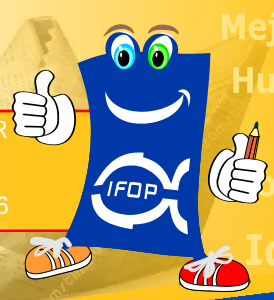
NUMBER
85
ABR. 2026



IFOP
INFORMATION
BULLETIN

El Ifopino

IN THIS NUMBER

IFOP Report on the Species Caprella mutica Associated with Mussel Seed Collectors in Southern Chile 1

IFOP Researchers Present to Community and Authorities of the Atacama Region 2

Extensive Participation in the First International Workshop of the IFOP-APC Colombia Project 3

Governance Meeting: ANID Ocean Node Highlights Importance of Multisectoral Collaboration for Territorial Impact 4

IFOP Report on the Species Caprella mutica Associated with Mussel Seed Collectors in Southern Chile

Chilean mussel (Mytilus chilensis) aquaculture is one of the main productive activities in the Los Lagos Region, with a supply chain that contributes significantly to regional economic development. However, it faces persistent challenges, such as variability in seed collection and competition for substrate, key factors for production efficiency.

In this context, fouling—the colonization of structures by organisms other than the target species—is a growing concern for the sector. The correct installation of collectors and the optimal timing of collection are crucial to ensuring successful seed settlement, especially under conditions of high biological competition.

During the 2024–2025 and 2025–2026 seasons, mussel farmers in the region began reporting

unusual abundances of a small crustacean known as the “skeleton shrimp” or “sea prawns,” belonging to the caprellid amphipod group. Its recurring presence sparked interest from both the production sector and the scientific community.

In mid-February 2026, researchers from the Mussel Larval Monitoring Program of the Environmental Department of the Aquaculture Research Division at IFOP Puerto Montt received samples from collectors in the Reloncaví Sound. These samples were analyzed

Editorial committee
Gonzalo Pereira P. / Executive Director
Gabriela Gutiérrez V. / Journalist

Graphic design
Mario Recabal M. / Senior graphic designer

by researcher Macarena Herrera to determine the diversity and abundance of mussels and epibiont organisms, with a particular focus on identifying the caprellid.

The morphological analysis conducted by Sandra Silva for the Study on Monitoring the Environmental Performance of Aquaculture in Chile and its Effect on the Ecosystems of its Sites, by the Aquaculture Research Division of IFOP (Chilean Fisheries Development Institute), determined that the specimens belong to Caprella mutica, a species internationally recognized for its colonization capacity.

To confirm this result, with the support of biochemist Dennis Cisternas from the Department of Hydrobiological Health, specimens were selected and sent to the Austral OMICS laboratory at the Austral University of Chile, where their identification was molecularly validated using COI and 18S genetic markers, following methodologies previously described in the literature.

This record raises new questions about the dispersal dynamics of species associated with fouling and their potential effects on mussel seed collection, highlighting the need for more in-depth monitoring and management strategies for the national mussel farming industry.

IFOP Researchers Present to Community and Authorities of the Atacama Region

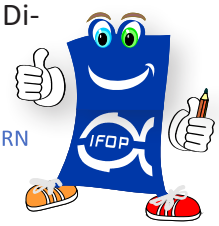
The final workshop of the project "Incorporation of Anchovy Monitoring Associated with the Artisanal Fishing Fleet of the Atacama Region," funded for the third year by the Atacama Regional Government, was held at the University of Atacama's Cultural Development Center in the city of Caldera. This project facilitated a research cruise to assess the abundance and distribution of anchovy in the Atacama Region, complementing the Recruitment and Spawning Stock cruises, which together provide the community with information on the status and condition of the resource.

This meeting with the community brought together more than forty artisanal fishers, vessel owners, and the Regional Governor, Miguel Vargas Correa. Professionals from the Sernapesca (National Fisheries Service) and IFOP also attended.

