

# EI Anzuelo

EUROPEAN NEWSLETTER ON FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT



VOL 10 • 2002 • ISSN 1464-6749

## NAVIGATING ROUGH WATERS



Sue Scott

Farmed salmon in cage

**Niki Sporrong**  
Editor

Fisheries managers seem to be facing a more difficult task than ever before, both in Europe and around the world. The WorldFish Center (previously ICLARM) estimates that in twenty years from now, around one billion people in developing countries will face shortages of fish, their primary source of animal protein. As a result, prices will be rising. The Center also predicts that conflicts between countries over fishing grounds will increase. According to the FAO, around 50 per cent of global fish stocks are fully exploited, while up to 28 per cent are overexploited or depleted. The overexploited category is on the increase.

In the European Union, where reform proposals on the Common Fisheries Policy are currently debated by Member States, stakeholders have been forced to confront an onslaught of bad news this year. The state of the marine environment is not improving. Climate change is thought to be changing the distribution of many species, among them some commercially important fish stocks. Chemical pollution is also affecting fisheries. Last year, the Baltic Sea fisheries were hard hit by new legislation on dioxin levels in fish used both for feed and for human consumption.

Most recently, the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) Advisory Committee on Fisheries Management has released its advice for next year's quotas. The scientists are warning the European Commission and national governments that cod stocks are now so depleted in the North Sea, Skagerrak, Irish Sea and waters west of Scotland that they are in danger of collapsing. Several other stocks seem to be headed the

same way, such as hake and eel. A complete closure of the cod fisheries in the above areas is suggested. The advice also extends to fishing activities targeting mixed stocks and those that result in bycatch of cod. These include haddock, whiting, plaice, sole and nephrops fisheries, for which harvesting would have to be greatly reduced until it can be proved that catch rates for cod are close to zero.

A fault line seems to be opening between more progressive managers, at both national and EU level, and the fishing industry. While managers say that firm action in line with the scientific advice is needed, industry sources dispute the science underpinning the advice. Some claim that climate change has changed migration patterns, and that fish stocks are just more dispersed than in the past. Scottish industry leaders say that a closure would in effect wipe out the remaining whitefish fleet in Britain, costing up to 20,000 jobs.

Over the past decade, on average 8,000 jobs in the harvesting sector have been lost every year in the EU as a whole. Whatever decision is made in the end, it is clear that the fish stocks cannot sustain the current fishing pressure. It is also clear that the current management system so far has failed to protect the fish stocks – the very basis for a sustainable industry. It has been excruciatingly slow in reacting to the increasing plight of both fish stocks and the marine environment as a whole.

One example of this is the much-needed EU recovery plans for cod and hake that have been on the table for some time now. They were intended to be put into place after last year's emergency measures taken by the Commission to protect the stocks. But both the process of developing them and the political process needed for an agreement have proved very time-consuming. The proposals were discussed again at the last Fisheries Council meeting, but no decision is likely before mid-December. This does not bode well for any future multi-annual management plans – a key aspect of the reform proposals.

Aquaculture is often seen as a solution to the depletion of wild fish stocks, but the sector has its own problems. Over the last few months, there has been increasing conflict around the aquaculture sector and its products. In the Mediterranean, the practice of tuna fattening in sea cages has raised concerns for the already

*Continued on page eleven*

### INSIDE

## 2-3

Update on CFP reform

## 4-7

Focus on the Aquaculture

## 8-12

European Scene

Edited by Niki Sporrong of IEEP London.  
Translated into French by Ilona Bossanyi.  
This Newsletter is financially supported by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, UK

Contributions from Don Staniford; Euan Dunn, Zoltan Waliczky and Szabolcs Nagy (BirdLife International); Indrani Lutchman; Brian O'Riordan (International Collective in Support of Fishworkers); Mark Tasker (JNCC, UK); and Sergi Tudela (WWF Mediterranean Programme).



IEEP London

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

Issue 11 of this Newsletter will be produced in Spring 2003. If you have material to send or comments please contact the editor: Niki Sporrong, the Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), Dean Bradley House, 52 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AG, UK. Tel +44 (0)20 7799 2244; Fax +44 (0)20 7799 2600; email: nsporrong@ieeplondon.org.uk



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

# CFP Compromise on the Cards

**Niki Sporrang**  
IEEP London

**W**e are rapidly approaching the end of what was heralded as the year of CFP reform. In May, the Commission released its much-delayed first package of proposals. Since then, a few more documents have been released, notably on aquaculture (September), Mediterranean fisheries (October), and recently on the socio-economic impact of fleet restructuring. At the time of writing, important documents are still awaited, including a strategy for distant water fisheries.

While the Commission continues its drafting, key legislative proposals for CFP reform, including the proposed new CFP framework regulation, have been pored over and picked apart in and by the Member States.

## Member States divided...

The Member States have been divided on much of the content, and especially on issues related to aid (particularly renewal and modernisation of the fleet or export of capacity to non-EU waters), multi-annual management plans and the Commission's ambitions to reduce both capacity and fishing effort over the coming years. For some, the Commission proposals focus too heavily on the environmental aspects of what they see as a primarily economic activity; other Member States see this change in direction as essential.

Occasionally, the Member States agree, but not with the Commission. For example, proposals to coordinate control and enforcement at the EU level or delegating the annual adjustment of multi-annual management plans to a Commission management body, do not have support in the Council.

The 'Friends of Fishing' coalition – France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Ireland – has been outspoken and is opposed to many aspects of the Commission's approach. The coalition has a blocking minority in the Council and they will have to be appeased or split, or both.

## ... but compromise on the horizon

Despite the many differences, a compromise seems to be emerging. The Danish Presidency has set its sights

firmly on reaching agreement in the Council on 27-29 November, and is working hard together with the Commission to prepare a compromise that most countries can accept.

