



## Discards – new developments in 2013

Developments (year by year) from 2008 to 2012 can be found at:

<http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/conserving-fish-stocks/discards/discard-guides-and-information>

### Contents

Fully Documented Fisheries	Page 2
Scotland	
General policy/Gear technology trials	Page 4
England/Wales/Northern Ireland/Southern Ireland	
General policy	Page 5
Gear technology trials	Page 6
European perspective	Page 7
Other countries/Regional Advisory Councils	Page 9
Research	Page 11

The progress of the CFP reform process and the pathway to a landings obligation are covered elsewhere.

### For further information:

#### Seafish

<http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/conserving-fish-stocks/discards>

#### New Seafish Guide to Discards – September 2013.

[http://www.seafish.org/media/publications/SeafishGuidetoDiscards\\_201309.pdf](http://www.seafish.org/media/publications/SeafishGuidetoDiscards_201309.pdf)

#### CEFAS

<http://www.cefias.defra.gov.uk/our-science/fisheries-information/discards-and-fishing-gear-technology.aspx>

#### CFP reform

[http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/index_en.htm)

## **FULLY DOCUMENTED FISHERIES**

### **1. Marine Scotland: Report of the Demersal Landing Obligation Trial. 21 November 2013.**

Marine Scotland invited a pair team of demersal vessels, using a mesh size of 120mm+ and fishing in the North Sea, to participate in a fully documented landing obligation trial for all demersal species. The vessels were awarded a quota uplift for a number of species in line with estimated of Scottish fleet discard rates and required to land all of their demersal catch as a trial of the discard ban, which is to be progressively introduced from 1 January 2016.

The trial provided valuable insight into some of the challenges ahead, particularly the pressure of choke species and financial consequences of leasing in quota to cover non-target and unwanted catches. It also allowed the operational deployment of Fully Documented Fishery Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) technology, using CCTV cameras, to be successfully tested in a multi-species no-discard mixed fishery. There are a number of key lessons learned from this trial, even though it ran for only a third of the expected time:

- **Choke species.** This trial showed that there are likely to be significant challenges in operating under a landing obligation due to choke species, even where current quota levels are increased by current discard rates relevant to the specific fishing fleet, which in some cases are higher than the average EU estimated rates. Whilst this was not unexpected for hake, we were surprised as to how quickly it ‘choked’ the system – particularly due to a lack of available quota to lease/swap in. Furthermore, the financial consequences of covering catches over and above the quota uplift became particularly apparent for saithe. The skipper reported that the cost of leasing quota approached, or exceeded, the price level for which the fish were sold, resulting in a projected financial loss once operating costs are taken into account for this species. It is not possible to predict how these situations might differ when the entire EU fleet is subject to a landing obligation and when the flexibilities become available.
- **Unwanted catch.** The trial showed that it is possible to be very selective with regards to juveniles, with very little catch below Minimum Landing Size even when whilst targeting small haddock. Approximately 1% of the catch in this trial was juvenile fish. The terms and conditions of the trial required that this fish could not be sold for human consumption. Fish below Minimum Landing Size, damaged fish and fish otherwise unsellable were sold as bait to potters and creelers. It seems possible that this market could absorb considerable quantities of unwanted catch once the landing obligation comes into effect. This could be useful as catches below the new Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes (which replace the MLS) will not be able to be sold for human consumption.
- **Enforcing a full landing obligation.** The FDF system used for this trial appears to be an effective tool capable of detecting discarding on demersal vessels. However, whilst the system also works well for a single-species discard ban (i.e. the North Sea cod FDF scheme), we have not yet trialled the system under a multi-species partial discard ban (i.e. just for cod, haddock, whiting and saithe), where the bulk of fish may create new challenges.
- **Scientific data.** The short nature of this landing obligation trial, and limited participation, means that the data collected will not be sufficient to improve the science directly. However, Marine Scotland Science is continuing to progress a number of techniques utilising REM technology in order to provide the size comparison data and estimates of catch weight at the vessel level. For this to be of value in stock assessments, the vessel sampling across the fleet needs to be set up within a statistical design and not based on isolated examples. Furthermore, the ‘basketing’ system of monitoring saithe and hake discards, whilst operating on an FDF scheme with limited quota, has proven to be effective and verifiable. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00438386.pdf>

**2. FAIL: EU discards ban test. 14 November 2013.**

Test of EU discards ban has boats 'sailing in circles around the North Sea' trying to avoid catching just about everything (report on FDF trial in Scotland Summer 2013).

