

# El Anzuelo

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## FINDING COMMON GROUND



Prawn trawl bycatch from waters off southern Ireland

Sue Scott

Chris Grieve  
Editor

When we talk about 'greening' policies and laws, we usually mean making them more environmentally sound or, at least, making them more able to facilitate sustainable development. During the debate about the future of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy most of us have been interested in the responses of stakeholder groups to the European Commission's ideas. The great variety of reactions to the Green Paper has led some of us to ponder what might be reasonable or realistic to expect in a future fisheries policy from an environmental perspective and, more particularly, how agreement might be reached.

On 3 August 2001, the UK newspaper *Fishing News* featured a report about a CFP conference in Sussex the previous week. The report carried a banner exclaiming "The conference was dominated not only by a heavy presence of national and EU political and civil servant representatives, but also by the ever more powerful 'green' NGO lobby." This was a perplexing statement. I attended the conference and people speaking about the environment no more dominated proceedings than did those from industry or science or governments. In a subsequent article by another publication, the

European association of national organisations of fishing enterprises, *Europêche*, was reported as saying that the Commission's Green Paper on the future of the CFP is 'too green'.

The fishing industry has accused environmental groups of failing to understand the everyday realities of trying to earn a living from the sea or the hardships faced by those in fisheries dependent communities. Similarly, environmental groups have accused the industry of avoiding hard decisions about depleted stocks and fleet overcapacity, of refusing to engage in the non-target species and habitats debate and of being its own worst enemy by lobbying politicians who continue to think in the short term.

At times, particularly at public debates at a European level, the industry and environmental groups seem to view each other as opposing forces and treat each other's viewpoints with scepticism, suspicion and mistrust. However, as groups of fishermen and environmentalists in Member States are quietly contradicting, people are working together to find solutions. The question is how to overcome the more overt conflict in the broader political arena.

In part, this question was answered in Brussels at IEEP's conference on CFP reform

*Continued on page eleven*

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IEEP London

# Reactions to the gre

**Chris Grieve**  
IEEP London

**T**he consultation period on the European Commission's Green Paper on the future of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) officially ended on 30 September 2001. A great many documents have been produced and meetings conducted throughout Member States in response to the Green Paper. Here we feature only a small selection of opinions offered by stakeholders during the public consultation process.

Following the June Council meeting, initial responses to the Green Paper by Member State fisheries ministers were reported in *Worldfish Report* (No. 143, 20 June 2001). As an early indicator of political division, ministers' statements hint at the challenges to be faced when the Commission puts forward its legislative proposals.

While Ministers indicated broad support for adopting a multi-annual approach to catch limits and quotas, some showed open hostility towards the Commission's position on reducing fleet capacity by 40% and commitment to removing public aid for fleet renewal. Contesting analysis that fleet capacity should be reduced by 40%, the French fisheries Minister indicated that fleet cuts ought to be voluntary and supported by public aid. The Spanish Minister supported keeping and enforcing fleet reduction programmes, but criticised the Commission for ignoring the consequences of reform on fishing communities. He also attacked the relative stability method of allocating quotas to Member States. The Minister from Portugal also supported fleet reduction programmes but complained about the exclusion of

Portuguese vessels from the North Sea.

The Ministers from the Netherlands and Ireland also called for revisions to the allocation method, claiming that as relatively new entrants to the EU they are disadvantaged by a method which uses historical catches to calculate quotas. All countries, except the UK and Ireland, want to do away with 'Hague preferences' which allocate a minimum quota for stocks under pressure to the two countries. While the UK Minister is against subsidies and for regional management, the Ministers from Greece and Italy strongly supported the use of subsidies and were in favour of continued special treatment for the Mediterranean.

Proposals for reforms to monitoring, control and enforcement are likely to be a source of political wrangling as ministers supported the need for greater control but could not agree on the measures. As part of a declaration about safeguarding biodiversity, ministers also acknowledged there has been a negative effect on the marine environment caused by the present lack of a sustainable balance between fishing effort and available resources.

It is interesting to note that fisheries ministers seem set to argue about individual measures, such as quota allocation methods and access to waters, rather than taking the opportunity to design an overarching CFP which might deliver sustainable fisheries and economically viable fishing communities in 10 to 15 years time.

In its public hearing on the Green Paper on 5-7 June 2001, the European Commission heard position statements from some 400 stakeholders from all Member States. In its summary of the hearing, the Commission indicated that many participants supported sustainability as the main goal of the CFP and there was a consensus on a multi-annual approach to management. It was acknowledged that integration

## ● EUROPECHE/COGECA – fishing industry associations respond to Green Paper

The European associations representing professionals in the fisheries sector acknowledged that the Green Paper characterised the problems facing EU fisheries fairly accurately, but suggested it presents an unduly negative and pessimistic vision of the CFP. They state that the paper lacks a genuinely horizontal socio-economic dimension, and that the primary objective of the CFP should be "to secure the sustainability of the fishing industry and maintain employment, through the conservation of marine resources". The submission suggests a lack of strong political ambition in terms of distance fishing, which represents an essential complement to fishing practised in Community waters. The statement by the Commission that the Community fishing sector will have to be significantly smaller if it is to survive was found to be alarming and heavy in social consequences. EUROPECHE and COGECA thought there were important and positive options on governance, but their organisations must be included in the process at European

level. Whilst they are sensitive to environmental questions, EUROPECHE and COGECA do not understand the Commission giving priority to environmental aspects of fishing, to the extent of strengthening its legal basis. However, they recognise that it is vital to secure sustainability, the need to restore a large number of stocks and admit overcapacity exists in certain fleet segments. In response, they propose a more targeted approach, instead of overcomplicated, generalised regulations. The organisations urgently call for Structural Funds to continue to be used for fleet renewal and modernisation – making the distinction between active capacity (generating fishing effort) and passive capacity (improving safety and living conditions which do not generate fishing effort).

