

MARE NEWS

New Pelagic Fishing Vessel "Høgaberg" Delivered to Faroese Owners of Karstensen's Shiyard

The Karstensen Shipyard in Skagen, Denmark, has successfully handed over the Høgaberg, an 87.8-metre pelagic trawler and seiner, to its new owners, the Olsen family of Fremherji p/f in Fuglafjordur, Faroe Islands. This newbuild replaces a previous vessel of the same name under the command of skippers Høgni Hansen and Jógvan Olsen. See page: 58-60

The Fishing Daily. Europa Azul



N°-1-2025

UK-EU Fishing Dispute Over Sandeel Ban Set for Arbitration Hearing

A significant legal confrontation between the United Kingdom and the European Union is set to play out later this month as the two sides clash over the UK's ban on sandeel fishing. This marks the first arbitration hearing under the post-Brexit Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). See page: 42-43

The 'Argos Berbés': Nodosa's Latest Innovation

The Asturian group Armón will construct a 53-metre-long vessel to advance the long-term sustainable management of fishing resources for the Institute of Agri-Food and Biosciences in Northern Ireland. See page:



Brussels Funded Environmentalists to Campaign for Its Green Plans

A Dutch daily has revealed that a group of NGOs received €700,000 to campaign for the Nature Restoration Act. According to a report by De Telegraaf. However, according to documents obtained by De Telegraaf, several beneficiaries received the subsidies on the condition that they campaign for Brussels' and Timmermans' green initiatives, influencing debates on agriculture and sustainability. One example cited by the Dutch daily is the European Environment Bureau (EEB). See page: 24-26

NWWAC and PelAC Mediterranean trawling begins its conversion

The North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) and Pelagic Advisory Council (PelAC) have renewed their call to join Ireland's Seafood/Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Group, citing the importance of fisheries stakeholders being actively involved in discussions about offshore energy developments in Irish waters.

The Government of Spain agrees with the autonomous communities of the Mediterranean the obligatory change of trawl nets. The ministry will subsidize the entire purchase of two 45-millimeter codends for each boat in the coastal fishery and 50-millimeter codends for deep-sea fishing. See page: 36-37



Introducing MARE News: A New Voice in European Fisheries Journalism

Welcome to MARE News, an exciting new collaboration between two of Europe's most respected and influential marine news platforms—The Fishing Daily and Europa-Azul. This dynamic venture unites the expertise, credibility, and deep industry knowledge of two powerhouses in fisheries journalism to deliver comprehensive, high-quality reporting on the issues that matter most to the European fishing community.

With a combined 50 years of journalistic experience, Oliver McBride, Managing Editor of The Fishing Daily, and Alberto Echaluze, Editor of Europa-Azul, bring an unparalleled depth of insight into the fisheries sector. Their extensive networks and on-the-ground reporting ensure that MARE News is uniquely positioned to provide the most accurate and up-to-date coverage of European and international fisheries.

Covering the vast expanse of European waters—from the Mediterranean Sea to the Arctic, and from the Baltic Sea to Greenland—

MARE News delivers essential industry news, in-depth analysis, and expert commentary. Whether it's political developments, regulatory changes, sustainability initiatives, or the latest advancements in vessel technology, our magazine is committed to keeping stakeholders across the sector well-informed.

For businesses operating within the fishing industry, MARE News offers an exceptional opportunity to expand visibility and reach across coastal states, mainland Europe, and the Mediterranean. By partnering with us, companies can connect with a broad and engaged audience, ensuring their presence is felt in key markets across the continent.

With its authoritative journalism and broad European focus, MARE News is set to become an essential resource for policymakers, fishermen, industry professionals, and businesses alike. Stay informed, stay ahead—join us as we chart the future of European fisheries.

The Fishing Daily

YOUR INDUSTRY, YOUR NEWS TODAY



Est 2019

Europa Azul

Equity is needed in ocean conservation interventions

A new study published in Nature Ecology & Evolution highlights the importance of integrating equity into the design of interventions to address the biodiversity and climate change crisis. Researchers point out that without fair treatment for all, there is a risk of undertaking harmful actions that can compromise human health and well-being, increasing the vulnerability of marginalized populations. This could hinder the achievement of common climate, conservation and sustainable development goals. To realize global ambitions for sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity in ocean spaces, it is crucial that no one is left behind. For these reasons, putting equity first is a necessary step to ensure the well-being of all people who use and access the oceans, while safeguarding the planet. In this direction, it is necessary to call for a transformative change towards ocean sustainability, which can only occur by engaging stakeholders in more inclusive and equitable forms of sustainable development, climate change adaptation and conservation. Key points proposed in-

clude seeking inclusive participation, ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders in ocean governance, including marine spatial planning processes. This means inviting representatives of indigenous peoples and artisanal fishing organisations to planning and policy-making meetings to address their concerns. This calls for balanced decision-making: major players such as governments, NGOs and businesses must work towards focusing on equity in their internal decision-making processes, assessing whether their actions are truly inclusive and fair to all stakeholders. This calls for reformed rules and entrenched systems: transforming existing rules and systems to address long-standing injustices in coastal areas and oceans, and offering redress where past actions have significantly harmed coastal communities. Many decisions taken by community institutions are made without any consultation, and their damage is ultimately irreversible and unreversible. This has been seen in the damage caused to the bottom longline fleet by the closure of fishing zones at depths of more

than 400 metres, which have directly affected 59 Spanish boats.

The involvement of local communities is more than necessary. We cannot forget that hundreds of millions of people around the world live near the ocean and depend on it for their livelihood. It is therefore essential that their voices and needs are taken into account in decisions that will affect their lives, including the development of the blue economy, the creation of marine protected areas and the implementation of climate measures. To effectively address the climate and biodiversity crisis, equity must be at the heart of ocean governance. Involving all stakeholders and ensuring that decisions are inclusive and equitable is key to promoting sustainable development that benefits all coastal and marine communities.

Through these joint efforts, the world can move towards a future in which oceans are managed sustainably, ensuring human well-being.

OLIVER MC BRIDE

Managing Editor,
The Fishing Daily,
No. 1 Áras Ros Goill
Na Dúnaibh,
Downings.
Co Donegal, Ireland. F92 RX8C
Phone or WhatsApp: 00353838268406
Email: editor@thefishingdaily.com
Website: www.thefishingdaily.com

ALBERTO ECHALUCE

Managing Editor
Europa Azul
Plaza de Unzaga 9.2
20600. Eibar (Gipuzkoa)
SPAIN
Tlfno: 34 619179516
Phone or WhatsApp: 34 619179516
Email: info@europa-azul.es
Website: www.europa-azul.es

Interview 6 to 9

Basilio Otero, president of FNCP

Ireland 10 and 13

Irish Fish Processors Chief Calls for Level Playing Field to Save Sector from Collapse

Irish Fishing Representatives Slam Claims of Inspection "Tip-Offs"

Fishing Vessel Master Pleads Guilty to Landing Undersized Brown Crab

Irish Fishing Representatives Slam Claims of Inspection "Tip-Offs"

Europe 12 and 29

«The implementation of bans worries European fishermen» NWWAC Raises Concerns Over

Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) Closures and Calls for Policy Revisions
Europe and the United Kingdom, an economic relationship to be rebuilt

UK-EU Fishing Dispute Over Sandeel Ban Set for Arbitration Hearing

Brussels funded environmentalists to campaign for its green plans

NWWAC and PelAC Urge Inclusion in Seafood/Offshore Renewable Energy Group

NWWAC Highlights Persistent Choke Risks in North Western Waters Despite Mitigation Efforts

Europe and the United Kingdom, an economic relationship to be rebuilt

New Mapping Project Enhances Fishing Data for Marine Planning

Shetland Fishermen See Promising Signs for Young Fish Stocks

Scotland 30 and 31

Scottish Government Outlines Measures to Tackle Ghost Fishing in 2025

Scottish Government to Publish Update on Fisheries Management Strategy Progress

France 32

The French and Basque Country fleet has imposed a ban

6 a 9

Interview

“The new Fisheries Commission must listen more to fishermen and scientists”

José Basilio Otero Rodríguez has been a skipper and shipowner since 1995, although he has been working for the fishing industry more in his offices for the last fifteen years. Senior Skipper of the "San Juan Bautista" Fishermen's Guild of Burela since October 2008, President of the Provincial Federation of Fishermen's Guilds of Lugo since October 2014 and President of the National Federation of Fishermen's Guilds of Spain since April 2017, he warns of the diffi-

cult times the sector is experiencing due to European policies "characterised by an increasingly environmentalist drift," he says. What we have asked the current commissioner is to stop the reduction of days in the Mediterranean and to carry out a biological study of the current situation of the stock. He has not paid attention, he has continued with the reduction and that has caused us to have boats with a minimum number of days of work per year.

24 a 26

Investigation

«The implementation of bans worries European fishermen»

The IEO-CSIC researcher, Julio Valeiras, presented at Expomar-Burela the results of the Ispamer project, focused on understanding the impact of the Longline fleet in European waters, with the aim of obtaining scientific data to study the selectivity of the gear and measure the possible impact of this fishing gear on the seabed of European waters, where this EU fleet operates. The IEO researcher, José Manuel González Irusta, presented the studies related to the closures of the 87 areas of vulnerable marine ecosystems and their economic impact on the different fleets.

Spain 33 and 37

EEESC calls for an end to unsustainable practices in third countries

Vigo bets on an electric boat with a hydrogen fuel cell

EFGA Calls for Overhaul of Fishery Weighing Practices in EU Member States

Mediterranean trawling begins its conversion

Marketing 38 and 39

"Everything by its name"

EE.UU 40 and 41

US Fisheries Management: A Model for Sustainability and Global Leadership

International 42 and 43

Fishing Industry Leaders Call for Urgent Reforms in Spurdog Management

12 y 13

Ireland

Irish Fish Processors Chief Calls for Level Playing Field to Save Sector from Collapse

In an in-depth conversation with The Fishing Daily Podcast, Brendan Byrne, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers and Exporters Association (IFPEA), shared his candid insights into the ongoing struggles of Ireland's fishing industry. From overfishing by third-party nations to the inequities in EU fisheries regulations, Byrne painted a stark picture of an industry facing unprecedented challenges. Reflecting on the reductions in Ireland's mackerel quota for 2025, Byrne highlighted the damaging effects of overfishing by non-EU countries such as Norway and the Faroe Islands.



36 and 37

Mediterranean trawling begins its conversion

The Government of Spain agrees with the autonomous communities of the Mediterranean the obligatory change of trawl nets. The ministry will subsidize the entire purchase of two 45-millimeter codends for each boat in the coastal fishery and 50-millimeter codends for deep-sea fishing.

The ministry will subsidize the entire purchase of two 45-millimeter codends for each boat in the coastal fishery and 50-millimeter codends for deep-sea fishing.

42 y 43

UK and EU

Fishing Industry Leaders Call for Urgent Reforms in Spurdog Management

Prominent fishing organisations from across the UK and EU have issued a joint position paper demanding critical reforms to the management of the Northeast Atlantic spurdog fishery. The paper addresses pressing con-

cerns surrounding current regulations, which the signees argue hinder sustainable economic opportunities while contributing to environmental inefficiencies.



Iceland 44

Iceland's 2024 Groundfish Survey Highlights Stock Trends and Ecosystem Shifts

Business Section 46 and 47

National Centre for Food Manufacturing Strengthens Support for UK Seafood Industry
Seafood Sector Welcomes Launch of UK Seafood Federation

Exhibition 57 a 61

World Maritime Week, the great meeting of the international maritime sector

Faroe 45

Faroe Government Allocates 6,500 Tonnes for Blue Whiting Fishing Trials in 2025

Investigation 48

Octofrost Announces Acquisition of HiTec Food Systems

Shipyard 66 a 71

Armón, Zamakona
Karstensens Shiyard

Basilio Otero Rodríguez, President of the Federation of Fishermen's Guilds

"The new Fisheries Commission must listen more to fishermen and scientists."

José Basilio Otero Rodríguez has been a skipper and shipowner since 1995, though for the past 15 years, he has primarily worked within the fishing industry's offices. Since October 2008, he has served as Senior Skipper of the San Juan Bautista Fishermen's Guild in Burela, President of the Provincial Federation of Fishermen's Guilds of Lugo since October 2014, and President of the National Federation of Fishermen's Guilds of Spain since April 2017. Otero warns of the challenges facing the sector due to European policies, which he describes as having "an increasingly environmentalist drift."

What should a reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) prioritise, especially as European elections approach?

First and foremost, the sector and scientists must be heard. In recent years, the European Commission's environmental policies have caused significant harm and could even backfire on the environment itself. Since European regulations determine much of what impacts us, we hope to have a dedicated Fisheries Commissioner. Currently, having fisheries grouped under the Environment portfolio is illogical. At the very least, fisheries should be included within Agriculture, as part of the primary sector.

Are EU policies putting the survival of parts of the fishing fleet at risk by prioritising environmental sustainability over economic and social sustainability?

There is no doubt that a radical environmental approach has dominated European policies in recent years. In northern Spain, for example, the issue of vulnerable marine areas exemplifies this radicalisation. According to the law, marine areas where "there are or could be" vulnerable species must be protected. However, this vague wording—"there could be"—has allowed authorities to prohibit all bottom-fishing gear, using trawling data to justify closures.

In the Mediterranean, the situation is just as troubling. Over the past five years, a multiannual plan mandated a reduction in fishing effort by "up to 40%," but that "up to" has been disregarded, with reductions reaching 40.5%. This is despite the FAO's social report, which indicates evident stock recovery in the region. We have asked the current



The president of the Federation of Brotherhoods talks about the most important problems of the extractive sector.

commissioner to pause further reductions and conduct a biological stock study to assess the actual situation, but this request has been ignored. The continued reduction of fishing days has led to boats in the Mediterranean operating with minimal time at sea. With no quotas, except for bluefin tuna, swordfish, and now red shrimp, effort is measured by days of fishing. No business can survive with so few operational days.

Why has the request to reduce VAT on fishing products been repeatedly denied?

Honestly, I do not understand. Neighbouring countries have successfully implemented reduced VAT rates for fishing products. In Spain, however, the Minister has shifted the blame from the Ministry of Finance to his own lack of conviction.

How is offshore wind energy impacting fishing, and is an assessment of its effects possible?

Assessing the impact of wind energy on fishing requires scientific studies, which, as of now, do not exist. We have met with the Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO) three times, and they have acknowledged the need for such studies while noting that the fishing sector cannot request them; the government must do so.

How are negotiations with wind power companies progressing?

We are in discussions with the Wind Business Association (AEE), and while they have been receptive, there is still much work to be done. With the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge (MITECO), we established a working group two years after our initial request. However, we have only reached the first meeting.

Why are first-sale fish prices so low that it's often not worth going to sea?

This issue is partly true. Fish prices, as a perishable commodity, depend heavily on supply and demand. However, the real problem lies with imports. European fishing and aquaculture only meet 30% of consumption demand, leaving 70% to imports, often from countries with far lower standards. We are



Caricatura de Basilio Otero.

«We have been in an environmental whirlwind of the Commission in recent years that is causing a lot of harm and will end up damaging the environment»

advocating for "mirror clauses" to ensure imports meet the same standards as European producers.

What is your opinion on the increasing establishment of marine protected areas?

Marine protected areas, when designed with fishing interests in mind, are an effective tool for co-management. While administrations may dislike the term "co-management," evidence shows it works. These areas not only promote environmental protection but also allow for robust fishing controls and population development, ensuring a sustainable future. However, they must balance immediate needs with long-term goals.

Why has generational renewal in fishing been so difficult, and how can the profession be made more attractive?

Generational renewal is indeed one of our biggest challenges. While Nautical Schools are seeing record enrolments, the sector still struggles to attract new entrants. Many graduates opt for careers in the merchant or recreational marine sectors rather than

fishing. Addressing this requires a national training plan and improved working conditions, such as fixed salaries with catch-based bonuses, as some fisheries already offer. Additionally, we need to modernise perceptions of the industry. Fishing is now a highly digitalised and innovative sector, far removed from outdated stereotypes.

Every day, more protected areas are being tried to be established in community waters. What is your opinion on this?

Marine protected areas of fishing interest are the most valid tool to be able to achieve co-management. Although the administration does not like this word co-management in this type of associative instrument, it is being shown that it works and, in addition to promoting respect for the environment, there is exhaustive control of fishing and the development of populations that promises a future. This is what we need, but it must be managed with an eye to the future and with the need for the present.

Javier Garat, President of Europêche y secretario general de CEPESCA

“We need to dispel the myths surrounding fisheries management”

Javier Garat, president of the Spanish Fisheries Confederation, calls for transparency from the EU. Bad press, the abandonment of fish consumption, unfair competition and the importance of the sector and governments working together. The bad press that the sector has and the attacks of environmental organisations that manage to penetrate the community in a way that fishing cannot do, are added to the increasingly marked lack of interest of consumers in fishery products and to the problems of unfair competition posed by countries that capture without rules the same products that then compete in the same market.

“Different countries of the EU are in low morale because we are receiving attacks from all sides. From the point of view of certain pressure groups, certain legislations, and certain international organisations. And people are a little fed up with all these situations and that is why I think it is very important that, above all, governments and the sector itself in all the links of the commercial chain, work together to make known the importance of fishing in our respective countries and in the world,” said the president of CEPESCA at the beginning of his presentation.

In his statements, Garat complains that during the pandemic, politicians stressed the importance of the sector, considering it essential and strategic to feed people, “but after the years, the pandemic has been forgotten and so has that concept; and we have to



Javier Garat es el presidente de Europêche

continue insistently repeating that fish is the healthiest animal protein and with the lowest carbon footprint in its production, which produces impressive health benefits.”

A phrase that always resonates is that “it is scientifically and medically proven that it produces happiness”; and Garat proposed that work be done so that this message resonates deeply in society and consumers.

In a world that sees fishing as predatory, Garat argues that the fact that two-thirds of populations are sustainable, as confirmed by the FAO Sofia 2024 report presented at this seminar, is not enough: “We must ensure that 100% of fish stocks are

sustainable. It has been proven that when there is good fisheries management, things work and there are hundreds of success stories that we have to tell because people do not know about them. Many consumers are left with the idea that we are exploiting populations and destroying the planet, when in reality we are the true allies in the fight against climate change.”

In this sense, he argues that collaboration with scientists is necessary for this, “the closer this relationship is, the better it is for all of us, because the stock assessments are better and the results, therefore, of management are also better.”

«He also refers to countries that play other cards, that do not comply with standards that aim to guarantee sustainability, human rights and fair competition»

“We have to put everything into play, we have to debunk the many myths surrounding both fisheries management and the consumption of fish and seafood, which is another of the problems we have in Europe, the United States and certain developed countries. Being vegan is not really as good and as nice as some make it out to be and that message can be worrying in the short term if we continue with this trend of abandoning the consumption of fish and seafood and dedicating ourselves to eating other things that will have a clear effect on health. We are talking about the fact that it has to be of public interest in different areas,” Garat proposed.

On the other hand, he suggested that it is extremely important to attend to the social, environmental and economic aspects with the same dedication: “They should be equally important and all three should take up the same amount of time in fisheries management. The reality is that in recent years there has been much more effort and concentration on the environmental aspect than on the social and economic aspects in general, and that must be reversed, we have to achieve that balance between the three issues.”

He also refers to countries that play other cards, that do not comply with standards that aim to guarantee sustainability, human rights and fair competition, as the great problem to be solved so that those who comply with everything can be competitive and win over the consumer through transparency but also through price.

“We are competing globally and we see that some have a series of relevant standards that imply flotation costs and on the other hand there are others that do not, but then we compete in the same market” says Garat and adds that “what is important is that those who do things well have incentives to be able to continue, to do so and not, as often happens, that the market is not recognizing that”. It shows that there is inaction in the face of everything that China does. “The main problem with all this is that China is behind it. And no one has the courage to act against China, such a great power in every sense, not only from the outside, but also from the outside.

