



WWF

NEWSLETTER

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More fish in the sea



Tony Long,
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It was Aristotle who observed ‘that which no one owns, no one will care for’. I don’t think he was talking about fish, or our oceans and seas, but he could have been. Fish is a common resource and it’s one that we are struggling to manage sustainably. In large parts of European waters more than 70% of assessed stocks are overfished. Iconic species like the Mediterranean bluefin tuna are on the brink of collapse. This trend can’t continue.

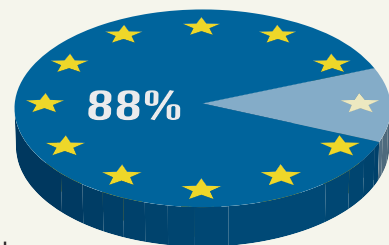
Fishermen need fish. Fishing communities need fish. The oceans need fish. Indeed, whether the issue is environmental, social or economic, there is reason for protecting our fish stocks. However, this logic does not always translate into EU policy.

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has been in place for three decades, and undergone two reviews. The third is underway. This time there is a big difference: thanks to the Lisbon Treaty there are co-decision powers in place which ensure the full involvement of the European Parliament for the first time. Members of the European Parliament now have an opportunity – and a responsibility – to help deliver a more robust policy which will save our seas and the fish in them. (cont’d page 2)

BIG APPETITE FOR SUSTAINABLE FISH

88% of Europeans say fish products within the EU should come from stocks that are not overfished

There is a huge appetite for change among European consumers who want better access to more sustainable fish. An exclusive poll commissioned by WWF shows that 88% of Europeans think the fish products on sale within the EU should come from sources that are not overfished.



In several countries, including those across the Mediterranean, more than 9 in 10 of those surveyed said sustainably sourced fish was ‘important’ to them. The poll, carried out by YouGov across Europe and Focus Bari in Greece, comes as Europe starts its journey to reform the Common Fisheries Policy – a policy that many say has failed both fish and fishermen (see page 2).

Indeed, 78% of Europeans support a reform of the CFP. Commenting on the results, Hervé Gomichon, Carrefour’s quality group director, said there is clearly a need for deeper change today and he supports all credible and efficient initiatives in favour of developing sustainable ways to manage fisheries.



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Karoline Schacht, WWF Germany’s EU fisheries policy officer said: “The pressure from the public is important, and welcome, but the real pressure for change comes from the current state of our seas.” According to the European Commission, between 54-72% of EU fish stocks, for which there are assessments, are overfished and between 40-59% are at high risk of depletion. WWF is calling for a “robust reform of the CFP” to ensure the future of European fisheries (more poll results, page 2).

(cont'd from page 1) Critically, a more robust CFP will safeguard the future of our fishing industries too. The current system has made European waters an increasingly difficult place to run sustainable and profitable fisheries. With the economy already struggling, there might well be the temptation to put fishermen before fish. This would be a false economy.

It's not a case of choosing fishermen over fish, the economy over the environment. The two depend on one another. If fish stocks keep falling then there soon won't be any fish to catch. Surely that's reason enough to look longer-term at sustainable solutions that will see fishermen landing more fish rather than less. With better management we could have healthy stocks in 15 years' time in some areas.

“Over the next 18 months, this newsletter will keep you up to date on the reform process.”

That's the focus of WWF's 'More Fish' campaign. The sea's resources are limited, but managed well they can be abundant and so much more profitable. The reform of the CFP is a once in a decade opportunity to set things straight; we may not get another chance in 10 years' time.

Over the next 18 months, this quarterly newsletter will keep you up to date on the reform process, the challenges ahead and some of the solutions already in place. We will provide you with the bigger picture, covering news from across Europe, comment from the fishing industry, and projects among fishing communities. There will also be insight from top chefs and a host of other stakeholders who want to ensure that we get an ambitious new CFP.

An ambitious and successful reform is good for fish, good for fishermen and good for Europe. It is also what the citizens of Europe and your constituencies want. Our exclusive poll shows the vast majority of Europeans want to buy fish from sustainable stocks – and they support a reform of the CFP in delivering this. They care about this and this is your opportunity to show them you do too. **Tony Long**
See wwf.eu/fisheries for WWF's 'More Fish' campaign

WHAT IS CFP?



