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IEEP London



Margot Wallström,
Environment
Commissioner

Fisheries make a good case study for sustainable development. They provide a livelihood and food for hundreds of millions of people around the world and in particular in the developing countries. They determine the prosperity of many coastal regions including in the EU. Therefore, the depletion of fish stocks through overfishing would have disastrous economic and social consequences – everybody will suffer if we do not respect the regeneration capacity of this natural resource.

Fisheries also illustrate the problem of our natural commons. The high seas belong to everybody and no-one prevents their over-exploitation, although various international fisheries agreements are of course aiming to do so. In short, in few other areas is the relationship between our natural resource base and our economic welfare and the importance of strong global governance so clear as in fisheries.

Sustainable development is of course one of the objectives of the European Union. Many instruments are already in place to ensure sustainable development, including in fisheries. The Common Fisheries Policy has among its objectives the conservation of fish stocks and the protection of marine ecosystems. It is fully recognised that the fishing industry can only survive if the conservation of renewable marine resources requires healthy marine ecosystems which, in turn, can only be assured through environmental protection.

Last year's Commission Communication on fisheries management and nature conservation stressed the synergies that exist between the environmental and economic goals of fisheries. The review of the Common Fisheries Policy in

2002 should make further headway in getting fisheries onto a more sustainable development path.

The integration of environmental protection into Community policies is embodied in the EC Treaty. This obligation was translated into the request from the European heads of state and government when they met in Cardiff in 1998 to a number of sectoral Councils to prepare their own environmental strategies. The Fisheries Council was added to this list of Council formations at a second stage and is now requested to prepare an environmental strategy before the European Council in Göteborg in June 2001. What still lies ahead of us is the arduous exercise of defining environmental objectives for the fisheries sector together with a system of indicators for the future monitoring of policy performance, and the adoption of a long-term strategy and legal instruments to achieve policy objectives. This integration effort is part of the more ambitious project of revising the CFP in 2002.

Regardless of the exact content of the integration strategy, a desirable result would be a synergy between environmental and fisheries legal instruments. In other words, making good use of fisheries policy to achieve environmental protection, together with the possibility of using environmental instruments such as the Habitats Directive to achieve good fisheries management, and in particular the enhancement of commercial fish stocks. Other new initiatives could focus on sustainability indicators and coastal zone management as well as on the improvement of protection for non-commercial species and habitats of marine organisms. These have been scheduled as priority fields in the Commission's work programme for 2000.

Clearly, close day to day co-operation between the environment and the fisheries Directorates General in the Commission as well as at the level of the Council (in the form of a joint fisheries-environment working group) is a critical condition for progress in sustainable fisheries. This is happening. More transparency, information and training of stakeholders are equally important. I hope that this Autumn edition of El Anzuelo will contribute to this objective.

Towards a Green Paper...

As 2000 draws to a close, the official process for reviewing the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has been running for over two years. Now, with a little over two years remaining before the Council is to decide on any changes to the CFP, a growing number of interest groups are busy developing ideas and engaging in debate ahead of the production of a Green Paper by the Commission.



Chris Grieve
IEEP London

For most of 2000 the Fisheries Directorate-General has been working on its report on the fisheries situation in the EU. Required under the basic Regulation (3760/92) in order to evaluate the performance of the CFP, the report is to assess the state of fish stocks, the economic and social situation of coastal regions and the implementation of CFP rules. During the remainder of this year the Commission will also be drafting its Green Paper on the CFP review. Commissioner Fischler officially announced its development at a seminar on sustainable fisheries held in Brussels on 27 and 28 June 2000. Attended by members of the Commission, European Parliament and the Advisory Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture (ACFA), the seminar enabled participants to contribute their views on how to achieve sustainable fisheries before completion of the Green Paper.

Considerations coming from consultations over the last two years are likely to be incorporated into the paper. This includes 172 responses to the questionnaire that launched the official review process in March 1998, the outcomes from 30 regional meetings in Member States held between September 1998 and June 1999 and the opinions of both the European Parliament and ACFA. The Commission will also take

into account the many and varied submissions and suggestions made to it by the fishing industry, Member States and environmental organisations.

The Green Paper is expected to focus on five key topics that were outlined by Commissioner Fischler at the June seminar and reiterated by the Director-General of Fisheries, Steffen Schmitt, at a meeting of The Greenwich Forum on 7-8 September 2000 in Peterhead, Scotland.

- **Conservation of resources** – acknowledging stocks are depleted and considering development of a multi-annual approach to management, precautionary and/or ecosystem approaches, and a more effective fleet policy.
- **Economic and social dimensions of the CFP** – balancing the need for economic and social policies which do not undermine conservation objectives and reflecting upon the kind of fisheries sector wanted in the EU, for example, self-sufficient or subsidy-dependent.
- **External fisheries relations** – as conditions become increasingly restrictive for EU fishing interests, developing new forms of partnership for fisheries agreements; committing to sustainable exploitation and economic development of third countries.

‘Overcapacity remains the main culprit, being responsible for too much fishing on too few resources.’

