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Fisheries

Sustainability

Policy

Sorting Myth from Fact:

The truth about Europe's Common Fisheries Policy

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Authors: Karoline Schacht/WWF Germany; Helen McLachlan and Louize Hill/WWF European Policy Office;
Piers Hart/WWF UK; Jessica Landman (consultant).

Editors: Thomas Koeberich/ WWF Germany; Anouk Delafortrie/WWF European Policy Office,
Derek McGlynn (consultant).

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Time To Act

Difficult decisions lie ahead if we are to undo the effects of three decades of disastrous fisheries management in Europe. In order to fully understand the challenge faced in reforming the Common Fisheries Policy, we must expose some strongly-held beliefs regarding fisheries policy which have no basis in fact. The truth is that these myths stand in the way of successful reform.

Myth 1: It isn't *that* bad. Environmentalists are exaggerating the problems of overfishing.

Myth 2: If the Common Fisheries Policy reform further reduces fishing activities, many jobs will be lost in the European fishing industry.

Myth 3: Discards and waste are the result of the quota system; fishermen throw away tons of fish because quotas are too low.

Myth 4: Transferable Fishing Concessions will privatise Europe's seas, turning our fisheries into private possessions.

Myth 5: Partnership agreements between the EU and third countries, including those in Africa and Asia, promote sustainable fisheries; EU vessels only catch fish which these countries will not catch.

Myth 6: Subsidies are no longer increasing the capacity of the EU fishing fleet. The European Fisheries Fund has achieved fleet reduction.

Myth 7: Aquaculture is THE sustainable solution to overfishing. It will provide much needed food for a growing market without damaging the environment.

Myth 8: Consumers in Europe aren't really interested in sustainable fisheries.



Sorting Myth from Fact: The truth about Europe's Common Fisheries Policy

Throughout humankind's long history, fishing has played an important role in our life and culture. Yet today, due to unsustainable rates of exploitation, we have greatly depleted our

marine resources. Scientific research shows that worldwide 32%¹ of fish stocks are overfished or depleted. In Europe the news is far worse, with a staggering 75% of assessed fish stocks being over-exploited. This has a considerable impact on the environment, as well as on fishermen and communities dependent on the fishing industry.

Since its creation in 1983, Europe's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) - the overarching framework governing EU fisheries - has failed in its goal to achieve sustainable fishing and provide a long-term survival strategy for the fishing sector².

So, what can be done to fix this broken system?

The European Commission's proposal for the reform of the CFP, released in July 2011, is now being reviewed by the European Parliament and Council of Ministers. Even if the proposal offers some welcome and vital improvements, it lacks the guidance and coherence to deliver sustainable fisheries. Before the new CFP comes into force in 2013, there remains plenty of work to do to get the reform right and to help turn around 30 years of severe overfishing.

In order to fully understand the challenge at hand, we must first critically examine some of the most commonly-held beliefs about fishery policy. Many of these are simply myths, with no basis in reality. Such myths present significant barriers and stand in the way of successful reform. This aim of this paper is to separate the facts from the myths and to highlight what needs to be done to make European fisheries sustainable.

For many fisheries in Europe the situation is so severe that this once-in-a-decade opportunity for CFP reform truly cannot afford to be missed.

¹ FAO (2011), State of the Worlds Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA), p. 8

² Council Regulation (EC) 2371/2002, of 20 December 2002; European Commission (2009). Green Paper on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy.

Myth 1

It isn't *that* bad.

Environmentalists are
exaggerating the problems of
overfishing.

UNTRUE!

³ European Commission. Communication from the Commission concerning a consultation on Fishing Opportunities. Brussels, 25.5.2011. COM(2011) 298 final

⁴ Maria Damanaki European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Breaking the circle: introducing a new Common Fisheries Policy Press Conference on the Common Fisheries Policy reform package: speaking points Brussels, 13 July 2011. <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/520&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

⁵ Fact sheets of the European Commission on the CFP (2008). http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/pcp2008_factsheets_en.pdf

⁶ Working paper of the European Commission. http://www.cfp-reformwatch.eu/pdf/reflection_cfp_o8_mid.pdf

⁷ Ibid, p. 21

⁸ Maximum Sustainable Yield or MSY is the largest yield or catch that can be taken from a fish stock each year without deteriorating the productivity of the stock. 'Getting MSY right', available at http://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_msy_oct2011_final.pdf

FACT : It is that bad. And since the creation of the CFP in 1983 things haven't improved.