Garat’s most important words

✓ During the pandemic, the fishing sector was considered essential and strategic, both the inshore and offshore fleets. Sometimes I feel that this has been forgotten.

✓ We produce the healthiest animal protein with the lowest carbon footprint, feeding millions of people in the world.

✓ Fisheries for decades has invested in promoting sustainable practices for the long-term conservation of natural resources, as the best way to maintain food security, livelihoods and conserve ocean biodiversity. However, we have been demonized despite these efforts.

✓ We must reframe the narrative to one that recognizes that fishing is not the problem. It is part of the solution. We need to invest to strengthen work on the wise use of the sea.

✓ We have made enormous efforts to absorb new science and other forms of knowledge into our evolving fisheries policies and practices to conserve the ocean, but we see that these efforts are not recognized in these types of forums.

✓ We are investing in new technologies to reduce our impact on ecosystems, protect vulnerable marine ecosystems, reduce energy consumption, reduce bycatch or fight illegal fishing.

Irish Fish Processors Chief Calls for Level Playing Field to Save Sector from Collapse

Brendan Byrne Speaks Out: The Challenges Facing Ireland's Fishing Industry

In an in-depth conversation with The Fishing Daily Podcast, Brendan Byrne, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers and Exporters Association (IFPEA), shared his candid insights into the ongoing struggles of Ireland's fishing industry. From overfishing by third-party nations to the inequities in EU fisheries regulations, Byrne painted a stark picture of an industry facing unprecedented challenges.

A Devastating Reality for Ireland's Fishing Sector

Reflecting on the reductions in Ireland's mackerel quota for 2025, Byrne highlighted the damaging effects of overfishing by non-EU countries such as Norway and the Faroe Islands. He criticised the European Union for failing to enforce regulations that prevent these nations from exploiting shared marine resources.

"It's unfair and devastating," Byrne stated. "We are forced to cut our quotas while others overfish with no repercussions. This situation has left Ireland's pelagic sector, which relies heavily on mackerel stocks, in a perilous state."

The reductions, which were initially set at 22% but mitigated to 16% through the invocation of The Hague Preference mechanism, reflect a deeper issue. "Norway and Iceland continue to overfish, pushing the situation to a point where the long-term sustainability of these stocks is se-



Brendan Byrne, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers and Exporters Association (IFPEA)

riously at risk," Byrne warned.

Processing Plants Underutilised

Byrne also expressed concern about the underutilisation of Ireland's world-class fish processing facilities, particularly in Killybegs. "We have some of the most advanced and mechanised factories in Europe, yet they sit idle due to the lack of raw materials," he lamented. This, Byrne explained, is compounded by stringent landing rules in Ireland, which make it less attractive for fishers to

bring their catch ashore.

"Landing fish in Ireland has become synonymous with harassment and the prospect of criminal prosecution for minor errors," Byrne said. "The uneven application of regulations across EU member states has driven fishers to land their catch in friendlier ports like those in Norway or France."

Calls for Level Playing Field

A recurring theme in Byrne's interview was the need for a level playing

field in fisheries regulation. He criticised the overzealous enforcement of rules in Ireland compared to other EU countries. "Our factories are subject to up to 80 CCTV cameras and stringent controls that far exceed those in other member states. This puts Irish businesses at a competitive disadvantage," Byrne noted.

The discrepancies extend to international markets, where Irish fish must compete with products from countries with more lenient oversight. "We are playing by one rulebook while others bend theirs, and it's destroying our market share," he said.

The Role of Government and EU

Byrne called on the Irish government and the EU to recalibrate their approach to fisheries management. He emphasised the need for Ireland to leverage its position as a key member of the EU, hosting 12% of its waters and supporting the fishing industries of multiple coastal states.

"We need a government that prioritises the fishing sector," Byrne asserted. "This includes appointing a Minister of State for Fisheries with full authority and creating a dedicated fisheries committee within the Oireachtas."

Looking Ahead

While 2024 marked the worst year on record for Ireland's fishing and processing industries, Byrne expressed cautious optimism for the future. However, he stressed that meaningful change requires action at both the national and EU levels.

"We can no longer afford to be silent or passive," Byrne concluded. "The industry's survival depends on fair regulation, effective governance, and a shared commitment to sustainability."

This candid discussion underscores the urgent need for a unified approach to address the challenges facing Ireland's fishing industry. As Byrne aptly put it, "The clock is ticking, and the stakes have never been higher."

Pelagic Advisory Council Urges Action on 2025 Herring TACs and Stock Mixing Issues

The Pelagic Advisory Council (PelAC) has issued recommendations for the 2025 Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for herring stocks in the North West Atlantic, including 6a North, 6a South and 7bc, and the Irish Sea, with a call for clearer stock assessments and immediate action on cross-stock mixing concerns.

In a letter addressed to Ms. Charlina Vitcheva, Director-General of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, the PelAC highlighted key issues and solutions to ensure sustainable herring fisheries in the coming year.

The council supports the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) recommendation of 1,745 tonnes for 6a North herring in 2025. PelAC further suggests evaluating the current stock separation of 6a North herring and North Sea Autumn Spawners (NSAS), as evidence suggests they may belong to the same population.

For 6a South and 7bc herring, a TAC of 2,724 tonnes is recommended, in line with ICES advice. PelAC also advocates for expanding scientific sampling to elevate the stock to a Category 1 assessment, improving data reliability.

The Irish Sea herring poses significant concerns regarding stock mixing with Celtic Sea herring. PelAC recommends a combined benchmark assessment for these stocks, pointing out that ICES' dual recommendations—ranging

from zero catch under the precautionary approach to 5,223 tonnes under the MSY approach—highlight uncertainty in the data.

The PelAC expressed dissatisfaction with ICES' handling of stock mixing data, which affects the accuracy of Irish Sea herring assessments:

"ICES should revoke the current advice and conduct the necessary analyses to develop robust catch advice," the council stated, emphasising that stock mixing leads to overestimated Irish Sea stock levels and risks depleting the Celtic Sea herring population.

The council also drew attention to non-fisheries pressures, including gravel extraction and offshore renewable energy (ORE) development, which threaten herring spawning habitats. PelAC urged the European Commission to exclude these vital areas from Renewable Acceleration Areas, aligning with ICES advice to prioritise habitat preservation.

The PelAC underscored the urgency of addressing these issues to safeguard the long-term sustainability of herring stocks. The council called on the European Commission to request ICES establish a timeline for resolving stock assessment ambiguities and improving data accuracy.

With herring stocks integral to marine ecosystems and regional economies, the PelAC's recommendations seek to balance conservation with the economic needs of fishing communities.

Jon Erik Reinhardsen Appointed New Chairman of Smart Ocean

Smart Ocean has appointed Jon Erik Reinhardsen as its new chairman. The experienced industry leader joins at an exciting time for the Norwegian technology company.

Reinhardsen, who is chairman of Equinor, brings extensive industrial expertise with him.

In addition to his broad competence, he is well-acquainted with Smart Ocean's technology through his role as a part-time senior advisor at BearingPoint Capital.

BearingPoint Capital provides Smart Ocean with strategic and financial advisory services.

"I am very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the development of Smart Ocean going forward. This is an exciting time for the company, and I look forward to being part of the growth of an impressive company in an industry with great potential," said Reinhardsen.

Solid experience

Tore Halvorsen, founder and CEO of Smart Ocean, believes Reinhardsen's background and experience will be vital for the company's continued development and growth.

"Jon Erik Reinhardsen has solid experience in the industry, and his expertise will be crucial as we continue to grow. We have been eager to strengthen our organization, and we are truly achieving that with Reinhardsen," said Halvorsen.

Smart Ocean is building an ocean data platform through its proprietary software solution and smart



Tore Halvorsen and Jon Erik Reinhardsen

buoys with real-time communication for marine industries. These include coastal and ocean buoys for fisheries, sensor buoys for aquaculture, and buoys for ocean monitoring. The company is currently scaling up, internationalizing, and focusing on collecting and commercializing critical ocean data that holds significant value for both society and commercial markets.

New regulations

Recently, the company has been preparing for increased demand following the implementation of new regulations for marking fishing equipment. The new regulations, effective from the beginning of the year, prohibit the use of AIS tracking technology for this purpose. AIS, an anti-collision system, can interfere with ship traffic when used on fishing gear. For many fishers, this has necessitated replacing AIS buoys they have relied on for years.

Technology Company

Smart Ocean AS is a technology company that solves significant ocean challenges with innovative solutions. Founded in Norway, the company also operates in the UK and Canada. Smart Ocean develops world-class software and IoT solutions to make shipping more efficient, marine operations more profitable, and fisheries more sustainable. The company's first product, the Smart Ocean Buoy, provides value to fishing companies by increasing productivity, reducing loss of fishing equipment, and thereby mitigating ghost fishing. Smart Ocean is a pioneer in ocean data and analytics, advancing solutions for ocean data collection with its Smart Buoys. These include the collection of crucial scientific and operational data for offshore industries, fisheries, aquaculture...

EU Fisheries Sector Calls for Tougher Stance on Norway Over Quota Disputes

The European Parliament's Committee on Fisheries (PECH) held a public hearing yesterday, highlighting deep tensions in EU-Norway fisheries relations. Industry leaders, MEPs, and European Commission officials voiced mounting frustration over Norway's unilateral quota decisions and its lack of reciprocity in access to fishing waters and markets.

Sustainability at Stake in the Northeast Atlantic

At the heart of the discussions was the issue of fisheries management in the Northeast Atlantic. Iván López, Chair of the Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC), warned that Norway's actions threaten the sustainability of one of the world's best-managed fisheries.

"Norway presents itself as a responsible partner, yet continuously sides with Russia and the Faroe Islands to undermine EU efforts for sustainable fishing," he stated.

López pointed to Norway's continued support of transshipments at sea and its reluctance to enforce stricter sustainability standards. He further criticised the country's refusal to allow EU investments in its fishing industry, despite Norway's overwhelming reliance on EU markets—57% of the value of its seafood exports and 53% of its volume go to the bloc.

Quota Disputes and Unilateral Decisions

Tim Heddema, Chair of the Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association (PFA), shed light on the ongoing impasse in coastal states negotiations. Talks on sharing arrangements for key stocks, such as mackerel, blue whiting, and

Atlanto-Scandian herring, have failed for over a decade.

Heddema condemned Norway's "excessive, unjustified unilateral quotas," with increases of up to 55% compared to previous agreements.

"Norway and the Faroe Islands are setting quotas far beyond sustainable levels, leading to overfishing," he said, adding that the UK's decision to enter a partial agreement with Norway further legitimised irresponsible quota allocations.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen, President of the European Association of Fish Producers Organizations (EAPO), echoed these concerns, describing the EU-Norway relationship as a "one-way street." He criticised Norway's prioritisation of its own industry over sustainability, particularly its unilateral bans on EU vessels in certain fisheries.

Calls for a Stronger EU Response

Speakers at the hearing urged the European Commission to take a firmer stance. López called for an end to tariff exemptions for Norwegian seafood until fisheries disputes are resolved, warning that the EU has been "too nice" in its approach.

"We need to stop acting like Ned Flanders—polite and passive—while Norway takes advantage," he said.

Both Sverdrup-Jensen and Heddema supported linking fisheries negotiations to market access, arguing that Norway should not enjoy free trade benefits without meeting EU sustainability standards.

European Commission officials acknowledged the frustrations but cautioned against hasty action. Fabrizio

Donatella, Director at DG MARE, stressed that Norway remains a strategic partner and that the EU must balance firmness with diplomacy.

"The Commission is working closely with industry and member states to ensure stability in access to fishing waters and economic interests," he assured.

Political Pressure on the Horizon

The hearing underscored a growing political push within the European Parliament for stronger trade measures against Norway. Francisco Millán Mon, MEP, summarised the key grievances, stating that "Norway is not cooperating," with numerous violations of agreements, including overfishing, quota reductions, and restrictions on EU vessels.

Parliament is set to vote in the coming weeks on a financial mechanism linked to Norway's EEA membership, which could provide leverage for fisheries negotiations.

Conclusion: A Defining Moment for EU-Norway Relations

With Brexit reshaping power dynamics, Norway appears less inclined to prioritise EU interests. However, the EU remains Norway's primary seafood market, providing significant leverage if trade measures are pursued. As negotiations continue, European fishers are calling for decisive action to prevent further losses and ensure sustainable fisheries management in the Northeast Atlantic.

The coming weeks will reveal whether the EU adopts a tougher stance or continues its diplomatic approach.

Fishing Vessel Master Pleads Guilty to Landing Undersized Brown Crab

The skipper of the *Mary James*, Brian Leonard from County Dublin, admitted to landing undersized brown crab at Rush Pier, Dublin, during a court hearing at Balbriggan District Court on 9 January 2025. The case followed a routine inspection by Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers from the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) in August 2023.

Breach of Conservation Regulations

The court was informed that 29 brown crabs, measuring below the legal size of 140mm, were found during the inspection, with some as small as 118mm. Under EU and national laws, undersized catches must be returned to the sea. The minimum size rules, in effect since 2019, aim to protect crab stocks, which are under increasing threat.

Scientific evidence presented in court highlighted the critical importance of maintaining these conservation measures.

Court Ruling

The court stressed the need to safeguard marine stocks and

acknowledged the vital work of Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers. Brian Leonard was ordered to donate €500 to the charity Saint Vincent de Paul. No conviction was recorded.

SFPA Statement

An SFPA spokesperson emphasised the importance of complying with conservation size rules, stating:

“Ensuring the sustainability of shellfish stocks is crucial for trade, fishing communities, and ecosystems. Masters and vessel operators must adopt and consistently implement measures to comply with their obligations regarding undersized catches.”

The SFPA commended the officers for their thorough investigation and welcomed the court’s recognition of the seriousness of the offence.

This case highlights the need for strict adherence to conservation rules to ensure the long-term viability of shellfish stocks and marine ecosystems.

IIMRO Withdraws from Northwest Herring Advisory Committee Over Departmental Concerns

The Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation (IIMRO) has announced its immediate withdrawal from the Northwest Herring Advisory Committee, citing dissatisfaction with the Department’s engagement and responsiveness.

IIMRO, which has been a constructive participant in the committee since its inception, expressed frustration over what it described as a lack of acknowledgment and action on its advice and recommendations concerning herring management and other critical issues.

A Frustrating Experience

In a statement, IIMRO outlined its reasons for the decision:

“Despite our constructive input, the engagement from the department has been unsatisfactory, with advice and recommendations from the committee being ignored and unacknowledged. Experience has shown that our time, expertise, and efforts will be better spent elsewhere.”

The organisation emphasised that it will continue advocating for fair access to herring and other key fish stocks on behalf of its members.

Call for Change in Leadership and Departmental Reform

IIMRO also expressed hope that a new minister might take a more proactive approach to ensure the survival and prosperity of Ireland’s small-scale fishing fleet.

“A review of the internal structures of the department is long overdue,” IIMRO stated, highlighting the need for reform to address longstanding issues.

Impact on the Small-Scale Fleet

This move underscores broader frustrations within Ireland’s small-scale fishing sector, which has often felt sidelined in fisheries management decisions. IIMRO’s withdrawal raises questions about the efficacy of current advisory structures and the future of collaborative management efforts.

Irish Fishing Representatives Slam Claims of Inspection "Tip-Offs"

Irish fishing industry representatives have strongly criticised allegations suggesting that fish processors receive advance notice of inspections, labelling such claims as unfounded and damaging. The controversy arose following an article in the Irish Independent that implied the practice of "tip-offs" was prevalent within the sector.

Industry Leaders Deny Allegations

The Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association (IFPEA) has categorically denied the existence of any advance notifications for inspections. In a robust statement, the IFPEA described the claims as baseless, asserting that the Irish fish processing sector operates under some of the strictest scrutiny in the EU.

"There are not, nor have there ever been, any 'tip-offs' or advance notice of inspections within the fish processing sector," the IFPEA declared. "The degree and level of inspection within the Irish fish processing sector is unparalleled within the EU. Irish fish processors have live feed cameras directly relaying to SFPA offices and retain 31 days of CCTV recordings of weighing activities on their premises."

The organisation questioned the logic behind claims of tip-offs, pointing to the constant oversight already in place. "One would have to question the logic or need for tip-offs in any case," they added.

Criticism of Media Narratives

Cormac Burke, Chair of the Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance, also



criticised the allegations, suggesting they were part of a politically motivated agenda to malign the fishing industry.

"These articles published in Irish newspapers clearly have, as has always been the case, a political agenda behind them," Burke stated. "Journalists are being fed a line of anti-fishing industry propaganda to constantly reinforce the belief that this industry is populated with crooks and thieves. Despite several high-profile 'raids' and investigations receiving massive media coverage, they have yet to uncover any major illegal activities."

Burke further called for an investigation into what he termed the "constant anti-industry feed" to the media, which he believes originates from within regulatory bodies.

Robust Oversight Already in Place

Industry representatives have highlighted the robust systems already

in place to monitor compliance within fish processing plants. Live video monitoring and extensive CCTV recordings are part of standard operating procedures, ensuring transparency and adherence to regulations.

The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), tasked with regulating Ireland's seafood production, has faced scrutiny in recent audits. While EU auditors have previously criticised some inspection practices, fishing representatives insist that these do not include advance notifications.

Restoring Trust in the Sector

As the fishing industry pushes back against the allegations, representatives are calling for a fair and evidence-based assessment of regulatory practices. The controversy has highlighted the need for balanced narratives that acknowledge the stringent oversight measures already in place.

«The implementation of bans worries European fishermen»

The IEO-CSIC researcher, Julio Valeiras, presented at Expomar-Burela the results of the Ispamer project, focused on understanding the impact of the Longline fleet in European waters, with the aim of obtaining scientific data to study the selectivity of the gear and measure the possible impact of this fishing gear on the seabed of European waters, where this EU fleet operates.

In September 2022, the European Commission published an Implementing Regulation prohibiting fishing with any bottom gear in 87 specific areas of Community waters, from the Gulf of Cadiz to the Gran Sol fishing ground.

The argument used for this decision was the proven existence of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME) in these areas or the possibility of it. These VMEs are characterized by their high biodiversity, priority conservation and by being key habitats for fishing species.

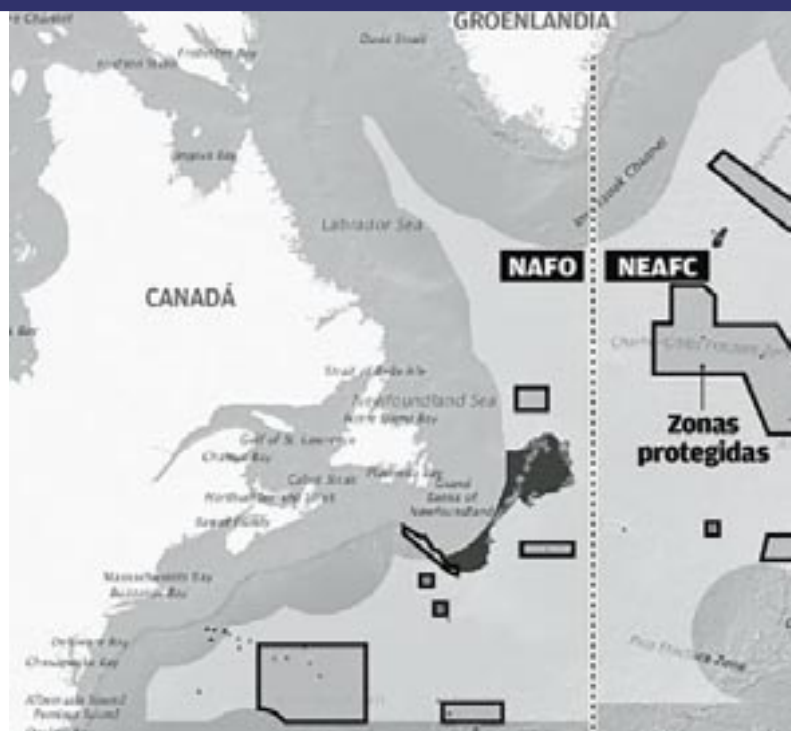
In 2022, the Commission published regulations with spatial closures to bottom fishing without fishery exemptions.