Consultation with delegations from the different Member States has taken place over the last few weeks to find common ground. Exactly what the compromise will contain remains uncertain, but it may well include changes to key aspects of the proposals, as follows:

- Restricting multi-annual management plans to stocks below safe biological limits. For other stocks, a less ambitious approach would be taken involving the Council in setting multi-annual and multi-species Total Allowable Catch limits (TACs).
- Extending the phase-out period for fleet renewal and modernisation aid to 2005 rather than 2003 as initially proposed. Funding for the export of capacity and for creating joint ventures outside the EU may be left intact, contrary to the Commission's wishes.
- Developing specific measures in favour of small-scale fishing (ie boats under 12 metres). These may include reserving a share of national fishing fleet effort allocations for the inshore sector, making aid available for diversification (eg enabling coastal fishermen to do something else part-time) and keeping modernisation grants for the smaller vessels in order to maintain employment in coastal areas.

The Friends of Fishing have expressed concern on several issues related to the adjustment of fishing capacity, specifically proposals that capacity should be permanently reduced. The effectiveness of the capacity reduction proposals is dependent on multi-annual management plans and availability of structural aid, however. If major changes are made in these two areas, the fleet capacity aspects of the proposals will automatically be weakened as well.

## Parliament on track

Meanwhile, the European Parliament is dealing with

### ● REFORM TIMETABLE

<b>November</b>	<b>Political groups in European Parliament to discuss draft Parliament reports. 27-29 the Council of Agriculture and Fisheries meets in Brussels</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>4-5 European Parliament votes on reform proposals 16-19 the Council of Agriculture and Fisheries meets in Brussels</b>

reform proposals at something of an express pace. The Fisheries Committee has already prepared reports on the legal proposals and the action plan on integrating environmental protection requirements into the CFP. The political groups will discuss the reports during meetings in the last week of November, and the European Parliament vote on the legal proposals is expected at the 4-5 December session.

## Decision, but no fish?

Agreement on the framework regulation is ideally needed before the end of 2002. Otherwise, EU coastal fisheries within the 6-12 nautical mile zones will be open to vessels from all Member States, rather than being restricted to the coastal state and/or vessels with historical rights. For some Member States in particular, such an 'open season', and its associated media coverage, would not be worth risking.

If agreement cannot be reached in November as planned, the Council has another chance in December, but at this meeting Ministers will also have to deal with the issue of fishing quotas for next year. With recent warnings of possible cod stock collapse in the North Sea, this will not be an easy matter. In addition, many EU fisheries Ministers are also responsible for agriculture, and are consequently engaged in a set of difficult and politically sensitive reform discussions in this area as well.

Whatever the eventual date that agreement is reached, the real question for those interested in sustainable fisheries will be whether the final deal will save the fish stocks and the coastal communities that depend upon them.

## ● Commission tables strategy for aquaculture

The strategy for the sustainable development of European aquaculture can be seen as a response to criticism of a lack of a coherent policy in this area. The Commission document sets out three objectives for the aquaculture sector: to create long-term employment; to assure availability of safe, high-quality products to consumers; and to ensure an environmentally sound industry.

A range of specific actions is proposed for each of the three objectives. On employment, the aim is to increase jobs in the sector by 8,000 to 10,000 in the next five years, providing some alternative employment for those affected by the expected changes in the capture sector. To achieve this, the current yearly growth of the aquaculture sector will have to increase from 3.4 to 4 per cent, with an emphasis on farming of molluscs, new species and 'organic' certification.

The Commission acknowledges that this must be paralleled with efforts to resolve land-use conflicts (predominantly in coastal areas), intensified marketing and product promotion, and improved

governance in the sector as a whole. To fulfil the objective of ensuring an environmentally sound industry, the development of a set of standards and/or voluntary agreements is proposed. Of particular note is the idea of bringing aquaculture under existing Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Nitrates Directives.

Another action to support sustainable growth is a new set of priorities for aid to the sector. In the past, uncontrolled expansion has disrupted the market. Therefore the Commission proposes that modernisation of existing farms and diversification should be favoured in the future. It also wants to fund training, monitoring, research and development, clean farming technologies, and traditional aquaculture activities such as mollusc farming.

It has still to be seen whether, taken as a whole, these adjustments will lead to 'sustainable development' of the industry, ie one that respects environmental limits for present and future generations.

## ● Ways to counter the socio-economic impact of stock depletion

As a response to the potential social, economic and regional consequences of the current state of many fish stocks and the proposed restructuring of the fishing industry, the European Commission has come forward with an action plan. The plan has been prepared after consultations with the Member States, and contains more immediate measures that can be taken, as well as more long-term possibilities.

A number of concrete possibilities within the framework of the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) are outlined, based on reprogramming of EUR 611 million. Many options are currently under-utilised by the Member States – only 3 per cent of available aid is used for social measures, compared to 22 per cent for fleet renewal and modernisation. Other possible EU funding sources are also identified.

The action plan has a certain focus on the small-scale, coastal

part of the industry, which has been identified as more labour intensive and therefore more important from an employment perspective. Ways of attracting more young people to the sector are also discussed, as is involving more women and developing better methodologies to assess the degree of dependence on fisheries in different coastal areas.

Interestingly, the analysis and the consultations with the Member States have resulted in lower estimated impacts, particularly for employment in the catching sector, than was first feared. In a majority of the Member States, it is already difficult for many boat owners to find crews for their boats, and many are therefore recruiting crew members from third countries, such as the accession countries and North Africa.

Finally, the Commission concludes that although there will be a social cost to reducing fishing effort, the cost of not doing so would be even greater.

## ● Useful action plan for fisheries in the Mediterranean Sea

The Action Plan for the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources in the Mediterranean Sea, released in October, gives an overview of the special characteristics of Mediterranean fisheries and sets out several ambitious actions that need to be taken over the next few years.

The lack of a uniform approach to the issue of territorial waters is perhaps the most challenging difference to other EU waters.

None of the Mediterranean countries have established EEZs, and only Spain have extended its management of fisheries resources past coastal waters through declaring a Fisheries Protection Zone. Even the extent of the coastal territorial waters varies from 6 to 12 nautical miles.