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## ● Put environment at the heart of European fisheries policy – WWF manifesto

WWF highlights four major problems: (1) bigger boats, fewer fish; (2) overcapacity leads to overfishing; (3) bycatch and discards; and (4) effects on the wider marine environment. The environmental NGO says it is "not asking for anything new, just that the people responsible for our fish resources and the marine environment put the fundamental concepts of the EC Treaty into practice before it is too late." To support this are six recommendations:

1. practical implementation of ecosystem-based management and the

2. precautionary principle; immediate creation of recovery plans for stocks outside safe biological limits;
3. putting an end to overcapacity;
4. reduce and reform subsidies;
5. fair and sustainable fisheries agreements; and
6. increase stakeholder involvement.

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# Green Paper

## ‘ministers seem set to argue about individual measures . . . rather than taking the opportunity to design an overarching CFP’

of environmental considerations is an obligation of the Treaty, however many participants emphasised that this is a two-way process and not a simple submission of one policy to the requirements of another.

With the European Parliament not expected to deliver its opinion until December 2001, the process of developing and releasing proposals is expected to continue until early in 2002. According to Steffen Smidt, Director-General Fisheries, the Commission intends to put the first of its proposals to the Council in January 2002. He indicated that all reforms may not be contained within a single proposal, but rather a package of proposals will be released throughout 2002 and 2003.

After proposals are tabled, the emphasis of the debate will shift to Member States and the political process, with stakeholders needing to continue their engagement at this level. In the meantime, the Council has made conclusions about both the Biodiversity Action Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture and its integration strategy for environmental considerations and sustainable development, pointing to the reform of the CFP as the mechanism to deliver the actions, goals and targets contained within those documents. If Ministers water down what is contained within the Green Paper, these other EC policy strategies must be actively pursued.

### ● IEEP conference on CFP reform and the environment

Towards the end of the consultation period, IEEP convened a conference whose main aims were to explore areas of consensus between stakeholder groups and, if possible, take thinking forward about a future legislative framework for the CFP with particular emphasis on integrating environmental concerns. These aims were pursued through the exploration of four key themes chosen for their relevance to the pursuit of sustainable development: (1) ecosystem approaches to fisheries management; (2) partnerships in fisheries management; (3) bringing strategic planning into the CFP; and (4) incentives for sustainable fisheries.

One concept emerged on several occasions: the desire of many stakeholders for a reformed CFP to

provide an overarching framework for long term management based upon a clearly articulated vision for the future of European fisheries and fishing communities. The conference emphasised that dialogue is imperative and a key to success of any future CFP. Learning by doing through facilitated dialogue was a strong message from the conference, as was the notion that interest groups need to more clearly articulate their objectives and definitions in order to help understanding, reduce conflict and to build trust.

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### ● Environmental advisors from European states – recommendations

European environmental advisors and experts met in Brussels in May 2001 to discuss integration of nature conservation issues into the CFP. “The Green Paper put forward many positive proposals for change that would, if implemented, help to solve many difficulties and would help integrate the CFP with other European policy areas including the environment.” Key recommendations included:

**Fleet Policy** – strongly support proposals to reduce fleet capacity and effort to levels that bring exploitation in line with available fish resources and provide major environmental benefits.

**Implementing an ecosystem-based approach** – support an approach that includes wide consideration of marine habitats and species.

**Improving governance based on regional seas** – support the establishment of regional seas advisory committees.

**Ensuring involvement of all stakeholders at relevant levels** – support widening stakeholder involvement, recommend explicit inclusion of, and support for, environmental interests and those responsible for the delivery of nature

conservation and environmental policy. **Implementing and extending the use of existing environmental legislation and policies** – recommend existing environmental legislation and instruments are fully implemented and environmental assessment of fisheries policies, plans and programmes is introduced within the CFP.

**Develop process for setting and using indicators of the environment** – recommend immediate commencement of a process to identify and implement an integrated system of environmental indicators for use in decision making. **Closer integration of fisheries and environmental policy at all levels** – recommend the future CFP should establish formal and support informal dialogue between fisheries and environment interests at all levels from the Commission to local administration in order to deepen understanding and develop coherent governance.

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### ● TIMETABLE: REVIEW OF REGULATION 3760/92

2001	2002
Regulation 3760/92 continues unless amended by Council	
Current restrictions on access to inshore waters end in 2002	
Commission proposals discussed and debated	Official negotiations and adoption of legislation



# Complex problems, creative solutions



Mike Jackson/Still Pictures

Trawl net yet to reveal its bycatch mysteries

Characterising bycatch issues as preoccupations of the environmental movement fails to do justice to the complicated interactions between science, economics, ethics and politics. Fishing interests, marine scientists, government officials and advisors, nature conservationists and members of the general public have legitimate but potentially different concerns about bycatch and associated discarding. Therefore solutions aimed at dealing with bycatch must encompass a wide range of considerations. Within a context of adopting a broader approach to fisheries management, this focus article investigates the complexity of bycatch issues and looks at how to arrive at creative solutions.

For some stakeholders, concerns about bycatch relate to the impact it has on biodiversity, such as the removal of top order predators, large numbers of prey species or endangered species. Others find the issue more one of waste – estimates by the FAO in 1999 suggest that at least one quarter of the total world catch is discarded each year, equating to approximately 20 million tonnes<sup>1</sup>. Bycatch of animals

**‘estimates by the FAO in 1999 suggest that at least one quarter of the total world catch is discarded each year’**

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with popular appeal, such as dolphins and other marine mammals, presents ethical issues not only about the way in which they may die, but also the waste of their lives. Bycatch and associated discarding presents negative images about fishing operators and has become a source of conflict between different

sectors, such as line fishing and trawling or recreational anglers and commercial operators.

