



Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Irish Sea Fisheries Board

Selectivity of Fishing Gears & Practices

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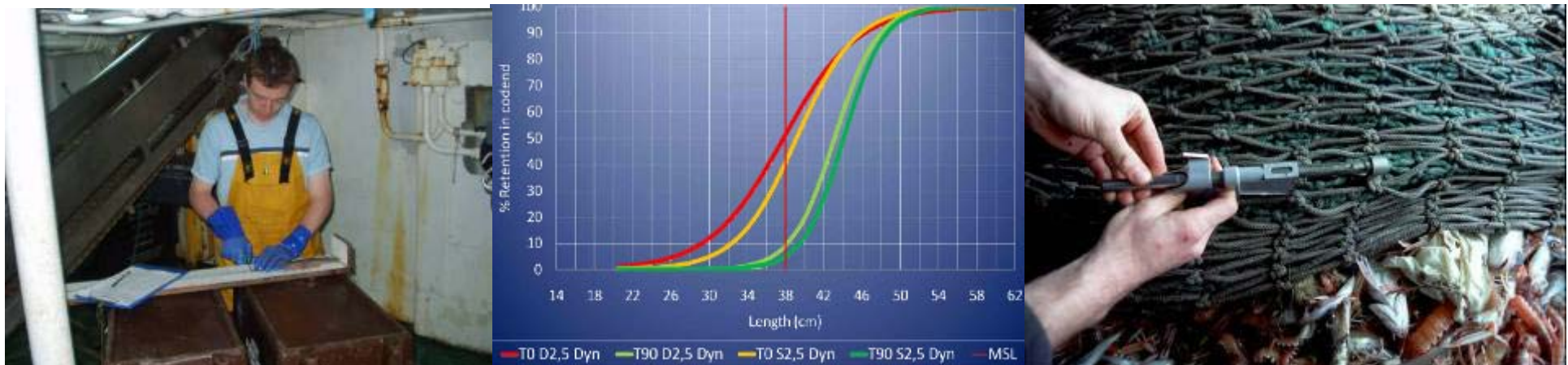
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Overview

- What is selective fishing and why is it important?
- Are current gears selective?
- Is a new approach needed?
- What a new regulation do?
- Relationship/Conflict with other initiatives?
- Conclusions

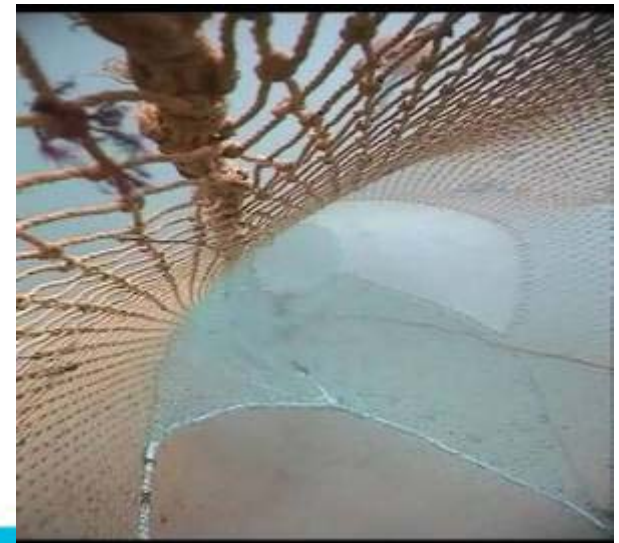
What is selective fishing ?

- A fishing method's ability to target and capture organisms by size and species allowing non-targets to be avoided or released unharmed (FAO).
- Can be achieved through
 - modifying the gear design and/or operation
 - using alternative fishing gears



