

ICES
CIEM

The Landing Obligation in the European Union Common Fisheries Policy

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Fishfight campaign 2010 – 2013: Bycatch **A**nd **D**iscards are **BAD**

- Waste of valuable resource
- Adverse ecological impacts
- Immoral

New regulation to reduce discards by
incentivizing more selective fishing



The newly launched Common Fisheries Policy



Launched January 2014

Objectives: *Fishing activities environmentally sustainable on the long-term [...] achieving economic, social and employment benefits [...] supplying food to the Union market [...].
Gradually eliminate discards [...].*

Provisions:

- Conservation measures: capacity control, fishing gears
- More multi-annual plans
- Regionalisation

Article 15: obligation to land all catches



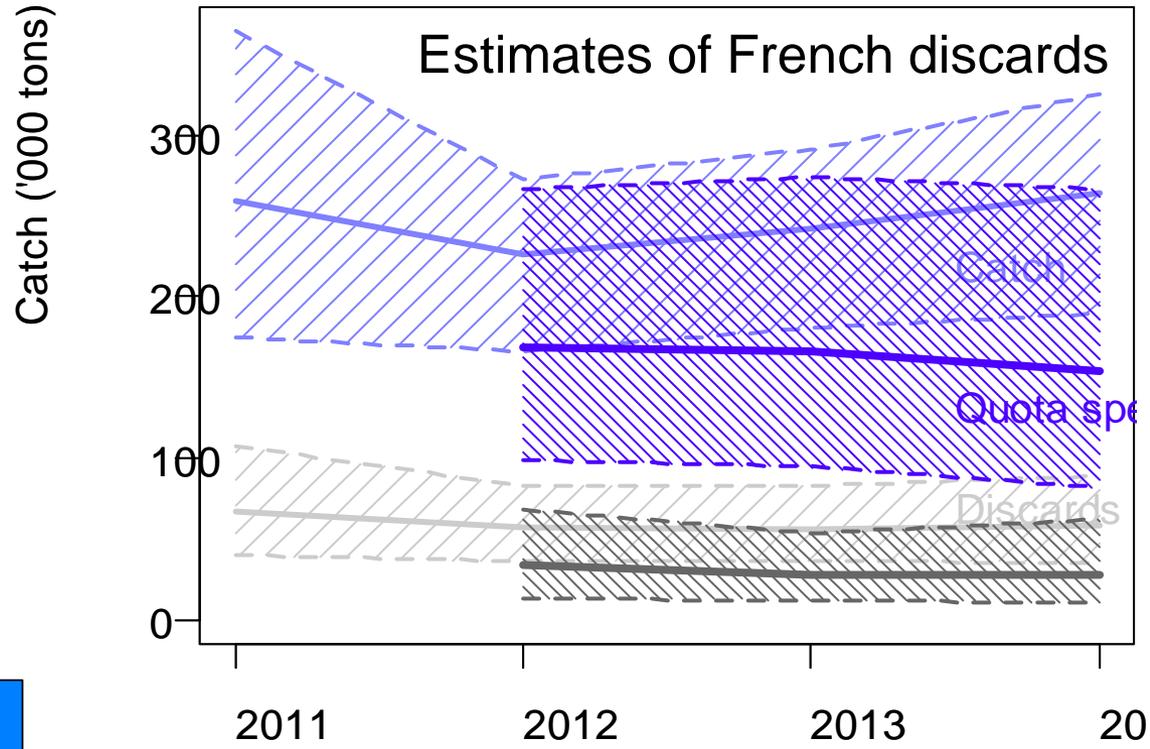
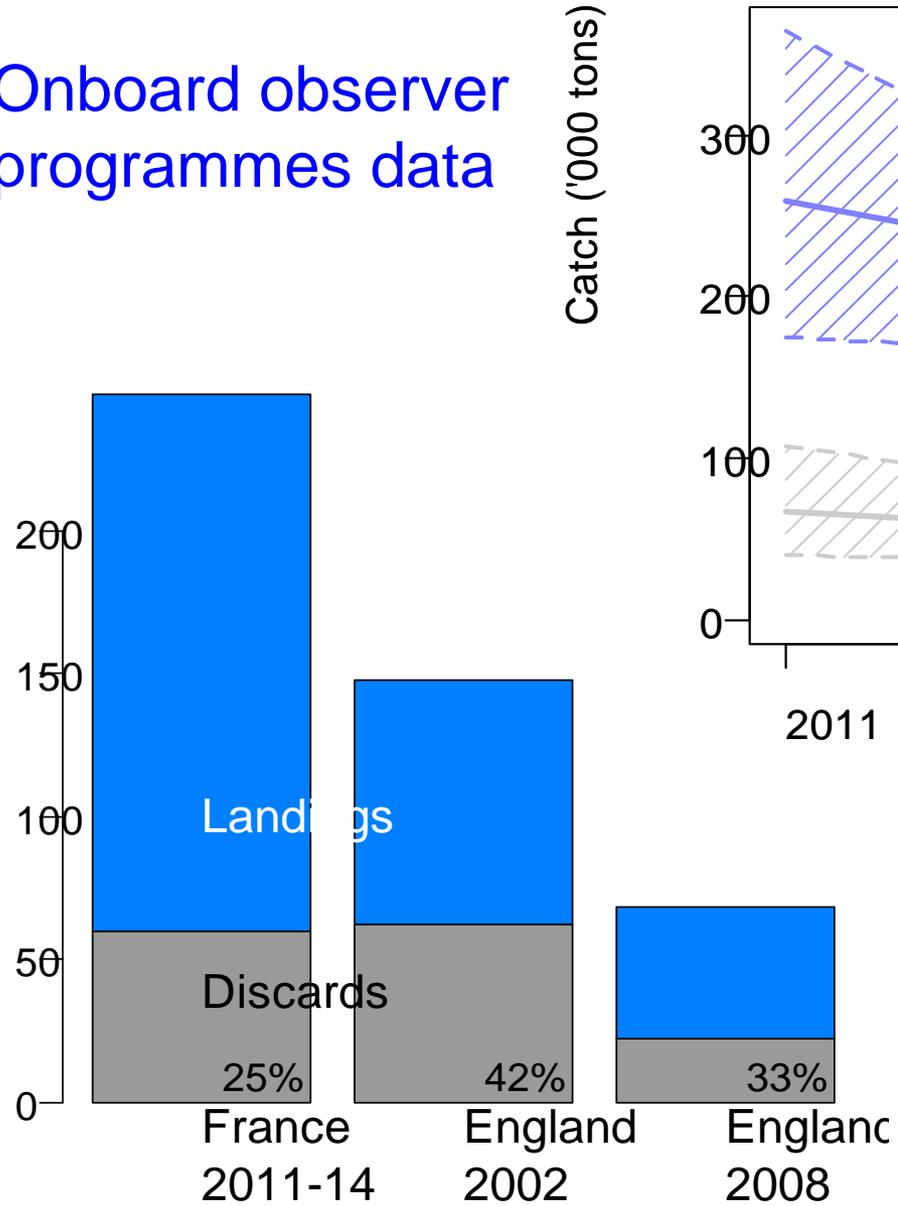
- Starting January 2015, gradually by fishery:
 - Land all catch of species subject to catch limits
- **Landing** quotas replaced by **catch** quotas
- Minimum **landing** sizes replaced by Minimum **conservation reference** sizes
 - Fish < MCRS must be landed for purposes other than direct human consumption
- Exemptions, quota flexibility
- Monitoring, control and enforcement incumbent on the Member States

Can a regulation focused on resource utilization address broad management objectives, such as limited environmental impacts, economic development, and food supply?