Creating solutions to bycatch issues, whether at a small-scale level or higher policy levels, first requires bycatch to be defined. Intuitively this seems a simple enough exercise. However, it can be a very contentious issue that gets in the way of progress towards solutions. Box 1 sets out the definitions most commonly used for bycatch.

#### Box 1. Defining bycatch

##### *By-product, incidental catch*

- Commercial, non-target species – kept and landed because they have economic value to the operator, therefore *by-products* of target fishing, sometimes known as *incidental catch*.

##### *Discards*

- Non-commercial, target – discarded due to regulations, e.g. the operator is over-quota or fish is undersized. Also economic choice by operator due to market price or other considerations, i.e. *highgrading*.
- Non-commercial, non-target fish species – discarded because the species has no commercial value.
- Non-commercial, non-target non-fish species – discarded because the species has no commercial value or is protected under nature conservation laws.

Leaving aside judgements about the waste of potential sources of protein, determining the impact of bycatch upon sustainability and the marine ecosystem is not simply a question of quantifying the weight or numbers of individuals. It is possible that one fishery's discarded bycatch is another fishery's target species. For example, juvenile fish species taken and discarded in prawn fisheries potentially affecting recruitment into, or sustainability of, a target fishery. It is therefore more useful to measure the *proportion* of populations dying by whatever cause.

Impacts of bycatch at an ecosystem level may include: (1) direct impact on bycatch or target species; (2) reduction in large animal abundance; (3) increase in relative abundance of smaller species; and (4) increase in abundance of scavenging species<sup>2</sup>.

#### BYCATCH EXAMPLES

Studies show that, of all fishing methods, prawn or shrimp trawling generates the highest discard or catch ratios: from 3 kilograms (kg) of bycatch species to every one kg of prawns landed (i.e. 3:1) to as high as 15:1<sup>2</sup>. In some fisheries where these species are discarded, this is condemned as wasteful and potentially harmful. In other fisheries, like some in developing nations, almost all of the catch is used thus there is virtually no bycatch and little waste of protein<sup>2</sup>. Prawn fisheries also take sea turtles as bycatch. Many turtle species are critically endangered and while fishing is not the only threat to populations, fishing is acknowledged as a key threatening process. Trawling for fin-fish is also known to produce significant bycatch of undersized fish, non-

## 'bycatch solutions could be developed using a strategic process'

commercial fish, and protected or endangered species such as dolphins, seals or shark species.

Early battles between nature conservationists and fishermen on the bycatch issue involved species of popular appeal to the general community. Highly visible campaigns by environmental NGOs brought the fate of more 'charismatic' species to public attention. For example, the interactions between tuna purse seining and dolphins generated massive media attention in the 1960s, with dolphin mortality in the hundreds of thousands each year<sup>2</sup>.

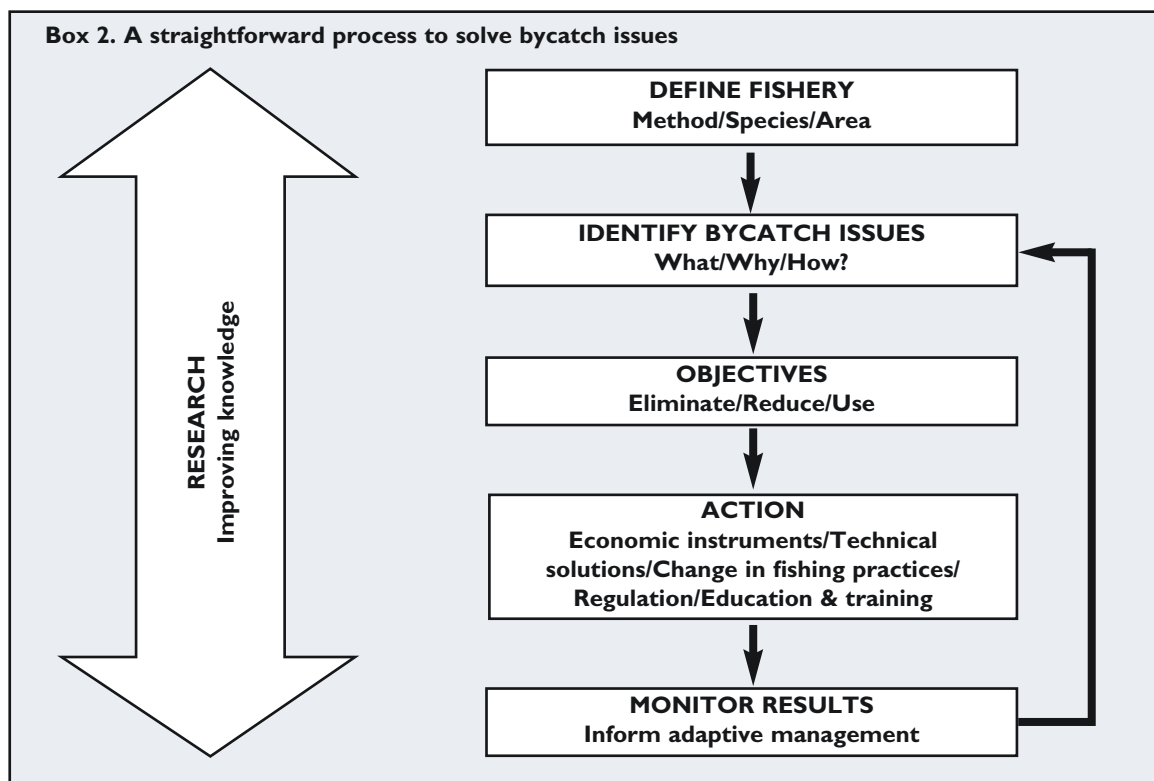
Gillnets can be a low cost and very effective fishing method, employed by many small inshore fishing boats around the world. While gillnets are known to be relatively size selective for target fish species, they are quite poor at species selectivity, thus entangling marine mammals, sharks, turtles and sea birds<sup>3</sup>. An issue for European fisheries is the bycatch of protected harbour porpoise in gillnets by Member State fleets, with an estimated 4% of the North Sea harbour porpoise population being taken, when only 1% is estimated by the International Whaling Commission to be sustainable.

