



WWF
NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER
2012



Most fishermen want reform



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We always knew that robust reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was going to be a long, hard journey. But in our favour is the huge support we have for much-needed change to a policy that is outdated, unsustainable and has brought our seas to the brink of collapse.

Ask most fishermen and they want reform. Processors, consumer co-operatives and retailers want it too, as Eurocommerce director-general Christian Verschueren explained in our last newsletter. Chefs also want to see fish stocks and fishing communities flourish. And, critically, so do the public - 88% of Europeans say fish products in the EU should come from stocks that are not overfished.

In June, the Council of Ministers published its initial response (the General Approach) to the Commission's proposals for the reform of the CFP Basic Regulation. (cont'd page 2)

MORE WORK NEEDED FOR ROBUST REFORM

Those involved in fisheries policy reform have been publishing their proposals for Parliament to consider. There is a long way to go to ensure a policy that will save our seas.

Following the adoption of the European Commission's proposals for the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reform in July 2011, the Council of Fisheries Ministers and the European Parliament Rapporteur tabled their positions. WWF said that Member States are still failing to appreciate the seriousness of the problem. However, the Rapporteur's proposals are a move in the right direction, as WWF's CFP project director Roberto Ferrigno explained.

"There are some promising proposals in Rapporteur Ulrike Rodust's report, and the European Parliament now needs to consider these carefully and build on them. This is a rare chance to change policies that have destroyed many fishing communities both at home and abroad." WWF outlined three key areas of Rodust's report, which show improvements over the Council's General Approach. However, further work is also needed.

Focus on the fish

The issue: Healthy fish stocks and a healthy marine environment have to be the priority in any CFP reform. This is the only way to provide long-term, sustainable economic and social benefits. No fish means no fisheries.

The positives: The clear commitment to recover fish populations to levels above those capable of producing maximum sustainable yield (MSY) by 2015 and the proposal to ensure CFP contributes to achieving (cont'd page 2)

STOP BANKRUPTING OUR OCEANS

Cover photo: **Stop Bankrupting Our Oceans** – Ulrike Rodust receives WWF's campaign petition from Roberto Ferrigno, WWF CFP project director. Alongside nearly 30,000 WWF activist messages sent by concerned citizens to members of the Fisheries Committee, 150,000 people from across Europe signed a petition asking MEPs to correct 30 years of fisheries mismanagement by Fisheries Ministers.

(cont'd from page 1) To say it was unambitious is an understatement. What was agreed is a compromise which plays to the lowest common denominator. While it included some improvements on the Commission proposal there were many areas where the commitments were too weak to deliver meaningful reform to current policy. The Council's text lacks ambition and if it was to be adopted today it would fail to resolve the environmental, social and economic situation in European fisheries. The Ministers' short-sighted approach of failing to apply the basic rules of sustainability and place long-term prosperity at the heart of the reform is what has pushed fisheries deeper into crisis time and again.

The question is: will the Members of the European Parliament take advantage of their newly gained powers and this once-in-a-decade opportunity to break the cycle of overfishing?

"We need to stop wasting our natural resources, and bring about an end to bycatch and discards."

In the coming weeks, all eyes will be on the European Parliament and whether it can rise to this challenge. We need ambitious timelines and binding targets. We need to put in place the tools to achieve fish populations that can deliver the maximum sustainable yields by 2015. We need to establish multiannual plans based on sound science and input from all stakeholders to ensure the way we fish is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. We need to stop wasting our natural resources, and bring about an end to bycatch and discards. We need to reduce overcapacity and ensure our fishermen are fishing sustainably both in EU waters and abroad.

The bottom line is that we need a much more ambitious reform than the position proposed by the Council of Fisheries Ministers. Major changes in governance and management goals are needed – all stakeholders have told us so. It is up to the European Parliament to deliver what our seas need and our people want.

Tony Long
WWF Brussels

Healthy fish stocks have to be the priority.

Plan for the future

The issue: In order to end decades of short-sighted policies, the new CFP needs to turn to long-term management and embrace more effective governance. Multiannual plans (MAPs) for each fishery at a territorial level should be at the core of any reform. Clear goals and deadlines must be set, with milestones and binding targets.

The positives: A deadline for Member States to produce MAPs is welcomed. The extension of the scope of MAPs to help minimise the impacts of fishing activities and adjust fishing capacity to levels that consider the amount of fish available is also positive.

Still needed: MAPs and regionalisation are critical components of the future CFP. MAPs should promote stewardship of the resources by all those involved in a fishery, while regionalisation should allow improved adaptation of measures to the fishery. The management of each fishery should guarantee the involvement of all stakeholders in co-management groups.