- **The Mediterranean** – clarifying stock status; implementing and monitoring realistic technical rules in a challenging environment.
- **“Good governance”** – involving stakeholders more in management decisions and considering appropriate decentralisation of some aspects of the CFP.

Steffen Schmitt, in his speech on 7 September 2000, also indicated that a number of other issues will be incorporated into the Green Paper: access to the 12 mile zone; the future of the Shetland Box; relative stability; and access to the North Sea. He said some Member States are pushing for changes to some of these issues, but not, of course, the same changes.

Significantly, in highlighting what he saw as some of the fundamental problems facing the fishing industry, Commissioner Fischler said that “overcapacity remains the main culprit, being responsible for too much fishing on too few resources. EU reduction programmes have not proven sufficiently effective in tackling this scourge of most fishing industries.” Many stakeholders hope that the forthcoming Green Paper deals with this issue in particular in a comprehensive and decisive way.

After the Green Paper has been released in about February 2001, the remainder of the year will focus upon public and political debate. Formal Commission proposals are expected to be put forward for consideration before the beginning of 2002 with a view to implementing a reformed CFP by 1 January 2003.

● Chris Grieve is the new editor of *El Anzuelo*, having joined IEEP earlier this year to lead the Institute's Programme on Policy Measures for Sustainable Fisheries. Chris comes to the UK from Australia where for over ten years she worked in fisheries research and then management, working in partnership with the Australian fishing industry, NGOs, researchers and other government interests.

● IRELAND PREPARES CFP PROPOSAL – SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES THROUGH REGIONAL MANAGEMENT

In 1998 the Irish Minister of Marine and Natural Resources established the National Strategy Review Group on the Common Fisheries Policy to develop strategies and policies and publish proposals related to the review of the CFP. Launched in Killybegs, Ireland in May 2000, the main concept of the latest proposal is that stakeholders, in this case industry, administrators, scientists, development

agencies and the Commission, be involved in the decision-making process. Its key recommendations are that regional advisory committees be established; that they be confined to control and enforcement and technical conservation measures; that they are based on well-defined regions/fisheries (excluding migratory species); and that industry representatives chair the committees on a rotational basis.

● THE REFORM OF COMMON FISHERIES POLICY: TOWARDS A COMMUNITY SYSTEM OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

Andrés Hermida Trastoy, Director General of Fishing Structures and Markets, Ministry of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Shellfish, Autonomous Government of Galicia, Spain. Paper given at The Greenwich Forum, 7-8 September 2000, Peterhead, Scotland.

In contrast to views held by many, the Galician government official put forward a proposal to provide individual fishing rights accompanied by institutional reforms involving:

- equal access to Community waters and

- resources;
- initial distribution of fishing rights based on relative stability;
- multi-annual and multi-specific management objectives;
- definition of individual transferable quotas or individual transferable effort quotas;
- a framework of co-management;
- integration of Community decision-making processes, strengthening the competencies and means of the European Commission; and
- international co-operation and fishing agreements.

● TIMETABLE: REVIEW OF REGULATION 3760/92

2000	2001	2002
Regulation 3760/92 continues unless amended by Council		
Current restrictions on access to inshore waters end in 2002		
Drafting Commission report and proposals		
Official negotiations and adoption of legislation		

Multi-annual guidance programmes (MAGPs)



Chris Grieve

MAGPs fall under a key EC instrument which seeks to limit, at Community and then national level, fleet capacity and fishing effort through the setting of mandatory reduction targets. The ultimate aim is to achieve sustainable stocks by matching fishing effort with available resources.

Each MAGP usually lasts four to five years and Member States are required to outline fleet reduction strategies based upon Council guidelines. Fishing effort is defined as vessel capacity, based on engine power and vessel tonnage, multiplied by fishing activity (ie days at sea).

Prior to fixing the guidelines for MAGP IV (1997-2001) the European Commission commissioned an independent report (the 'Lassen' report) which indicated that for some stocks up to 40% of the fleet needed cutting in order to achieve a balance between fishing effort and available resources. The final agreement on MAGP IV, however, required an overall reduction of about 15%.

In MAGP IV Member States had the option to reduce days at sea in order to achieve all or part of their reduction targets. Guidelines also stated that reduction rates were weighted according to the proportion of the catch made up of depletion risk and overfished stocks.

A mid-term review of MAGP IV was recently

conducted by the Commission. This report concluded that the guidelines in the current programme had undermined the effectiveness of MAGP IV to reduce fishing capacity. Effort management regimes in a number of Member States were considered unsatisfactory and failing to deliver permanent, structural reductions in fishing effort. One of the final conclusions of the report was that the real level of effective effort has probably increased since the beginning of MAGP IV.

Prompted by the conclusions of the report the Commission held a public hearing in Brussels on 21 September 2000 to discuss reducing fleet capacity and fishing effort in the EU.

Representatives of the fishing industry, NGOs, academics, experts and other EU institutions were invited. At the time of going to press El Anzueto did not have the outcomes of the public hearing.

In light of this important and ongoing discussion, El Anzueto has solicited the views of two individuals. Guy Vermaeve from Europêche, the trade organisation representing the fishing equipment industry, and Dr Monica Verbeek, from the environmental, non-government organisation Seas At Risk, present their differing perspectives on the controversial issue of fleet or capacity reduction in the two articles that follow.

