

Results of the STECF summer plenary meeting on the Compensation Mechanism

West Med MAP



Cofinançat per
la Unió Europea



Generalitat
de Catalunya



CSIC
CONSEJO SUPERIOR DE INVESTIGACIONES CIENTÍFICAS



Institut
de Ciències
del Mar

Introduction

5 years transitional WM-MAP period (2020-2024) → 1st January 2025 permanent phase

Proposal for fishing opportunities for 2026

The European Commission suggests **maintaining fishing management practices**:

1. **Regulate fishing effort** for trawlers and longliners
2. **Catch limits** for deep-water shrimps
3. **Compensation mechanisms** (CM) for trawlers

STECF summer plenary (25-02)

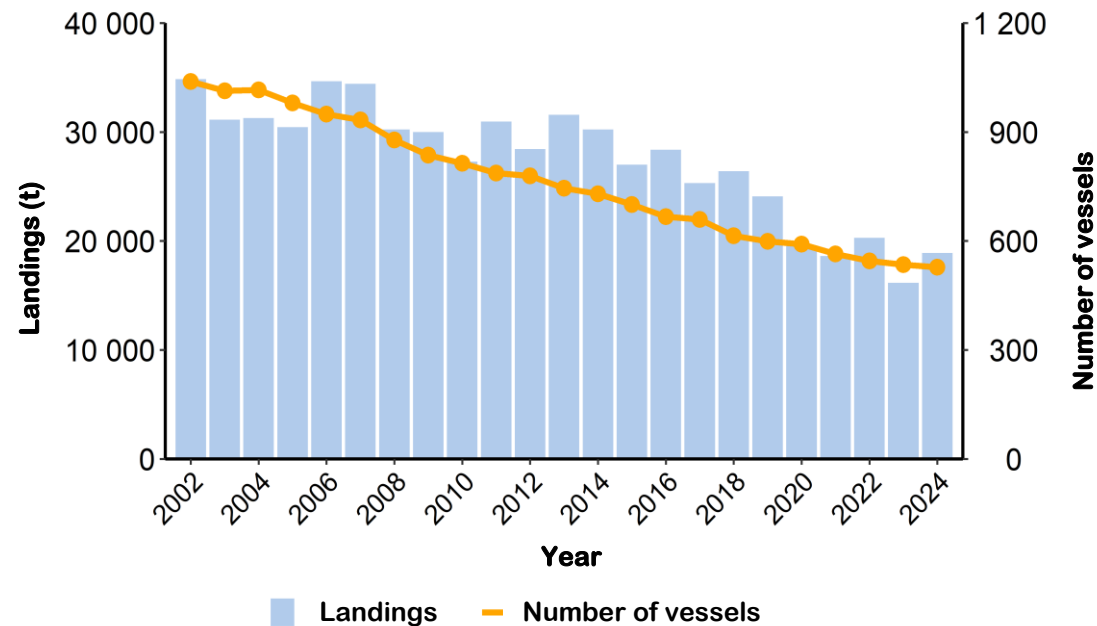
Assessment of measures in the CMs:

- TOR 1: Review CM criteria and evaluate their potential effectiveness on stocks recovery
- TOR 2: Review additional recommendations
- TOR 3: Review which criteria are the most efficient for stocks recovery and socio-economic impact. Suggest new conservation measures

Effort reduction conducted during the last years

Number vessels, days at sea and landings

Northern GSA 6



Reduction during the last 20 years (2004 – 2024)

- 42% reduction number trawlers
- 50% reduction total days at sea
- 35% reduction landings

Effort reduction during WM-MAP (2020 to 2024)

- 20% reduction in number of vessels (trawlers)
- 20% reduction in total days at sea
- 23% reduction in landings
- 25% reduction in number fishers

Current situation (2025)

- **27 days** + compensation up to 2024 assigned days (approx. 130)
- Most of the fleet is now out of fishing days
- Multispecific fishery is being driven by one single species

Compensation mechanism (CM)

EU Regulation 219/2025

Article 8 Compensation mechanism (CM)

EU Regulation 219/2025	Compensation mechanism	Increase of fishing days	Before 01/05/25	>40% vessels	100% vessels
a (new)	Remove OTT	24,00%	35,00%	40,00%	
b (mod)	Selectivity 45 mm	9,30%	18,60%	25,00%	30,00%
c (mod)	Selectivity 50 mm	15,40%	30,80%	40,00%	50,00%
d (new)	Closure 6 w 100-500 m (May-Sep)	10,00%			
e,f (mod)	[GSA 1,2,5-11] Closure 4 w (May-Oct)	15,00%			
g (new)	National closure area 5% 100-500 m	4,00%			
h (new)	Temporary closure area: Reduction 20% catch of hake spawners	13,00%			
i	Temporary closure area: Reduction 25% catch of juveniles + Reduction 20% catch of spawners	3,00%			
j	Permanent closure >800 m	3,00%			
k	Low contact otter boards	3,00%			
l	Highly selective gear: Reduction 25% catch of juveniles + Reduction 20% catch of spawners	3,00%			

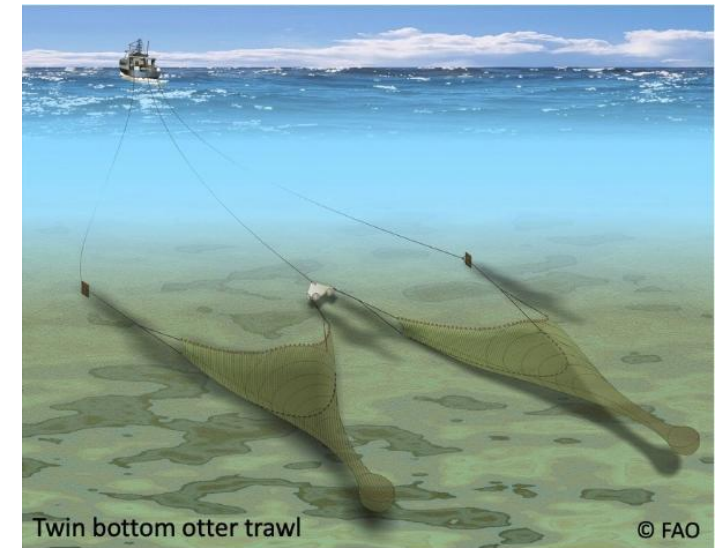
Remove Twin bottom otter trawls (OTT)

