



## October and November 2017

### Common Language Group e-alert

(amalgamation of adhoc news alerts issued to CLG circulation list by email in Oct and Nov 2017)

### Common Language Group

<http://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/discussion-forums/the-common-language-group>

### Seafish publications and news

As a follow up to the meeting the Seafood 2040 strategic framework has now been published. [Seafood 2040 - A Strategic Framework for England \(SF2040\)](#) sets out a vision for the seafood supply chain. It identifies actions for how the industry can grow to the recommended consumption level of two servings of fish per person per week, while ensuring continued sustainability of supply in both the wild caught and aquaculture sectors. The framework has been created by an expert panel with members from across the seafood value chain including catching, aquaculture, processing, international trade, retail, foodservice and science. It is the first time a full supply chain perspective has been used to develop a plan for the long-term future. The presentation given at the CLG meeting can also be found [here](#).

### Consultation on Responsible Fishing Ports Scheme. Opened 1 December 2017. Closes 29 January 2018.

A certification scheme is being developed to promote good practice in UK fishing ports and give seafood buyers added confidence in the quality and sustainability of the seafood landed there. In a move to assure buyers of a fishing port's good practice, Seafish is currently running a Responsible Fishing Ports Scheme (RFPS) pilot programme and is seeking input and feedback from the seafood industry and other interested parties, as part of a public consultation. Feedback from pilot audits has been used to further develop the standard to ensure it is fit for purpose. Responses to the public consultation, which is open for 60 days, will also generate useful feedback to inform further changes to the draft Standard. The implementation of a workable and practical certification scheme for harbours and first sale establishments will serve to standardise working practices throughout the industry, provide clear guidelines and increase buyer confidence by regulating hygiene and safety standards. The current standard has been developed for large ports but future development of the standard will include a separate version to suit small ports and harbours.

[Public consultation page](#)

### **New Seafish Market Insight infographics**

[Click here](#) to see an overview of the UK Seafood Value Chain performance in 2016. This includes a top line summary of landings, imports, exports and sales to consumers in retail and foodservice. In 2016, UK consumers purchased £6.1bn of seafood, down 2.7% on 2015 levels.

[Click here](#) to find out more about the performance of each step of the value chain.

### Fisheries management

[Agreement on Commission proposal for a multi-annual fisheries management plan for the North Sea. 8 December 2017.](#)

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission has reached a political agreement on a multi-annual management plan for demersal fish stocks in the North Sea. This comprehensive plan covers more than 70% of the fishing sector, sets catch limits based on science and brings decision-making closer to the fisherman.

**[EP PECHE - Clear rules on prohibited fishing gear and more flexibility for EU fishermen. 22 November 2017.](#)**

The Fisheries Committee has approved a draft technical measures regulation. Currently there are more than 30 different EU regulations laying down technical measures for fisheries. The new regulation will introduce common measures on fishing gear, methods and allowed species for all EU waters, whilst at the same time allowing for regional, tailor-made measures to be adopted.

- **EU-wide prohibitions to progressively reduce juvenile catches would include, inter alia:** prohibited fishing gear and methods, i.e. toxic substances and explosives; general restrictions on the use of towed gear and static nets a list of fish and shellfish species fishing for which is banned restrictions on catches of marine mammals, seabirds and marine reptiles, special provisions to protect sensitive habitats, and a ban on practices such as high-grading (discarding low-priced fish even though they should legally be landed) in order to reduce discarding.
- **Innovative fishing methods.** MEPs want the STECF (Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries) to assess innovative fishing gear, including electrical 'pulse trawls' which are used to drive fish up out of the seabed and into the net. This assessment should cover trial periods of at least four years. Trial use would be restricted to no more than 5% of existing vessels in that métier (i.e. using a specific type of gear in the same way). Use of such gear would be permitted on a commercial scale only if the assessment shows that it would not lead to 'direct or cumulative negative impacts' on the marine environment.
- **Regional measures and flexibility for EU fisheries.** Regional measures that deviate from the baselines would be introduced for the seven EU sea basins: North Sea, North Western Waters, South Western Waters, Baltic Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea and waters fished by EU boats in the Indian Ocean and West Atlantic. These measures would cover inter alia minimum conservation reference sizes, and closed or restricted areas. Member states and the Commission would have 18 months from the entry into force of the regulation to regional rules on mesh sizes.

