

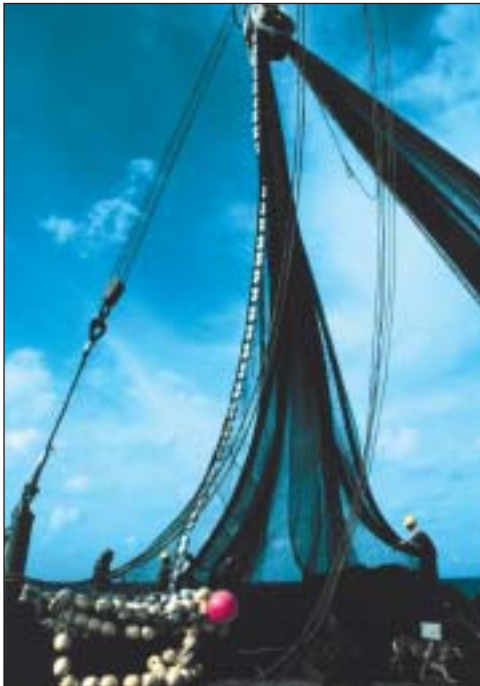
El Anzuelo

EUROPEAN NEWSLETTER ON FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT



VOL 13 • 2004 • ISSN 1464-6749

REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCILS: OPPORTUNITIES NOT TO BE MISSED



Cont. NOAA fisheries

Although decision making power will be held by the EU institutions, RACs should provide a better mechanism for industry and other stakeholders to feed into the decision making process.

David Symes
Guest Editorial

If all goes according to plan under the Irish presidency, the path should finally be cleared for implementing what is possibly the most important single development in European fisheries policy for two decades. First mooted in the mid-90s and adopted as a key feature of the Commission's road map for reform of the CFP in 2002, the establishment of Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) is expected to be approved later this spring and at least one RAC – for the North Sea – in place by the end of the year.

To the dismay of some in the fishing industry, but unsurprising in view of the initial opposition voiced by other Commissioners, RACs will remain purely advisory at least for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, much is expected of them. Their supporters look to RACs to provide an entry for the industry to play a more substantial role in decision making; a forum in which fishermen and scientists can work out their differences over stock assessments; a mechanism for more regionally sensitive management; and the means by which

the ecosystem based approach, now espoused by the CFP, can be implemented.

Critics, however, are sceptical of the RACs' ability to make any real impact on the centralised decision making model adopted by Brussels or to improve the quality of decision making. Doubts are raised over the efficacy of proposed structures: whether five regional councils can adequately reflect the diversity of ecological conditions across Europe; and whether the ceilings on council membership will allow full expression of stakeholder views. The two tier structure of a large general assembly and much smaller council may help to widen participation. But as Euan Dunn (p5) reminds us, the problem faced by NGOs is not lack of opportunity but having to spread scarce human resources too thinly. More crucial, perhaps, is whether limited funding arrangements will permit RACs to fulfil their potential even in an advisory capacity.

Yet the biggest challenge comes not from structural constraints but from the untried chemistry of stakeholder cooperation on an international scale, which seeks to offer well reasoned advice on controversial management proposals at a time of deep crisis for some sectors of the industry. There are few models to which we can turn for guidance. Even the long standing Regional Management Councils in the United States avoided creating the potentially dangerous mix of fishing and environmental interests. Much has still to be done to prepare for the smooth working of the RACs and to develop a *modus operandi* for melding the undoubted strengths of commercial and recreational fishing interests, marine environmental conservation and more broadly constructed consumer interests into a single, authoritative advisory body. It is doubtful whether the NGOs and conservation agencies across Europe are yet fully prepared to confront the challenge.

RACs will involve a huge learning process. Progress will be slow; in the early years it is likely that environmental issues per se will assume a fairly low priority. The success of RACs will be crucial to developing sustainable fisheries in Europe and the effective integration of environmental protection within mainstream fisheries management. It will require the full commitment of all concerned to ensure that RACs establish their credentials for sound advice, thus paving the way for more direct involvement in European fisheries management in the years to come.

INSIDE

2-3

CFP Update

4-6

Focus on Governance

7-12

European Scene

Edited by James Brown of IEEP London
Translations by Vanesa Castán Broto and
Joanna Cairns

The Institute for European Environmental
Policy wishes to acknowledge the financial
support of JNCC and the Esmée Fairbairn
Foundation.

Contributions from Alexandre de
Lichtervelde (Belgian Federal Department of
the Environment); Serge Collet (Université
de Hambourg); Euan Dunn (RSPB); Michael
Earle (Green Group, European Parliament);
Sarah Fairbrother (Soil Association); Graham
Fletcher (East Lincolnshire Seafoods);
Giorgos Payiatas; Andrew Rosenberg
(University of New Hampshire); Concepción
Sánchez Trujillano (Spanish Ministry of
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food); David
Symes (Hull University); and James Brown,
Niki Sporrang, and Saskia Richartz (IEEP).



Views expressed within this Newsletter do
not necessarily reflect those of the editor,
supporting organisations or the publisher.

Issue 14 of this Newsletter will be produced in Autumn 2004. If you have material to send or comments, please contact the editor: James Brown, Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), 28 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9AB, UK. Tel +44 (0)20 7340 2688; Fax +44 (0)20 7799 2600; email jbrown@ieeplondon.org.uk



The paper for this document has
been made from wood fibre
from a sustainable forest

Is the new CFP framework delivering?

James Brown
IEEP London

It is still rather early to expect the new Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) to have an impact on stock recovery and the wider environment. However, steps have been taken in establishing legislation to implement the new CFP. The quality of the resulting

legislation, and the nature of discussions leading up to it, tells us something about the Commission, Council and Parliament's real commitment to the new more environmentally sensitive CFP.

● EU Enlargement



EU Member States (yellow), accession (blue) and candidate countries (purple). © European Community, 2004.

Ten new countries are joining the EU on 1 May 2004: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia. All the countries have fishing and aquaculture industries, including the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia who do not have coastlines. Their total catches however are less than seven per cent of the EU total (527,298 tonnes in 1999).

All ten new Member States are required to adapt their legislation to meet EU standards and to set up the necessary administrative systems for implementing the CFP. Some of the most challenging issues for the ten countries relate to limited human and financial resources and the need to strengthen fisheries surveillance and inspection.

The implications of enlargement for the CFP itself have been limited, at least compared to agriculture. A number of temporary derogations have been secured by the countries, notably restrictions on access to Latvian and Maltese waters. On the whole, however, all ten countries will be fully integrated into the CFP upon accession.

