



Once upon a time
European seas...

How the EU Common Fisheries Policy reform can make up for past mistakes

Poor fisheries management – quotas set too high, fishing seasons open too long, indiscriminate gear, too many boats, the targeting of juvenile fish – continue to put our seas and fishing communities at risk.

More than 80% of commercial fish stocks in Europe are over-exploited, far above the global average of 25%.

Overall there remain far too many European vessels chasing the fish that are available. This is one of the crucial barriers to the recovery of fish stocks and efficient economic performance of the fleet.

We know how to fix these problems.

We have the capacity to bring life back to our seas, with abundant fish and a flourishing marine environment. Experts estimate that, if we set and enforce the right recovery goals for European fish stocks, we could restore EU fisheries within 15 years and move from a heavily subsidized to a profitable fisheries sector.

The coming reform of the Common Fisheries Policy offers us the opportunity to fix our past mistakes. Now is the time to make the changes we need, to restore our fisheries before it is too late.



WWF priorities for the reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy

Fit the fleet to the fish

The European fleet still has two or three times the amount of capacity is needed to catch fish, which means that we have far too many vessels with far too much fishing power for the stock available. Perversely, funds supplied by the European Union have contributed to its excessive fishing capacity. The new Common Fisheries Policy must:

- Promote, develop and implement rights based management tools, that means, systems that offer fishermen user rights so that to bring capacity into line with fishing opportunities.
- Guarantee that EU countries that fail to bring down their fleet capacity would have their fishing opportunities reduced.
- Eliminate harmful subsidies and redirect tax payers' resources to improving fisheries management, research and controls.

Preserve marine ecosystems

Preservation of fish stocks and the marine environment should be the core objective of the Common Fisheries Policy. Reform must ensure that:

- Every commercial fishery is subject to a long term management plan,

and these plans must be designed to bring fish stocks back to healthy levels by 2015.

- Management plans must contain appropriate measures to eliminate discards, control bycatch and protect sensitive habitats, such as spawning areas and coral reefs.

Bring decision making closer to fish and further from politics

Today the Council often overrides scientific advice in setting quotas, endangering our fisheries' future. Reforming this process is essential. The reform must:

- Ensure scientific advice is followed in management plans, and enhance the role of science particularly in the Mediterranean where new scientific bodies may be needed.
- Move us from a centralised (and politicised) to a regional and community-level decision-making system, whereby fishermen are responsible for fisheries management under improved national and EU oversight.
- Increase the role of the Regional Advisory Committees to ensure that all parties involved, including small scale fishermen, participate in decisions.

For further information, please contact:

Stefania Campogianni
WWF European Policy Office

168 avenue de Tervuerenlaan box 20
1150 Brussels
Belgium

Tel: +32 2 743 8800
Fax: +32 2 743 8819
www.panda.org/eu

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by:

- conserving the world's biological diversity
- ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption