



# Improving selectivity in trawl fishing 2015-2021



22 November 2021, Virtual Meeting  
MEDAC



- The catching of unwanted species is a pervasive problem in fisheries. In most cases unwanted catches are returned dead to the sea as discards.
- In Mediterranean European fisheries, discarding usually occurs because potentially commercial species are below the minimum size allowed for consumption or are of low commercial value.
- With current fishing methods, undersize fish make up the bulk of catches of hake and red mullet in the Mediterranean.

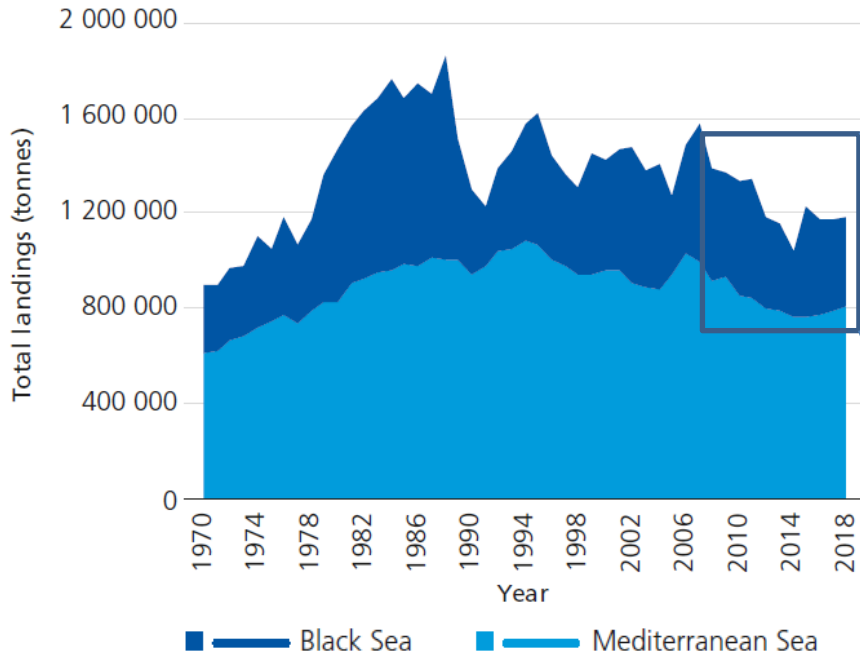




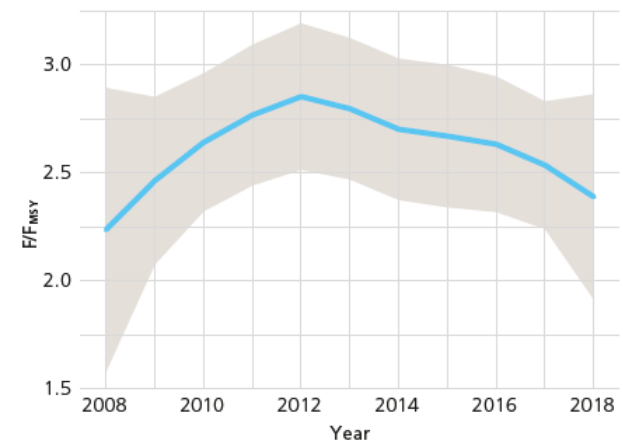
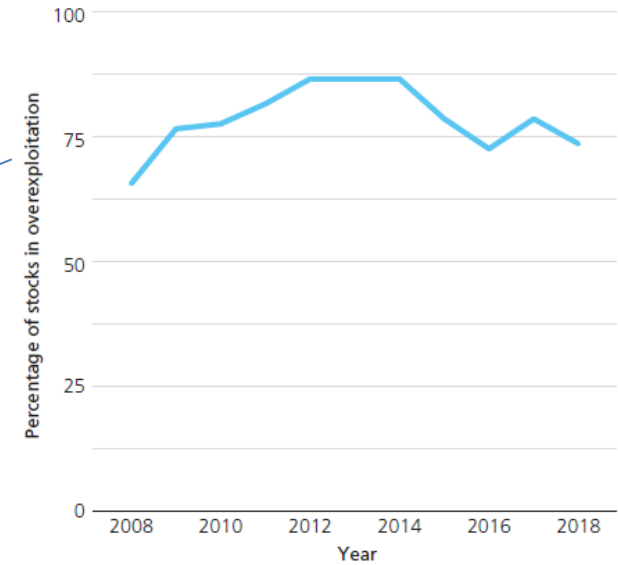
- Discarding damages fish stocks by killing juvenile individuals before they reach reproductive age.
- Trawls fishing operations damage habitat-forming invertebrates by fishing on sensitive habitats.
- Unselective fishing practices contribute to overfishing