The Commission does not provide a solution to this, although it clearly wishes to promote more coordinated and coherent approaches among and between the Member States. It also wishes to strengthen international efforts to manage fish resources, in particular stocks of large pelagics. A Ministerial Conference including all the coastal states is to be convened, and greater leadership and financial support will be provided for regional fisheries management efforts.

Several concrete actions are suggested to deal with the overexploitation of fish stocks and the high levels of bycatch. The current technical measures are to be revised at the beginning of next year and the limited use of quotas and TACs might be

extended to migratory species other than tuna, such as swordfish. The option of area or seasonal closures to protect high concentrations of juveniles and spawners will also be examined. The correlation between mesh sizes and landing sizes is likely to be reviewed and, because of the large number of recreational fishermen in the region, their resource use, as well as the type and dimension of gear used, will have to be regulated.

The document also identifies two main groups of environmental threats posed by fisheries: damage to biodiversity and damage to the physical habitats. Special care will need to be taken to avoid bycatch of monk seals, turtles and certain seabirds. For habitat protection, seagrass beds, ham mussel beds, deep water white coral and the biodiversity on hard bottoms are priority areas.

Several aspects make control and enforcement in the Mediterranean particularly challenging. Solutions to some of the overarching problems will have to be found on a multilateral level, as part of the issue of national jurisdiction. An extension of the VMS system to all vessels of more than 10 metres length is also suggested to improve control and enforcement.

On the whole, the action plan gives a good overview of the particular issues related to fisheries in the Mediterranean and provides a range of solutions, but more effort will be needed to tackle monitoring and enforcement issues.

# Aquaculture in the EU – Have We Missed the Boat Already?



Adrian Arbib

Cage farming of salmon has increased rapidly along the Scottish coast

## Don Staniford

Campaigner on ecological, economic, consumer and safety issues associated with the fish-farming industry

**A**quaculture is the fastest growing sector of the world food economy and its development has proceeded way in advance of adequate environmental and public health safeguards. The sheer pace of the expansion, and of sea cage fish farming in particular (predominantly salmon in Scotland and Ireland; seabass and seabream in Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal; and now tuna off the coasts of the Mediterranean), has outstripped the processes of statutory regulation and food safety. The reliance of sea cage fish farming, for example, on toxic chemicals to control parasites and disease and its dependence upon fishmeal and fish oil as a source of feed have led to conflict with other coastal users and with consumers. This clash of cultures makes sea cage fish farming incompatible not only with other forms of ‘environmentally-friendly’ aquaculture such as shellfish farming but also with other sectors such as capture fisheries and tourism.

That the European Commission only published a *Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture* in September 2002 is symptomatic of the lack of action on aquaculture at the European level. Such a strategy is long overdue, and the EU still has a long way to go. There have been earlier attempts; back in 1995 the Commission tackled the issue of ‘Aquaculture and the Environment’ and in 1996 the European Parliament addressed the future development of aquaculture. In 1999, a *Forward Study of Community Aquaculture* was commissioned. The

Commission’s first ever *Strategy for the Sustainable Development of European Aquaculture* concedes that marine fish farming ‘suffers from environmental problems linked to intensive fish farming, where fish is fed with industrial feed’ and ‘in some regions, aquaculture faces a considerable problem with the public because of negative environmental effects’. The EU is clearly playing ‘catch up’ in terms of any policy on aquaculture.

## Five fatal flaws

Aquaculture is not a new industry – carp farms existed in medieval times and shellfish farms already in Roman times. But since the 1970s, aquaculture has gone through an industrial revolution, with the development of much more intensive fish production methods. This so-called “Blue Revolution” has ushered in a new era of resource exploitation with profound social, environmental and economic impacts. In particular the intensification of sea cage fish farming has taken place at the expense of other more environmentally benign forms of aquaculture such as shellfish farming.

Five facets – namely wastes, escapes, diseases, chemicals and feed – make sea cage fish farming fundamentally and fatally flawed. The recently-published strategy concedes that ‘in areas with numerous farms, nutrient enrichment and the risk of eutrophication are significant issues’ but suggests

little to stem the tide of pollution emanating from sea cage fish farms. The proposal that Council Directive 91/676/EEC, which 'aims to reduce water pollution caused or induced by nitrates from agricultural sources, including the spreading or discharge of livestock effluents', should be extended to include intensive fish farming should be implemented immediately. The proposal for new waste collection systems under cages on the other hand is nothing new at all and has long been dismissed by farmers as too expensive. In allowing fish farms to discharge contaminated wastes into the sea the EU is permitting the free use of pristine coastal waters as an open sewer.

### Already highly regulated?

According to the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP), the sector is governed by over 350 regulations making it 'one of the most highly regulated industries in the world'. Yet, not a single regulation encompasses the environmental effects of aquaculture effectively. Where regulations do exist, such is the implementation deficit that the EU has to deal with a raft of problems. Ireland, for example, have been severely criticised by the Commission over aquacultural expansion in Lough Swilly and a 10,000-signature petition calling for an aquaculture moratorium was submitted to the EU in March 2002. The Scottish Government has also been accused of 'regulatory failure' in allowing the expansion of sea cage fish farming in Scotland, with an inquiry by the Scottish Parliament and a petition submitted to the Commission in April 2002 as a result. In Greece, the unregulated expansion of seabream and seabass cages is encroaching upon coastal waters and threatening the tourist industry.