In addition to these ten 'acceding countries', there are currently three other 'candidate' countries: Bulgaria and Romania are in negotiations to join the EU by 2007, while Turkey is still preparing to start negotiating its membership. There are also increasing accession discussions with western Balkan states, in particular Croatia and Macedonia.

For more information visit <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement> and http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/faq/external_en.htm

Absence of capacity reduction?

The proposed cod recovery plan was a key test of the Council's political commitment to sustainable fisheries. Following many months of negotiations, and several Council discussions, Ministers finally agreed the cod recovery plan at the December 2003 Council meeting. While it is to be expected that the Council will modify Commission proposals, the changes made to the cod recovery plan significantly weakened it and the final plan potentially sets a bad precedent for future plans. One important amendment is that the Council will retain its role in deciding on Total Allowable Catches (TACs) each year, rather than letting the Commission set TACs on the basis of an agreed formula. Furthermore, the rules under which the Council is to set TACs are weak (see Box 1) and how binding they will be on the Council remains to be seen. One can certainly expect the annual horse-trading to continue, even if somewhat restrained by the new rules.

The proposed kilowatt-day system of effort control was also dropped in favour of a simpler days-at-sea approach. This is in addition to the complete absence of any capacity reduction mechanism in either the originally proposed and finally agreed plan, apart from increased vessel decommissioning co-financing rates available to those hit hard by the plan. This is critical, given that recovery plans were touted as the EU's main mechanism to address the significant fleet capacity problem.

Progress in establishing a comprehensive system of recovery and management plans – covering all EU stocks – has also been limited. A northern hake recovery plan has been agreed politically by the Council, but a European Parliament opinion is awaited before a final decision is made. A recovery plan was proposed in December for sole stocks in the Western Channel and the Bay of Biscay and also a recovery plan jointly for Southern hake and Norway lobster (nephrop) stocks in the Cantabrian Sea and Western Iberian peninsula. Both are being amended by the Commission, to bring the effort management systems in line with the cod plan.

Strengthening enforcement

Although improvements could be made in terms of EU fisheries legislation, significant progress could also be secured by proper implementation and enforcement of the existing legal framework. The Commission and

Member States are continuing work on this front, with Commissioner Fischler announcing a new joint inspection structure (JIS), which is to be based in the Spanish port town of Vigo. Fleet monitoring rules have also been tightened through the adoption of a new Commission Regulation on the Community fishing fleet register (Regulation 26/2004).

Such improvements are justified by a recent Commission assessment of Member State enforcement systems (December 2003, COM(2003)782). In the report, the Commission expressed concern over both the lack of enforcement and the quality of data reported by Member States. Particular shortcomings highlighted included the lack of gear and catch confiscation, lack of fishing licence withdrawal, and over reliance on vague verbal and written warnings.

Progress on the wider environment

There have been significant developments on the wider environmental front, building on the 2002 CFP framework. Agreement was reached on a new cetacean bycatch Regulation (see Box 2) and on a bottom-trawl ban covering the Darwin Mounds deep-water coral areas east of Scotland. A Commission emergency measure banning trawling in the Darwin Mounds area (see El Anzuelo Volume 12) until February 2004, was extended by a further six months to August 2004. A permanent measure, adopted by the Council in March, will then apply from August onwards. Hopefully this will be followed by Council agreement on a proposed trawling ban around the Azores and Madeira that is before the Council (COM(2004)58 final).

The relatively quick adoption of the cetacean and Darwin Mounds Regulations was made possible by the efforts of the Irish Presidency. The Presidency has also been promoting the development and uptake of

environmentally friendly fishing gear, organising a conference on this issue in March. The subject is to be on the agenda of the Fisheries Council, and is then to be the subject of a Commission Action Plan. There are important links also to a forthcoming DG Fish conference in June, where the Commission will be discussing EU funding under the next budgetary period (2007-2013).

With bycatch, discarding and gear impacts being a significant problem in the EU, a real and concerted effort to improve gear selectivity and sensitivity is long overdue. Even in the absence of more stringent EU standards, there is much that can be done to introduce gear and methods that make better use of resources. The issue ties in with ongoing discussions to make the EU more competitive, including by promoting the use of environmental technology, which is likely also to be a priority of the Dutch Presidency in the second half of 2004.

However, unless they are drastic such as permitting only one haul per fishing trip, technical measures are not a substitute for capacity reductions or, at the very least, effort controls. They should not detract from efforts on this front.

And towards a new EU political landscape ...

Both a new Parliament and Commission will be in place at the end of this year as they come to the end of their terms in July and October, respectively. Discussions on a draft European constitution process have meanwhile been revitalised, and are due to conclude in June 2004. One of the main implications, in terms of fisheries policy, is that the European Parliament would likely be given greater powers in agreeing legislation. While this would make the policy making process more democratic, it does raise concerns over the future prospects for 'greening' the CFP with the environmental performance of the Parliament's Fisheries Committee less than ideal (see Michael Earle's article p6).

By the autumn the political landscape will be clearer. The next edition of El Anzuelo will take the opportunity to look back at the achievements of the fisheries Commissioner, Dr Franz Fischler, and forward at the challenges and priorities of the new fisheries Commissioner and Parliamentary Committee.

● Cod recovery plan – the details

The purpose of the cod recovery plan (Council Regulation 423/2004) is to increase levels of mature fish above agreed targets within five to ten years by using TACs together with effort limitation. TACs will be set based on fishing mortality rate ceilings rather than stock levels, as was originally proposed. The cod stocks covered are those of the Kattegat, North Sea, Skagerrak and eastern Channel, West of Scotland and the Irish Sea. Where stock levels are at or above a defined minimum level, annual TACs are to be set by the Council subject to a set of constraining rules:

- TACs will be set so that they result in at least a 30 per cent increase in stock size;
- this first rule shall not result in TACs being 15 per cent less or greater than that of the preceding year (except during the December 2004 TAC decisions); and
- applying in all cases, and overriding these two rules, TACs

shall not result in mortality rates exceeding set values.

These TAC rules shall still be applied if stocks fall below the minimum levels and it is expected that they would result in stocks increasing back above the minimum levels. Where this is not expected to happen, the Council is to decide on a TAC that would be lower than under the application of these rules. Despite these convoluted rules, there is no provision for a zero TAC, even where stocks may be persistently below the minimum levels.

The accompanying effort limitation systems and technical measures are detailed in the main 'TAC Regulation' (Regulation 2287/2003). These include the North Sea 'cod protection area' and related permit system for the closely related haddock fishery which sets conditions such as a five per cent cod bycatch limit and a transshipment prohibition.

● Cetacean bycatch measures

A Regulation on cetacean bycatch measures was adopted by the Council in March. The final version followed the same form as that originally proposed in July 2003 although there were a number of significant amendments. Driftnets will be banned in the Baltic as of 1 January 2008 (rather than 2007). This will follow a stepped reduction in effort over the preceding years. Compulsory 'pingers' will be phased in, with deadlines depending on the area.