<http://www.intrafish.com/news/article1381017.ece>

**3. Report: Fishermen demonstrate almost zero discards in latest MMO trial. 18 June 2013.**

The latest catch quota report from the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) shows discards of important stocks such as sole, cod, plaice, megrim and anglerfish have been drastically reduced in the trials carried out by through 2012 with North Sea and West Channel fishermen. Seven vessels took part in the trials in the South West along with twelve in the North Sea. The boats were not permitted to discard any of the species in the trials, including those below the minimum size. They had to land all of the fish of these species that they caught so they all counted against their quota. Data from onboard monitoring equipment, including CCTV cameras, was used to check the conditions of the trial were adhered to. Catches of undersized fish in the trial were also low, suggesting that boats are fishing more selectively. Arnold Locker, Chairman of Lockers Trawlers Ltd, is quoted.

<http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/news/press/130618.htm>

Final 73 page report:

[http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/management/documents/quotas/cqt\\_final2012.pdf](http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/management/documents/quotas/cqt_final2012.pdf)

**4. Devon Fishermen deliver responsible and sustainable – ‘no discard fisheries’**

This project has been partnered by fishermen from Devon and Cornwall and is a continued evolution of the ‘Project 50’ work completed in 2011. Southwest skippers have developed highly selective fishing gear and have adjusted the way in which they fish to deliver what is being hailed as a ‘zero discard fishery’ – this work has been validated by UK authorities with results taken from the mixed demersal fisheries around South Devon and Cornwall. The project has required Skippers to operate as a ‘Fully Documented Fishery’ - thereby delivering high quality data on a continuous basis to Fisheries Managers and Fisheries Scientists ensuring the sustainable management of Westcountry fish stocks. [andrew@interfish.co.uk](mailto:andrew@interfish.co.uk)

**5. Second MMO report: Under 10 metre remote electronic monitoring technical trial. 18 June 2013.**

Using two vessels. The installing of the equipment was generally straightforward, but additional structures above deck could be useful in improving video quality or for expanding trials to under 10 metre vessels with more open decks. The REM equipment was shown to be reliable on board under 10 metre vessels for the majority of the time but some imagery was out of focus and blurry. Assessment of fishing effort using the sensors was very accurate and could be used to verify self-reported fishing effort, by trip, haul and towing time. Quantifying catches was possible and very accurate for the retained part of the catch when gutting occurred or where whole ungutted fish was collected in baskets. Discard estimates were also possible but were easier to quantify when the crew separated and collected the discard part of the catch in baskets. It was also useful for verifying species identification and could be used to quality assure any self-reported data. The importance of discussing sorting procedures and differences between crew and analyst estimates was also highlighted.

[http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/management/documents/quotas/cqt\\_u10m.pdf](http://www.marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/management/documents/quotas/cqt_u10m.pdf)

**6. Workshop on 9/10 January to Consider Ways to Fully Document Fisheries Catch. 2 January 2013.**

The NFFO and Cefas are co-hosting a workshop for fishermen, scientists, managers and policy experts on 9-10 January 2013 as part of a cutting-edge Fisheries Science Partnership (FSP) project to evaluate ways of providing fully documented fisheries. The ‘Scoping Industry Approaches to Fully

Documented Fisheries' project planned the workshop to consider how the 'full documentation of catch' can be delivered for a range of fisheries.

<http://www.thefishsite.com/fishnews/19149/workshop-considers-ways-to-fully-document-fisheries-catch>

### **7. Apply Now for English 2013 Catch Quota Trials. 4 December 2012.**

Applications are invited for new trials of catch quota schemes in the North Sea and in Western Waters for 2013, which may include the extended range of species added in 2012 and the possibility of further species such as saithe, plaice and haddock for the North Sea. The scheme is run by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and will follow on from the current 2012 trials, which are demonstrating virtually zero discards for species being trialled. Successful vessels will be allocated additional quota for the relevant species subject to the outcome of negotiations at December Council. An exemption from effort or additional kilowatt days will also be considered for applicants operating in the North Sea. Remote electronic monitoring (REM) equipment, including CCTV, will be used to document and quantify the effectiveness of the catch quota system at reducing discards across a range of fisheries. Vessels may occasionally be required to carry MMO observers. Vessel owners who expect to fish in the North Sea or Western Waters from 1 January to 31 December 2013 can apply. Only English-registered vessels that are members of a producer organisation are eligible.