This decision had detrimental effects on hake longlines, the most affected fishery in terms

of fishing effort. However, hake longlines are the most selective gear but the most penalised compared to other fisheries. This led to a decrease in fishing yields and a socio-economic impact of up to 27 million euros. The effects have been that the affected vessels have changed their fishing methods. There has also been interaction with other fisheries in the fishing grounds, in addition to increasing uncertainty about new closed areas in the future.

Commissioned by the OPP Burela

For these reasons, the Organisation of Fisheries Producers of the Port of Burela commissioned the Oceanographic Centre of Vigo (IEO-CSIC) to carry out the ISPAMER study, which shows the null impact of hake longlines on the sea-



Mapa que muestra la existencia de zonas con posibilidad de localizarse ecosistemas vulnerables.

«In the catches made by the longline only worn corals and ancient fossils were seen»

bed. The general objective of ISPAMER is to carry out a study of demersal longlines in non-Iberian Community waters, to determine the selectivity and clarify the intensity and type of impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems.

The Spanish fleet operating with demersal longline gear in non-Iberian Community waters, which extend from western France (ICES division 8b) to northwest Scotland (Division 6a), has been exploiting a selective fishery targeting European hake for over thirty years.

Demersal longline gear for hake is used in shelf-edge areas on seabeds exceeding 400m and spatially coincide with several of the areas designated by the EC as prohibited areas for bottom fishing, so this ban impacts fishing activity in these areas.

Need to obtain scientific evidence on the impact of this fis-



istemas marinos vulnerables.

hing gear on marine ecosystems that allow the maintenance of this activity in balance with the conservation of EMVs.

Therefore, the aim was to determine the fishing selectivity parameters of the demersal longline fleet targeting hake currently used by the

“Demersal or semi-pelagic longlines have very little effect on the seabed”

fleet in non-Iberian Community waters.

Scientific information was also sought on by-catches of bottom invertebrates such as corals, sponges and feathers to clarify the effect of the fishery on vulnerable marine ecosystems.

87 closed areas

The 87 closed marine areas for bottom fishing referred to an area of 400 to 880 metres, between the Gulf of Cadiz and Ireland. The habitat to be protected referred to a series of species that have conservation problems that have disappeared and with which biodiversity is being maintained, making them priority conservation. They are key habitats for the fisheries themselves, because they are the breeding grounds for many species, including target species such as hake. There are species that are attached to rocks and soft bottoms. Among the four

vulnerable species, sponges, cold water corals, gorgonians and feathers were considered. "They are invertebrates of no fishing interest."

Highly selective art

The results obtained indicate that the longline used by the Burela fleet is a demersal or semi-pelagic longline of the "stone-ball" type that is aimed at adult hake and has very little contact with the seabed. "In 2024, sampling will continue to clarify whether or not this fishing system puts the conservation of the seabed at risk and with them request an exemption from the rule that allows fishing in closed areas." At the moment, from the observers' study, a fishing effort is known, with the use of 431,000 hooks, and catches of 36 different species, of which 90 percent was European hake with 135 kilos of the species per 1,000 hooks. Among the species that are dis-

«The Spanish fleet loses 79 million and if more vulnerable marine ecosystems are restricted, the figure will rise to 115 million»

The IEO researcher, José Manuel González Irusta, presented the studies related to the closures of the 87 areas of vulnerable marine ecosystems and their economic impact on the different fleets. "As a result of the study, we have found that static gear is the most affected by the proposed closures, despite being the gear with the least impact on the ecosystems." In fact, the impact on the fleet has already occurred. The closures in force have me-

ant that the Spanish fleet has eliminated areas with an approximate value of 17.7 million euros for trawling (equivalent to 3.58% of the total value of catches in the affected bathymetric range), 5.6 million for gillnetting (6.42% of the total value of catches in the affected bathymetric range) and 55.6 million for longlining (7.16% of the total value of catches in the affected bathymetric range). However, all the data are likely to increase with the new proposed

closures, affecting, especially, the North of Spain, which would be home to nearly 40% of the total closed areas, in most scenarios. For static gear, the new closures could mean the elimination of areas with an approximate value (in the most restrictive scenarios) of 90 million for longline and 15 million for bottom gillnets, respectively, 11.65 and 17% of the total value of catches in the affected bathymetric range.

carded is the blue whiting. The hake had an average size of 63 centimeters. In total 55 individuals of ancient coral were observed, and some were subfossils. In total 3,383 pieces of hake were measured. Crustacean hooks could be seen. As for electronic observation, a total of 10 trips were made, with 295 trips, in areas adjacent to the closed areas, with more than 400 meters deep. In benthic species, results have been obtained through the cameras. 39 individuals, benthic invertebrates. "They were dead specimens and were decomposed."

In September 2022, the European Commission published an Implementing Regulation prohibiting fishing with any bottom gear in 87 specific areas of Community waters, from the Gulf of Cadiz to the Gran Sol fishing ground.

The argument used for this decision was the proven existence of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME) in these areas or the possibility of it. These VMEs are characterised by their high biodiversity, priority conservation and by being key habitats for fishing species.

In 2022, the Commission published regulations with spatial closures to bottom fishing without fishery exemptions.

This decision had detrimental effects on hake longlines, the most affected fishery in terms of fishing effort. However, hake longlines are the most selective gear but the most penalised compared to other fisheries. This led to a decrease in fishing yields and a socio-economic impact of up to 27 million euros. The effects have been that the affected vessels have changed their fishing methods. There has also been interaction with other fisheries in the fishing grounds, in addition to increasing uncertainty about new closed areas in the future.

Commissioned by the OPP Burela

For these reasons, the Organisation of Fisheries Producers of the Port of Burela commissioned the Oceanographic Centre of Vigo (IEO-CSIC) to carry out the ISPAMER study, which shows the null impact of hake longlines on the seabed. The general objective of ISPAMER is to carry out a study of demersal longlines in non-Iberian Community waters, to determine the selectivity and clarify the intensity and type of impacts on vulnerable marine ecosystems.

The Spanish fleet operating with demersal longline gear in non-Iberian Community waters, which extend from western France (ICES division 8b) to north-west Scotland (Division 6a), has been exploiting a selective fishery targeting European hake for over thirty years.

In September 2022, the European Commission published an Implementing Regulation prohibiting fishing with any bottom gear in 87 specific areas of Community waters,



Julio Valeiras, del IEO-CSIC.

“The average size of the hake was 63 cm in total length, with a range that oscillated between 38 and 110 cm, with 3,883 individuals being counted in the study.”

from the Gulf of Cadiz to the Gran Sol fishing ground.

The argument used for this decision was the proven existence of vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME) in these areas or the possibility of it. These VMEs are characterised by their high biodiversity, priority conservation and by being key habitats for fishing species.

In 2022, the Commission published regulations with spatial closures to bottom fishing without fishery exemptions.

This decision had detrimental effects on hake longlines, the most affected fishery in terms of fishing effort. However, hake longlines are the most selective gear but the most penalised compared to other fisheries. This led to a decrease in fishing yields and a socio-economic impact of up to 27 million euros. The effects have been that the affected vessels have changed their fishing methods.

NWWAC Raises Concerns Over Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) Closures and Calls for Policy Revisions

The North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) has highlighted significant issues with the current management of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs), urging the European Commission to take a more evidence-based and flexible approach. In its latest advice, submitted on 14 January 2025, the NWWAC addressed inaccuracies in data and inconsistencies in VME closures that have disrupted fishing activities while failing to fully achieve conservation goals.

The advisory council expressed concerns over the reliance on outdated data and methodologies used in ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) assessments, which inform the European Commission's VME Implementing Regulations. These closures restrict bottom fishing activities in designated areas to protect marine habitats but, according to the NWWAC, lack the necessary precision and consistency.

Key Issues with Current VME Closures

The NWWAC pointed to several critical discrepancies in the current VME advice and closures:

Inaccurate Depth Modelling: The VME polygons are based on modelled depth zones (400-800m) rather than accurate bathymetric data. This has resulted in some closures being placed in areas unsupported by scientific evidence.

Outdated Data: Errors identified in ICES advice from 2021 and 2022 remain uncorrected. This data forms the basis of current VME closures, which are now seen as ineffective and unnecessarily disruptive to fishing activities.

Discrepancies Across Regions: Significant differences exist in how data is submitted and processed for regions such as the Celtic Seas, the Bay of Biscay, and the Iberian Coast, leading to uneven implementation of closures.

NWWAC Recommendations

To address these challenges, the NWWAC proposed several measures:

Improved Methodology: ICES should adopt accurate bathymetric data for depth-based VME polygons to ensure closures align with ecological realities.

Updated Regulations: The European Commission should revise its VME Implementing Regulation to reflect the latest scientific advice and correct outdated or erroneous closures.

Socio-Economic Impact Assessments: The NWWAC welcomed the planned socio-economic analysis of VME closures by STECF (Scientific, Technical, and Economic Committee for Fisheries) and called for active stakeholder engagement to ensure balanced outcomes.

Regional Approaches: VME management should consider regional differences and avoid applying uni-

form policies across diverse marine ecosystems.

Ongoing Work and Industry Impact

The NWWAC acknowledged efforts by the European Commission to involve advisory councils in VME-related discussions. However, the council criticised delays in implementing corrections to ICES advice and called for faster retraction and reissuance of erroneous data to minimise disruption to the fishing industry.

"Fishing communities are already facing economic pressures due to regulatory changes and environmental shifts," said NWWAC Chairman Emiel Brouckaert. "It is essential that VME closures are based on robust scientific evidence and are sensitive to the socio-economic realities of the fishing sector."

Future Outlook

The NWWAC emphasised the need for collaboration between stakeholders, scientists, and policymakers to achieve both conservation and economic sustainability. A key upcoming milestone is the STECF Expert Working Group meeting in March 2025, which will evaluate the socio-economic impacts of VMEs and help shape future policies.

By advocating for a balanced approach, the NWWAC aims to ensure that the preservation of marine ecosystems does not come at the expense of sustainable fishing practices or the livelihoods of coastal communities.

UK-EU Fishing Dispute Over Sandeel Ban Enters Arbitration Phase

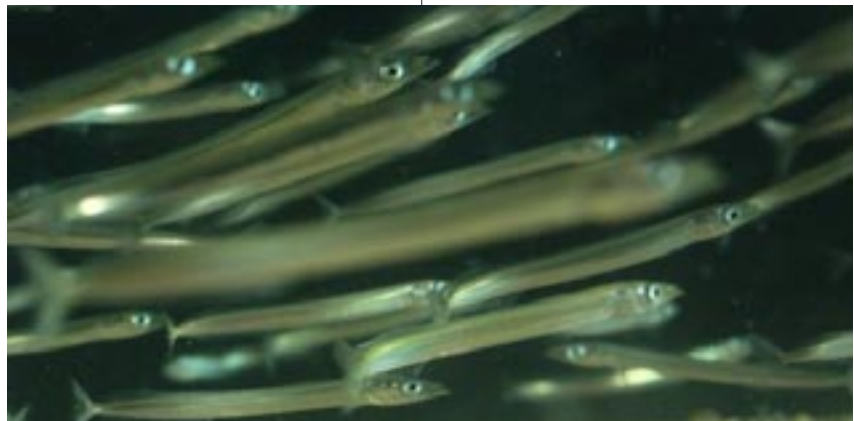
A landmark legal confrontation between the United Kingdom and the European Union took place between 28 and 30 January 2025. The two sides clashed over the UK's ban on sandeel fishing in the first arbitration hearing under the post-Brexit Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). The hearing was conducted at the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague, and a verdict is expected by the end of March. Both parties have until 9 February to submit additional comments, after which the tribunal will prepare its preliminary conclusions. A written report is expected within 30 days of either the hearing or supplementary submissions.

Background of the Dispute

Conservation Versus Economic Interests

The UK government imposed a ban on sandeel fishing in March 2024, citing the species' importance to the North Sea ecosystem. Sandeels serve as a key food source for larger fish like cod and haddock, as well as seabirds such as puffins and kittiwakes, many of which face population declines. UK officials argue that unchecked sandeel fishing threatens biodiversity and marine sustainability.

The EU contends that the ban disproportionately affects European vessels, particularly Danish fishermen, who rely on sandeel stocks for fish oil and animal feed production. EU representatives claim that the restrictions breach the TCA, which guarantees EU vessels access to shared fishing resources in UK waters.



The UK government imposed a ban on sandeel fishing in March 2024

Origins of the Case

After months of deadlocked negotiations, the EU initiated arbitration in October 2024. It argues that the UK's conservation measures are excessive and economically harmful to EU member states, especially Denmark.

Arbitration Details

Structure of the Tribunal

The arbitration tribunal comprised three judges: Dr Penelope Jane Riddings, an expert in international law from New Zealand; Professor H el ene Ruiz Fabri of France, a renowned academic in trade disputes; and Justice David Unterhalter of South Africa, a seasoned adjudicator

in international arbitration.

Timeline and Consequences

The tribunal's binding ruling is due by the end of March 2025. If the UK is found to have breached its obligations, the EU may impose retaliatory measures, such as tariffs on British exports, unless the UK amends its policies.

This arbitration coincides with critical negotiations over new UK-EU fishing quotas, as current agreements expire in June 2025. Analysts suggest the tribunal's decision could significantly impact these discussions, potentially strengthening the EU's stance on resource-sharing obligations.

Broader Context

Environmental and Economic Stakes

Sandeels, though not directly consumed by humans, are vital to the North Sea food chain. Environmental groups have long advocated for a fishing ban to protect declining seabird populations. Organisations like the RSPB have praised the UK's actions, emphasising the need to safeguard puffins and kittiwakes.

However, the fishing industry, particularly in Denmark, has expressed strong opposition. Danish fishermen argue the ban prioritises environmental goals at the expense of their livelihoods.

Testing Post-Brexit Trade Mechanisms

This case serves as the first major test of the TCA's dispute resolution framework. Observers are closely monitoring how the tribunal balances the UK's conservation rights with the EU's access rights under the agreement.

The renewable energy sector is also paying attention, given that seabird conservation is linked to meeting ecological targets for offshore wind farm development.

Next Steps

With the arbitration hearing concluded, the focus now shifts to the tribunal's forthcoming report. Depending on the outcome, this case could set a precedent for future UK-EU cooperation on fisheries, trade, and environmental policy.

EU Handbook Highlights Sustainable Management of Key Fish Species

A newly released handbook by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies provides a comprehensive overview of the fish species most relevant to the European Union's fisheries and aquaculture sectors. With over 900 species landed and around 100 farmed within the EU, this resource underscores the importance of sustainable management and policy alignment.

Key Features of the Handbook

The document highlights:

Biological and Conservation Data: Each species entry includes scientific names, biological characteristics, and habitat preferences.

Fishing Practices: Insights into whether species are wild-caught, farmed, or both.

EU Conservation Measures: Total Allowable Catch (TAC), Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS), and other regulatory frameworks are detailed for each species.

Multilingual Accessibility: Common names are provided in nine EU languages, reflecting the region's linguistic diversity.

Insights into European Fisheries

The handbook categorises species into finfish and shellfish, presenting details like size ranges, habitat types, and fishing methods. It integrates data from EU regulations and global fisheries bodies, offering a nuanced perspective on managing species like cod, herring, mackerel, and shellfish.

Promoting Sustainability

As EU fisheries navigate challenges like overfishing and habitat degradation, this handbook highlights the region's commitment to balancing ecological preservation with economic viability. Fisheries Minister Marianne Sivertsen Næss commented, "This is a step forward in supporting sustainable practices and educating stakeholders on the importance of preserving our marine resources."

United Kingdom and the EU: An Economic Relationship to Be Rebuilt

Tariff and bureaucratic barriers have hit Britain's trade relationship with the European Union hard. In this context, Keir Starmer's Labour government is seeking to strengthen ties with Brussels, although it rejects possible concessions in the field of customs or mobility united kingdom europe european union.

A new start for relations between the United Kingdom and the EU. This is one of the objectives pursued by the new British government headed by Keir Starmer. After defeating the Brexiteers in the elections, the Labour Party intends to moderate the economic damage caused by the divorce from the European Union (which cost it 4% of GDP growth, according to estimates). The interest is mutual: Starmer has already been invited to an informal summit of EU leaders in February (the first of its kind for a British leader since leaving the EU). While the main topic of the meeting will be security and possible responses to the new US government, experts anticipate that it may be a key opportunity for the British to rebuild bridges with their main trading partner.

Brexit was a colossal blow to what was once one of the strongest and most dynamic economies in the EU. Analysts believe that, although the British have managed to recover in certain aspects, their former shine is no longer present. "How would we rate the UK economy in recent years? It is not too controversial to say that it has been a lot like an office Christmas party buffet: grey and unappetising. It has certainly done its job, but it has lacked flavour," says Alex Everett, investment director at ABRDN.

In the third quarter of 2024, British

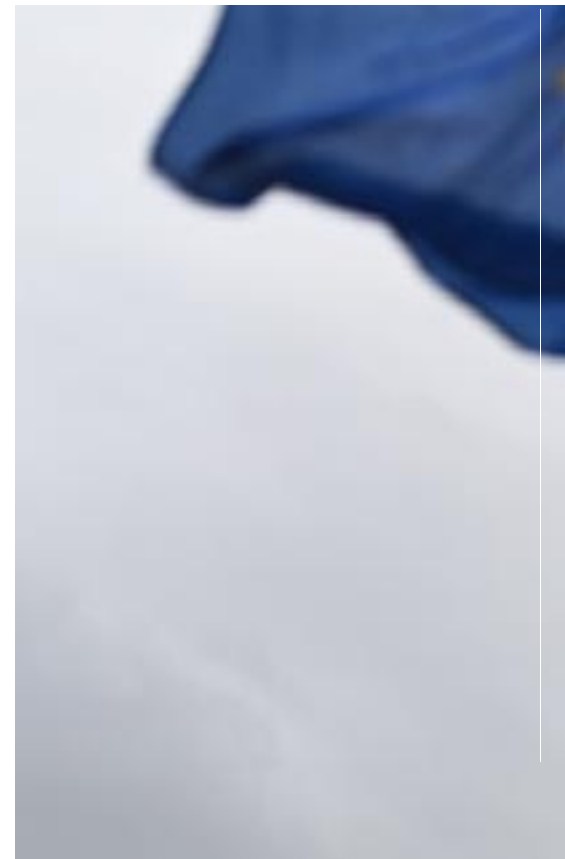
growth was 2.9% (below the 4.6% average for the Eurozone). The OECD projects that in 2025 it will grow by 1.7%, the IMF by 1.5% and Goldman Sachs by 1.2%. For this reason, improving the commercial relationship with the EU becomes crucial to avoid stagnation.

In this context, Everett considers that, in its first budget, the Starmer government added some "relatively bold flavours" to the economic recipe. "It included increases in debt, spending and taxes, with a firm commitment to fiscal prudence. With all these ingredients, however, we and the market are not entirely sure how the final dish will taste," says the ABRDN analyst.

Faced with this situation, various political leaders have requested greater integration with the EU to boost the economy, including the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan. Some experts estimate that the capital lost some 40,000 financial professionals due to Brexit, with Ireland being the main beneficiary, along with Milan, Paris and Amsterdam.

Tariffs and Bureaucracy

The British acknowledge that part of the economic cost is due to the new bureaucratic barriers. Although there is a Trade and Cooperation Agree-



Tariff and bureaucratic barriers have hit Bri

In the third quarter of 2024, British growth was 2.9% (below the 4.6% average for the Eurozone)

ment (TCA) with the EU, which came into force in 2021 to avoid tariffs, exporters must complete a series of procedures to prove that their products comply with the rules of origin and that they do not come from third countries in order to benefit. This process has been described by the British government as "onerous", arguing that many companies prefer to pay the tariffs than invest time in carrying out the procedures.