**[Commission proposes fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and North Sea for 2018. 7 November 2017.](#)**

Ahead of the December Fisheries Council the Commission presented its proposal for fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and the North Sea for 2018 for 76 stocks: for 53 stocks the fishing quota is either increased or remains the same and for 23 stocks is reduced. For stocks for which scientific data are lacking and the data is not sufficient to properly estimate the stock's size, the Commission proposal follows scientific advice from ICES, i.e. cuts or increases of a maximum of 20%. As the size of some key fish stocks is increasing – notably for sole in the North Sea, northern hake and southern horse mackerel – so is the profitability of the fishing sector, with an estimated EUR 1.5 billion profit for 2017.

**[AGRIFISH Council agreement on 2018 catch limits in the Baltic Sea. 10 October 2017.](#)**

The European Council has agreed on 2018's total allowable catches (TACs) and national quotas for the ten commercially most important fish stocks in the Baltic Sea. In line with the Commission proposal based on International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) scientific advice, the agreement includes a roll-over for Western cod and an increase in catches for central herring (+20%) and sprat (+1%). For the remaining stocks, ministers decided on a reduction for Riga herring (-7%), salmon in the Gulf of Finland (-5%), main basin salmon (-5%), Eastern cod (-8%), Bothnian herring (-40%), Western herring (-39%) and plaice (-10%).

**[Northeast mackerel quotas cut 20% for 2018. 12 October 2017.](#)**

Norway, the EU and the Faroe Islands have agreed on a total quota for North East Atlantic mackerel of 816,797 metric tons for 2018. This is a 20% reduction from the quota for 2017; the International

Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) had recommended a 35% reduction. At the same time, the three coastal states agreed on a new management strategy for mackerel, in line with advice from ICES. The quota is divided between 183,857t to Norway, 102,924t to the Faroe Islands and 402,596t to the EU. This distribution is again based on the distribution key established in the tripartite agreement from 2014. The three coastal states have also set a share corresponding to 15.6% of the total quota for other coastal states, and those that fish mackerel in international waters.

### **IUU**

**[European Parliamentary Research Service briefing on IUU. 27 November 2017](#)**

**[EU list of vessels engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. 22 November 2017.](#)**

This establishes the EU list of vessels engaged in illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

**[Commission repeals Sri Lanka red card. 25 October 2017.](#)**

The European Commission withdrew the red card issued to Sri Lanka, indicating that it is no longer considered to be a non-cooperating country in relation to controlling illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The Commission noted that Sri Lanka has implemented the relevant international law obligations and adopted an adequate legal framework for fighting against IUU fishing and has established an adequate and efficient monitoring, control and inspection scheme for its fishing vessels. It has also created a deterrent sanctioning system, revised its fisheries legal framework and improved its compliance with Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMO) recommendations and resolutions.

**[Commission warns Vietnam over insufficient action to fight illegal fishing. 23 October 2017.](#)**

The European Commission is continuing its fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing worldwide by warning Vietnam, with a "yellow card", about the risk of it being identified as a non-cooperating country. The decision highlights that Vietnam is not doing enough to fight illegal fishing. It identifies shortcomings, such as the lack of an effective sanctioning system to deter IUU fishing activities and a lack of action to address illegal fishing activities conducted by Vietnamese vessels in waters of neighbouring countries, including Pacific Small Island Developing States. Furthermore, Vietnam has a poor system to control landings of fish that is processed locally before being exported to international markets, including the EU.