Increase of fishing days: 24 - 40%

STECF

- Only affects GSA7 (French fleet)
- 1 fishing day with OTT gears represents 1.25 with Bottom trawls (OTB)
- OTT sweeps 30% more area than OTB
- More fuel consumption and economic performance (40-60% compared to OTB)

- GSAs that prohibited OTT in the past are not being compensated
- Other examples: The GSAs that historically reduced the number of days are penalized, as the reduction is applied to the effective fishing days

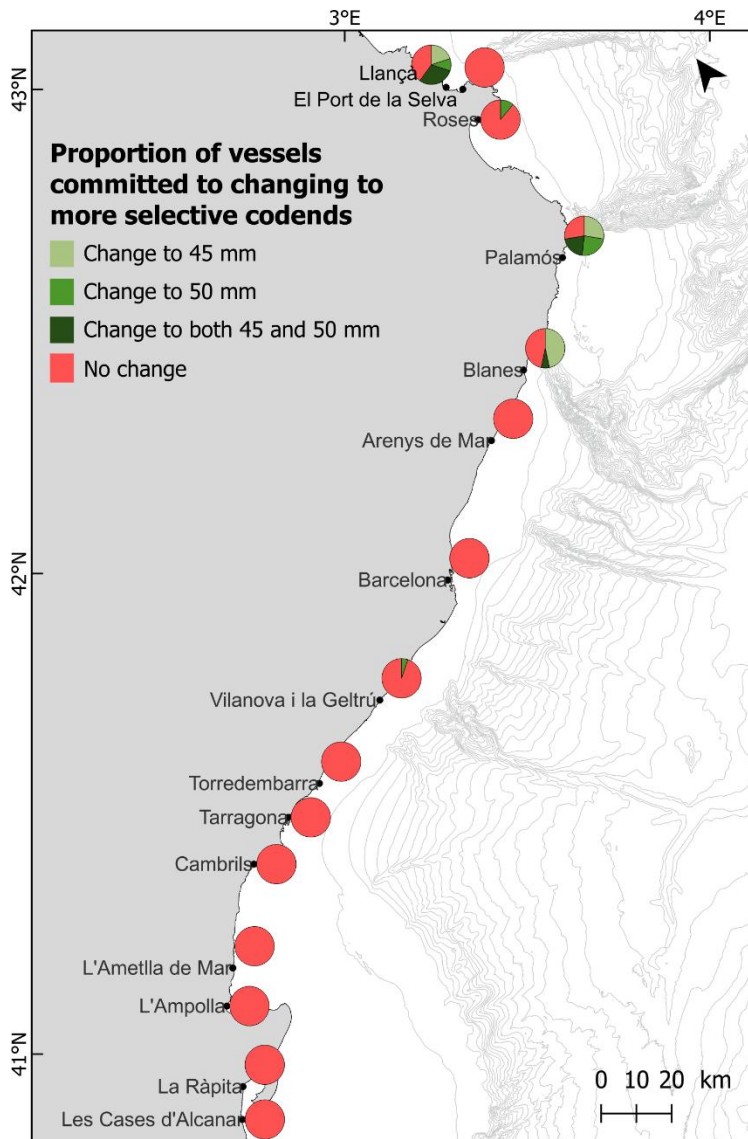


STECF comments: Selectivity

Increase of fishing days:
45mm: 9.3 - 30%
50mm: 15.4 – 50%

- **Promote** from individual voluntary level to a **fleet compulsory level**
- **Reduction in catches of small-sized individuals**
- **Exclusion of <20cm hake compared to 40mm**
- Measures that **reduce hake fishing mortality at age 0 will have limited effect** on recovering the stock to MSY levels
- **EC regulations lack specifications on codend length**, allowing short SM codends

Compulsory implementation of gear selectivity



- **Compulsory in the spanish Mediterranean from June 1st 2025**
- Low implementation until now (low % compensation)
- Time is needed to evaluate the effect of this measure, especially in the case of long-lived species



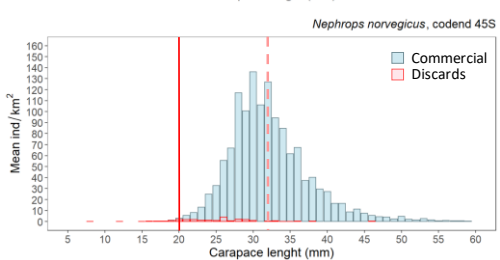
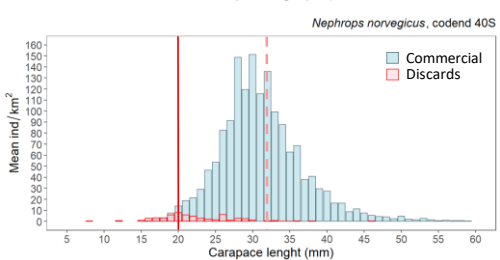
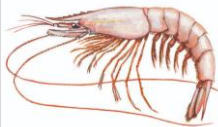
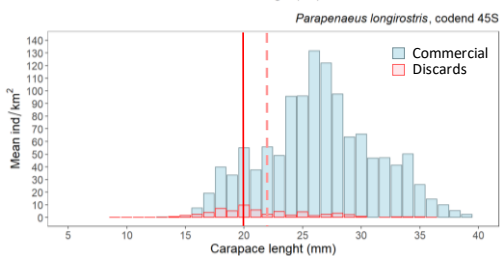
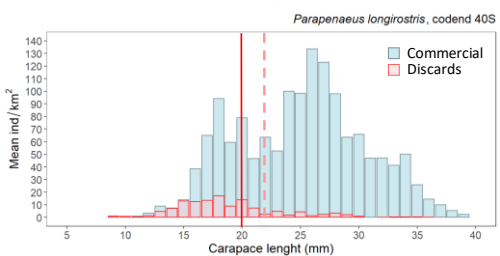
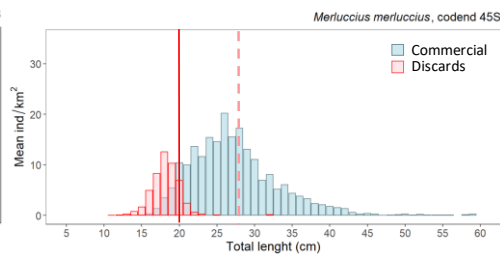
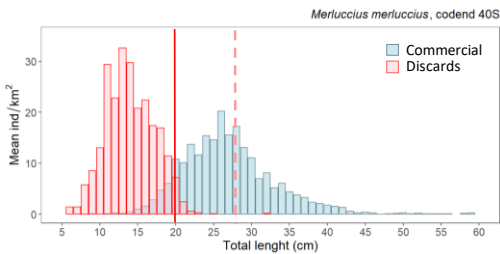
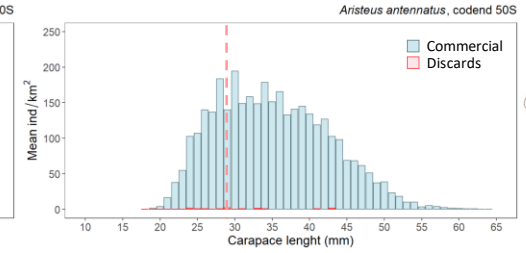
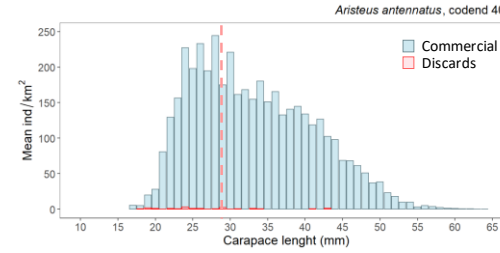
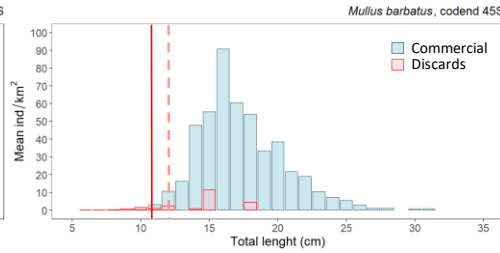
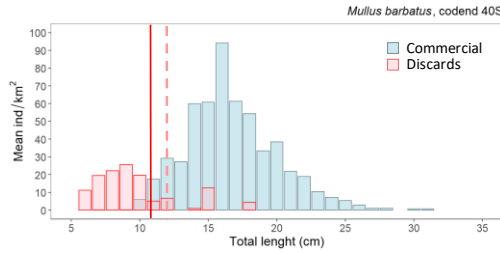
Improvements on gear selectivity