"The TCA did not include tariffs, but it did include trade barriers, such as customs controls and procedures, rules of origin requirements, excise taxes, sanitary and phytosanitary



Britain's trade relationship with the European Union hard.



controls on the movement of animals and plants, and the need for exporters to demonstrate that their products comply with regulations in their destination market," says a recently published study by the London School of Economics, which details that small businesses

have been hardest hit.

Similarly, a recent study by Aston Business School (ABS) reveals sharp declines in UK exports (27%) and imports (32%) with the EU between 2021 and 2023. "The contraction in trade is attributed to reductions in both the variety of goods exported [33%] and the intensive margin of imports [28%]," the research states.

In 2023, UK exports of goods and services amounted to around €1.039 trillion, and imports to around €1.057 trillion, according to official figures. The EU accounted for 41% of British exports of goods and services and 51% of imports in the same year. The trade deficit with the EU was around €114.66 billion in 2023, according to official British government figures.

The distribution of fishing quotas

More indications of the UK's possible position vis-à-vis the EU will probably be seen in the coming months. For the moment, one of the most recent developments in the relationship has been the approval in December of an agreement with the UK on fishing opportunities of more than "80 total allowable catches" (maximum amount of catches in a region) for stocks jointly managed by the EU and the UK under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and the UK. "The agreement guarantees EU fishermen fishing rights for 2025 in the Atlantic and the North Sea, and its conclusion in a timely manner will ensure stability and security for EU fishermen and for the sector," said official sources in Brussels. This was one of the pending Brexit issues that most interested the British. "As the US becomes increasingly isolationist, focusing on all-out competition with China and abandoning multilateralism and free trade in favour of a more protectionist doctrine, partnering with the EU will feel much more natural for the UK. Closer values aside, Britain's geographic reality makes moving closer to the EU and its members less of an option than a strategic imperative, even if it risks provoking Trump's wrath," said Anand Sundar, a researcher at the ECFR think-tank in a recent analysis.

Marine Strategy

The UK Government has unveiled its Marine Strategy Part Three: 2025 Programme of Measures, outlining a series of initiatives aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability of commercial fisheries and the protection of cetaceans in British waters.

The updated programme is part of the UK's commitment to achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) in its seas, balancing marine conservation with economic activities such as fishing. The measures include strengthened fisheries management frameworks, bycatch reduction initiatives, and new conservation strategies for marine mammals.

Fisheries: Progress Made, But Challenges Remain

The UK's commercial fish and shellfish sector has seen notable improvements since the 2015 Marine Strategy, with several stocks recovering from overfishing. However, GES has not yet been fully achieved, with challenges persisting due to international fishing agreements, climate change, and stock management complexities.

Key measures outlined in the strategy include:

- Implementation of the Fisheries Act 2020 – A legal framework ensuring fish stocks are managed at or below Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY).
- Expansion of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)
 - Designed to restore and maintain sustainable fish stocks, including non-quota species such as crabs, lobsters, and scallops.

The updated programme is part of the UK's commitment to achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) in its sea

• Bycatch Reduction Initiatives

– The Clean Catch UK Bycatch Mitigation Hub will help fishers adopt measures to prevent incidental capture of sensitive species, including dolphins and seabirds.

• Strengthened Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs)

– These will contribute to fish stock recovery by restricting harmful fishing activities in designated zones.

Despite these measures, the government acknowledges the need for international cooperation, particularly for shared fish stocks, and has applied exceptions under the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010, citing factors outside UK control.

Cetacean Conservation: Tackling Bycatch and Noise Pollution

The strategy also emphasises the protection of cetaceans, such as dolphins and porpoises, which are impacted by fishing operations, noise pollution, and climate change. While the conservation status of UK cetaceans remains stable, the government has introduced 17 new measures to enhance protections, including:

UK Cetacean Conservation Strategy – A framework to address key threats such as bycatch, entanglement, cumulative noise impacts, and pollution.

Marine Wildlife Bycatch Mitigation Initiative – Focused on reducing incidental catches of dolphins and porpoises through improved fishing gear and real-time monitoring.

Expansion of protected areas – Consideration of additional site-based protections for at-risk species, particularly bottlenose dolphins.

Research into climate change impacts – Studying how warming seas affect prey availability and cetacean distribution.

Industry and Conservation Groups React

Fishing industry representatives have broadly welcomed the strategy's commitment to science-based fisheries management but warn that further restrictions could negatively impact coastal communities. Conservationists, meanwhile, have cautiously praised the cetacean protection measures, though some argue for stronger regulations on industrial fishing fleets to prevent bycatch.

Looking Ahead

The 2025 Marine Strategy Programme marks an important step in balancing environmental sustainability with economic viability. With the UK's seas playing a crucial role in biodiversity and food security, the coming years will be pivotal in ensuring that both fisheries and marine mammals thrive in a changing climate.

The success of these measures will depend on effective enforcement, scientific monitoring, and international cooperation to safeguard marine ecosystems for future generations.

Europeche and ETF Demand Action to Secure Fishers' Future

Europeche and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) have called for urgent action to secure the future of Europe's fishing industry. At the "Fishers of the Future" conference, Cor Blonk, Chair of the EU Social Dialogue Committee for Sea Fisheries, highlighted the essential role fishers play in Europe's food security and the socio-economic stability of coastal communities.

Speaking at the conference, which examined the future of fishers in society up to 2050, Blonk stressed the need for robust policies to ensure the fishing industry can continue to provide quality, safe jobs. He called for coordinated action to address economic, environmental, and regulatory challenges that threaten the industry's sustainability and appeal to younger generations.

"The future of fishers starts today," Blonk said. "Sustainability must go beyond environmental concerns to include the welfare and profitability of fishers themselves. Fishers play a vital role in securing healthy, nutritious food, and their contributions deserve recognition and appreciation."

The conference was opened by Kostas Kadis, the new EU Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans, who emphasised the sector's integral role in delivering healthy food to European citizens. Kadis highlighted that the industry faces significant challenges, including labour shortages, an ageing workforce, and a persistent gender gap. He called for open dialogue between fishers



Europeche and the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) have called for urgent action to secure the future of Europe's fishing industry

and policymakers to develop strategies that ensure the industry's competitiveness, resilience, and sustainability.

Blonk echoed these concerns, noting that rising operational costs, competition from unsustainable imports, and excessive bureaucracy are further compounding the difficulties faced by fishers. He pointed out that fleet modernisation offers a pathway forward, but restrictive EU regulations, including outdated capacity definitions, are slowing progress by preventing necessary upgrades for greener technologies and better crew accommodations.

Blonk praised the industry's environmental achievements, such as a 52% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, but he warned that much work remains to be done. Safety remains a critical concern, with inconsistent training standards across

Member States jeopardising the well-being of crews. Blonk also called for regulatory simplifications to enable fishers to compete effectively in a global market.

"Times are challenging, but we remain optimistic. What we need is a policy framework that allows fishers and vessel owners to do what they do best: deliver healthy seafood to our tables," he said. "We cannot stop the future, but we can influence it—together."

Europeche and ETF presented several recommendations to support the sector, including revising fleet renewal rules, establishing consistent safety standards, investing in workforce development, and reducing regulatory burdens. The social dimension of fisheries policies must also be prioritised, ensuring fair working conditions and equitable opportunities for all.

Brussels Funded Environmentalists to Campaign for Its Green Plans

A Dutch daily has revealed that a group of NGOs received €700,000 to campaign for the Nature Restoration Act. According to a report by De Telegraaf, the European Commission has been providing subsidies to various environmental groups on the condition that they support the green initiatives of Brussels and former European Commissioner Frans Timmermans. This has raised questions about the authenticity of the environmental NGOs' support for EU climate proposals.

The funds originated from a budget allocated for climate and environmental subsidies granted to environmental groups. However, according to documents obtained by De Telegraaf, several beneficiaries received the subsidies on the condition that they campaign for Brussels' and Timmermans' green initiatives, influencing debates on agriculture and sustainability.

One example cited by the Dutch daily is the European Environment Bureau (EEB), an organisation that encompasses more than 150 citizen environmental groups across the EU, including Friends of the Earth Netherlands (Milieudefensie) and the Society for the Preservation of Nature Monuments (Natuurmonumenten).

The grant contract with this group includes specific instructions to provide at least 16 examples of how its efforts have led to more ambitious green legislation in the European Parliament.

The EEB, which is reported to have received €700,000, promoted Timmermans' Nature Restoration Act and was tasked with steering



Frans Timmermans, como vicepresidente Ejecutivo de la Comisión Europea para el Pacto Europeo Verde promovió la Ley de Restauración de la Naturaleza.

A Dutch daily reveals that a group of NGOs received 700,000 euros to campaign for the Nature Restoration Act

the agricultural debate towards a greener direction, according to the contract in De Telegraaf's possession.

Dutch MEP Dirk Gotink of the centre-right NSC party is investigating, alongside colleagues from the budget control

committee, the subsidy contracts awarded to environmental groups over the past five years. He claims that "there were even lists of lobby groups with names of politicians who should be contacted."

"Of course, they have the right to lobby. My target is the European Commission. This seems to be a highly organised cooperation between a green coalition led by Timmermans and a left-wing majority in the European Parliament," Gotink stated, questioning whether this is "an isolated case or a widespread practice" in Brussels that could also apply to other issues.

Timmermans returned to Dutch politics more than a year ago, resigning from his post at the European Commission to lead a coalition of two left-wing parties, the Greens GroenLinks and the Social Democrats PvdA. However, he failed to defeat the radical right of Geert Wilders and is now the leader of the largest opposition party to the coalition government, of which NSC is a member.

The EEB defended its position to De Telegraaf, stating that "a flourishing democracy requires resources that allow the voice of citizens to reach decision-makers" and that "unlike well-resourced actors such as foreign governments and multinationals, European citizens and their civil society organisations often do not have sufficient means, and EU support is necessary to ensure a level playing field."

The European Union channels its financial support to the fisheries sector and marine conservation mainly



Dutch MEP Dirk Gotink of the centre-right NSC party is investigating, the subsidy contracts

through the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFF). For the period 2021-2027, the EMFF has a budget of approximately €6.108 billion.

This fund is intended to promote sus-

tainable fisheries and the conservation of aquatic biological resources. Its objectives include support for innovation in fisheries, advisory services, partnerships between researchers and fishermen, promotion of human capital and social dialogue, income diversification, improvement of fishermen's working conditions, and the protection of biodiversity and marine ecosystems.

However, there is no specific data available on the exact volume of aid that the EU grants exclusively to fisheries conservation associations and marine environmental organisations. The allocation of funds varies according to the programmes and projects submitted by these organisations in each funding period.

Recent reports have noted that the European Commission has awarded subsidies to various environmental groups on the condition that they back Brussels' environmental policies and climate proposals.

Piracy on the High Seas Fell Last Year, but the Number of Hostages Rose

The annual report on piracy and armed robbery on the high seas, compiled by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), recorded 116 incidents against ships in 2024, a slight reduction from the 120 incidents reported in 2023 and the 115 in 2022. The figures indicate that 94 ships were boarded, 13 faced attempted attacks, six ships were hijacked, and three were fired upon.

Although the number of incidents reported in 2024 remains similar to those in the previous two years, the IMB urges caution in promoting crew safety, given that the number of crew members taken hostage or kidnapped increased throughout 2024.



Safety on a boat

A total of 126 people were taken hostage, compared to 73 in 2023 and 41 in 2022. Twelve crew members were reported kidnapped, down

slightly from 14 in 2023 but up from two in 2022. Additionally, 12 crew members were threatened, and one was injured in 2024.

The use of weapons has also continued to rise. In 2024, 26 firearm incidents were reported, compared to 15 in 2023. Knives were involved in 39 incidents in 2024, compared to 42 in the previous year.

This trend highlights the ongoing challenges faced by maritime security and the need for continued vigilance in safeguarding shipping routes and crew members.

NWWAC and PelAC Urge Inclusion in Seafood/Offshore Renewable Energy Group

The North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) and Pelagic Advisory Council (PelAC) have renewed their call to join Ireland's Seafood/Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Group, citing the importance of fisheries stakeholders being actively involved in discussions about offshore energy developments in Irish waters.

In a letter dated 10 January 2025 to Mr. Rory O'Leary, Principal Officer of Ireland's Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC), the councils highlighted their shared concerns regarding the impacts of offshore wind energy projects on fisheries. The NWWAC and PelAC represent a wide array of international stakeholders with fishing rights within Ireland's 6–12 nautical mile zone and its exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

A Call for Greater Inclusion

The letter stressed that despite assurances given in 2024, the councils' request for formal inclusion in the Seafood/ORE Group remains blocked. Both organisations underscored the value they bring to the table:

The councils argue that the exclusion of fisheries stakeholders could lead to decisions that undermine sustainable fishing practices and harm communities dependent on the sector

The councils have long been vocal about the potential disruptions caused by offshore wind farms and seismic activities, particularly in areas critical to fisheries

"The connection to the Advisory Councils will support the stakeholder involvement on a much wider basis without any additional pressure on the Department itself," they wrote.

The councils also detailed their extensive work on offshore energy, including policy advice to the European Commission and a 2022 workshop on seismic and wind energy impacts on fisheries. They emphasised that their participation would foster constructive dialogue between the offshore renewable energy sector and fisheries representatives, ensuring balanced and informed decision-making.

Previous Engagement and Promises

In April 2024, NWWAC Executive Secretary Mo Mathies attended a Seafood/ORE Group meeting in Galway to outline the councils' remit and expertise. At that meeting, a senior DECC representative reportedly indicated support for the councils' inclusion. However, despite apparent consensus among existing members by late 2024, the councils' integration into the group has yet to materialise.

Impacts of Offshore Energy on Fisheries

The councils have long been vocal about the potential disruptions caused by offshore wind farms and seismic activities, particularly in areas critical to fisheries. "Our members are naturally concerned with offshore wind energy developments in this area and their potential impacts on fisheries," the letter states.

A Growing Urgency

As offshore renewable energy projects accelerate, the councils argue that the exclusion of fisheries stakeholders could lead to decisions that undermine sustainable fishing practices and harm communities dependent on the sector. Their participation in the Seafood/ORE Group, they say, would ensure that fisheries' perspectives are adequately considered.

The NWWAC and PelAC have asked the DECC to respond promptly to their renewed request, emphasising the need for a collaborative and transparent approach to Ireland's offshore energy planning.

The NWWAC and PelAC have asked the DECC to respond promptly to their renewed request, emphasising the need for a collaborative and transparent approach to Ireland's offshore energy planning.

Conclusion

With the stakes high for both Ireland's fishing industry and its renewable energy ambitions, the councils' plea for inclusion represents a critical moment in fostering harmony between two vital sectors. Their expertise and advocacy, they argue, could help balance ecological, economic, and energy goals for the benefit of all stakeholders. 🌊

NWWAC Highlights Persistent Choke Risks in North Western Waters Despite Mitigation Efforts

The North Western Waters Advisory Council (NWWAC) has released its 2025 advice on addressing choke risks, a longstanding challenge under the EU's Landing Obligation (LO). Despite progress through exemptions and technical measures, the report warns that many fisheries in the North Western Waters (NWW) region still face significant risks that threaten their viability.

Choke Risks: A Continuing Challenge

The Landing Obligation, a key component of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), mandates that all catches of regulated species must be landed, effectively prohibiting discards. While intended to promote sustainability, it has created significant challenges for mixed fisheries, where unavoidable bycatch of non-target species with strict quotas can lead to early closure of fishing activities—a situation known as a "choke."

The NWWAC states:

"Even with the current measures in the 2024-2027 Discard Plan, choke risks remain for many stocks, threatening early closure of multiple fisheries."

Key Stocks at High Risk

The report identifies several stocks in the Celtic Sea, West of Scotland, and Irish Sea as high-risk choke species. For instance:

Haddock (Celtic Sea): A 44% re-

The report identifies several stocks in the Celtic Sea, West of Scotland, and Irish Sea as high-risk choke species

duction in scientific advice has resulted in a 23% cut to the Total Allowable Catch (TAC), creating economic challenges for fishers.

Cod (West of Scotland): The TAC was reduced by 20% due to concerns over depleted sub-stocks, with NWWAC calling for stock-specific management to avoid overly broad restrictions.

Whiting (Irish Sea): Despite significant efforts to improve selectivity, bycatch remains high, further exacerbating choke risks.

Additionally, the council noted anomalies in scientific assessments, with fishers observing higher abundance of some stocks at sea than reflected in official data. This disconnect raises concerns about the accuracy of quotas and assessments.

Proposed Solutions

The NWWAC recommends a multifaceted approach to reduce choke risks:

Enhanced Data Collection: Improved monitoring and assessment of stocks, including recruitment and bycatch levels, to ensure quotas reflect reality.

Increased Flexibility: Adjustments to TACs to account for unavoidable bycatch, particularly for zero-catch advice stocks.

Technical Measures: Continued development of selective fishing gear to avoid non-target species and reduce discards.

Socio-Economic Support: Financial assistance for fishers to adapt to new measures and mitigate economic impacts.

Climate Change and Ecosystem Changes

The report also highlights the growing impact of climate change on fish distributions and recruitment, noting that these shifts could create new choke risks or exacerbate existing ones. The NWWAC calls for an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management to address these changes effectively.

Pelagic Bycatch and Offshore Energy Impacts

The council raised concerns about bycatch of pelagic species in demersal fisheries and the potential impacts of offshore renewable energy (ORE) developments on fisheries. In the Irish Sea, anecdotal evidence suggests that Nephrops catches have significantly decreased after ORE survey activities, prompting the NWWAC to recommend a full assessment of these impacts.

Collaboration and Future Strategy

The NWWAC emphasises the importance of collaboration between the EU, the UK, and stakeholders to address choke risks effectively.

New Mapping Project Enhances Fishing Data for Marine Planning

Fishermen's Activities Mapped to Protect Industry Interests Amid Offshore Developments



El.

Fishermen's Activities Mapped to Protect Industry Interests Amid Offshore Developments

A groundbreaking participatory mapping project by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) has provided critical data on fishing activities by small vessels under 12 metres, supporting marine spatial planning (MSP) for Ireland's south coast designated maritime area plan (SC-DMAP).

The study, conducted in 2024, gathered data from 78 vessel owners and covered 244 fishing activities, equating to 22,700 fishing days. Lobster, crab, and shrimp fisheries dominated, accounting for 78% of total fishing days.

Bridging Data Gaps

Small vessels often operate without vessel monitoring systems

(VMS), creating gaps in spatial fishing data. This new approach used innovative participatory mapping techniques, including a marine spray-can application and vessel chart plotters, enabling real-time validation of fishing locations.

Dr Elizabeth Tray of BIM explained: "This project ensures that small vessel operators can contribute vital information for planning processes that directly impact their livelihoods."

Key Findings

Fishing Hotspots: Most activity occurred in Maritime Area A, while no fishing was recorded in Area D.

Seasonal Patterns: Lobster fishing peaked in summer, crab in autumn, and shrimp during winter.

Validation: A high average validation score (81%) confirmed the accuracy of the data.

Lobster, crab, and shrimp fisheries dominated, accounting for 78% of total fishing days

Industry Collaboration

The Southeast Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum (SERIFF) supported the project, which highlights the importance of ongoing collaboration between fishermen, policymakers, and developers as Ireland advances its offshore wind and marine conservation goals.

A Model for the Future

BIM plans to refine the method, exploring confidentiality agreements to privately share detailed maps with stakeholders. With over 70% of Ireland's small vessels under 9 metres exempt from VMS requirements until 2029, this project provides a critical tool for balancing industry and environmental needs.

Shetland Fishermen See Promising Signs for Young Fish Stocks

Survey Finds Strong Recruitment for Future Whitefish Stocks

Hopes are high for the future of Shetland's whitefish stocks as a recent survey detected an abundance of young fish.

While catch rates for mature haddock, cod, and whiting were at the lower end compared to recent years—highlighting the cyclical nature of fish populations—juvenile fish were found in greater numbers than previously observed.

These findings were revealed by the 2024 Shetland Inshore Fish Survey (SIFS), an independent study conducted by marine scientists from UHI Shetland.