**[Pew Trusts: Ending Illegal Fishing Project. Update](#)**

### **Pulse fishing**

**Question for written answer to the Commission: Has the Commission examined whether there is any link between the decline in fish stocks in the southern North Sea and the authorisation of pulse fishing? 10 November 2017.**

**[Answer given by Mr Vella on behalf of the Commission:](#)** The Commission is not aware of a general decline of fish stocks in the Southern North Sea. To the contrary, the latest advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) shows that both sole and plaice in the North Sea are in a good state with plaice being at the highest level of abundance since the 1950s and sole being at the highest level of abundance since 1995. These stocks are the main target species for vessels that use the pulse trawl. Both of these stocks have their highest densities in the Southern part of the North Sea. Catches have not increased since the introduction of pulse trawls. Catch results are mainly determined by the total allowable catch (TAC) limits that are set by the Council of Fisheries Ministers of the EU. The Commission has therefore not seen a need to request data from the relevant Member States involved regarding the catches taken by pulse trawls.

**[LIFE Concerns rise over electric pulse fishing.](#)**

[Is pulse fishing the future?](#) In a major project, researchers at WUR and NIOZ are trying to find answers to those questions.

### **Microplastics and marine litter**

#### **Ghost nets: investigation finds deliberate damage. 23 October 2017.**

In the summer of 2017, volunteers collected more than 20 tonnes of marine litter on the beaches of Svalbard, the massive Norwegian archipelago close to the North Pole, of which more than one third was fishing nets (fragments). A thorough investigation of 2 tonnes of the fishing nets accumulated showed that, as it turns out, almost all fishing nets were thrown out at sea deliberately. If most of the marine litter from fishing nets is attributable to deliberate and inappropriate disposal of used nets by some of the less conscientious fishermen out at sea, the authors of the survey conclude that the solution to this kind of marine litter is easy: it is about engaging with the fisheries sector to change behaviour and increase awareness. Protecting the marine environment concerns their very own livelihood and the amount of microplastics in the sea.

#### **Plastic being ingested by fish and humans. 13 October 2017.**

A study led by Matthew Savoca of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has found that when algae grows on tiny bits of plastic in the ocean, it gives off an odour that attracts fish, leading fish to seek it out. The study [Odours from marine plastic debris induce food search behaviours in a forage fish](#) was published in Proceedings of the Royal Society, alongside an article [Bait and switch: Anchovy eat plastic because it smells like prey](#) which explained the findings in layman's terms. He found that fish (Northern anchovies) not only visually mistake microplastic for food, but also actively seek it out based on the smell it acquires.

#### **Globefish Publication: Microplastics in fisheries and aquaculture: status of knowledge on their occurrence and implications for aquatic organisms and food safety. September 2017.**

This technical paper aims to contribute to the stock taking of scientific knowledge available on microplastics in fisheries and aquaculture. It provides information on the most likely pathways in terms of sources, transport and distribution in both marine food chains and seafood value chains and provides a framework to assess the risks that may (or not) affect commercial fish stocks and consumers, as well as review current practices and limitations of microplastic sampling techniques.

### **Statistical reports**

#### **Annual NOAA fisheries report shows value up, consumption slightly down from 2015. 2 November 2017.**

Seafood consumption dipped slightly in 2016, as the average American ate 14.9 pounds. The decrease of .6 pounds from 2015's figures was noted in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) annual Fisheries of the United States report. The report which provides a snapshot of how commercial and recreational fishing impact the U.S. economy, also noted that commercial fishermen brought in 9.6 billion pounds of product last year. While the volume decreased by 1.5 percent from 2015, the overall value of USD 5.3 billion (EUR 4.6 billion) increased by 2.1 percent over the same span.

#### **EU Fish Processors and Traders Association (A.I.P.C.E.-C.E.P). Finfish study 2017. October 2017.** Key findings

- Total market supply increased to 14.42 million t so up by 1.8 %;
- Imported share slightly up at 63.8 % (9.20 million t);
- Whitefish import dependency slightly raised to 88.9 % for wild capture species; and EU catches for whitefish species have remained stable but quota utilisation has fallen to 77.7 %;
- Exports contracted for a second year down by 4.2 %;

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- Of the species in the 1 million tonnes+ supply group cod and herring both grew but salmon and tuna stood still. Salmon remains with 1.4 million tonnes the largest overall in WFE;
- Supply for per capita consumption is up by 0.6 kg at 24.5 kg (WFE).

