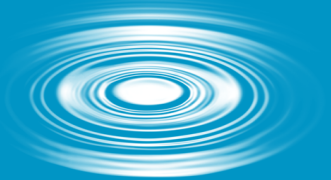
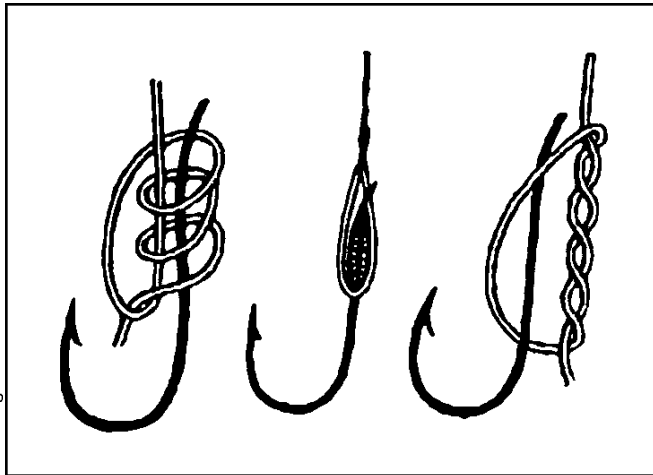


El Anzuelo

EUROPEAN NEWSLETTER ON FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT



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Concha Salguero/ARPA

An anzuelo is a fishhook which is still the principal means of capture in certain sectors in Spain. For example, tuna fishing from the Atlantic ports is largely carried out using this method. Typically, several anzuelos are trailed from transverse rods in a system known as *curricán*. This is a highly selective form of capture. Curiously, one of the strongest types of anzuelo is known as the Limerick, as its shape is said to originate from the Irish town of the same name.

A CHANCE TO CONTRIBUTE

David Baldock
Director, IEEP London

Welcome to the second edition of *El Anzuelo*. We were convinced that fisheries and environment issues in Europe warranted more discussion and exposure. There seemed to be a gap which we hoped a new newsletter might help to fill. However, the first and greatest test was bound to be readers' reactions to Volume No 1. It has been gratifying that many people have responded positively, supporting the idea of a new forum of this kind and making a variety of useful comments. Several readers have requested additional copies; usually we can provide these, so do not hesitate to ask if you feel that your colleagues or contacts should see the newsletter.

Any genuine dialogue about progress towards sustainable fisheries in Europe must be welcome. During the autumn, DG XIV began a useful and rather unusual consultation exercise, asking for views about the current strengths and weaknesses of the Common Fisheries Policy and seeking opinions about how it should be developed in the next century. Environmental organisations are amongst those invited to a series of meetings being held in most Member States to present the results of an earlier questionnaire and to provide an opportunity to discuss important issues face to face. A

number of different environmental bodies have responded. Perhaps for the first time, there is an opportunity for those directly involved in the industry and for others with a legitimate interest in its future to contribute ideas at a critical stage in the evolution of the policy. Those concerned with the future of the CFP should not miss the opportunity to participate in such meetings which will be completed by June 1999.

In another initiative, a DG XIV Contact Group involves environmental and overseas development NGOs who are invited to periodic meetings in Brussels to express their concerns and discuss important current issues. This is clear and welcome recognition of the fact that the CFP is not solely concerned with the capture and marketing of fish but has important wider implications for the environment and sustainable development inside and beyond Europe.

In the immediate future, the negotiations over the new Structural Fund Regulations will provide an important test of DG XIV's willingness to take up the challenge of integrating environment into sectoral policies. There are clear opportunities for adapting the FIFG and other structural measures to give greater prominence to the environment and the sustainable management of fish stocks. We will be reporting on the development of the new Regulations during 1999.

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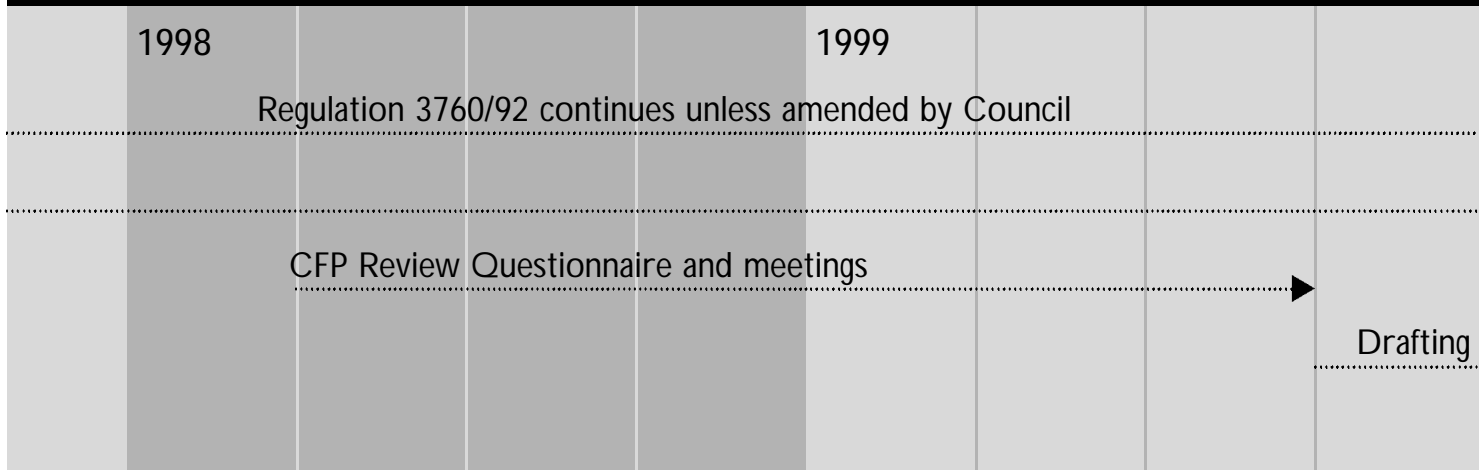
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Contributions from David Baldock (IEEP London), Jonette Braathen (Norwegian College of Fishery Science), Alex Midlen (Essex Estuaries Project), Ralph Piotrowski (Ecologic), Concha Salguero (Análisis y Reforma de Política Agro-rural)



IEEP London



Update on 2002 CFP review – meeting the stakeholders

Clare Coffey
IEEP London

We are now firmly within the second phase of the 'CFP review' process as the Commission arranges a series of meetings throughout the EC Member States, aimed at consulting stakeholders. A welcome development is the engagement of social and environmental interest groups which are generally excluded from routine CFP consultation fora. At this early stage, therefore, there are positive signs that the review of the CFP may reflect more closely the new sustainable development agenda.