Under 12 meter vessels will be exempt from requirements to use pingers. Vessels using pingers will not require onboard observers and all under 15 metre vessels be exempt from the observer scheme.

Despite these changes, some consolation can be taken in the fact that the Regulation was adopted in just eight months. This compares to the 50 months it took to adopt a EU driftnet ban, finally adopted in June 1998 and only applying fully in January 2002.

To regionalise or centralise: experiences from the USA



NOAA fisheries

Nature conservation has proved to be one of the major sticking points in RFMCs.

Dr Andrew Rosenberg provides an insight into regional fisheries management based on 10 years' experience in government working with the American equivalent of RACs.

In the United States, a regional approach to fisheries management was adopted with the 1976 Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Since then, eight Regional Fishery Management Councils (RFMCs) have been operating around the country. Their remit is to develop fishery management plans for implementation by the government, and to subsequently monitor and suggest modifications to these plans.

The record of the regional fishery management in the USA is decidedly mixed. In some regions, such as Alaska, there have been major battles over quota allocations between different user groups and over the need to conserve wildlife, such as marine mammals and sea birds, but the Council has successfully adhered to scientific advice. Overall, the target species in the fishery are not overexploited and the fishery remains stable and immensely profitable.

In New England, there was a long-term struggle with persistent overfishing, very similar to the current situation in the North Sea. For many years, the New England Council considered fending off regulation to be its primary aim, and it was unable to develop a plan to address the overfishing. Consequently, a recovery plan was not put into place until the mid-90s. This is because the Councils are generally dominated by fishing interests, not public interest representatives, with the increased role of environmental groups really only beginning in the 1990s.

The relationship between the Councils and government has proved critical to management success.

It is politically difficult, if not impossible, for the government to implement a management plan without or at odds with a Council recommendation. In addition, while the government has authority to approve, reject or partially reject a Council plan, it could not change it. If a plan is rejected, there is essentially no change in management. Government therefore found itself in a 'take it or leave it' position, and Councils have, at times, been able to delay management changes quite effectively. This was particularly true in the early years of implementation but is still all too often the case. However, the law was strengthened, particularly in 1996, and legal action has sometimes been forced against the resisting political pressure from industry.

Despite these problems, I am of the view that fishery management plans must be developed and implemented on a regional basis. Given the regional differences, it is not feasible to develop a national plan for all fisheries. However, there should be clear national standards for the regional plans, as well as a national policy to adhere to. The stronger those standards and policies are, the better implementation of regional management plans will work. I stress that it is regional *implementation*, ie measures used to achieve national objectives, that should be developed, not regional *policy*. Furthermore, it is essential to have a backstop to inaction at the regional level (or nationally for that matter) in the form of a default strategy that is implemented if a plan to conserve the resource is not developed in a timely way. Such a default could be preventing the fishery from

'Regional implementation should be developed, not regional policy'

continuing to operate without an adequate plan or a very conservative formulaic plan that could be a placeholder for a more comprehensive proposal.

The important thing is that the default cannot be optional and should be protected against political interference.

There are a number of other lessons that Europe can learn from the USA experiences. Conservation limits should be set by scientists independent of the Councils, rather than be subject to political discussions. The Councils' role would then primarily focus on strategies to stay within these limits, as well as quota allocations between different user groups, with government having power to decide if there is no agreement. The rules of the game need to be clear in order for regional management to work. There must be an incentive for Councils to come to a timely conclusion of debate and implement real management measures. To not have a clear fall back procedure nor a deadline for agreement is to court disaster.

Dr Andrew Rosenberg can be contacted at: University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824, USA; email andy.rosenberg@unh.edu; Tel +1 (0)603 862 1450

Green in the shadow North Sea regional advisory council

On behalf of BirdLife International, WWF and Seas At Risk, Euan Dunn (RSPB-UK) provides an NGO perspective on establishing a North Sea RAC and some of the challenges that lie ahead.

Environmental NGOs (e-NGOs) have joined a Working Group to develop a North Sea RAC, the so-called 'North Sea shadow RAC', set up by the North Sea Commission Fisheries Partnership (NSCFP). The NSCFP was founded five years ago to promote co-operation between scientists and fishers in monitoring and managing North Sea fisheries.

The NSCFP was not open to environmental interests until recently when the Commission's proposal for establishing RACs forced the issue. The environmental NGOs invited aboard the Working Group were BirdLife International, Seas at Risk and WWF. First they were invited to endorse and help shape the Partnership's Interreg IIIB proposal to fund the RAC's development.

Then followed the first meeting of the Working Group in November last year. The current Group by no means reflects the full breadth or balance of stakeholders in a properly constituted RAC (the sooner it broadens the better) but it does begin to bring together key constituencies and simulate consensus-seeking conditions.

Held in advance of the December Fisheries Council in hopes of influencing its outcome, the NSCFP chose a hot topic for the first stakeholder meeting – namely possibilities for decoupling management of cod and plaice from other stocks in the mixed fishery. The debate between stakeholders was highly interactive, more so than the e-NGOs had experienced in the ACFA, and strenuous efforts were made to reach a genuine consensus rather than to have an industry-led outcome with dissenting or abstaining voices. The NGOs were particularly keen to

ensure that any potential decoupling of haddock- from cod-fishing areas was underpinned by a high level of observer coverage to validate negligible cod by-catch. Debate apart, the stakeholders had ample opportunity to get to know one another, and develop the mutual respect and trust needed for a full RAC to succeed.

Many issues remain to be addressed, however. The sense of industry domination is real and the Commission's proposal to have a RAC executive committee of only 12 to 18 members, two-thirds comprising the fisheries sector, puts an excessive squeeze on wider representation. On the other hand, like many other stakeholders, the e-NGOs are suffering from 'audit fatigue' in the brave new world of transparency, and have concerns about their capacity and resources to service not just the North Sea RAC but all the other RACs in the pipeline. So e-NGOs are cautious about

pushing for access they cannot deliver and are responding by pooling their forces and positions as much as possible. But they will still have to resolve – as they had to for ACFA – representation on some future executive committee. The e-NGOs' ultimate challenge, however, will be to get RACs to give due priority to implementing the ecosystem approach mandated by the reformed CFP. The sector will want to marginalize this in favour of why they wanted RACs in the first place - putting a firm industry hand on the tiller of managing and assessing fisheries. RACs will founder if they cannot resolve this dynamic tension and instead resort to business as usual.