### Fraud and pollution

Food fraud, with farmed fish being mis-labelled as wild, is becoming such an issue that the Commission has hired a consortium in France, Italy, the UK and Norway to investigate. And the Fish Labelling Regulations (as highlighted in El Anzuelo, Vol 9, 2002) which came into force on 1 January 2002 are being flouted by retailers and supermarkets across Europe. Consumers are unaware that the fish they are buying is farmed let alone what 'hidden extras' it contains. The artificial colouring (E161g) Canthaxanthin (the Commission is currently proposing a fourfold reduction but this is being resisted by salmon and trout farmers), illegal chemical residues (the UK's Food Standards Agency has recently found ivermectin and malachite green in farmed salmon on sale in supermarkets) and contaminants such as DDT, dioxins and PCBs (earlier this year the Irish Food Safety Authority found that farmed salmon contained four times more cancer-causing PCBs than wild salmon) all raise legitimate public health concerns. Nor are food safety issues confined to the EU - this year imports of farmed shrimp from Asia were stopped after illegal residues of chloramphenicol were discovered. Farmed fish products are increasingly attracting the attention of DG Health and Consumer

Protection's (SANCO's) Rapid Food Alert system.

### Coherent policy needed

Given the need for public scrutiny and greater transparency the European Parliament's public hearing on "Aquaculture in the EU: Present Situation and Future Prospects" (1 October 2002) was a welcome step forward. Since this was the first ever public hearing on aquaculture the debate has only just begun. The can of worms that is sea cage fish farming cannot be left to fester in a climate of apathy and denial. In many respects,



Adrian Arbib

**The intensive salmon farming also supports a large processing industry**

## 'Five facets – namely wastes, escapes, diseases, chemicals and feed – make sea cage fish farming fundamentally and fatally flawed'

the damage has already been done and the EU is in danger of missing the boat completely. There are many unanswered questions. Where, for example, does aquaculture fit into the current CFP reforms? How can the demands of sea cage fish farming for fishmeal and fish oil be reconciled with the conservation of wild fish stocks? And does sea cage fish farming have any role to play in a truly sustainable strategy?

If a coherent aquaculture policy is not developed quickly, the problems so evident in the reforms of agriculture and fisheries policy, both known to promote more intensive production at the expense of the environment and in urgent need of reform, will inevitably be replicated in the aquaculture sector. If sea cage fish farming is to have any long-term future it must be forced to treat its wastes and focus on non-carnivorous species that do not lead to a net deficit in fisheries resources. Closed containment systems may solve the waste and escapes problems but the final fatal flaw lies in feed and food issues. Far from being a panacea for the decline in wild fisheries and the need for healthy food, sea cage fish farming serves only to compound the current crisis.

*Don Staniford's presentation at the public hearing on Aquaculture in the EU is available online at: <http://www.steelheadermag.com/news2402.html>*

# The Challenge of Freshwater Aquaculture in the Accession Countries



Ladislav Marton

Senné fish ponds, Slovakia

Euan Dunn, Zoltan Waliczky and Szabolcs Nagy  
BirdLife International

As wild capture fisheries decline, aquaculture is seen as the bread-basket of the future. According to the FAO's *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2000*, aquaculture will dominate global fish supplies by 2030, accounting for more than half of the fish we consume. The Commission's broad strategy for the sector (COM (2002) 511) is to promote aquaculture development across Europe to create a 15 per cent increase of 10,000 new jobs by 2008.

A major dimension not flagged up in the strategy, however, is the role of the ten Central and Eastern European accession countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia), where freshwater aquaculture is already highly developed and economically beneficial but also incurs significant environmental problems.

## Many benefits

Fish ponds for freshwater aquaculture are created in two ways: A series of ponds may be created by damming along the course of a stream or river. Alternatively, low-lying land may be excavated, enclosed with a dyke and inundated from a nearby canal or river. The greatest extent of fish ponds occurs

in the Czech Republic (21,000 fish ponds covering 49,000 ha), Poland (700 fish-pond systems covering approximately 45,000 ha) and Hungary (26,000 ha). Though dominated by carp, which occurs naturally in

**'A major dimension not flagged up in the [aquaculture] strategy... is the role of ten Central and Eastern European accession countries'**

these countries, introduced herbivorous and predatory fishes are also important. As fish ponds tend to be in rural areas with few employment opportunities, they help alleviate unemployment as well as providing opportunities for recreational fishing.

Fish ponds also have a high nature conservation value as wetland resources, especially for birds. Among them are 53 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of international importance, all of which should be designated under the EU Birds directive as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within the Natura 2000 network. They hold important breeding or migrating populations of globally threatened species, such as lesser white-fronted goose, ferruginous duck and white-tailed eagle. Breeding colonies in fish ponds hold 18 per cent of the European population of squacco heron, 12 per cent of night heron, 13 per cent of spoonbill, as well as breeding and migrating waterfowl and other waterbirds. A large proportion are protected at the national level as nature reserves, landscape protection areas or even national parks, as well as at an international level as Ramsar sites.

## Environmental problems

Many fish-farms in the accession countries are established on the sites of freshwater marshes. Several are still managed in a fairly extensive or semi-intensive way, but fish-farm managers are under

# ‘The increasing competition in the sector leads to two different responses, abandonment or intensification’

pressure to intensify production to limit costs. The increasing competition in the sector leads to two different responses, abandonment or intensification, either of which has a negative impact on conservation values.

High operational costs (in many cases including the cost of water) and a limited market can force fish-farm managers to abandon production altogether. With deteriorating infrastructure and insufficient water input, fish ponds quickly dry out, becoming totally uninhabitable to birds and other freshwater fauna. At this stage they are often converted back into agricultural (eg maize) production.

The most important environmental problems associated with intensification of fish ponds are:

- Eutrophication due to high levels of fertilisers and feed;
- High densities of main fish species leading to impoverished vegetation and freshwater organisms, some of which are important as food or habitat for other organisms;
- Drainage of ponds (as part of the fish-farming cycle) during the spring and summer, often destroying nests of breeding birds;

- Destruction of littoral vegetation along ponds, especially reed beds; and
- Scaring of fish-eating birds (such as cormorants or grey herons) leading to disturbance of other birds.

## Maintaining conservation values

From the Commission’s strategy, we would like to highlight the following issues (numbered as in the Communication) as contributing to the sustainable management of freshwater fish ponds in the accession countries:

### 4.1 Increasing production: promoting organic and ‘environment friendly’ aquaculture products.

This can help the marketing and sale of freshwater fish from ponds managed extensively for their conservation value, especially those protected at the national and international (EU) level, such as Natura 2000 sites.