The average catch rates for most of the main commercial gadoids, i.e., haddock, cod, and whiting, were at the lower end of observed catch rates over the survey time series

Key Survey Insights

The SIFS, conducted annually since 2011 using UHI Shetland's research vessel *Atlantia II* (LK 502), assesses the distribution, abundance, and population structure of fish species in local waters. The 2024 survey was carried out across 52 pre-defined locations, including 25 shallow areas identified as potential nursery grounds within 12 nautical miles of Shetland.

Dr Shaun Fraser, Senior Fisheries Scientist at UHI Shetland, explained:

"The average catch rates for most of the main commercial gadoids, i.e., haddock, cod, and whiting, were at the lower end of observed catch rates over the survey time series.

"However, more positively, in all cases there was more evidence of a strong age-0 year-class in 2024 than in 2023."

He added: "While the future survival rates of undersize fish are uncertain, past results suggest further strong recruitment to the local fishery for some gadoid species. High abundances in larger length classes may again be observed in future surveys."

Notable Trends

The survey recorded high catch rates of spurdog, John Dory, and horse mackerel. Additionally, scaldfish and imperial scaldfish—flatfish species more commonly found further south—were documented for the first time. Squid catch rates remained strong in specific nearshore areas, following record levels in 2023.

Industry Response

Daniel Lawson, Executive Officer of the Shetland Fishermen's Association, welcomed the findings:

"These results are encouraging, particularly for nursery grounds, which are vital to Shetland's fisheries ecosystem.

"However, they underline the importance of protecting nursery and spawning areas from inshore developments, especially as several such projects are in the planning stage."

Lawson also emphasised the value of long-term survey work, stating:

"Data from these surveys highlights the cyclical nature of fish stocks, helping to inform decision-making and avoid knee-jerk policies that create instability for fishermen.

"The research conducted by UHI Shetland, using the *Atlantia II*, is critical to an evidence-based approach to fisheries management, which stands in stark contrast to the misplaced ideology driving many environmental NGOs."

Scottish Government Outlines Measures to Tackle Ghost Fishing in 2025



Mark Ruskell of MSP



Gillian Martin, Scotland's Minister

The Scottish Government has reaffirmed its commitment to tackling "ghost fishing," a phenomenon caused by abandoned, lost, or discarded fishing gear that poses a significant threat to marine environments. Responding to a parliamentary question from Mark Ruskell, MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife, Gillian Martin, Scotland's Minister for Environment, highlighted ongoing and planned measures to mitigate the issue.

Martin described ghost fishing as a shared global problem exacerbated by adverse weather, gear failure, and snagging. While acknowledging fishers' efforts to recover lost gear, she emphasised that marine litter from fishing remains a priority for both Scotland's national policies and international collaboration.

The Scottish Government is implementing a multi-faceted approach to reduce the impact of ghost fishing and improve waste management in the fishing sector. Marine Directorate Coastal Offices maintain a mechanism for reporting lost gear to facilitate recovery efforts among fishers. The Gear Marking (Scotland)

The Scottish Government is implementing a multi-faceted approach to reduce the impact of ghost fishing and improve waste management in the fishing sector

Order 2020 requires fishing vessels to deploy buoys marked with their name and registration number, aiding in the identification and retrieval of lost gear. Building on the 2018 Best Practice Guidance for Marking Static Fishing Gear, the government is encouraging voluntary codes of conduct through Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups to minimise gear conflicts.

To further reduce risks, the government will promote the adoption of the European standard for circular design of fishing and aquaculture gear, published in late 2024. This initiative aims to reduce the risk of gear loss while supporting the recycling of end-of-life equipment.

Martin highlighted the importance of education and collaboration within the industry. Fishers' professional training modules will continue to address plastic pollution and environmental impacts, reinforcing responsible practices. Additionally, the government is supporting KIMO's Fishing for Litter programme, which operates in 32 Scottish harbours to facilitate the collection of passively caught waste, including fishing gear.

The intentional disposal of fishing gear at sea remains a legal offence under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). Martin reiterated Scotland's commitment to enforcing these regulations in partnership with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), ensuring intelligence on intentional dumping is reported and acted upon. She also announced plans to use recent research to inform future policies aimed at improving fleets' waste management and supporting Scotland's circular economy.

The Scottish Government's approach to ghost fishing reflects a balance of enforcement, innovation, and international cooperation. Through its Marine Litter Strategy,

"The measures we have in place demonstrate our commitment to tackling ghost fishing,"

participation in the Oslo Paris Convention (OSPAR), and the Global Ghost Gear Initiative, Scotland aims to reduce the environmental impacts of lost fishing gear and support sustainable fishing practices.

"The measures we have in place demonstrate our commitment to tackling ghost fishing," Martin said, adding that the government will continue to work with industry stakeholders to ensure marine ecosystems and fishers alike benefit from these initiatives.

Scottish Government to Publish Update on Fisheries Management Strategy Progress

The Scottish Government has announced plans to publish an updated Future Fisheries Management Delivery Plan in the coming months. The announcement follows a parliamentary question lodged by Maurice Golden, MSP for North East Scotland and member of the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party, seeking clarity on progress made towards Scotland's Fisheries Management Strategy 2020-2030 Delivery Plan.

Long-Term Strategy for Stability and Sustainability

In response, Mairi Gougeon, Scotland's Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, stated that the Fisheries Management Strategy is a ten-year initiative, with most actions designed for continuous delivery. "The progress being made with these actions

will help ensure a stable context for fishing businesses to operate within," Gougeon remarked.

The Fisheries Management Strategy 2020-2030 outlines 12 key actions aimed at achieving sustainable fisheries, supporting the fishing industry, and protecting marine ecosystems. However, specific details on achievements to date remain forthcoming, with the upcoming update expected to provide comprehensive insights into each action's progress.

Industry Stability and Future Planning

The ten-year strategy is central to ensuring that Scotland's fishing industry operates within a stable and sustainable framework. By continuously adapting and implementing key actions, the Scottish Go-

vernment aims to balance economic growth with environmental stewardship, a critical aspect of the Future Fisheries Management Delivery Plan.

Commitment to Transparency

The forthcoming update will offer the fishing industry and stakeholders a clearer understanding of the government's progress and future plans. This transparency is expected to support long-term planning for fishing businesses and build trust within the sector.

The delivery plan's publication will also enable ongoing dialogue between the government and industry stakeholders, ensuring that the strategy remains responsive to the challenges and opportunities facing Scotland's fisheries.



The French and Basque Country fleet has imposed a ban to protect cetaceans

The ban on fishing for species in the Bay of Biscay has had its first day of implementation, facing strong opposition from the fishing sector in the Cantabrian Sea and France. The Ondarroa Producers' Organisation, integrated in Cepesca, regrets the imposition of a ban in the Bay of Biscay to protect cetaceans that vessels over 8 metres in length must carry out between 22 January and 20 February 2025, to avoid accidental catches of dolphins and other small cetaceans, in line with the recommendation of Spain and three other Member State.

Fishermen in northern Spain and France oppose the ban on cetaceans

The Basque shipowners claim that they have "equipped themselves with all the cetacean deterrent equipment and that mortality has been minimal in the last year, making this ban unjustifiable". For their part, coastal fishermen will have to start fishing for mackerel at the beginning of March.

According to Mikel Ortiz, from the OPPAO of Ondarroa, "it is regrettable that once again the three objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy have been breached, which must pursue sustainability under the three axes: environmental, social and economic. With this decision, the aim is only to comply with the first axis, but the other two are forgotten; that is to say, it is decided, says Ortiz, to bet only on defending cetaceans, but


who protects the fishermen? Thus, Europe is betting on continuing to import fish from Asia and intends to eliminate its fishing fleet; this is the interpretation of the sector in the face of such a regrettable drift."

On the other hand, for Ortiz, "we cannot speak of aid that the Administrations will grant but of compensatory compensation, when a company is prevented from carrying out its work for a month. The compensation must compensate for the losses and not help with 30 or 40% of the lost income." But ultimately, for the Basque shipowners "what is needed is for Europe to decide whether it wants to be self-sufficient in the production of its food, and to invest in its pri-

mary sector, or to depend on Asia to feed us."

Strong opposition from France

The French fishing sector, represented by the National Committee for Maritime Fishing and Marine Agriculture (CNPMM), respects the ban but maintains its opposition on the substance. "Judicial closures will never provide solutions for the fishing industry in the Bay of Biscay." Fishermen reiterate that their fishing "is one of the most selective in the world and plays an essential role in the

economic and social structuring of coastal territories. If we have experienced a "meteorological" recovery that has made it possible to partly compensate for the start of the year, the sector has been further weakened because lost customers cannot be found again at the snap of a finger. This result is also the result of risk-taking by shipowners who had to advance costs and salaries and, for some, leave in bad weather as soon as they reopened. In addition, the ban completely weakens the sector." 

EESC Calls for an End to Unsustainable Practices in Third Countries

The plenary session of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) has approved an opinion presented by Javier Garat, rapporteur and Secretary General of Cepesca, with Daniel Voces, Director General of Européche, as advisor, on the proposal to amend Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012. The amendment seeks to strengthen measures against unsustainable fishing practices by countries outside the European Union. The EESC has issued a key opinion supporting this amendment, which aims to ensure the sustainability of shared fish stocks, protect marine ecosystems, and safeguard the interests of European fishing communities.

The opinion calls for the geographical extension of these measures, requesting that the

70% of fishery products consumed in Europe come from third countries

revised rules not be limited to the North-East Atlantic but also include Mediterranean waters and international areas. This broad approach aims to ensure that all unsustainable practices are effectively addressed.

It also proposes stricter tools to sanction unfair practices through import bans and other restrictive measures, always adhering to the guidelines of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). These tools are intended to promote responsible fishing in both European and international waters. Furthermore, the opinion highlights the need to strengthen coherence between fisheries policies, including Regulation (EC) No

1005/2008, which combats illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. It is also recommended that the relevant advisory councils be informed immediately about the identification of countries permitting unsustainable fishing, ensuring greater participation from stakeholders.

The opinion stresses that this proposal comes at a crucial time, with European fishing interests under threat from the actions of certain non-EU countries. In particular, Norway is cited for its unilateral management of resources such as cod and mackerel, which has created significant tensions. The Committee urges the EU to explore strategic alliances with countries such as Iceland and to link fisheries management to access to the EU market as a pressure tool to ensure compliance with international standards.

Key Measures Proposed

Specific measures include legislative amendments requiring third countries to adopt effective control and enforcement measures to ensure the conservation of shared fish stocks. The opinion also calls for the inclusion of clear examples of discriminatory actions, such as the restrictions imposed by Norway on EU fleets while granting benefits to its own vessels.

With 70% of fishery products consumed in the EU originating from third countries, these measures are also designed to protect the EU market from fishery products obtained through unsustainable practices. Implementing these measures will not only safeguard marine ecosystems but also promote fairer and more balanced trade.

Modernising Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012

Regulation (EU) No 1026/2012 was initially adopted to ensure the conservation of shared fish stocks and to protect EU fishing rights from actions by third countries. However, the increasing aggressiveness of some nations has highlighted the need to review and strengthen this legal framework. In particular, the Regulation has been instrumental in combating overfishing and the irresponsible exploitation of marine resources.

The current proposal seeks to modernise the Regulation and adapt it to current challenges, aligning it with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 14 (Life Below Water) and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

With 70% of fishery products consumed in the EU sourced from third countries, the stakes are high, making this proposal a critical step towards sustainability and fairness in the global fishing industry.

Vigo Bets on an Electric Boat with a Hydrogen Fuel Cell

A European consortium led by ARVI has received €2.2 million to launch a project with alternative propulsion. ARVI has acquired a boat in the Mediterranean for its transformation and testing. The vessel, named Julia Pico and acquired for the HY2Fish project, will remain in Vigo.

The European Commission has made a clear commitment in its roadmap to achieving the energy transition of the fishing fleet. It aims to reduce pollution and, ultimately, bring about a complete shift to zero-emission boats. With this goal in mind, Brussels launched a tender in the first quarter of last year to find a consortium capable of converting a diesel-powered boat into a "demonstrator" equipped with "alternative propulsion technologies." The city of Vigo has been chosen to carry out the project.

A consortium led by the Vigo Shipowners' Cooperative (ARVI), which includes the Port Authority and members from eight countries, will develop the HY2Fish project. The project has been allocated €2.2 million, and the consortium has already identified and purchased a vessel in the Mediterranean. The aim is to equip it with battery propulsion and hydrogen fuel cells.

Testing New Technologies

The initiative launched by Cinea (Executive Agency for Climate, Infrastructure and Environment) seeks to promote the creation of a "pilot project" to study "the viability of the chosen technologies." To date, no viable or mature alternative exists for the fishing sector, which faces challenges such as limited space on vessels and restrictions on increasing tonnage due to stringent regulations and a lack of funding for fleet renewal.

In this tender, which closed on 11 June, ARVI won with its HY2Fish proposal, of-



ARVI has acquired a boat in the Mediterranean for its transformation and testing

icially titled "Zero-emission demonstration fishing vessel powered by a hybrid hydrogen fuel cell and battery system."

To execute the plan, the consortium is finalising the purchase of a small vessel in the Mediterranean that meets the project's criteria—a ship measuring between 12 and 24 metres. This vessel, the Julia Pico, is a small-scale fishing boat based in Gandía. It measures 12.6 metres in length and was built in fibreglass in 1997.


Technical Details

The Julia Pico will be equipped with a propulsion system based on an electric motor connected to the existing shaft line, supplied by Wankel (Denmark), along with a 50 kW hydrogen generator serving as the main engine driver. This generator will be complemented by 7 kW hydrogen fuel cells developed by Cynergy (Italy). In addition, a 25 kWh battery pack and flexible solar panels up to 15 m², developed by Nexthorizon (France) and Regbes (Netherlands), will be key components in the system's electrical integration, ensuring the necessary power supply.

To store hydrogen, the Spanish technological institute Aimplas and the Greek firm B&T Composites will design low-pressure tanks and solid adsorbers. They will also install ventilation and gas detection systems to ensure onboard safety. A recyclable thermoplastic structure will also be incorporated.

The Port Authority of Vigo will contribute by providing its hydrogen station and assisting in tests. Furthermore, the RISE research institute (Sweden), Klaipedos University (Lithuania), and the company Inotesa (Lithuania) are participating in the project, which also has RINA certification.

The HY2Fish project represents a significant step towards zero-emission fishing fleets, with Vigo positioned at the forefront of this innovative transition.

The technological institute Aimplas and the Greek firm B&T Composites will work on the design of a system of low-pressure tanks and solid adsorbers, as well as installing ventilation and gas detection systems to ensure safety on board. A thermoplastic recyclable structure will also be incorporated. 

EFCA Calls for Overhaul of Fishery Weighing Practices in EU Member States

The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) has released a detailed report addressing inconsistencies in fishery weighing practices across the European Union. The analysis, commissioned by the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), highlights critical deficiencies in current systems and proposes reforms to ensure accuracy, transparency, and compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

The 33-month study involved consultations with Member States, including 15 on-site visits, 10 bilateral meetings, and five workshops. EFCA's findings emphasise the need for harmonised standards and modernised technology to improve weighing systems and procedures across EU waters.

EFCA identified significant inconsistencies in how Member States interpret and apply weighing regulations under Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009. Member States have adopted varying approaches, from sampling methodologies to control procedures, creating an uneven playing field across the EU.

The report highlights several key challenges, including sampling plans that lack statistical rigour, arbitrary water and ice deductions, and inconsistent documentation of weighing activities. Many Member States fail to maintain real-time records, particularly for catches weighed post-transport, reducing traceability and complicating enforcement. Procedures for weighing frozen fishery




(EFCA) has released a detailed report addressing inconsistencies in fishery weighing

products also vary significantly, impacting the accuracy of quota tracking.

EFCA warned that outdated weighing systems and the absence of standardised electronic records create risks of manipulation and undermine the integrity of fisheries management.

The report outlined several recommendations to standardise and improve fishery weighing practices across the EU. These include developing robust, statistically justified sampling plans tailored to specific fishery types, transitioning to fully electronic records for enhanced transparency, and deploying advanced technologies such as Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) systems and CCTV in weighing facilities. EFCA also called for a review of the widely criticised 2% deduction for water and ice in pelagic fisheries, which it described as arbitrary and

unscientific. Despite these challenges, EFCA highlighted examples of best practices among Member States. Some countries have adopted innovative solutions, such as automated electronic weighing systems, independent third-party weighers, and real-time monitoring tools. In artisanal fisheries, mobile weighing devices and pier-side facilities have streamlined processes and reduced administrative burdens. Accurate weighing is essential for ensuring fair quota allocations, sustainable stock management, and market transparency. EFCA's recommendations, if implemented, could significantly enhance the integrity of the CFP while promoting equity among operators across the EU. The European Commission is expected to review EFCA's findings and collaborate with Member States to implement the proposed reforms. The report represents a critical opportunity to modernise EU fisheries. 

Mediterranean Trawling Begins Its Conversion

The Government of Spain has reached an agreement with the autonomous communities of the Mediterranean on the obligatory replacement of trawl nets. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will fully subsidise the purchase of two 45-millimetre codends for each boat in the coastal fishery and 50-millimetre codends for deep-sea fishing.

Agreement on the Replacement of Trawl Nets

Luis Planas, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, alongside council representatives from Catalonia, the Valencian Community, Murcia, Andalusia, and the Balearic Islands, has laid out a roadmap to sustain fishing activity in the Mediterranean. This follows a recent agreement with the European Commission (EC). During what Planas described as a "positive and constructive" meeting, measures to promote sustainability, protect the marine environment, and ensure the economic viability of the fishing fleet were discussed.

A key proposal involves the mandatory adoption of new technical measures, including improving the selectivity of fishing gear by replacing the codends in trawl nets. The existing meshes will be replaced with 45- and 50-millimetre versions to reduce bycatch and safeguard vulnerable species. Planas confirmed that this modification would be

included in updated legislation governing the Mediterranean management plan.

The Ministry will cover all costs for adapting the trawl nets. This measure will benefit 314 vessels involved in coastal fishing and 246 vessels operating both in coastal and deeper waters. The aid programme allows shipowners to purchase up to two codends per vessel for coastal fisheries and up to four for mixed fisheries, capped at €1,000 per unit.

To qualify for aid, shipowners must present invoices and proof of payment, and the General Secretariat of Fisheries will certify that the new meshes meet minimum dimension standards. Certificates, valid for 12 months, will ensure compliance with the updated regulations, addressing a long-standing demand from the sector for greater clarity and certainty in implementing such measures.

The schedule stipulates that the aid application guidelines will be published in the first half of the year, with payments distributed in the second half following verification.

Stability in Temporary Stoppages and Support Measures

The plan also includes maintaining the current framework for temporary fishing stoppages in 2025, mirroring the 2024 structure. In total, 52 days of

Polish Presidency's Role in Mediterranean Fisheries

The Polish Presidency of the European Union has committed to prioritising the competitiveness of the EU fishing fleet and ensuring its interests in negotiations with regional fisheries management organisations and third countries.

The Presidency aims to ensure that decisions regarding fish stocks are based on the best available scientific advice while considering the socio-economic impacts of fisheries.

In this vein, the Polish Presidency has announced its intention to negotiate fishing opportunities for 2025 in the North Sea, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Atlantic. It will also negotiate with the United Kingdom and Norway on shared fish stocks in the first half of the year.

Additionally, the Presidency will focus on integrating conclusions from the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) into EU law and amending regulations concerning countries that allow unsustainable fishing. The goal is to strengthen cooperation on sustainable fisheries management with third countries. Preliminary discussions on revising the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) will also commence



Mediterranean fishermen will have to change their nets

stoppages will be enforced, comprising 30 days for reduced fishing efforts and 22 days during closed seasons. Affected fishermen will receive financial compensation during these interruptions.

Additionally, up to 100% financing is being considered for the purchase of "flying doors", a technology that reduces ships' energy consumption by 30% and minimises their environmental impact on the seabed. Planas highlighted the importance of such innovations for enhancing both economic efficiency and environmental conservation.