Fishing with longlines is also known to take significant bycatch of seabirds in certain waters, particularly the higher latitudes in both hemispheres<sup>3</sup>. Lines with bait set to target tunas, swordfish, sharks and some fish species are a tempting food source and therefore trap for seabirds as lines take too long to sink below the water's surface.

#### POLICY GEARED TOWARDS SOLUTIONS

Starting at a policy level, bycatch solutions could be developed using a strategic process that integrates bycatch management into the overarching resource management framework. The USA and Australia have developed national bycatch policies which guide the process of solving bycatch issues in an integrated way<sup>4,5</sup>. Box 2 shows a flow chart which offers a relatively straightforward process which could be followed by stakeholders working together to solve bycatch issues at a fishery level.

Having defined bycatch in an overall policy context and set out agreed principles and objectives, stakeholders could define the fishery by fishing method, species or area. The next step is to identify the particular bycatch issues associated with the fishery and explore the various objectives or goals open to fishermen to eliminate, reduce or use the bycatch. Having determined the relevant objectives, a range of actions may be taken to achieve them. Action can then be implemented within a context of adaptive



management, i.e. monitoring results against indicators and creating a feedback loop which informs future action. All of this activity is also conducted within a context of improving the knowledge base upon which decisions can be made through research.

### CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

An excellent illustration of applying creative solutions to bycatch problems is shown by the tuna-dolphin story. Dolphin mortality in tuna purse seine fisheries reduced from approximately 133,000 individuals in 1986 to less than 2,000 in 1998<sup>2</sup>. Pressure from environmental groups and the general public led to the use of 'dolphin friendly' eco-labels which created an economic incentive. Technological improvements to gear and changes in fishing practices by fishermen were also implemented. Most of the solutions came from the fishermen, with scientists facilitating communication and validating experiments. Significant improvement came by training skippers and crew under the Tuna-Dolphin Program of the international body Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC). Management action included, among other things, individual vessel limits on dolphin mortality, which effectively created a 'market' for good skippers who could avoid catching dolphins<sup>2</sup>.

Excluder devices fitted to trawl nets to allow the escape of turtles, sharks or other large animals, as well as devices fitted to gillnets to make nets acoustically 'visible' to cetaceans offer technical solutions to reduce bycatch. In the meantime, sorter grids and different net configurations are increasingly being developed to deal with fin-fish bycatch with research being informed by the behavioural responses, size and shape of bycatch species. Finally, the use of closed areas or seasons has offered

solutions for reducing bycatch, particularly juvenile fin-fish species in prawn fishing areas, as well as marine mammals in gillnet fisheries.

### CONCLUSION

With such a vast topic, a short article such as this cannot do justice to all of the complexities in bycatch management. Many experts work on different aspects of bycatch: from fishermen who see it every day on the water, to scientists grappling with impact assessment and technological research, to managers and conservationists trying to devise ways to reduce or eliminate it. As groups of stakeholders have already experienced, working together to find solutions seems a logical way forward. A straightforward process for taking action has been presented here, which could be incorporated into overarching fisheries policy at a European level. Equally it is a model which could be used at local or regional fishery level with the involvement of interested groups and a commitment to finding the common ground.

**Chris Grieve**

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# Thinking globally, acting locally: the Loch Torridon Project



Sue Scott

Nephrops in creel, Loch Torridon – fishing considered in plans to sustain the marine environment.

## Dr David W Donnan

Scottish Natural Heritage

The review of the Common Fisheries Policy, the release of the Commission's Green Paper and all of the activity surrounding it have focused attention on some common themes relating to fisheries and the environment. Amongst other things, these include:

- the requirement for the integration of environmental considerations into fisheries management;
- the adoption of an ecosystem approach to the management of the marine environment;
- the need to integrate fisheries and the management of other marine activities; and
- greater stakeholder participation in the management process.

Such high level objectives are certainly desirable and welcome, but sometimes it is difficult to make the connections between them and the real world. This short article highlights some activity in Scotland that may provide some insight about how these objectives are being pursued in practice.

Loch Torridon is a deep fjord lying amidst spectacular mountain scenery on the west coast of Scotland. As well as a feature of great scenic beauty, the loch has great economic importance for the local economy through a variety of activities ranging from a productive *Nephrops* (Norway lobster/langoustine) fishery to fin-fish and shellfish farming.

In the last two years a project has been established in Loch Torridon to draw together the necessary information to inform and develop the sustainable management of the loch's

marine resources, as well as to raise awareness of the value of Loch Torridon's marine natural heritage. This has been a partnership project, funded through Ross & Cromarty Enterprise (using LEADER and PESCA funds), the Highland Council and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH). The project, co-ordinated by Angus McHattie, has now reached the end of the first phase.

One of the first tasks was to undertake an assessment of the *Nephrops* stocks within the loch and adjacent waters. This was conducted by the Fishery Research Services Marine Laboratory, Aberdeen and took account of catches from both a trawl fishery and a trap fishery, or creel fishery as it is known in Scotland.

Secondly, broadscale mapping of seabed habitats within Loch Torridon was conducted by the Marine Laboratory Aberdeen and the SNH Maritime Group using sonar and underwater video techniques. This was further enhanced with information provided by amateur divers who have been conducting voluntary surveys of the marine life in the loch.