### 4.3 Market development, marketing and information

As the market for freshwater fish is very limited, and often seasonal (eg strongly linked to the Christmas season in most Central European countries), the proposed measures to expand current markets, and especially to promote organic and environmentally-friendly freshwater fish, are essential. However, the proposal to extend the range of farmed fish species needs a highly precautionary approach to assess the potential ecological impact of any new species introduced.

### 4.8 Environmental aspects

Insofar as fish ponds also represent a major nature conservation value, the most significant of the proposed measures is the promotion of extensive fish culture. Agri-environment type incentives for environmentally-friendly management practices should be introduced at the national level to maintain the conservation value of fish ponds. EU co-financing for such schemes should be considered under the Rural Development Regulation, as well as under a revised FIFG. The volume and scope of these co-funding measures should be greatly expanded to cater for the needs of the accession countries with their extensive fish-farm systems.

The proposed application of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is also a welcome and essential element in the strategy. EIAs should be extended considerably to include not only intensive fish farms, but all new aquaculture developments, as these will all take up space which might be ecologically valuable, will use up water and release nutrients.

*For further information contact:*

*Dr Euan Dunn, Senior Marine Policy Officer, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds, SG19 2DL, UK.*

*Email: euan.dunn@rspb.org.uk*

## EU Fisheries Agreements: In the Dock

**Brian O’Riordan**  
Secretary, International  
Collective in Support of  
Fishworkers, Brussels

For several years NGOs have criticised European ‘cash for access’ fisheries agreements with West African countries for being unfair. Most notable are the agreements with Senegal and Mauritania, but more recently the agreement with Angola has been strongly attacked by WWF.

NGOs are not against fisheries agreements. Rather they advocate that all international fisheries access arrangements should be set into a framework that both guarantees the sustainability of fisheries resources, and favours the development of the local small-scale sector. They also feel that the EU has a crucial role in establishing such a framework.

Several NGOs (The Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements, the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, Greenpeace International and Eurostep) have therefore mounted a legal challenge through the European Ombudsman. This accuses the European Commission of mismanagement of the fishery agreement negotiations with Mauritania. The outcome is expected shortly. The case rests principally on the scientific basis on which access to cephalopod stocks was negotiated. It also questions why additional access to the pelagic stocks was secured for the Irish supertrawler the *Atlantic Dawn* at a time of considerable uncertainty over the state of stocks.

The timing of this legal challenge is crucial. It follows a lengthy process of internal discussion within the Commission that has led to a joint

WWF-Canon/Seamus Murphy

Fishermen in Mauritania delivering their catch



Communication and a Council Resolution on Fisheries and Poverty Reduction. It anticipates a new EU policy and strategy on distant-water fishing, as part of the Common Fisheries Policy reform process. These are important steps towards establishing a framework for fair and sustainable international fisheries arrangements.

The EU’s first fisheries agreement, signed in 1979, was with Senegal. The signing of UNCLOS five years later in 1984 meant that, to continue to fish legally in distant waters, the EU had to enter into access arrangements of one kind or another. Since the signing of that first agreement, the global fisheries context has changed dramatically. Whilst international legal and regulatory frameworks have been greatly enhanced, this has not kept pace with the legal and illegal capacity of the world’s fishing fleet and its ability to outstrip the potential of fish resources to renew themselves.

Twenty years ago cash for access agreements could perhaps have been justified in strictly legal and commercial terms. But in today’s context they are an anathema, undermining both the achievement of sustainable development goals and the equitable distribution of benefits from resource use. This is no longer acceptable. Fisheries resources are more than a national asset to be rapidly extracted for short-term gain. They are a global patrimony to be sustained over the long term, to ensure a flow of benefits to future generations.

In the case of developing countries such as Senegal, enormous economic differences between the negotiating partners put undue pressure on them to part with their fishery resources at the expense of their coastal populations. Furthermore, the subsidised access provided to EU fishing companies puts the local fishing sector at a severe disadvantage.

Some important milestones have been established by the

European Commission in mapping out the future of the EU’s international fishing policy. In fact, the Commission’s Green Paper on the future of the CFP notes that:

‘The current policy needs to adapt to changing circumstances and new challenges such as... the legitimate aspirations of many developing States to develop their fishing industry... Many third countries where European fleets used to fish are also facing the problem of resource depletion while fish supply is crucial for their food security and economic development. Moreover, in third countries where there is a necessity to reduce fleet capacity it is inconceivable to ask for an increase of fishing possibilities for European vessels.’

It is hoped that the NGOs legal challenge will help put these very good intentions into practice.

For more information contact: Brian O’Riordan, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers, Brussels. Tel +32 2 5131565; email: [icsfbrussels@yucum.be](mailto:icsfbrussels@yucum.be)



## New protection for Great White

During the triennial conference of the Convention on Migratory Species, on 18-24 September 2002, delegates assessed the conservation status of 37 migratory species. The great white shark has subsequently been added to Appendix I and II of the Convention.

Appendix I requires protection from poaching and bycatch in fishing nets, while Appendix II places the great white on par with, for example, the harbour porpoise and the European sturgeon, providing additional conservation benefits and protection from human activities.

In addition, six whale species were added to the Appendices, opening up the possibility for new regional agreements in the South Pacific. Priority listing on Appendix I was awarded to the Ganges and Indus river dolphins.

Following a campaign led by BirdLife International, the conference also addressed impacts of long-line fishing on albatrosses and petrels.

For further details contact: Eric Falt, UNEP Spokesperson/Director of the Division of Communications and Public Information, Kenya. Tel +254 2 623292; email [eric.falt@unep.org](mailto:eric.falt@unep.org)

## NEAFC now open to NGOs

The North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) holds its 21st Annual Meeting on 11-15 November in London. For the first time, NEAFC has opened its doors to observers. To qualify as observers to the annual meeting, NGOs have to supply basic details, as well as papers produced by the organisation on relevant fisheries.

