



NEWS FROM THE DECK

The monthly newsletter of the

Low Impact Fishers of Europe

September 2017

MAIN NEWS

LIFE engaged from the start in the new Working Group on small-scale fisheries set up by the GFCM

11-13/9 Rome (Italy) - LIFE's Deputy Director Brian O'Riordan attended the first meeting of the Working



Group on small-scale and recreational fisheries organised by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in Rome. The GFCM is the Regional Fisheries Management Organization responsible for the Mediterranean and Black Sea, and **sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries are one of its main policy objectives**. The aim of the new group is to foster dialogue and actions for sustainable and resilient fisheries in the Mediterranean, with LIFE being part of the coordinating mechanisms. During the meeting Mr O'Riordan underlined the need to guarantee polyvalence and access rights to ensure the survival of

the sector and networked with a number of stakeholders, including LIFE Members from Southern France and friends from the Maghrebian platform.

Small-scale fishers working in the Southern North Sea worried about the impact of pulse fishing

1/9 Nieuwpoort (Belgium) - A number of representatives of the fisheries sector in the Netherlands, Belgium, France and the UK gathered to share their concerns about the spread of pulse fishing and consequent decrease of commercial stocks. **Small-scale fishers, including LIFE members, alongside fishers of the industrial and recreational sectors, attended and shared their experience**. They highlighted a drastic decline in sole, cod and seabass since the introduction of pulse fishing 3 years ago, and many of them referred to the Southern North Sea as a dead zone. Their testimonies



have been recorded and included in an official report delivered to the Dutch authorities with a view to ensure an effective regulation of this controversial gear. More information on the matter in this article by LIFE's Executive Director Jeremy Percy <http://lifeplatform.eu/concerns-rise-electric-pulse-fishing/> and in the official report of the meeting <http://lifeplatform.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Testimonies.pdf>

OTHER NEWS FROM AROUND THE EU

- ✚ 06.09 Kadyny (Poland) – LIFE staff attended the **coordination meeting of its Polish Member Organization Stowarzyszenie Rybaków Łodziowych Mierzeja**. The meeting allowed on the one hand to discuss the current matters relating to fisheries management in the Baltic Sea, i.a. the ban on the marine Eel fishery proposed by the Commission as part of 2018 Fishing Opportunities Regulation, and on the other to kick-off a large-scale ghost nets retrieval action carried out by the Organization. More information on the latter here (in Polish) <http://fundacjamare.pl/aktualnosci/polscy-rybacy-walce-odpadami-morskimi-baltyku/>. In parallel, the **management of European Eel** was subject to many more discussions and interactions between LIFE Members and staff, as well as other relevant organizations, such as through the <http://www.sustainableeelgroup.org>. LIFE's position paper on the matter is available here in English <http://lifeplatform.eu/saving-european-eel-small-scale-fishermen/>

- ✚ 19-20/09 Portugal - LIFE returned to Portugal **for a second round of interviews and encounters with fisheries and ocean stakeholders**: LIFE's Deputy Director Brian O'Riordan and Serge Gomes da Silva, Consultant for LIFE, met with Miguel Gaspar, fisheries scientist at the Portuguese Institute for the Ocean (IPMA) involved in several European projects and networks dedicated to the sustainability of fisheries communities and who is now helping LIFE to understand the dynamics within the country. They met with representatives of Docapesca, a state-owned company responsible for the first sale of fish, with an interest in direct sales of ssf products. Following this, a meeting with the Blue Ocean foundation (Fondacion Oceano Azul) was organised. The Blue Ocean foundation's focus is on a healthy and productive ocean for the benefit of the planet, with an interest in conservation, and SSF as actors in co-management.