The project's principal investigator, MSc. Francisco Leiva presented the main results of the research cruise, which included the scientific detection of a significant biomass of juvenile anchovies in the surface layers during the first months of 2026, and the increased depth of the adult population. Dr. Jaime Letelier, head of the Oceanography and Environment Department, explained that this increase in depth is due to the expansion of the anchovy's habitat as a result of the influence of the Coastal El Niño phenomenon developing along the South American coast. He also demonstrated IFOP's Monitoring System (SAPO). Meanwhile, MSc Esteban Molina, head of the Direct Assessments Department, answered questions from attendees about the status of pelagic resources such as jack mackerel.

For his part, the Acting Regional Director of IFOP for Atacama-Coquimbo, Mg. Gonzalo Muñoz no-

RETURN



ted that the workshop was very well attended and characterized by a broad and fluid dialogue between anchovy fishery users, sector authorities, and the regional governor, Miguel Vargas Correa. Researchers from the institute demonstrated their extensive experience in the field, answering a significant number of questions, including several from the governor regarding his interest in the region's fisheries development.

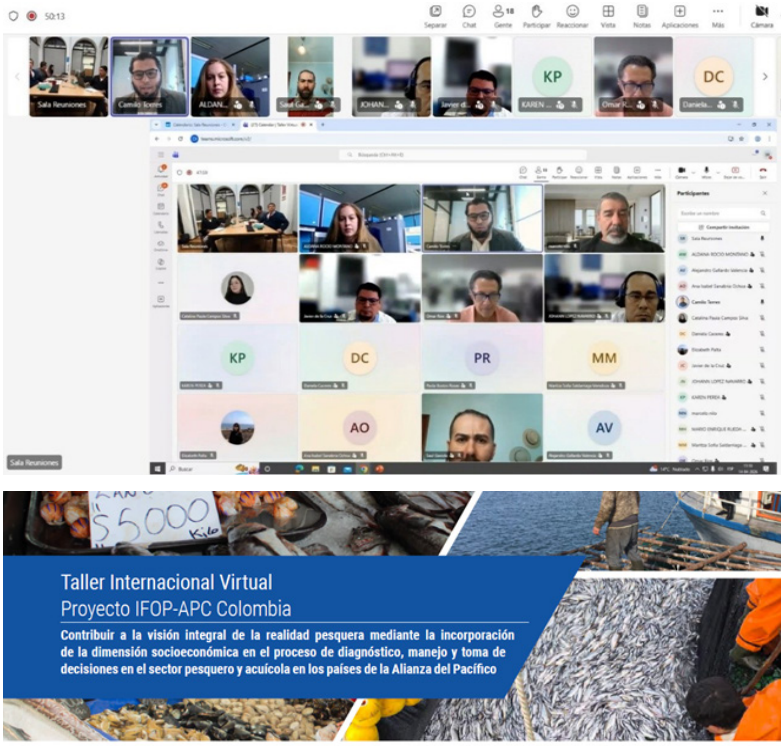
The researchers also took the opportunity to visit the IFOP base in Caldera, where they were able to examine samples of Spanish sardine caught in the area.

Extensive Participation in the First International Workshop of the IFOP-APC Colombia Project

On April 14, the first International Workshop of the project "Contributing to a Comprehensive Vision of the Fisheries Reality by Incorporating the Socioeconomic Dimension into the Diagnosis, Management, and Decision-Making Processes in the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector in the Pacific Alliance Countries" was held virtually. The project, funded by the Pacific Alliance Cooperation Fund, is being implemented by the Department of Economics and Statistics (DEE) of IFOP. For more information, visit: https://www.ifop.cl/nuestro-que-hacer/la-investigacion-pesquera/departamento-de-economia-y-estadistica-dee/alianza-del-pacifico/

This important project milestone included the participation of representatives from Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, as well as the focal points of the Network of Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Institutions of the Pacific Alliance member countries (IIPA-AP Network).