Having such a detailed knowledge of the seabed and its associated species encourages a more integrated approach to the management of the loch by allowing assessment of all activities in relation to their supporting environment and to each other.

The information and the images collected by the amateur divers, along with the products from the assessment and mapping work have been valuable for promoting a greater understanding of the beauty and the importance of Torridon's marine environment. For example, an underwater guide and an accompanying video have been prepared to showcase the underwater plants, animals and habitats within the loch.

The Loch Torridon project is providing valuable experience in bringing together fishery and broader biodiversity and environmental information to inform sustainable management. It is also an excellent example of people working collaboratively, both with respect to the funding arrangements and in the delivery of the different elements of the project. The next step of the project will involve the establishment of a loch 'users group' which will involve all the relevant stakeholders in the development of a sustainable management scheme and subsequent monitoring of its effectiveness in relation to stocks and the wider environment.

Finally, it is worth emphasising that the initial impetus for this project came from local people, particularly the *Nephrops* fishermen. The partners in the project hope that their efforts will be rewarded by sustaining a high quality marine environment which will continue to support the local economy in the long term.

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## Fishermen's organisations collaborate with WWF

The National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO), which represents England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel

Islands, and the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF) have agreed to work with the environmental group WWF UK on a study into the economic impacts of fish stock recovery measures. The idea is to overcome the obstacles to rapid introduction of conservation measures through transitional financial

investment, whilst finding ways to manage the short to medium term commercial losses which will be associated with such measures.

The study aims to show that the short term investment losses are outweighed in the longer term by revenue gains from higher stock levels. Hamish Morrison, Chief

Executive of the SFF hopes the initiative will "break the snail's pace of movement in the adoption of effective conservation measures".

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# Commission adopts emergency measures to help recovery of northern hake

Several emergency measures adopted by the European Commission in June for the recovery of northern hake stocks came into force on 1 September 2001. These include an increase in mesh size to 100 mm, a limit on the amount of hake caught incidentally in other fisheries of no more than 20%, and the creation of two protected areas for juveniles off the west coast of France and the south-west coast of Ireland. In addition, Member

States were required since June to ensure that observers are on-board certain vessels operating within the protected areas as well as implementing additional monitoring and control measures for vessels targeting hake.

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## Caspian Sea States agree to halt sturgeon harvest

At a meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Paris in June 2001, Russia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan agreed to temporarily suspend catches of sturgeon in order to allow the endangered stocks to recover. This is just one of a host of agreed measures to be implemented jointly by the end of 2001, including a comprehensive survey of sturgeon stocks, an analysis of the illegal sturgeon trade, a study of enforcement needs, and on-site inspections by CITES of sturgeon management activities. Catch and export quotas are also to be agreed for 2002. Failure to implement the agreement will result in zero export quotas for 2002.

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## Fifth International Conference on Protection of the North Sea

A draft outline of the issues to be addressed at the Fifth

International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea in Bergen, Norway in March 2002 has been released. The list of issues, incorporating some of those raised at the Committee of North Sea Senior Officials (CONSSO) meeting in October 2000, includes: establishing an ecosystem approach to the management and protection of the North Sea; the protection of species and habitats in coastal and offshore areas; fisheries; prevention of pollution by hazardous substances, ships and by offshore installations; further reductions to nutrient input to the North Sea; management of radioactive substances including waste; and new items such as climate change, litter and tourism/recreation. The future co-operation for the protection of the North Sea is also on the agenda.

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## EU moves to stop pirate fishing

On 5 July 2001, the European Commission tabled a proposed amendment to the Regulation on subsidies in fisheries, the Financial Instrument for

Fisheries Guidance (FIG), which would prohibit Community funds being used to transfer EU vessels to Flags of Convenience (FOC) countries such as Belize and Honduras. The criteria proposed by the Commission for identifying FOC countries is that they permit fishing 'in a manner which jeopardises the effectiveness of international conservation measures'. After undergoing consultation in the European Parliament, the proposal will be eligible for adoption by the Council of fisheries ministers at their 22 October 2001 meeting.

A hearing on FOC was also held by the European Parliament on 19 June 2001, which resulted in a broad consensus that FOC fishing needs to be eliminated through a wide range of measures, including port and market measures. A report and Resolution are expected to be adopted in November 2001 by the Parliament's Fisheries Committee, followed in December by the Plenary. Spain, allegedly the host of the majority of EU companies owning or operating FOC fishing vessels, has already adopted new national legislation which allows the Spanish authorities to withdraw the licence of Spanish skippers involved in illegal, unregulated

or unreported fishing.

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## Precautionary approach to Baltic cod and herring TACs

Conditions for fishing in the Baltic Sea for 2002 were set at the end of the 27th Session of the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission, held in Cracow in September 2001. Scientific advice provided by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) informed the setting of total allowable catches (TACs), including the adoption of precautionary levels for stocks of cod and herring. The TAC for cod has been substantially reduced by 29,000 tonnes, representing a 28% decrease from the current level. This is in recognition of the downward trend in the eastern cod stock and the lower reproduction of cod in this region. The contracting parties agreed to establish a recovery plan for Baltic cod, in accordance with a long-term management plan adopted in 1999. Such measures include a reduction in fishing mortality of the eastern stock, extension of a summer ban on cod fishing, changes to rules regarding bycatch of cod, and stricter enforcement and control measures. The reductions for herring were on an even larger scale, with the TAC being reduced by a third - some 112,000 tonnes less than last year. However, the TAC for sprat was increased slightly (6%) in acknowledgement of the fact that the stock is now considered to be within safe biological limits and the TAC for salmon in the Main Basin and Gulf of Bothnia was maintained at last year's level.