The series of Commission meetings was lunched in September 1998, starting in Ireland and moving on to the UK, Denmark, Germany and Belgium. Consultations in other Member States will follow in 1999, concluding in Italy in June. Representatives of the fisheries sector, non-governmental organisations, consumer organisations, scientists and European organisations are being approached to participate. However, the meetings are open to all other interested parties. The aim is to enable the

Commission to identify some of the main wishes and concerns of the sector and the other parties consulted.

Discussion within the meetings is largely being framed by the outcome of the questionnaire which was issued earlier in 1998 to canvass the views of a wide range of stakeholders (see Vol 1 of *El Anzuelo*). The preliminary findings generated by the questionnaire were presented to the Fisheries Council in June 1998, but a more detailed analysis of the responses has been prepared since.

The Commission's analysis highlights some of the specific national, regional and sectoral interests, although it almost inevitably reflects the concerns of the more vocal and better organised groups. In some areas there appears to be widespread dissatisfaction with existing rules, though suggested solutions vary.

For example, on discarding 'a majority was in favour of scrapping present rules', but apart from tightening existing regulations, no single solution was universally favoured. However there was general support for continuing to restrict access to the 6 and 12 mile fishing zones. Some of the other key findings are highlighted in the box.

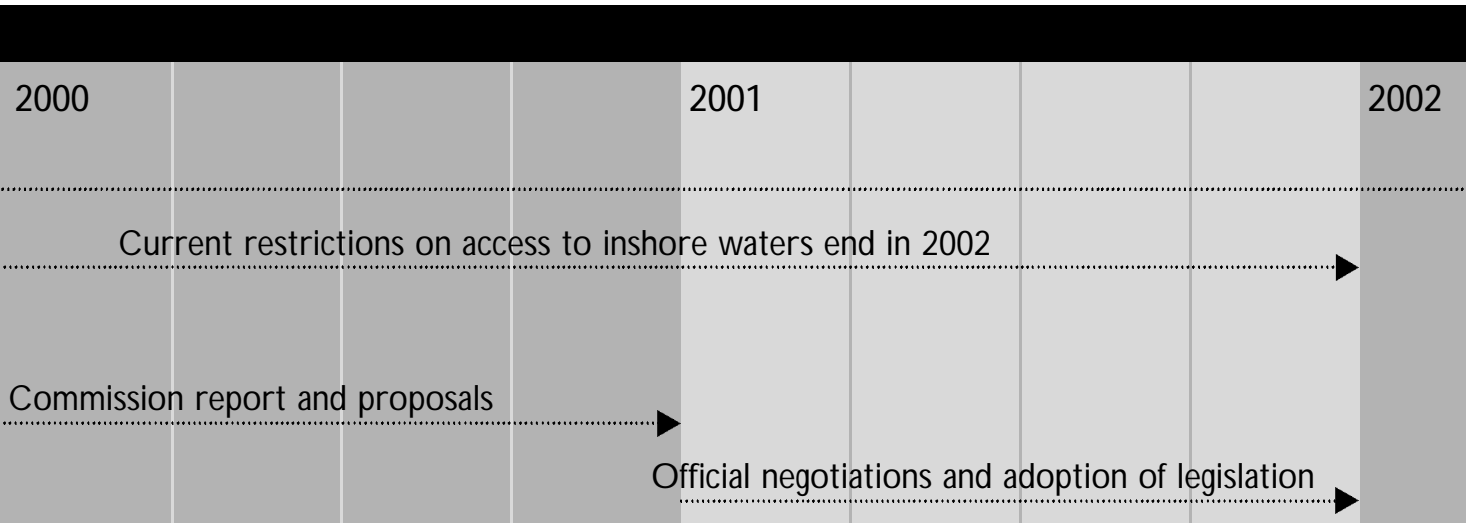
Although there is consensus in some areas, a large number of regional and national sensitivities are also coming to the fore. In particular, access restrictions to the North Sea and the Shetland Box tend only to be supported by those countries which benefit directly from the restrictions.

It will be important for the Commission to manage these divergent positions carefully if any real consensus is to emerge from the consultation exercise. Making progress towards sustainable development will require adequate

weight to be given to the interests of the traditional sector and environmental groups. But the Commission is unlikely to support any new policies unless they are seen to be workable in the Member States. Ultimately, it will also be critical that support for such policies can be generated among a sufficient number of Member States, with whom final agreement will rest.



Oxford Scientific Films



Assessing the questionnaire responses

According to the Commission's own analysis, the questionnaire on the review of the CFP yielded 172 responses. Many originated from the UK (49), Spain (19), Ireland (18) and the Netherlands (18), with Luxembourg the only Member State not to have responded.

It is perhaps not surprising that of all the replies received, 80 came from fishermen's organisations. This compares to 20 responses from trade/processing organisations, 13 from organisations representing the environment and 32 from 'other' groups. Among 'environment' responses, most originated from 'European' representative organisations (5), such as WWF and Greenpeace, and the UK (5). The remainder came from the Netherlands (2) and Italy (1). Unfortunately, no environmental organisations responded directly from the other 12 Member States.