40 mm

45 mm

40 mm

50 mm



— MCRS for each species
 - - - Average of length at first maturity (L50)

STECF comments: Closures

General comment: Temporary closures will not allow restoring benthic habitats

Closure 6w 100-500m (May-Sep):

- Risk of fleet displacement

Increase of fishing days
10%

[GSA 1,2,5-11] Closure 4w (May-Oct):

- Beneficial for ARA as spawners aggregate, but economically detrimental
- End of summer -> 2nd peak of HKE reproduction appears
- GSA 9-11 already close in October

Increase of fishing days
15%

National permanent closure area 5% 100-500m:

- Better permanent closures applied to all gears

Increase of fishing days
4%

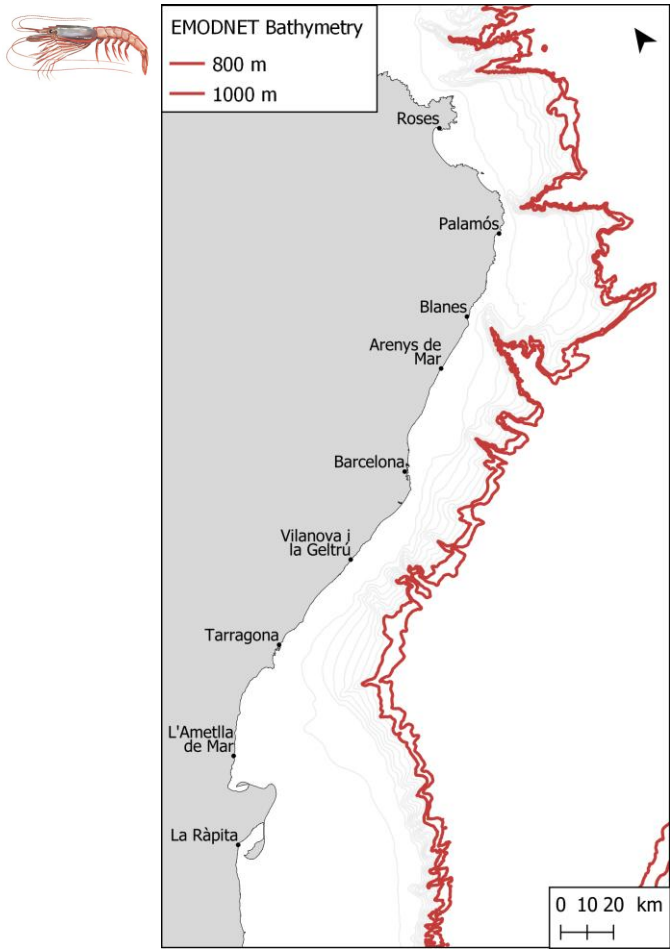
Temporary closure area for reduction 20% catch of hake spawners