Observers will be able to make oral statements during the meetings if invited to do so. Three organisations applied for observer status and registered their attendance for this year's meeting.

On the agenda are management measures for blue whiting, redfish, spring spawning herring, mackerel, haddock and deep sea species.

For further details, please contact the NEAFC Secretariat.

Tel +44 20 76310016; fax +44 20 76369225; email: [info@neafo.org](mailto:info@neafo.org)

## Iceland rejoins IWC

At the Special Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) on 14 October 2002, Iceland's application to rejoin the International Whaling Commission (IWC) was narrowly accepted. After a series of procedural votes, it was agreed by 19 votes to 18 that Iceland could again become a member of the Commission. The country rejoins with a reservation to the IWC moratorium on commercial whaling before 2006.

The decision to readmit Iceland seems to be a result of confusion regarding the Swedish vote. Shortly after the meeting, the Swedish Environment Ministry announced that it had mistakenly registered its support for Iceland amidst time-pressure and complicated voting procedures. The Ministry is now looking at ways to correct its mistake, potentially leaving Iceland out of the Commission.

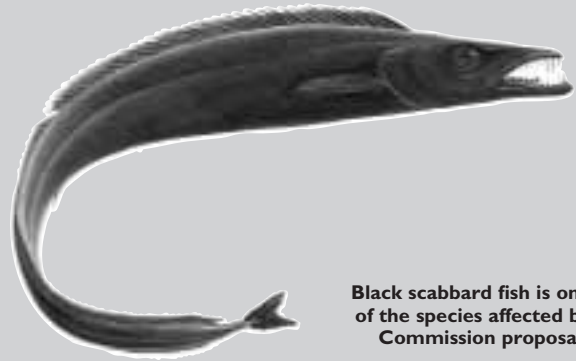
At the same meeting, Japan tried to gain IWC approval for an interim annual relief quota of 50 minke whales to support subsistence whaling in coastal communities - an issue that has been discussed by the Commission for the last 15 years. The proposal was narrowly defeated.

According to media reports, Japan may have used aid to six Caribbean countries in order to sway the balance towards a pro-whaling vote within the IWC.

Recently, incorrect labelling of Japanese whale meat has heightened concerns over the lack of transparency and poor traceability in the trade in whale products. A study published in the *New Scientist* should cause further concern among consumers: whale meat and organs contain exceptionally high levels of mercury, with some exceeding Japanese health limits by as much as 5,000 times.

For further details contact: Stellan Hamrin, Ministry of Environment, Sweden. Tel +46 8 4052345; email: [stellan.hamrin@environment.ministry.se](mailto:stellan.hamrin@environment.ministry.se)

## Deep water fish stocks – a compromise too far



Jon Baldur Hilberg

Black scabbard fish is one of the species affected by Commission proposals

Mark Tasker

Joint Nature Conservation Committee, UK

As reported in *El Anzuelo 9*, the Commission published two regulatory proposals on deep water fishing in late 2001 and early 2002 (COM (2001) 764 and COM (2002) 108). The first proposal suggested TACs for eleven species of deep-water fish, while the second proposed a licensing system and also introduced effort limits.

The scientific advice, heeded in the second of the Commission's proposals, was that in mixed-species deep-water fisheries where the stocks are relatively unknown, the most appropriate control is on effort, otherwise there is a risk of a large discard problem for species whose TAC or quota limits have been reached.

Unfortunately, Fisheries Ministers in the European Council meeting on 11 June chose to disregard much of the scientific advice and voted by a qualified majority to bring in a TAC and quota scheme only. The quota allocations have also disadvantaged those, such as much of the Scottish fleet, which have entered the fishery relatively recently.

Some progressive aspects of the Commission's proposals remained – for instance, there will now be detailed reporting of catches and a full observer scheme will be brought into operation. The fear must be that this much-needed look at what is happening aboard Europe's deep-water fleet will merely track the disappearance of these fragile fish stocks.

At this stage, the Commission appears to have accepted this 'compromise' rather than risk no agreement (and therefore no controls at all). This deal does not bode well for the deep-water fish stocks that in most cases are already either fully or over-exploited. TACs and accompanying technical measures have clearly failed to conserve the fish stocks on the continental shelf, and thus failed to sustain viable fishing fleets in this area. They are even more likely to fail in deep-water areas.

Fishing on the long-lived, slow-reproducing stocks in deep-water areas is probably not sustainable except at very low levels (and many would argue can never be sustainable). Thus the pain being felt by the newer entrants to the fisheries perhaps should be the rule for all fleets rather than the exception. The current regulatory proposals probably merely postpone that day and make the prospects for even a limited fishery even less likely.

For further information contact: Mark Tasker, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, UK. Tel: +44 1224 655701; email: [mark.tasker@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:mark.tasker@jncc.gov.uk)

# Patagonian toothfish proposed for CITES listing

Indrani Lutchman  
Fisheries Consultant

CITES, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, was designed to ensure that exploitation for the purposes of international trade does not threaten wild species. CITES is traditionally associated with banning trade in species such as tigers, great apes and elephants, but plays a much broader role in regulating and facilitating sustainable trade. The vast majority of species regulated through CITES can be traded, and some, such as crocodiles for the skin trade or queen conch for food, are traded at very high volumes.

Dr Julian Ashford/Center for Quantitative Fisheries Ecology



Half of the toothfish traded are caught illegally

Over recent years there has been an ongoing debate about the possible listing of 'commodity' species such as commercially harvested fish under CITES. CITES already regulates trade in products of one commercially valuable fishery, sturgeon, and has had some success in combating the lucrative illegal trade in caviar. Now Australia has submitted a proposal to list Patagonian toothfish (*Dissostichus eleginoides*) in Appendix II at the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) in November 2002 in Santiago.