For further information contact: Euan Dunn, Head of Marine Policy, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, SG19 2DL, UK, email: euan.dunn@rspb.org.uk; Charlotte Mogensen, Fisheries Policy Officer, WWF European Policy Office email: cmogensen@wwfepo.org; Dr Christien Absil, Fisheries Policy Officer, North Sea Foundation/Seas At Risk, email: c.absil@noordzee.nl.

RACs – A step towards Mediterranean wide management?

In addition to the 'new CFP', the context of Mediterranean fisheries management continues to evolve. Concepción Sánchez Trujillano of the Spanish Fisheries Ministry describes some of the challenges that new legislation, EU enlargement and working with non-EU Member States poses in developing a Mediterranean RAC.

The Mediterranean Sea is a classic example of the need for regional fisheries management. It presents differences to the rest of Europe in many respects, including environmentally, socially, politically and technically. It is also a diverse region within itself. The development of a Mediterranean Regional Advisory Council (RAC), advising the Commission and Member States, is therefore widely welcomed by stakeholders in the region.

While the case for a RAC in the Mediterranean may be similar to that for other areas in the EU there are a

number of specific challenges that a Mediterranean RAC will have to address. The semi-enclosed nature of the Mediterranean presents a case similar to the Baltic Sea, where a high proportion of fishery resources are shared between several countries. Like the Baltic, EU enlargement in May 2004 will also see an increase in the number of Mediterranean Member States with Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia joining the EU. A RAC will be an ideal forum in which to bring all Member States into the consultation process.

A multilateral approach is particularly important for the whole of the region given that the Mediterranean will continue to have a large number of non EU countries with interests in the region. This is reflected in the November 2003 ICCAT decision prohibiting the use of drift nets in the entire Mediterranean and in the November 2003 Inter-ministerial Conference in Venice, where the necessity of all the Mediterranean countries working



WWF Mediterranean/Paolo Guglielmi

The Mediterranean RAC will bring together stakeholders from the EU and accession countries, who will be new to CFP processes.

together in cooperative management was highlighted.

While a new basic CFP Regulation was adopted in 2002 (Regulation 2371/2002), further legislation continues to be developed for the Mediterranean. A new Regulation for the sustainable exploitation of Mediterranean Sea fishery resources (COM(2003)589) is under discussion to replace existing technical provisions (Regulation 1626/94). A Mediterranean RAC would play a key role in implementing this new Regulation, including the submission of Community

organisations in the development of the new legislative framework. A RAC will provide the perfect forum through which to do this on a more long-term basis and ensure successful implementation and ongoing evaluation and analysis of policy in the region.

Mrs Concepción Sánchez Trujillano, Subdirectora General de Caladero Nacional y Aguas Comunitarias, General Directorate of Fishery Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Madrid, Spain. Tel: +34 91 3476044 email: csancheztrujillano@mapya.es

management plans and consultation on national management plans.

At present there are a significant number of derogations to the existing technical provisions in the Mediterranean. Over time these have grown in number, being adopted on the basis of the need to account for regional differences in fishing practices. A RAC should revisit these derogations with a view to modifying them where they undermine sustainable fisheries management.

The success of RACs will depend on the active participation of stakeholders and constructive dialogue. At this time of great change and potential in the Mediterranean, it is important for the fisheries sector to organise itself and engage with all fisheries stakeholders, including scientists, national administrations, NGOs and other representative

STOP PRESS • STOP PRESS • STOP PRESS • STOP PRESS

STOP PRESS!!

Michael Earle
Fisheries Advisor, Green Group
in the European Parliament

On 1 April, the European Parliament adopted the Ó Neachtain report on Regional Advisory Councils (RACs). While broadly supporting the approach taken by the Commission, Parliament nevertheless adopted certain amendments that could act in a way contrary to the principles of transparency, broad participation and public debate.

The Commission had proposed that RACs be composed of representatives

of the fisheries sector (two thirds of the seats) and other interest groups, such as environmental organizations, consumers and recreational fishermen (one third of the seats). However, Parliament has adopted a Socialist amendment to the effect that only the industry representatives be members, with all others relegated to the status of observers. Rather confusedly, another amendment said that the industry should be allocated 'at least' two thirds of the seats, with one third for other interest groups, but

the clear intention of the Parliament is to minimize the input of interests other than the fishing industry.

Another amendment dealt with the form of the recommendations and suggestions that the RACs adopt. While the Commission specifically proposed that dissenting views be recorded, Parliament wants all recommendations to be taken by consensus, leaving no scope for minority opinions. This amendment was also originally proposed by the Socialists.

Finally, the Commission wants all meetings to be

open to the public, but a Liberal amendment introduced the possibility of them being closed 'in exceptional circumstances'.

While the Parliament's opinion on RACs is, as always, merely advisory, this result will give those Member States who so choose a good political excuse to minimise the participation of non-industry interests on the RACs, while claiming to reflect the wishes of the democratic Parliament.

For further details contact Michael Earle, Fisheries Advisor, Green Group in the European Parliament, LEO 6C99, Rue Wiertz, 1047 Brussels, Belgium Tel:+32 (2) 2842849 email

STOP PRESS • STOP PRESS • STOP PRESS • STOP PRESS

Cyprus: an accession country leading the way in environmental management

Come 1 May, the Republic of Cyprus will be the most south-eastern EU Member State. How will the CFP affect countries in this region and how will acceding countries such as Cyprus work within the CFP? Will environmental management even be a concern in these countries? Giorgos Payiatis provides an insight into how Cyprus is approaching these issues regarding its inshore fisheries.

The Cypriot fishing fleet is typical of the Mediterranean countries, dominated by small coastal vessels. With 680 of the 702 (97 per cent) licensed vessels fishing in inshore waters, Cyprus has a very real interest in managing its fleet and resources in a sustainable manner. From Cyprus' perspective, the CFP brings some significant benefits to its fisheries sector, such as funding and frameworks for resource management and stakeholder involvement.

In addition to the €3,419,000 grant from the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIG), it is expected that a participatory approach will be applied in decision making, while various stakeholders will benefit from capacity building programmes. At the same time, reduction in fishing effort is expected to result in a more competitive and sustainable fishing industry capable of supplying consumers with high quality products according to EU standards.

In the two years running up to accession, negotiations on harmonising the National Fisheries Programme (NFP) with the CFP have been completed and the details of the 2004-2006 FIG have been agreed. The NFP was approved and initiated on 1 January 2004 and, despite the lack of experience of



Mediterranean fleets are characterised by small scale vessels.

Giorgos Payiatis

such negotiations, the outcome was positive for Cyprus. The programme includes seven key areas that are to be supported by the FIG funding:

1. scrapping;
2. transfer to a third country/reassignment;
3. modernisation of existing vessels;
4. aquaculture;
5. fishing port facilities;
6. processing and marketing; and
7. technical assistance.