- Not possible to evaluate effectiveness of the CM

Increase of fishing days
13%

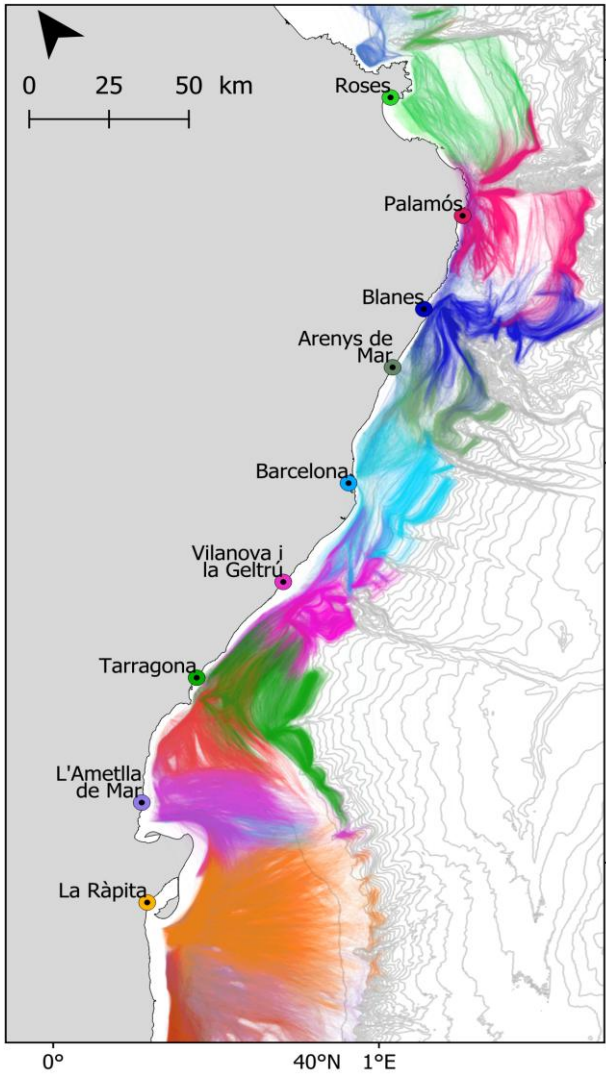
Permanent closure areas

800-1000m (10.3% fishable area in Catalonia)

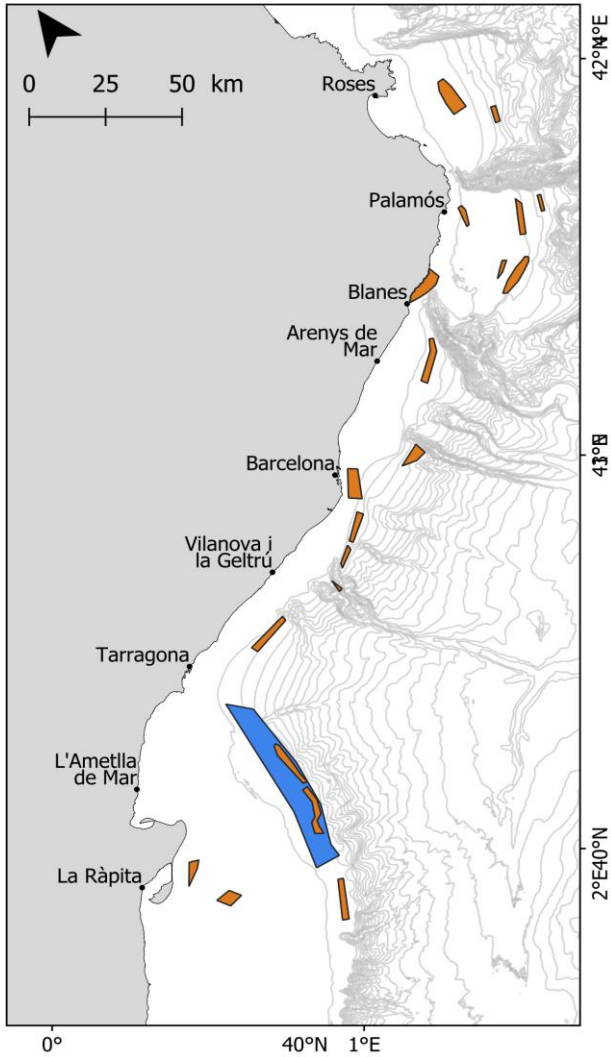


Increase of fishing days: 3%

100-500m (3.8% fishable area in Catalonia is protected)