1. Discards in the European fisheries prior to the new regulation
2. Consequences of the newly launched Common Fisheries Policy

EU fisheries: high levels of discards

Onboard observer programmes data



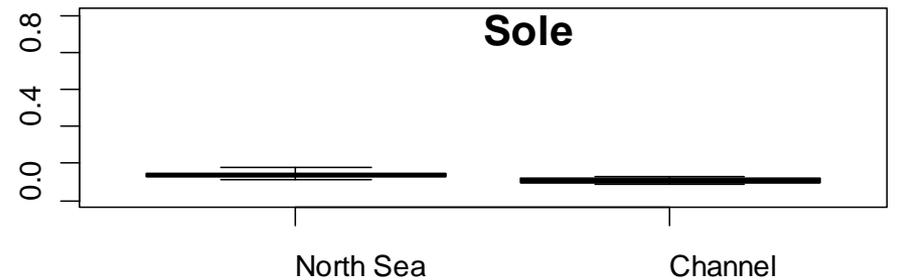
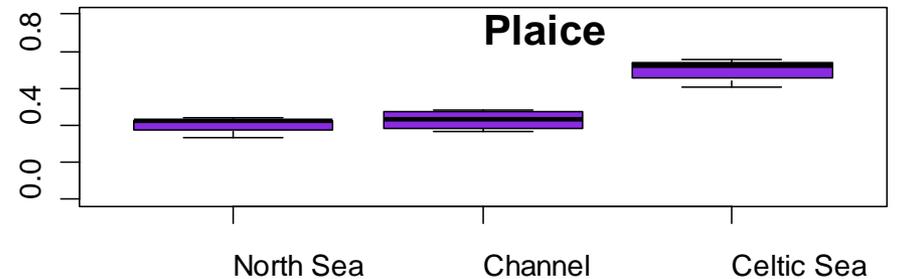
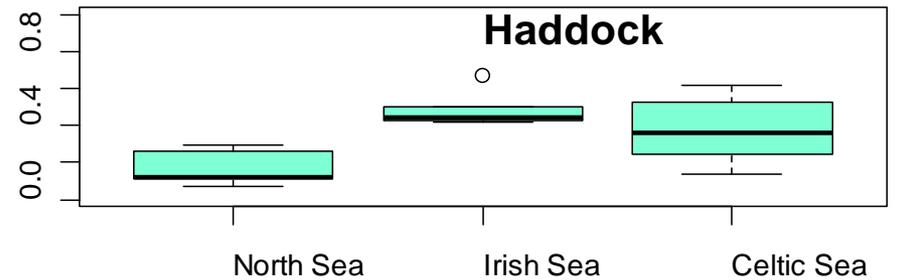
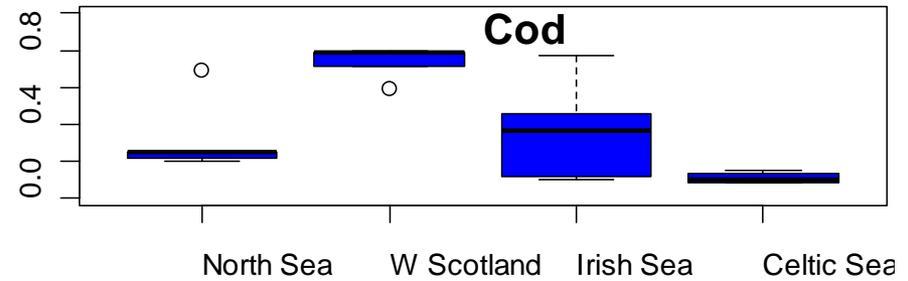
EU fisheries: high levels of discards

