

Sargassum and the Fishing Industry

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Thanks to the staff of the Fisheries Division for their feedback

**FISHERIES DIVISION
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Content

1. Problems facing the Fisheries Sector.
2. Impact of Sargassum of the Fisheries Sector.
3. Coping Strategies of Fishers.

Information presented here was compiled from:

- *Observations and documentation by the presenter*
- *Discussions among the presenter and fishers.*
- *Preliminary results of a, soon to be published ,survey of the “**Impact of Sargassum on the Livelihood Assets of Fishers**”.*

Skeete's Bay

Willoughby, 2015



Willoughby, 2015



Skeete's Bay

Willoughby, 2012



Willoughby, 2015



Oistins

Willoughby, 2012



Willoughby, 2015



Consett Bay

Willoughby, 2012



Willoughby, 2015



Consett Bay

Willoughby, 2012



Willoughby, 2015



Beach Cleaning Equipment

Willoughby, 2015



Willoughby, 2015



Skeete's Bay

Willoughby, 2015



Willoughby, 2015



Willoughby, 2015



Willoughby, 2015



Oistins



The Impact of the Sargassum on Boat Access

Access to boats

It becomes difficult, if not impossible to:

1. Access the boat by:

- Walking through the sargassum;
- Dragging the tender across the sargassum;
- Oaring a tender through sargassum;
- Swimming through the sargassum;

2. Launch and haul a boat.



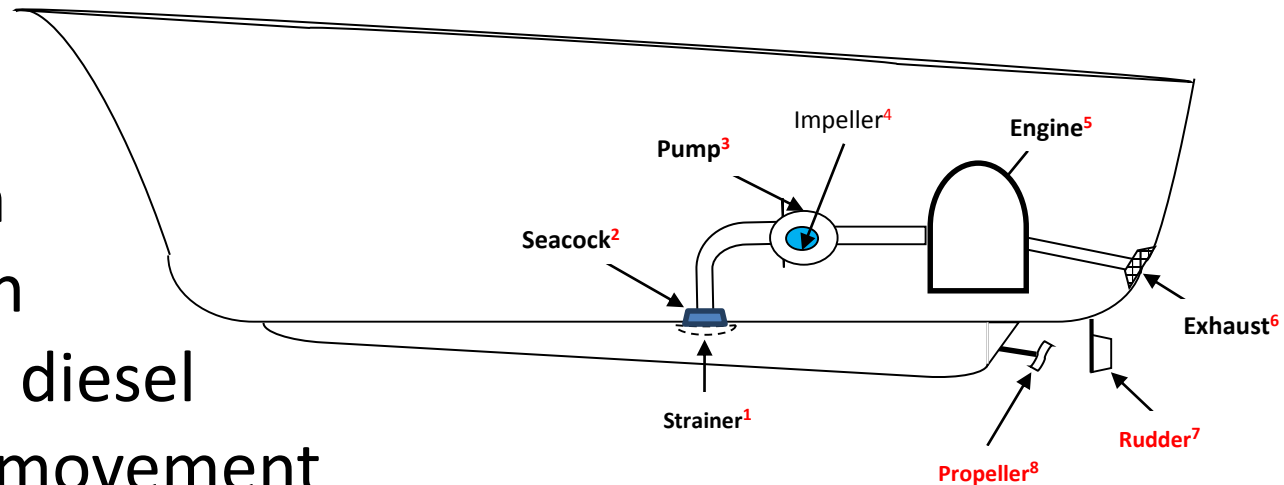
The Impact of the Sargassum on Boat Operation

Operation of Boats

The sargassum affects the **cooling and propulsion systems** resulting in the engine:

- overheating
- slowing down
- shutting down
- burning more diesel
- making jerky movement
- making unusual noises