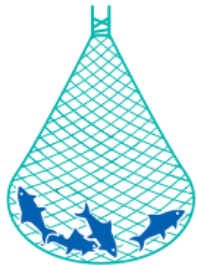


## Trends in landings



## Trends in exploitation

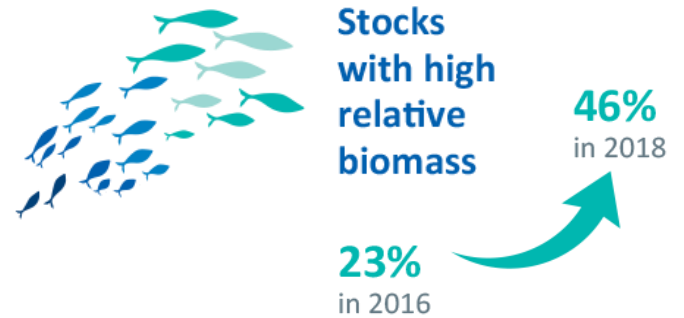




**88%**  
in 2012

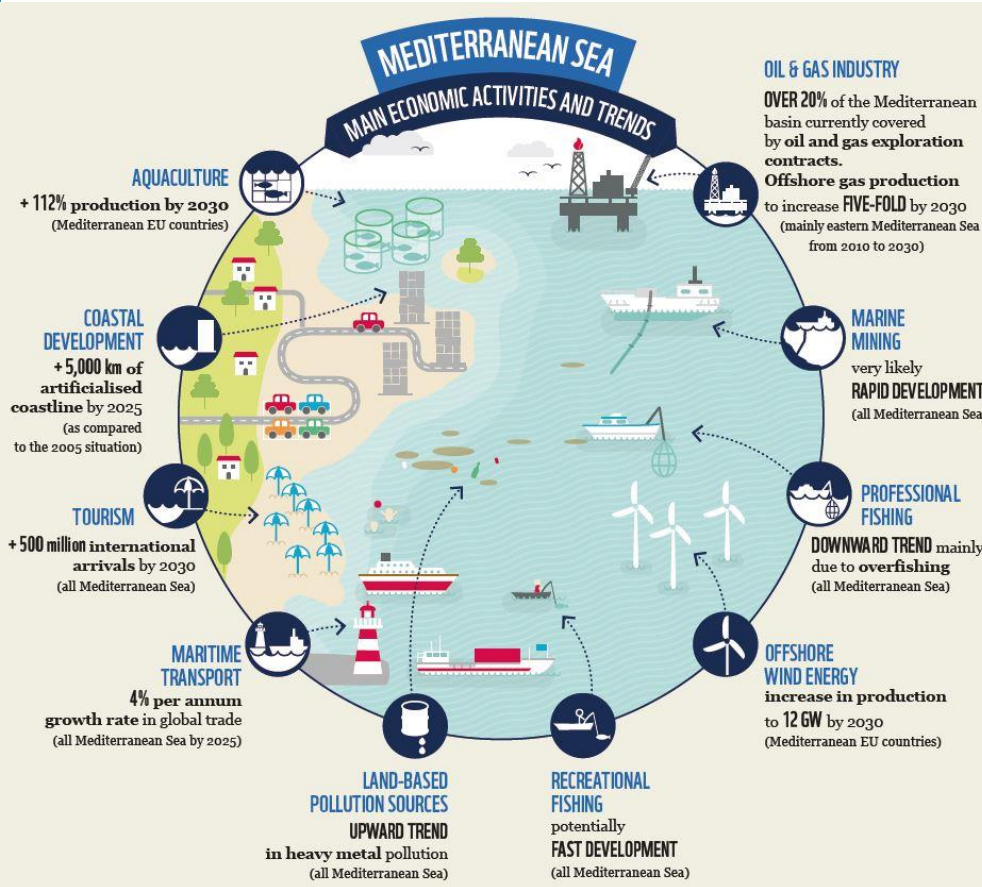
**Stocks fished  
outside  
sustainable  
limits**