Although the number of actual 'environment' responses was relatively low, environmental concerns permeated many other replies. The Commission identified some priority concerns of stakeholders as follows:

- 6/12 mile inshore access restrictions – 'a great majority of the organisations consulted wanted to keep the present restrictions'. Opposition to the restrictions came from Spain;
- Total Allowable Catches

(TACs) – the system of setting TACs was universally criticised. Proposed improvements included greater use of existing technical measures (gear restrictions, closed areas), monitoring, multiannual TACs, TACs divided by types of species (ie demersal, benthic, pelagic etc) and payments/incentives to improve adherence to quotas. For the Mediterranean, proposed alternatives to TACs included licensing, closed areas, and days at sea restrictions. The idea of introducing Individual Transferable Quotas was largely opposed, with the exception of some Dutch, Danish and Spanish organisations;

- discarding – the majority favoured changing discarding rules to allow all fish to be landed. Proposed alternative measures included the use of more selective fishing gear, greater use of closed areas and improved monitoring. Others proposed permitting a percentage of by-catch, or prohibiting discards beyond a set percentage of total catch;

- fishing effort – most organisations thought more rigorous controls were necessary to limit fishing effort. Some proposed an extension of the existing 'effort control' regime, or more widespread use of closed areas. Organisations in Finland and Portugal were very critical of or opposed to the present system.

- agreements with third countries – there was support for extending the present range of agreements, although the overall budgetary allocations could be reduced. In particular, benefiting Member States or vessel operators could be asked to increase financial contributions.

- markets policy – responses generally supported the application of suitable marketing standards and eco-labelling. Many stressed that consumer information for fresh and processed products should include details of the fishing method, catch date and origin of products.

- structural aid – although many organisations thought that this aid made no real contribution to effort reduction, it was widely felt that the aid should continue in a modified form. Among the priorities identified for aid were small-scale inshore fishing, protected areas, and local-management zones.

Specific actions proposed to support this small scale sector included a dedicated financial measure, conservation or capacity reduction measures, decentralisation and local management, and PESCA type initiatives. However, there was also strong support for vessel modernisation;

- monitoring and control – as well as strengthening the existing system, some respon-

dents supported on board observer schemes, the application of the single net rule, increased powers for Community inspectors, and the withdrawal of aid to countries not fully implementing the system; and

- aquaculture – taking greater account of social and environmental aspects of aquaculture development was identified as a priority. Some respondents called for an EC wide plan to ensure more coherent development of the sector, to be accompanied by financial support measures.

It is clear from this brief summary that many respondents supported measures which could help strengthen social and environmental aspects of the CFP. These two areas were further highlighted in the list of 'other subjects' which were not explicitly mentioned in the questionnaire, but which respondents considered to merit attention as part of the review. Included here are some broader themes such as adopting a more regional approach under the CFP, increasing protection for local fishing communities and furthering the integration of fisheries and environmental issues. Although each of these poses considerable challenges to the EC, it is hoped that they remain firmly on the agenda of the CFP review.

Eco-labelling in the fisheries sector

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In the quest for more sustainable fisheries management, market-based instruments such as food labels are gaining in interest. Food labelling can serve multiple purposes. The existence of labelling schemes can encourage and reward more acceptable fishing practices. They can serve social functions by promoting local and regional identity and preserving local distinctiveness. They can also act as a tool for local economic development by establishing niche markets which add value to local products.

Examples of labelled food products can be found in every EC Member State, as well as in other European countries, though the majority involve agricultural goods. In many cases, the goods concerned are the product of distinctive local patterns and types of farming, although they may be accredited by national schemes such as the *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*.

Experience of labelling within the fisheries sector is still limited, with much discussion taking place in the Marine Stewardship Council and focusing specifically on eco-labelling. In its Communication on *The Future for the Market* the European Commission signalled its support for labelling schemes, while suggesting that a legal framework might be needed to ensure proper application of voluntary schemes involving the certification of 'responsible' fishing and aquaculture.

The following article by Jonette Braathen of the Norwegian College of Fishery Science explores some of the issues surrounding the use of eco-labels in the fisheries sector, and the potential for their further development. This is accompanied by an article from Alex Midlen on the approach being adopted to the certification of a local fishery.

.....

Jonette N. Braathen
Norwegian College of Fishery Science

For several years environmental issues have been of growing interest in a range of sectors, not least the fisheries sector. Green issues are now rising on the agendas of politicians, decision-makers and consumers. This development has prepared the ground for discussion on the more widespread use of 'eco-labels', a tool which seeks to take advantage of increasingly powerful consumers and their environmental commitment.

One of the main arguments for introducing some form of eco-labelling in the fisheries sector is that government management has failed and that alternative policy instruments should therefore be developed in support of fisheries management. A growing number of reports tell of fisheries characterised by over-capitalisation and subsequent fleet over-capacity, depleted fish stocks and low incomes for those relying on fishing for their livelihood. The pollution and destruction of mangrove forests adds to the negative impacts on the marine environment. Those involved in new initiatives to improve fisheries management accordingly appear to have a good cause.

One initiative aimed at establishing a global, independent, third-party certification scheme for fish products was taken in 1996 when the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) was launched by Unilever and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). By harnessing consumer power, the two parties' aim was to make fisheries management more sustainable than governments had proved able to do.

The two organisations promoted a shared goal, but with different motivations. WWF, as the world's largest environmental organisation, highlighted the poor state of the world's fisheries. Unilever, on the other hand, is one of the world's largest buyers of frozen white fish and consequently emphasised its desire to secure future supplies of fish.

Apart from the particular interests highlighted by Unilever and WWF, the growing concern over health and food safety has helped raise interest in food labelling schemes. For these different reasons, consumers are keen to know where products originate and how they are produced. Of course, increased competition in the retail sector is also fuelling interest in eco-labelling. Labelled goods can gain a competitive advantage in the market place and may therefore help companies survive in a tough market. Eco-labelling can open up market opportunities for traditional, specialised products which can be sold at premium prices.