Luis Carroza, senior researcher in the Department of Economics and Statistics and project leader, indicated that the workshop's objective was to share the methodology that each country will use to evaluate the application of socioeconomic information in sectoral diagnostic and decision-making processes. The respective evaluations will then be presented at an in-person workshop to be held in Chile in June of this year. In this regard, the project leader emphasized the importance of developing these technical initiatives aimed at highlighting the socioeconomic dimension in fisheries and aquaculture management. These initiatives contribute both to sectoral research and to positioning IFOP as a leading authority in this field within the Pacific Alliance.



Finally, Camilo Torres, head of the Department of Economics and Statistics, added that considering socioeconomic aspects is fundamental for the sound management of fisheries and aquaculture, given the interaction between people, markets, and countless productive relationships with other sectors of the economy. Therefore, this project contributes to this effort, aiming to integrate the socioeconomic component of fisheries and aquaculture management into the biological and operational information already present in the management cycle.

RETURN

Governance Meeting: ANID Ocean Node Highlights Importance of Multisectoral Collaboration for Territorial Impact

THE MEETING ESTABLISHED THE INITIAL GUIDELINES FOR DEFINING THE OCEAN NODE'S GOVERNANCE MODEL

The Faculty of Natural and Exact Sciences at the University of Playa Ancha hosted the first governance meeting led by the North Central Ocean Natural Laboratory Node (Ocean Node). Representatives from the project's partner institutions, the National Research and Development Agency (ANID), and the CIV-VAL Node participated.

Impact on the Territories

The meeting aimed to inform and co-design a governance model for the Ocean Node. The initiative, its components, challenges, and next steps were presented, ultimately leading to the identification of the initial guidelines that will shape its governance.

Among the key elements identified were the need for balanced representation of stakeholders, promoting a two-way flow of information between the territory and communities, science and public policy, maintaining a focus on the real needs and challenges of the territory, and uniting existing scientific efforts in the regions and institutions.

In this regard, the director of the Ocean Node, Marcelo Olivares Arenas, stated that "this governance meeting allows us to plan the best way to coordinate efforts, so that the world-class science that is being conducted and planned can have an impact on the territories of the central and northern coastal zone of Chile."

Likewise, Dr. Verónica Molina Trincado, Deputy Director of the Ocean Node and General Director of the UPLA Environmental HUB, stated that this first milestone aimed to "identify the areas where we can leverage all the work that has been done over these years, in order to generate an impact in the territories," highlighting in this context the focus on the Node's six priority areas of work: Oceanography, Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, Local Knowledge, Networking and Knowledge Transfer, Sustainable Blue Economy, and Territorial Governance.

Importance of Collaboration

The National Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen of Chile (CONAPACH) valued the development of this space, emphasizing the importance of a permanent link between academia and the fishing industry, as stated by the confederation's treasurer, Miguel Ávalos Medina.

"These opportunities for participation are extremely rewarding and also solidify the possibility that the artisanal fishing sector, together with academia, can contribute to civil society, science, and the results we hope to achieve with this Node," stated the treasurer of CONAPACH.

RETURN

Among the perspectives that emerged from the meeting, the importance of inter-institutional collaboration to generate a real impact on public policy through the work of the Ocean Node was highlighted.

In this regard, the coordinator of the CIV-VAL Node, Kinga Halmai Zapata, noted that “initiatives like these allow us to complement and identify strategic points to visualize the next steps in these two ANID instruments, which are of great importance to our country.”

Participating Institutions

It is worth noting that this initiative is led by the Catholic University of the North (UCN), through its Institute of Public Policy and the UCN Faculty of Marine Sciences, along with the University of Playa Ancha (UPLA), the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso (PUCV), the University of Valparaíso (UV), the University of Atacama (UDA), the Center for Advanced Studies in Arid Zones (CEAZA), the National Confederation of Artisanal Fishermen of Chile (CONAPACH), and the Fisheries Development Institute (IFOP).

RETURN