- ✚ 12/09 Barcelona (Spain) – LIFE members and the Coordinator for the Mediterranean **provided their comments in written form on the “Working document for the debate on the future management of Bluefin Tuna” to the Fisheries Ministry of Spain**. According to LIFE it is vital that the Spanish General Fisheries Secretariat recognizes at last that in fact small-scale fishers did declare catches of Bluefin Tuna



over the years 2007-2008, as did other fleets, but that their declarations were not included in the census, thus cutting them out of any possible distribution based on historic track record. Only purse seiners and long-liners obtained licenses. LIFE and its members are outraged by the repeated wording in the Working Document underlying "the need to go back to the pre-1998 situation as a first step towards the recognition of the rights of all fleets". In LIFE's view the changes in the

distribution system should allow, after 11 years of sacrifices, to turn the page for good on the unjust discrimination of the fishing sector of small-scale hand-liners. In its contribution LIFE is also asking for the involvement of LIFE member organizations in the preparatory meetings relating to Bluefin Tuna, in the debates on the topic and to fix a meeting with the Fisheries Secretary. The full document in Spanish is available upon request to LIFE's Secretariat.

- ✚ 15.09 Brussels (Belgium) – LIFE Directors from Germany and Poland, together with LIFE's Deputy Director and Baltic & North Sea Coordinator **held a bilateral meeting with Maja Kirchner from the European Commission's DG MARE and her team**. The very fruitful and constructive meeting lasted much longer than expected, allowing a detailed exchange of views on main matters relating to the 2018 Baltic Sea Fishing Opportunities and other points important to Baltic small-scale fishers, such as the impact of grey seals on fisheries. **LIFE was encouraged to write a letter summarizing its position to the BALTFISH Presidency and**

DG MARE, which has been done a few days after the meeting. LIFE hopes that the addressees will keep its suggestions and views in mind during the Fisheries Council of EU Ministers in Luxembourg.

✚ 20.09 Stockholm (Sweden) – Bengt Larsson from LIFE’s Swedish Member Organization SYEF and LIFE staff actively participated in a **kick-off meeting of the NESUfish project**, financed by the Swedish Institute (www.si.se) and led by the Marine Stewardship Council’s Baltic office. The project aims to **map small-scale fisheries in the Baltic Sea region, with a view to establishing and strengthening their networks and making sure they are sustainable**. LIFE delegation made clear from the start that small-scale fisheries, when conducted in a low impact manner, are sustainable by their very nature, pointing out the multiple challenges faced by the profession in the Baltic Region. LIFE is eager to see the project develop and turn into a bigger, much-needed activity in the near future!

✚ 24-28/09 Dziwnów to Darłowo (Poland) – LIFE’s Baltic and North Sea coordinator, together with a filming team, **oversaw the making of two documentaries on a large-scale ghost nets retrieval action undertaken by all Polish small-scale coastal fishers**. In fact ghost nets are a major hazard for our oceans and for this reason small-scale fishers from Poland, including a number of LIFE members, are joining forces and carrying out actions at sea to retrieve nets and marine litter. More information on this action, including the films prepared in cooperation with <http://fundacjamare.pl/en/>, will be available soon. The four days spent with the fishers have also been a great opportunity to discuss their daily problems and consider future plans.



✚ 25-28/09 Brussels (Belgium) – Oceana organised a meeting to release **the results of a study they carried out on the potential of rebuilding European fisheries**. It concluded that EU fisheries could produce 5 million tonnes more fish if sustainably managed. LIFE’s Deputy Director Brian O’Riordan attended the event and highlighted that although more profits were to be welcomed from healthier fisheries, this should go hand in hand with more access and benefits for SSF.

✚ 26/09 Brussels (Belgium) – DG Mare organized a Scientific Seminar on **the status of European fish stocks, fisheries management systems and the economic performance of the EU fishing fleet**. Presentations were made by senior experts in fisheries biology from DG MARE, ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) and STECF (Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries), among others. The meeting was closed by Mr Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. Mr Vella drew attention to the Mediterranean, where he stated that SSFs pose a problem to sustainable fisheries because given that they represent 80% of the fleet and are under the regulatory radar they are the ones to blame for the current status of stock, and that quotas are needed to replicate the positive results obtained in the North Sea. According to LIFE, taking into account that this 80% fishes only 25% of the resources, it appears clear that it can only partially responsible for the current situation in the Region. LIFE’s Deputy Director and Communications Officer attended the event on behalf of LIFE.

✚ 27/09 Brussels (Belgium) – LIFE’s Communications Officer attended the workshop **“Production and Marketing Plans: Implementation and Challenges” organised by the Market Advisory Council**. The meeting provided an overview on the criteria Producer Organisations should apply for an effective PMP and allowed fruitful exchanges between PO managers, the Commission and Member States representatives.