Despite the potential benefits of fish product labelling, the MSC Initiative has met with some scepticism from fisheries managers, the fisheries sector and environmental organisations other than WWF. The scepticism is largely founded on the perception that the MSC was established without a sufficiently open consultation process involving all the stakeholders. In particular, the process for developing the principles and criteria which would form the basis of certification for a fishery caused some concern. Another concern focused on the potential role of a private multilateral organisation in evaluating government management systems which are normally established through more democratic processes.

The MSC Initiative is still at a relatively early phase in its development, with a number of feasibility studies being carried out to evaluate how the certification process would work in practice (see separate article by Alex Midlen). Actual experiences of eco-labelling in the fisheries sector are still limited, with the 'dolphin-safe' label on canned tuna probably providing the best known example. The label came into widespread use within a relatively short period of time. Indeed, it became almost impossible to find canned tuna which was not labelled as 'dolphin safe' even when it originated from 'dolphin-free' fisheries, illustrating how difficult it became to market tuna without the label. There was great deal of uncertainty among consumers as to the label's meaning. It was even suggested that the label indicated that there was no dolphin meat in the cans!

Other notable attempts at eco-labelling of fish products include the more recent 'turtle-safe' label put on shrimp and shrimp products. There are also ongoing attempts to extend organic labelling schemes to farmed species (see photo), though progress in this area has been slow. In addition, some local and regional labels are now in place and opportunities for introducing others labels are being explored.

Experience of initiatives within other sectors have met with mixed success. For example, the certification and labelling of tropical timber products does, in principle, support improved forest management practices. To date there has been little demand for tropical timber certified under the

● THE THAMES HERRING FISHERY

Labelling in practice

Alex Midlen, Essex Estuaries Project

The Thames herring fishery was chosen as a trial site during the development of the Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) Principles and Criteria. The project is likely to be the first fishery in the world to achieve MSC certification and could play a key role in the development of the certification process.

The project was instigated by the Essex Estuaries Project (EEP). EEP was established to take forward implementation of the habitats Directive in the area. It is sponsored by local authorities and English Nature, England's statutory nature conservation agency. A large part of the herring fishery, and all the spawning grounds, falls within the boundaries of the Project. Certification is seen as a means of supporting good fisheries management, in order to help maintain the conservation status of the Essex estuaries proposed Special Area of Conservation.

The fishery is based on a distinct stock of herring which is within the UK's territorial waters. It is managed by the UK's Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF) under a system of total allowable catches and licences. The local fisheries management body, the Kent and Essex Sea Fisheries Committee, also has a range of byelaws which, for example, protect the spawning grounds from trawling operations. They also specify that only small drift nets are to be used within a Regulated Area. Outside this Area, some of the herring stock is harvested by small pair trawlers, using much larger mesh nets than is normal for herring (50 mm compared to 31 mm).

The fishermen are all based locally and have a strong sense of ownership in the herring stock. The fishery itself is locally important, providing some cash turnover through the winter. It is also an accessible way of entering the fishing industry as the necessary capital investment is low. In the past, the fishermen have themselves contributed to management of the fishery by adopting a range of measures (for example individual daily quotas) to restrict fishing effort. In fact, many of the key regulatory measures that are now in place have evolved as a result of initiatives by the fishermen themselves.

The certification process

The process of certifying the fishery involved an assessment of the fishery which was undertaken in September 1997. A working group, comprising the herring fishermen, wholesalers and regulators was established to consider the implications of certification and how it might be achieved. Initially the fishermen requested meetings with fish retailers, so as to understand better the marketing aspects of the scheme, and with the fishery scientists to address the future management of the stock. The whole process has therefore provided a valuable means of improving communication and understanding between different sectors of the industry, and with conservation organisations.

Importantly, the scheme provides an opportunity to strengthen support for conservation measures amongst fishermen, especially in inshore fisheries. It is also a means of giving fishermen a greater share of responsibility for managing the stocks upon which their livelihood depends.

For further details contact:

Mr Alex Midlen, Colchester Borough Council, tel +44 1206 282 222; fax +44 1206 282711; email alex.midlen@colchester.gov.uk
Mr Peter Scott, Marine Stewardship Council, tel +44 171 350 4000; fax +44 171 350 1231; email peter.scott@msc.org



Dave Pierson

Forestry Stewardship Council scheme, although demand is growing.

Even if there is a demand for certified goods, there is no guarantee that the principles and criteria used to assess their suitability for labelling are sufficiently rigorous to ensure the sustainability of stocks. This is a particular fear where there are commercial interests involved. In relation to the MSC Initiative, for example, Unilever has committed itself to purchasing only MSC certified fish by the year 2005. This may be a useful target, but there are also dangers that such a commitment could lead to less stringent standards being applied to certification in order to maintain supplies of the raw material.

The central role played by NGOs in relation to the MSC also causes suspicion within the fishing industry who perceive that NGOs have gained considerable experience in bringing environmental protection and nature conservation to the attention of the public at their expense. However, the management of marine eco-systems is highly complex and in most cases poorly understood. Evaluating and certifying a fishery as 'sustainable' remains a major challenge, one that should perhaps be addressed using a wider range of expertise, including industry representatives, scientists and NGOs.

Once a fishery is certified, however, the benefit of an eco-labelling scheme is that it can provide a relatively simple message for consumers to help them find their way through the complex issues involved in sustainable fisheries management. By using labels, awareness of some of the key issues can be raised and consumer choices influenced. This, in turn, can support the long-term development of communities dependent upon the fisheries sector. However, ensuring continued access to eco-labelled goods will depend on whether markets can be established and maintained. It will also be influenced by whether the large retail stores take the products onto their shelves.