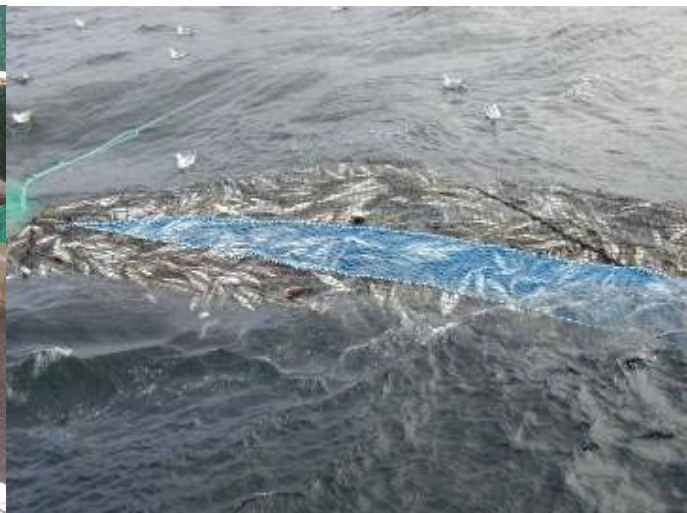
Why is selective fishing important?

- Optimal use of marine resources
- Reduction of discards
- Protection of juveniles
- The right thing to do!
- Factors affecting selectivity
 - Gear and configuration
 - Operational parameters
 - Fish size and shape
 - Catch volume
 - Environmental conditions



This means.....

- Measuring selectivity isn't easy
- Imprecise science
- A snapshot
- Well studied for some species
- But not for a great deal more!
- Essentially a compromise



Are Current Gears Selective?

- No in many mixed fisheries
- Driven by lowest common denominator
 - Nephrops
 - Sole
 - Hake
- Better in others
 - North Sea whitefish
 - Baltic cod (“eventually”)
 - Gillnet fisheries



Are Current Gears Selective?

- No mechanism to react to stock fluctuations
- Catch composition regs - A discard charter!
- Extensive for some gears e.g. trawls
- Little or none for others e.g. gillnets
- Trying to please all of the people all of the time!



Is a new approach needed?

- Clearly Yes!
 - Towed gears can be selective
 - But fishermen need to have an incentive to keep them selective
 - Static Gears are definitely more selective
 - But need regulation to stop effort increases
- Reduce complexity and remove ambiguity
- Change doctrine from regulating on landings to regulating on catches
- Understand the drivers

What should a new regulation do?

- Encourage responsibility
 - Quota or Effort Premiums
- Better define fisheries and gear
 - What constitutes a target species
- Level of Certification for gear
 - Mesh size
 - Twine thickness
- Workable catch composition
 - Is 24 hrs sensible or workable
- Economic Reality
 - Fact from fiction!

What should a new regulation do?

- Regulate what impacts on selectivity
 - Mesh size
 - Twine thickness
 - Codend circumference
 - Soak time
 - Net length
- But are measurable
- Realistic transitional periods
- Avoid big and/or frequent changes
- Avoid overlaps in regions
 - Hake don't know where VII ends and VIII begins

Some simple things?

- Set objective targets for mesh/gear changes
 - smps mandatory in all *Nephrops* fisheries
 - 100mm + smp for mixed “demersal” fisheries
 - 120mm for directed whitefish
- Continue to encourage use of good gears in the right circumstances
 - Sorting grids
 - T90/Bacoma
 - Sieve Nets



Some simple things?

- Review attachments regs (date back to medieval times!)
- Whole gear selectivity



Special Provisions?

- “Small” vessels
- Seine net vessels
- Gillnets
- Limits of other static gears
- Dredges
- Novel catching methods
- Minimum marketing sizes
- Reaction to science



Relationship/Conflicts with other Initiatives?

- EU “Communications” on Discards
 - Catch composition conflicts
- Effort Controls
 - Drive fishermen to fish “dirty”
- Move to MSY
 - Fishermen act responsibly to meet one requirement then penalized because of MSY





And Then.....?

- **Ecosystem approach**
- **Should we fish selectively at all?**

Conclusions

- Selective gears have a role to play in stock sustainability
- But current measures don't work
- Driven by the need to retain one species
- New approach with more flexibility and allow for evolution
- Better define gears and fisheries
- Set objective targets for mesh size and gear change
- Regulate what is important and measurable

Conclusions

- Look at gear certification
- Realistic transition periods
- Examine linkage with other policies
- And don't conflict
- Don't penalize responsible actions
- Managers must commit to providing real and tangible incentives for responsible fishing
- In return fishermen must be pro-active and adopt selective gears

THANK YOU!