To apply vessel owners should complete an application form that is part of the following information packs:

North Sea stocks application form and information pack:

[http://marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/management/documents/quotas/cqt\\_ns2013.pdf](http://marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/management/documents/quotas/cqt_ns2013.pdf)

Western Waters stocks application form and information pack:

[http://marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/management/documents/quotas/cqt\\_ww2013.pdf](http://marinemanagement.org.uk/fisheries/management/documents/quotas/cqt_ww2013.pdf)

Alternatively, an application form or information pack is available from [ukcatchquota@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ukcatchquota@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

## **SCOTLAND**

**1. Innovative Trawls Developed to Reduce Discards, Conserve Stocks. 19 February 2013.** The Scottish fishing industry is developing new and innovative designs of prawn trawls that significantly reduce discards of whitefish such as cod. The designs represent a new approach to fisheries management where fishermen fed up with unworkable European regulations have taken matters into their own hands to deliver effective conservation. Working in partnership with the Scottish Government, the new designs of prawn trawl have achieved reductions of over 60 per cent of cod caught when compared to a standard trawl, with one of the designs having the ability to reduce the cod by-catch by 87 per cent. Trials conducted by the Scottish Fishermen's Federation have also shown that the new trawls can achieve a 67 per cent reduction in haddock and 64 per cent fall in whiting, as well as achieving the required reductions in the cod catch. Two of the approved designs are now being utilised by the Scottish prawn fleet – the 'Flip-Flap' trawl developed by Gamrie Bay Prawn Trawls in Gardenstown, and the Faithlie 'Cod Avoidance Panel' net developed by Faithlie Trawl of Fraserburgh. These two designs are similar in that they incorporate variations of internal panels to direct fish towards escape holes at the top of the net. Several other trawl designs are in the process of being trialled and approved by Marine Scotland Science.

<http://www.thefishsite.com/fishnews/19507/innovative-trawls-developed-to-reduce-discards-conserve-stocks>

**ENGLAND/WALES/NORTHERN IRELAND/SOUTHERN IRELAND**  
**GENERAL POLICY**

**1. Lords committee warns of discard ban at sea leading to discards on land. 29 July 2013.**

The House of Lords EU Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment and Energy has completed its short inquiry into reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and the implementation of the discard ban and has written to Richard Benyon. This has involved evidence from:

- Richard Benyon MP, Minister for Natural Environment, Water and Rural Affairs, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Neil Hornby, Deputy Director, Sea Fisheries; and Andrew Clayton, Head of Common Fisheries Policy Reform.  
<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-d/one-off-evidence/corrected-evidence-050613-defra.pdf>
- Mr Barrie Deas, Chief Executive, National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO); Mr Mike Park, Seafish Board member and Chairman, Discard Action Group and Ms Libby Woodhatch, Head of Advocacy, Seafish. <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-d/one-off-evidence/correctedtranscript100713.pdf>
- Professor Chris Frid, School of Environmental Sciences, University of Liverpool and Professor Jesper Raakjær, Department of Development and Planning, Aalborg University.  
<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-d/one-off-evidence/corrected-transcript-170713.pdf>
- **Letter to Richard Benyon.** As a result the Committee has written to Environment Minister Richard Benyon and the European Commission to warn that unless the EU fish discard ban is implemented effectively there is a risk that discards at sea will simply become discards on land. It has suggested there is a particular risk that fish will have to be landed which cannot be sold and which might otherwise have survived if returned to the water. The letter also cites: the need for sufficient financial resources for local decision making; improving links between marine science research and industry; the committee identifies commercial fishing vessels as the best research vessels; focus on compliance with the ban rather than heavy handed enforcement – the committee states that engagement with industry on management measures and objectives should lead to effective compliance; public consumption of a wider variety of fish. <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/eu-sub-com-d/one-off-evidence/Reform%20of%20the%20Common%20Fisheries%20Policy%20Benyon%20240713.pdf>

**2. Fish Discards. Oral Answers to Questions. 21 November 2013. Hansard.**

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2013-11-21a.1352.2>

**3. 'Boat-to-plate' scheme starts up in London. 16 October 2013**

A commercial version of the community Catchbox fish marketing scheme just opened in London.

<http://www.intrafish.com/news/article1379222.ece>

**4. Seafish bait project announced. 15 October 2013.**

1. Review of the bait supply chain: to understand what is used where, and to determine logistics and commercial requirements which need to be in place to facilitate the future use of discards in bait.

2. Commercial trials: to compare discard species against standard baits already used to assess their effectiveness. 3. Reporting: once trials and reviews have been completed, a report detailing the key findings will reveal whether the use of discards as bait is a practical and cost-effective future method for managing discards that may not be sold in human consumption.

<http://www.seafish.org/about-seafish/news-and-events/news/new-project-sets-out-positive-uses-for-discards>

## **5. ASSIST road shows planned for English ports this autumn - Preparing for 'landing obligations'. 30 August 2013.**

To help English fishermen prepare for a landings obligation for all quota species, Defra and Cefas have begun a five-year project, "Applied Science to Support the Industry in delivering an end to discards" (the ASSIST project). Cefas will conduct scientific studies alongside fishermen to provide evidence to support the English fishing industry to end discarding and to maximise revenues. The aim of these road shows is to understand how different English fishing groups will be affected by the ban. Cefas will present catch and discards data, collected during the Cefas Observer programme, and share knowledge on discards patterns.