Despite the limited use of eco-labels within the fisheries sector, eco-labelling offers the potential for furthering sustainable development, including in the fisheries sector. But the issues surrounding certification in particular are extremely difficult to resolve. It is therefore all the more important that the issue is approached with some care and that labels are applied appropriately. This implies taking into consideration all possible aspects of responsible fisheries, including social, environmental and economic impacts, and listening to the views of all the stakeholders.

The shape of things to come? Tagging is already commonplace for meat products.

Greening EU Policy – the 'Cardiff Process'

David Baldock
Director
IEEP London

Heads of State and Government meeting at the Cardiff Summit in June 1998 gave rise to a process designed to breathe new life into the integration of environmental considerations within other policy areas, in line with the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam.

In particular, the Summit invited 'all relevant formations of the Council to establish their own strategies for giving effect to environmental integration and sustainable development'. The Transport, Energy and Agriculture Councils were to start the process off, with progress reports to be presented at the Vienna Summit in December 1998. In parallel, the Commission was asked to review existing policies, to prepare strategies for action in key sectors and present a report on previous experience and best practice.

Work on the strategies is being taken forward, with varying success. The December Vienna Summit is expected to welcome the

progress made and suggest that the strategies are further developed in 1999. It may also identify other Councils to join the process. The Fisheries Council is rumoured to be among this second wave and could therefore be the subject of some attention under the German Presidency of the Council in the first half of 1999.

The Commission is also in the process of building up momentum for work on indicators to help monitor and develop integration within the sectors.

Mrs Bjerregaard, the Environment Commissioner, told the European Parliament earlier this month that the Commission would be proposing indicators during 1999. This work is attracting particular attention and could provide an important vehicle for setting future targets for the EU, including in relation to fisheries.

For further details contact:
Germany Presidency – Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit, tel +49 228 305 2650
Austrian Presidency – Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Jugend und Familie, tel +43 15 1520

Compensation package for drift-net fleet

In June 1998, the EC adopted an extended ban on the use of drift-nets for the capture of tuna, swordfish, sharks and other similar species (see Vol 1 of *El Anzuelo*). At the same time, the European Commission and the Council agreed that fishermen and vessel owners affected by the ban would be compensated.

Further agreement on compensatory measures was reached by Ministers meeting at the October 1998 Fisheries Council. Based on a proposal from the Commission, the package enables France, the UK, Spain and Ireland to re-equip their fleets for other forms of fishing, to decommission vessels not so converted, and to compensate affected fishermen. For example, between ECU 26,000 and ECU 285,000 is available for converting vessels to another fishing activity, depend-

ing on the vessel tonnage. An additional ECU 10,000 is available in each case for vessel owners to cease fishing activities altogether. Funding for this initiative is being provided from existing budgets under structural adjustment programmes.

Adoption of the final Decision is expected to follow in December, once the European Parliament has delivered its opinion.

Salmon in the river Elbe

According to the Saxonian Agency for Agriculture, salmon have returned to German rivers for the first time in 50 years. Salmon were once a major source of income for local fishermen but pollution and dam construction meant that the last salmon was caught in the Elbe in 1947. With progressive improvements in water quality, salmon were successfully reintroduced in

1995, using young fish hatched from Swedish and Irish eggs.

The salmon, which spend much of their lives in the North Atlantic, have been seen swimming up the River Elbe in Saxony to spawn in the headwaters where they were reintroduced more than two years ago. In October 1998, the first full grown salmon reached the state of Saxony. Government officials are confident that, in future, salmon fishing will once again be possible in Germany. For the time being, however, salmon fishing will be subject to heavy fines, as the stock still needs a long time to recover. The stocking programme may also be extended to the Czech Republic to cover the whole of the river Elbe.

For more details contact:
Dr G Füllner, Sächsische Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft, Referat Fischerei, tel +49 35931 20206; fax +49 3591 20109; email lfi-fischerei-sax@t-online.de
Herrn Burkart Zscheiler, Press Office, Sächsische Landesanstalt für Landwirtschaft, tel +49 351 2612138; fax +49 351 2612151

Court of Auditors critical of Joint Fisheries Enterprises

The Court of Auditors has published a *Special Report (No 18/98) on Community Measures to Encourage the Creation of Joint Enterprises in the Fisheries Sector*. The report highlights some of the failures of EC funding for Joint Enterprises which, it says, has had 'practically no effect on the overall fishing activity in Community waters'.

The Joint Enterprise measure was introduced in 1990 to contribute to the reduction of the Community fishing fleet by helping EC vessel owners set up partnerships in third countries. According to the Court, some 188 projects have been approved to date, resulting in the removal from the Community fishing register of 290 vessels. This represents a capacity of 113, 710 tonnes, and has been achieved at a cost of ECU 298 million. Despite this sizeable investment, however, the measure has apparently had no effect on domestic fishing activity.

The Court's findings were included in its most recent Annual Report on the EC budget. Despite the criticisms of the scheme, the Commission's response asserts that the establishment of joint enterprises 'will appear again' in the proposed regulation on future fisheries development measures (see EU Funding, this issue).

For further details contact:
Ilias Nikolakopoulos, Court of Auditors, tel +352 43 98 45411; fax +352 43 98 46235; email ilias.nikolakopoulos@eca.eu.int; http://www.eca.eu.int

ICES adopts precautionary approach

The ICES Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management's 1998 advice for fisheries management has been published and is available on the ICES web site (www.ices.dk). The advice is of particular interest because it proposes and uses precautionary approach reference points in formulating advice.

In its explanatory note, ICES recognises that 'changes in fisheries systems are only slowly reversible, difficult to control, not well understood, and subject to change in the environment and human values'. Therefore ICES agrees that a precautionary approach should be applied to fishery management. 'Reference points, stated in terms of fishing mortality rates or biomass and management plans are key concepts in implementing a precautionary approach. Reference points should be regarded as signposts giving information of the status of the stock in relation to predefined limits that should be avoided to ensure that stocks and their exploitation remain within safe biological limits.'