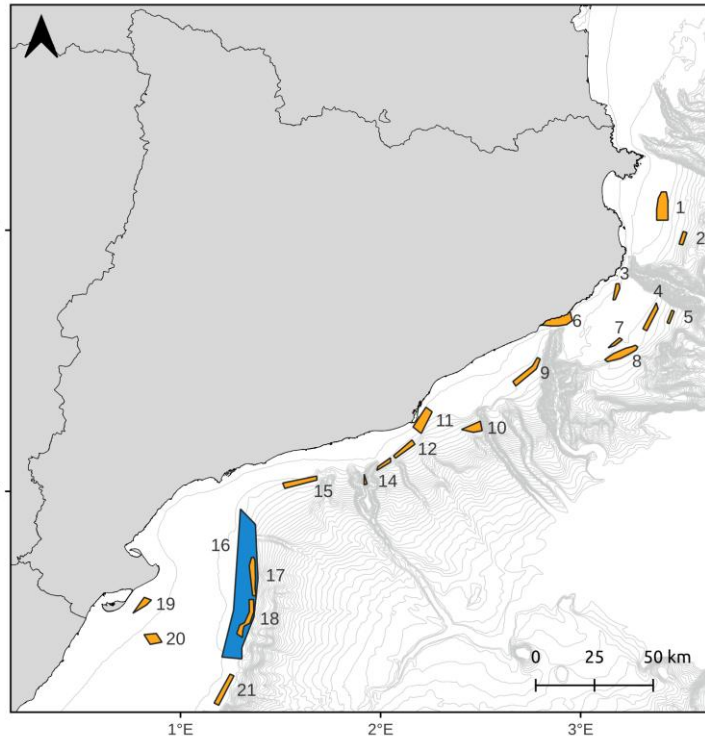


Increase of fishing days: 4%

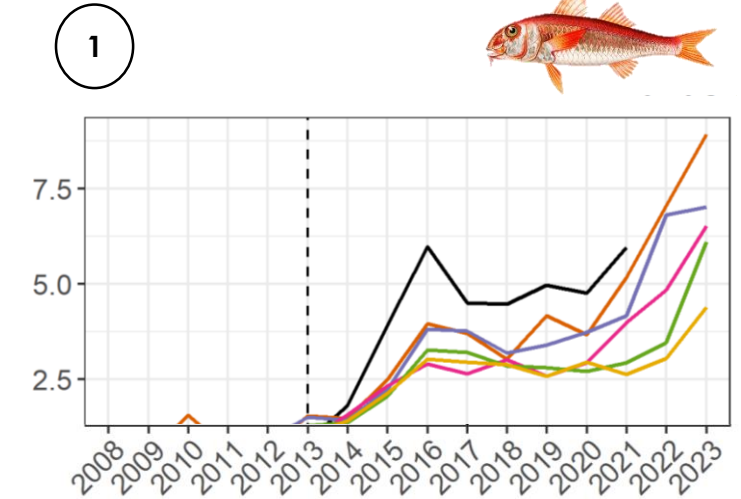
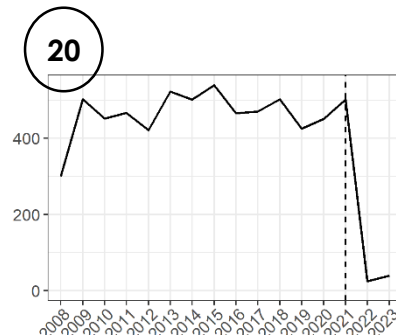
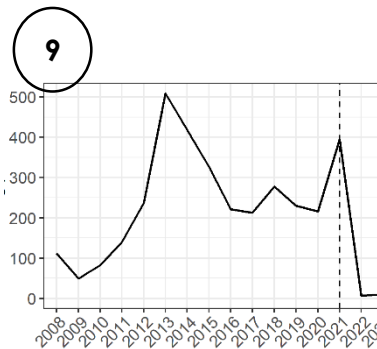
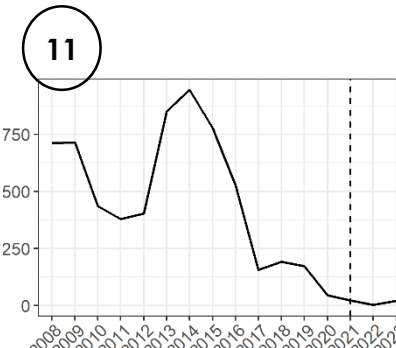
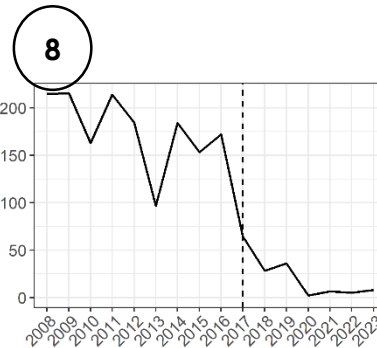
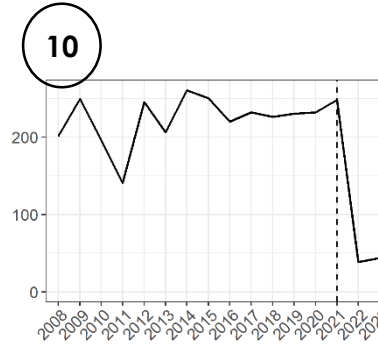
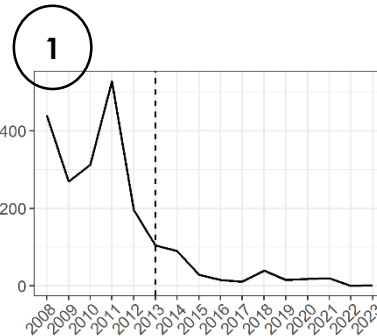


Permanent closure areas

Increase of fishing days: 4%

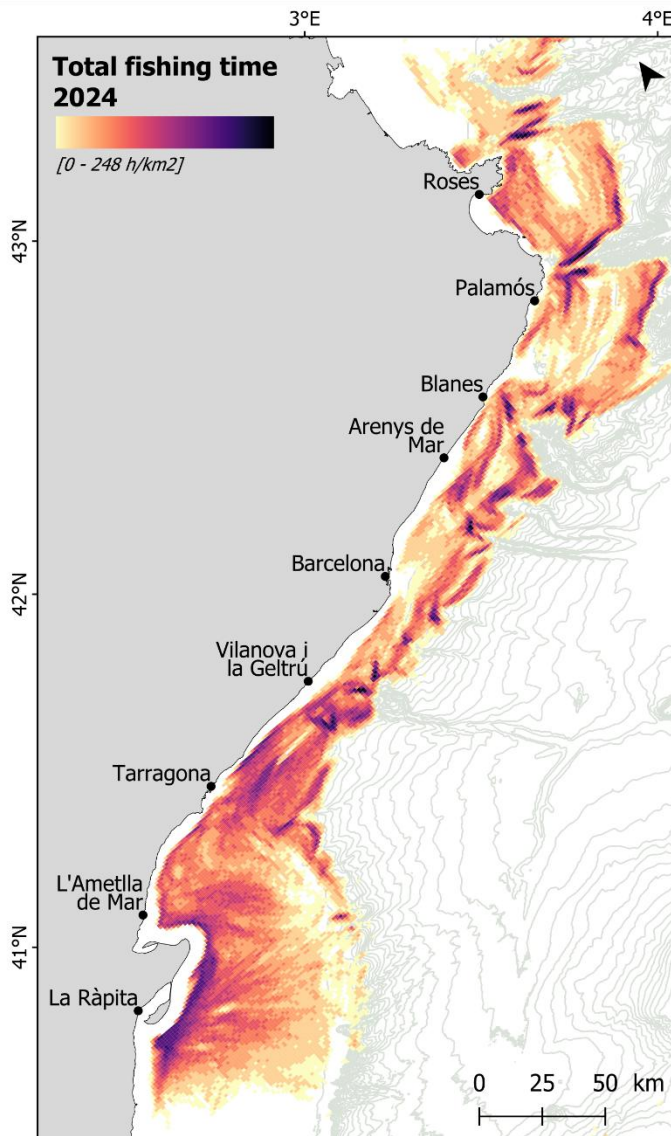


Fishing time (h/km²)



Permanent closure areas

Increase of fishing days: 4%



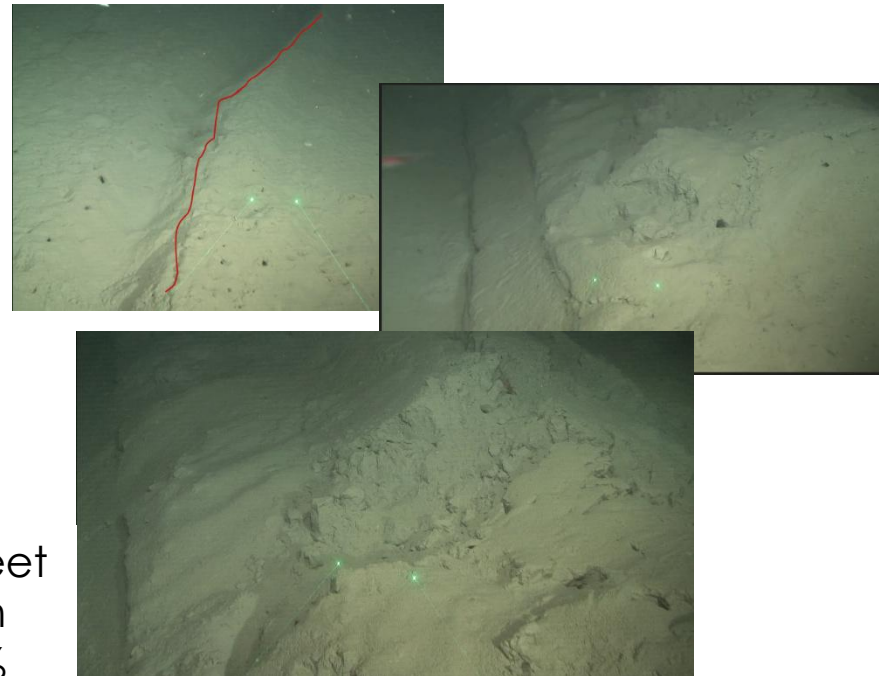
- Fisheries dynamics will **sweep entire fishable area even with less vessels**
- **No-take areas are essential** to population and ecosystem recovery
- **Needs more incentives** for implementation