### **ENGLAND/WALES/NORTHERN IRELAND/SOUTHERN IRELAND** **GEAR TECHNOLOGY TRIALS**

#### **1. Cefas 2013/2014 Fisheries Science Partnership projects.**

<http://www.cefas.defra.gov.uk/industry-information/fisheries-science-partnership/current-programme.aspx>

##### **Project 39: Area VII Haddock Discard Eliminations Using Technical Measures**

The aim of this project will be to research optimum whitefish trawl setups with the objective of reducing the number of high grade haddock discards whilst landing commercially viable catches.

Timing: July to October 13. Vessel: Ocean Spirit.

##### **2. Project 37: North East Coast Net Grid Trials**

The primary aim of this project will be to develop the net grid design so that it can meet the objectives of significantly reducing catches of cod in the English NE Nephrops trawl fishery, while being considered practical and acceptable by the fishers who will have to use it. Timing: during September to December 13 period. Vessel: Aquarius II.

##### **3. Self-sampling of the Inshore Fleet (SESAMI) 2012 – 2014.**

[http://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=129:selfsamplingoftheinshoresector&catid=10:newsandpress](http://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=129:selfsamplingoftheinshoresector&catid=10:newsandpress)

##### **4. Northwest Discards trial. July 2013.**

Skippers from Whitehaven and Maryport, who were discarding half of their total catch, asked Cefas scientists to help them improve their trawl design to avoid discards, particularly of small plaice and dab before they reached marketable size. In response, Cefas set up a project to minimise catches of unwanted fish in the northwest English Nephrops trawl fishery; and the NFFO appointed a co-ordinator to oversee gear trials. After a trawl gear training course at the Sintef

Flume Tank in Denmark, co-ordinated by Seafish, each skipper, helped by Cefas, developed their own trawl design. Nine vessels did 21 trials of the new nets – the equivalent of 424 hauls from 214 days' fishing. None of the designs reduced the catches of *Nephrops* but did radically cut discards, for example by up to 82% for plaice by weight. A square mesh section design is now being included in the Cod Recovery Scheme as a highly selective gear for use in *Nephrops* fisheries. The Northwest Discards project report is soon to be published at: [www.cefas.defra.gov.uk/](http://www.cefas.defra.gov.uk/)

##### **5. Vessels sought for fishing gear trials. 20 February 2013.**

The Irish Sea Fisheries Board (BIM) is inviting participation in trials aimed at minimising discards and improving the selectivity of fishing gear. Fishing vessel owners who apply to take part will be required to provide information on vessel characteristics, facilities for onboard observers, fishing operations and the proposed cost of participating in trials. Fishing gear/chandlery suppliers who apply to take part will be required to provide costs for various items of chandlery and fishing gear.

## **EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE**

### **1. Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) Landing obligation in EU fisheries (STECF-13-23)**

#### **Conclusions from STECF meeting 4 to 8 November 2013 in Brussels.**

Based on the findings in the report of the EWG 13-16, the STECF concludes that the EWG 13-16 report represents an important step in identifying and assessing some of the key issues associated with the landing obligations and will be an important aid for those developing and assessing regional management plans.

Noting that time to provide advice on the development and assessment of discard plans and regional management plans is limited (for the pelagic stocks and for salmon in the Baltic Sea, plans need to be submitted by June 2014) and many issues still need to be resolved, STECF concludes that the most important challenges to address include the following:

- Defining management units (e.g. stocks, areas, fisheries). As an example: the pelagic fisheries should apply the landing obligation from 2015 onwards, and can be approached in many different management units involving very different combinations of Member States and Advisory Councils. Discard plans could possibly be submitted for different combinations of area, species, stock, catching method, vessel type and other relevant aspects of the fishing activity.
- Dealing with third countries (e.g. Norway)
- Defining Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes (again with no clear objective, but with major implications for the marketing of the catch and the economics of catching businesses)
- Develop the criteria to evaluate discard plans (Impact Assessment indicators)
- Outlining a process for developing discard plans
- The effect of exemptions and de-minims on control, enforcement and compliance levels

[http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/610582/2013-11\\_STECF+13-23+-+Landing+obligation+in+EU+Fisheries+-+part1\\_JRCxxx.pdf](http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/610582/2013-11_STECF+13-23+-+Landing+obligation+in+EU+Fisheries+-+part1_JRCxxx.pdf)

### **2. STECF Terms of Reference for an Expert Working Group 13-16 on a Landing Obligation in EU Fisheries. See page 8.**