Traditionally, management advice has been framed in relation to 'safe biological limits'. In order to remain within these limits, there should be a high probability that the spawning stock biomass will be above the threshold where recruitment might be impaired (B_{lim}) and that fishing mortality will be below the limit which will

drive the spawning stock to the biomass threshold (F_{lim}). However, in order to have a high probability of avoiding these limits, management actions are needed before the limits are reached.

The distance between the limit and the precautionary approach reference points is related to the precision with which current stock size can be estimated, to the precision with which the limit reference points are estimated, and to the degree of risk that fishery management agencies are willing to accept. Therefore, although ICES sees its responsibility to identify limit reference points, the precautionary reference points presented in the 1998 report should be regarded as proposals.

The new precautionary reference points, B_{pa} and F_{pa} , are defined as the thresholds at which management action should be taken in order to prevent B_{lim} and F_{lim} from being reached. So, for example, where F_{pa} is being exceeded, ICES would advise the implementation of management or recovery plans to reduce fish-

ing mortality. 'If the development of plans were recommended, but not taken up, ICES would have to advise that management was not consistent with a precautionary approach.'

For further details contact:
J-J Maguire, tel 001 418 688 5501; fax 001 418 688 7924; email
jj_maguire@compserve.com
ICES, tel +45 33 15 42 25; fax +45 33 93 42 15; http://www.ices.dk

Support for a ban on sandeel fishing

The UK Government is proposing that the Community adopt a seasonal ban on industrial fishing in sensitive parts of the North Sea. The move takes account of international scientific data on seabirds dependent on sandeels and is aimed at protecting seabirds and other marine species.

If followed by a proposal from the European Commission, and agreed by the Council, the move could lead to an international closure affecting offshore waters along the UK's east coast. The area includes major concentra-

tions of several species of seabirds, including arctic tern, black guillemot, common tern, guillemot, kittiwake, puffin, razor-bill, Sandwich tern and shag. It would also provide protection to marine mammals, salmon and sea trout.

For further details contact:
Peter Winterbottom, UK Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, tel +44 171 238 5583; fax +44 171 238 5721; http://www.maff.gov.uk/

Observing Northwest Atlantic Fisheries

Following a three year pilot programme, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) has agreed to permanently extend its surveillance programme. The programme puts an observer on every vessel fishing in the NAFO area, including French and Danish vessels.

Placing independent observers on board vessels is seen as a highly effective means of controlling activities of the larger fishing fleets. Results of the three-year pilot scheme suggest that the presence of observers has led to an 80 per cent reduction in the number of apparent infringements.

Observer schemes compare favourably with satellite tracking systems. Both are costly, but satellite tracking cannot detect illegal use of nets, misreporting or discarding.

Assessing the Fifth Environmental Action Programme

The Community's Fifth Programme of Policy and Action in relation to the Environment and Sustainable Development (SEAP) sets out the EC's framework for environmental policy up to the year 2000. As the end of the Programme approaches, it is being subjected to a 'Global Assessment' which is intended to inform any decisions on a possible successor.

The Commission has now started the Global Assessment process, through a series of meetings with Member States' officials and various stakeholders.

Fishing versus farming

A recent paper in the journal *Science* suggests that feeding requirements and the environmental damage caused by some fish farming are reducing the total fish supply. This goes contrary to the popular belief that farming actually adds to the overall production of fish.

The paper by Naylor *et al* claims that the rapid growth in salmon and shrimp farming, combined with other human activities, now places substantial demands on ocean ecosystems. Global aquaculture production has more than doubled over the last decade, now accounting for 25 per cent of all fish consumed by humans. The value of annual production of salmon alone is now \$2 billion, having expanded rapidly since the 1970s due to improved technology, high profits and government subsidy.



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Fish farm in Scapa Flow, Orkney, UK

Despite the growth in farming, however, it is relatively inefficient – it takes nearly three pounds of wild-caught fish to produce one pound of farmed salmon. Construction of farms has also caused substantial loss of nursery areas and habitats, as well as resulting in pollution and the introduction of exotic

species. These in turn are challenging the ability of wild fish stocks to regenerate.

The paper calls on industry and government to consider introducing new regulations, pollution taxes, or reduced financial subsidies for the most harmful activities.

For further details contact:
http://www.science.mag.org/
Science 1998 October 30; 282: 883-884

Artisanal fishing in the Canary Islands

WWF Spain/Adena, through its recently established office in the Canary Islands, is running a project for the promotion of sustainable coastal fishing throughout the archipelago. The three year project has funding for the first year from the PESCA Community Initiative, via the Fisheries Department of the Canaries Government.

Artisanal fishing, organised through *cofradías* or guilds, is a traditional and significant source of employment in the archipelago, and provides an important opportunity for integrating conservation with socio-economic objectives.

The multi-disciplinary team, led by WWF/Adena, aims to identify five areas for the establishment of new marine reserves which will combine conservation (focusing particularly on marine habitats and species under the EC habitats Directive) with the development of sustainable artisanal fisheries. The project also includes amongst its aims the training of fishers in 27 *cofradías* in the seven islands.

For further information contact: Ezekiel Navio, Urb. Puerto Calero 27-28, 35570 YAIZA, Lanzarote



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Mending the nets

A short questionnaire on the effectiveness of the programme was circulated to key groups early in the autumn; several workshops to explore sectoral issues, including agriculture and transport, are to follow in early 1999.

Among the more visible outputs of the assessment will be a Commission Communication which is expected to be finalised in mid 1999, possibly to be followed by a joint Commission/Parliament Hearing in the autumn. Together, these exercises will inform the Commission on whether to have a 6th Action Programme and if so, what form this should take.

For further details contact: European Commission, tel +32 2 299 1111

EC Biodiversity Strategy and Fisheries Action Plan

In the drive to implement the UN Biodiversity Convention, the Commission produced a Communication in 1998, entitled *EC Biodiversity Strategy*. The stated aim of the Strategy is 'to anticipate, prevent and attack the causes of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity at the source'.