Cooling System	1- 6
Propulsion System	7-8

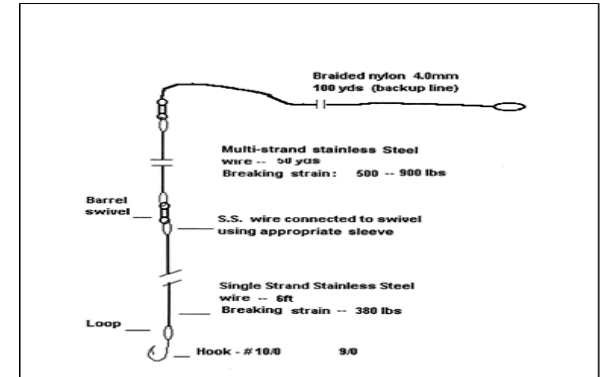


Impact of the Sargassum on Fishing Gear

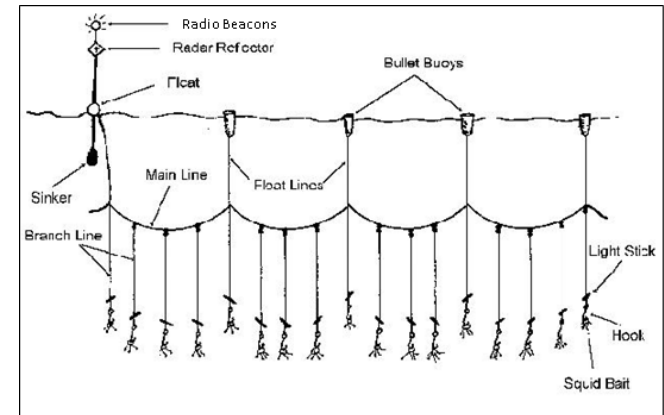
Fishing Gear

The sargassum:

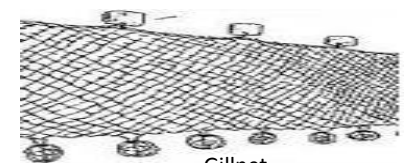
- becomes caught and entangled in the gear;
- impedes the setting and retrieving of fishing gear;
- forces fishermen to constantly clear the gear;
- makes the gear very heavy;
- destroys fishing gear.



Trolling Line



Long line



Gillnet

Impact of Sargassum on Fish Catch, Fish Size and Fish Prices

Catch and Size of Fish

Many of fishermen reported that in the presence of sargassum:

- their **total catch** was less; and
- the **sizes** of fish were smaller.

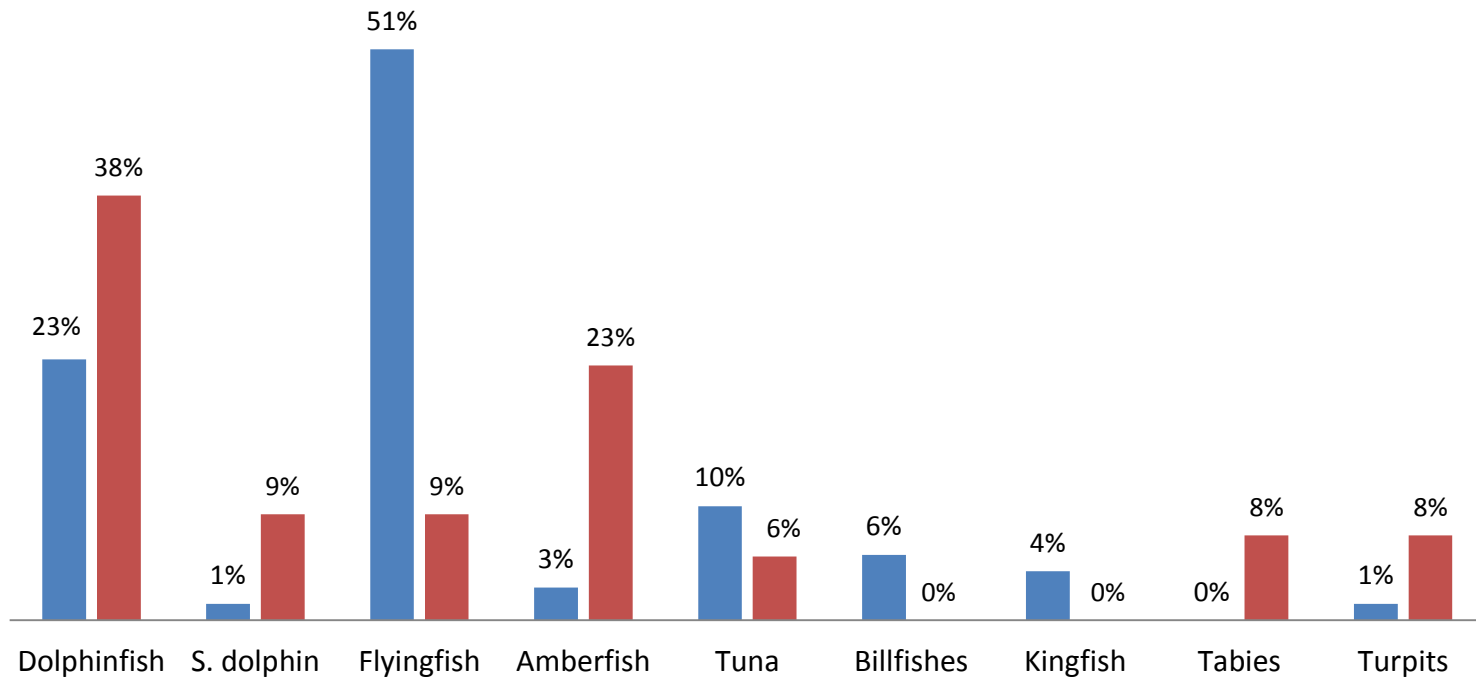
Fish Prices

- Fishermen reported higher fish prices, but this did not translate into increased income.