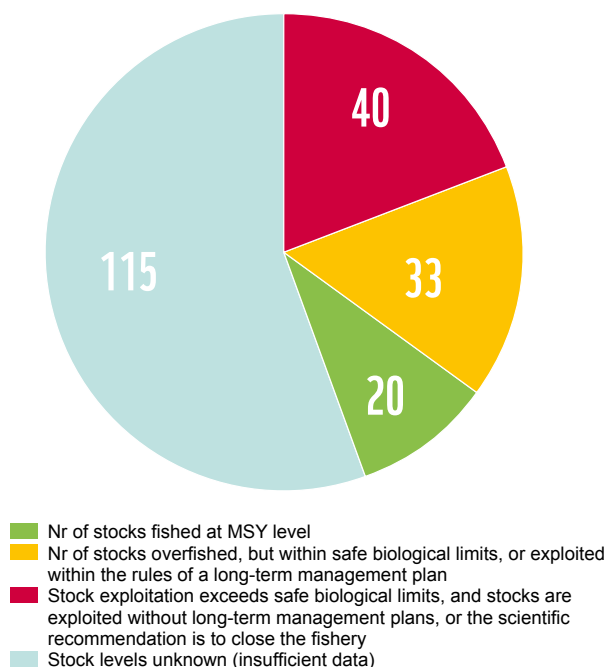
Today, 63% of assessed stocks in the northeast Atlantic and 94% in the Mediterranean are overfished³. According to the European Commission if the status quo is maintained only 8 out of 136 stocks will be at sustainable levels in 2022, when the next reform is due.⁴

Background: Since 1993, the quantity of fish caught in the EU has decreased by 2% on average each year – stocks of cod, plaice and sole fell by 32% in the same period. The North Sea was once renowned as one of the most fish-abundant seas in the world. It provided 5% of the world's fish production in 1995. Since then, the catch has slumped from 3.5 million to 1.5 million tonnes in 2007⁵.

If we continue to exert excessive pressure on fisheries, only small numbers of mature fish will be left. For example, approximately 93% of cod is caught prior to maturity⁶. Catching cod before the fish stock has had the chance to reproduce, puts the very survival of the species at risk.

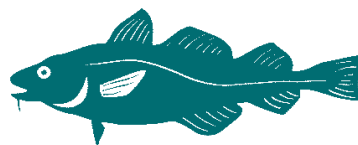
A problem that also needs to be addressed is the gap in available scientific data. For example, reliable data are missing for 59% of all fished stocks in the Mediterranean⁷. Considering the poor state of the stocks for which data exist, we should not assume that stocks for which data are missing, are faring any better.

Number and condition of EU fish stocks



Source: European Commission Consultation on fishing opportunities (2010), COM(2009) 224

WWF Position: The EU needs to urgently transform the way it manages its fisheries and allow stocks to recover. The Commission proposes multi-annual management plans (MAPs) for all fisheries and a target to achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)⁸ for all stocks by 2015. It is essential that these proposals remain firmly anchored in the new CFP and that MAPs are co-designed and managed by stakeholders at the fishery level. Additionally, proposed funding from the €6.5 billion European Marine & Fisheries Fund (EMFF) needs to be doubled for control and enforcement measures, and for data collection.



North Sea cod is, on average, 1.6 years old when it is caught today with a weight of under 1kg. Mature, it can grow to reach 80 cm and weigh up to 15 kg.

Myth 2

If the CFP reform further reduces fishing activities, the European fishing industry will lose many jobs.

UNTRUE!

⁹ NEF (2011), "Jobs lost at sea. Overfishing and the jobs that never were", available at: <http://www.neweconomics.org/press-releases/lost-at-sea-27-billion-and-100000-jobs>

¹⁰ Salz, P. et al. (2010), "Final Report – Study on the Remuneration of Spawning Stock Biomass," p.17. http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/studies/remuneration_of_the_spawning_stock_biomass_en.pdf

¹¹ WWF (2007), Mid-Term Review of the EU Common Fisheries Policy, produced by MRAG, p. 12. http://assets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_cfp_midterm_review_10_2007.pdf

¹² Maximum Sustainable Yield or MSY is the largest yield or catch that can be taken from a fish stock each year without deteriorating the productivity of the stock. 'Getting MSY right', available at http://awsassets.panda.org/downloads/wwf_msy_oct2011_final.pdf