Fisheries is identified among several priority EU policy areas

where biodiversity concerns are to be integrated. Specifically, a Fisheries Action Plan is to be drawn up by February 2000, to address a number of objectives. These include promoting the 'conservation and sustainable use of fish stocks and feeding grounds', and reducing the 'impact of fishing activities and other human activities on non-target species and on marine and coastal ecosystems'. The Plan is to review existing policies and instruments, as well as setting priorities for action, with the Directorate-General for Fisheries (DG XIV) taking the lead.

In September 1998, the European Parliament's Environment Committee added its weight to the Biodiversity Strategy. In its report (A4-0347/98, Jonas Sjöstedt), the Committee makes several recommendations to strengthen the document, including those aspects relating to the sustainable management of fisheries. The Parliament also calls on the Commission to support 'regions which lend themselves to traditional forms of fishing'.

For further details contact: Mr Carlos Martin Novella, European Commission, DG XI (Environment), tel +32 2 296 3976; fax +32 2 296 9557 Mr David Armstrong, European Commission, DG XIV (Fisheries), tel +32 2 295 3129; fax +32 2 296 6046 Mr Jonas Sjöstedt MEP, European

Parliament, tel +32 2 284 5563; fax +32 2 284 9563

FAO moves on sharks, seabirds and overcapacity

In November, an international

conference organised by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) approved drafts of three non-binding global documents. Final approval by the FAO's Committee on Fisheries (COFI) is expected in February 1999.

The documents concern International Guidelines or Plans of Action relating to the management of fishing capacity, the conservation and management of sharks and the reduction of incidental catch of seabirds in longline fisheries.

The Guidelines/Plans are to be voluntary in nature, though in each case national plans of action are envisaged.

In the case of sharks, for example, countries implementing the Plan of Action would commit themselves to regularly assessing the status of stocks and adopting a national 'Shark-plan' if necessary.

States should strive to have such a plan in place by the year 2001.

For further details contact: Erwin Northoff, UN FAO, tel +39 06 5705 3105; fax +39 06 5705 4975; email erwin.northoff@fao.org; <http://www.fao.org>

Fishing in the Channel and the Southern North Sea

A two-day conference is being held on 20 to 21 May 1999 for all those concerned with fish stocks, fisheries management and fishing effort in the wider 'Transmanche' region, and with the impending reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.

Fishing plays an important but often neglected role in the life of coastal communities in south east England, northern France, Flanders and Zealand. Although the sea-going fleet is much smaller than in previous times, fishing provides a living for many thousands of families in the Transmanche. Boulogne, for example, is France's premier fishing port with an extensive downstream industry.

Yet there are numerous problems associated with the

sector: lack of information is acting as a fundamental constraint to effective fisheries management; fish stocks are reported at dangerously low levels; fishing gear is alleged to damage fragile benthic ecosystems while aggregates extraction is thought culpable in destroying fishing grounds. The possible reform of the Common Fisheries Policy could also improve or worsen the situation in the greater Transmanche region.

The conference provides an opportunity to exchange views and ideas on these areas, and debate the future of fishing in the region.

For further details contact: Debbie Morgan, Kent County Council, Invicta House, Maidstone, ME14 1XX, UK; tel +44 1622 221567; fax +44 1622 221636; email debbie.morgan@kent.gov.uk



Apart from acting as a source of independent information on fisheries and the environment, *El Anzuelo* aims to present different perspectives on the issue, and thereby encourage discussion and debate among the various players. If you wish to respond to material included in this or the previous issue, we would be happy to hear from you.

Dutch shellfish fishery policy inadequate

This letter is a response to an article by Bert Keus of the Dutch Fisheries Board. The article was included in Vol 1 of Anzuelo under the title 'Controversy over Dutch mussel fishing'

Tom van der Have
BirdLife/Vogelbescherming Nederland
(and on behalf of the Wadden Society)

Between 1989 and 1991, after several years of low recruitment, virtually all intertidal musselbeds were removed and cockle stocks seriously depleted by shellfish fisheries in the Dutch Waddensee. This resulted in unprecedented mortality among oystercatchers and eiderducks and a deterioration of extensive areas of the Waddensee intertidal ecosystem. After intensive discussions and pressure from environmental NGOs a new policy was introduced in 1993. The measures taken included partial closing (26 per cent of the intertidal area) and reserving 60% of biomass of the shellfish stock for birds in years when stocks are low.

BirdLife International/Vogelbescherming Nederland considered these measures as completely insufficient for a timely recovery and adequate protection of bird populations and important habitats in the Dutch Waddensee such as cockle, eelgrass and mature mussel beds. Therefore, a complaint was submitted to the European Commission in 1993 about failure by the Dutch Government to respect the EU birds Directive.

The Waddensee is the most important wetland in Europe and should already have been designated as a Special Protection Area in 1981. According to article 4.4 of the Directive, Member States shall take appropriate steps to avoid pollution and deterioration of habitats or any disturbance affecting the birds, insofar as these would be significant.

Bert Keus of the Dutch Fisheries Board, a commodity board of the Dutch fishery industry, gave comments on the European Court case in the first issue of *El Anzuelo*. Apart from the fact that he seems well

informed about the confidential correspondence between the Dutch Government and the European Commission, his comments are remarkable in several respects.

Firstly, the reader is misled by the focus on mussel fishing, which is potentially a sustainable form of shellfishery if limited to the subtidal zone. The real controversy is mainly over mechanical cockle dredging, of which the damaging effects on the vulnerable intertidal areas are widely accepted.