Restructuring the Community fishing fleet: Europêche's point of view

● MAGPs: AN INDUSTRY VIEW

Guy Vermaeve

Europêche

European fishing equipment producers, represented by the trade organisation Europêche, took an active part in the public hearing on 21 September 2000 which provided an opportunity for reminding stakeholders how Europêche perceives the issue of reducing fishing efforts, why it is questioning the Commission's assessment of MAGPs and in the ways it intends to seek alternative instruments to restructure the sector.

It is indeed in the interests of the Community's fisheries industry to restructure the Community fleet (for the segments where this is required) in order to adapt its size to the state of the resource. However, it is vital to conduct wide consultation with the industry to identify problems arising from implementing the reduction in the fishing effort and assess the socio-economic impact of the measures planned.

Europêche believes that the overcapacity of the Community fishing fleet is not the only cause of the poor state of the resource. The impact of climate and environmental change, species interactions, effects of marine pollution caused by other human activity, lack of enforcement by some Member States, and non Community ships flying flags of convenience are all aspects which the European Commission does not take into account at their true value, putting most of the blame on so-called overfishing.

POSITIVE INCENTIVES

There is a need for the fleets to continue to be partly renewed and for vessels to continue to be modernised – particularly for safety reasons and in order to maintain competitiveness. The Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) must therefore keep providing funding for investments for renewing and modernising the sector's production tools.

According to Europêche, restructuring the Community fleet also depends on positive incentives, encouraging the joint responsibility of fishers, and accompanying socio-economic measures. These must be properly implemented in the different Member States as soon as fishers and their companies so request.

In the opinion of the vast majority of Europêche members, the Commission's mid-term review of

MAGPs and the proposals it contains to amend programmes to achieve more substantial reductions (by doing away with both the system of weighted reduction rates and management of the fishing effort by restricting vessel activities) are not acceptable.

Europêche notes that the Commission Decisions setting the MAGP targets for the fleets of the various Member States were not adopted until December 1997 and that the observation period for the – supposedly mid-term – assessment of MAGP IVs does not allow the direct effects of programmes on the state of the resource to be measured.

Furthermore, the Commission is following too global an approach. The report merely analyses the state of the Community fleet without differentiating between countries, fishing segments or fisheries. The figures put forward by the Commission appear inaccurate and unreliable rather than based on current, reliable scientific facts.

Most players in the sector have often called for an end to MAGPs – at least with regard to capacity reduction – considering that they are not a suitable instrument to manage the resource and that they are likely to generate negative effects on vital aspects of the CFP such as the possibility to modernise or build vessels.

Europêche supports sustainable development in terms of resource management largely based on a TAC and quota policy, technical measures and appropriate control throughout the sector. It welcomes the Commission's proposal to extend the duration of the MAGP IV period by one year, but without any further amendment since this would have a detrimental effect on planning activities and investments in fishing equipment in Europe.

Europêche notes with interest that the Commission intends to undertake wide consultation with interested parties in order to define more effective instruments to ensure long-term viability of the fisheries sector. As part of this, the Commission intends to seek alternatives to the Multi-annual Guidance Programmes. These could take the form of joint management measures along the lines of those which exist in certain Member States, combining a greater role played by those operating in the sector and the subsidiarity principle. Europêche is engaged in wide discussions on problems stemming from reducing effort as well as broader issues relating to the CFP review.

Translated from French by Mark Tuddenham

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'Europêche supports sustainable development largely based on a TAC and quota policy, technical measures and appropriate control.'

A fishing fleet for fishers and the environment

● MAGPs: AN NGO PERSPECTIVE

Dr Monica Verbeek
Seas At Risk

European marine capture fisheries are facing a crisis of dwindling fish stocks and fisher employment. The principal challenge facing all stakeholders is protection of the environment and fish stocks while minimising the effect of measures on fisher jobs and livelihoods.

An alternative to relying primarily on TACs and quotas is a fleet properly adjusted in size to match the available stocks. Unfortunately, attempts to tackle the problem of overcapacity have had little effect on fishing effort. That MAGP IV would not succeed in its aim to reach a more sustainable balance between resources and exploitation was clear to many from the start. Despite recommendations from experts of up to 40% reductions in fishing effort, the Commission only recommended 30% for depleted stocks and 20% for over-fished stocks, resulting in an overall reduction of about 15%. These were watered down even further by Council when a weighting system according to the composition of the vessel catches was introduced. This resulted in an overall reduction of about 5%. The Commission recently suggested modifying the programme to make it more effective but this was turned down by the Fisheries Council in June.

Decommissioning schemes may not have impacted on stocks but certainly have on fishing communities. With decommissioning of older, smaller, less technically sophisticated and more labour intensive boats, jobs are swapped for new electronics, bigger engines and the latest on board gizmos. Recent Commission figures suggest an average decrease of 18% in fishing employment in Europe against a nominal capacity reduction of only 8.4% in power and 12.1% in tonnage between 1990 and 1997. This undermining process is still supported by new FIGG regulations despite the general principle that public funding should not contribute to increasing fishing capacity (in terms of tonnage and power). Modernisation of vessels leads to higher efficiency, even if the amount of tonnage or power stays the same. Without appropriate intervention the industry will in time consist of a very small number of very large "efficient" vessels and not many fishers.

