ON SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES IN TIMOR-LESTE

Based on the observations from Blue Ventures’ staff speaking to key informants in 6 communities in Timor-Leste in May 2020.

Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis

Collapse in marine tourism and associated conservation access fees

State of emergency announced on 27th March

International borders closed so fishers can’t fish in Indonesian waters
- Fish consumption has decreased due to the lack of presence of important consumers (international buyers and expatriates), local consumers are prioritising essential purchases over fish

General social distancing restrictions enforced by police but not consistently between communities, which has an impact on fishing activity
- Fishers not allowed to work in large groups
- Length of fishing trip and seaweed farming activity is limited
- Restrictions on transport mean that fishers and/or consumers cannot get to markets and collectors/middlemen visit communities less often

In general, prices of fish have fallen and fewer fish are being caught because of reduction in fishing activity, resulting in reduced income for fishers (but prices have increased in some areas as fishing restrictions have reduced supply)

Community-based fisheries monitoring group are collecting information on fisheries and only working when they can gather data from members of their households, or by remaining socially distanced

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