



WWF

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER

2011



WILL REFORM SAVE FISH AND FISHERMEN?

The proposals for a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy are not the ambitious new system many had hoped for

The European Commission's proposal for reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has potential but is clearly not ambitious enough, according to WWF.

The EU Fisheries Commissioner had raised hopes of an ambitious, or even radical reform. In a speech to launch her proposals just before the summer break this year, Maria Damanaki said she hoped this would be "the birthday of a new, flexible and intelligent fisheries policy fit for today's environmental and economic challenges".

However, there were no celebrations once the plans had been scrutinised. Tony Long, WWF European Policy Office director, said he was "disappointed" by the proposals. "While there are some good ideas and some acknowledgement of the faults in the current system, this isn't the reform that will ensure our seas recover."

The highlights, he said, included the

establishment of multi-annual plans as the key to long term management. Issues such as discards and overcapacity have also been clearly recognised.

"... this isn't the reform that will ensure our seas recover."

Tony Long, WWF European Policy Office

But despite the perilous state of many European fishing stocks, the threats to marine habitats and the precarious state of the fishing industry, the proposed solutions do not go far enough. Long says this leaves plenty of work to do in the next 18 months.

"Ministers and MEP's must now demonstrate the political courage to invest in sustainable fisheries

management, or be prepared to carry the responsibility for ever-more depleted stocks and a fishing industry that continues to decline into the future."

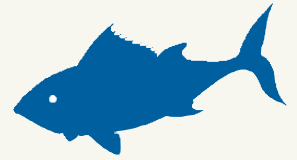
A recent study by the European Commission found that only 9% of European fish stocks are likely to be at sustainable levels by 2022 if the CFP is not radically changed.

(The proposals explained – see pages 2 & 3)



■ EU Fisheries Commissioner Maria Damanaki had raised hopes of an ambitious reform

18 MONTHS TO CHANGE 30 YEARS OF POOR POLICY



For the first time MEPs have the opportunity to help deliver CFP changes

The Proposals for reform

Almost everyone involved in fisheries, from decision makers to industry and the NGO community, are in agreement that 'business as usual' is not an option. Indeed, the Commission says its proposals for a new CFP will be good for fish, fishermen, fishing communities and consumers. It claims its new CFP will help to:

- Bring all fish stocks to sustainable levels by 2015
- Phase out discarding
- Offer consumers better information on the sustainability of seafood
- Only offer financial support to environmentally-friendly initiatives

The good, the unclear & the bizarre

When the reform proposal was announced, it received a mixed reception. For some parties the targets are too ambitious, for others the proposal lacks ambition or detail. So the question is: will the Commission's reform proposal make the necessary changes to European fisheries management? WWF walks you through the good, the unclear and the totally bizarre parts of three major areas of the reform.

The good: Environment first

The proposal establishes clear conservation targets such as the obligation to fish within the limits of 'maximum

sustainable yield' by 2015 (MSY, see below). This is an encouraging recognition of the issues facing fish stocks and marine ecosystems.

WWF's view: The environment must take centre stage in CFP reform, not least because it underpins economic and social sustainability. However, WWF still feels that MSY is not precautionary enough and that this should be seen as an interim target towards more robust future goals.

Reflections on Reform



Tony Long,
Director
WWF European
Policy Office

- Rampant overfishing, with a large impact on coastal economies, has become a thing of the past
- Nearly all of Europe's fish stocks have been restored to their maximum sustainable yields
- Fishermen earn more from these larger fish populations composed of mature and bigger fish

This could easily be WWF's vision of Europe's fishing industry. But it's actually taken from the European Commission's Green Paper on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) published in 2009. It sounds idealist, but this vision is, without doubt, realistic.

Unlike some policy areas, fisheries management is one where real solutions are available. Unfortunately,

the policy to date hasn't worked. The CFP has led to over-fishing, fleet overcapacity, billions paid out in subsidies, low economic resilience and a decline in the volume of fish caught. The system is broken and it needs to be fixed.

Now, for the third time in its 30-year history, the CFP is being reviewed and reformed.

And this is your first chance, as an MEP, to make the Commission's vision a reality. Thanks to the Lisbon Treaty there are co-decision powers in place which ensure the full involvement of the European Parliament this time.

Two years on from the Green Paper, Maria Damanaki, the EU Fisheries Commissioner, has published a proposal on how the vision above can be achieved. It's a start, but there is still a lot of work to be done in the next 18 months to help turn around the last three decades of unsuccessful management and over-exploitation.

Tony Long,
WWF Brussels

Did you know? Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) is the optimal catch that may be taken from a fish stock in any given year without causing stocks to decline. Currently, most stocks EU vessels exploit are still fished well above MSY. It is essential to restore and maintain populations of harvested species above levels which can produce MSY by 2015 in European waters and abroad.

The unclear: Ending short term management

Quotas are currently set annually, often in excess of scientific advice. The reform proposes multi-annual plans as a means of ending over-fishing and achieving MSY. This is good news. But with the lack of detail in the proposal we still don't know how this will be achieved, by whom and under what timeframes.

WWF's view: The CFP needs to set clear, binding targets which must be met through long-term management, or multiannual plans designed specifi-



■ Bizarre: the Commission proposes using discards for fishmeal, which won't encourage selective fishing

cally for each fishery. When management decisions are taken at fisheries level this will move us away from the madness of politically-motivated annual quota negotiations.

***Did you know?** “In fisheries where stakeholders have a say through co-management, compliance increases significantly, as does enthusiasm for finding new solutions to old problems ...”*

(Mike Park, Scottish Whitefish Producers’ Assn.)

discards to producers of fishmeal and pet food.