¹³ European Commission (2012). The social dimension of the CFP reform, available at http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/docs/social_dimension_en.pdf

¹⁴ NEF (2011), "Jobs lost at sea. Overfishing and the jobs that never were", available at: <http://www.neweconomics.org/press-releases/lost-at-sea-27-billion-and-100000-jobs>

¹⁵ Questions and answers on the new European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF), available at <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/11/863&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

¹⁶ European Commission, Eurostat (2011). Total catches in all fishing regions. [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Total_catches_in_all_fishing_regions_\(1_000_tonnes_live_weight\).png&filetimestamp=20110117160002](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Total_catches_in_all_fishing_regions_(1_000_tonnes_live_weight).png&filetimestamp=20110117160002).

¹⁷ European Commission (2010). Facts and figures on the Common Fisheries Policy. http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/pcf_en.pdf

¹⁸ A Diagnosis of the EU Fisheries Sector . <http://www.cfp-reformwatch.eu/pdf/002.pdf>, p. 41f

FACT : Existing fisheries policy undermines sustainable employment in the sector.

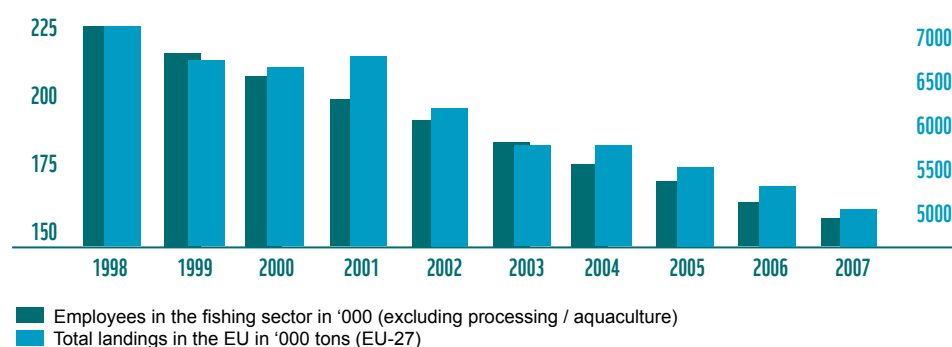
A recent study found that the failure to manage fish stocks sustainably is costing the EU at least 100,000 jobs⁹. If overfishing continues, the industry will keep losing jobs. However, if we succeed in rebuilding fish stocks and manage them sustainably, more stable and profitable employment will be created. It is estimated that if European fish stocks were allowed to recover fisheries could be five times more profitable than they are today¹⁰.

Background: According to the Commission, the total employment in the EU fisheries sector, in 2007, was around 355,000: of this 145,000 (45%) are in the catch segment; 137,000 (34%) are in processing; 55,000 (16%) work in aquaculture; and 18,000 (4%) are in related services. Small-scale fishing activity (vessels under 12 metres) account for around 40% of employment in the catch segment and 80% of all EU fishing vessels. The catch segment has lost 31% of its workforce since 2002 and job losses will continue at a steady pace of 1-2% per year in the absence of real reform. The decline is attributed to the sector's limited attractiveness (low earnings) and occupational risks (working conditions and safety).

EU Fisheries Ministers have systematically set catch quotas higher than could be supported by fish stocks¹¹ yet this has not prevented job losses. If Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)¹² is achieved for fish stocks by 2015, the Commission expects fishing quotas to go up by 20% by 2020 and employment on vessels to start increasing after 2017. For the stocks that have already achieved MSY thanks to long-term management plans, employment has been maintained and higher incomes have resulted.¹³ A recent study by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) found that poor management of fish stocks is costing the EU at least 100,000 jobs.¹⁴

WWF Position: To create more secure, full-time jobs in the fisheries sector we need to reduce fishing activity and achieve MSY for all stocks by 2015. Subsidies from the proposed new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) need to assist fishermen in the transition towards sustainable fishing and help them to acquire better business skills or diversify to other sectors of the maritime economy, such as tourism¹⁵.

Trends in employment figures in the fishing sector plotted against landings of fish in the EU



Source: European Commission, Eurostat (2011)¹⁶. „Figures and Facts on the CFP“¹⁷, „A Diagnosis of the EU Fisheries Sector“¹⁸

Myth 3

Discards and waste are the result of the quota system; fishermen throw away tons of fish because quotas are too low.

