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Theme: Special Sessions

Session: WeF4 - Ocean Management 2

Title: **Marine habitat modification through artificial reefs: an economic analysis of the coastal fisheries of the Algarve, Southern Portugal**

Author(s): David Whitmarsh , Miguel Neves Santos

Abstract: Marine habitats and the fisheries they support may be modified through the use of human-made physical structures placed in the sea. These structures ('artificial reefs') serve a variety of functions, ranging from the traditional practice of food production to newer applications which include mariculture, tourism and resource conservation. The presentation examines the use and potential of artificial reefs, focussing on their role in sustaining coastal fisheries. A range of economic benefits are attributable to artificial reefs, and empirical evidence relating to the performance of the artificial reef system in the Algarve (southern Portugal) is used to demonstrate their potential to increase fishing incomes and to contribute positively to the economy of the region. To ensure that these benefits are captured, however, a clear exploitation strategy is needed in order to control harvesting activity around the reefs and to prevent overfishing. It is argued that, without such a strategy, the economic benefits may prove unsustainable in the long run.