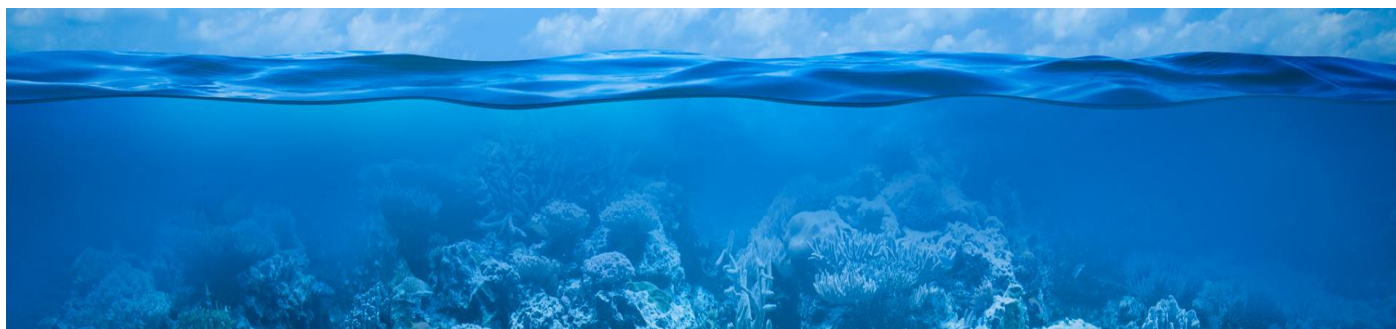


FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE NEWSLETTER

November 2015



Dear readers,

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Events

The year is almost to an end and as each year the month of December will be dominated by the issue of Fisheries Ministers deciding on the 2016 TACs and quotas for the Atlantic and North Sea that the European Commission proposed this month.

The EU Council, last month, reached a landmark agreement on the deep sea fishing regulation dossier allowing the procedure to go forward with trilogues with the European Parliament and the European Commission. Also, a fitness check of the Habitats and Birds Directive was organised by the European Commission where stakeholders had the opportunity to raise concerns and opinions on this Directive and its new shape in the next years.

At international level, the EP Fisheries Committee held a hearing this month on the external dimension of the CFP reform where some key issues and concerns were raised from attendees. Also, the month of November ended with the annual meeting of ICCAT deciding on key dossiers and issues, such as quotas for tuna and setting up a working group on FADs.

NGOs have also been active this month, on many dossiers, such as "Sustainable Aquaculture Feed" from Seas at Risk and "IUU fishing and high risk species" from WWF.

The month of December is full with events, including a conference on Maritime Spatial Planning, organized by the European Commission, a Roundtable discussion on "Sustainable Fishing And Multiannual Management Plans" and an event on Industry Innovation & CFP Landing Obligation, organized by the EP Intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development. Lastly, the theme of oceans will figure high in the negotiations for climate in Paris (COP 21).

Enjoy the reading!

Despina Symons
Director, EBCD

The EU institutions



EU Council reaches agreement on deep sea regulation

On the 6th of November, the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Council of the EU (COREPER) adopted a general approach to the deep sea fishing regulation (*Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing specific conditions for fishing for deep-sea stocks in the North-East Atlantic and provisions for fishing in international waters of the North-East Atlantic and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2347/2002*), following a Council Fisheries Attaché Working Group discussion yesterday.

This proposal imposes a trawler fishing ban at a depth of 800 meters, in order to protect particularly fragile seabed ecosystems. It also proposes a ban on fishing for deep sea species in areas where ecosystems have been deemed to be vulnerable. Additionally, it proposes a measure where fishing vessels encountering vulnerable marine ecosystems beyond 400 meters should move away from those areas and avoid using deep fishing gear.

The compromise, although it is not completely rational, it is politically reasonable and in any case preferable to the trawling ban of deep species proposed by the Commission. Its application is now limited to Community waters, which will allow EU

vessels to be subject to fair conditions of competition in international waters regulated by RFMOs. The other provisions of this compromise are very similar to those used by the EU Regulation 734/2008 for unregulated international waters by a RFMO text itself directly inspired by the resolution of the General Assembly 2006 United Nations, with one difference; this difference relates to the "freeze the footprint" that seems to be definitive, whereas in the 2008 Regulation, the freeze only applies to areas that have not yet been scientifically evaluated to demonstrate the absence of environmental risk.

It has yet to be a trilogue with the European Parliament and the Commission before a final text is adopted to regulate trawling activities in deep waters

The agreement reached also gave the green light to start trilogues with the MEP in charge of this dossier, Mrs Isabelle Thomas (S&D, FR). It remains to be seen how the trilogues will progress and the compromises that will be made. So far one trilogues took place start of this month and another is scheduled for the end of the year. Should an agreement be reached, then the rapporteur will have to put it forward for approval to the EP fisheries committee and if adopted will have to be adopted finally in the plenary.

Background

The EU parliament had rejected the deep sea trawling ban in December 2013.