What is particularly noteworthy is that the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research took the forward looking and bold decision to withdraw the licences of eight bottom trawlers operating within Cypriot territorial waters. This decision was made in light of long-term research indicating that trawling has resulted in significant catch reductions.

Given that the CFP is often perceived negatively and blamed for the degradation of marine ecosystems, it is interesting to compare the Cypriot case with Greece, an EU Member State since 1981. Its inshore fisheries sector is equally important, with 91 per cent of the fleet

engaged in coastal fisheries. Nonetheless, Greece appears to have still not grasped the nettle of sustainable inshore fisheries management nor taken a long-term perspective on CFP application. There are still important conflicts between the various stakeholders over the allocation of resources, transparency, participation in decision making and environmental considerations. An indicator of this is the fact that in the current FIG for Greece, some 30 per cent of the programme is allocated to aquaculture development, 0.5 per cent to fisheries resources protection, and less than 10 per cent to coastal fisheries.

Reductions in commercial fish stocks have been recorded by Mediterranean countries for many years. Together with other countries, Greece has yet to apply any radical and effective measures to protect their demersal fish stocks and coastal fisheries. An example of this is the negotiated exemption from the EU requirement on the withdrawal of beach seines by 1 January 2003, despite strong opposition by the coastal fishermen's

organisations.

While governments may make such derogations for social and political reasons, it is radical rather than incoherent measures that are needed in order to achieve an effective Mediterranean fisheries regime. While also true in the northeast Atlantic fisheries, this is particularly important in the Mediterranean with its mixed fisheries, economies and demographic structures and multiple landing points spread over thousands of kilometres of coastline.

For Cyprus, reducing the environmental footprint of fisheries remains one of the biggest challenges for the Government. However, the expected benefits from the withdrawal of trawlers, if finally applied, should be a prime example of good practice for other Mediterranean countries, and hopefully a point of inspiration for similar management measures elsewhere.

Mr Giorgos Payiatis is a Cypriot independent fisheries consultant currently working on the FIG programme in Cyprus and Greece. For more information on this or fisheries management in the Mediterranean region more generally, contact Tel: +30 (0)210 6466328; email giorgospayiatis@yahoo.gr

Who represents environmental interests in the CFP?



The Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA) was established by the European Commission to engage stakeholders in the development and implementation of the CFP. ACFA is composed of 20 representatives from European level stakeholder groups. Members are appointed by the Commission and include representatives of the production sector, the processing industry, trade in fishery and aquaculture products, consumers, the environment and development.

Here we talk to the environment representative, Mrs Anna Rosa Martínez Prat, about her role on the Committee:

Ed: Firstly, can you briefly tell me how ACFA works, including in relation to the Working Groups?

ARMP: There are four Working Groups, each with their own technical areas that they cover. These groups meet and advise the Commission on various issues, including development of proposals. It is in these groups that most of the detailed debates and analysis is done. The outcome of these meetings are prepared and presented to the plenary ACFA by the Commission. ACFA representatives then have the opportunity to react to issues raised. It is also an important opportunity to pose questions to Commission officials and it is where ACFA decisions may be adopted. An example is the recent adoption of the European Code of Sustainable and Responsible Fisheries Practices.

Ed: For what term are you an ACFA member?

ARMP: The appointment is a 3 year term and began at the end of 2002. It is possible for me to be re-elected for another term.

Ed: Which organisation do you represent and what are its aims?

ARMP: I currently work independently so do not represent any organisation. When on ACFA, my role is to

represent all environmental interests rather than one opinion

Ed: What is your background and interests in fisheries?

ARMP: I am a marine biologist and before working independently, I worked for Genetic Resources Action International, GRAIN, on agriculture and biodiversity issues. During this time, together with Sergi Tudela, I wrote a book, *Fish, Fleets and Markets*, examining the environmental and social effects of EU fishing policies on the South. This built on my previous position with Greenpeace Spain, where I led on the monitoring and analysis of distant water fleet policies. I am currently an Associate Member of ICSF and a Member of the recently formed Mediterranean Fisheries Watch. My interests and experience therefore cover development and social issues as well as the environment.

Ed: What are your main environmental concerns in European fisheries?

ARMP: One of the most important issues I consider currently facing European fisheries management as a whole, is the need for a shift in management to working at an ecosystem level – with a view

to regenerate ecosystems. In the case of the North East Atlantic, the state of the cod and hake stocks has to be one of my main concerns. In the Mediterranean, the widespread use of non-selective gear is troubling, together with the management of the tuna fisheries and the practice of "tuna fattening". My concerns do not end in European waters, however, and I follow the new EU fisheries partnership agreements policy closely.

Ed: How do you ensure that you represent the varied views of different environmental organisations on ACFA?

ARMP: Before I attend an ACFA meeting, I read all the ACFA Working Group meeting minutes and papers. On top of this, there is an environment and development NGO coordination meeting in Brussels before the ACFA meeting so that opinions and positions can be developed and shared. Then, of course, I raise the points of existing NGO common positions.

Ed: Thank you for your time.

Mrs Anna Rosa Martínez Prat can be contacted at Nàpols 153, 3er 1a 08013, Barcelona, Catalunya, Spain
Tel: + 34 (0)93 232 05 08 Email: annarosam@yahoo.com
http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/faq/c ommittee_en.htm

Ecosystem management challenges

Several recent scientific studies involving cod stocks in the North Sea point to the complexities of ecosystem-based management. It is clear that new challenges await fisheries managers, who will increasingly need to consider the effects of climate change and pollution, as well as of fishing activities, when choosing paths to stock recovery.

It is widely argued, by industry in particular, that climate change has a significant effect on fish stocks. An article in *Nature* last year suggests that since the mid-1980s, a rising North Sea temperature has

modified plankton communities, with reduced survival of young cod as a result. Another recent study published in *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* argues that fishing-induced changes in population structure can affect mating systems to the extent that stock recovery is impeded. In the future, factors such as these will need to be included in stock recovery plans and population assessments to a greater extent.

An often-heralded solution is to make fishing gear more selective or to reduce fishing effort, or both. This will reduce fishing mortality and the

removal of both undersized and larger, more fecund individuals. An article in *Nature*, however, argues that such management measures could pose serious threats to some internationally important seabird populations that currently depend on discards. The reduction of discards would have a direct impact on food availability. As discards decline, top predators such as great skuas will shift to increasingly eating other birds. While it is recognised that maintaining current discard rates for the sake of seabirds would be perverse, sudden policy changes such as the

recent virtual closure of the North Sea cod fisheries can be expected to have some negative impacts on the wider marine ecosystem.

