

Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC)

Overview

The Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC) is the technical arm of the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Blue Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping that carries out applied research, development and management activities. AFRC also focuses on the sustainable management and conservation of marine resources.

Established to support fisheries and aquaculture research, it conducts studies on fish biology, population dynamics and the impacts of fishing on marine ecosystems. The Institution undertake collaborative research/studies with regional, international organisations such as the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) for the management of tuna stocks in the Indian Ocean and the Indian Ocean Commission (COI) for the conservation and protection of marine ecosystems in fisheries and marine ecosystem.

The centre also collaborates with local communities and stake holders to promote sustainable fishing practices and enhance food security. Through its research and outreach efforts, the AFRC aims to protect the biodiversity of Mauritius' coastal and marine environments while supporting the livelihoods dependent on these resources.

The Centre is also used for sensitisation campaigns targeting primary, secondary, tertiary students and elders and undertake guided tours/visit and share the knowledge, experiences and the role of the Centre towards Blue Economy.

Fisheries Division involved in Research Area and Innovation

Aquaculture Division: The division works to boost fish production by researching various types of fish, both marine and freshwater. They have a marine ranching programme to release young rabbitfish and seabream into lagoons to help increase and build fish stocks. They also produce young giant freshwater prawns and red tilapia and offer extension service and advice to local farmers.

Laboratories Division: The division comprises three laboratories namely: Marine Chemistry, Marine Microbiology and Fish Toxicity laboratories. The division is involved in long-term monitoring of coastal water quality in terms of physico-chemical and microbiological parameters. The division is also involved in the long term monitoring of harmful marine microalgae at established sites, detection of ciguatoxin in fish and conducting awareness campaigns on toxic fish present in Mauritian waters.

The Laboratories division also investigate cases of marine pollution, fish mortality and harmful algal bloom, conduct test on fish samples to detect presence of ciguatoxin, and implement laboratory quality management system according to MS ISO/IEC 17025 Standards.

Marine Resources Division: The division is responsible for carrying out research, monitoring and development activities aimed at increasing knowledge on the fishery resources found in our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) with a view to enabling its sustainable utilisation.

The Marine Resources looks into the Coastal and Pelagic Fishery. Its activities include research and assessment of fish stocks, monitoring of fishing activities and the dissemination of information on fisheries matters. It includes sample survey programme for the collection of fisheries data at Fish Landing Station in order to maintain and update records of fishery statistics for estimation of fish landed for the management of the coastal fishery. After collection, the coastal fish landings data are processed and analysed to estimate the fish catch, fishing efforts and catch per fisherman day from the lagoon and off-lagoon areas. It is also involved in the centralisation of fisheries and statistical data by the collection and compilation of data for dissemination to various National/Local, Regional and International Organisations through the Fisheries Statistic Unit.

The Offshore Demersal Fisheries comprises the bank fishery, semi-industrial chilled fish fishery, deep-water slope fishery and the St Brandon fishery. Fish landings data are collected through vessel logbooks which are processed and analysed to maintain updated records of all the fisheries. The data are used for the estimation of yields, rate of exploitation, spatial distribution and calculation of fishing quotas in Banks fisheries, in view of sustainable exploitation within biologically acceptable levels as well as with social and economic objectives.

Marine Conservation Division: The division is responsible for the long-term protection and conservation of marine biodiversity and habitats for sustainable use while maximizing economic and social benefits derived from the coastal zone.

It is involved in Coral Reef Restoration projects, training of fishermen for coral reef restoration, monitor state of corals, seagrass and associated biota, through field and underwater surveys in Marine Protected Areas and coastal waters.

The Division also undertake underwater ecological surveys for coastal development and tourism related projects such as undersea walk activities, demarcation of swimming zones, construction of jetties and the placing of platforms. It is also involved in regulating permissible activities through the issue of interference permits in the Blue Bay Marine Park and for the other Marine Protected Areas.

This Division has under its purview the two (2) Marine Protected Areas of Mauritius namely: Blue Bay Marine Park and Balaclava Marine Park as well as the six (6) Fishing Reserves namely: Poste Lafayette Fishing Reserve, Poudre d'Or Fishing Reserve, Trou d'Eau Douce Fishing Reserve, Port Louis Fishing Reserve, Grand Port Fishing Reserve (Zone A) and (Zone B) and Rivière Noire Fishing Reserve.

Marine Science Division: The Division assesses the marine ecosystems (coral reefs, mangrove and seagrass) for sustainable use of marine resources. The assessment includes Long-term monitoring of the coastal ecosystem at selected sites around Mauritius.

It is also involved in Island-wide monitoring of coral reef ecosystem, mangrove propagation in the coastal areas; provide technical know-how to private organisations / fishermen to propagate mangroves and awareness on importance of mangroves. The Division is also concerned with the conservation and management

of Marine Turtles and their habitats and implementation of projects on marine biodiversity.

Contact Details:

The contact details of the Albion Fisheries and Research Centre is as follows:

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