Secondly, the arguments presented contradict the conclusions of the policy evaluation report. The evaluation studies clearly concluded that declines in oystercatcher survival rate and numbers occurred during 1991-1997, a period with a low frequency of cold winters compared to the reference period in the 1980s' when the oystercatcher population was increasing. These declines were mainly caused by the lack of significant recovery of intertidal mussel beds and the failure of the Dutch government to take the systematic absence of intertidal musselbeds into account in the stock reservation measure to prevent food shortage for birds. A detailed study carried out as part of the evaluation shows that, except for 1994, food shortages for oystercatchers occurred in all years despite a catch limitation in 1995 and complete closure in 1996 and 1997, mainly as a result of the lack of mature mussel beds.

Thirdly, the areas voluntarily closed by the fishery management plan are minute, less than 0.1 per cent of the intertidal area of the Dutch Waddensee. In addition, it is claimed that annually only a few per cent of the Waddensee is fished by cockle vessels. This estimate is based on the area touched directly by the suction dredgers, each of which is usually one metre wide. However, the area disturbed by suction dredging for cockles is much larger. Included in the fishing permits is the condition that cockle dredging is forbidden within 100 metres of mussel and oyster culture plots, because sedimentation damages

these plots. This implies that, by fishing one percent of the Waddensee with one suction dredger of one metre wide, in theory twice the total area of the Waddensee could be affected. Even if one accounts for overlap, it is clear that cockle dredging disturbs considerable parts of the intertidal area in the Dutch Waddensee, as is also apparent from the lack of recovery of important habitats in the areas open to shellfishery.

A comparison with the shellfish fishery policies in the German and Danish parts of the Waddensee is highly illustrative. Cockle fishing is almost completely forbidden (except for a very small area in Denmark) and mussel fishing is much more restricted compared to The Netherlands. Both in Denmark and Germany extensive areas of mature mussel beds and eelgrass beds still occur, while in the Dutch part only small fragments of the historical distribution of these important habitats have recovered. These benthic communities are almost completely limited to areas which have not been fished for at least two, and in most cases more than five years. And cold winters and storms, frequently claimed as the main causes for the lack of recovery of mussel beds in the Dutch part of the Waddensee, affected the German and Danish parts just as much.

Finally, Bert Keus seems unaware of the fact that measures taken after the application to the European Court of Justice in September 1997 are largely irrelevant to the case.

In fact, the very statement by the Minister of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries that in the next five years greater effort will be made to improve possibilities for developing mussel beds can be taken as further evidence that the present policy is inadequate for the recovery of important habitats.

This conclusion is strengthened by a recent ruling of an administrative judge of the Dutch judicial division of the Council of State. The permits for cockle suction dredging in the Dutch Waddensee issued by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries were considered inappropriate and a catch limitation and additional closed areas were imposed.

For further details contact: Tom van der Have, BirdLife/Vogelbescherming Nederland, PO Box 925, 3700 AX Zeist, The Netherlands, tel +31 30 6937700; fax +31 30 6918844; email vogelnl@wirehub.nl

Opportunities for fisheries

PROPOSALS FOR NEW STRUCTURAL MEASURE

In March 1998 the Commission put forward a package of proposals as part of the *Agenda 2000* process. This included a proposed 'framework' Regulation on structural measures for the fisheries sector, setting out the key tasks for future fisheries development funds.

The proposed Regulation draws on funding from the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) and the European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) – Guarantee Section, with some ECU 950 million earmarked from the latter. This would be subject to different administrative procedures than FIFG funding.

Under the proposed regulation most structural measures, including PESCA type measures, could continue to be funded as at present, although funding from FIFG would be limited to *coastal* areas of Objective 1 and 2 regions. EAGGF funds would however be made potentially available 'horizontally' to the whole fish-

eries sector, despite the more targeted, regionalised approach being promoted under the Structural Funds.

The proposal was discussed in the fisheries Council in October, though final agreement is to be left to the General Affairs Council. A European Parliament Fisheries Committee report (A4-0406/98, Mr Arias Cañete) was also discussed by the Parliament in November. The report is critical of the proposal. Among its numerous proposed amendments is a call for the key tasks of future structural measures to be extended to 'sustainable development of the fisheries sector, including social and environmental considerations'. The report was sent back to Committee to be amended.

A second more detailed proposal on the use of FIFG/EAGGF is to be adopted by the Commission in December. Substantive discussion on this will be left to the fisheries Council, though progress cannot be expected until March 1999, under the German Presidency.



Environmental Appraisal of FIFG and PESCA

A recent IEEP/WWF report highlights the use of the EC's ECU 2.8 billion fisheries development programme. The report aims to influence ongoing discussions on *Agenda 2000*, and particularly future structural measures for the fisheries sector. Among its key recommendations is a call for a strategic shift away from damaging fisheries subsidies, and in favour of

support for sustainable fishing methods and traditional activities of the small-scale sector.

The report was written by IEEP and partners, and focuses on the money which is distributed under the Structural Funds, and particularly the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG). This provides part-funding for investment in new fishing vessels, fishing technologies and port facilities, as well as encouraging further expansion of the fish farming industry. Though considerable funds are directed at removing excess capacity from the European fleet, overall the sector is exerting increasing pressures on many commercial fish stocks and the wider marine environment.

A number of specific options are presented for reversing damaging policies. In particular, the report recommends that a dedicated measure is introduced to reward 'environmentally sensitive fishing', for example by offering incentives for environmental resource management and nature conservation activities.

For further details contact: Julie Cator, WWF, tel +32 2 743 8807; jcator@wwfnet.org or Clare Coffey, IEEP London, tel +44 171 2244; ccoffey@ieeplondon.org.uk

IEEP London is an independent body for the analysis and advancement of environmental policies in Europe. While a major focus of work is on the development, implementation and evaluation of the EC's environmental policy, IEEP London has also been at the forefront of research and policy development in relation to the integration of environmental considerations into other policy sectors.

This Newsletter is part of IEEP's work programme on Policy Measures for the Sustainable Management of Fisheries which aims to identify, develop and build a consensus around alternative approaches, with a view to influencing the review of the Common Fisheries Policy in 2002.

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