**[2017 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet. 29 September 2017.](#)**

The report suggests economic performance stagnates where fleets depend on stocks which are still overfished or overexploited, while more and more fleets that exploit stocks sustainably see clear improvements in their profitability and salaries. The report shows that the overall economic performance of the EU fishing fleet improved again in 2015, registering record-high net profits of €798 million, while estimates for 2016 and 2017 point towards further increases in profitability. In 2015, the EU fleet's contribution to the economy through wages and gross profit, amounted to €3.9 billion. This represents a 16% increase compared to 2013. Average salaries in the EU fleet have also increased while average fuel consumption has decreased.

**[UK sea fisheries annual statistics. 28 September 2017.](#)**

The publications include information on: the structure and activity of the UK fishing industry; landings; supplies, overseas trade and marketing; main stocks and their level of exploitation and a look at the world fishing industry.

**[Reports and initiatives](#)**

**[NFI launches website aimed at foodservice sector. 8 December 2017.](#)**

The National Fisheries Institute has launched a new website aimed at professional chefs and members of the foodservice industry. The site NFIHooked.com contains videos, articles on trends, nutrition notes, and recipes designed to encourage chefs to menu seafood.

**[UK's OceanMind looks to provide world's most detailed fishing monitoring. 6 November 2017.](#)**

U.K. nonprofit OceanMind thinks its unique analysis of "at-sea" data can add up to the most detailed information available on fishing activities around the world. Established in 2015, OceanMind was born out of an earlier partnership between The Pew Charitable Trusts and Satellite Applications Catapult Ltd., part of a network of U.K. technology companies designed to spur economic growth through commercializing research. OceanMind gathers data not just from Automatic Identity Systems (AIS) carried by fishing vessels, but also from satellite imagery, terrestrial sensors, vessel registries, and licensing databases.

**[New tech tool to detect illegal seafood launched by Traffic, WWF, Hewlett Packard. November 2017.](#)**

Charities Traffic and WWF have teamed up with international technology company Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) to develop a new web-based tool aimed at identifying wild-caught and farmed seafood products that are being traded illegally. Initially the brainchild of Traffic, the data analytics system, called DETECT-IT, has been launched to help businesses, NGOs, Customs officers, law enforcement and fisheries officials worldwide quickly search through fish trade data to uncover potential illegally supplies of products

**[Marine Stewardship Council \(MSC\) 20th Anniversary Annual Report. October 2017.](#)**

This shows that more than 400 fisheries, landing 14% of global marine catch by volume, are now engaged in the MSC program. 42,320 sites have MSC Chain of Custody certification and in the last financial year, consumers bought 730,860 tonnes of MSC labelled seafood, in a market worth \$5.6 billion.

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**[Seafood Alliance for Legality and Traceability \(SALT\)](#). 6 October 2017.**

SALT is a collaboration between FishWise, USAID, and the Walton, Moore, and Packard Foundations to fight illegal fishing through improved traceability. SALT is a global alliance to improve the transparency of seafood supply chains by bringing together stakeholders throughout the seafood industry to share their insights on traceability. SALT will convene businesses, governments, and organizations to collaborate on solutions for legal and sustainable seafood and enhanced tracking of seafood through supply chains. SALT will build the capacities of these actors by fostering key relationships, facilitating learning across pilot sites to promote innovation, and expanding the use of emerging best practices. These improvements will ultimately help to address food security, labour rights, and marine biodiversity conservation. See the [blog](#). You can register your interest in SALT on the website [here](#).

**[New publication: Effective Conservation Science. Data Not Dogma](#).**

It focuses on controversial questions and discussions, some of which overturn long held theories and assumptions. It includes a global range of relevant case studies and is written by leaders in the field whose expertise spans freshwater, terrestrial, and marine conservation. It provides links to (or citation of) data pertinent to the controversial discussions, so that readers can examine these independently and draw their own conclusions.

***This is an amalgamation of the news alerts issued in October and November 2017.***