At the upcoming Council of Fisheries Ministers of the European Union on 27 January, Spain will push for regulatory changes to Mediterranean fishing. Spain's priorities include adapting the multi-annual plan for the western Mediterranean and obtaining updated scientific reports on the state of fish stocks. Restrictions on species such as hake will also be revisited, with proposed alternatives to balance sustainability and profitability for the fleet.



The fishing fleet will have to modify the nets of its boats

Reactions from the Sector: Discontent and Uncertainty

Despite these developments, the fishing sector has expressed dissatisfaction with the proposed measures. José María Gallart, President of the Andalusian Federation of Fishing Asso-

ciations, criticised the Government's roadmap for failing to offer immediate solutions to ongoing uncertainties. In particular, Gallart deemed the 30 April deadline for adapting nets unrealistic, given the high volume of nets that require replacement. 🌊

An Alliance Seeks to Have Food Products Called "Everything by Its Name"

Anfaco-Cecopesca, Anice, Avianza and Cedecarne have launched the joint initiative "Everything by Its Name", aiming to raise public awareness about the risks of an imbalanced diet in the face of misinformation and confusion created by so-called imitation vegan products. They propose the need for national regulations to protect product names when they do not include the specified animal protein in accordance with the relevant scientific species.

Anfaco-Cecopesca (Maritime-Industry Complex Organisation), Anice (National Association of Meat Industries of Spain), Avianza (Spanish Interprofessional Association of Poultry Meat) and Cedecarne (Spanish Confederation of Meat Retailers), representing over 150,000 workers, met with the Secretary General of Agricultural Resources and Food Safety, Fernando Miranda. They presented the joint initiative 'Cada Cosa Por Su Nombre' and urged the Spa-

nish government to take concrete actions to protect consumers.

The primary aim of this initiative is to increase public understanding of the true composition of vegan products and advocate for action by public administrations. This includes reviewing product labelling and advertising in line with consumer information regulations, as well as developing new, specific legislation at both national and EU levels.

The meeting follows a previous session held on 20 February with the Directorate General of Consumer Affairs and a request to AESAN for an interpretive note to clarify the nutritional values of these products. Such clarity is seen as critical in addressing the dietary impacts of displacing animal protein, which provides essential nutrients for the human body.

Legal and Regulatory Discussions

During the meeting, the possibility of conducting consumer reviews within the current legislative framework (Regulation (EU) 1169/2011) was explored, referencing the recent case involving HEURA FOODS' "Hake Fillets". Discussions also focused on the existing legal frameworks governing product labelling, commercial presentations, and advertising practices.

The need for national legislation to protect product names was highlighted, ensuring names reflect the presence of animal protein where applicable. Key laws such as Royal Decree 474/2014 (quality standards for meat derivatives) and Royal Decree 1521/1984 (fishery products) were reviewed, with participants emphasising systematic non-compliance and the need for updated legal frameworks.

The meeting also referenced France's recent move to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) to seek clarity on preventing consumer confusion caused by terms traditionally associated with animal products being used for plant-based items. The Spanish government plans to consider a similar initiative once the CJEU ruling is issued.



The purpose of the campaign is to avoid the confusion generated by certain products that are associated with animal proteins.

Advocating Harmonised Regulation

The delegation urged the Spanish government to support and implement the delegated act outlined in Article 36 of the EU Regulation on Consumer Information (1169/2011). This act aims to establish clear guidelines for vegan and vegetarian product labelling across the EU. To ensure political momentum, the group called for this issue to be addressed by political parties and MEPs following the next elections in June.

One emerging concern is the proliferation of vegan fish products, such as those produced by Revo Foods, which markets items like "Kraken" – a plant-based product inspired by octopus. These products are designed to mimic the appearance and taste of fish, raising concerns about transparency in labelling and advertising.

Historical Context

The debate between plant-based and animal-derived products has historical precedents, such as the 2017 ruling by the CJEU, which prohibited plant-based products from being marketed with terms like "milk" or "cheese". This case serves as a reference point for protecting the integrity of animal-based product names.

While vegan products are promoted as healthier and more ethical alternatives, detailed analysis often reveals that they are ultra-processed, made from vegetable proteins, additives, and other ingredients. Critics argue these products fail to deliver the nutritional benefits of animal-based foods, such as high-quality proteins, essential nutrients, Omega-3 fatty acids (from oily fish), and Vitamin B12 (from meat). The promotion of these items, often based on unverifiable environmental claims, has been criticised for misleading consumers.

Through this initiative, the alliance seeks to ensure that food products are labelled accurately, protecting consumers from potential confusion and safeguarding the integrity of animal-based food products.



A food industry alliance is trying to avoid the confusion of associating plant-based products with animal products.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The historical context of the dispute between plant-based and dairy products has also been presented, where, until a few years ago, it was common to find plant-based products with names reserved for dairy products. This situation was resolved with the ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union of June 14, 2017, which established that plant-based products cannot be marketed with names such as "milk" or "cheese", which is considered an obligatory reference for the adequate protection of other products of animal origin.

Vegan products, increasingly present on supermarket shelves, are often promoted as healthier and more ethical alternatives to products of animal origin. However, a detailed analysis of their ingredients reveals a different reality. Made from vegetable proteins, additives and, in some cases, additives or ingredients that would make them considered ultra-processed, these foods are designed to imitate and displace their animal-based counterparts. Through misleading advertising strategies, they are presented as beneficial options for health and the environment, using names such as "vegan tuna or chicken" making claims about supposed global environmental benefits not supported by verifiable data. From a nutritional point of view, they lack the benefits of animal products, which offer a unique digestive matrix, rich in high-quality proteins, essential nutrients and Omega 3 fatty acids, such as in oily fish, or vitamin B12 in meat, which vegan foods cannot match.

US Fisheries Management: A Model for Sustainability and Global Leadership

The United States has established itself as a global leader in fisheries management through a robust legal framework, science-based policymaking, and collaborative governance. Underpinning this success is the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA), which has transformed US fisheries into a model of sustainability, balancing ecological protection with economic viability.

A Legislative Foundation for Sustainable Fisheries

Enacted in 1976 and amended in 1996 and 2006, the MSA remains the cornerstone of US fisheries management. The Act mandates adherence to ten national standards that prioritise the prevention of overfishing, the rebuilding of depleted stocks, and the safeguarding of marine ecosystems. These standards, according to the report, are "designed to ensure fisheries are managed for the long-term benefit of the nation, considering both environmental and socio-economic factors".

Federal jurisdiction spans from 3 to 200 nautical miles within the US exclusive economic zone (EEZ), while nearshore waters (0 to 3 nautical miles) fall under state management. This dual system enables tailored regulations that reflect both national and local priorities.

Regional Councils: Adapting Management to Local Needs

Central to the MSA's implementation are the eight Regional Fishery Management Councils (RFMCs), which oversee fisheries management in their respective regions. These councils create and enforce Fishery Management Plans (FMPs), incorporating measures such as annual catch limits (ACLs), gear restrictions, size limits, and community quotas. Scientific and Statistical Committees (SSCs) within each council provide the data and analyses that form the basis of these decisions.

According to the report, RFMCs are pivotal in fostering community participation:

"Councils conduct regular public meetings, ensuring that fishers, conservationists, and other stakeholders have a platform to influence policy".



Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management

To combat bycatch, a key environmental concern, councils adhere to the National Bycatch Reduction Strategy, which focuses on research, monitoring, and enforcement. Advanced technologies, such as electronic monitoring systems, play a vital role in reducing waste and improving data accuracy.

Enforcement: A Multi-Layered Approach

Fisheries enforcement in the US is a collaborative effort involving state and federal agencies. The Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) is a cornerstone of compliance, tracking fishing activity in real time to ensure adherence to regulations. The US Coast Guard, NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement, and state authorities work together to monitor fishing activities and address violations.

Internationally, the US demonstrates leadership in combating illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing. As highlighted in the report:

"The United States actively participates in



Act (MSA) signing moment



Rebuilding Stocks: A Success Story

The US has made remarkable progress in rebuilding overfished stocks. As of 2023, only 6% of assessed stocks were subject to overfishing, compared to 30% in the European Union. This achievement underscores the effectiveness of science-led management practices and strict adherence to catch limits.

Aquaculture: A Secondary but Growing Sector

While fisheries remain the dominant focus, aquaculture in the US is gradually expanding. The federal government has identified Aquaculture Opportunity Areas (AOAs) for future development. However, as the report notes, the sector faces challenges such as "regulatory complexity, technological constraints, and environmental concerns".

Conclusion: Lessons for Global Fisheries Management

The US fisheries management system is a testament to the power of science-driven policymaking, collaborative governance, and international cooperation. By prioritising sustainability and community involvement, the US offers a model that other nations can adopt as they strive to balance ecological preservation with economic growth.

As global seafood demand continues to rise, the US stands ready to lead by example, demonstrating that sustainable fisheries management is not only possible but essential for the future of our oceans.

Finfish account for approximately 80% of commercial landings by volume, but high-value shellfish like crabs, lobsters, and scallops dominate in terms of economic value

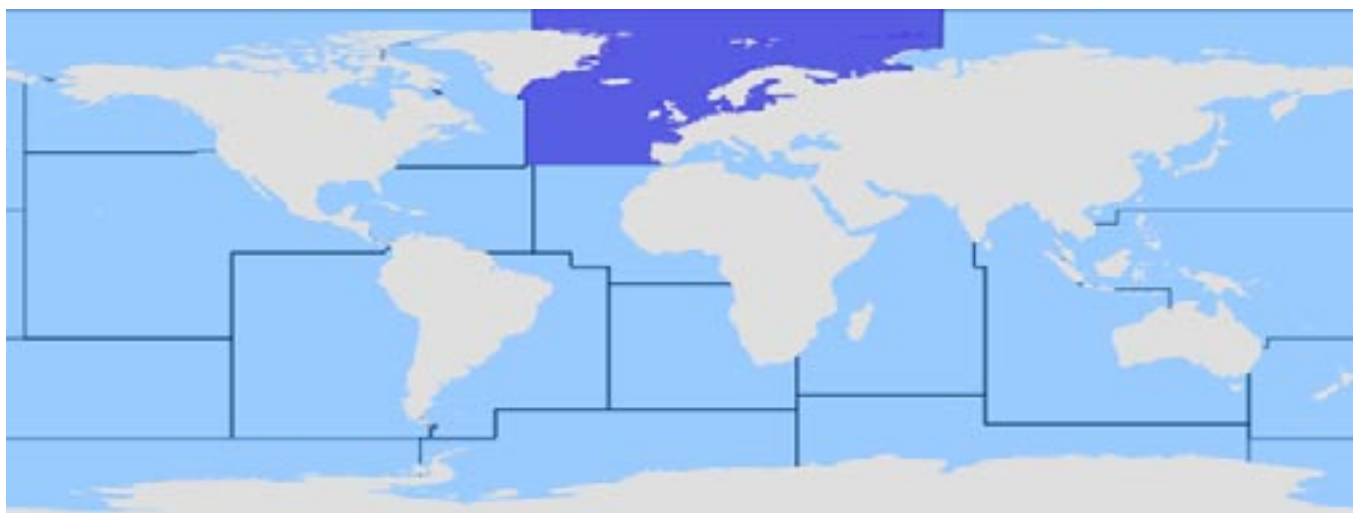
regional and bilateral agreements, leveraging partnerships to safeguard shared stocks and promote global sustainability".

This includes membership in organisations such as the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission (IATTC).

Economic Contributions and Sustainability Initiatives

The US fishing industry is a vital contributor to the economy, supporting over two million jobs and generating significant revenue. Finfish account for approximately 80% of commercial landings by volume, but high-value shellfish like crabs, lobsters, and scallops dominate in terms of economic value. In 2020 alone, salmon brought in over \$400 million.

Subsidies play a critical role in supporting the industry. In 2024, \$4 million in grants were awarded for projects aimed at enhancing electronic monitoring and developing sustainable fishing gear. Notably, the US has aligned its subsidy policies with international commitments by signing the World Trade Organization's Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, which targets harmful subsidies contributing to overfishing and IUU fishing.



Organisations from across the UK and EU have issued a joint position paper demanding critical reforms to the management of the Northeast Atlantic spurdog fishery

Fishing Industry Leaders Call for Urgent Reforms in Spurdog Management

Prominent fishing organisations from across the UK and EU have issued a joint position paper demanding critical reforms to the management of the Northeast Atlantic spurdog fishery. The paper addresses pressing concerns surrounding current regulations, which the signees argue hinder sustainable economic opportunities while contributing to environmental inefficiencies.

Background and Concerns

After a 15-year closure, spurdog stocks have recovered sufficiently to support substantial landings. However, existing management measures, such as the 100cm maximum landing size, are seen as outdated and problematic. Industry leaders contend that these rules lead to unnecessary waste, forcing fishers to discard larger, more valuable spurdog despite their potential survivability. This not only impacts profitability but also undermines environmental goals by increasing reliance on imported

spurdog with higher carbon footprints.

The letter also criticises the slow pace of reforms, urging immediate actions to ensure the fishery meets both sustainability and market demands.

Key Recommendations

The position paper proposes several measures to optimise the management of spurdog stocks:

Permit Landings of Larger Fish: Introduce a trial allowing the landing of spurdog over 100cm to collect vital data and increase market value.

Precautionary TAC Increases: Implement To-

tal Allowable Catch (TAC) increases cautiously, ensuring they are accompanied by improved management practices.

Exempt Landing Obligation: Recognise the high survivability of discarded spurdog and exclude the species from mandatory landing obligations.

Enhanced Monitoring: Strengthen data collection to support stock assessments and future management strategies.

The industry also draws lessons from the US, where a similar fishery operates without size restrictions but under sustainable quotas, benefiting both the market and marine ecosystems.

Industry Leaders Speak Out

The joint letter was signed by leading representatives of key fishing organisations, highlighting the collective concern across the sector:

Esben Sverdrup Jensen, President, European Association of Fish Producers Organisations

Mike Cohen, CEO, National Federation of Fishermen's Organisation

Jean-Marie Robert, Pêcheurs de Bretagne

Chloe North, CEO, Western Fish Producers' Organisation

John Lynch, CEO, Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation

Chris Ranford, CEO, Cornish Fish Producers Organisation

Juan Martín, Organización de Productores de Pesca del Puerto y Ría de Marín

Diane Gonzales, Wales and West Coast Fish Producers Organisation

Mathieu Vimard, Organisation de Pêcheurs Normands

Esben Sverdrup Jensen remarked, "This is a unique opportunity to turn a sustainable stock into a thriving fishery. These reforms are critical to balancing economic growth with environmental responsibility."

"This is a unique opportunity to turn a sustainable stock into a thriving fishery. These reforms are critical to balancing economic growth with environmental responsibility."

Urgency for Change

The signees call on the UK Government and European Commission to implement these changes by the end of 2025. They also recommend a six-month trial period for landing larger spurdog to collect necessary data and refine management strategies.

A Collaborative Approach

The letter reflects a united industry front, advocating for practical solutions that ensure the long-term sustainability and economic viability of the spurdog fishery. Stakeholders emphasise the importance of aligning industry needs with ecological priorities to maximise the potential of this recovering stock.

Fishing Industry Warns of "Spatial Squeeze" Threat to Maritime Sustainability

Representatives from the fishing sectors of the UK, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands have issued a joint statement highlighting the urgent challenges posed by the increasing "spatial squeeze" in shared maritime waters. The statement, delivered at the Mid Channel Conference in Ostend on 12 December 2024, underscores the growing competition for space due to offshore wind farms, marine protected areas (MPAs), and other maritime activities. The conference, hosted by Rederscentrale, marked a pivotal

moment for the fishing industry, which called for an integrated approach to marine spatial planning to ensure the sustainability of fisheries, marine ecosystems, and coastal livelihoods.

The joint statement noted:

"Each year, the space available for fishing activities is shrinking, threatening the economic viability of the industry, the sustainability of fish stocks, and the marine environment."

Challenges of Spatial Squeeze

In recent decades, maritime activities such as offshore renewable energy projects, transportation, and conservation efforts have expanded rapidly. While acknowledging the importance of these developments, the fishing industry voiced concerns about the uncoordinated growth and its impacts on fisheries. Offshore wind farms were a focal

point, with the statement highlighting their dual challenges: the physical displacement of fishing activities and potential safety risks for vessels. Additionally, the lack of research into the environmental effects of these projects on marine ecosystems and fish distribution was criticised.

Knowledge Gaps and Industry Contributions

The fishing sector emphasised its contributions to scientific research and its efforts to minimise environmental impacts. However, representatives noted that their expertise is often overlooked in decision-making processes. They reiterated the findings of a UNCTAD report, which highlighted the relatively low carbon footprint of fish production compared to other animal proteins, demonstrating the industry's sustainability potential.

Iceland's 2024 Groundfish Survey Highlights Stock Trends and Ecosystem Shifts

The Icelandic Marine and Freshwater Research Institute has published the results of its 2024 Autumn Groundfish Survey, providing critical insights into the state of various fish stocks around Iceland. Conducted between 27 September and 29 October, the survey evaluated changes in biomass, distribution, and diet across multiple groundfish species, continuing a data series initiated in 1996.

Key Findings:

Cod Stocks (*Gadus morhua*): The biomass index remained steady, exceeding the 1996–2024 average following declines during 2018–2021. However, the youngest cod cohorts exhibited reduced size and weight, reflecting potential recruitment challenges.

Haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*): The haddock index showed sustained high levels, consistent with a population boom attributed to strong recruitment in recent years.

Redfish Species: While the biomass of golden redfish (*Sebastes marinus*) declined, the beaked redfish (*Sebastes mentella*) index improved, exceeding long-term averages. Recruitment for both species remains a concern.

Greenland Halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*): Indices showed a modest recovery, particularly among juvenile fish, although adult stocks remained below historical levels.

Saithe (*Pollachius virens*): The survey noted an unusually high abundance of one-year-old saithe in Faxaflói Bay, while other size classes remained at or below long-term averages.



Marine and Freshwater Research Institute

The biomass index of cod stocks remained steady, exceeding the 1996–2024 average following declines during 2018–2021

Ecosystem and Diet Observations:

The survey highlighted significant dietary shifts, particularly among cod and haddock. For cod smaller than 85 cm, capelin and shrimp consumption has declined over the past decade, while larger cod predominantly preyed on fish like herring and blue whiting. Haddock diets reflected a dependence on benthic organisms such as brittle stars and bivalves.

Methodology:

The survey covered 371 sampling stations across Iceland's continental shelf

and deeper waters, employing a standardized bottom trawl approach. Data were collected using research vessels and commercial trawlers, emphasizing both pelagic and demersal species.

Implications for Fisheries Management:

The findings underscore ongoing challenges in managing Iceland's marine ecosystems. Declines in specific cohorts and changes in prey availability highlight the need for adaptive strategies to ensure sustainable fishing practices and ecosystem balance.

Iceland's marine authorities plan further analyses and stakeholder consultations to refine conservation and management measures. These efforts aim to safeguard both marine biodiversity and the economic vitality of the fishing industry.

Further updates are expected as additional analyses are completed and 2025 surveys commence.

Faroese Government Allocates 6,500 Tonnes for Blue Whiting Fishing Trials in 2025

The Faroese Ministry of Fisheries and Transport has announced an allocation of 6,500 tonnes of blue whiting for industrial fishing trials under Faroese-flagged vessels in 2025. This initiative aims to promote innovation and development within the fishing industry, focusing on sustainable practices and maximizing resource value.

Key Details of the Allocation

The blue whiting quota can be fished in the following areas:

Faroese waters.

Icelandic waters.

The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) regulatory area.

Application Process and Requirements

Interested parties must submit their applications to the Ministry by 12:00 PM on Friday, 31 January 2025. The application process will prioritise proposals with a clear focus on development and innovation. Applicants are required to provide detailed information, including:

The purpose and objectives of the trial.

Timelines and budget estimates.

Information about the vessel, fishing gear, and equipment.

Planned fishing routes.

