

# Robust catch and socio-economic data for management and for business



Jean Claude BEL, CEO, The European Fishing Tackle Trade Association



# Who are the Marine Recreational Fishers ?



- More than **9 million** European citizens (EEA) are enjoying regularly or occasionally recreational fishing from boat or shore.

- Far the most are 'anglers' (rod and line). Other recreational fishers use other gears like pots, nets, traps, fixed lines, however:
  - marginal in economic terms (except from underwater spearfishing), but catch volumes can be sizeable locally.



- **1,7 million** fishing days annually.

# Economic Value - Marine Recreational Fisheries

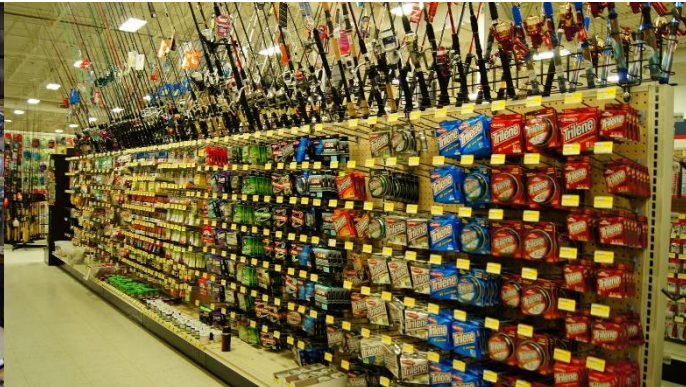
(European Economic Area, EEA)

**Estimated economic value: €10.5 billion**

- **Direct expenditures: €5.1 billion**
- **Indirect expenditures: €2.3 billion**
- **Induced expenditures: €3.2 billion**

**The coastal communities benefit a lot from this!**

- **The economic actors:** 2,900 fishing tackle specialized companies, several thousands of specialized tackle dealers and sport shops, marine industry, charter boats, fishing guides, services, ports, fishing trips, lodging, equipment, taxes, mooring fees, electronics, gas, food, etc...



# Jobs depending directly or indirectly on Marine Recreational Fisheries

**Ca. 100 000 jobs:**

- **Direct Jobs** 57 000
- **Indirect Jobs** 18 000
- **Induced Jobs** 24 000

**With more to come**

**- if our legislators and fisheries managers so will**

# EU legislation – two fisheries sectors

**The EU legislation only knows of two fisheries sectors: the commercial and the recreational fisheries sectors**

- **Semi-subsistence and semi-commercial fisheries** are terms in use, but EU legislation wise they don't exist.
- Any **'hybrid fishery'** should be adapted to and managed as either recreational- or commercial fishing. If sales of catch is allowed, it can only be termed commercial fishing.
  - The Control Regulation's Art 55(2) forbid all sales(\*) of recreational catches.
  - One exception, Mediterranean Sea, Regulation 1967/2006, Art 17(3):  
"by way of exception, the marketing of species caught in sportive competitions may be authorised provided that the profits from their sale are used for charitable purposes"

\* Art 55(2): "The marketing of catches from recreational fisheries shall be prohibited."



# Robust and timely fisheries data: a condition for good and fair legislation and fisheries management

- **The annual fishing opportunities** as proposed by the Commission are based on “best scientific evidence”, which can be of high vs. poor quality, and everything in between.
- **The amount and quality of Recreational Fisheries data** is generally in the ‘poor’ end. Much more Commercial Fisheries data is available, and continuously produced. The EMFF is available but very little is spent on recreational fisheries data.\*
- **Shortcomings:**
  - **Very few time series;** for a few species; only for some countries
  - **Data collection initiated too late – when a stock is overfished**  
Control Regulation’s Article 55(3): “..Member States shall monitor, on the basis of a sampling plan, the catches of stocks subject to recovery plans..”
  - **..prompting unwelcome and unfair drastic measures like this year’s ban of keeping any Northern sea bass** (while segments of the commercial fisheries sector still are allowed to land and sell this species).

# The EU's Common Fisheries Policy is too vague on Recreational Fisheries

- There is only one explicit mention of Recreational Fisheries in the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), namely Recital 3:  
“Recreational fisheries can have a significant impact on fish resources and Member States should, therefore, ensure that they are conducted in a manner that is compatible with the objectives of the CFP.”
- **Open for interpretation:** Which CFP articles and provisions concern Recreational Fisheries? A couple of examples:
  - The CFP shall ensure environmentally sustainable fisheries, as well as economic, social and employment benefits. **Do parts or all of that concern the Recreational Fisheries Sector?**
  - **Does this?** Art2(5): “The CFP shall, in particular... promote coastal fishing activities, taking into account socio-economic aspects”
  - **In short: The time has come for explicit, clear and prominent phrasing of Recreational Fisheries in the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (next CFP reform process starts up this year – Green Paper)**

