

# Q & A

## Interview with María Hernández Rojas, a fisherwoman from Tárcoles community, Costa Rica.

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### **Maria, how many years have you been fishing?**

I have been fishing for the past 15 years.

### **What is your first memory of the sea?**

The desire to go to sea, to fish. I also remember one of the first times I went out, I fell out of the *panga* (boat) because it was so unsteady. But we were near the shore, and because I knew how to swim, I was not scared.

### **Who taught you to fish?**

It was my older brother, Marcos, who taught me how to fish, first with lines. He used to say "As soon as you feel a strong pull, a *tironaso*, you must quickly pull up."

### **What does fishing mean to you? And the sea?**

I would say fishing is something that at least helps to maintain the household. The sea gives me a wonderful feeling, it feels great to be there, it is a wonderful thing.

### **What are the challenges that women face in the fishing sector?**

I think a woman faces many challenges as a fisher; the activity itself is a challenge. When one goes out to sea, there is, of course, the danger of rains, storms, tides and waves, but there is also the challenge of constant self-improvement. Also, if the boat gets damaged, one must fix it; buy a spare part; fix the spare part—that's a big challenge; it's difficult to deal with all that.

### **Why is fishing important?**

Fishing is important for our children and our families—to help us live our lives today and also in the future. Also, it is important that our children learn how fishing has been done through time.

### **A story you would like to share?**

I have a strong memory of the time I fell out of the boat. I still remember the shock of falling. I fell. I put my foot on the sand, and just then, I stepped on a ray. A big one. It felt soft and slippery. In that instant, I jumped back into the boat and fell flat. I must have been about 8 years old at the time. 🙄