- ✚ United Kingdom - During this period, LIFE's Executive Director Jeremy Percy has been involved in positive and successful discussions with third parties regarding co financing **to support and increase LIFE's work across Europe.**

NEWS FROM OUR MEMBERS

- ✚ **LIFE member from the Netherlands NetVISwerk active on eel management and on-board requirements**

NetVISwerk contributed to the advice of the North Sea Advisory Council (NSAC) on eel management. Based on this input the NSAC advised the EU to help **to end the controversy between environmental groups and the fisheries sector on the issue of catching glass eel for restocking.** From the advice: *"ICES should be requested to come up with estimates of optimum glass eel recruitment levels in rivers like the Severn in the UK and the Ardour and Loire in France. This is urgently needed in order to resolve the current debate about the net benefits of taking glass eels from these areas of abundance and transferring them to other areas of much lower recruitment"* (the official document is available here in English: <http://nsrac.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/13-1617-State-of-the-European-Eel.pdf>). In addition to its activity at European level, in the Netherlands NetVISwerk was involved in the discussions on **legally binding training requirements for fishers** and on the minimum number of crew on fishing vessels. They struggled to keep it possible for day-fishers to fish with two persons aboard. As for 12-24 meters, a third person should be required on board in case of nightshifts.

- ✚ **Member organisation from the Netherlands LIFE NL working on on-board requirements and new electronic logbook system**

LIFE's member organisation from the Netherlands LIFE NL attended a meeting organised by the Dutch Ministry for Infrastructure, Environment and Transport examining, inter alia, the requirements for crews working on vessels of less than ten metres in length. Discussions focused on the need for **a policy tailored to the needs of the small-scale fleet**, and public authorities mentioned the need to align the criteria in place for the under-tens with those of the under-twelves to be consistent with the EU official definition of small-scale fisheries. In parallel, LIFE NL is contributing **to the design of a new electronic logbook system**, the use of which will be mandatory from the 1st January 2018, in accordance with the indications provided by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, NVWA.



- ✚ **Member Organisation from Cyprus involved in an event on Marine Protected Areas networks**

On September 8th the Association of Fishermen of Zygi attended the presentation of the project "Towards the establishment of Marine Protected Area Networks in the Eastern Mediterranean" which was organised by Protomedea, a project funded by DG Mare with the aim to reinforce Marine Protected Area networks to deliver sustainable fisheries in EU Mediterranean waters. **In particular, two representatives of the Association provided their contribution in the " Stakeholders' Workshop" held at the University of Cyprus in Nicosia.** The event proved to be particularly interesting in terms of participants as well as informative, providing inter alia a mapping of MPAs in Cyprus. The Cypriot association actively participated in the event and is very keen to join other settings where it can exchange information on marine related issues.

Project by Spanish member Pescartes on sustainable products to start soon

“Fundación Biodiversidad” recently approved the project **“Fish with Art: responsible fisheries in your kitchen”** presented by LIFE member from Spain Pescartes in cooperation with the NGO Asociación Columbares. It aims to inform the general public on the value of sustainable artisanal fish products through gastronomic events in restaurants and grocery stores, information days in fishmongers, support of consumers’ associations etc. In parallel, the positive role of marine protected area for the regeneration of fishery resources will be explained and promoted, taking as example the marine reserves of *Cabo de Palos-Islas Hormigas* , *Cabo Tiñoso* and *Cabo de Gata-Níjar* and areas of the Natura 2000 network.

Results of Projecte Sepia (Cuttlefish Project) carried out in Costa Brava released



LIFE members of Arts Menors Costa Brava in Spain released the results of Projecte Sepia during a press conference. **762,786 individuals of cuttlefish and squid which otherwise would have been lost have been released.** Each fisherman provided an average of 84,754 eggs of cuttlefish and squid. A pilot test of direct sales of the cephalopods of the fishers involved in project has also been carried out in the locations of *L'Escala* and *L'Estartit* (in the area of Costa Brava) with positive results. The project also worked on the creation of a specific label to give added value to the product. All in all, a great project that we hope continues with that same results in the future. More information on www.projectesepia.com .

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 or follow us on Facebook on Low Impact Fishers of Europe or on Twitter on @LIFEplatformEU