PECH hearing on the external dimension of the CFP reform

Speakers were from all interested actors in the fisheries sectors such as, Mr. Michel GOUJON, Mr. Anertz MUNIATEGI, Mr. Philippe CURY, Mr. Gaoussou GUEYE, Mr. Giovanni TUMBILOLO, Mr. Julio MORON AYALA.

The public hearing was divided in two panels:

Panel 1: Fisheries partnership agreements and the evaluation of the benefits for the local economy and the EU fisheries sector

This panel focused on the importance the FPAs have in improving cooperation, monitoring, traceability and control in third countries, as well as their commitment with the fight against IUU. For the European fleet, legal security, stability and the reasonable cost of the access to resources and level playing field are the main values. Some points were raised regarding the lack of respect for small scale fisheries in the areas covered by the FPAs from the European fleet.

Panel 2: Rights and responsibilities of countries in the management of fisheries and fishing capacity

This panel focused on the issue of non EU and EU fishing fleets fishing in controversial areas such as the Mediterranean and West Africa. Also, the issue of Economic exclusion zones and the unfair competition has caused several problems that the Commission needs to look into. It was highlighted that one of the pillars in the external dimension of the CFP is regional governance. Lastly, it was emphasized again the need to have strict controls and to ensure that international legislation is implemented by all actors.

[Find their presentations and hearing programme here.](#)

EC proposes 2016 TACs for Atlantic and North Sea fish stocks

The European Commission published on the 12th November the Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas for fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and North Sea for 2016.

According to the EU Commissioner on Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, K. Vella, *"My objective is clear and ambitious: I want us to bring all stocks to healthy and sustainable levels as soon as possible. I am happy that for a number of fish stocks we can propose quota increases and achieve Maximum*

Sustainable Yield in 2016. The efforts of our fishermen paid off and we are here to support them also in making the transition to landing all fish caught. For other fish stocks however cuts need to be made so that we can protect the future of those stocks."

In summary, The TACs in the proposal include 4 increases, 5 TACs which are proposed at the same level as in 2015 ("rollover") (plus 26 "rollovers" in for stocks contained in a joint Council and Commission statement) and 28 decreases:

- Increase of TAC for megrims in the North Sea and horse mackerel in Iberian and Western waters
- Decrease of TAC for Cod stocks in the Irish Sea and the Celtic Sea, Sole stocks in areas such as the Irish Sea, Eastern Channel and Bay of Biscay, haddock and cod in the Celtic Sea, Cod in the West of Scotland
- A management plan for sea bass (proposal includes a complete fishing ban for commercial vessels and recreational anglers in the first half of 2016. For the second half of 2016, the Commission is proposing a monthly one tonne catch limit for vessels targeting sea bass, and a one fish bag limit for recreational anglers. It is also proposing to maintain the closure for commercial fishing around Ireland.)

Find here a link to the table with the proposed TACs: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6016_en.htm

Find here a Q&A on the proposed TACs: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-6030_en.htm

Find here a Q&A on the quota top-ups (an increase in fishing opportunities to help fishermen in the transition to the new obligation to land all catches): http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-6017_en.htm

This proposal will be presented by Commissioner Vella and submitted to discussion to the Ministers of the Member States at the December Fisheries Council to be applied as from 1 January 2016.

International

ICCAT 2015 Annual Meeting outcomes

The historic maritime Islands of Malta played host to the 24th Regular Meeting of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) from 10 to 17 November, 2015.

The meeting was honoured by the presence of Mr. Karmenu Vella (European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries), Hon. Roderick Galdes (Parliamentary Secretary for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animals Rights, Malta), and, Ms. Andreina Fenech Farrugia (Director General Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Malta). Attending the Annual Meeting were 45 Contracting Parties and 2 Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities. The assistance, as Observers, of 6 intergovernmental organisations and 25 non-governmental organisations, completed the participation. A total of 524 delegates (out of 623 total registrations), or representatives of the Organisations present, have participated in the meeting.

The following recommendations were approved:

- Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish an Ad Hoc Working Group on Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs)
- Recommendation by ICCAT on a Multi-annual Conservation and Management Programme for Tropical Tunas
- Recommendation by ICCAT to Establish Harvest Control Rules for the North Atlantic Albacore Stock
- Recommendation by ICCAT for the Conservation of South Atlantic Swordfish
- Recommendation by ICCAT on Porbeagle caught in Association with ICCAT Fisheries

- Recommendation by ICCAT to Further Strengthen the Plan to Rebuild Blue Marlin and White Marlin Stocks
- Recommendation by ICCAT on the Development of Harvest Control Rules and of Management Strategy Evaluation
- Recommendation by ICCAT to Clarify and Amend Aspects of ICCAT'S Bluefin Tuna Catch Documentation Program to Facilitate the Application of the eBCD
- Recommendation by ICCAT Amending Deadlines of Two ICCAT Recommendations
- Resolution by ICCAT Establishing Guidelines for the Implementation of the
- Recommendation by ICCAT on Penalties Applicable in the Case of Non-Fulfilment of Reporting Obligations [Rec. 11-15]
- Resolution by ICCAT Concerning the Application of an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management
- Resolution by ICCAT Concerning the Use of a Precautionary Approach in
- Implementing ICCAT Conservation and Management Measures
- Resolution by ICCAT on Criteria for the Allocation of Fishing Possibilities