Behaving overseas

The issue: Wherever EU vessels fish, they should do so to the same high standards they work to in EU waters. This has become even more important with the deterioration of global fisheries (see Newsletter 3). As the third largest fishing fleet on a global scale, the EU should champion sustainable fisheries management to the world.

The positives: To date, the EU has not used its political power on the international scene, so the proposal to ensure that Europe becomes a more active player in global negotiations is good news. The proposal to increase the detail regarding how EU vessels fish overseas is a step in the right direction, as is the consideration of human rights within Sustainable Fisheries Agreements with countries outside the EU.

Still needed: A reinforcement of the need to exchange relevant information to allow identification of any "surplus" (i.e. fish which third countries cannot or will not harvest themselves).

■ We need to ensure that our external fleet leaves enough fish for the local people.



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(cont'd from page 1) and maintaining good environmental status of marine waters as required under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD).

Still needed: Full recognition that the achievement of "MSY by 2015" is not a new element proposed in this reform process. The EU committed internationally to achieve MSY by 2015 back in 2002. The new CFP Basic Regulation cannot be less ambitious than the commitments made 10 years ago.

60-SECOND BRIEFING: MSY



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■ Only healthy fish stocks will deliver a healthy fishing industry.

The issue

European fisheries are in big trouble. Currently, overfishing is estimated to cause annual EU financial losses of 2.1 to 3 billion Euros¹. Any reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) must ensure that stocks are given adequate time to recover – not just for environmental reasons. If European stocks are allowed to recover then yearly landings could increase by 63%². To allow fish stocks to recover, fishing intensity needs to be adapted to allow the stock to reach a size that can be fished sustainably for years to come.

One means of achieving this is to fish according to the principle of the Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). This principle creates a balance between the necessary stock size (or biomass – called B_{MSY}) and a high, but sustainable, catch rate (or fishing mortality – called F_{MSY}). Experience from New Zealand shows that management of fisheries based on the MSY principle will enable higher catches, bigger profits and more security for those employed in the fisheries sector³.

The pressure

Many European stocks are being fished at levels higher than F_{MSY} . That is, we take out more fish than stocks can replace naturally. To make things worse, more young fish are caught before they have reproduced at least once. This is why almost one in two assessed European fish stocks from

the North East Atlantic and 80% from the Mediterranean are now classified as "overfished". Once fish stocks have grown back to B_{MSY} size they can support a sustainable F_{MSY} catch rate – the maximum annual catch that may be fished without causing fish stocks to decline.

1) Salz, P. (2012). Socio-economic benefits of a bold EU fisheries reform – a discussion paper. Framian BV. 2) Froese, R. et al. (2011). Generic harvest control rules for European fisheries. | 3) Froese R. (2011). Fishery reform slips through the net. | 4) "Sustainable Exploitation of Fish: What do we mean by MSY?", by Environmental Defense Fund stock assessment scientist Helen Takade-Heumacher

The latest

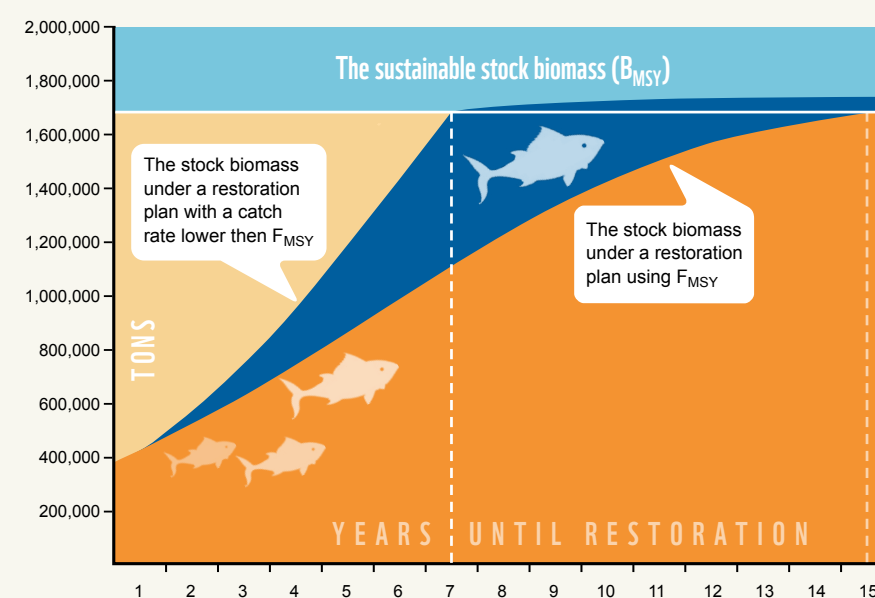
The Council is proposing to set catch levels according to F_{MSY} by 2015 where possible and 2020 at the latest. This would expose already depleted stocks to fishing levels that are too high. The stocks need to be given time to recover to the B_{MSY} – for most of the stocks this means fishing at levels lower than F_{MSY} . If not, then we are just continuing to overfish.