Methods for handling, storing, and processing the catch both at sea and onshore.

Applications must also specify whether the fish will be used for food or industrial purposes, as vessels with dedicated industrial quotas will be given preference for dual-purpose voyages.

Innovation in Focus

The Ministry highlighted that these trials should prioritise new approaches to enhance the value and sustainability of blue whiting fisheries. Only a small fraction of quotas allocated for food purposes can be redirected to industrial use, ensuring that resources are primarily directed toward higher-value markets.

Regulatory Framework

The initiative operates under Regulation No. 140, issued on 17 December 2024, which outlines the

terms and conditions for industrial fishing trials. The regulation underscores the importance of aligning fishing activities with the Faroese government's long-term goals for sustainable fisheries management.

Boosting Economic and Sustainable Development

The fishing trials are expected to foster innovation in fishing techniques, improve efficiency, and support the sustainable use of blue whiting, a vital marine resource. By focusing on developmental value and sustainable practices, the Faroese government aims to bolster the fishing industry's economic contribution while ensuring ecological balance.

For more details, interested parties can review the full regulation and application guidelines through official Faroese fisheries channels.

Iceland's Total Fish Catch in 2024 Falls by 28%

Iceland's total fish catch for 2024 reached 994 thousand tonnes, marking a significant 28% decline compared to 2023. The decrease was primarily driven by a dramatic reduction in the pelagic catch, which dropped to 545 thousand tonnes—a 42% decrease—due to the absence of any capelin catch.

However, the demersal catch provided a slight positive note, increasing by 4% to 421 thousand tonnes. The flatfish catch totalled 24 thousand tonnes, while shellfish accounted for 3,700 tonnes.

December 2024 Brings Recovery Signs

In December 2024, Icelandic vessels landed 61 thousand tonnes of fish, a 32% increase compared to the same month in 2023. This included 29 thousand tonnes of demersal fish and approximately 31 thousand tonnes of pelagic species, suggesting a seasonal uptick in catches.

Data Remains Preliminary

The figures, released by the Directorate of Fisheries, are still considered preliminary. As Iceland continues to monitor and manage its marine resources, these data offer crucial insights into the challenges and dynamics of its fisheries sector.

The dramatic year-on-year changes underscore the importance of sustainable fisheries management and the unpredictable nature of the marine ecosystem. Let me know if you'd like to include additional perspectives or context.

National Centre for Food Manufacturing Strengthens Support for UK Seafood Industry

Milestone Celebrations in Grimsby Mark Commitment to Innovation and Skills

The National Centre for Food Manufacturing (NCFM), part of the University of Lincoln, UK, was honoured at a Grimsby event earlier this week for its continued support of the UK seafood processing and food manufacturing industries.

Operating from the Humber Seafood Institute, the NCFM reaffirmed its dedication to providing higher-level skills training, research, and innovation to drive the sector forward.

Empowering the Sector

Over the past three years, the University of Lincoln has collaborated with businesses through the Seafood and Grimsby Humber Alliance to create tailored training courses and apprenticeships. These initiatives aim to nurture future leaders while offering comprehensive support services for innovation in both small and large enterprises.

Professor Simon Pearson, Head of the School of Agri-food Technology and Manufacturing at the University of Lincoln, highlighted the impact of NCFM's work:

"We are delighted to provide businesses with ready access to NCFM's unique seafood and food processing and manufacturing capability.

"This will help the sector advance, not just regionally but across the UK, including adopting AI, automation, and innovative biotechnologies to generate high-value co-products, as well as providing access to skills provision tailored for seafood pro-



National Centre for Food Manufacturing (NCFM)

cessors."

Industry Collaboration

The celebration coincided with the launch of the UK Seafood Federation (UKSF), a new industry-led organisation serving as the collective voice of the seafood processing and trading sectors.

Simon Smith, Chair of the UK Seafood Federation and Vice Chairman Europe, Sofina Foods, praised the collaborative efforts:

"We are pleased to be celebrating two major milestone events for the seafood processing and trading sector.

"Our partnership with the University has achieved so much to date, and now as the UK Seafood Federation, we look forward to building on this success, aided further by ready access to the NCFM in the heart of the sector across the UK."

Driving Future Success

With the NCFM and UKSF at the helm, the UK seafood industry is poised for further growth, embracing technological advancements and skill development to secure a thriving future for businesses nationwide.

Seafood Sector Welcomes Launch of UK Seafood Federation

New Organisation Unites Industry to Promote Seafood and Address Key Challenges

The UK's seafood processing and trading sector has gained a unified voice with the launch of the UK Seafood Federation (UKSF). This newly formed organisation brings together the Seafood Industry Alliance (SIA), Seafood Grimsby & Humber Alliance Limited (SGHA), and other stakeholders to advocate for the industry and promote seafood as a vital part of a healthy British diet and a sustainable future.

Industry Leadership and Vision

The UKSF will be chaired by Simon Smith, Vice-Chair of Sofina Foods (Europe) and former SGHA chairperson, with Simon Dwyer serving as CEO. The leadership team also includes Andrew Kuyk and Mike Short from the SIA, as well as SGHA's Professor Val Braybrooks, Julie Waites, and Joanne Woodhouse.

The federation aims to address common industry challenges, including skills shortages, sustainability, ethical standards, trade flows, and communication. UKSF will represent seafood processors and traders of all sizes, promoting collaboration across the sector to strengthen its position in the UK economy.

Simon Smith emphasised the importance of the federation:

"This is a milestone for the seafood processing and trading businesses across the UK. Sales in retail and food service exceed £8bn annually, and the majority of this is handled by UK businesses. I look forward to working with the board and the team to deliver our priorities."

Collaboration with Industry Stakeholders

UKSF has already garnered strong support from key industry players. Mike Sheldon, Chairperson of the Seafish Industry Authority, expressed enthusiasm for the partnership:

"Seafish looks forward to working with UKSF and being an associate member of their board. UKSF's priorities align closely with our Corporate Plan, which is encouraging."

Jimmy Buchan, CEO of the Scottish Seafood Association, praised the consultative process behind UKSF's formation:

"We've had a positive relationship with SGHA over the years and look forward to supporting UKSF in its priorities."

Andrew Wallace, Fish and Fisheries Director at the Fishmongers' Company, highlighted SGHA's success in skills development and research, noting that UKSF builds on this legacy:

"SGHA's regional and international stakeholder engagement has been remarkable. UKSF's creation is an exciting step forward for the sector."

Strengthening the UK Seafood Industry

The UK Seafood Federation aims to serve as a central hub for processors, traders, and stakeholders, advocating for policies that support the sector's growth, sustainability, and innovation. From small-scale processors to major enterprises, UKSF represents the entire seafood supply chain and invites businesses to join this initiative to shape the industry's future.

Looking Ahead

This landmark initiative underscores the seafood industry's critical role in the UK economy and food supply. By uniting stakeholders, the UKSF is poised to address shared challenges, champion sustainability, and promote seafood's role in a healthier nation and planet.

Octofrost Announces Acquisition of HiTec Food Systems



Members of UK Seafood Federation (UKSF)

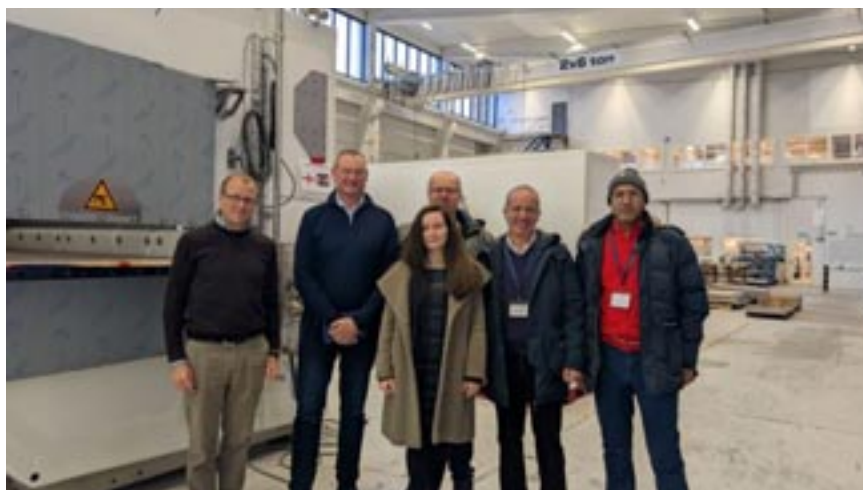
Octofrost Announces Acquisition of HiTec Food Systems

Octofrost, a globally recognized leader in food processing equipment, announces the acquisition of HiTec Food Systems, a Netherlands-based expert in tailor-made food processing machinery. This partnership enhances the global market position, combined portfolio, and shared commitment to quality, innovation, and customer-centric solutions.

This strategic move combines Octofrost's expertise in blanching, cooking, chilling, and freezing with HiTec's specialized capabilities in coating, frying, oil filtering, cooking, grilling and cooling – creating comprehensive solutions for a wide variety of food products while expanding Octofrost Group to three production sites in Sweden and the Netherlands.

Rasmus Larsson, CEO of Octofrost Group, shared his excitement about this milestone:

"This acquisition represents an important step in our mission to serve our customers with the most innovative, efficient, and reliable food processing solutions. By joining forces with HiTec, we are not only expanding our capabilities but also creating a unique opportunity to deliver complete, integrated solutions for many food industries. Together, we are better equipped to support our customers' success and add more value to their operations."



Octofrost is a leader in food processing equipment.

This acquisition represents an important step in our mission to serve our customers with the most innovative, efficient, and reliable food processing solutions

Eddie van Dam, CEO of HiTec Food Systems, and Jeroen Lijkendijk, Sales Director, expressed their enthusiasm for the partnership:

"Teaming up with Octofrost is a natural step in HiTec's growth and development. Together, as part of the Octofrost Group, we can deliver greater value by offering end-to-end processing solutions while ensuring HiTec remains a strong and innovative industry player. Jeroen and I are excited about this new chapter and fully committed to driving the business forward", said Eddie van Dam.

Jeroen Lijkendijk added, "Joining Octofrost allows HiTec to strengthen its solutions and extend its reach globally. We are eager to build on HiTec's legacy of quality and innovation while joining Octofrost to provide complete food processing systems for our customers."

As part of the Octofrost Group, HiTec will continue to deliver its signature high-quality, hygienic, and innovative solutions while benefiting from the enhanced resources, global reach, and expertise of the larger organization. The shared vision of both companies ensures that customers will receive unparalleled service and comprehensive solutions for their food processing needs.

World Maritime Week: The Great Meeting of the International Maritime Sector

The fifth edition of World Maritime Week (WMW) will be held from 19 to 21 March 2025 at the Bilbao Exhibition Centre, consolidating its position as the primary meeting point for professionals in the maritime sector at both national and international levels. This biennial event will bring together experts and companies from various maritime fields, promoting collaboration and knowledge exchange within the industry.

Challenges and Opportunities

In today's context, the maritime sector is at a pivotal moment, facing key challenges such as:

- The transition towards decarbonisation.
- Aligning with the principles of the blue economy.
- Digital transformation.
- Strengthening the competitiveness of the European maritime industry in the global market.

To address these challenges, it is essential for professionals to collaborate and create strong support networks that allow them to defend their interests. In this sense, World Maritime Week is presented as a strategic tool, designed to support all companies in the value chain on this path of transformation.

Conference Highlights

WMW has fully integrated current trends into its conference programme, which will feature discussions across four cross-cutting sessions:

1-Blue Economy for Sustainable Growth

Confirmed speakers include Giuseppe Sciacca, Director of Maritime Affairs and Climate at CRPM, and Julien Mader, Director of Maritime Technology at AZTI.

2-Digital Transformation

Speakers include Antonio Guarnieri, Policy Officer at the European Com-

mission (DG MARE), and Julio Sánchez, founding partner of IMBATIA.

3-Decarbonisation of the Sector

Featuring Jesús Manuel Puelles, General Manager, Marine Sales Ibérica & WSE Africa at Wärtsilä.

4-Competitiveness of the Sector

With the OECD as one of the potential speakers.

Sector-Specific Sessions

In addition, WMW will continue its sector-focused sessions under the following categories:

Sinaval (shipbuilding).

Eurofishing (fishing).

Futureport (ports).

Marine Energy Week (marine energy).

World Maritime Week is poised to be the key event for fostering collaboration, innovation, and growth in the maritime industry.

Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority to Exhibit at the Skipper Expo

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), Ireland's competent regulatory authority for the regulation of sea-fisheries and seafood safety, will be exhibiting at the Skipper Expo in Limerick on the 21st and 22nd March 2025. Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers (SFPOs) of the SFPA will be on hand to answer queries from fishers, industry, and stakeholders.

SFPOs will be happy to meet and engage with industry and discuss the significant programme of work un-

dertaken by the SFPA to promote compliance with the EU Common Fisheries Policy, sea-fisheries legislation, and seafood safety law, all with the goal of ensuring the future sustainability of Ireland's marine resources and assuring public trust in the quality and provenance of seafood.

Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson, SFPA said: 'We are looking forward to engaging with industry at the upcoming Skipper Expo and

to further explain the importance of our broad remit. Sustaining Ireland's marine resources, and assuring consumer trust in the quality, provenance and safety of our seafood produce are critical to achieving the collective ambitions for the sector. The SFPA, for its part, is committed to the promotion of compliance and the effective and fair regulation of the sea-fishing and seafood sectors that fall within the SFPA's mandate.'

Gondán to Build the First Electric eSOV with Zero Emissions

The Asturian shipyard Gondán will construct the world's first zero-emission electric eSOV (electric Service Operation Vessel) for Bibby Marine. The eSOV will feature an advanced battery system and methanol engines, enabling emission-free operation and setting a new benchmark for efficiency and environmental responsibility in the maritime industry.

Gondán Shipbuilders, a leader in the shipbuilding industry with a century of expertise in manufacturing specialised vessels, has been chosen by Bibby Marine to deliver this groundbreaking project. The eSOV is specifically designed for operations in the offshore wind sector and marks a significant milestone in Gondán's commitment to sustainable maritime innovation.

Batteries for Over 16 Hours

According to the shipyard, this is a "pioneering vessel" that "represents a natural progression in Gondán's trajectory". To date, the shipyard has built numerous low-carbon Service Operation Vessels (CSOVs), and this new electric eSOV continues that tradition.

The vessel will be "equipped with an advanced battery system and engines adapted for the use of methanol as fuel," ensuring emission-free operations. Additionally, it will be capable of running solely on batteries for more than 16 hours between charges.

"In doing so, it sets a new standard of efficiency and environmental respon-



The Gondán ship will be a pioneer and represents a step forward for the shipyard.

sibility in the sector, underlining Gondán Shipbuilders' dedication to innovation and our commitment to supporting the transition of the maritime industry towards a more sustainable future," the shipyard explained.

Delivery by 2026

This groundbreaking vessel is scheduled for delivery in 2026 and represents a natural evolution in Gondán's shipbuilding history, transitioning from low-carbon CSOVs to a fully zero-emission model.

The eSOV will include advanced high-voltage offshore charging capabilities, allowing for more than 16 hours of battery-only operation. These features highlight Gondán's dedication to setting new industry standards in efficiency and environmental sustainability.

A Broad Portfolio of Projects

Gondán's project portfolio reflects its expertise and innovative approach. Current projects include the construction of three wind platform support vessels, completing a series of six vessels ordered by Norwegian company Edda Wind; a vessel for the support and maintenance of lighthouses and buoys in Scotland; an unmanned vessel for underwater maintenance and inspection missions in Norway; and several fully electric ferries for Portugal.

This new eSOV project further solidifies Gondán's position as a leader in sustainable shipbuilding and its commitment to driving the maritime industry towards a greener future. 🌊

Freire to Build the Thuwal II Oceanographic Ship for Saudi Arabia

Construcciones Navales Paulino Freire (Freire Shipyard), a Vigo-based shipyard that has participated in the construction of twelve oceanographic vessels, will build the Thuwal II, a 50-metre-long vessel commissioned by the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST). The project will further consolidate the shipyard's presence in the demanding Middle East market.

KAUST announced in June 2022 its intention to build a modern oceanographic vessel to replace their current vessel, the Thuwal, and to provide "first-class marine research and support Saudi Arabia's objectives of studying and protecting marine environments". To achieve this, the university enlisted the expertise of Glostén, the North American naval engineering firm responsible for the David Packard, an American research vessel built and delivered by Freire that is currently in Beiramar.

The Thuwal II will be a multipurpose vessel designed to operate in both reef and deepwater environments, accommodating the unique conditions of the Red Sea as well as the Gulf of Aqaba and other areas with tropical waters and similar climatic conditions. At 50 metres in length, the new vessel will be nearly 15 metres longer than the current Thuwal, a converted fishing vessel that is now 22 years old.



El ThuwalII ha sido encargado por la Universidad Rey Andullah.

The ship will feature a deck designed to deploy heavy equipment and sophisticated instrumentation for multidisciplinary research. It will also be capable of deploying autonomous or remotely operated vehicles, as well as advanced sampling systems.

Expanding Freire's Portfolio

The confirmation of the Thuwal II order adds a sixth vessel to Freire Shipyard's diverse portfolio of projects. These include another oceanographic vessel (Anita Conti, for the French research institute Ifremer), a freezer trawler for Canada (Saputi II, for the Qikiqtaaluk Fisheries shipbuilder), a support and maintenance vessel for Briggs Marine (Forth Constructor), a megayacht for the Incognita project, and an "ecological" sailboat commissioned by Greenpeace.

Since 2011, Freire Shipyard has delivered four other vessels for the Middle East. The first was the Janan, an oceanographic vessel commissioned by Qatar University that showcased the shipyard's expertise in the region. This was followed by the Taqnia, the first vessel built for Saudi Arabia (for Taqnia Cyber), a multipurpose patrol boat for Kuwait (Sabah, 42 metres long), and the Jaywun, an oceanographic and fisheries research vessel commissioned by the Environment Agency Abu Dhabi of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

With the construction and delivery of the Thuwal II, Freire Shipyard will have built 13 scientific vessels for a dozen countries, second only to the 15 vessels produced by Armón Vigo, which currently has five under construction. 🌊

Armón to Build Vessel for Northern Ireland's Institute of Agri-Food and Biosciences

The Asturian group Armón will construct a 53-metre-long vessel to advance the long-term sustainable management of fishing resources for the Institute of Agri-Food and Biosciences in Northern Ireland. Armón announced that its Beiramar shipyard has been awarded the contract to build the marine research vessel, which is expected to be operational for the next 30 years. The vessel will help address the challenges of ocean exploration and contribute to the sustainable management of fisheries, marine environmental health, conservation, and planning, according to the British department overseeing the project.

The construction will take place at Armón Vigo over a period of three years. The vessel, measuring approximately 53 metres in length, will have an autonomy of 21 days at sea and will be operational for up to 300 days per year. It will be a multipurpose ship equipped with cutting-edge technology. The new vessel will replace the RV *Corystes*, which has served Northern Ireland for 35 years in researching the state of the seabed. The current vessel operates out of Belfast Harbour.

Supporting Northern Ireland's Waters and Beyond

The primary purpose of the new ship will be to support environmental research and the sustainable management of fishing resources in Northern Ireland's waters and the Irish Sea. In addition, the vessel will



Model of the ship that Armón will build

also provide benefits in other areas, such as marine tourism, renewable energy, environmental monitoring as part of the United Kingdom's climate change observation network, and aquaculture. The ship is also designed to respond to marine pollution incidents and emergency situations in waters surrounding Ireland.