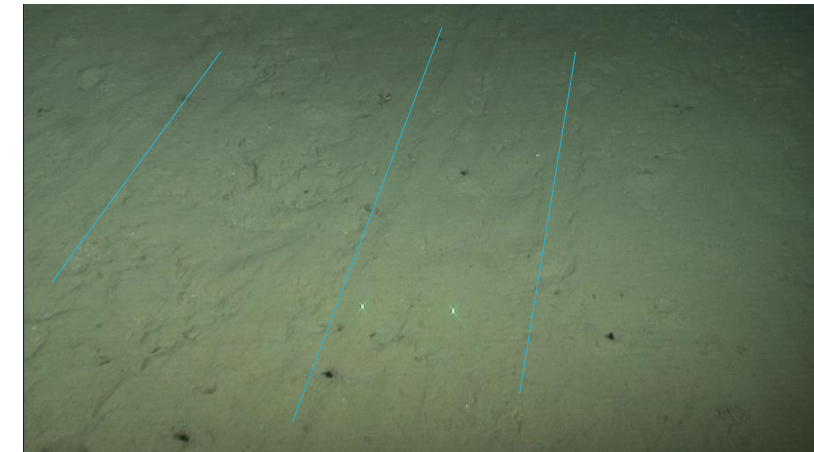
Low-contact otter boards

Increase of fishing days: 3%

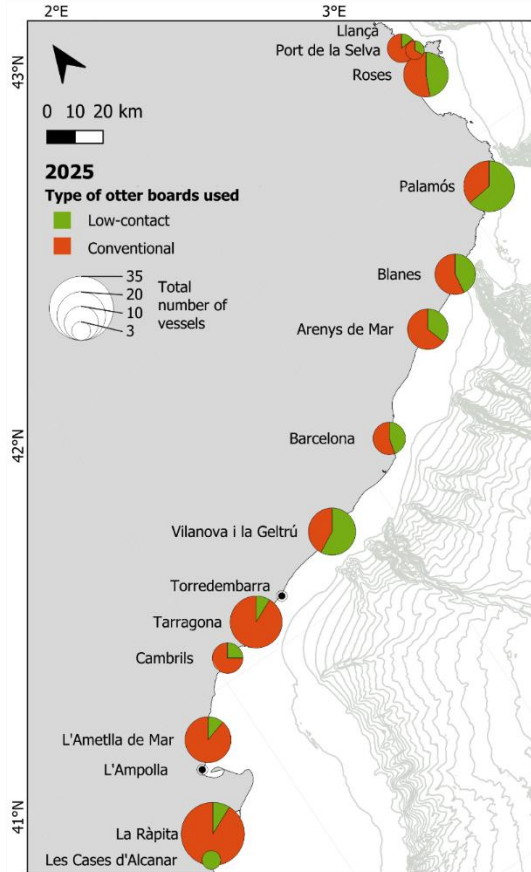
- Difficulty of translating benefits of low-contact otter boards to reduction in fishing days
- **Ecosystem recovery** (habitat recovery, burrowing species)
- CFP calls for ecosystem-based management but **low-contact otter boards get very little compensation**



Conventional



Low-contact



20.3% of the Catalan bottom trawl fleet was using low-contact otter boards in 2024. On April 2025 it reaches the 37% of the fleet

STECF general remarks

- It is **difficult to assess the coherence between** the effectiveness of **compensation measures** **and** the percentage of recovery **days** assigned
- The **overlap of** different regulatory and **compensation** schemes **with quotas complicates evaluation** of individual impacts
- **Frequent redefinition** of compensation mechanisms **leads member states to adopt short-term**, fragmented **measures** that reduce effectiveness
- A **longer time series** of catch and effort data per vessel and country **is needed** to identify trends and fishing pattern changes linked to compensation mechanisms
- **Available data** and information currently collected within the Data Collection Framework **do not allow to assess the social impact** of the implementation of CMs
- STECF reiterates its **concern that CMs might impair the general objectives** of EU Reg 2019/1022

Catch limit on blue and red shrimp

Management of the blue and red shrimp



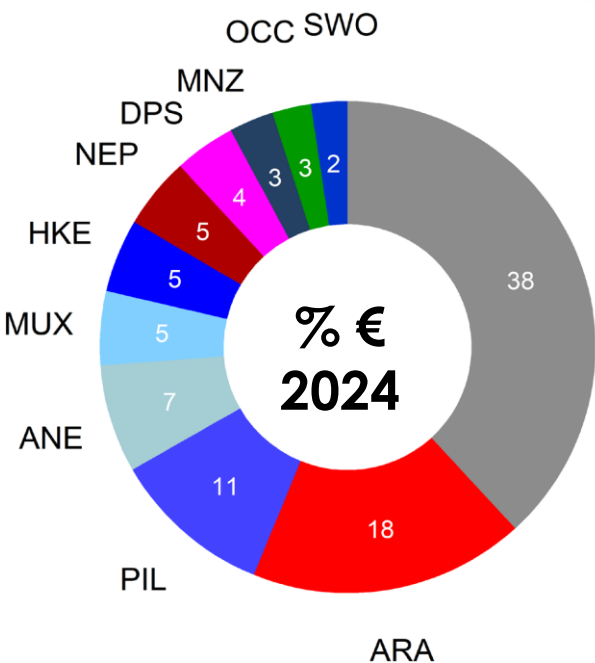
- Fished in submarine canyons by largest vessels (20-28 m LOA)
- Deep-sea metier (smaller vessels favor coastal)
- Most important species in revenues
- No discards