<http://nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/STECF%20EWG%2013-16%20TOR.pdf>

### **3. Seminar on implementation of the CFP reform. Brussels, Belgium. 10.00 – 17.30, 25 October 2013**

Location: Albert Borschette Conference Centre, Room OD, Brussels

[http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/news\\_and\\_events/events/20131025/index\\_en.htm?subweb=343&lang=en](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/news_and_events/events/20131025/index_en.htm?subweb=343&lang=en)

### **4. European Parliament Register. Implications of reducing discards on defined fisheries. 25 July 2013.**

Question: James Nicholson (ECR). Will the Commission outline the analysis it has undertaken to assess the practical impact of eradicating discards on defined fisheries?

Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission: As part of the impact assessment to support the CFP reform, the impact of discard eliminating policies was comprehensively assessed[1]. This assessment had two phases. The first phase comprised a series of desk studies on the extent of discarding practices in the EU Member States as well as other countries, and described the anti-discard policies in a number of non-EU countries (e.g. Iceland, Norway, and the USA) as well as pilot studies carried out in the UK and Denmark. The level of discards in EU fisheries was also analysed during this phase with a special emphasis on discarding in Mediterranean fisheries. The second analytical phase of the study assessed the impacts of a range of anti-discard policy options in EU fisheries including the effects of changes in fishing gear selectivity and the introduction of new

technical measures such as real-time closures. This analysis showed that phasing out discarding based on more effective technical measures and the removal of ineffective technical measures that induce discarding would result in short-term economic losses but medium to long-term additional gains, primarily in environmental and economic terms.

[http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/studies/discards/annex\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/studies/discards/annex_en.pdf)

#### **5. European Parliament register: Answer to written question on fisheries reform: ban on discards. 5 July 2013.**

Refers specifically to the Mediterranean but makes some general points:

- How does the Commission justify the obligation to land fish that are under size or over quota but now dead, which would entail serious risks of a retrograde step in the common fisheries policy, since it would undermine the safeguarding of marine stocks and send out the wrong message to fishermen and consumers who, at a time of crisis, would see financial or food resources thrown back into the sea?
- Has it considered that discarding fish that are now dead into the sea could be dangerous for the conservation of fish resources and also potentially damaging to the environment and the food chain?
- Does it have a scientific assessment available on the costs and the enormous difficulties of implementing techniques that would derive from the application of the future common fisheries policy, as it is currently envisaged?
- Has it assessed the possibility of exempting countries in the Mediterranean basin from the obligation of landing catches and the ban on discards, by transferring to the multiannual management plans the drafting of appropriate measures for the selectivity of gear, stepping up all the activities that are necessary in order to ensure full compliance with the rules in force?

EN E-005315/2013 Answer given by Ms Damanaki on behalf of the Commission

- Implementation of the landing obligation will begin in 2015 and be fully implemented by 2019 for all EU fisheries.
- Stopping discarding contributes to improved conservation: the landing obligation will drive fishermen to be more selective, avoid unwanted catches and safeguard marine stocks.
- The impact assessment carried out to support the CFP reform<sup>[1]</sup> formed the basis of the Commission's proposal, including introducing the landing obligation. The amendments introduced by the Parliament and the Council were not considered in this assessment but in principle introduce some limited flexibility to make the landing obligation workable and effective. The Commission has proposed financial support under the EMFF<sup>[2]</sup> to fishermen for the introduction of methods that reduce unwanted catches.
- There is no justification for exempting countries in the Mediterranean from the landing obligation, the Commission's impact assessment showed discarding to be high in many Mediterranean fisheries. For instance in certain beam trawl fisheries in coastal areas discard rates for flatfish of 70% are reported.

#### **6. NSRAC Discards Workshop. 19 June 2013, Brussels, Belgium.**

The NSRAC held a workshop on the practical implications of the forthcoming discards ban. The purpose of the workshop was to approach the discard ban in a positive and constructive manner, to review the available information and identify what practical steps will have to be taken over the coming months. DAG was one of the presenters. To see all the presentations:

<http://nsrac.org/category/reports/meetings-c/discards/>

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<sup>[1]</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/studies/discards/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/studies/discards/index_en.htm)

<sup>[2]</sup> the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund



## **OTHER COUNTRIES**

### **1. State of play. Discard ban in the Baltic Sea. 26 April 2013.**

A joint response from Coalition Clean Baltic (CCB), Oceana, the Fisheries Secretariat (FISH), Finnish Association for Nature Conservation and the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) on the BALTFISH High-Level Group paper. State of play with regards to the implementation of a ban on discards in the Baltic Sea.