© Magnus Lundgren / WWF

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is one of the oldest common policies in the European Union. Since the first elements were introduced in 1970, it has also proved one of the most controversial. Over the years, the CFP has twice (in 1992 and 2002) been reformed. The full policy was developed in 1983, including the introduction of 'total allowable catches', quotas for certain fish species and minimum net mesh sizes, all in a bid to stop overfishing. Since then, quotas for fish in European seas have been decided on a yearly basis. The objectives seem fairly straightforward: to protect the oceans and seas from being overfished; to guarantee an income for fishermen; and to provide consumers with a regular supply of fish at reasonable prices. In other words, to promote a sustainable fish supply chain. In practice, however, this has proved difficult and the CFP simply isn't working. The European Commission admits that the current reality is one of over-fishing, fleet overcapacity, heavy subsidies, low economic resilience and a decline in the volume of fish caught by European fishermen. Detailed negotiations will soon start on the third reform of CFP. For the first time, Members of the European Parliament will play a full role in the decision-making process. Many believe this could be the last chance to ensure a really effective policy and to future-proof what remains an economically, environmentally and socially important sector for Europe.

What do Europeans* think about fish & CFP reform?

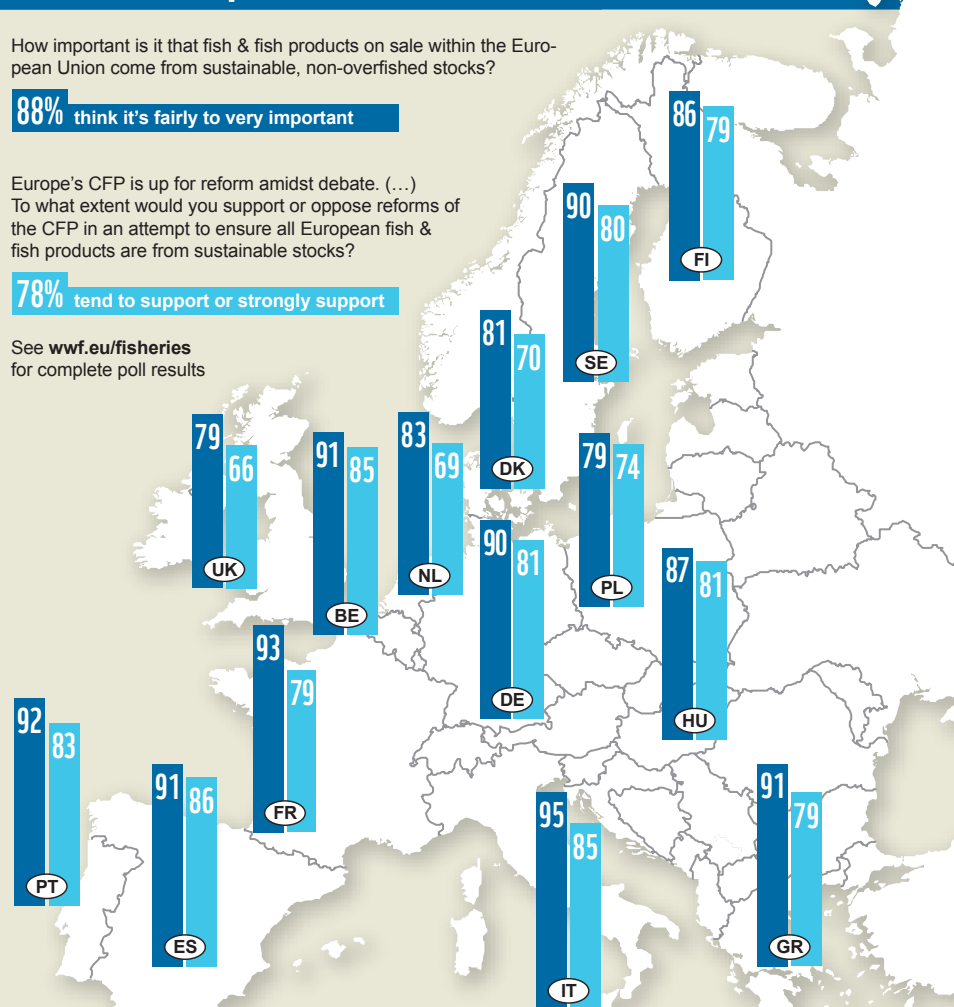
How important is it that fish & fish products on sale within the European Union come from sustainable, non-overfished stocks?

88% think it's fairly to very important

Europe's CFP is up for reform amidst debate. (...) To what extent would you support or oppose reforms of the CFP in an attempt to ensure all European fish & fish products are from sustainable stocks?

78% tend to support or strongly support

See wwf.eu/fisheries for complete poll results



* Countries surveyed: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK. 14,635 adults surveyed in total. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults aged 18+ (aged 18-54 in Greece).

60-SECOND BRIEFING: DISCARDS

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■ What a waste. Up to half the fish caught in Europe are thrown back dead.

