



## NEWS FROM THE DECK

*The monthly newsletter of the*

*Low Impact Fishers of Europe*

*February 2017*

### MAIN NEWS

#### ✚ LIFE dissatisfied by the criteria used by the Spanish administration for the allocation of Bluefin Tuna quota in the reserve pool for 2017.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, the Spanish Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment announced that the government had published its “Plan for the Catch, Capacity, and Control of Bluefin tuna” and fixed the **criteria for the allocation of the quota in the reserve pool for 2017**.

This document does not correct in any way past mistakes and continue to benefit the status quo, increasing the fishing possibilities of the industrial fleets and overlooking – for another year – the Spanish small-scale fisheries sector. LIFE laments the fact that the Spanish Government is not seizing this golden opportunity **to correct historic errors** and promote a fair balance that guarantees the survival and prosperity of the small-scale fleets, which provide so many social, economic and environmental benefits to coastal communities.

Following this disappointing political decision, LIFE published a press release entitled “11 years awaiting a fair quota allocation” and asked for several specific meetings, at both European and national level, including with the new Secretary General of Fisheries in Spain.

LIFE’s official PR is available here: <http://lifeplatform.eu/11-years-awaiting-vain-fair-quota-allocation/>

#### ✚ DG Mare hosts a stakeholders meeting for the “Our Oceans” Conference.

LIFE was invited by the European Commission-DG Mare to attend a stakeholders meeting on the **Our Oceans Conference, which they are organizing in Malta on the 5-6 October 2017**. Commissioner Vella will be joined by Federica Mogherini, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy as the main VIPs. The main themes will be pollution (essentially meaning marine litter), marine protection/ MPAs, sustainable fisheries (including IUU), and climate change (and its impact on oceans). Those wishing to participate will need to submit proposals, which include commitments to a concrete action with tangible outputs. The best will be selected. The aim is to top previous Conferences in terms of commitments (over 130 made in 2016, valued at over 5 billion US\$) and funds pledged (over 1 billion \$). The “Our Oceans” Conference is one of three big oceans events being held this year, which will continue to run in 2018 and 2019. LIFE will be actively involved to ensure that small-scale fisheries benefit from the attention they deserve as one of the topics on the political agenda of this very important international event.



## OTHER NEWS FROM AROUND THE EU

- ✚ 4/2 Trzęsacz (Poland) - LIFE staff met with the members of the Wolin Fishers Association during a Fishers' Ball. It was not all about singing and dancing; a number of important matters were discussed, such as **Wolin's LIFE membership application** and local problems, access to the opportunities offered by the EMFF, as well as the impact of predation of grey seals on their catches.
- ✚ 1-16/2 Barcelona (Spain) - LIFE's Med coordinator and members from Catalunya had meetings with two managers in the Generalitat de Catalunya (public administration of the Region). On the 1<sup>st</sup> of February they met with Itziar Segarra, Head of the Fisheries Development and Structures Services, and on the 16th with Rosario Allué of the Marine Resources and Conservation Services. Both meetings provided the opportunity to present **LIFE members from Catalunya, their needs and ideas for new projects** and how these can be developed in the light of the regional policy and EMFF. The main challenges for these members are to improve the marketing and valorization of their products, as well as to improve the status of stocks by promoting Management Plans based on a participatory approach. One of the main outcomes of the meetings has been that LIFE's members from the Catalunya Region **will now be consulted by the public administration with regard to the future co-management plan** that the Generalitat will carry out throughout 2017.
- ✚ 2/2 Barcelona (Spain) - The "Stakeholders Conference on the Sustainable Development of Blue Economy in Western Mediterranean" has been organized by the European Commission in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the Union for the Mediterranean. The event, attended by LIFE staff, aimed at promoting an exchange of views among stakeholders operating in the maritime sector, such as businesses, institutes and public authorities, belonging to Western EU and non-EU Mediterranean Countries. The outcome of the conference will be used for a feasibility study on **a potential initiative on the blue economy in the Western Mediterranean**. LIFE staff attended the "Sustainable Consumption and Production" round table, where a key idea has been that Blue growth should serve a more sustainable and green economy in marine-related sectors. More info: <http://www.westmedstrategy.eu/events/>
- ✚ 7-8/2 Turku (Finland)- LIFE's Executive Director Jerry Percy and LIFE staff met with the **Finnish fishers at their annual gathering on a ferry departing from Turku, Finland**. This well-attended meeting was an opportunity to present LIFE to Finnish fishers – both sea and freshwater, and to have a good discussion on LIFE's vision, work, support, as well as EU funds, seals and other key & cross-cutting issues in the Baltic. LIFE's staff were warmly welcomed and Jerry Percy had the opportunity to learn the secrets of ice fishing with local fishers during his wait for a return flight. It was clear from the meeting that Finnish fishers suffer the same problems and challenges as their counterparts across Europe.