Impact of the Sargassum on Species Composition of the Catch

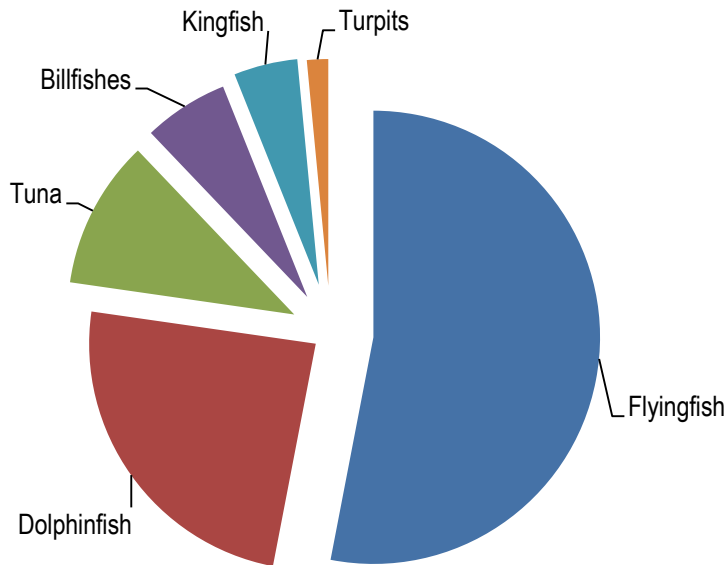
Fisherman's View on Catch Composition

■ Sargassum Absent Catch ■ Sargassum Present Catch

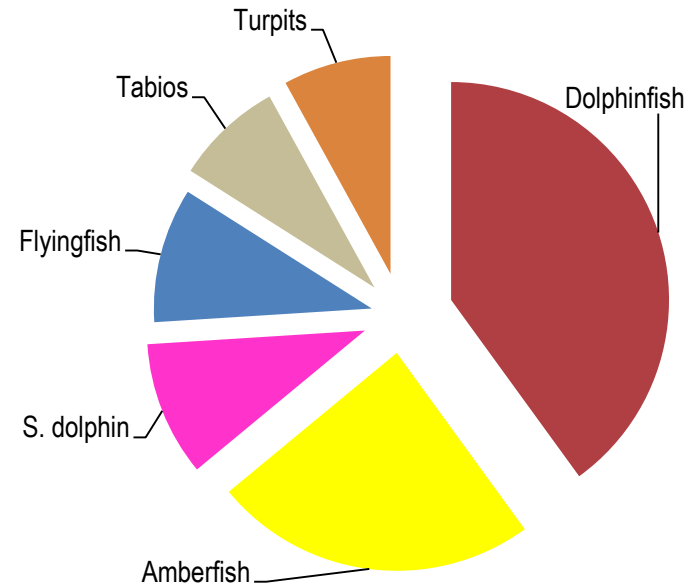


Impact of the Sargassum on Species Composition of the Catch

Absence of Sargassum



Presence of Sargassum



When sargassum is absent:

- adult **dolphinfish** and **flyingfish** dominated
- tuna, billfish and kingfish - common
- turpits not plentiful

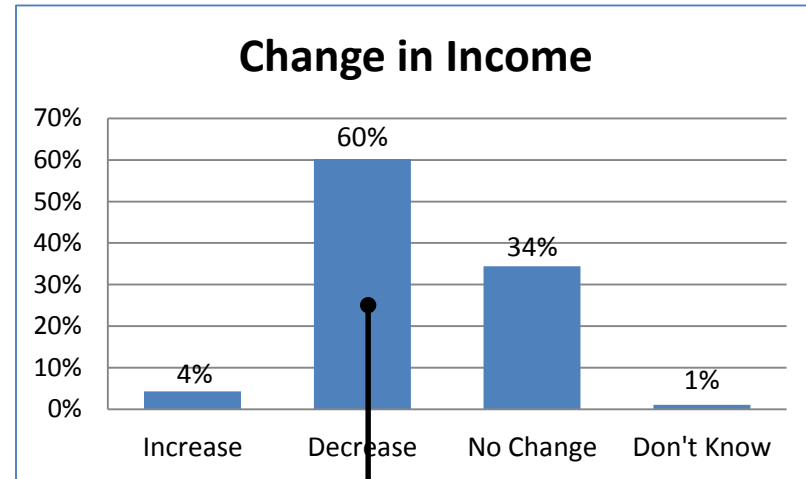
When sargassum is present:

