This “fish ruler” can be used to do a “quick assessment” of your priority fisheries. Through this you will be able to assess how mature/immature the fishes being sold are. If more than 20% (approx.) of your fish are “immature” it is a good indicator that your fishing resources are in a state of “recruitment overfishing” and there may be problems ahead that will need resolving. (Ideally you should assess the fishery regularly through the whole year, as seasons change). Better law enforcement, closed seasons, a comprehensive CRM code, municipal fishing licensing system and marine sanctuaries are some of the ways to help alleviate the impacts of overfishing.

The broken lines — indicate the average length or maturity of each of the different fish species. If you catch, sell, eat or use a fish smaller than the length shown in the ruler, the fish is immature. If fishes are continuously caught smaller than shown in the ruler, they will not be able to buy eggs in previous catches. This will eventually reduce fish availability at sale and will result to lesser fish catch (of fishes) and eventually higher prices in the market.

Note: length is measuring only the body, without the head and tail. All the fishes can fill the entire image, this is done as an attempt at the worst situation to record the market. Some of the species could be represented with groups in the bottom of the chart.