[http://baltic.oceana.org/sites/baltic.oceana.org/files/OCEANA\\_Joint\\_NGO\\_considerations\\_Baltic\\_discard\\_ban\\_20130430.pdf](http://baltic.oceana.org/sites/baltic.oceana.org/files/OCEANA_Joint_NGO_considerations_Baltic_discard_ban_20130430.pdf)

### **2. European parliament votes for Skagerrak discard ban. 17 April 2013.**

MEPs voted on April 16 to adopt a ban on discarding unwanted fish of 35 species caught in the Skagerrak (between the North Sea and the Baltic). Parliament negotiators will now discuss the proposal with EU countries to reach an agreement. The ban, to take effect gradually between 2014 and 2016, would be enforced with a remote electronic monitoring system. On 1 Nov. 2012, Norway denounced the international fisheries agreement of 1986 with the EU for the Skagerrak. Since Norway has a landing obligation for all catches, we need these new rules – but we also need them because the practice of discards is irresponsible,” said German MEP Werner Kuhn, after the vote. Under the discard ban, fishing vessels would be obliged to land all caught fish in order to halt “discards” – the practice of throwing fish back into the sea, usually because they are of an unwanted species or size. Most discarded fish die, which is wasteful and aggravates overfishing. To enforce the discard ban, member states would be required to set up a remote electronic monitoring system to supervise fishing in the Skagerrak, which is bound by Denmark, Sweden and Norway. For the system to work, boats over 12 metres long would have to be equipped with closed circuit TV (CCTV), GPS and transmitting equipment. Financial aid for this should be granted from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, said MEPs, who also insist that the system should be automated and use image recognition software for better data protection.

[http://www.undercurrentnews.com/2013/04/17/european-parliament-vote-for-skagerrak-discard-ban/?utm\\_source=wysija&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=europe\\_newsletter\\_april\\_17](http://www.undercurrentnews.com/2013/04/17/european-parliament-vote-for-skagerrak-discard-ban/?utm_source=wysija&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=europe_newsletter_april_17)

### **3. Skagerrak discard ban report presented in PECH. 19 December 2012.**

On 17 December the Fisheries Committee was asked to comment on the proposal for a new regulation, the main purpose of which is to put in place a discard ban in the Skagerrak. MEPs raised issues about the report on the regulation prepared by Werner Kuhn and on the Commission’s proposal. These issues covered possible increases in TACs, control systems and minimum conservation reference sizes. The current timeline for this legislation is:

1. Date for amendments: January 9 (to be confirmed)
2. Vote in PECH committee: 18/02/2013
3. Indicative plenary date, 1st reading: 12/03/2013
4. Implemented by January 2014 at the earliest

<http://www.fishsec.org/2012/12/19/skagerrak-discard-ban-report-presented-in-pech/>

Draft report by Rapporteur: Werner Kuhn.

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-500.527+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

Key comments by Rapporteur

- The main purpose of the proposal is to put in place a discard ban in the Skagerrak.
- The Commission has proposed that the landing obligation should take effect on the 1 January 2013. As it is so closely linked to the rules on quotas, it should reasonably take effect in the beginning of a quota year. As it would not be possible to have the rules in place before the end of this year, they should take effect on the 1 January 2014.

- The purpose of the Regulation is not to change mortality in the Skagerrak. That is a question regulated in the multi-annual plans. With the introduction of the landing obligation, the quotas, the TACs will in effect become what their literal meaning seems to be. With a landing obligation, all fish caught (to which no exception is applicable) shall be landed. At present TAC in essence means Total Allowable Landings. As a consequence, the TACs should be adjusted so that they represent what the actual catches in the Skagerrak are now before discards. There is no reliable information on how much fish is actually discarded, but it is clear that the raise of the TACs should be substantial.
- It is proposed that the flag Members states of vessels operating in the Skagerrak shall put in place and operate a Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) system. This part of the proposal is reasonable. An important question is how the control within the REM system is carried out.
- The Commission has proposed an obligation for all vessels of 12 metres overall length or more to put in place equipment to collect information and transfer it to the REM (CTE). The CTE would include closed circuit TV (CCTV), global positioning system (GPS), sensors and transmitting devices. Such an obligation gives rise to a number of questions both in relation to the economical burden for the sector but also – and maybe primarily – in relation to the aspects relating to the respect for the private life of the fishermen. It has been stated that co-financing will be in place and that the level would be approximately 50%.

Original Commission proposal. August 2012.