- adult **dolphinfish** and **amberfish** dominated
- small dolphinfish - plentiful
- tuna, tabios and turpits - common
- flyingfish catches - down

Impact of Sargassum on Income

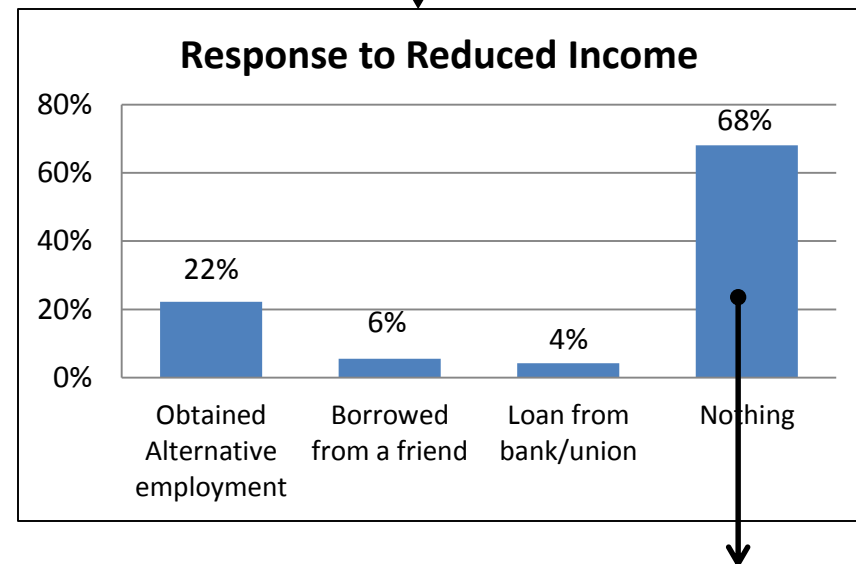
Income

The majority of respondents (60%) reported a **reduction in income**, despite an increase in fish prices, when the sargassum was present.



Response to Income Reduction

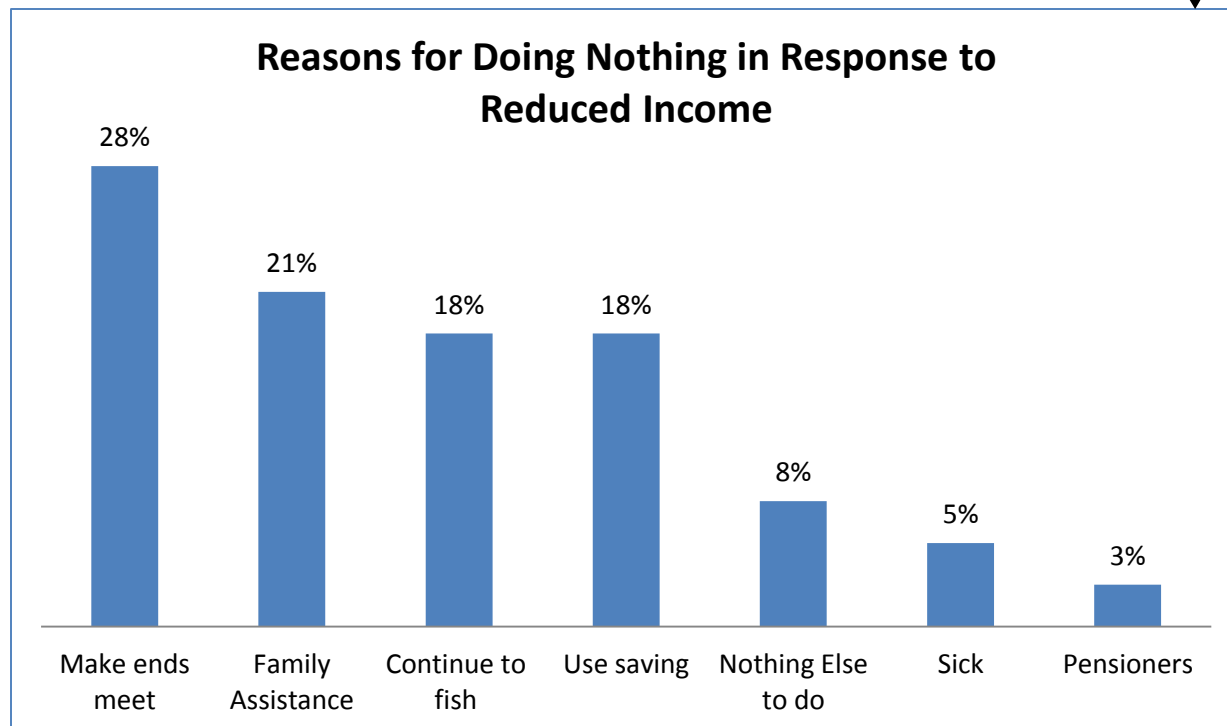
- **68% did nothing**
- 22% obtained alternative employment
- 6% borrowed from a friend
- 4% obtained loans from a lending agency