Grégory Beaugrand *et al.* Plankton effect on cod recruitment in the North Sea, *Nature*, 426, 661 – 664, 11 December 2003. Contact: gbea@mail.pml.ac.uk; Sherrylynn Rowe & Jeffrey Hutchings, Mating systems and the conservation of commercially exploited marine fish, *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, 18 (11), 567-572, November 2003. Contact: sr@ganymede.cs.mun.ca; Stephen Votier *et al.* Changes in fisheries discard rates and seabird communities, *Nature*, 427, 727 – 730, 19 February 2004. Contact: s.votier@bio.gla.ac.uk.

IUU fishing stretches CCAMLR



The month-long pursuit of the *Viarsa I* pirate ship in the Southern Ocean stretched over 3900 miles in August 2003

Australian Customs Service and Coalition of Legal Toothfish Operators

on an annual basis. During the 22nd meeting of the Commission, held in Australia in October/November 2003, combating Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing (IUU) was a key agenda point. Developing a list of IUU vessels was discussed: something that remains difficult to establish under the unanimity voting system. A centralised Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) using satellite technology was also considered together with an onboard observer programme and catch documentation scheme, monitoring both landings and trade. Again, the consensus requirement prevented the adoption of a binding system for VMS so it will be used on a voluntary basis only. These measures would help manage stocks as well as strengthen enforcement. In order to strategically coordinate these and other measures, a Plan of Action was discussed.

IUU fishing does not affect CCAMLR alone, now being a significant global problem. This is highlighted by the reaffirmed commitment to the implementation of FAO's International Plan of Action to prevent, deter and eliminate IUU fishing (IPOA-IUU) at the December FAO governing conference. A five-nation Ministerial Task Force to combat the poaching of fish stocks by pirate fishers was also announced at a Deep Sea conference in New Zealand in December.



Alexandre de Lichtervelde, expert at the Belgian Federal Department of the Environment, section International Affairs, writes on the need to strengthen CCAMLR and its management tools in the face of Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported fishing.

Imagine a marine area covering ten per cent of our oceans and containing vast stocks of valuable fish and krill. Think about the challenges raised by the fight against illegal fishing for these resources when they are in some of the most hostile waters on the planet.

Since 1982, management of the rich fauna and flora of the Antarctic has been through the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). This important body, which is part of the Antarctic Treaty System, adopts management and conservation measures for krill and fish stocks, including the famous toothfish (*Dissostichus* spp.). Cetaceans and seals are dealt with by other international conventions.

The 24 CCAMLR members, among which are Belgium, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the European Commission, convene

'IUU fishing does not affect CCAMLR alone, now being a significant global problem'

In terms of the Antarctic fisheries, there is a pressing need to further strengthen the governance of CCAMLR in addition to the apparently impressive battery of instruments being discussed. Qualified majority voting should be considered, together with increased cooperation with other elements of the Antarctic Treaty System, including the Committee for Environmental Protection, and international conventions such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. A special meeting of CCAMLR in April 2005 will hopefully reflect on most of these issues.

For further information, contact: Mr Alexandre de Lichtervelde, Expert, Belgian Federal Department of the Environment, International Affairs - Montagne de l'Oratoire 20, box 3, B-1010 Brussels. Tel: +32 (0)2 210 4543 E-mail: alexandre.delichtervelde@health.fgov.be Alternatively visit www.ccamlr.org or www.colto.org. Deep Sea Conference homepage: <http://www.deepsea.govt.nz/> and IPOA-IUU Implementation Progress Report available at <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/007/j0403e.htm>

EU funds boost Baltic Sea research

At the dawn of EU enlargement, Europe's largest internal water basin, the Baltic Sea, has been granted EU support to boost joint thinking and cooperation in environmental matters over the next four years.

Ten research organisations from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden will benefit from the research programme. It

is aimed at improving the co-ordination and strategic planning in research areas such as pollution, regional development, protection of natural resources and marine science. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) will also be a recipient.

The Baltic Sea is under threat by numerous environmental problems, not least nutrient loading, oil spills, overfishing, environmental toxins and alien species. While this has triggered some co-operation at the political and research level

through, for example, HELCOM, Baltic 21 (the Agenda 21 initiative for the Baltic Sea), and the Nordic Council, the BONUS project is the first to systematically integrate different research efforts.

EU Enlargement will bring four new Baltic coastal states into the EU, leaving Russia as the only non-EU neighbour in the region. This EU level co-operation should therefore make a significant difference for the Baltic Research Area, with Russia acting as an observer in the project.

BONUS will receive €3 million under ERA-NET, the Community's scheme for supporting long-term co-operation between national research programmes. This is administered under the EU's Sixth Research Framework Programme.

For further details contact Dr Kaisa Kononen, Academy of Finland, Finland Tel: +358 (0)9 7748 8415; email: kaisa.kononen@aka.fi http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/04/38|0|R APID&lg=EN&display= <http://www.balticsearesearch.net> <http://www.bonusportal.org>

Independent Estonian female increases her reach – but males are making a comeback

Editor, James Brown

When told this story over a drink at last years ICES Annual Science Conference in Tallinn, Estonia, I thought it could only be a joke – but it's true! The prussian carp, also known as the gibel carp (*Carassius gibelio*), can reproduce without males of its own species. Females spawn with males of other fish species, the sperm of which initiates the development of their eggs without actually fertilising them. This rare type of reproduction is known as gynogenesis.


It is known that the prussian carp spawns with the closely related common carp and crucian carp in the wild. In captivity however, they have even been recorded reproducing successfully with trout – a fish of an entirely different family. The fry that result when females spawn with males of other species in this way are 'pure' prussian and turn out to be entirely female. This strategy of reproduction

must be quite efficient because the number of prussian carp is on the rise in Estonia. They are non-native to the country, originally stocked or escaped from farms where they were introduced about 55 years ago from Russia. Prussian carp have increased their distribution across Estonian rivers and lakes, where they are almost entirely female. In the last few years however, males appear to be making a comeback as the mixed sex population in the Baltic Sea also increases. Their impact on other fish species and the wider environment is not known, although scientists are looking for answers. They are however fished commercially on a small scale, so they at least bring some benefits to the local industry.

Further information on the prussian carp in Estonia can be obtained from Mr Meelis Tambets at the Institute of Zoology and Hydrobiology, University of Tartu, Vanemuise 46, 51014 Tartu, Estonia. email: mtambets@ut.ee Tel: +372 (0)51 76886

New organisations working towards sustainable fisheries

Two new organisations that will be working with fisheries issues from an environmental perspective have recently been established in Europe.

