

MariFish Briefings

Working collaboratively on by-catch and discard reduction

January 2010

What are we working on?

Reducing by-catch and discards is a major challenge facing fisheries managers across Europe. For this reason research into possible solutions is a priority area for the MariFish partners. Research is needed on a wide range of topics including developing more selective fishing gear, assessing whether closed areas or seasons provide a possible answer and how best to monitor and record discard levels. A substantial amount of research is being undertaken and MariFish partners have agreed to work collaboratively in this priority area.

What are our aims?

Fourteen MariFish partners UK (Defra and Scotland), Denmark, Greece, Iceland, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Belgium, Germany, France, Spain, Ireland, and Poland, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work collaboratively on discards and gear selectivity. Our collaborative programme will focus on the following broad themes:

- Developing (and evaluating) gear-based and other technical solutions (e.g. spatial and temporal management measures) which reduce discarding.
- Improving knowledge exchange on the above subject between all fisheries stakeholders.
- Investigating new technologies / approaches for recording of discard data on board commercial fishing vessels



MariFish

Strengthening the links between European marine fisheries science and fisheries management



What have we achieved so far?

In October 2009, technical experts and partners met in Madrid to discuss progress on the ten actions agreed as priorities for collaboration. Of these several were taken forward through other initiatives including a comprehensive review of gear aimed at reducing cod discards, and further development of the T90 involving Poland, Germany and France. MariFish helped strengthen collaboration in several areas including:

Camera systems (led by Cefas, UK)

Cefas and Denmark have been carrying out sea trips to look at this issue. The UK is to pilot a second set of camera trials using a newly built and 'home designed' portable camera system. Scottish workers are also to pilot the camera system on several vessels. The technology has considerable potential application in many fisheries

T90 Developmental work (led by SFI, Poland)

Collaboration is between Belgium, France, Germany, Norway and Poland. The aim is to exchange data and information on progress with T90 netting construction. IFREMER, France has asked Poland to help design a total T90 bottom trawl for Nephrops fishing. This gear will be used to compare the drag of the T90 trawl with existing standard bottom trawl with the same geometry.

Plans for further collaboration:

The Madrid meeting identified the following areas where collaboration under MariFish would be appropriate:

- Update partners on progress on electro-shrimp fishing (Belgium), T90 developments (Poland), and trials to adopt electronic log books (Iceland).
- Gather together details on all current research on discards and selectivity, as an essential step for successful collaboration (UK Defra).
- Further collaboration on the application of camera systems for monitoring discards (UK Cefas)
- A preliminary look at the issue of non-landed mortality
- Consider how to maximise industry uptake of selective fishing gear, possibly by looking at good practice amongst partners.

During 2010 partners and technologists plan to work on some or all of the above, enhancing collaboration in this important area of research for fisheries management.