UNTRUE!

¹⁹ European Commission (2008), Factsheets on the CFP. http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/pcp2008_factsheets_en.pdf

²⁰ www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0025326X11005200

²¹ See, e.g., 'Sustaining America's Fisheries, supra note 60, at, ch 3, 'Reducing Bycatch'.

²² www.smartgear.org

FACT : Every year, up to 60% of all fish caught by European boats is thrown overboard, mostly dead or dying.¹⁹ This is due not to quotas being too low, but to unselective fishing practices. The EU only holds fishermen accountable for what they land, rather than what they remove from the sea.

Background: Claims that quotas are too low disregard the fact that from 1987 to 2011 Total Allowable Catches (TACs) were set higher than scientific recommendations in 68% of decisions by European Fisheries Ministers²⁰. The problem is rather that European fisheries management is in effect relying on Total Allowable *Landings*; only the fish brought to port is counted.



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Many of Europe's fisheries are mixed fisheries, catching a number of species at the same time. Quotas are set independently for each species, which makes respecting quotas a challenge, with traditional fishing gear. In fisheries managed via 'effort limits' such as days at sea (rather than quotas), there is pressure on fishermen to catch as much as possible during their limited time at sea, which promotes wasteful fishing practices.²¹

WWF Position: WWF believes that the EU should set central objectives to minimise by-catch and progressively eliminate discards. Strategies to achieve this will have the greatest chance of success if they are developed at the level of the fishery and involve local stakeholders. Fishermen should be held accountable for what is taken out of sea. Fishing should be as selective as possible to avoid removing species that are not being targeted or that are undersized. Binding measures regarding selective fishing gear²² and best practices (such as real time closures of fishing grounds) is the best way to end discards.

Myth 4

**Transferable Fishing Concessions
will privatise Europe's seas
and turn fisheries into private
possessions.²³**

UNTRUE!

²³ Joint Declaration by Germany, Poland and France on the Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, Paris, 29. June 2010. <http://agriculture.gouv.fr/france-allemande-pologne>

²⁴ Bjørndal T. and Conrad J. M. (1987). The Dynamics of an Open Access Fishery. The Canadian Journal of Economics / Revue canadienne d'Economie. Vol. 20, No. 1 (Feb., 1987), pp. 74-85.

²⁵ Salz, P. "Who is afraid of individual transferable shares?", in: El Anzuelo, Vol.24, 2012. http://www.ieep.eu/assets/871/vol_24.3.pdf

²⁶ An analysis of existing Rights Based Management (RBM) instruments in Member States and on setting up best practices in the EU Final Report: Part 1. http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/studies/rbm/rbm_2009_part1.pdf

²⁷ Connolly, B. (2004). "Conclusions recommending appropriate systems of sea tenure for future fisheries management, arising from the study: 'Traditional fishery knowledge and practice for sustainable marine resource management in Northwestern Europe: a comparative study in Ireland and the Netherlands' (1994-1997)", in: SPC Traditional Marine Resource Management and Knowledge Information Bulletin 13, p. 24-27

FACT : Transferable Fishing Concessions (TFCs) are a type of rights-based management

(RBM). RBM allocates the right or privilege to fish, to individuals or groups, for a limited amount of time. These are user rights, not property rights. The state continues to be the owner of fisheries and can impose conditions and restrictions.

Background: Allowing the free exploitation of fish resources often leads to severe stock depletion²⁴. Faced with growing demand for seafood, better regulation and management of fishing has become a necessity. TFCs are likely to achieve fleet reduction, but are primarily a management tool not necessarily aimed at achieving ecologically sustainable fisheries. When a fishery is profitable, for instance due to high fish prices or low fuel price, TFCs alone will not lead to fleet reduction²⁵. The European Commission's proposal of introducing mandatory TFCs is a 'one size fits all approach' that does not take into account the diverse nature of European fisheries, marine ecosystems and society.

RBM in general, including a variety of systems that are tailored to fit the needs of fisheries across Europe, can be very effective in ending overfishing and providing incentives for sustainable fishing. Safeguards can also be integrated into any RBM system to avoid a concentration of fishing rights.

WWF Position: WWF believes that the CFP reform should embrace rights-based management while maintaining enough flexibility to design the management systems in the most appropriate way for individual fisheries. Many examples of RBM systems already exist in Europe, some of which have been in place for centuries^{26 27}. They include transferable and non-transferable rights as well as territorial-based rights.



