

## Abstract

Sardines (Clupeidae) make up a substantial proportion of the fish catch across the Philippines and consequently are the most accessible source of animal protein for millions of Filipinos. Further, this fishery is an economic engine providing thousands of jobs and generating revenue at the individual, municipal, and national levels. Ecologically, sardines are basally positioned in a food web that supports pelagic tuna and mackerel, as well as numerous sea birds and marine mammals. Philippine sardine biodiversity is among the highest in the world and includes the only known freshwater sardine species. The ecological and economic value of sardines alone warrant further research; however the looming effects of global climate change and an ever-growing population in the Philippines increase the urgency of this research. Signs of a collapsing sardine stock, reported earlier this decade, have promoted investigations of their abundance, viability, and long-term integrity as a fishery. Furthermore, the historical collapse of small pelagic fisheries elsewhere in the world may serve as guides in mitigating a similar fate in the Philippines. Our goals here are to a) review the current understanding of sardines in the Philippines; b) provide a snapshot of their status using the most recent data available; and c) highlight where the greatest concerns are and how new research may aid in creating a sustainable and secure sardine fishery.