Particularities of the fishery

- Recruitment at **>800 m** (non-exploitable grounds)
- Dense shelf water cascading
- More **selective gear** in deep-sea fisheries
- Stock assessment results vary between models

Management measures affecting the fishery

- Reduction of **fishing days**
- **Catch limit** on blue and red shrimp (Spain)
 - 2022: **872 t**
 - 2023: **828 t**
 - 2024: **787 t**
 - 2025: **708 t**



Stock	Source	Assessment method	B Ref. Point	F Ref. Point	Ref. Year	Area	Trend B	Trend F	Bcurr/B tgt	Fcurr/F tgt
ARA	GFCM WGSAD 24	SPICT	B/Bmsy	F/Fmsy	2023	GSA 1,5	↑	↓	above	below
	GFCM WGSAD 24	a4a	B/Bmsy	F/Fmsy	2023	GSA 6	⇅	↓	below	above
	ICATMAR 25-06	SPiCT	B/Bmsy	F/Fmsy	2023 2024	GSA 6	↑	↓	above	below
	STECF EWG 24-10	a4a		F/Fmsy	2023	GSA 1-2		↓		above
	STECF EWG 24-10	a4a	B/Bmsy	F/Fmsy	2023	GSA 5, 6-7	⇅	↓	below	above

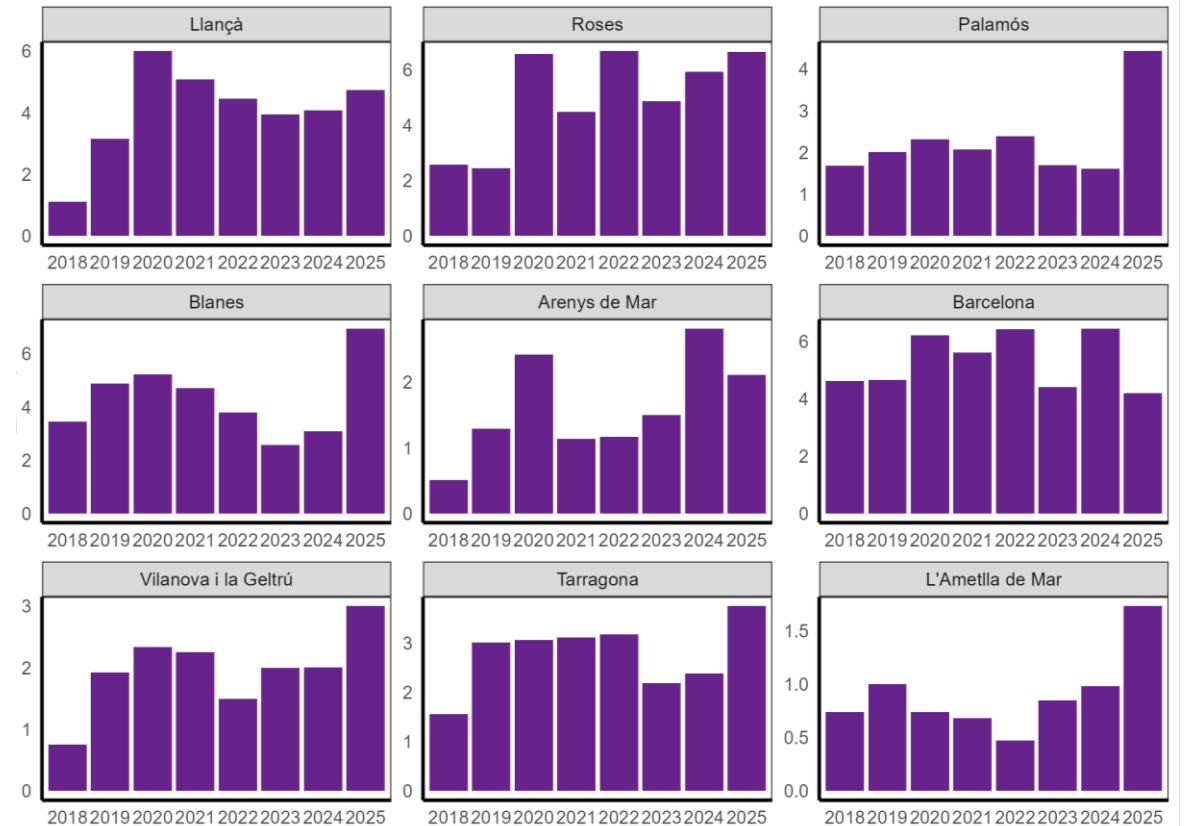
Management of the blue and red shrimp

Quota update N GSA 6 (30/09/2025)

Quota is at **94%** before yearly peak in price around Christmas

- Some ports are **changing fishing strategy** in favor of fishing over more coastal grounds, to avoid surpassing shrimp catch limit
- Usually the largest vessels with a **higher fishing capacity** (20-28 m)
- Transformation deep into coastal days