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Myth 5

Partnership agreements between the EU and third countries, including those in Africa and Asia, promote sustainable fisheries. EU vessels only catch fish which these countries will not catch.^{28 29}

UNTRUE!

²⁸ In 2009 there were 16 Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPA): one with Greenland, eight in the Central East Atlantic, four in the West Indies and three in the Central and Western Pacific. Diagnosis [see footnote 8], Part B, International fisheries and EU external fleet, p. 276

²⁹ European Commission, Fisheries partnership agreements. http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/documentation/publications/cfp_factsheets/fisheries_partnership_agreements_en.pdf

³⁰ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); in EU Fact Sheet, "Fisheries Partnership Agreements". http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/international/agreements/index_en.htm

³¹ African Journal of Marine Science (2007), "Decline of demersal resources in North-West Africa: an analysis of Mauritanian trawl-survey data over the past 25 years," 29(3): 331–345, available at: http://www.accordsdepeche.com/fichiers/docs/bibli_o8/8o1.pdf

³² WWF internal analysis of the consequences of FPAs in Africa, by Dr. Didier Fourgon (WWF European Policy Office, 2010)

FACT : European vessels continue to catch fish overseas that are not ‘surplus’ stock. Available information about various Fisheries Partnership Agreements (FPAs) shows that there is a lack of reliable data to define ‘surplus’ fish and that overfishing by EU fleets is widespread.

Background: The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) stipulates that the EU only catches fish from the waters of third party states, which those states will not, or cannot catch³⁰. Whether this is actually the case can be seriously questioned.

According to findings by CECAF – the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic – the meagre data available suggest that most stocks in West African waters are already being fished to maximum capacity or are being overfished. Fishing activities in these areas must be reduced³¹. Upon examining the FPAs with Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Senegal, WWF has found that the relevant data to define ‘surplus’ fish is either missing or that overfishing is rampant³².



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In 2011, the European Parliament twice – in the resolution on the EU-Mauritania agreement and the decision not to extend the EU-Morocco agreement – stressed the need for EU vessels to catch only surplus stocks in future and for local populations to benefit from EU funds.

WWF Position: WWF believes that sustainability principles should apply to all EU vessels, wherever they fish. WWF therefore welcomes the inclusion of the so-called ‘external policy’ in the Commission’s CFP reform proposal. However, it needs to be more explicit in stating that any aid associated with fisheries agreements should specifically aim to improve the governance and management of the natural resources of the concerned third country. Fleet owners, on the other hand, should be made to bear the full cost of the access rights themselves rather than the EU.

Myth 6

Subsidies are no longer increasing the capacity of the EU fishing fleet. The European Fisheries Fund has achieved fleet reduction.

UNTRUE!

³³ Court of Auditors Report, 2008, EC's Green Paper (2010).

³⁴ Member States can make available the so-called de minimis aid or direct fuel subsidies, especially in difficult economic times.

³⁵ WWF briefing on the performance of the EFF and preliminary analysis of the EMFF (December 2011), available at: http://assets.panda.org/downloads/111129_emff_media_briefing_1.pdf

³⁶ Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd. (2010), "FIFG 2000-2006, Shadow Evaluation, Final Report for Pew Environment Group. http://www.pewenvironment.eu/channel/view_resource/id/115166

³⁷ A new European Fund for the EU's Maritime and Fisheries Policies, available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/11/1495&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

FACT : The great promise of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) – to help reduce the oversized EU fleet and to better balance fishing capacity with the available fish stock – has not materialised. Less than 25% of funds has gone to reducing ‘overcapacity’ of the fleet whilst subsidies which are harmful to fish stock recovery still constitute the majority of funds spent.



Background: Fleet overcapacity remains one of the fundamental barriers to the effective recovery of fish stocks and the efficient economic performance of the EU fleet³³. Funds for vessel modernisation, engine replacement, expansion of port infrastructure continued to be provided without effective capacity controls or reductions. This was compounded by ineffective capacity limits on the fuel crisis regulation³⁴, weak fishing effort adjustment plans and the scrapping of inactive vessels. Funds intended to rebuild fish stocks, restore ecosystems or reduce fishing pressure remain minimal whilst money for research or other beneficial programmes was rarely used.