That fish stocks and the environment need substantial reductions in fishing effort is clear. The logistical and economic arguments for permanent capacity reduction are equally clear. What is less clear is how decommissioning can be organised to create a fleet for fishers

and the environment. Real and deep cuts in capacity are needed to protect stocks and this will require a political will absent from the scene to date.

The way the cuts are made however, needs to be tailored. Criteria for the sectors of the fleet and the types of vessel that are decommissioned need more attention. Environmental criteria might include the impact of different types of gear on the marine environment, both in terms of selectivity and damage to the seabed, and the energy consumption of the fleet segment. From a fisher welfare perspective, the quality of the fish landed and marketed (maximising income from a given catch), and the employment generated by the fleet segment would be important. The current exemption for non-trawling vessels smaller than 12 metres is a first, rather unsophisticated attempt to address the employment criteria and might prove helpful. Other accompanying measures will be needed to support the creation of an appropriate fleet structure, including economic instruments.

With an appropriate fleet size and structure, a method of fine tuning the fishing effort to local situations will be essential. Licences and enforcement measures should be used to control the number and type of vessels and thus the effort expended in a particular area or on a particular stock. They could also be used to control access to sensitive areas and the type of gear used, to restrict the scale and sophistication of vessels and to protect communities reliant on local small-scale fisheries. There should be safeguards built in to ensure that licences cannot concentrate in the hands of a few companies or be combined to allow the operation of super-vessels. The devolution of licensing power to local managers could be used to reallocate responsibility for fisheries management to fishing communities. To enhance the effectiveness of fisheries management, local licensing systems could be integrated into management plans that cover all activities affecting the local marine environment. Such integrated management plans can only be successful if all stakeholders are involved.

From an environmental point of view the virtue of a fleet adjusted to the stock and environmental considerations is clear. From a fisher point of view the burden of regulation would be greatly reduced. The need for quotas might in some cases be eliminated, or at least the quota would closely match the capacity of vessels to catch fish. Together it holds the possibility of fishers simply being left to get on and fish, in balance with the environment they rely on.

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'Real and deep cuts in capacity are needed to protect stocks and this will require a political will absent from the scene to date.'

Nature conservation concerns over deep sea fisheries



Clare Eno

The red fish – under threat from overfishing

By Dr Clare Eno

CCW

The Countryside Council for Wales is one of the UK's statutory nature conservation agencies and this article is written on behalf of their inter-agency marine fisheries working group.

The deep sea, which extends from the shelf edge or Continental slope and covers about 92% of the world's oceans, is probably the last bastion of this planet that remains largely unknown and unexplored. As guaranteed returns on traditional Community stocks are becoming less predictable, attention is turning to alternative fisheries for non-quota stocks, such as deep sea species. Indeed, it appears governments are actively encouraging this move, with the support of the EU's Structural Funds, to build up track records on non-quota species, before TACs are introduced.

Despite deep sea fisheries only having been in existence since the mid 1970s and the relatively few vessels involved, the most commercially important deep sea species in the north east Atlantic have already been over-exploited and are in decline. The fishing methods employed are generally a refinement of techniques developed for shallow water, using heavier gear. The body shape of many deep sea fish makes it difficult for them to escape through traditional trawls and discards of immature and unwanted species are very high. Eighty-five different species of non-target fish were recorded

Nordic-wide fish eco-labelling scheme proposal creates conflict

Nordic fisheries ministers have agreed in principle to a set of criteria to be used for evaluation of the sustainability of fisheries. The agreement, reached at a Norway meeting in August, follows the recommendations of a Nordic technical working group report. The governments of the Nordic countries

are aiming for the criteria-set to be globally accepted as a platform for ecolabelling of wild fish and fish products. The report also states that ecolabelling would be voluntary and consumer/market driven, so that, for example, private bodies and NGOs could be the certifying bodies.

However, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), which runs its own global ecolabelling scheme for seafood products, has criticised the scheme,

in a discard study on French and Scottish trawlers operating in the Rockall Trough. Deep sea sharks also make up a substantial bycatch and the ecological effects of removing large proportions of the top predators are unknown.

Deep sea species are known to be long lived, late maturing with low levels of fecundity, so they are far more susceptible to over exploitation than most shallow water species. In many deep sea fisheries, attention is now turning to species that were previously discarded, as captures of the more valuable species are becoming less viable.

Strict control of deep sea fishing is not only required to safeguard rapidly dwindling stocks, but also the entire ecosystem upon which they depend. Evidence of extensive damage to deep sea coral reefs is starting to emerge in north east Atlantic waters. These reefs, which possibly take centuries to form, are an example of a habitat that is in imminent danger of destruction before it has even been located and studied. The red fish, associated with these reefs, is currently under threat from overfishing.