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## Mediterranean stock conservation hindered by "inconclusive" evidence

In spite of evidence put forward by the Scientific Advisory Committee of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in June 2001, representatives of Mediterranean fishing nations failed to take action for stock conservation at a recent meeting in Ischia, Italy. Mediterranean governments stated that there was "inconclusive evidence of stock decline" and that under such circumstances they were unwilling to commit to any reductions in fishing effort, due to the potential socio-economic repercussions. It was argued that current methods of monitoring, data collection and analysis were not of a sufficient high quality and that information is not comparable across the region. On the face of it this is contrary to the precautionary principle which affirms that insufficient evidence should not be a reason for inaction, particularly where a risk is perceived. Indeed, evidence presented at the June Scientific Committee arguably confirms the risk of damage to stocks, particularly demersal species. Assessments for hake, red shrimp and red mullet showed increased overfishing and reductions in fishing effort were strongly recommended. In an attempt to move things forward, it was acknowledged that further research should be undertaken to provide evidence for future action. A more positive outcome of the meeting was the agreement on national catch limits for blue-fin tuna in the Mediterranean and the Eastern Atlantic.

At the EU level, fisheries management in the Mediterranean is included in the forthcoming review of the CFP. In a recent meeting with fishermen's representatives in Greece, the European Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, Franz Fischler, drew attention to the important

socio-economic role played by fisheries and the need for greater determination and co-operation from all parties to guarantee their future. He pointed to the fact that conservation measures for the Mediterranean had not had their desired effect, with fish stocks and the coastal marine environment remaining in a vulnerable state.

"If progress is to be made", said Fischler, "the attitude of fishermen in all the Mediterranean countries has to change. Fishermen have to respect conservation rules and co-operate with scientists to build fisheries data which are sorely missing in the Mediterranean."

For further details on the EU contact: Chiara Gariazzo, Communication and Information Unit, DG Fisheries, Commission of the European Communities; tel +32 2 299 9255; fax +32 2 299 3040; email [chiara.gariazzo@cec.eu.int](mailto:chiara.gariazzo@cec.eu.int)

For further details on the GFCM: <http://www.fao.org/fi/meetings/gfcm/gfcm26/default.asp>

## New measures agreed at NASCO meeting

New and innovative conservation and restoration measures were agreed internationally by the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) at its Annual Meeting in June 2001 in Spain, in response to continuing concern about the status of wild salmon stocks. A further significant step was taken in applying the 'precautionary approach' to the management of salmon habitats. Under an agreed plan of action contracting parties will establish comprehensive salmon habitat protection and restoration plans and report back to NASCO at its 2002 meeting.

An international research programme is to be established to investigate the causes of increased salmon mortality at sea and to explore ways of reducing it. Agreed guidelines on containment of farm salmon will be used to produce

# UK fisheries gain MSC label

Two more UK fisheries have been awarded the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) sustainability label. The Burry Inlet Cackle Fishery in South Wales became the fifth fishery in the world to be awarded the label, closely followed by the South West Mackerel Handline Fishery.

The Burry Inlet Cackle Fishery, which is the first molluscan fishery to be awarded the MSC label, is based on hand-raking and sieving of cockles from within the Burry Inlet estuary. It is licensed and regulated by the South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee (SWSFC) and yields around 3,500 tonnes of cockles to 55 full-time licence holders. Although cockles are mainly sold locally, they are also sold to UK retailers, and some are exported to Spain, The Netherlands, France and Portugal.

The South West Mackerel Handline Fishery sits within the South West Mackerel Box and targets the western component of the North East Atlantic mackerel stock. The Mackerel Box was set up to protect juvenile mackerel at a time when the resource was heavily exploited. Within this



area only handliners are allowed to target mackerel and it is widely believed that these practices, praised for their precision in targeting the stock, are contributing to the health of the wider existing stock. David Muirhead, Secretary of the South West Handline Fishermen's Association is hoping that the label will lead to better markets and higher prices, helping to secure the existing 500 jobs within the fishery.

For information about the Burry Inlet Cackle Fishery contact: Phil Coates or Mark Stafford of SWSFC; Queens Buildings, Cambrian Place, Swansea, SA1 1TW, UK; tel: +44 (0) 1792 654 466; email: [swsfc@aol.com](mailto:swsfc@aol.com)

For information about the South West Mackerel Handline Fishery contact: David Muirhead, South West Handline Fishermen's Association; tel: +44 (0) 1326 555 813 or mobile 07977 597644; email: [rec@hancockcaffin.co.uk](mailto:rec@hancockcaffin.co.uk)

For further details about the MSC contact: Louisa Barnett, Communications Director, The Marine Stewardship Council, 119 Altenburg Gardens, London SW11 1JQ, United Kingdom; tel: +44 20 7350 4000; fax: +44 20 7350 1231; email: [louisa.barnett@msc.org](mailto:louisa.barnett@msc.org); <http://www.msc.org>

national and regional plans. NASCO also opposed releasing genetically modified salmon into the wild.

For further details contact: Dr Malcolm Windsor; NASCO Secretary; 11 Rutland Square, Edinburgh, UK EH1 2AS; tel: +131 228 2551; fax: +131 228 4384; email: [hq@nasco.int](mailto:hq@nasco.int); <http://www.nasco.int>

# EU shark fin trade poses serious threat to species survival

Susie Watts  
WildAid

An estimated one hundred million sharks are killed globally each year, many just for their fins, which enter international trade and are used to make shark fin soup. Finning is a practice that wastes 95% of the fish, which is thrown back to sea. Not only economically wasteful, finning also prevents socio-economic benefits from the processing of shark products on-shore. The practice potentially threatens the continued survival of the shark species and, by removing large numbers of these top predators from the oceanic ecosystem, will have unpredictable environmental consequences. Research has shown that significant – and sometimes counter-intuitive – changes in the abundance of sharks could result in the decline of commercially valuable fish stocks.