Despite spending €848 million (17% of fisheries funds) for the scrapping of 6,000 vessels between 2002 and 2007³⁵, no real capacity reduction took place. The majority of scrapped vessels were smaller than 12m, mostly old and belonging to coastal fishing communities. At the same time, €1.27 billion was invested in the building of 3,000 new vessels and the modernisation of another 8,000 vessels, the majority of these over 12m³⁶.

WWF Position: With its proposal for a new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), the European Commission wants to help fishermen in the transition towards sustainable fishing and coastal communities in the diversification of their economies³⁷. WWF welcomes these intentions. However, proposed fleet-related subsidies shall be made conditional upon adequate assessment of overcapacity and the progress of Member States towards achieving an effective balance between fishing capacity and available fishing opportunities. The EMFF shall exclude financial support for the construction of new ports, new landing sites or new auction halls as well as aid for engine replacement. In addition, aid shall not provide incentives for unselective fishing.

Examples of harmful fisheries subsidies:

- subsidising fleet modernisation
- subsidising the price of fuel for fishing
- buying of non-commercial catches and in some case funding the cost of their destruction

Myth 7

Aquaculture is THE sustainable solution to overfishing.

It will offer the much needed food for a growing market without impacting the environment.

UNTRUE!

³⁸ FAO (2010). State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, p.197

FACT : The production of more seafood by aquaculture will only partially fulfil the growing demand for seafood, as it will not replace the demand for wild seafood. In addition, the present reliance on wild fish in feeds for farmed fish could cause further depletion of wild stocks.

Background: Aquaculture is the fastest growing food production system in the world and now provides half the world's seafood. If per capita demand for seafood remains constant, aquaculture production is expected to double by 2050³⁸. Most of this growth has occurred in Asia while Europe's production has stagnated, leading to a significant increase in imports. Although aquaculture is meeting the increased demand for seafood it is not reducing overfishing. In fact, it contributes to higher wild fish landings as a result of its consumption of fish meal and fish oil.



© ISTOCK

Aquaculture uses 85% of the world's fish oil and 68% of fish meal. Although not all fish require fish meal in the diet, the demand in Europe is mostly for carnivorous species such as salmon and seabass. Around 2-4 kg of wild fish is required to produce 1 kg of salmon. Although the inclusion rate of fish meal and fish oil in feeds has decreased considerably, it will have to decrease a lot further before salmon feeds become sustainable.

Some popular aquaculture species in Europe such as tuna and eels are not farmed from hatchery produced eggs, but from wild harvested juveniles due to the challenges of hatchery production. This is particularly problematic as it directly contributes to overfishing of these sensitive species, whilst also requiring fish meal in the feeds.

WWF Position: The CFP reform proposal has the potential to ensure that aquaculture in the EU becomes a net producer of seafood in a way that does not increase pressure on marine and freshwater environments. But this will require that the guidelines for the development of National Strategic Plans for aquaculture contain explicit references to improving the sustainability of feeds. Requirements for environmental impact assessments will also need to be standardised and improved.

Myth 8

Consumers in Europe aren't really interested in sustainable fisheries.

UNTRUE!

³⁹ In 2010, 19% of German consumers stated that they only bought fish and seafood from sustainable sources. In 2008 this figure was only 3%. http://www.msc.org/presseraum/pressemitteilungen/neue-umfrageergebnisse?fromsearch=1&isnewssearch=1&b_start:int=10

⁴⁰ The Guardian (17.01.2011). "Sales of sustainable seafood soar in UK supermarkets". <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/jan/17/sustainable-seafood-supermarkets-fish-fight>

⁴¹ WWF-Poll 2011. Details on the evaluation. http://www.wwf.eu/fisheries/industry_alliance/?199993/CFP-Reform-Poll

⁴² The Guardian (17.01.2011). "Sales of sustainable seafood soar in UK supermarkets", available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/jan/17/sustainable-seafood-supermarkets-fish-fight>

⁴³ <http://www.fishfight.net/>

⁴⁴ The Guardian (30.01.2012). "Sharp rise in sustainable seafood products on sale in UK", available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jan/30/sustainable-seafood-products-sharp-rise>

FACT : An independent survey commissioned by WWF and carried out in 14 EU

countries shows that an overwhelming majority of Europeans want fish products to come from sustainable sources. And consumers seem committed to following up words with actions as witnessed by the rapid rise in sustainable seafood choices being made in various EU countries^{39 40}.

