

## REPORT ON THE IMPACTS OF THE LANDING OBLIGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION FISHERIES POLICY ON GALICIAN SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The practice of discards occurs not only due to poor selectivity in the capture of species, but also because the capture of immature individuals, or to the low catch quotas that are allocated to artisanal fisheries (Villasante et al., 2015). However, the scientific community has paid scarce attention to the problem of discards in small-scale fisheries. (Frangoudes y Bellanger, 2017; Villasante et al., 2018). This is mainly due to the proven fact that the magnitude of the problem of discards was mainly concentrated in industrial fishing, while discards in small-scale fisheries have received less attention; probably because the volume of discards is usually significantly lower when compared to industrial fishing (Veiga et al., 2017; Villasante et al., 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2018).

To date, there has not been a systematic review of the scientific evidence on the problem of discards in small-scale fisheries. This review would help policy-makers to know the magnitude of discards in this type of fisheries and determine the appropriate actions. This report shows that between the period 1950-2018, only 21% of the scientific articles published in peer review journals have focused on discards in small-scale fisheries; while the remaining 89% of articles have focused on industrial fishing.

This report shows that, as in most of the North Atlantic small-scale fisheries (Kelleher, 2005), the magnitude of discards in Galician small-scale fisheries (on Atlantic mackerel *Scomber scombrus*, European hake *Merluccius merluccius* and rays Rajidae) is small (0-5% of the total volume of catches). However, the volume of discards can be higher while the quotas allocated to the fleet are exhausted, which contrasts with the volume of discards of the species captured by the small-scale fleet, managed by the combination of effort and minimum sizes (Villasante et al. al., 2015, 2016a, 2016b). The volume of discarded individuals is practically non-existent or very low in the species subject to TACs included in this report (Atlantic mackerel, European hake and rays). In this sense, the fishers interviewed in this paper argue that small-scale fishing is a highly selective activity with a discard ratio significantly lower than that generated by industrial fishing.

On the other hand, the impact of the small-scale fleet studied in this work on the catches of the analyzed species is relatively small compared to the rest of the fleets. Thus, in the 2007-2015 period (for which information is available on catches and sale value of the species of interest commercialized in the Galician markets by the whole fleet, and also the catches on the species of interest marketed by the small-scale fleet), the different Galician fleets landed 350 009 t of the species of interest, with a sale value of 913 M€. In the same period, the fleet of interest captured 15 838 t of these

species, with a value of 41M €, representing 4.5% of the catches and commercial value. The relative importance of both fleets in relation to the sales of most of the species of interest in this period is similar: the European hake catches of the study fleet represent 3.7% of the total and 3.8% of the sale value, and those of Atlantic mackerel represent 3.8% of the catches and 4.3% of the sale value. However, catches of rays by the fleet of interest account for 20.7% of the total traded in the markets and 23.7% of their sale value.

The main incentive to avoid discards lies in the change of the system of TACs and quotas that is based on the principle of relative stability of the EU, followed by actions of promotion of small-scale fishing, and the increase of "*de minimis*" exceptions. Regarding the effects of the landing obligation (LO), 88% of small-scale fishers do not perceive advantages for small-scale fishing. In fact, more than 60% of the fishers interviewed indicated that its implementation will mean their abandonment of fishing. Most of the small-scale fishers (85%) do not show any willingness to accept the LO, which highlights the lack of information and dialogue by the European authorities regarding the impact of the LO on small-scale fisheries. To encourage compliance, the main measure recommended by the fishers is the recognition of the exceptionality of the application of TACs in small-scale fisheries.

Regarding the economic and social impact of the LO in small-scale fishing, it is estimated that the economic loss on the small-scale fleet that catches the species of interest (Atlantic mackerel, European hake and rays) would be around 60 million euros per year. From these results it is worth noting the scope of the impacts at the macroeconomic and microeconomic levels. In the first case, the direct economic loss will mean a reduction in the amount of taxes that small-scale fishers will leave to pay, as well as the need to approve unemployment subsidies that would have to be paid to the fishers directly affected. In the second case, and given the high economic dependence on the fishing activity of each family, which is integrated on average by almost four people, the impact on direct employment would affect almost 3 000 small-scale fishers and more than 10 800 people who make up the respective family units of these fishers along the Galician coast. The effects induced on the rest of the economic activities that provide or demand goods and services from small-scale fisheries are excluded from this impact.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the current situation of the small-scale fleet studied in this work does not go through a good time, so it is expected that the effects of the LO will be more serious than on other fleets in better socio-economic situation. Thus, in the last decade this fleet has suffered a significant reduction in fishing units (17%), which has resulted in a reduction in its effective fishing effort of 10-13% and a loss of employment of 20%. In addition, this fleet captures a very small percentage (4.5%) of its main target species, which are captured mostly by other fleets. For this reason, the increase in discharges (21%) and commercial value (15%) of the species of interest captured by the different Galician commercial fleets in recent years has hardly benefited the small-scale fleet.

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