Impact of Sargassum on Income

Reasons for “doing nothing” in Response to Reduced Income

- Made ends meet.
- Family gave assistance.
- Continued to fish and sell fish.
- Used savings.
- Did nothing.
- Sick.
- Pensioner.



Impact of the Sargassum on Health

Health Risk:

The sargassum causes:

- itching of the skin and ear infection;
- a rash that may become infected;
- *sore muscles* from hauling gear laden with sargassum.

Decaying sargassum gives of a foul smelling gas (hydrogen sulphide) which:

- affects the throat and cause coughing;
- burns of the nose and eyes;
- upsets the stomach; and
- triggers respiratory problems.



Impacts of Sargassum

Summary

When sargassum is present:

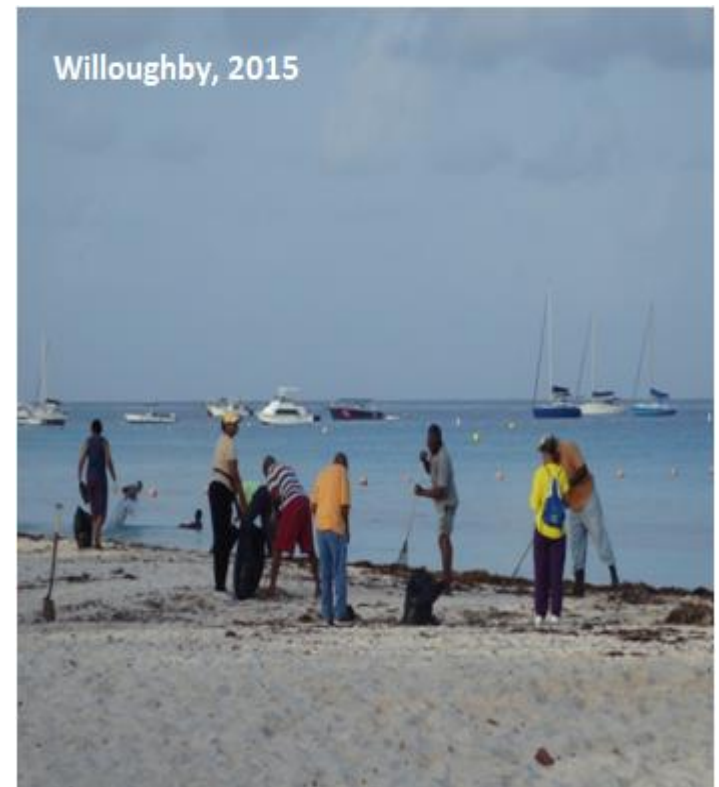
- It piles up on beaches and in nearshore waters.
- It prevents access to and launching and hauling of boats.
- The cooling and propulsion systems malfunction.
- Fuel consumption of some boats is higher.
- Some fishing trips are longer.
- There are fewer fishing trips.
- Some fish are scarce others are abundant.
- Fish prices are high but income is low.
- It presents health risks.
- The atmosphere is polluted with hydrogen sulphide.
- Decaying sargassum covers the nearshore reefs.
- Fishing gear is lost.

Coping Strategies for the Impacts of Sargassum

- Keep constant lookout for sargassum while at sea.
- Navigate around sargassum.
- Remove the sargassum from the propeller and rudder.
- Run the engine in reverse.
- Not fishing when the sargassum is present.
- Avoid contact with sargassum.
- Try to make ends meet.
- Get assistance from family.
- Use saving.
- Abandon some landing sites and fishing gear.

Suggestions for Dealing with the Sargassum

- Beach clean-up
- Clean-up at sea
- Collect and burn
- Use as a offshore FAD
- Give fishers a stipend
- Use in agriculture
- Conduct research



Thank You