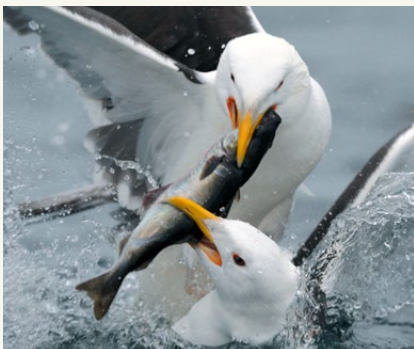
WWF’s view: Commercialising discards won’t encourage fishermen to fish selectively. Instead, we have to reduce the number of unwanted fish and sea creatures being caught in the first place, not to find a mechanism to deal with them after they have been caught. More selective fishing practices must be adopted. Moreover, EU discarding is not just about commercial species but also includes the incidental capture and dumping of non target, vulnerable and protected species, which is not considered by the proposed ban.

***Did you know?** Up to 50% of all fish caught in Europe are thrown back as discards. Incentives to use more selective gear, avoiding areas with high concentrations of unwanted fish and making fishermen accountable for what they catch rather than what they land are missing altogether.*

The bizarre: Markets for discards

The Commission wants to eliminate the practice of discards, i.e. fish that are thrown back to sea because they cannot legally be landed or they are not marketable. However, the proposed discard ban is also accompanied by a new option to sell some of these

© Wild Wonders of Europe



■ Sustainable management not fighting will solve Europe’s fish crisis



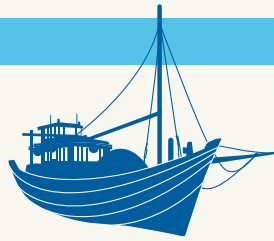
EU FISH FACTS ...

For **55%** of stocks in NE-Atlantic data are missing. Their status is unknown.

The North sea yields **20%** of the cod, plaice and sole it did 25 years ago.

Around **75%** or three out of four of assessed fish stocks are overexploited.

Europe’s fishing fleet is estimated to be two or three times the size needed to catch the available resources.



60-SECOND BRIEFING: TRANSFERABLE FISHING CONCESSIONS



© Erward Parker / WWF-Canon

THE ISSUE:

Transferable Fishing Concessions (TFCs) are being proposed by the European Commission as the main tool to address the chronic problem of overcapacity. They will apply to all vessels over 12 meters and to those below 12 meters with towed gear. TFCs are one form of Rights Based Management (RBM). RBM assigns a time limited privilege to fish to an individual or group and links it with clear responsibilities to meet certain

obligations. RBM tools give fishermen a secure stake in their fishery which should encourage them to safeguard fish for the future, but they do not turn oceans or resources into private property. Many different systems of RBM are already a fact of life in different European waters and some already allow rights to be traded similarly to the TFCs.

THE NEED:

As well as failing to combat overcapacity, current fisheries management systems do not put natural resources at the heart of fisheries management. They also do not provide fishermen with the responsibility to use the available resources sustainably. Current RBM systems are often informal and without a strong legal base and this needs to change, tightening the systems to link the right to fish with the responsibility to protect.

THE PROBLEM:

The TFC proposal is a “one size fits all” approach which WWF does not think appropriate given the diverse nature of European fisheries, its marine ecosystems and society. TFCs are also primarily an economic tool, relying on market forces to determine who fishes, and not one aimed at delivering sustainability. Again WWF does not consider this appropriate given the unhealthy state of so many fish stocks and marine ecosystems.

THE SOLUTION:

WWF strongly believes that the overarching goal for management must be long-term sustainability. There needs to be a more flexible management approach: a toolkit of RBM-measures. Solutions must be designed within fisheries management plans and tailored to each fishery. They have to avoid the monopolisation of rights and must include indicators of success and safeguards to act and revoke the rights if conservation goals are not met.



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

Karoline Schacht | EU Fisheries Policy Officer | **WWF Germany** | T: +49 40 530200 127 | schacht@wwf.de • Anouk Delafortrie | Campaign & Communications Manager European Marine & Fisheries Policy | **WWF European Policy Office** | T: +32 2 743 8800 | adelafortrie@wwf.eu • Written & edited by David Burrows | davidgburrows@yahoo.co.uk © Copyright of WWF International © Trademark of WWF International • Printed on 100% Recycling paper

WHAT'S NEW

July Meeting in Poland

Just 14 days after the proposal for the new CFP was announced, WWF Poland organised an international seminar to discuss it – as well as the issues facing Baltic fisheries. All participants agreed that the proposal requires some more work. The seminar was also an opportunity to discuss the experiences of fisheries management based on long-term management plans (LTMP's) and regionalisation – both of which have to be part of a robust CFP, according to WWF.



Patronage
of the Polish EU Presidency

The Scottish management system, designed in close co-operation with the fishermen and WWF (Scottish Conservation Credits Scheme), was presented by Richard Lochhead, Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, as a successful regional approach to fisheries management. Polish/English reports are available at www.wwf.pl.

In your next newsletter ...

There is no doubt that fisheries policy is a complicated and controversial area. It's hardly surprising, therefore, that there are plenty of myths circulating regarding fish, fisheries, fishermen and fisheries policy. The next issue of this newsletter will untangle some of these issues, separating the myths from the facts. Is the state of our fish stocks really that bad? Will reductions in catch quotas result in job losses? Will Marine Protected Areas really force fishermen out of their traditional fishing areas? All this, and more, in your next issue, due to be published in December.