A long life span, late sexual maturity and low fecundity make Patagonian toothfish vulnerable to overfishing. It is a highly-prized fish, fetching up to US\$10 per kilo, and is sold under various names including Chilean seabass in the UK and *robalo* in Spain. The high market value has led to a rapid expansion of toothfish fisheries in the Southern Ocean in the last decade, including extensive illegal fishing. In 2001, it was estimated that 50 per cent of the toothfish traded on the international market is caught in illegal fishing operations.

Toothfish in the Antarctic and Southern Ocean is managed under the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), a part of the Antarctic Treaty System. The aim of the Convention is to conserve marine life of the Southern Ocean, but this does not exclude sustainable harvesting of resources. CCAMLR has adopted a number of conservation measures to control both the illegal fishing activities and the trade, but so far they have not proved adequate.

According to the Australian proposal, CITES has the mechanisms in place to assist CCAMLR with its

ongoing efforts to deter illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing. This can be done by extending the application of CCAMLR measures to all vessels, covering a larger geographical range and enabling recourse to compliance measures to deal with offenders. Both environmental NGOs and the Australian fishing industry strongly support the proposal. A number of CITES governments are also supportive but a large number (including some countries that are parties to CCAMLR) remain opposed or indifferent.

The European Commission is both a member of CCAMLR and a party to CITES. Currently, DG Fish, responsible for the management of fisheries in the EU, is not supportive of the listing since it sees CITES as a threat to CCAMLR's authority. However, DG Environment, responsible for CITES, remains open. The final decision on the EU position on toothfish will be taken after the CCAMLR Conference of the Parties (21 October to 1 November).

If listed under CITES Appendix II, trade in toothfish would have to be authorised by governments and can only take place if specimens were legally obtained and it can be proved that trade will not be detrimental to the wild population.

For further information contact: Indrani Lutchman, SCALES Inc, Barbados.  
Tel: +1 246 2284818; email: [ilutchman@sunbeach.net](mailto:ilutchman@sunbeach.net)

Editor's note:

A CITES listing of Patagonian toothfish was rejected in Santiago, but whale shark, basking shark and 32 species of seahorses have been included in Appendix II.

## Navigating Rough Waters

*Continued from page one*

overexploited tuna stock. It has also increased fishing pressure on species used for feed. The issue even resulted in physical conflict in the summer, when a boat carrying WWF members was rammed by tuna farm workers off the coast of Cartagena in Spain. In Scotland, a public campaign on the effects of aquaculture is urging consumers not to buy farmed fish products.

So where does this leave us? Public awareness of the problems of fishing activities and in the marine environment has increased in many countries. The number of stakeholders showing an interest in developments in the sector has also increased significantly over the last few years. At the Earth Summit in Johannesburg this summer, the first major breakthrough in negotiations was an agreement to restore heavily depleted fish stocks by 2015. Progress in dealing with these issues is still slow, and typically hampered by conflicting national interests; but, as the European Commission states in its recent paper on the socio-economic consequences of the changes needed: 'postponing the measures required by the present overexploitation of common fisheries resources would generate far greater social costs'. This is a lesson which needs now to be fully understood, both across the EU and around the world.

## WSSD: Mixed results

The World Summit on Sustainable Development drew to a close on 4 September 2002 in Johannesburg, having secured new commitments on biodiversity and fisheries.

In addition to a general commitment to significantly reduce biodiversity loss by 2010, delegates agreed to encourage the ecosystem approach in marine management by 2010 and to restore depleted fish stocks to maximum sustainable yields by 2015 'where possible'.

They further pledged to establish a regular UN system for marine monitoring by 2004 and to establish representative marine protection networks by 2012.

The outcome was welcomed by many, although Greenpeace called the Summit a 'flop'. According to the organisation, the language on subsidies and marine protected areas is a step in the right direction. The agreement to restore depleted fish stocks to maximum sustainable yields, however, is considered 'a major step backward in international law and almost certain to perpetuate overfishing and the depletion of marine ecosystems if implemented'.

For further details contact: Mr Matthew Gianni, Oceans Campaign Coordinator, Greenpeace International, The Netherlands. Tel +31 20 5236222; email: mgianni@ams.greenpeace.org

## Chemicals affect sexual behaviour

For some time now, endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) have been known to disrupt reproduction by mimicking natural oestrogens. The chemicals, found in detergents, plasticisers and herbicides, are commonly associated with the feminisation of male fish.

But new research suggests that EDCs also interact directly with genes that are critical for reproductive success, thereby affecting the amounts of testosterone in the brain. These findings add to fears that EDCs, now widely available in the environment, may cause serious disruption in sexual behaviour and development in an unknown number of species.

For further information contact: Steve Berberich, Centre of Marine Biotechnology of the University of Maryland, USA. Tel +1 301 9904804; email: berberic@umbi.umd.edu. Longer article available at: [http://www.umbi.umd.edu/nande/news/080102\\_genes.html](http://www.umbi.umd.edu/nande/news/080102_genes.html)

## Assessing the impact of new EU fisheries proposals

One of the more concrete elements of the EU's Sustainable Development Strategy, agreed in Gothenburg in June 2001, related to sustainability impact assessments covering the potential economic, social and environmental consequences of all major policy proposals.

The basic parameters of the new impact assessment procedure were outlined by the Commission in June 2002 (COM(2002)276), with a view to applying the system to all major proposals and initiatives from autumn 2002.

Two levels of assessment are to be undertaken. A preliminary impact assessment is to accompany all proposals appearing in the Commission's Annual Policy Strategy, agreed in February each year. Proposals likely to have particularly significant social or environmental impacts will then be required to undergo an extended impact assessment. Sufficient progress will have to be shown on this before an initiative is included in the more

detailed Commission Annual Work Programme, agreed in October/November each year. The extended assessment will need to be completed by the relevant Commission department before the proposal undergoes consultation among other Directorates General in the Commission.