Marine Life and Environmental Importance

Pieter-Jan Schön, Director of Environment and Marine Sciences at the Institute of Agri-Food and Biosciences, emphasised the exceptional diversity of marine wildlife and habitats in British waters. He also highlighted the ocean's influence on the climate and its impact on those living on an island. [🌊](#)

Report Proposes Decarbonisation of the British Fleet

A new report examines alternative fuel sources for the UK fleet as it moves towards decarbonisation, with a particular focus on hydrogen as an option for achieving net-zero fishing vessels. Produced by experts at Macduff Ship Design and supported by Marine Fund Scotland, the study provides detailed vessel specifications. By drawing comparisons with previous research into the potential of battery-electric, methanol, and liquefied natural gas (LNG) power options, the report delivers critical infor-

mation to help fishing businesses remain safe and competitive as net-zero deadlines approach. With Scotland's net-zero commitment set for 2045 and England's for 2050, this hydrogen-focused report builds on the momentum generated by Fisheries Innovation & Sustainability (FIS) during earlier phases of the project. It identifies key barriers to achieving net-zero emissions and lays the groundwork for the development of six unique vessel designs powered by alternative propulsion systems. [🌊](#)

The 'Argos Berbés': Nodosa's Latest Innovation for the Falklands

The inauguration ceremony of the Argos Berbés, the new freezer trawler built by Nodosa Shipyard (Marín, Pontevedra) for Grupo Pereira and its Falkland Islands partner Argos Limited, through the joint venture Orion Fishing Company, exemplifies cutting-edge shipbuilding for the British Isles fishing grounds in the South West Atlantic, one of the most technologically advanced regions in the world. The Argos Berbés joins the ranks of the Haddasa Bay, built for the Falkland Islands joint venture South Atlantic Squid—owned by the Vigo-based Copemar and its partner Beauchêne Fishing Company—by Astilleros Ría de Vigo (Armón Group), and the Prion, constructed for Petrel Fishing Company Ltd, a joint venture owned by Grupo Pescapuerta and Grupo Fortuna. Like the Argos Berbés, the Prion was also built by Nodosa Shipyard. The investment in this new-generation vessel exceeds €30 million.

With a gross tonnage of 2,500 GT, a length of 85 metres, and a width of 14 metres, Grupo Pereira's new vessel stands out for its inverted bow. Together with the Prion, it is the largest freezer trawler built to date by the Marín shipyard, which was also responsible for the construction of the company's previous vessel, the Argos Cíes, launched in 2018.

The Argos Berbés represents a significant step forward in Grupo Pereira's fleet renewal efforts in the southwestern Atlantic. This follows the success of the Argos Cíes, also built by Nodosa. "We wish we could build new ships in other fishing grounds, but today the only one that gives us sufficient legal security is the Falklands," explained Ruy Andrade, Director of Foreign Relations. He added that the shipowner aims to launch the vessel, which will replace the Argos Vigo, during the first Loligo squid cam-



paign of next year.

"We do not contemplate any other option. We want to think that the end of this year is an exception. It is a well-managed fishing ground. At the slightest doubt,

they close or do not open. That also ensures bread for tomorrow. Now we have to deal with this situation, but we trust that February will bring improvement," said Andrade. 🌊

Construction of New Oceanographic Facilities Continues in Shipyards

Armón Vigo has celebrated the launch of the Anna Weber-van Bosse, the new oceanographic research vessel being built for the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research (NIOZ) in the Netherlands. Delivery of the vessel, which measures nearly 80 metres, is scheduled for autumn 2025. This vessel is one of four oceanographic ships that Grupo Armón is building simultaneously in Vigo. Through its social channels, the shipyard congratulated NIOZ on this milestone in the construction of its new vessel and thanked "the entire team involved in this innovative and ground-breaking project."

The Anna Weber-van Bosse marks a significant step in Grupo Armón's advancements in alternative propulsion systems, as it will be prepared for the future use of methanol. It will also have polar capabilities, enabling it to operate near the sea ice border in the Arctic and Antarctic. "This is crucial given the rapid melting due to climate change," stated the Dutch organisation. The vessel will be "the flagship of the Dutch research fleet," NIOZ representatives added.

Signed at the end of 2022, the Anna Weber-van Bosse will replace the Pelagia, an oceanographic vessel nearing the end of its 35-year service life. Its name pays tribute to Anna Weber-van Bosse, the first Dutch marine biologist to conduct research at sea.

In parallel with this project, and following the delivery



The Anna Weber-van Bosse ship is one of the oceanographic vessels being built by Armón

of the Odón de Buen for the IEO, Armón is progressing with the construction of three other oceanographic vessels:

- The Borunn Bordardottir (69.80 metres) for the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute (MFRI) of Iceland, scheduled for delivery in November 2025.
- A new 45.95-metre research vessel commissioned by the Regional Government of the Azores (Portugal).
- The most recent addition to Armón's order book: a vessel for the Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute (AFBI) in Northern Ireland, which will be an updated sister ship to the Tom Crean, built by Armón Vigo for the Marine Institute of Ireland in 2022. 🌊

A Busy Year for Armón in 2024

Armón shipyard is concluding a productive year, highlighted by the launch of a fishing vessel for Wofco in December. The marine research vessel Borunn Bordardottir is currently visible in the Vigo estuary, where it began sea trials after its construction was completed at Armón's Ría de Vigo shipyard. The Borunn Bordardottir will be Iceland's largest oceanographic vessel. Upon delivery this year, it will join the fleet of the Ma-

rine and Freshwater Research Institute of Iceland. The vessel will explore the North Atlantic, replacing the veteran Bjarni Sæmundsson, which has been in operation for more than 50 years. This state-of-the-art vessel, equipped with cutting-edge technology, has been named in honour of the first woman trained in marine sciences in Iceland. 🌊

Launching of the cargo ship 'Bermeo' at Murueta Shipyards



Murueta facilities with the cargo ship 'Bermeo' built

Astilleros Murueta has celebrated the launching ceremony of the cargo ship *Bermeo NM* at its facilities in Erandio, which it has built for the shipowner MAAS and currently has a workload of three ships.

In a statement, it has indicated that the new ship has diesel-electric propulsion, which, complemented by state-of-the-art battery technology, allows for emission-free operations by adjusting the power generated to what is needed at any given time, "optimising consumption during all its voyages and significantly reducing the environmental impact."

The *Bermeo NM* will become part of the MAAS (Murueta Atlántico

Alcudia Shipping) pool, based in Bilbao, which has 14 ships transporting all types of dry cargo, bulk goods and large projects throughout Europe, North Africa and the Black Sea.

Energy efficiency

This is the fifth ship in the 6200 series that Astilleros Murueta has designed and built for the shipowner MAAS, after the *Mundaka NM*, the *Katuxa NM*, the *Gernika NM* and the *Arteaga NM*. In fact, as with the four previous ships, both the conception and the design of the ship have been carried out entirely by the engineering division of Astilleros Murueta in collaboration with the shipowner.

The ship will be delivered in the second quarter of 2025 and represents the 332nd construction of the shipyard. As it emphasised, this work strengthens its commitment to the designs of "technologically advanced ships with a high component of innovation, which seek energy efficiency and the use of new fuels."

Currently, Astilleros Murueta has a workload of three vessels: the freezer trawler *Kaassassuk*, which is being built for the Greenlandic company Royal Greenland; the chemical tanker *Bahía Candela*, which is being built for Murevi Energy; and the cargo ship *Busturia NM*, which is being built for MAAS at its factory in Murueta.

Zamakona Yards to Build Two Vessels for Transporting Fish Feed



The shipping company Eidsvaag AS is engaged in the transport of food.

Zamakona Yards has been commissioned to construct two state-of-the-art fish feed vessels for the Norwegian shipping company Eidsvaag AS. Scheduled for delivery in 2026, the vessels will feature cutting-edge diesel-electric propulsion systems, large battery packs, and dual-fuel engines capable of running on biodiesel when required.

Designed to accommodate a crew of 14, these vessels will incorporate several energy-efficient measures, including hulls optimised for propulsion efficiency. This design will significantly reduce both energy consumption and emissions. Additionally, the vessels will each be equipped with 860 kW battery systems, which will minimise

diesel consumption by providing energy during peak demand periods. Exhaust heat recovery systems will also supply heating for the accommodation and technical spaces on board.

The vessels have been engineered with future adaptability in mind, allowing for relatively straightforward transitions to alternative fuels as greener and more cost-effective options, such as hydrogen, become available.

Eidsvaag AS, a family-owned shipping company with more than 30 years of expertise in fish feed transport, currently owns six ships and operates an additional 15 vessels.

Zamakona Yards, with over 41 years of experience in vessel construction and repair, operates facilities in Santurtzi (Vizcaya), Pasajes (Gipuzkoa), and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Canary Islands).

The design of the new vessels will be provided by Kongsberg Maritime AS.

Key Specifications of the Vessels:

Length: 71.10 metres

Width: 17.60 metres

Depth: 5.8 metres

Speed: 13.5 knots

Load Capacity: 2,000 tonnes

Propulsion System: Diesel-electric hybrid

U.K. Ships Track Russian Surveillance Ship Loitering Near Underwater Cables

Russian surveillance Yantar was shadowed by HMS Somerset on Jan. 22, 2025. UK Royal Navy Photo

U.K. Defence Secretary John Healy revealed to Parliament on Wednesday that he had ordered a Royal Navy submarine to surface close to Russian surveillance ship Yantar in November as a deterrent measure after it was detected loitering over critical undersea infrastructure in the U.K. exclusive economic zone (EEZ), resulting in Yantar departing U.K. waters.

The revelation came during his statement to Parliament on the U.K. response to more recent Russian maritime activities. He stated that Yantar, now in the North Sea, passed through U.K. waters Monday, with Royal Navy frigate HMS Somerset (F82) and offshore patrol vessel HMS Tyne (P281) shadowing the Russian ship for two days following its entry into the U.K. EEZ in an area about 45 nautical miles off the British coast on Monday. "Let me be clear, this is a Russian spy ship used for gathering intelligence and mapping the U.K.'s critical underwater infrastructure," said Healy.

Healy also said he changed the Royal Navy's rules of engagement so that its ships could move closer to Yantar to better track it and that so far the Russian ship has complied with international rules of navigation. The U.K. Defence Secretary then went on to state that Monday's entry was the second time Yantar entered U.K. waters, revealing the November incursion.



U.K. Defence Secretary John Healy

During that time, Healy stated, that to deter any potential threat, he deployed the Royal Air Force (RAF) alongside mine countermeasures ship HMS Cattistock (M31), Tyne and multi-role ocean surveillance ship RFA Proteus (K60) to shadow Yantar's movement. "Today, I also want to confirm to the House that I authorized a Royal Navy submarine – strictly as a deterrent measure – to surface close to Yantar to make clear that we had been covertly monitoring its every move," adding that Yantar then left U.K. waters and headed to the Mediterranean.

Healy then stated he would not comment further because of operational security, save to thank all personnel involved for their dedication and their professiona-

lism and to deliver a message to Russian President Vladimir Putin. "And I also want President Putin to hear this message: We see you. We know what you are doing. And we will not shy away from robust action to protect this country. And with our NATO allies, we are strengthening our response to ensure that Russian ships and aircraft cannot operate in secrecy near the UK or near NATO territory," he said.

Healy also announced the U.K. will assign RAF P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) and RC-135 Rivet Joint surveillance aircraft for NATO's Baltic Sentry operation, whose mission is to protect critical underwater structures in the Baltic Sea... 🌊

New Pelagic Fishing Vessel "Høgaberg" Delivered to Faroese Owners of Karstensen Shipyard

The Karstensen Shipyard in Skagen, Denmark, has successfully handed over the Høgaberg, an 87.8-metre pelagic trawler and seiner, to its new owners, the Olsen family of Fremherji p/f in Fuglafjordur, Faroe Islands. This newbuild replaces a previous vessel of the same name under the command of skippers Hogni Hansen and Jógvan Olsen.

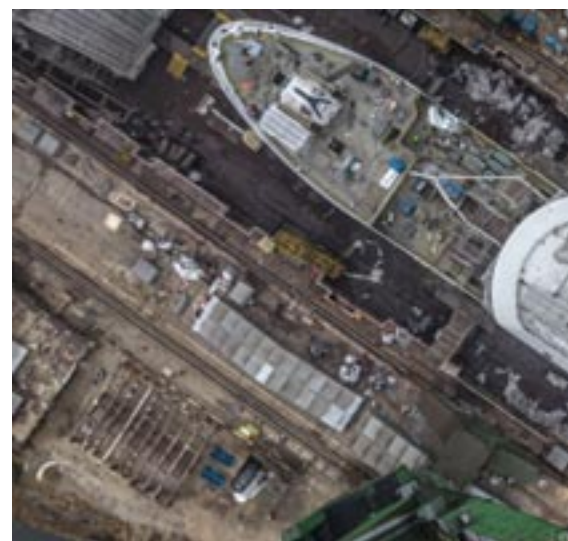
The Høgaberg reflects meticulous design and innovation, achieved through close collaboration between the owners and the shipyard, resulting in a vessel tailored to optimise crew safety, comfort, operational efficiency, and fuel consumption.

Advanced Design and Features

The steel-hulled Høgaberg has three continuous decks with a

long forecastle and boat decks. The wheelhouse, masts, and funnel are constructed from aluminium. The hull design incorporates a bulbous bow, stern skeg, and wave-piercing stem, ensuring excellent seakeeping and fuel efficiency.

The vessel's internal layout prioritises crew safety and operational functionality. Highlights include:



The Karstensen Shipyard in Skagen, Denmark, has successfully handed over the Høgaberg, an 87.8-metre pelagic trawler and seiner.



The steel-hulled Høgaberg has three continuous decks with a long forecastle and boat decks

Catch Handling: A centralised RSW (refrigerated seawater) system comprising 15 tanks with a capacity of 3,470 cubic metres, ensuring optimal catch preservation.

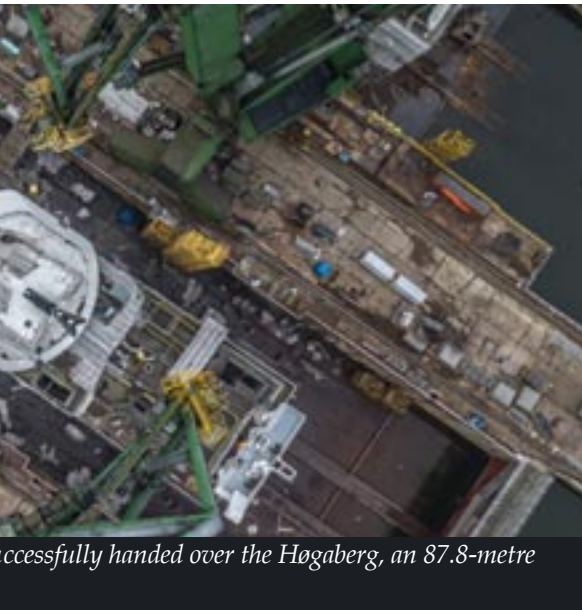
Noise Reduction: Accommodation spaces are designed to minimise noise, with results from sea trials significantly below required standards.

Accommodation: Modern facilities provide a comfortable environment for the crew, including en-suite cabins, a wellness area, and recreational spaces.

Green Power and Fuel Efficiency

Equipped with twin Bergen Diesel engines (3,600 kW each), the Høgaberg features a hybrid propulsion system, including a Corvus Orca battery pack producing 1,100 kWh.

The vessel's internal layout prioritises crew safety and operational functionality



Successfully handed over the Høgaberg, an 87.8-metre



This green technology enables reduced fuel consumption and emissions, especially during fishing operations where electric winch systems are employed. Additionally, a DEIF power management system ensures efficient energy distribution.

Fishing Capabilities and Deck Equipment

The Høgaberg is outfitted with state-of-the-

MAIN DIMENSIONS

Length overall	87,80 m
Length between PP	83,40 m
Breadth moulded	16,60 m
Breadth at stern	17,00 m
Depth 1. deck	11,55 m
Depth 2. deck	8,85 m
Depth 3. deck	6,25 m
Scantling draught	8,30 m
Frame spacing	600 mm
Tonnage	4303 GT
RSW-tanks	3470 cum
Fuel oil	480 cum
Fresh water	40 cum
Forepeak	75 cum

Design: Karstensens Skibsværft A/S

Trial speeds / average; 18,9 knots, diesel-mechanical

Hull: - built by Karstensen Shipyard Poland, Gdansk, Poland. Class: DNV +1A Fishing Vessel E0 TMON, hull: Ice-C.

DECK EQUIPMENT:

Electric winches: - all supplied by Evotec main system, electric:

- 2 x Trawl winches 118,0 t
- 2 x Netdrums 147,0 t
- 1 x Tail-end winch 69,0 t
- 2 x Purse seine winches 40,0 t
- 1 x End-wire winch 20,0 t
- 2 x Purse auxiliary winches 15,1 t
- 4 x Mooring winches 12,0 t
- 2 x Anchor windlasses
- 1 x Netsounder winch

art fishing and deck equipment, including:

Electric winches supplied by Evotec, capable of handling heavy-duty trawling and purse seining operations.

Fish pumping systems by SeaQuest, with multiple pumps for efficient fish transfer.

Advanced electronic systems for navigation, fish detection, and communication, including equipment from Furuno, Simrad, and Marport.

Innovative Electronics

The vessel's wheelhouse boasts cutting-edge technology, including:

Furuno Smart Bridge displays, with

large monitors for real-time data.

High-frequency sonar systems and trawl monitoring tools to optimise fishing operations.

The hull design incorporates a bulbous bow ensuring excellent seakeeping and fuel efficiency

Starlink satellite communication for seamless global connectivity.

Owner's Fleet Expansion

The Høgaberg joins Fremherji p/f's existing fleet, which includes the pelagic vessel Fagraberg, a freezer trawler, and two longliners. This addition underscores the family's commitment to maintaining a modern, sustainable, and efficient fishing fleet.

As the Høgaberg embarks on its maiden voyages, it represents a leap forward in technological innovation, operational efficiency, and environmental sustainability for Faroese fisheries.

Electronic equipment are supplied by Furuno, Marport and Simrad

ELECTRONICS

Extensive array of electronic equipment (navigation, fish finding and communication), all supplied by Furuno, Marport and Simrad. Simrad equipment is supplied by Radioservice and Marport equipment by Vikmar, both in Faroe Islands.

Main items:

Display system: Furuno Smart Bridge

Main monitors; 4 pcs 55" North Invent.

14 pcs 32" North Invent.

20 pcs 27" North Invent.

LF sonar 1: Furuno FSV-25S, 15-25 kHz.

LF sonar 2: Simrad ST94, 25 kHz.

HF sonar: Furuno FSV-75, 180 kHz.

Echo sounder 1: Furuno FCV-38.

Echo sounder 2: Furuno FCV-1900.

Echo sounder 3: Simrad ES38

Box scanner: Simrad SN90

Current indicator: Furuno CI68.

Net monitor: Marport.

Trawl sonar: Simrad FS-70.

Radar 1 (3 cm): Furuno FAR 3220-X.

Radar 2 (10 cm): Furuno FAR 2238-S.

Radar 3: Furuno DRS-4D-NXT

Ecdis: Tecdis T-2128.

Plotter 2+3: MaxSea Time Zero.

GPS: Furuno GP-170

AIS: Furuno FA-170

Gyro compass: 2 x Simrad RGC-80.

GPS compass: Furuno SC-130.

Furuno SC-70.

Autopilot: Simrad AP70-system.

VDR: Furuno VR-7000 VDR

Satellite com.: StarLink

Sat-TV system: Sailor

GMDSS: Sailor equipment for A4 navigation.

VHFs: Sailor.

Autotrawl system: Scantrol (supplied by Evotec).

ME remote control: Kongsberg.

Intercom: Vingtor Stentofon



THE FISHING DAILY

OLIVER MC BRIDE

Managing Editor,

The Fishing Daily,

No. 1 Áras Ros Goill

Na Dúnaibh,

Downings.

Co Donegal, Ireland. F92 RX8C

Phone or WhatsApp: 00353838268406

Email: editor@thefishingdaily.com

Website: www.thefishingdaily.com

EUROPA AZUL

ALBERTO ECHALUCE

Managing Editor

Europa Azul

Plaza de Unzaga 9.2

20600. Eibar (Gipuzkoa)

SPAIN

Tlfn: 34 619179516

Phone or WhatsApp: 34 619179516

Email: info@europa-azul.es

Website: www.europa-azul.es