Discards

→ account for a significant part of catch in some stocks

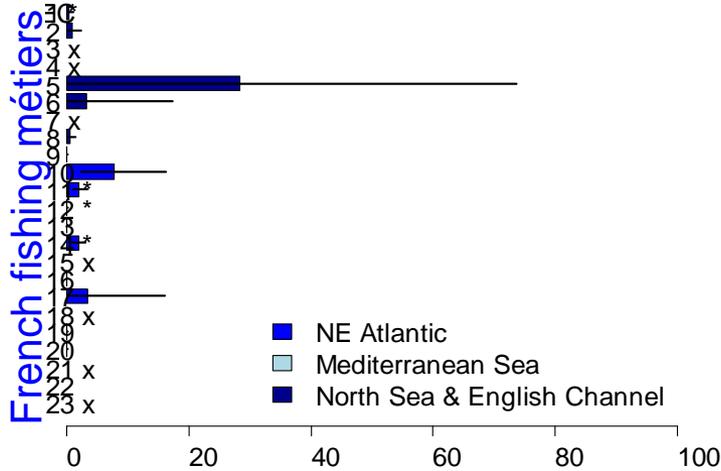
→ vary across species & stocks

Proportion of discards in total catch, 2000

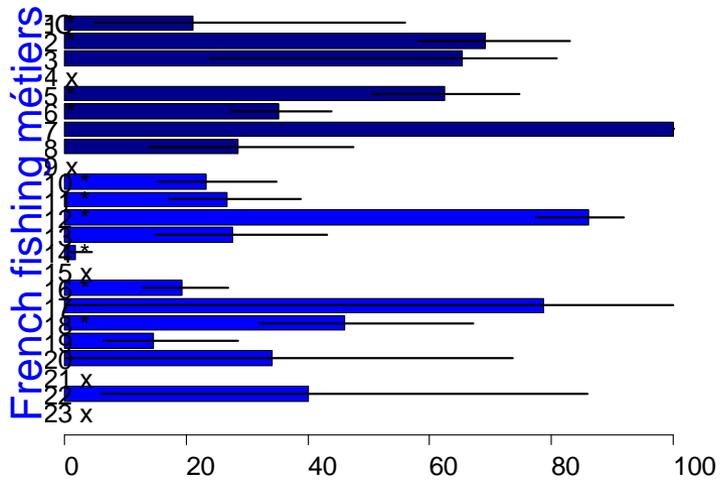


Discards vary across areas, fisheries, and species

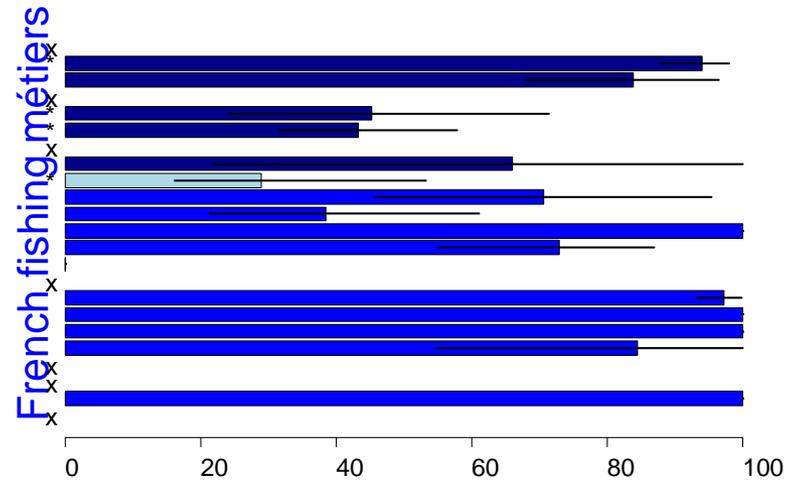
Sea bass



Whiting

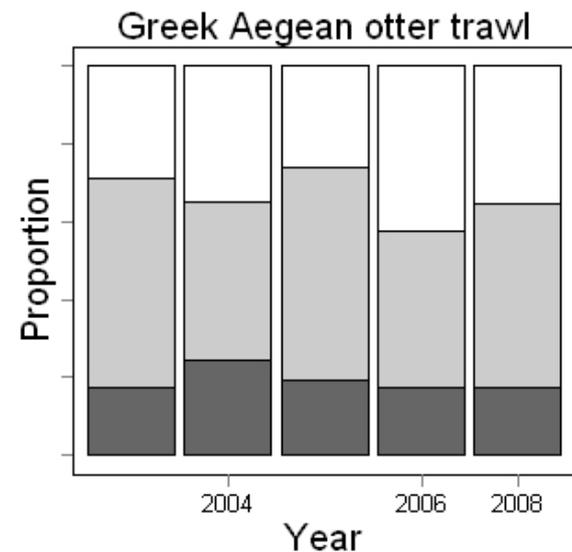