The issue

Up to 50% of all the fish caught in Europe are thrown back into the sea, dead. Surprised? Or perhaps concerned? These so-called ‘discards’ are the result of unselective fishing practices and Europe’s fisheries management – one that is largely based on what fishermen land instead of what they catch. This means that if they catch fish for which they have no quota, or which is undersize or not desirable for the market, then they are thrown back.

The pressure

The issue has recently been the subject of a high-profile campaign run by UK celebrity chef, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. Over 700,000 people signed a petition to end discards as part of the ‘Fish Fight’ campaign. Pressure from the public, combined with that from NGOs, such as WWF, who have been lobbying for change for many years, is beginning to have an impact.

The latest

In March this year, EU Fisheries Commissioner, Maria Damanaki, committed to ending the wasteful practice of discards, citing CFP re-

form as the chance to do this. In a ‘high-level meeting’ on the issue, she said the discard figures are “alarming” and if the policy continued then “we will soon face a situation where the production capacity of marine ecosystems is at risk”. Following this, fisheries Ministers from Germany, Denmark, France and the UK signed a declaration in which they commit to ending discards as part of an ‘ambitious reform’ of the CFP.

“The mantra needs to be ‘only catch what you can land’.”

The solutions

Louise Hill, Head of Marine & Fisheries Policy at WWF’s European Policy Office, said adopting selective fishing practices throughout Europe is the real solution for ending discards. “The mantra needs to be ‘only catch what you can land,’” she said. Trials undertaken in several EU member states, including the UK and Denmark, show it is possible to achieve a significant decrease in discards. Fishermen participating in these trials are offered incentives



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■ Bycatch on the deck of a fishing trawler

to fully document their catches and land all they catch. WWF believes these and other strategies to reduce discards, such as selective gears and full accountability, should be expanded to all European fisheries.

FISH FOR THE FUTURE



■ MEP Chris Davies

A new cross-party campaign group of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) has been formed to ensure that a radical reform of the EU fisheries policy is possible. The 'Fish for the Future' group has already gained support from MEPs in 4 countries representing all the major political groups in the European Parliament. The Group has drafted a written declaration calling on the European Commission to adopt a "long-term, regionally-sensitive, science-led approach" to reform the Common Fisheries Policy. In some areas this may require a temporary reduction in the amount of fish caught. MEP Chris Davies, who started the group, said: "Our seas are capable of supporting many more fish than now exist after so much overfishing. We cannot allow the agenda to be set by short term thinking that ignores the need to ensure that we have fish on the table in 50 or 100 years' time." For more information: chris.davies-office@europa.eu, +32 228 373 53

SMALL-SCALE FISHERMEN GET BIG VOICE



© Michel Gunther / WWF-Canon

■ Artisanal fishing represents the majority of fishing jobs around the Mediterranean

Fishermen from France, Greece, Italy and Spain have come together to form the first ever European association of Mediterranean artisanal fishermen. This will provide the sector with a stronger voice, and a fairer representation in the decisions made concerning EU fisheries. Two representatives of the association met EU Commissioner for Fisheries, Maria Damanaki, at WWF's Mediterranean office in Rome in February. The Commissioner committed to facilitating a fairer representation of the artisanal sector in EU fisheries advisory bodies. Artisanal fishing represents the majority of fishing jobs around the Mediterranean, and often uses low-impact gears and practices that yield highly priced harvests for local markets. The new association will also enable small-scale fishermen from across the Mediterranean to share experiences and best practice. For more information: gparkes@wwf.panda.org



Why we are here

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.wwf.eu

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WHAT'S NEW

CFP for all

EU Fisheries Commissioner Maria Damanaki has been visiting various Member States, gathering information from stakeholders to help her shape a new fisheries policy framework. In Hamburg, Aberdeen and London she met representatives of the 'WWF/Industry Alliance for CFP reform' which includes some of Europe's largest fish processors and retailers. They called on her to replace the current "short-term scramble for fish" with a "long-term management vision".

WWF Masterclass

In March, WWF organised a fisheries management "masterclass" for European fisheries Director Generals. Facilitated by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, on behalf of the Hungarian presidency, the masterclass showcased innovative examples of sustainable fishing. For instance, the fishermen in Greece who are using more sustainable practices such as fishing restrictions during spawning and nets with bigger mesh to allow small fish an escape route. See: <http://vimeo.com/8887062>



Fishing Partnerships

It isn't just fishing in the EU's waters that will come under scrutiny as part of the reform of CFP. The EU has 'fishing partnerships' with 17 countries – mainly in Africa – which some believe may be contributing to overfishing and threatening food security and livelihoods locally. A number of organisations, including the Coalition for Fair Fisheries Arrangements, the Pew Environmental Group and WWF, have now signed a letter, sent to the European Commission, requesting that the evaluations of these partnership agreements are made available to the public. See: <http://transparentsea.co/>