According to Franz Fischler, the Fisheries Commissioner, 'we must act very soon to ensure the protection of these fragile deep-water species before irreversible damage is caused by unregulated fisheries'. However, the deep sea lies predominantly beyond the national and European jurisdiction of the 200 miles Fisheries Zones. The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), which has responsibility for managing fisheries in international waters, is therefore, the most obvious organisation to accept, or at least administer, responsibility for conservation of the natural features and biodiversity of the deep sea in the north east Atlantic. There are plainly also European Union fleet responsibilities.

The NEAFC should take immediate action to reduce fishing efforts and apply the precautionary principle to the management of deep sea fisheries in line with the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fishing and the UN Fish Stocks Agreement. A range of conservation and management measures need to be fully considered in talks called for by Fischler between the EC and NEAFC this November to determine the potential application of TACs to several deepwater stocks, which the Commission recently proposed would come into effect from 2001.

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accusing the Nordic governments of attempting to undermine what it is doing. A senior Norwegian government official has resigned an advisory role to the MSC and is now leading the Nordic ecolabel development process in the belief that ecolabelling initiatives should be government run.

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Back to regional management of Swedish inshore fisheries?

Niki Sporrang
WWF Sweden

In contrast to some Member States, Sweden does not protect its inshore fisheries by regional management of the coastal resources. In 1993 Sweden changed from a regional management scheme administered by the County Administrative Boards to an open access system. The main reason was difficulties in administration of the many local agreements, but also a lack of compliance to the rules by non-local fishermen. Regional rules were abolished and replaced by national regulation of fishing activities.

Today, Swedish inshore fisheries up to four nautical miles are open to all licensed Swedish fishermen (within the TACs). Despite agreements for some stocks that the catch should be distributed over the year, an overcapacity in the fisheries sector creates a "race for fish". Smaller boats find it increasingly difficult to compete with the bigger ones that can take a large share of the quota in a few hauls. This is coupled with depletions of many inshore fish stocks, such as European eel, cod, perch and pike along the south-eastern coast of Sweden. Over the last few years, many inshore fishermen have not been able to make ends meet.

To protect both local fishermen and the fish stocks, discussion about regional

management of inshore fisheries has flared up again. In March, WWF-Sweden held a joint seminar with one of Sweden's smaller producer organisations, NBPO, and a recently formed association of inshore fishermen, SYEF, about the management of inshore fisheries. The seminar was attended by over 60 people from different stakeholder groups and during debate many views were put forward.

In April, the National Board of Fisheries was commissioned by the Swedish government to analyse the situation for small-scale inshore fisheries, specifically the importance of different types of fisheries from an ecological, economic and regional point of view. By January 2001, suggestions for management methods that will allow inshore fishermen to fish throughout the year have to be provided.

Apart from this, an official evaluation of resource management programmes for coastal areas (SOU 2000:67) by the Swedish Environmental Advisory Council is coming to an end. Among other things, they suggest a temporary closure of the Baltic cod fishery; that specific quotas are given to inshore fishermen; and that regional management schemes are developed by the affected counties and the National Board of Fisheries.

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RSPB sets challenge for CFP review

A new report, entitled 'Managing EC Inshore Fisheries: Time for Change', written by IEEP and commissioned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and BirdLife International, calls for the Common Fisheries Policy inshore access restriction to be placed on a permanent footing.

The report calls for Member States' fisheries management systems to be extended out to 12 nautical miles compared to the 6 mile limit commonly applied in Europe under current Regulations and for the objectives of the inshore restriction to be extended to explicitly support 'social and environmental development'. It

highlights the particular importance of inshore waters for marine wildlife and conservation, as well as the social and economic importance of inshore fisheries in many of Europe's most remote regions.

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New UK-Spanish committee on fishing

A new joint committee to promote better understanding and co-operation between the UK and Spanish fishing industries has been set up by both governments, UK Fisheries Minister Elliot Morley announced in July.

It was agreed during talks in Madrid on July 11 with the Spanish Fisheries Minister that both fishing industries had areas of common interest. These include promoting fisheries conservation, developing a closer understanding of regional and zonal approaches to fisheries management and finding ways of co-operating on fishing grounds to avoid gear conflict.

Mr Morley said, "It is another step forward in increasing the involvement of fishermen in fisheries issues as part of developing a regional aspect of the Common Fisheries Policy."

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Fish shopping guide for environmentally conscious consumers

WWF Germany and the Bremen division of a German consumer organisation launched a joint publication, entitled 'Shopping Guide for Fish', at the International Fish 2000 exhibition in Bremen, Germany in July 2000. As well as providing information on general consumer health issues related to the consumption of fish, the brochure informs consumers about specific environmental problems caused by fisheries. Overfishing, bycatch and harmful fishing techniques are described for the most popular fish species eaten in Germany.

The recommendations of the guide are based on the severity of environmental problems associated with specific fisheries and are divided into four categories ranging from 'recommended' to 'not recommended' for consumption. Atlantic mackerel, Pacific halibut, herring and Alaska wild salmon earn a rating of recommended. In contrast Atlantic halibut, red fish, all sharks, plaice and Atlantic wild salmon are not recommended.