Sharks are slow growing species, taking several years to mature and only producing small numbers of young. As such their populations are very vulnerable to overfishing. Economically important target shark fisheries in EU waters that have crashed after a short period of high landings include those for the porbeagle shark, spiny dogfish, basking shark and several species of skate. Populations of sharks, skates and rays are currently under serious threat world wide and some are at risk of extinction.

It is extremely hard to identify many shark species either from their fins alone, or from the 'trunks' of bodies landed without fins and heads. The practice of finning therefore actively prevents the collation of the accurate scientific data, which is essential to effective fisheries management. The EU does not keep accurate records of the overall volume of sharks fished, landed, imported, exported or traded within or by its Member States. There are no records of fins retained by its fishing vessels, nor of fins landed, nor of the quantities of shark fins exported from the EU and the overseas territories of the EU Member States. However, import statistics kept in Hong Kong reveal that Europe is the largest exporter of fresh shark fin to Hong Kong, providing 28.86% of the wet weight of all imported fins. It is likely that shark fin trading with EU vessels is common throughout east Asia.

The European Union's Preliminary Draft Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks, presented at the FAO's Committee on Fisheries in February 2001, represents the European Community's initial response to the 1999 International



B. McCoubrey/WildAid

Fins left out to dry – increasing international trade in shark fins threatens shark species worldwide.

Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA). However, this document does not adequately address the issues raised in the IPOA and does not appear to propose sufficient action to begin the process of establishing precautionary sustainable shark fisheries management in the EU.

Several major fishing states (including Brazil, South Africa, USA, Oman, Costa Rica and most Australian state and federal waters) have enacted legislation to prohibit finning within their EEZs. An EU ban on shark finning both within EU waters and on all vessels registered to Member States could be enacted well before the CFP is finalised. It would enable managers to improve the quality of shark fisheries monitoring and associated scientific research, and hence the quality of data on which to base future management decisions.

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# Illegal fishing continues to threaten Patagonian toothfish

According to a new study by TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring programme of IUCN – World Conservation Union and WWF, illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing accounted for half of the Patagonian toothfish traded last year. Also known as Chilean sea bass, the Patagonian toothfish is facing an uncertain future, despite conservation measures introduced by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), of which the European Community is a member. A particular problem, says the report *'Patagonian Toothfish: Are Conservation and Trade Measures Working?'*, is the use of Flag of Convenience fishing vessels.

The French islands of Crozet and Kerguelen were identified by the report as one of four hotspots for IUU fishing. The report urges countries involved in the trade to show more commitment to co-operating with CCAMLR's attempts to eliminate IUU fishing. The next meeting of CCAMLR will take place in Hobart, Australia, 22 October – 2 November 2001. In addition, a TRAFFIC review released on October 12 2001 regarding Antarctic toothfish adds further support to the findings of the Patagonian toothfish report.

For further details contact: Glenn Sant, Director, TRAFFIC Oceania; email: traffic@traffico.org or TRAFFIC Europe - Regional Office; Waterlooostenweg 608, 1050 Brussels, Belgium; tel: +32 2 343 82 58; fax: +32 2 343 25 65; email: traffic@traffic-europe.com

## Finding common ground

*Continued from page one*

and the environment on 20-21 September 2001. Participants included the European Commission and members of stakeholder groups including environmental NGOs, the fishing industry, Member State governments and researchers. One concept recurred throughout the conference – dialogue.

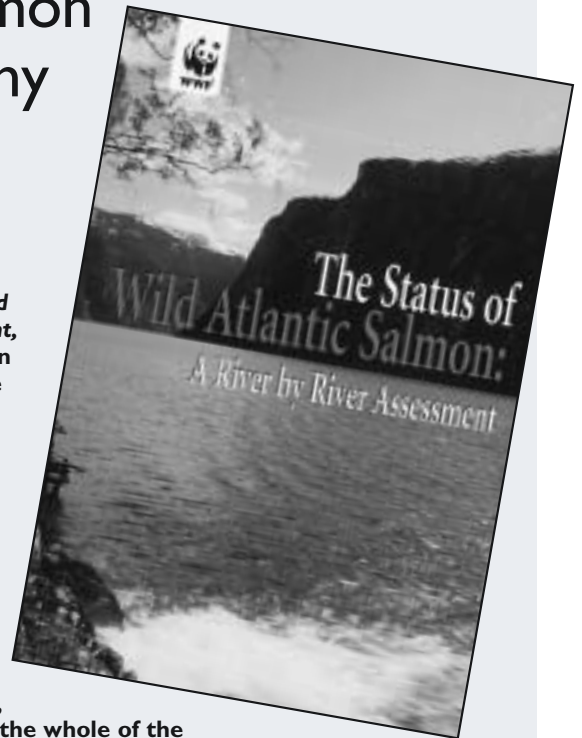
What we discovered was not rocket science, indeed it was more a blinding flash of the obvious: we need to talk to each other, to listen and strive to understand the other's world view. As well as this, we need to explain to each other what we want, i.e. our vision for the future, our objectives and goals. We need to open our respective 'positions' to scrutiny, to robust debate where our assumptions are challenged in a constructive way, and perhaps most importantly we need to strive for common ground, for it is in the finding of common ground that progress will be made. Learning to create productive and solution oriented working relationships may be one of the only ways forward – ultimately striving together for healthy ecosystems, healthy fisheries and healthy fishing communities.

This eighth volume of *El Anzuelo* explores some of these themes. The update on 2002 looks at selected responses to the Green Paper, while the focus on bycatch management investigates the complexity of bycatch issues and solutions from different perspectives. In our regular section on the European Scene, we provide an update on recent events and issues related to fisheries and the environment. Keep an eye out for a piece about the collaboration between the fishing industry and an environmental NGO in an important study on stock recovery measures. We hope these offerings provide food for thought for the coming months of discussion and debate at the political level.