Baltic9-10/2 Kuressaare (Estonia) - Rafał Bochenski from LIFE member Darłowska, and LIFE staff went to **Kuressaare on the Island of Saaremaa** to meet local fishers and, with the indispensable help of a local facilitator, Els Ulman-Kuuskmann discussed their matters of concern at an “**open day**”. Topics discussed included: port infrastructures, quality products and presenting LIFE to Estonian organizations. An important topic was also **safety at sea** – due to a recent fatal accident in the area. On the same day, a meeting with a representative of fishers from Eastern Estonia took place, which included a detailed discussion on quota allocation, based on LIFE’s recent report on ITQs (<http://lifeplatform.eu/itqs-road-no-return/>) . The damage to catches and gears by grey seals featured at both meetings.

✚ 10/2 Estartit (Spain) - LIFE staff met with all the fishers of **LIFE member organisation Arts Menors Costa Brava**. The purpose of the meeting was to better understand their ideas and evaluate how to develop these, also with the view of pursuing additional funding. This organization, although it’s a very new one, has lots of energy and ideas to put in place and LIFE is very happy to provide them with the support they need to develop.

✚ 13/2 Brussels (Belgium) - Benoît Guerin, a fisherman based in Saint Raphael, France, is carrying out some very interesting research into how small scale fishers’ needs are catered for, or not, by formal organizations in **South West France, Galicia and Portugal**. One of the key roles played by such organizations is **to resolve conflicts between small and large scale sectors**, and to establish the basis for cohabitation. One problem is that conflicts are seldom resolved. Two other key issues highlighted by the failure to develop appropriate policies for small-scale fishers are that a) in several inshore areas there is intense fishing pressure by small gill netters and potters, leaving few areas that are not choked with gear b) in Portugal, small-scale fisheries is seen as a poverty trap, generating little by way of surplus, with few opportunities to gear up, or find alternatives. Whilst in Brussels, LIFE and Benoît organized a meeting with DG Mare Mediterranean Services to discuss his research findings and policy implications.

✚ 20-22/2 Rome (Italy) – A series of meetings of the Mediterranean Advisory Council, of which LIFE is a member of the General Assembly, were held. Within the working groups, the main topics of discussion have been the “**Technical measures regulation**” and the “**Western Mediterranean Management Plan**”. The election of the new President, for an assignment of four years, took also place. The three candidates were Jose Manuel Gonzalez Gil de Bernabé (Spain), Antonio Marzoa (Spain) and Giampaolo Buonfiglio (Italy). The latter got elected, although Marzoa gained a lot of support as well. Nominated vice-presidents were: Gérard Romiti (French Regional Fisheries Committee); Cristina Mislo (HGK-Croatian Chamber of Economy), and Laura Pisano (recreational fisheries). With regard to a possible enlargement of the membership of the Executive Committee, **LIFE had indicated Christian Decugis**, LIFE’s Med Director, as representative of small-scale fishers in this setting. Unfortunately, the President decided to maintain the same membership, thus impeding an enlargement. LIFE is now discussing the issue with DGMare and other colleagues in the Mediterranean Advisory Council to find a solution and have a specific representation for the small-scale sector in the MedAC ExCom in line with the Commission’s Amended Regulation. More info: <http://en.med-ac.eu/events.php>

✚ In January 2017 LIFE’s Executive Director Jeremy Percy and Coordinator Marta Cavallé undertook a field trip to Malta following numerous requests from small scale fishers there. The mission has been an opportunity to visit local fishing communities and to better understand their needs. Given the difficult and urgent situation on the island, it appears that the help of LIFE is needed to build the capacity of Maltese fishers to effectively represent themselves and reverse the downward spiral that they face. To succeed in this task, **Alicia Said will temporarily join the Mediterranean Unit as Project Manager for Malta**. Alicia holds a PhD in Biodiversity Management and Human Ecology with a special focus on governance and socio-economic resilience in artisanal



fisheries. Her expertise in the field of small-scale fisheries, along with her knowledge of the Maltese local reality and key players will allow LIFE to support local communities in an effective bottom-up approach. Welcome Alicia!

## NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

### LIFE Director from France launches a petition against the selling of low quality bass by big retailers

23/2 Sainte Marine (France) - Gwen Pennarun, Director of the Low Impact Fishers of Europe for France and President of Brittany's bass liners, **sent an open letter to the managers of the large-scale retailing market (namely Système U, E.Leclerc and Intermarché)** to raise awareness on the dramatic situation of overfishing and unsustainable methods in the bass fishery.

He underlined how, while the small-scale liners association self-imposes to its members a closure during the spawning season in February and March, big trawlers and netters do not hesitate to take advantage of the situation, thus putting a huge pressure on the stock and delivering to the market an unsustainable product of a low quality and price.

Mr Pennarun stressed how promotions and special offers of the above-mentioned retailers are threatening the survival of both the stock and small-scale fishing communities relying on this resource. He is now gathering **support via a petition to say enough is enough to these negative market practices.**

Sign the petition here: [goo.gl/87dkln](https://goo.gl/87dkln)

### FSK gets funded via the EMFF for a project on discards

LIFE members from Denmark, FSK, in partnership with two universities, applied for funding under the EMFF. The aim of the project is to investigate the bycatch and survival rate of discarded fish in coastal low impact fisheries (Danish seine and nets). The project has been approved and two fishermen from FSK have already agreed take part in the initial trials. The partnership hopes that the results will demonstrate a high survival rate, and that these results could be used to **exempt low impact fisheries from the landing obligation when using these fishing gears.** The results will be presented to the Schrevingen and Baltfish fora to start an official procedure via a delegated act.

### The French Liners Association holds its General Assembly

3/2 Saint Jean de Luz (France) – The French Liners Association held its General Assembly in the presence of around 30 fishers from the regions of Normandy, Languedoc-Roussillon, Brittany and the Basque Country. Among the issues of common concern: decrease of the stock, unfair competition and lack of controls.

The official Press Release is available here: <http://www.platforme-petite-peche.fr/?p=526>

## PRESS REVIEW

Please find below a selection of news on “LIFE dissatisfaction with the criteria used by the Spanish administration for the allocation of Bluefin Tuna quota in the reserve pool for 2017 “

[http://www.industriaspesqueras.com/noticias/en\\_portada/53892/la\\_plataforma\\_life\\_reclama\\_cuota\\_de\\_atun\\_rojo\\_para\\_los\\_artes\\_menores\\_del\\_mediterraneo.html](http://www.industriaspesqueras.com/noticias/en_portada/53892/la_plataforma_life_reclama_cuota_de_atun_rojo_para_los_artes_menores_del_mediterraneo.html) (Spanish)

<https://www.undercurrentnews.com/2017/02/16/low-impact-fishers-group-criticizes-spains-bluefin-fishing-plan-for-2017/> (English)

“SPANISH BLUEFIN TUNA PLAN DRAWS IRE FROM SMALL SCALE FISHERMEN: Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE), a group representing the interests of smaller vessels, slammed Madrid’s plans for divvying up an increase in bluefin tuna quota. The nonprofit group says small-scale fishermen have been repeatedly excluded from the fishery. On February 7, the Spanish government proposed raising its bluefin tuna catch by 20 percent this year. Spain will catch 4,243 metric tons this year with around 387 boats benefiting from the increase.

— Sustainable versus unsustainable? The nonprofit group argues Spain should reward small scale fishermen for being more sustainable than industrial-sized vessels. “The government of Spain has once again chosen to overlook the historic injustices done to small-scale fishers targeting bluefin tuna, and continues not to recognize the sector, refusing to grant access to this fishery,” said Brian O’Riordan, LIFE’s deputy director.” (From Politico Magazine)

*This Newsletter is a simple snapshot of our external activities. In addition, the LIFE staff in the UK, Brussels, Poland and Spain respond to a vast range of queries related to our sector and continuously develop and promulgate policies related to small scale, low impact fishing and fisheries.*

*Our Regional Directors, all working small scale fishers also promote the values and benefits of coastal fishing.*

*Would you like some additional information on a specific event, project or initiative? Don’t hesitate to contact us at [communications@lifeplatform.eu](mailto:communications@lifeplatform.eu) or follow us on Facebook on Low Impact Fishers of Europe or on Twitter on @LIFEplatformEU*