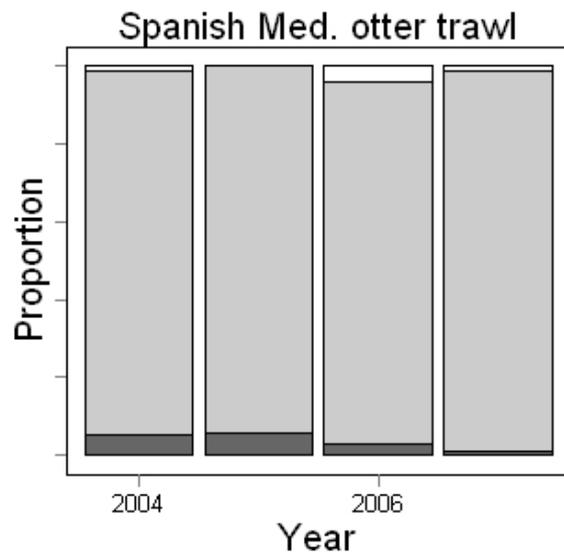
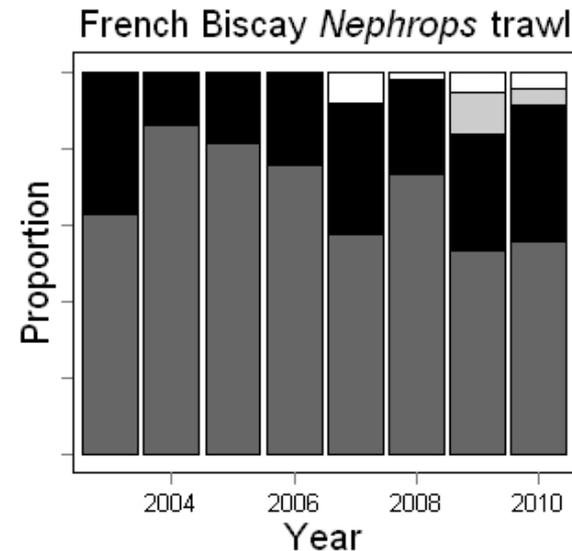
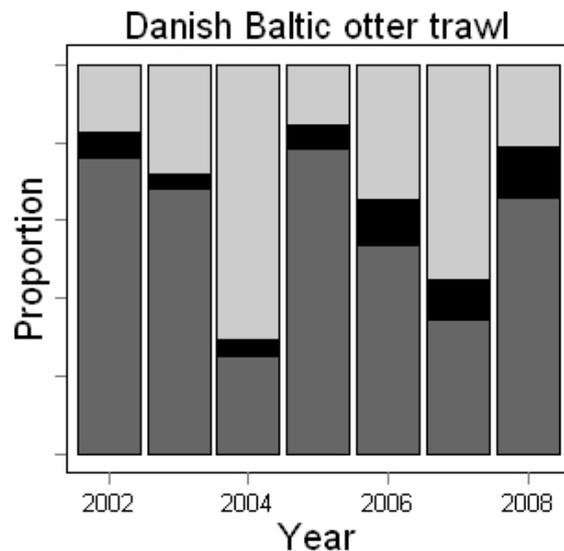
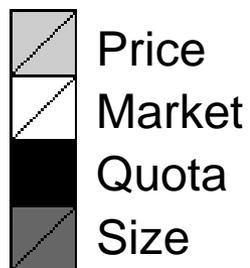


Horse mackerel



Discarded proportion (%)

EU fisheries: reasons for discarding vary



Consequences of discards on ecosystems: limited knowledge



→ Discards subsidize bird communities

– North Sea

→ Water column, fish?