## Wild Atlantic salmon populations healthy in only four countries

**A new study by WWF, *The status of wild Atlantic salmon: A river by river assessment*, points to the disappearance of salmon in the rivers of Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Belgium, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, with 85% of wild salmon populations categorised as vulnerable, endangered or critical. Nearly 90% of known healthy populations of wild salmon are found in only four countries – Norway, Iceland, Scotland and Ireland.**

**The report is intended to fill a critical gap in knowledge about wild Atlantic salmon and responds to a call from ICES, in its advice to NASCO, that "management of salmon stocks in the whole of the Atlantic should be based on local assessments of the status of river and sub-river stocks". It includes a series of analyses of the status of wild Atlantic salmon in each country and details factors influencing population declines. The five major threats identified are overfishing, dams and other obstructions, river engineering projects, pollution, and commercial salmon farming.**



For further details contact: Mrs. Maren Esmark, Marine Conservation Advisor, WWF Norway, Postboks 6784; St Olavs plass, 0130 Oslo, Norway; tel: +47 22 03 65 00; Email: mesmark@wwf.no <http://www.panda.org>

## Reykjavik conference yields declaration on ecosystem based management

Responding to an urgent need to include ecosystem considerations in capture fisheries management practices and procedures, the Government of Iceland and the FAO organised, with the co-sponsorship of the Government of Norway, a conference on responsible fisheries in the marine ecosystem. The conference, which took place in Reykjavik, Iceland from 1-4 October 2001, focused on exchanging knowledge on marine

ecosystem issues and identifying means by which ecosystem considerations can be included in capture fisheries management.

Concurrent with scientific presentations and discussions, an 'open-ended' drafting committee for FAO Member States was held to produce a Conference Declaration on Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem. This will be submitted to the 31st Session of the FAO Conference in November 2001 and to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002.

Now adopted as the Reykjavik Declaration, FAO Member States essentially agreed that, in an effort to reinforce responsible and sustainable fisheries in the marine ecosystem, they will individually and collectively work on incorporating ecosystem considerations into

fisheries management. The conference did not yield a declaration proscribing particular actions by Member States. Indeed, the process itself was criticised by some participants, e.g. frustration was expressed by some that delegates in the drafting committee were arguing politics in back rooms and not listening to information they had been brought to Reykjavik to hear. However, the achievement of such a declaration giving clear acknowledgement by FAO Member States of the importance of considering ecosystem based fisheries management, struck many involved as a very important step forward in an ongoing process of change.

For further details visit the conference website: <http://www.refisheries2001.org/> A summary of the conference and the declaration can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/download/pdf/sd/sdvol61num1.pdf>

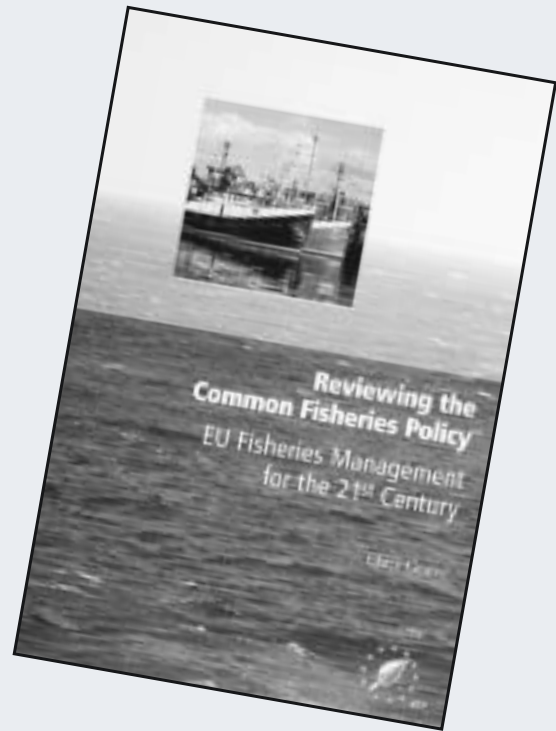


# Reviewing the Common Fisheries Policy: EU Fisheries Management for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

This IEEP report, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, aims to contribute to the debate on the future of EU fisheries policy. It is less a response to the Commission's Green Paper, than an examination at a fundamental level of the reasons why fisheries management fails and a proposal for systemic solutions. The report outlines how a new approach to fisheries systems design and its institutional management structures can provide incentives and mechanisms to steer fisheries management in the direction of greater sustainability.

Some of the key proposals include:

- an integrated strategic framework at EU level to enable long term management, stability for the industry and consistency in decision-making;
- a strong partnership approach at regional level integrated within EU institutional structures;
- pursuit of sustainable development as the core objective of the future CFP;
- an ecosystem-based approach;
- the use of strategic management plans;
- an exploration of rights-based management; and
- the development of an EU level bycatch policy.



The report can be downloaded from the IEEP website (<http://www.ieep.org.uk>).

For further details contact: Chris Grieve, Institute for European Environmental Policy, Dean Bradley House, 52 Horseferry Rd, London SW1P 2AG; tel +44 (0)20 7799 2244; fax +44 (0)20 7799 2600; email: [cgrieve@ieeplondon.org.uk](mailto:cgrieve@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 EU'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.**

Name	_____
Organisation	_____ _____
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**The Newsletter is funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust. It is sent free of charge to key practitioners in the Member States of the European Community. If you wish to subscribe to the Newsletter, or wish to register additional recipients, please fill in the form and fax to: Chris Grieve, IEEP London, on +44 207 799 2600. It is also available at [www.ieep.org.uk](http://www.ieep.org.uk)**