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/registre/docs\\_autres\\_institutions/commission\\_europeenne/com/2012/0471/COM\\_COM\(2012\)0471\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/registre/docs_autres_institutions/commission_europeenne/com/2012/0471/COM_COM(2012)0471_EN.pdf)

#### **4. Danish Catch Quota Management trials – application and results. November 2012.**

The Danish Government has published the results of the Danish Catch Quota Management trials (including full documentation) in Danish fisheries during 2010 to 2012. The trial aimed at testing whether CQM could provide a reliable accounting for all catches of cod, give better scientific data and encourage fishermen to fish more selectively and reduce accidental catches. The main feature of the trial is that all catches count against the vessel quota and that the fishing vessels are monitored from port to port using sensors and CCTV technology. The trial is a continuation of trials conducted since 2008 and it has been coordinated with similar trials in the UK and Germany. 22 vessels fishing in the North Sea, the Skagerrak and the Baltic Sea participated in the 2011 trial. Like in the previous trials the main focus has been on cod (*Gadus morhua*).

In general, the industry has accepted having REM installed on board their vessels. There has been no negative feedback on the issue of having cameras recording the vessels working areas. Most of the fishermen are of the opinion that it is important to show what they are doing and what they are catching. In support of CQM with full documentation they at the same time underline the need to simplify and remove micro management. It could be considered whether a score card system or system to graduate how accurate the skipper/crew comply with the terms and conditions for a CQM system. CQM is a benefit for the fisherman and if he is not able to take sufficient responsibility for his documentation some of the benefits such as the quota premium and the removal of control rules could be annulled.

[http://www.fvm.dk/Admin/Public/DWSDownload.aspx?File=%2fFiles%2fFiler%2fEnglish%2fThemes%2fyield%2fDanish\\_CQM\\_report\\_2012.pdf](http://www.fvm.dk/Admin/Public/DWSDownload.aspx?File=%2fFiles%2fFiler%2fEnglish%2fThemes%2fyield%2fDanish_CQM_report_2012.pdf)

[http://www.fvm.dk/CQM\\_%28Catch\\_Quota\\_Management%29.aspx?ID=42783](http://www.fvm.dk/CQM_%28Catch_Quota_Management%29.aspx?ID=42783)

## **RESEARCH**

**1. New study by the University of East Anglia and CEFAS: Does banning discards in an otter trawler fishery create incentives for more selective fishing?** Researchers examined what would happen with a discards ban alone, the effects of tougher quotas and how fishing fleets could be monitored in order to ensure that they do not illegally land fish.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S016578361300221X> Highlights reported as:

- A discard ban may not achieve the CFP reform objective of reduced unwanted catches
- A discard ban and effort controls create weak incentives for selective fishing.
- Catch quotas create strong incentives for avoidance of regulated species only.
- Economic impacts are unevenly spread unless catch quotas are set differentially.
- Vessels targeting non-quota species could see the largest reductions in income

*Lots of coverage*

- EU discards ban 'no great victory' for fish stocks. 11 November 2013.  
[http://www.undercurrentnews.com/2013/11/11/eu-discards-ban-no-great-victory-for-fish-stocks/?utm\\_source=wysija&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=europe\\_newsletter\\_nov\\_11](http://www.undercurrentnews.com/2013/11/11/eu-discards-ban-no-great-victory-for-fish-stocks/?utm_source=wysija&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=europe_newsletter_nov_11)
- Banning the wasteful practice of discarding edible fish at sea will not be enough to save dwindling fish stocks, a group of scientists have warned.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2013/nov/11/discards-ban-victory-fish-stocks>
- 'Saving our Fish' needs more than a ban on discarding.  
<http://www.fishupdate.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/20381>
- A discard ban alone is not enough.  
<http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?l=e&ndb=1&id=64684>

## **2. Report: SCAR-Fish final report on science in support of the CFP. 9 November 2013.**

This report highlights that the objective of SCAR-Fish is to establish a targeted and efficient knowledge base for policy and industry to make the visions of the CFP into reality.

Three overarching strategic tools are highlighted:

- Organise and co-ordinate policy related science. A co-ordination of the work of advice providing bodies will alleviate fragmentation of research, support focus on policy related science and enable a cost efficient deployment of science and advice. The providers of science and advice should establish a coordinating facility and the users of advice should initiate a yearly consulting in order to ensure alignment between policy and funding on the one side and science and the advisory system on the other. This commitment to should be supported by a periodical review.
- Meeting the future on own terms. A Fisheries and Aquaculture Foresight Platform should be established to underpin a long-term strategy for aquatic food production.
- Science supporting the CFP should be seen as part of a supply chain. For science and innovation to succeed in feeding management it must be user driven. Policy related science should be integrated with the relevant policy institutions on EU, regional or national level.