The brochure outlines criteria for sustainable fisheries and presents the Marine Stewardship Council labelling initiative as an example of a solution to the current crisis in global fisheries. In addition to promoting the need for political change, the brochure emphasises the power of consumer choice in the realisation of environmentally friendly and sustainable fisheries.

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Pesca programme in Italy tackles key issues

The regional development agency of Emilia Romagna in Italy (ERVET SpA) is running a study on the fisheries sector in the Province of Ferrara under a PIC-Pesca funded programme. The devolution of the majority of fisheries matters, which were previously the responsibility of the Member States, to coastal Regions and to local Province governments is presenting a challenging opportunity to local administrations, who are to draft the first fisheries management plan for the Province.

Within the study framework, several public workshops have been organised in order to build awareness about sustainable development in fisheries and the environmental and socio-economic pressures being felt in the region.

The first workshop on seafood quality has pointed out the urgent need for consumer education programmes and for seafood value-added strategies. Only 15 out of 60 "commercial" species fished in the Adriatic are currently finding easy market outlets due to rapid changes in the perception of what defines a "commercial species". This has resulted in a serious discard problem.

The second workshop will address Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and will be held in Ferrara on 19 September 2000 on the occasion of the first meeting of the "blue table" – the managers and stakeholders institutional permanent forum on fisheries set up by the Region Emilia Romagna fisheries act.

Several environment and fisheries interactions will be discussed such as eutrophication, alien species, water quality from river basins and interactions between fisheries and other economic activities along the coast, such as tourism and gas extraction. Through the dissemination of best practice, the workshop should provide an opportunity to local administrators to understand more

about inter-sectoral management approaches in the planning of the coastal belt. This event has already gained support from DG Fish, a representative of which will be speaking at the event.

A third workshop to be held near the end of 2000, will address the role of Seafood Producers Organisations and their increased role in co-management of marine resources provided for by the CFP.

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Proposal for measures to combat illegal fishing for toothfish

The Commission has adopted a proposal aiming to introduce measures to document catches of Antarctic and Patagonian toothfish. The documentation scheme, which was developed by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), provides for the obligatory presentation of a catch document for toothfish consignments destined for landing, transshipment, import, export or re-export. This slow-growing toothfish has been the target of substantial illegal, unregulated and unreported fisheries in the Southern Ocean over the past few years.

As one of the contracting parties of CCAMLR, these measures became binding on the EU on 9 May 2000. The scheme is one of a range of instruments to combat illegal fishing of fragile Antarctic species and to protect the marine environment in this region. The scheme should also contribute to better protection of sea birds as longlining used to catch the toothfish sometimes trap seabirds on their hooks.

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The common sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*): between species protection and culinary delight

Andreas Bauer
Germany

Forbidden fruits are known to taste better. The following anecdote highlights the tensions between the exploitation of species and their conservation. The story is currently circulating among fisheries and marine biologists; it is funny and tragic in equal measure.

The common (Atlantic or Baltic) sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*) is a living fossil. It is one of around 25 different species of sturgeon, most of which are either endangered or near extinction due to overfishing and environmental damage. *Acipenser sturio* is at the top of the danger list.

Having once inhabited many of Europe's seas and rivers, now individual catches and sightings point to only a few relic populations. There have been more or less effective attempts nationally and internationally to maintain or protect the species, which now benefits from the highest level of protection under both German (and EC) law.

In September 1993 in the North Sea near the island of Helgoland a very large, old female sturgeon was caught as bycatch in a trawler net. The fish, alive when it was landed, was a spectacular specimen, weighing in at 142 kilos and measuring 2.85 metres in length.

Curiously, one month after the landing of the female fish, the German Federal Nature Conservation Agency, working at the time on the international protection of the sturgeon, was delivered the head of a very large sturgeon for analysis. Further investigations into the origin of these remains revealed that the rest



The disappointed author with the remains of the meal that have been preserved in formaldehyde. This conservation effort means the head is no longer suitable for consumption...

of the fish had been dismembered and prepared by a diligent chef in the kitchens of the Bonn Interior Ministry, to provide sustenance for Ministry officials.

In addition, it was discovered that the Ministry's luncheon was the same female sturgeon caught a month earlier in the North Sea. The female had 12 kilos of eggs in its womb – tasty caviar or potential basis for a new sturgeon population? If the female had had the choice, perhaps it would eventually have made its way up the Rhine to Bonn, passing all the cooking pots and other dangerous obstacles to lay its eggs.

Further sturgeon catches of this size are unknown to this day, despite a rapidly created group that was formed to save the sturgeon and which offered a reward of DM 10,000 per sturgeon 'head', or should I say per 'living fish'.

Translated from German by Clare Coffey

OSPAR – quality status report

The first assessment of the status of the marine environment for the whole North-East Atlantic was launched on 30 June 2000 by the OSPAR Commission, meeting in Copenhagen. Five regional reports show that the human impact and type of pressure exerted varies enormously between the different regions of the maritime area.

The sustainable management of fish stocks, the continuing impact of some fisheries on fragile ecosystems, and the elimination of inputs of hazardous substances are identified as the main areas where action is needed.

