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The new European common fisheries policy and the obligation to land all catches: The port of Santa Pola (Mediterranean Spain) as a study case

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Reduce the discards levels in European Union fisheries is a target of the new Common Fisheries Policy. To achieve it, we will require to land all regulated species by catch limits and some species regulated by minimum sizes. Due to the characteristics of the Mediterranean Sea, the feasibility, effectiveness and the consequences of applying the measure in this region are questioned. This paper aims to answer these questions to improve the management of discards. For this purpose, the discard of an important Spanish Mediterranean port was characterized considering all species caught and, on the other hand, the species proposed by the CFP. The measure also was assessed using a SWOT analysis due to the evaluation of the critical points of regulation by fishermen, managers, NGOs, scientists and entrepreneurs. The daily discard was 11.7 Tm (All Species) and 1.8 Tm (Proposed species), and 2623 Tm were discarded annually (All Species) and 421 Tm (Proposed Species). The regulation showed greater weaknesses and threats (72.6%) than strengths and opportunities (27.4%). The high costs associated with the measure, the necessary logistics, the lack of motivation and adequate control create a negative balance, despite the proposed objective, the willingness of fishermen to reduce discards and the use of the resource by destination proposed. The negative balance shows that the measure does not appear to be feasible in the Mediterranean. Therefore discards will not be reduced in this sea. Perhaps an approach focused on mitigating the causes of discard can be more effective than the proposed of the new CFP.

Biography

Jose María Bellido acquired his PhD at the Department of Zoology, University of Aberdeen, Scotland (1997/2002). During the last few years, discards became his main research field. His expertise is also requested in spatial modelling and stock assessment in the Mediterranean as well as in the Atlantic stocks on small pelagic species. He has been the Director (Head of Unit) of the Oceanographic Centre of Murcia (IEO) from 2009 to 2014. Now, he is focusing on various research projects at the same IEO Centre and is teaching at the University of Alicante, mainly to Master students in Fisheries and Marine Sciences and supervises PhD students.

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