The solutions

Stocks need to be rebuilt back above B_{MSY} levels – only then can catch rates be increased to F_{MSY} and the balance restored. A new analysis⁴ of EU stocks from the North East Atlantic and adjacent waters shows that nearly half of the stocks assessed could be returned to a healthy state by 2015. For stocks to rebuild to B_{MSY} levels this rapidly, we will need to reduce the catch rates on many stocks for a few years (see figure below); once they do recover, we can fish at F_{MSY} rates indefinitely.

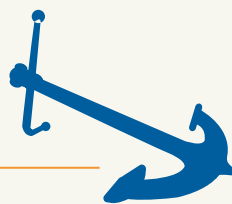
More information about the MSY concept: <http://vimeo.com/37718721>

Timeframe of stock recovery at two different catch intensities



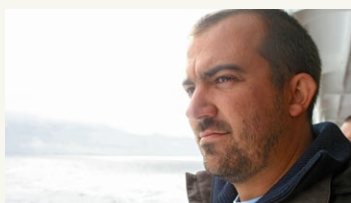
■ A fishing pressure below F_{MSY} will enable a significantly shorter restoration time of the stock and higher catch and higher revenue at an earlier stage. (hypothetical cod-like stock, data: H. Takade-Heumacher)

TOO BIG TO IGNORE



Eighty per cent of the vessels within the EU belong to the small scale fishing fleet, a sector ignored in the CFP reform proposal. Some of the small-scale fishermen, through networks such as the Mediterranean Platform of Artisanal Fishermen, MedArNet and the French artisanal fishermen within the "Plateforme de la Petite Pêche Artisanale Française", have started to organise themselves with a common aim: more sustainable fisheries. They are also asking for the creation of co-management groups governing all European fisheries. These will ensure the joint participation of fishermen, scientists, administrations, NGOs and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of management plans. Currently, the details of this are not adequately explained in the reform.

Charles Braine, artisanal fisherman, Brittany, Saint Quay Portrieux, France



■ Charles Braine: "We need to ensure the effectiveness of control measures."

"There are many reasons to support regionalisation and co-management. First, the fishing methods, the fishermen's habits and the geographical characteristics differ widely from one region to another and should be taken into account to improve fisheries management. Fishermen will be more likely to respect and follow rules if they have participated in decisions. We also

need to ensure the effectiveness of control measures. One can formulate the best rules but without an adequate control mechanism these rules will never be effective. A regional approach based on co-management must take into account all fishermen and give the advantage to those who fish sustainably."

Christian Decugis, Mediterranean artisanal fisherman, St Raphael, France



■ Christian Decugis: "We need to face these challenges together."

"In the French Mediterranean, fishermen have historically managed fisheries through a territorial approach. Over the years, more and more people started to interact with the sea, like recreational fishermen for example. At the same time, other environmental pressures have appeared such as pollution. We need to face these challenges together, small and large-scale fishermen, but also scientists,

administrations and civil society. We are convinced that models of territorial management are the solution. Inclusive, results-based management must be adopted in fisheries management if we want to preserve the livelihoods of coastal communities and marine resources for future generations."

For more information: www.medartnet.org and <http://vimeo.com/43352701>



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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

WHAT'S NEW

Bluefin tuna: stock at turning point?

WWF welcomed the first positive signs of stock increases in East Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna revealed at the recent scientific assessment by the ICCAT (the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna). If confirmed, this would mean a turning point for



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the threatened species. "We need to see how the recovery trend progresses over time. In the meantime, management measures, including total allowable catch (TAC) and fishing seasons, need to be maintained," said Dr Sergi Tudela, head of the fisheries programme, WWF Mediterranean. Concerns remain over illegal fishing of bluefin tuna.

Artisanal fishermen must be involved in reform

On September 19, the PECH Committee hosted members of the Mediterranean Platform of Artisanal Fishermen, MedArtNet, at the EU Parliament to discuss a new model to secure their future. The Platform is calling for the creation of co-management groups governing all European fisheries on a territorial basis.

"We didn't come to ask for money for our boats, we just want the new reform to give us the legal framework enabling us to apply what we know – that is, the best approach for our fisheries. If we don't want to see artisanal fishermen disappear, it is crucial that the new CFP endorses territorial based co-management," said Mauricio Paulido, the Platform representative for Spain.