[For more info check the press release from ICCAT here.](#)

EP Intergroup

EP Intergroup event - Sea for Society (by EBCD)

European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD)

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Our global Ocean is vast, covering over 70 % of the Earth and is vital to our life and wellbeing producing a huge range of goods and services. Yet it is extremely fragile and is experiencing increasing pressure on its resources and ecosystems through human activities. Sea for Society, an FP7-funded, three-year mobilization and mutual learning action plan with 28 partners from 12 countries, set out to address the challenge of taking advantage of the Ocean's tremendous opportunities to meet society's current and future needs whilst protecting it for future generations. Sea for Society has engaged over 500 stakeholders and citizens in a dialogue on the future of our Ocean. Together they have developed more than 700 ideas to improve human-Ocean dynamics and over 600 solutions to address barriers to sustainability. Ultimately, putting these solutions into action will help build a Blue Society. This event, organised in collaboration with the EP Intergroup on "Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development", provided a platform to learn and exchange on how the concept of a Blue Society can become a reality through open discussion among invited participants representing science, industry, policy-makers and civil society. Sectoral representatives, including youth, used their own practical experience to explain how humanity can move towards a Blue Society by galvanizing its values within their own spheres of influence. The event was an opportunity to exchange ideas and

for identifying practical strategies for the future. Organisations and individuals had also the opportunity to sign a commitment to become champions of the Blue Society by committing to positive change in their personal and professional activities.

[To see the presentations and webstream of the event check here.](#)

NGOs

NGO policy paper on sustainable aquaculture feed



This month a [policy paper](#) was published from the NGOs Seas at Risk and Marine Conservation Society on "Ensuring sustainable aquaculture feed ingredients". This paper is a follow-up from the joint NGO position paper "[Priorities for Environmentally Responsible Aquaculture in EU](#)".

According to the [press release](#), European aquaculture cannot be considered "sustainable" until the use of poorly managed and/or overexploited marine ingredients in the diets of European farmed fish is replaced by ecologically responsible marine and alternative non-marine ingredients. Seas At Risk's new policy paper outlines urgent and longer term actions to be taken by the EU on the issue of feed.

The paper looks at the issue of certification programmes (MSC, IFFO RS; the appendix compares

the two) and alternative feed ingredients (non-fished based). It also touches upon the issue of discarding where it states: The problem arises if the incentive to sell the fish to fish meal producers for a satisfactory price becomes stronger than the incentive to avoid the unwanted catch in the first place [...]NGOs emphasize the need to adhere to the objectives of the CFP and avoid unwanted catches in the first place. If fishers do not apply all possible efforts and measures to eliminate these at sea, the status of fish stocks will not improve as initially envisaged through the landing obligation. Utilizing unwanted catches misses the point when these fish, if they had not been caught, could have contributed to the reproduction capacity of wild stocks.

Lastly, it looks into the future trends in aquaculture and feed.

Report on IUU fishing and High risk species

A report was published at the start of this month by **WWF on Illegal Fishing: Which fish species are at highest risk from illegal and unreported fishing?**.

This evaluation is based on the most recent comprehensive estimates of IUU fishing and includes the world's major commercial stocks, species groups or FAO areas, such as:

- Tuna
- Sharks
- The Mediterranean and Black Sea (portions of or the entire EEZs of Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Cyprus, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Russia, Georgia, Ukraine and

high seas areas, including areas managed under the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) RFMOs)

- Northwest Atlantic Ocean (portions of the EEZs of the US, Canada, and Greenland as well as high seas under the jurisdiction of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) RFMO)
- Northeast Atlantic Ocean (portions of the EEZs of the Greenland, Iceland, the EU, Norway and Russia and high seas areas, including areas managed within the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES))

and many others...

In its conclusions, the report states that 86 percent (485 out of 567) of all species/groups or stocks assessed were categorized as at high or moderate risk of IUU fishing; 54 percent experienced high levels of IUU fishing, while 32 percent experienced moderate levels of IUU fishing. Only 14 percent (82) of all species/groups or stocks assessed were categorized as at low risk of IUU fishing. However, of these, almost one-third (27) are tuna stocks, for which more recent studies have found significant levels of IUU. If tuna stocks were reclassified as moderate to high risk according to those analyses, only about 10 percent of total stocks globally would be categorized at low risk of IUU fishing.

You can find the report [here](#).

Upcoming EVENTS

December 2015			
14-17 December	EP	Plenary	Strasbourg, France
14 December	EU Council	Fisheries Ministers' Council	Brussels, Belgium

European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD)

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