Concrete challenges:

- The “choke species” problem will be a very visible consequence of the new policy in many fisheries.
- Data collection and data management is at the same time very costly and very important to fisheries management. Transparency, the logistics of cost efficient data handling and real-time availability should be improved, and data sampling from commercial vessels prioritised.
- The landing obligation raises two question in relation to the fish brought to land. The use of fish not suitable for human consumption must find a proper alternative use in order to generate wealth instead of financial losses. Secondly the removal of biomass hitherto

discarded at sea will have a consequence for the food availability for species like birds, crayfish etc. The development here should be monitored carefully.

- Boosting aquaculture production is vital to the European food supply. The CFP offers an opportunity for Member States to establish coherent national policies building on optimising aquaculture production within defined impact limits inter alia through breeding programmes.

For more information see: [http://ec.europa.eu/research/agriculture/scar/scarfish\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/research/agriculture/scar/scarfish_en.htm)

### **3. Study: Using inferred drivers of discarding behaviour to evaluate discard mitigation measures.**

A study originally conducted for Defra on English fisheries, and the method then applied to other European case study fisheries, on inferring the drivers of discard patterns from observer data, as a means to indicate the potential impacts of catch quotas and the landing obligation, has now been published in the ICES journal.

### **4. Paper: The evolution of a discard policy in Europe. Lisa Borges, FishFix, Brussels, Belgium**

This study analyses the evolution of the European Union's discard policy since its inception in 2006 until the present day and the events that shaped its current format. It analyses the policy's advantages and disadvantages, and its political, environmental and scientific consequences. It argues that an increase in public awareness, due to public campaigns against fisheries discards, has focused managers' attention onto a symptom of fisheries mismanagement, rather than on its underlying causes of over-exploitation and lack of fisheries control. This has distorted the discussion of the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy and potentially undermined its provisions relating to discards..

### **5. A bird's eye view of fishery discard reforms. 17 June 2013.**

Concerns have been raised over the impacts of the changes on scavenging seabirds who feed upon discarded fish, new research on gannets indicates that, while they often forage near fishing vessels, more than half their time is spent foraging 'naturally' in the open sea. The study, partly-funded by the EU, explored whether scavenging seabirds have become completely reliant on fisheries discards, or whether they will continue to hunt for naturally-occurring prey. The researchers focused on Northern gannets habiting an island off the west coast of Britain. This is a wide-ranging seabird that is known to feed on discards from fishing boats. The results revealed that 42% of the birds' active foraging bouts occurred when a fishing vessel was present. The results also suggested a difference between male and female birds, with males more likely to forage near fishing vessels (80% of foraging bouts) than females (30%). Overall, the fact that 58% of foraging bouts were not associated with fishing vessels suggests that gannets may be able to switch to naturally-occurring prey under a discard ban.

[www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0057376](http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0057376)

### **6. International research shows it is possible to reduce discards, 28 May 2013.**

Scientists from the Netherlands, Spain, Iceland, Greece, the UK, France and Denmark, collaborated on a study analysing 14 fisheries in different European regional sea areas: the North, Baltic and Mediterranean, and Ibero-Atlantic waters, among others. This mainly analysed four commercially valuable discarded species: cod (*Gadus morhua*), haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*), European hake (*Merluccius merluccius*) and European plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*). The team found that the fisheries management system of quotas and the total allowable catches (TACs) induce higher discard rates; variability in discard rates at the regional level was higher than among regions or among the fisheries from different countries. This suggests that the reduction in discards will have to be carried out with management measures adapted to each region and that the different discard rates require specific research to improve fishing gear selectivity. This study is part of the European project Badminton (*Bycatch and discards: management indicators, trends and location*), whose goal was to

learn discard patterns and factors in European fisheries, evaluating the effectiveness of gear selectivity and management measures that were in place previously.

<http://fis.com/fis/worldnews/worldnews.asp?monthyear=&day=28&id=61093&l=e&special=&ndb=1%20target=>

**7. Britain's seabirds are switching from hunting to scavenging. 10 March 2013.**

Britain's seabirds are switching from hunting to scavenging, following trawlers to gather the millions of fish thrown back into the sea under the EU's discredited quota system. Scientists from Plymouth University say the trend is the latest illustration of how the discard policy destroys the delicate natural balance in Britain's seas. They found it had boosted the population of gannets, but at the expense of more specialised species such as puffins.

[http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk\\_news/Environment/article1227417.ece](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/Environment/article1227417.ece)

**8. Survival of discarded fish: A rapid review of studies on discard survival rates. 2012. (Two attachments)**

One of the provisions of the proposed discard ban is that fish with a high survival rate and vulnerable/protected species (e.g. basking shark, common skate and porbeagle) should be released back in to the sea. However, it is not entirely clear what species should be excluded due to good survivability after capture. This study aimed to develop a list of species with high survivability that could be excluded under the landing obligation and should be returned to the sea after capture.