 The international Oceana foundation, with headquarters in Washington, opened its European office in Madrid last November. It is headed by Xavier Pastor, Vice President, and Ricardo Aguilar, Director of Projects and Research. Both have dedicated much of their lives to marine conservation. Oceana is committed to protect the world's oceans and the individuals dependent on them. It is supported by a network of activists working in 150 countries. The organisation has identified fisheries as one of the main threats to the marine environment, and will be working to reverse the negative trends in destructive fishing practices, pollution, degraded ecosystems and threatened species.

 In Sweden, the non-profit Fisheries Secretariat started its work for sustainable management of the marine resources and their habitats in February. The Stockholm-based organisation is funded by the Swedish government, but set up by three environmental NGOs: the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, WWF Sweden and the Swedish Angler's Association. It is headed by Niki Sporrang (formerly with IEEP) and will work towards more sustainable fisheries through information, international cooperation and lobbying.

For further information, contact: Oceana, Plaza España, Leganitos 47, 28013 Madrid, Spain. Tel: +34 (0)911 440880; fax: +34 (0)911 440890; email: europe@oceana.org. The Fisheries Secretariat, Tel: +46 (0)8 704 4484; Fax: +46 (0)8 795 9673; email: info@fishsec.org

Standard standards for organic aquaculture



S. Fairbrother

Consumers are increasingly concerned over how their fish is produced.

Sarah Fairbrother
Soil Association Scotland

In the absence of EU organic aquaculture legislation, diverse standards for salmon and trout farming have evolved in different countries. This creates confusion for consumers and hinders trade in organic aquaculture products. The Soil Association (SA), the UK's leading organic certifying body, is seeking to remedy this through its aquaculture development programme, which it launched in May 2003. By working with other European certifiers, common organic aquaculture standards are being developed that can be applied across Europe, and so potentially form the basis of

future EU legislation.

As a relatively new industry, there are a number of challenges in aligning production methods of sea cage farmed carnivorous species more closely with organic principles. Issues include interactions between wild and farmed fish; sustainability and

potential contamination of fishmeal; and the loss of nutrients to the environment through faeces and waste. The various European organic standards also tend to differ in these areas.

In addition to reviewing organic standards for salmon, trout and cod production, the SA programme also aims to progress the development of organic standards for aquaculture species lower down the food chain. Such species include shellfish and tilapia, which have the advantage of not facing the same challenges as carnivorous species.

For more information, please contact Sarah Fairbrother at the Soil Association Scotland on + 44 (0) 131 666 1205; email sfairbrother@soilassociation.org

New standards against marine stowaways

Since *El Anzuelo* reported on the global damage invasive alien species cause (Vol 12), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has adopted a new Convention on the prevention of cross-contamination of aquatic ecosystems with invasive aquatic organisms carried in the ballast water of ships. Invasive species, including harmful pathogens, present one of the most serious threats to aquatic ecosystems and it is thought that up to 4,000 different species can hitch-hike in a ship's ballast at any one time.

The instrument, adopted in February, will require all new ships to implement a Ballast Water and Sediments Management Plan, and to carry a record book to monitor the implementation of certain management procedures. All ships will require a certificate

to operate. For existing ships phase-in periods have been granted until 2009 to 2016, depending on size, type and age of the vessel.

The Convention also requires the establishment of Sediment Reception Facilities in ports and terminals, and Parties have to monitor the effects of ballast water management in waters under their jurisdiction. Scientific and technical research has to be facilitated nationally.

The Convention is the first binding instrument on ballast water in international maritime transport. It will enter into force twelve months after ratification by 30 States, representing 35 per cent of world merchant shipping tonnage.

For further details contact: Natasha Brown, IMO External Relations Officer, Tel: +44 (0)20 7587 3274; email: media@imo.org; http://www.imo.org/home.asp

Getting to grips with trade



FAO/17423JH, Wagner

Catch traceability can bring benefits for monitoring and control.

The roles of traceability and ecolabelling in promoting more responsible trading systems were discussed at the February FAO meeting on global fish trade. A proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding between FAO and CITES, setting out a closer working relationship between the two bodies, was finally agreed upon and will be considered by the

CITES Secretariat. The final decision will be watched closely, as there is disagreement on the role of CITES in listing commercially-exploited aquatic species. While the very point of CITES is to control trade in endangered species, some countries argue that the role of CITES should be limited to 'exceptional cases only' as

UK Prime Minister prioritises the environment

The UK Prime Minister's Strategy Unit reported in March on its nine-month review of the options for a sustainable UK fishing industry. The outcome was a string of forward looking recommendations for the governments and fisheries departments of the UK. In environmental terms, the report was generally very positive, with the protection of the marine environment being a key element of the recommended overarching fisheries management aim.

The application of strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) to offshore and inshore

fisheries by the end of 2006 and the use of environmental impact assessments (EIAs) for new gears and fisheries was recommended. Unfortunately the report was more cautious when it came to the use of Marine Protected Areas, suggesting only that they be used on an experimental basis because the benefits 'could not be predicted accurately'.

The regionalisation of European fisheries management was also heavily promoted together with reinforcing the enforcement and environmental auditing role of the Commission. Indeed, it was recognised that

more extensive listing would result in 'potentially serious negative consequences for normal fishing activities'.

Meeting participants also commented on the October 2003 report from the Expert Consultation on ecolabelling. It includes draft international guidelines for ecolabelling of fish and fishery products from marine capture fisheries, and a recommendation that guidelines should be developed for fresh water capture fisheries as well.

The practicalities of traceability systems were also discussed at the meeting. While improved traceability could provide significant benefits for monitoring, and hence resource management, it is its potential role in tackling bioterrorism through food poisoning that is currently drawing attention to this issue. Meeting documents are available at http://www.fao.org/fi/meetings/cofi/cofift_9/default.asp.

For more information contact Mr George Kourous, FAO Information Officer, george.kourous@fao.org; Tel: +39 (0)6 570 53168.

many of the recommended actions will require changes at the EU level.

The report has been received with mixed reactions from the UK commercial fishing industry. Media coverage has, unsurprisingly, been dominated by industry dismissals of the report's recommendation of whitefish fleet cuts. Recreational anglers however have welcomed the report as it identifies recreational angler's interests as deserving explicit management.

Contact: Tel: +44 (0)20 7276 1881; strategy@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk; www.strategy.gov.uk

Ratification of the UN Fish Stocks Agreement

In December 2003, the EC and Member States finally ratified the 1995 United Nations Agreement on the conservation and management of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks. While the Agreement entered into force at the end of 2001, some EU Member States had not completed their ratification processes until recently. Both the EU and Member States will now be able to participate as contracting parties, rather than as observers, since this is a mixed competence agreement.

The Agreement was one of the major outcomes of the 1992 Rio Summit. Its aim is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks, by elaborating certain provisions of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. It includes a detailed description of how States are to apply the precautionary principle to fisheries management.

