

**Fisheries status and management aspects of octopus in Unguja Island, Zanzibar; the case of Kizimkazi mkunguni and Uroa areas**

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The study was conducted to assess the fishery status and management aspects of octopus in Unguja Zanzibar, using Kizimkazi Mkunguni as a managed site and Uroa as unmanaged site. The study used longitudinal mixed method design comprises both qualitative and quantitative approaches within longitudinal method. Data was collection over a period of 2 months from April to June 2018. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, key informant interviews, and focus group discussion. Secondary data were collected from online literature, octopus management reports and unpublished data from the Department of Fisheries Development, Zanzibar. In order to examine the catch status and management aspect of octopus fishery, information on total catches landed, fishing effort, methods and gears used, income earned by fishers and distribution of the fishing grounds along the study sites were collected. The findings of the study revealed that generally, the unmanaged (Uroa) site was found to have a larger number and larger sized octopus compared to the managed site (Kizimkazi Mkunguni). Among the factors found to influence the changes includes; fishing methods and gears used size of fishing area and management system. The numbers of foot fishers were higher compared to divers; however, divers were found to catch bigger octopus with regard to size and weight. The study also found that the octopus closure system has management benefits, as significant increase in catches of octopus was observed after opening of the closure area, although these benefits were observed to last only a few days. The study highlights the need for proper management and constant monitoring on the catch trend of octopus. It also stresses the need for effective law enforcement, awareness rising to local communities, and equips SFC with training and financial support to sustain the octopus closure system in Zanzibar