The new system should be applicable to major fisheries proposals and initiatives, including proposed fisheries access agreements with third countries. However the effectiveness of the new system could be compromised by the Commission's failure to make available sufficient additional resources – human and financial – to support its implementation.

For further information contact: David Wilkinson, IEEP London, UK. Tel: +44 20 7799 2244; email: [dwilkinson@ieeplondon.org.uk](mailto:dwilkinson@ieeplondon.org.uk)

## Swedish ecolabelling project

KRAV, the Swedish member of the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) Commission, has started a project on certification and ecolabelling of fish and fish products after finally receiving funding from the Swedish National Board of Fisheries on 2 September.

The aim of the project is to develop and test standards for wild capture fisheries. A pilot study will focus on the following products: frozen cod filets, pickled herring, and fresh shrimp and crab – all popular seafood products in Sweden. The work, led and managed by KRAV, will be carried out in close cooperation with the fishing sector, the relevant authorities, scientists and environmental NGOs.

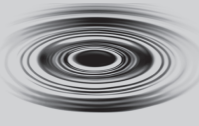
For further information contact: Johan Cejje, KRAV, Sweden. Tel: +46 18 107817; email: [johan.cejje@krav.se](mailto:johan.cejje@krav.se). More information about KRAV at <http://www.krav.se/sprak/english.htm>

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. It is funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. It is sent free of charge to key practitioners in the Member States of the EU and in accession countries.

If you would like to subscribe to EI Anzuelo please send your details by mail, fax or email to: Claire Monkhouse, IEEP, Dean Bradley House, 52 Horseferry Rd, London SW1P 2AG; Fax: +44 (0)207 799 2600. Email: [cmonkhouse@ieeplondon.org.uk](mailto:cmonkhouse@ieeplondon.org.uk)

EI Anzuelo is also available online at [www.ieep.org.uk](http://www.ieep.org.uk)



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.

# EU Fisheries Conservation Policy Undermined by Mismanagement of Mediterranean Swordfish

Dear Editor

■ The high catches of small swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) in the Mediterranean are a long-standing matter of concern. In 2000, a resolution made by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT), the international body responsible for the management of the stock, recognised that 'catches of juvenile swordfish in the Mediterranean are very high' and 'there is a need to examine possible protection measures for juveniles'. More recently, ICCAT adopted another resolution calling for the flag states of the vessels that catch swordfish in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean to evaluate measures that may reduce the mortality of undersized swordfish. In the recently released 2002 Report, ICCAT's Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) again expressed concern and recommended reducing the fishing pressure on juvenile swordfish in the Mediterranean.

Until recently, catches of juvenile swordfish by EU vessels were regulated under Council Regulation EC/1626/94, which provides a set of technical measures for the conservation of fishery resources in the Mediterranean. Minimum landing sizes for a number of species can be found under Article 8, forbidding fishing of and trade with fish below these sizes. The minimum landing size for swordfish was set at 120 cm LJFL (lower jaw-fork length) although, according to ICCAT, female swordfish in the Mediterranean normally reach sexual maturity in their third year at a length of about 130 cm. Despite this, massive catches of juvenile, undersized swordfish have been reported in the Mediterranean, due to unselective fishing. A study commissioned by TRAFFIC and WWF

in the late 1990s showed that 86 per cent of the swordfish caught by the Spanish longline fleet consisted of legally undersized fish. Other studies carried out at the same time showed that juveniles also dominated catches in Italian and Greek longline fisheries.

In these circumstances, it is difficult to understand why the European Union, through Council Regulation EC/973/2001 of 14 May 2001, removed the minimum legal size for swordfish in the Mediterranean, by making explicit in the Annex IV that it - there set at 125 cm - was only applicable in the Atlantic, and that sizes relating to tuna and swordfish in Annex IV of the former Council Regulation EC/1626/94 were derogated. The result; for the first time since 1994 the EU has no legal minimum landing size for swordfish in the Mediterranean. This decision leaves the heavily exploited stock in a very dangerous situation and will have dramatic consequences for the conservation of the stock since fleets from France, Spain, Greece and Morocco account for more than 85 per cent of swordfish catches in the region. Ironically, the European Commission itself, in its proposal for an Action Plan for Mediterranean Fisheries, published as recently as 9 October 2002, expresses concern for the 'extremely negative picture' shown by the state of the swordfish stock in the Mediterranean, with large quantities of juveniles in the catches.

When asked about the reasons for this nonsense, sources at DG Fish argue that the former minimum landing size (120 cm) was derived from scientific research on the Atlantic stock and, given that Mediterranean swordfish is considered a separate stock, there is no scientific research supporting this figure for the Mediterranean. Even if this was true, it

is surprising that it has taken the Commission eight years to realise it. The decision is a perfect example of the reluctance to apply the precautionary principle to fisheries management. In this case, since a conservation measure already in place has been abolished, it is as if the Commission has decided to apply a new 'principle of risk' to fisheries management. This deeply undermines the credibility of the current CFP reform process. The lack of transparency adds further perplexity: the change was made in a very subtle way, through far-from-explicit modifications of the legal texts. This has resulted in a lot of confusion in the field, with fishing inspectors ignoring the new situation or receiving contradictory orders.

WWF believes that the minimum size for swordfish in the Mediterranean should be restored immediately - at least until new scientific evidence shows that there is a need to change it. We would also like to point out that virtually all minimum legal sizes for fish species in force under EU legislation are arbitrary, since they are rarely consistent with the existing scientific information on size at maturity. Moreover, it is urgent that the EU develops suitable mechanisms to reduce the high catches of juvenile swordfish in the region. In key community legislation, swordfish in the Mediterranean is considered a critical stock qualifying for the 'overfished' category. Given the apparent lack of will to improve the situation, a legal action could be envisaged.

**Sergi Tudela**  
 Marine Projects Coordinator/Fisheries  
 WWF Mediterranean Programme Office  
 Tel: +34 933056252  
 Fax: +34 932788030  
 Email: [studela@atw-wwf.org](mailto:studela@atw-wwf.org)