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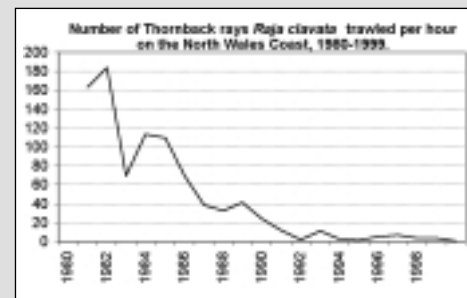
Fisheries science and conservation of biodiversity

Some of the themes explored in this year's ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) Annual Science Conference focussed on the contribution that fisheries science can make to conservation of the marine environment.

Held in Bruges, Belgium, from 27 – 30 September 2000, the programme explored ICES contributions to the state of knowledge on, and conservation of, biodiversity as well as the meaning of conservation biology in ICES activities. Topics included genetic, species and habitat conservation; the meaning of biodiversity to partner Commissions; management objectives for biodiversity; monitoring requirements; effects of biodiversity loss on ecosystem functioning; and addressing biodiversity in ICES advisory tasks.

The Annual Science Conference also covered sixteen other theme sessions focussing on a wide range of topics from general fisheries and marine ecology to gear

Disappearing Rays – a local example of a European problem



Sarah Fowler
Nature Conservation Bureau

Rays, the flattened close relatives of sharks and dogfish, used to be very important in UK commercial fisheries, comprising about 15% of landings in the 1930s. In the 1950s 27% of the whole UK ray catch came from the Bristol Channel and South Wales, where there are large ray nursery grounds. Unregulated fisheries halved populations from 1964 to 1974 and by the mid 1970s South Wales ray stocks were depleted. The largest and slowest growing, the mis-named Common Skate (*Dipturus (Raja) batis*), was extinct in Welsh waters by the early 1980s and is now on the brink of extinction in coastal waters elsewhere. Today, the second-largest species and formerly abundant Thornback Ray (*Raja clavata*) is beginning to disappear.

Some English and Welsh Sea Fisheries Committees impose catch size limits for rays within 0-6 miles. Undersized rays are returned to the sea and survival is high. These regulations are unpopular with inshore fishermen because they do not apply to vessels fishing outside 6 miles, nor to the carriage of undersized rays within 0-6 miles, nor to landings of undersized rays in local

ports. They are therefore difficult to enforce and ineffective in protecting juveniles outside 6 miles.

National regulation of catch and landing sizes within 0-12 mile territorial waters would remove some discrimination against inshore fishermen and improve management. This would still be unpopular with UK fishermen because it would not apply to other EU vessels with rights under the CFP to fish within the 6-12 mile limit. Foreign fishing boats don't have to comply with regulations of national governments, only with European fisheries legislation – and there's none of the latter for any species of shark, skate or ray.

It is essential therefore that vulnerable wide-ranging species like rays and sharks are protected by European legislation throughout EU waters, particularly now that the FAO International Plan of Action for Sharks requires shark and ray fishing nations to sustainably manage populations and critical habitats – like nursery grounds. Additionally, vessels fishing within national waters should, under the CFP, have to abide by national regulations. This would encourage governments to protect their own fish stocks more effectively, without discriminating against their own fishermen.

Finally, enforcement of fisheries regulations at sea would be made much easier if vessels carrying fish within national waters are only permitted to do so if none of those fish are below the legal limits set within that country.

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selectivity, development of reference points and co-operative research.

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A new EU Data collection framework

Regulation 1543/2000 is a new legal framework adopted by the Council that seeks to consolidate and co-ordinate data collection by EU Member States which is needed to

provide scientific advice for implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy.

A minimum programme covering the essential information for scientific evaluations will be set up by the Commission. This will include biological data on fish stocks, information about fishing fleets and their activities and information on other economic and technical issues. Member States will develop national programmes, which are to include the information required by the minimum programme. These national programmes will be eligible for

Community funding and will cover six-year periods, except for the first, which will start in 2002 and end in 2006.

An extended programme will also be drawn up by the Community to include additional scientific information to substantially improve evaluations. Financial assistance may also be available for these additional elements included in national programmes.

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The Swedish Presidency of the EU Council of Ministers

The Swedish government has announced that their work during the Swedish Presidency will focus on three issues: enlargement, employment and environment. In the official programme, fisheries is quite far down on the list. However, the further development of the Council strategies for continued integration of environmental considerations into fisheries policy is a priority issue.

In fisheries policy, priority will be accorded to the negotiations on the next development programme for the fishing fleet with a view to adapting fishing capacity to fish resources for the period 2002-2006. Sweden will also encourage a broad debate on the Commission's Green Paper on the Common Fisheries Policy.

'The Green Paper is the really interesting issue in a long-term perspective', says Henrik Svenberg, Swedish chairman of the Council Working Party for Internal Fisheries Questions. 'We hope to start the debate on these issues during our presidency and then leave it in the hands of Belgium'.

For further details contact: Henrik Svenberg, Swedish chairman of the Council Working Party for Internal Fisheries Questions; email henrik.svenberg@foreign.ministry.se

State of marine environment in the Mediterranean

A report entitled 'State and pressure of the marine and coastal Mediterranean environment' has been prepared by the European Environment Agency and its European Topic Centre on the Marine and Coastal Environment, in co-operation with the UNEP's Mediterranean Action Plan.