Average percentage of days in mixed metier
Data up to September 30th 2025

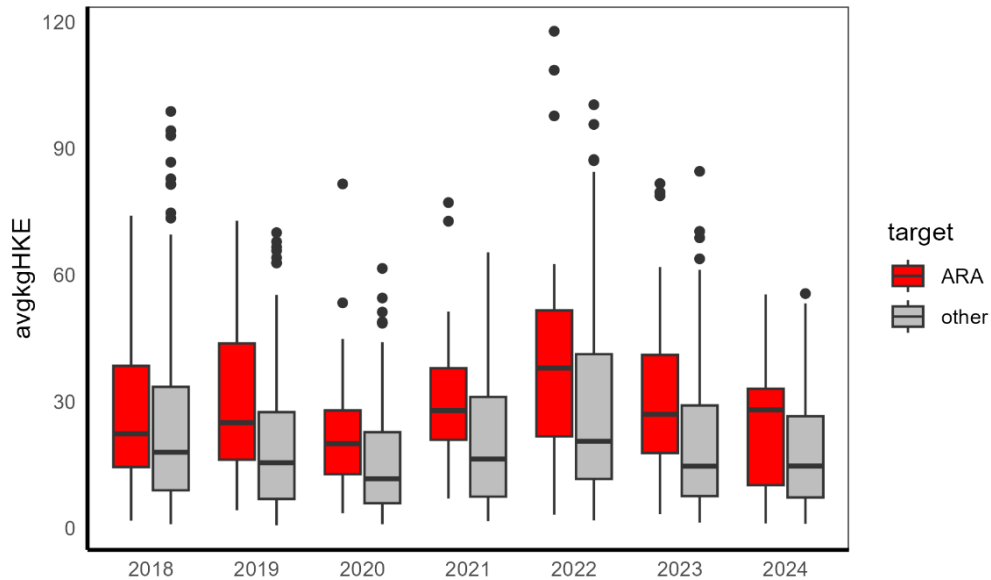


Management of the blue and red shrimp

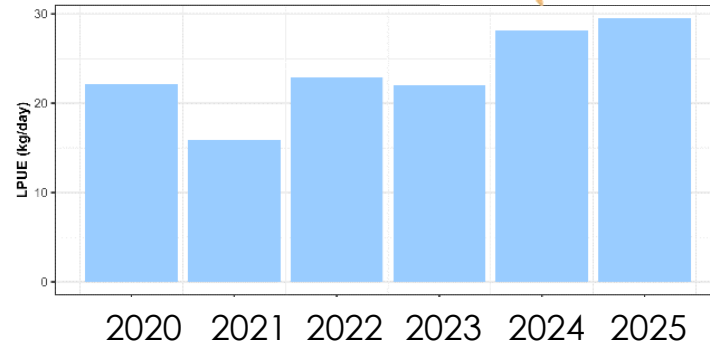
- Larger vessels catch more fish
- 2025 shows higher LPUE values for species of interest

Landings Per Unit Effort January-September

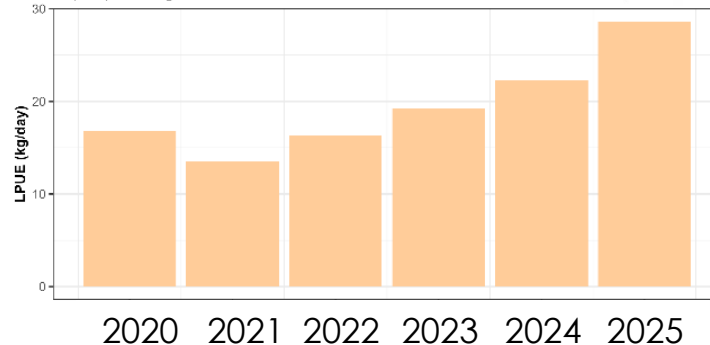
HKE landings for ARA fleet and others
Coastal métier



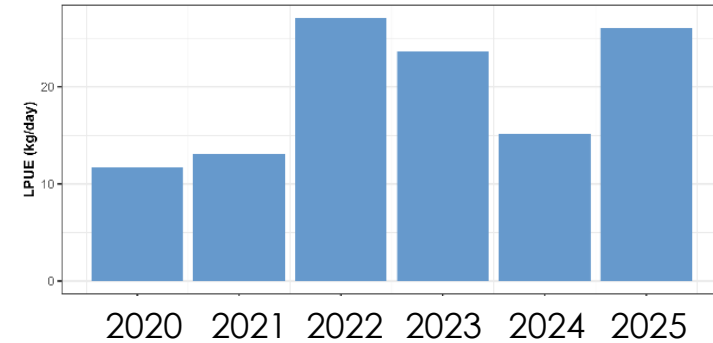
Mulletts
Mullus spp.



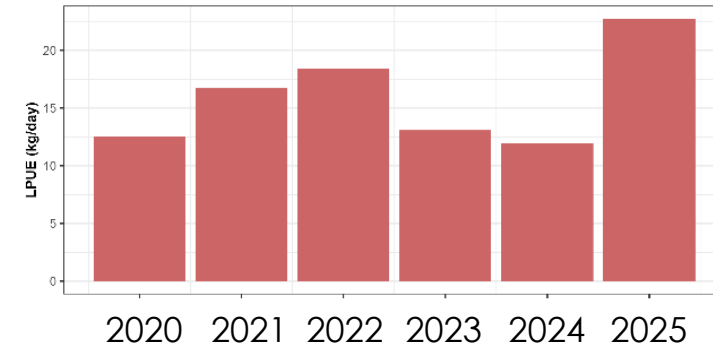
Norway lobster
Nephrops norvegicus



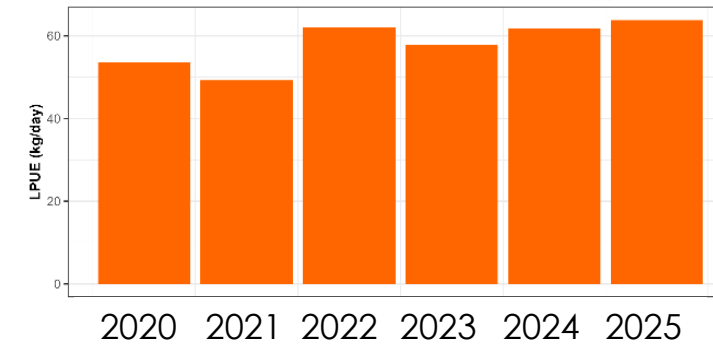
European hake
Merluccius merluccius



Deep-water rose shrimp
Parapenaeus longirostris



Blue and red shrimp
Aristeus antennatus



Key messages

- According to STECF 25-02, **the compensation mechanisms might impair reaching MSY, but we think it is an essential measure** for economical and social balance of the local fishery in the Western Mediterranean
- **Compensation mechanisms require** stronger **commitment** and clearer regulatory support **from administrations** to be effective. **Incentives should be substantial enough** to drive real implementation
- **Permanent closure areas and technological improvements** (e.g., low-contact otter boards) are **not adequately compensated** relative to their ecological value
- The **continuity of compensations remains uncertain**: will existing measures continue to receive support once they become part of the status quo?
- The recent **quota on blue and red shrimp, combined with reduced fishing days, is having harmful consequences** for the fishing system. It displaces the fleet toward coastal areas, increases effort, may encourage practices that were long absent and threatens the credibility of the data. Such measures should not be used as future management tools in the Mediterranean
- Ongoing **regulatory instability discourages** investment in **sustainable practices**. A comprehensive **review of the management system is needed**

Thank you

Jordi Ribera Altimir (jribera@icm.csic.es)

🦋 @jordiribe

🌐 icatmar.cat

✂ [@icatmar1](https://twitter.com/icatmar1)

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