**75%**  
in 2018



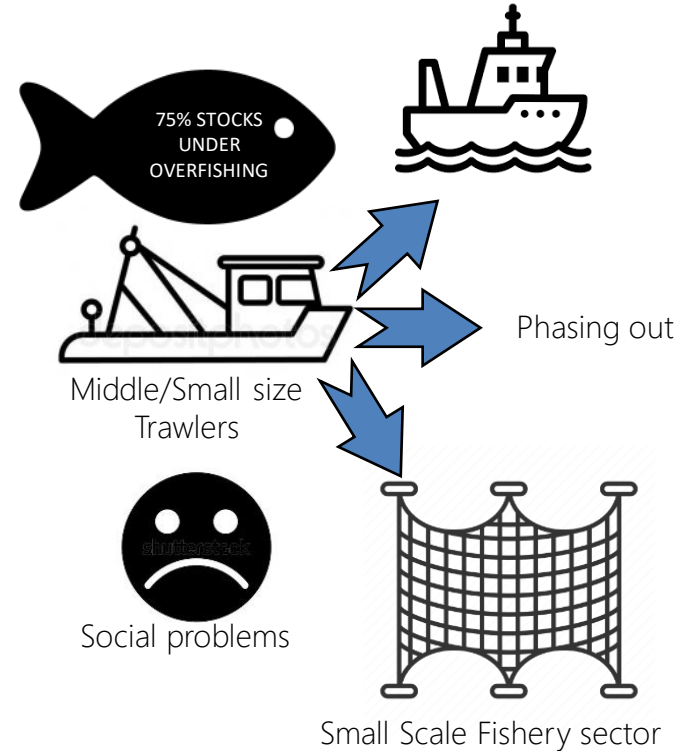


# BACKGROUND



# CONTEXT

Large scale/industrial Trawlers



## WHAT IS THE MINOUW PROJECT?

The **MINOUW Project** is made up of over 15 different maritime science institutes and bodies from across Europe, and brings together scientists, fisherman, NGOs and policy makers.

It aims to encourage the adoption of fishing technologies and practices that reduce unwanted catches, and contribute to the eventual elimination of discards in European fisheries.



### Common Fishery Policy

(2013)

In February 2013 the European Parliament voted for reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, including measures to overcome stocks overfishing and **to end discards**.

The reformed CFP came into effect from 1 January 2014

### Landing Obligation

(2019)

Common Fisheries Policy and includes in **Article 15 the Landing Obligation (Discard ban)**. **The Landing Obligation force to land all species subject to a regulation, but these landings are not for direct human consumption. LO fully enter into force on 2019.**

### Minouw Project

(2015-2019)

The [MINOUW](#) Project is made up of over 15 different maritime science institutes and bodies from across Europe, and brings together scientists, fisherman, NGOs and policy makers. It aims to encourage the adoption of fishing technologies and practices that reduce discards in European/Mediterranean fisheries.





A key element of the Minouw project was the participation of fishers in the identification of the solutions to improve selectivity.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

for discards-free fisheries

## Scientists should:

- Work with fishers to **develop more selective fishing gear**, investigating both well-known solutions (e.g. grids) as well as promising innovations (e.g. artificial light).
- Carry out **rigorous analysis** of the results of field trials for more selective fishing gear.
- Study the **biological and economic impacts** of deploying more selective fishing gear (while making clear independent recommendations about its use) and be realistic about its limits.
- Use statistically robust methods to **quantify bycatch and discard levels** to inform fisheries management decisions.
- Maintain and update the **EU Data Collection Framework**.

## Fishers should:

- **Plan fishing operations carefully** to minimize adverse impacts on the ecosystem: attaining sustainability is in the interests of the whole industry. This includes both modifying fishing gear and practices to maximize the target catch, as well as adopting recommended 'gentle care' at-vessel handling procedures to increase survival rates in legally discarded species.
- **Explore new commercial avenues**: the introduction of the Landing Obligation gives fishers new challenges in food production, which could lead to the creation of new business models. These might include creating value from less-well-known seafood products, exploring the market for non-direct human consumption, and working with vertically integrated seafood companies.
- **Provide full catch data** for scientists and fisheries management agencies to improve information on current stock status, future stock trends and sustainable harvest levels.
- **Minimize negative impacts** on sensitive or protected species – including seabirds, pelagic sharks and other megafauna – by adopting proven mitigation tools such as Turtle Exclusion Devices or Bycatch Reduction Devices.