Based on the best available information in 1997-98, the report concludes that the presence of pollution hot spots and the pressures of tourism in coastal areas present a major problem in the Mediterranean Sea, while the state of the open waters is generally good.

The report identifies an urgent need for measures to control fishing effort in coastal areas. Recommendations include the use of legal and market based instruments for integrated coastal zone management; careful selection of aquaculture sites to avoid adverse coastal impacts; and the creation of protected areas.

For further details contact: Anita Kunitzer, Project Manager, Marine and Coastal Environment; European Environment Agency; Kongens Nytorv 6, DK-1050 Copenhagen; tel 45 33 36 7155; fax 45 33 36 7199; email Anita.Kunitzer@eea.eu.int

International conference on control

On 24 to 27 October 2000 the European Commission will be hosting an international conference to compare various monitoring systems and identify best practice for fisheries control and monitoring.

Four major themes will be considered at the conference, with a number of topics to be covered under each theme. With invited experts from Europe and around the world, topics will include legal frameworks, new monitoring technologies, the costs and benefits of different control and monitoring methods and the role of professionals and stakeholders in the fisheries enforcement process. Attendance at the conference is by invitation only.

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Services related to the CFP

The Directorate-General for Fisheries published in August 2000 in the Official Journal of the European

Communities a call for expressions of interest concerning the studies and assistance services related to the Common Fisheries Policy. This call for expressions of interest will be used to draw-up a list of potential contractors for a three-year period. It covers four fields: socio-economic studies; scientific studies; evaluation and communication studies. The second field, scientific studies, is to cover principally environmental issues, discard practices, monitoring and control, fishing gear, by-catches, among other issues.

All the documents concerning this call for expressions of interest are available at the Commission website: http://europa.eu.int/comm/fisheries/new_s_corner/calls/calls_en.htm

LIFE-nature

A new LIFE instrument (L'Instrument Financier pour l'Environnement), LIFE III, to cover the years 2000 to 2004 was adopted by the Commission in July 2000. Of the areas to receive funding, LIFE-nature is perhaps the most relevant to fisheries. The submission deadline to the Commission for LIFE-nature, via the National Authorities has been set for October 31, 2000. Details on how to apply can be found at the Commission website: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/life/nature/prepare.htm>

IIEP London is an independent body for the analysis and advancement of environmental policies in Europe. While a major focus of work is on the development, implementation and evaluation of the EC's environmental policy, IIEP 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 IIEP'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.

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, IIEP London, on +44 207 799 2600. It is also available at www.iiep.org.uk

Name	_____
Organisation	_____
Address	_____



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.

Dolphin strandings only the tip of the iceberg...

■ The French article in volume 5 of *El Anzuelo* shows only the tip of the iceberg of dolphin bycatch along the western coasts of Europe. In every situation in which cetacean bycatch has been measured accurately for a fishery it is clear that very few of the animals killed actually appear as strandings on any coast. Typically the recoveries as strandings are well below ten per cent of known mortality so strandings events with

more than 600 animals over two weeks, such as the French have reported, must cause grave concern on their own. They are however only part of a wider pattern of common dolphin mortalities in European pelagic trawl fisheries from Ireland to West Africa.

The European Cetacean Society discussed this issue at its annual conference in Cork, Ireland, earlier this year and agreed a statement calling for

action at European level on this issue. The statement, with references to relevant evidence, is available on the ECS website at <http://web.inter.nl.net/users/J.W.Broekema/ecs/ecs1.htm>

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‘Very few of the animals killed actually appear as strandings on any coast.’

News from the Netherlands sheds more light on the cockle fisheries debate...

■ Virtually all Dutch NGOs with an interest in the conservation of coastal waters are opposed to mechanical cockle fisheries and consider the current Dutch policy to be totally inadequate for a timely recovery of important habitats and bird populations. Two NGOs, BirdLife/Vogelbescherming Nederland and the Wadden Society, began legal proceedings in 1998 against the Nature Conservation Law permits for cockle suction dredging in the Dutch Wadden Sea.

The European Commission has recently withdrawn the European Court case against the Dutch government for violating the EU habitats and birds Directives in the Dutch Wadden Sea. The Commission is

apparently giving the government the benefit of the doubt until 2003, when the Dutch government has said it will decide if the current scale and intensity of the mechanical cockle fishery is sustainable.

Discussions about the sustainability of shellfisheries should primarily focus on the direct, indirect and cumulative effects on the ecosystems, as these are in general much larger than the impact on the fish stock itself. At least 17 different direct, indirect and cumulative effects of mechanical cockle dredging on the coastal ecosystem, and birds in particular, have been proven or hypothesised.

An eco-label under the Marine Stewardship Council might be

considered and when exclusively granted to hand cockle fisheries could provide consumers with the possibility to direct shellfisheries in a more sustainable direction.

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 Correction: *El Anzuelo* apologises for the incorrect spelling of the photographer's name in the Fiddler crab story, vol 5. The name should have read: Pedro Brito