# Vague CFP inclusion - a cause for unfair treatment of the Recreational Fisheries Sector

- **The Commission** is more concerned about the fish stocks ('no fish, no fisheries') than the Member States, which for sake of 'national interest' fight for maximising their fishing opportunities (TACs and quotas).
- **Member States** often 'grow the cake' by agreeing a bigger TAC than proposed by the Commission, or water down targets to be reached, or extend the time to reach them.
- **This is doing harm to Recreational Fisheries**, as no part of the cake are allocated this sector (and therefore of no 'national interest' in this context), and the availability of the bigger fish is not made much of a priority, as it would be in a fishery managed for recreational purposes.
- **Thus, present and future recreational fishing opportunities**, the fishing quality, and the socio-economic value are by and large **residuals** of commercial fisheries interests and management. This doesn't secure fair and equitable treatment of recreational fishers, or the businesses and jobs depending on their spending.





# Definition of 'fisheries sector'

- **When the Common Fisheries Policy was incepted** in the 1970s no consideration was given to Recreational Fisheries. The EU fisheries decision-making and management apparatus was, and still is, formed and run predominantly for commercial fisheries management only
- **Fish are a publicly owned resource**, but this is not reflected by the current management and decision making. Unfair private ownership of fish (quotas) is used extensively, while the public can just hope that not all fish become 'privately' owned, or managed for that purpose only.
- **Change is needed.** A good start would be to use this definition from the Data Collection Regulation (17/5/2017) in the CFP:

## Article 3(1):

**'fisheries sector' means activities related to commercial fisheries, recreational fisheries, aquaculture and industries processing fisheries products"**



## Improving the institutional make up

- **ICES provides** the European Union with scientific advice on fishing opportunities, and more.

A few years ago ICES launched:

**‘The Working Group on Recreational Fisheries Surveys (WGRFS)’**, which serves as ‘the ICES forum for planning and coordination of marine recreational fishery data collection for stock assessment purposes’

- **Within the EU Commission, likewise, a Unit dedicated to Recreational Fisheries management and development would be timely and most welcome**

# Improving the Data Collection

## - licenses, permits, registration

- **In about half of the EU Member States** with a coastline a recreational fishing license and/or permit is required (for a day, week, month or year). So, the basis for providing more and better data is there, just waiting for being prioritised, and sufficiently funded.
- **The introduction of a marine license** or permits is not very welcome by many sea anglers, which see it as just another tax. They might have a point, depending on how the revenue is spent:
  - When Portugal introduced a marine license most of the revenue was earmarked retired commercial fishers.
- **If the purpose of a license** solely is to get a better idea how many recreational fishers there are, and a mean to get in contact with them, then the Italian model is sufficient: No pay, but obligatory sign up (more than 800,000 sea anglers have signed up).

# Improving the Data Collection - funding -

- **EMFF** (European Maritime and Fisheries Fund) is 'under-used'. Arguably, a reason for that is admin hassle and manpower to acquire and manage the funding/project. Maybe some scheme changes could bring down the hassle and increase the use of EMFF funding?
- **Excise tax on tackle** - launched in US several decades ago: 'The Hunting and Fishing Excise Taxes'  
<http://asafishing.org/facts-figures/studies-and-surveys/benefits-to-business/>  
Unfortunately, not possible for EU to copy and implement the scheme (national prerogative). Sweden has tried to bring a scheme into being several times but failed so far.

# Improving the Data Collection - new technologies -

- **“Pilot project — Control scheme for recreational catches of sea bass”** In the EU 2018/19 budget 300,000 euros is allocated to this project (proposed by MEP Cadec), to: ... *"develop innovative tools to ensure an efficient and harmonized control by Member States of sea bass recreational catches in the Atlantic. In particular, it should test electronic reporting tools, which could be filled in for example via a smartphone application..."*
- **Unfortunately**, the EU has adopted for this year a total ban on keeping any recreational catch of Northern bass.
- **Thus one important motivation factor** that sea anglers would sign up to such a log-book scheme voluntarily (by keeping bass against log-book data as ‘payment’) is lost for now – unless exemption is given, or the ‘new biomass’ data delivered in April shows room for some retention...

# Improving the Data Collection

## - a big step forward -

- Both decision-makers and managers as well as the businesses dependant on recreational fishers' spending need more and better data.
    - Businesses need data and certainty for forecasting and strategy
  - **EFTTA suggests** that the Commission brings together experts from national ministries and stakeholders to discuss and deliver a strategy and plan for:
    - **Data and statistics:** wishes and needs;
    - **An every five year survey** on recreational fisheries alone or combined, as done in the US:  
“Survey of Fishing, Hunting, & Wildlife-Associated Recreation”  
[www.census.gov/programs-surveys/fhwar.html](http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/fhwar.html)
- And how to secure funding, which doesn't dry up?

# Thank you and do not forget ...

## Life is short. Go fishing.



TAKEMEFISHING.org



TAKEMEFISHING.org