2019-2021

IMPEMED Project  
(Adriatic/West  
Mediterranean)

WWF-Selectivity  
Project (Strait of Sicily)

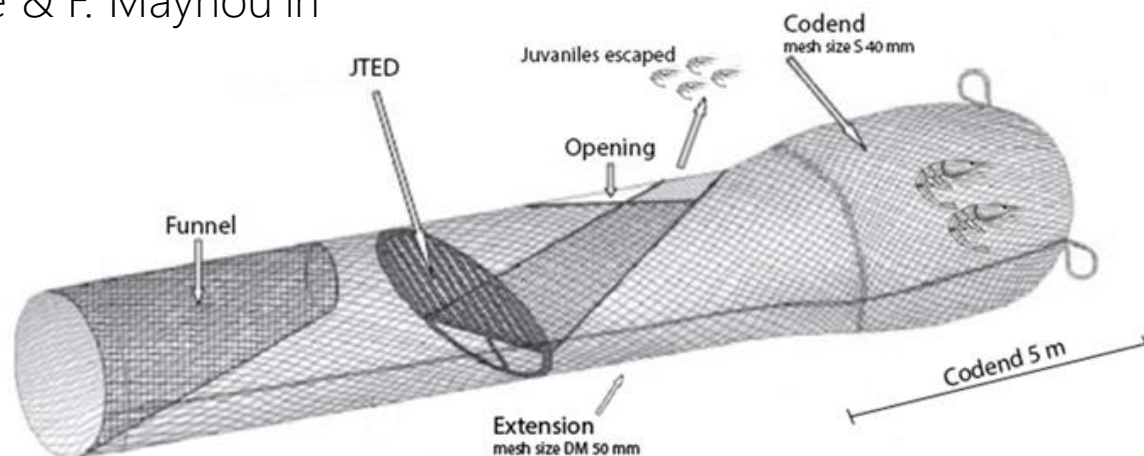


## Grids and T90 panels

- Solutions identified : Grids, T90 panels in the deep-water rose shrimp/hake trawl fishery
- Location identified (Mazara del Vallo, Italy, & Blanes; Spain).
- Experimental design developed and concluded in Sicily and Catalunya.
- Results presented by S.Vitale & F. Maynou in GFCM WGFIT (2021)



T90 mesh







Minouw, IMPEMED and WWF Selectivity projects results have been presented to the GFCM Working Group on Fishing Technology ( WGFiT), which suggested the implementation of a pilot project in the Strait of Sicily to test grids and T90 panels on a large scale in Italy and Tunisia. GFCM SAC endorsed it and last week it was formally approved by the GFCM Commission (2-6 November 2021). It will be implemented in 2022. Morocco has asked to be part of it.







**General Fisheries Commission  
for the Mediterranean  
Commission générale des pêches  
pour la Méditerranée**

## GFCM Decisions (44° GFCM Commission)

### *Management of central Mediterranean fisheries*

29. Considering that European hake and deep-water rose shrimp stocks, as well as most red mullet stocks in the Strait of Sicily were overexploited and in overexploitation, and that the existing management plan was due to end in 2021, the Commission, based on a proposal by the European Union, adopted Recommendation GFCM 44/2021/12 on a multiannual management plan for bottom trawl fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily (geographical subareas 12 to 16), amending Recommendation GFCM/42/2018/5, as reproduced in Appendix 15. This recommendation extends the current management plan for one year and foresees assessing the effectiveness of existing and potential management measures towards the implementation of a long-term multiannual management plan. The Commission also agreed on the implementation of a large-scale multiannual pilot study on the **selectivity** of bottom trawl fisheries exploiting demersal stocks in the Strait of Sicily (Appendix 44/C).

### *Bycatch and fishing technology issues*

- Continue implementing the bycatch monitoring programme (both discards and incidental catch of vulnerable species) and related tests and evaluation of mitigation measures.
- Implement a multiannual pilot study on the **selectivity** of bottom trawl fisheries, in particular demersal fisheries in the Strait of Sicily (GSAs 12 to 16) (Appendix 44/C) and possibly in Adriatic and western Mediterranean fisheries.





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**WWF**

THANK YOU