



World Ocean Day in times of corona – Quiz

Some background information

Fishing boats have been tied up in ports and beaches in most countries during the corona pandemic, including because processing and marketing chains for the perishable product could not function as before and social distancing is impossible, particularly on small boats. This has created hardship in small-scale fishing communities where men and women lost income and food sources almost overnight.

Conversely, reduced fishing pressure on the many overexploited resources has enabled some recovery, even after only a few months pause. The recovery is particularly visible in short-lived species and augurs well for conditions after the lockdown. Higher fish abundance and size should help improve the cost of fishing and generate higher catches with less effort.

The virus which has most probably jumped from its original host species, bats, to humans, is expected to reduce its virulence with time in order to survive in its new host. Fish and invertebrate species living in water are not infected by the virus.

As a result of the lockdown, supply chains from China and other Asian countries closed down to a trickle. With the reopening of many industries in Asia and elsewhere, production is resuming and demand for maritime transport growing rapidly. However, while empty containers pile up in supply markets they are lacking in Asia. Unfortunately, regulations for drastically reduced sulphur-content of bunker fuel for merchant vessels by the IMO are not yet in place.

The chance of getting infected by the virus is a function of the number of virus particles being exhaled by carriers: by coughing (a single cough releases 3,000 big droplets which tend to fall to the ground quickly), sneezing (a single sneeze releases 30,000 small droplets that can travel across a room), normal speech or singing with intensified deep respiration and exhaling mini droplets or aerosols that can carry millions of virus particles. While research is still going on to learn more about the virus, some comparison with influenza viruses can provide preliminary indications that it takes 1000 viruses for transmitting the disease. Risk of catching such a dose is highest in small interiors with little or no ventilation and at least one carrier (thus at home). Likewise rehearsing in choirs in rooms carries a high risk of catching covid-19, if there is at least one infected person. Conversely, catching it outdoors is much less likely, because of the dilution in large air volumes.