Background: A poll carried out in 14 EU member states in March 2011, found that:

- 88% of people think it is fairly to very important that fish products on sale within the EU come from sustainable, non-overfished sources.
- 72% feel information on whether fish products come from well-managed, sustainable sources is not very adequate or not at all adequate.
- 78% support or strongly support a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy to ensure all fish and seafood sold in Europe comes from sustainable, non-overfished stocks⁴¹.



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Consumer support for sustainable fisheries was highlighted by the reaction in the UK to the Fish Fight campaign spearheaded by UK celebrity chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. He showed fishermen testifying about fish they have to throw away because of the mismatch between their fishing practices and the current EU legislation. After the screening of the television series, the sale of certified mackerel increased by 60% and the sale of certified pollock by 167%⁴². Within a few weeks almost 700,000 people had signed a petition⁴³ to EU Fisheries Commissioner Maria Damanaki, urging her to end discarding in Europe. WWF's More Fish petition (wwf.eu/morefishpetition) is another way consumers can make their voice heard.

The demand for fish and seafood products certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) shot up by 41% in the UK in 2011 as retailers and supermarkets respond to consumer expectation.⁴⁴

WWF Position: Consumers are entitled to more transparency about the sustainability of seafood products. The reform of the Common Markets Organisation - as part of the CFP reform - needs to ensure that new legislation on consumer information

is effective and consistent with the objectives of the CFP. The seafood industry can also demonstrate leadership by offering consumers creditable eco-labels, such as those of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) and Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC).

EU fish facts

-  Around 75% of Europe's assessed fish stocks are overexploited.
-  Up to 60% of all fish caught by European boats is discarded.
-  Europe's fishing fleet is estimated to be 2-to-3 times the size needed to catch the available fish.
-  Despite spending €848 million on the scrapping of 6,000 vessels between 2002 and 2007, no real capacity reduction has taken place.
-  Small-scale fishing activity (vessels under 12 metres) accounts for around 40% of employment in the catch segment and 80% of all EU fishing vessels.
-  It is estimated that if European fish stocks were allowed to recover, the fisheries dependent on them could be 5 times more profitable.
-  It is estimated that the failure to manage EU fisheries sustainably is costing Europeans €3 billion per year in lost potential income.
-  60% of fish consumed within the EU is caught abroad and imported.
-  31% of jobs in fishing have been lost since 2002. Job losses will continue at a steady pace of 1-2% year in the absence of real reform.
-  The fisheries sector represents 0.2% of total EU employment.
-  From 1987 to 2011, European fisheries ministers have set Total Allowable Catches higher than scientific advice in 68% of decisions.
-  78% of Europeans support reform of the Common Fisheries Policy to ensure all seafood on sale in the EU comes from sustainable, non-overfished stocks.
-  The EU is the 4th largest producer of fish and aquaculture products in the world.
-  Aquaculture consumes 85% of the world's fish oil and 68% of fish meal.
-  The average consumption of fish worldwide is 17.12 kg per person per year; in the EU it is 22.3 kg.

WWF asks for a successful CFP reform

The Common Fisheries Policy needs a complete overhaul to save our fish stocks and to protect the fishing sector from bankruptcy.

The new CFP must formulate clear goals to:

- end overfishing and reduce fleet capacity;
- achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) by 2015, at the latest;
- end discards;
- end harmful subsidies.

The new CFP must introduce multi-annual management plans for all fisheries which:

- involve all relevant stakeholders;
- assess each fishery's catch capacity, environmental impact and discard level, so as to transition to sustainable fishing.

Sustainable fishing everywhere means that:

- the principles and goals of the CFP must apply to all EU fishing vessels irrespective of where in the world they fish;
- transparency and coherence with development policy must be a leading principle for fishing agreements outside of European waters

If you agree, sign our More Fish petition to the European Parliament and EU Fisheries Ministers: wwf.eu/morefishpetition

In a poll carried out in 14 EU Member States:

88 PERCENT

of respondents said that fish products on sale within the EU should come from sources that are sustainable and not overfished.

72 PERCENT

of respondents said that there isn't adequate information on whether fish products come from well-managed, sustainable sources.

78 PERCENT

of respondents said that they support a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy to ensure all European fish products are from sustainable stocks that aren't overfished.



100%
RECYCLED



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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WWF European Policy Office 168
Avenue de Tervurenlaan, B-1150 Brussels, Tel: +32 2 743 8800.
For contact details and further information, please visit our website: www.wwf.eu