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| 2018/04/18 Karama et al.  |
| We appreciatethe constructive comments of both reviewersand have responded to each comment*.* Please see and confirm our responses. All the track changes were made and the comments in the margins of the main text were also considered in this MS. |
| **Comment from reviewers** | **Response** |
| **Reviewers general comments section** |
| This manuscript is not ready for publication as it is. There are problems with grammar, data analysis, and a good justification as to why this study on beach seine being an illegal gear all along the Kenya coast was conducted. The authors should have explained this first, then zero in to Lamu archipelago where this gear despite being illegal is still in use probably due to its long history of its use in the area. The question is, is the beach seine in Lamu the same beach seine that its ban is still effective in other parts of the Kenya coast? What is so unique with the beach seine in Lamu in terms of its mode of operation that its use has been so persistent for many years? These are some the key questions authors should have explored first so as to convince the reader on this research.  | Major revision was made by explaining why beach seine in Lamu is rampant. Justification of the study in the selected study sites was also revised. Track changes made by the reviewers on grammar were accepted. Worked on the grammar and gave some colleagues to check on it. The entire data analysis was worked on.  |
| It is well clearly stated sampling was done in May 2014, March 2015 and May 2016 but not clear how many days in each month were used for sampling. The authors have presented this as annual analysis which is misleading since I am sure sampling might have been done for a few days in each sampling month although occurring in the different years. I suggest that authors pool this data basically for three months and to do seasonal analysis or just March and May samples instead of years. The statistical analysis in this manuscript is misleading and the authors have not given a justification for using Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test to their data set. This test works with variance of means and in this case authors have kept on referring to length frequencies. | The exact time period is given for each survey this gives the number days spent on data collection.We pooled the data for all the surveys and determine the catch composition and size frequencies for the different codend mesh sizes used in Lamu as suggested for precision since the sampling period was limited. I apologize for the misleading explanation of the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test. The Kruskal-Wallis test works with the mean ranks of groups. This test was performed to compare size distributions retained by the different codend mesh sizes but not the length frequencies.  |
| **Abstract**The abstract is not well written and its conclusion is not supported from the results of this study. The question is, what has this study really contributed in terms of management recommendations for the beach seine fishery in Lamu? | The entire abstract was re-written and conclusion withdrawn from the results. The study provided information on selectivity that should be considered for management. By regulating mesh sizes, fisheries managers aim to control the mortality caused by fishing fleets. Hence, reliable measurement of mesh size is needed by scientists when estimating fishing mortality in stock assessment predictions and also by enforcement officers and net makers to ensure that fishers use codends which comply with the regulations.  |
| **Title**See recommended improvement on the presentation of the title in track changes | Thank you for the suggestion and improvement of the title. We incorporated in the revised MS. |
| **Authors**There are a total of 12 co-authors and some with very good background on the fisheries of Lamu. I am not sure if this manuscript benefited from this wide co-authorship, otherwise it would stand a very good piece of work. The first author needs to be aware of this. | The piece of work is shared to the other authors for their contributions. The roles; Khyria, corresponding author, data collection, drafted the manuscript, data analysis. Matsushita review the manuscript, provided guidance on analysis and editing of the entire ms, Kimani and Gladys data collection and the MS, Mwakiti, Aura, Ochiewo, Fridah, Waiyaki, Horace, Faith and Ndegwa contributed significantly during data collection and comments.  |
| **Introduction** The introduction is not well written with grammar mistakes. I have tried to correct this where possible using track changes. A strong justification should come out here why this study on an illegal gear was conducted. See more comments on the text. | The entire section was re-done and track changes were accepted on the grammar mistakes. Justification was also re-written to justify why an illegal gear in Kenya was important for this study. |
| **Materials and Methods****The study area**Beach seine is a dragging net with definite impacts on the bottom habitats. The authors should have attempted to describe the habitats located in the study and at least give the current status. There complete silence on this and I am benthic habitat studies in the area have been previously conducted. | The impact of the beach seine fishery on the habitats is described based on the literature available. |
| **Sample collection**It is not very clear how the authors came up with a representative sub-sample for species identification and total length measurements while in the field. | We have explained how we came up with the sub-sample for species identification and length measurements.  |
| **Statistical analysis**This is the weakest part of this manuscript. It is wrong to do Kruskal Wallis test on length frequency data. The authors has a very good opportunity to study species diversity by employing at least measures of diversity such as species richness and Shannon-Wiener diversity index and even statistically test for significance differences between the different cod-ends. I feel more statistical analyses could be employed here to make the manuscript interesting. | We have corrected the details of the results on Kruskal-Wallis test which was not on length frequencies but on the mean ranks of groups. The entire section was re-done. We apologize for the misleading explanation. Species diversity analysis was performed using Simpson diversity Index. This diversity index was considered because it takes into account the number of species present, as well as the abundance of each species. |
| **Results**The whole of this section is too boring and very difficult to follow because of poor results presentation. Catch diversity should have come out for the months sampled instead of years. And this should have been compared between the cod-ends with justifiable statistical analysis. Here, results should have also indicated how much total catch was measured and the sample weight that was analyzed for the 98 species that were analyzed. The analysis for the most abundant three families of Siganidae, Scaridae and Lethrinidae. | The whole section was revised with accordance to the updated analysis done.  |
| **Discussion** The discussion is weak and some instances it repeats sections of the results.  | This section was also re-done and repetitive section was deleted. |