However, its most controversial provisions restrict the freedom to fish on the high seas, in the case of vessels flagged to States not members of or complying with regional fisheries management organisations. Although the Agreement is targeted ultimately at high seas fish stocks, it has important implications for the management of national stocks since national and high seas management must be 'compatible'.

As was reported last year (Vol 11, 2003), of the ten countries due to join the EU on 1 May 2004, only Cyprus and Malta have so far ratified the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. For the remaining countries, ratification has to be achieved before their accession to the EU, which is now imminent.

For further details contact: Mr Serge Beslier, Head of Unit, Directorate B, Fisheries DG, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium. Tel: +32 2 2991111; email: serge.beslier@cec.eu.int or Mr André Tahindro, Sr Ocean Affairs/Law of the Sea Officer, Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations, New York, USA. Tel: +1 (0)212 963 3946; email: tahindro@un.org

● PUBLICATIONS

- The Role of Fisheries Licensing in European Environmental Management <http://www.ieep.org.uk/PDFfiles/PUBLICATIONS/Licensing%20Report%20JB%20190104.pdf>
- The Fishery Effects of Marine Reserves and Fishery Closures. http://www.worldwildlife.org/oceans/fishery_effects.pdf
- Regional Fisheries Organizations and the World Trade Organization: Compatibility or Conflict TRAFFIC available at: http://www.traffic.org/news/fisheries_trade.pdf
- High Seas Bottom Fisheries and their Impact on the Biodiversity of Vulnerable Deep-Sea Ecosystems <http://www.iucn.org/themes/marine/pdf/MattGianni-CBDCOP7-Impact-HS-BottomFisheries-Complete.pdf>
- Okey T. A. (2003) Membership of the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils in the United States: are special interests over-represented? *Marine Policy*, 27, 193-206.



Apart from acting as a source of independent information on fisheries and the environment, *El Anzuelo* aims to present different perspectives on the issues, 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.

CONFLICT WITH COMMERCE

Dear Editor

■ My problems with the managed retreat at Frieston Shore in the Wash candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) started in August 2002 when the southern breach was cut.

Until this, I had no idea what a managed retreat was or the effect it might have on my oyster farm, one mile from the scheme. And neither did anyone else who was involved with its planning.

On complaining to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), who own the site, I was told that it was nothing to do with them as the work was carried out by the Environment Agency upon advice from English Nature! Taking my complaint to the Environment Agency, they told me that they had no idea anyone was farming oysters in the area. Their only advice was for me to move my farm, as any alteration

to their new flood defences might put 80,000 hectares at risk of flooding. On phoning English Nature I was told to speak with the Environment Agency 'as it was nothing to do with them'.

Eighteen months on, my 2000 oyster table farm has been buried by three feet of sand brought off the marsh by the new creeks formed by the water flowing out of the breaches. The whole of the surrounding area up to one and half miles from this environmental project has been affected when the appropriate assessment only predicted erosion of ten to 15 metres at each breach site. The Environment Agency has agreed to compensate, but how much this will be and when it is to be paid is still in question.

I find it almost unbelievable that a scheme such as this can alter such a vast surrounding area when only ten to 15 metres was predicted. Equally unbelievable

is that English Nature claim that this is not having a detrimental effect, even though the Environment Agency have admitted that after 18 months my site is continuing to silt up to the point that it will be incapable of sustaining a workable oyster farm. English Nature appear to be simply uninterested, stating that Pacific Oysters are an introduced species and as such the loss of my oyster farm will not have an adverse affect on the nature conservation interests of the Wash.

It seems madness to me that my farm, the only one of its kind in the Wash, has been sacrificed for an environmental project by the very people that claim they are 'working today for nature tomorrow' (English Nature).

Graham Fletcher, East Lincolnshire Seafoods, Boston, Lincs, UK, Tel: +44 (0)1205 364372

MEDITERRANEAN LET DOWN

Mr. Struan Stevenson, European Parliament Committee on Fisheries Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the European Parliament Committee on Fisheries

■ At its 16 March 2004 meeting, the Committee on Fisheries approved a legislative draft resolution (with 15 votes in favour, two against and four abstentions) rejecting the proposal for a Regulation for the Mediterranean (COM(2003)589). The rejection of a proposal that is consistent with the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, recent General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) resolutions, and EU commitments made at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), particularly those concerning

marine protected areas, is a serious act, that has serious implications.

The proposed Regulation represents for the first time a measured and coherent approach to managing the Mediterranean's ecosystems and fishing industries. Not only is it based on preparatory research¹, it also responds positively to both the desperation and aspirations of the small-scale coastal fisheries sector that dominates Mediterranean fisheries².

The four EU Mediterranean Member States account for 57% of the Mediterranean commercial fleet (FIPP/927, FAO 1997). These four Member States, particularly Italy (which accounts for one third of the Mediterranean catch), must give a clear signal of their commitment to promoting sustainable fishing practices. The

restoration of marine ecosystems worldwide and in the Mediterranean is urgent, not only for those who catch fish but to society as a whole. It is unacceptable, that for reasons exclusive to the Italian institutional context, European citizens should not be allowed the opportunity to have a more in-depth debate on a subject as fundamental as Mediterranean fisheries.

Dr. Serge Collet, Université de Hambourg, ravenwordfish@t-online.de
www.uni-hamburg.de/Wiss/FB/09/Ethnolol/Collet

- 1 Towards Holistic Fisheries Management: Mediterranean has prospect. Heraklion/Crete, 27-29 March, 2001. Ref. MAC 20/98
- 2 ELSA Pêche 98/3821. With group analysis of European fishermen perceptions of the stakes for the future of fisheries. ELSA survey

Correction – The author of the letter 'Calm Before the Storm' in Volume 12 of *El Anzuelo* was Jorge Gonçalves, not João Gonçalves. His correct email is m.arriaga@mail.telepac.pt Apologies for any confusion.

IEEP Changes – Dirk Reyntjens has joined IEEP to head the Fisheries Programme following Niki Sporrang's departure (p10). Dirk has nearly 20 years experience in fisheries and aquaculture management and is contactable on DReyntjens@ieeplondon.org.uk

IEEP 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 EU's environmental policy, IEEP 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 sustainable fisheries programme, which aims to identify, develop and build a consensus around alternative approaches to fisheries management. It is part-funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and is sent free of charge to key practitioners in the Member States of the EU and in accession countries. If you would like to subscribe to *El Anzuelo* please send your details by mail, fax or email to: Debby Rosin, IEEP, 28 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AB, UK. Fax: +44 207 799 2600; email: FisheriesUpdates@ieeplondon.org.uk

El Anzuelo is also available online at www.ieep.org.uk