– *Scyliorhinus canicula*

→ Discards subsidize benthic communities

– Input \lll benthos total energy budget

– Impacts local, few studies

Summary: Discards in EU fisheries prior to new regulation

- 2002 EU Common Fisheries Policy incentivized high levels of discards
- High variability in amounts discarded, discard composition, and reasons for discarding
- *Reducing discards may be complex, solutions to be tailored for each gear, species, area, fleet, harbour...*

Implementation of the Landing Obligation: 2015

- Enforcement postponed to 2017
- Pelagic: in force, fishing ~ as usual
- Demersal: Groups of member states & Advisory Committees are:
 - Defining target species & fisheries (vessel lists)
 - Awaiting catch quotas
 - Negotiating
 - Minimum conservation reference sizes
 - Exemptions: « high survival », *de minimis*
 - Quota flexibility

Implementation of the Landing Obligation : 2016 – demersal fisheries

Pilot trips in Landing Obligation conditions to estimate:

- Increased sorting time 
- Costs of gears, additional work & equipment 
- Loss of marketable catch 
- Decreased catch value 
- Potential utilization of non-desired catch 

Preliminary results

- Improved selectivity difficult to achieve
- Not all skippers and crews willing to comply

Expected consequences of the Landing Obligation

→ Assumption: *stocks at MSY*

→ Expectations under two hypotheses:

– Landing Obligation is enforced

Member states take on



➤ control observers or video-surveillance with sufficient coverage

➤ penalty systems

– Landing Obligation is not enforced

Discarding continues



« contribute to the collection of scientific data »



LO enforced



LO not enforced

→ « Fully documented fisheries »:



- 100% coverage, all catch of quota species recorded
- Non-landed bycatch?
 - Legal discards?
 - Mammals, protected species?

→ Onboard observer programs:

- Biases ↗
- Non-landed bycatch biased
 - Illegal & legal discards
 - Mammals, protected species...

→ Increased reliance on

- **Surveys**
- Landings & effort

« achieving economic, social and employment benefits »

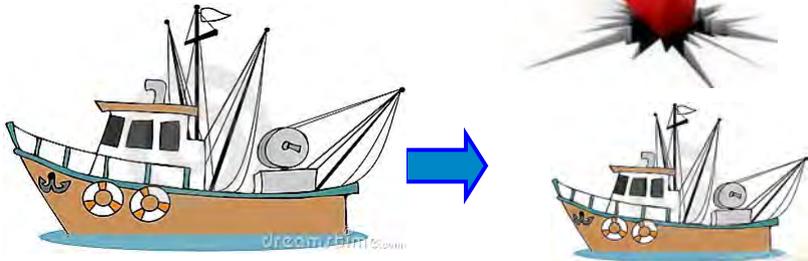


LO enforced



LO not enforced

→ Short term:



→ Long term:

- Economic benefits
- Employment losses

→ Short term:

- Business as usual
- Catch ↗
(unaccounted for discards) –
depending on catch
quotas

→ Long term:

???

« environmental sustainability »

1. Stocks



LO enforced



LO not enforced

→ Quota species:

MSY

→ Quota species:

MSY

(may be more difficult)

→ Other species:

Change in fishing
pressure intensity &
distribution => ???

→ Other species:

Change in fishing
pressure distribution
=> ???

« environmental sustainability »

2. Birds



LO enforced



LO not enforced

→ Short term:



→ Short term:
Limited change

→ Long term:

- Different bird communities

→ Long term:
???

« contributing to the availability of food supplies »



LO enforced



LO not enforced

→ Short term:
diversification of sea
food products?

→ Short term:
no change

→ Long term:
???

→ Long term
???

Conclusion

- Consequences of the Landing Obligation will depend on the ability of Member States to enforce the regulation
- *In an ideal world*, Landing Obligation contributes to address
 - economic benefits (but not employment)
- In the real world, Landing Obligation may complicate achievement of other management objectives