



# SEAS AT RISK

for the protection and restoration of the marine environment

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Exemptions for high  
survivability: are we reducing  
unwanted catches?

**European Parliament Intergroup, 26 June 2018**

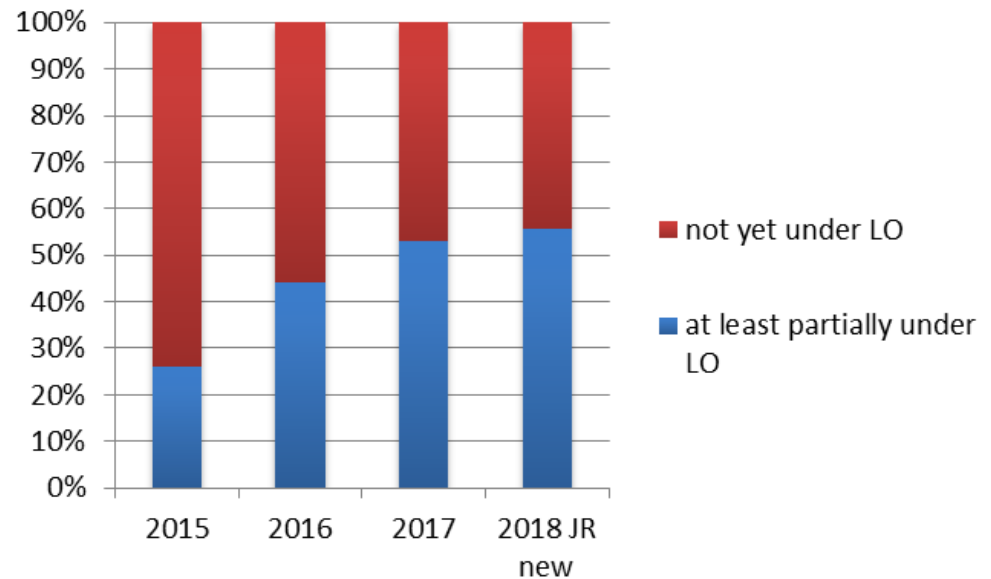




# Progress towards 2019

- Progress of including stocks with TACs in discard plans
  - Status: July 2017
  - Slowing down instead of keeping the pace

## Overall % of TACs at least partially under LO vs. not yet under LO



# Discard plans

- High survival exemptions can only be granted if there is specific scientific evidence – it is a legal requirement
- Joint Recommendations contain insufficient supporting information for exemptions
  - STECF (and later ICES) provided guidelines on survival studies from 2013 on
  - STECF repeatedly commented that the studies in the Joint Recommendations by Member States are insufficient – but exemptions still granted.
  - Over the years, exemptions granted for high survivability despite concerns about supporting information and uncertainty about quantities of surviving versus dead discards under such exemptions and the overall effects on stock health

# What is happening at sea?

- Are we actually reducing unwanted catches?



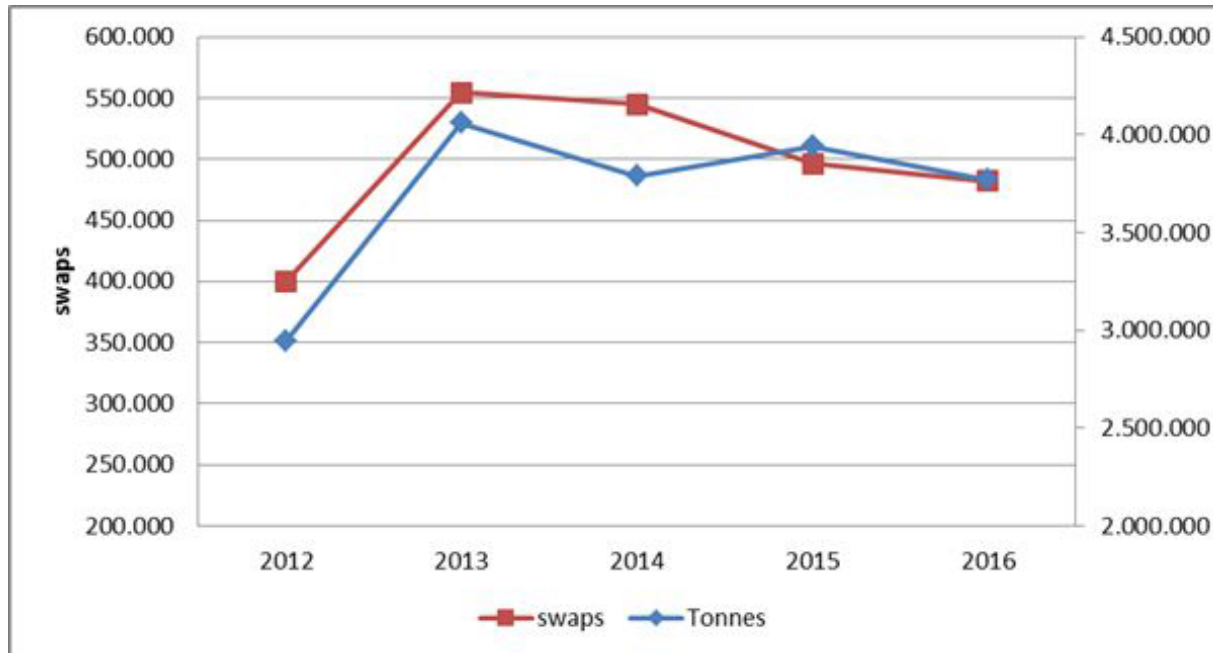
- At a critical point in time when we need more data than before to assess what impact removals have on European stocks, the data collection is hampered

# Key questions on high survival exemptions

- How much dead fish is or could be discarded under high survival exemptions?
  - Unlike for *de minimis*, there is no limit on high survival discards, and the amount of dead discards is usually not accounted for in the TAC-setting
  - Could certain high survival exemptions lead to more dead fish?
- To what extent do high survival exemptions decrease the coverage of the LO and counteract its purpose?
  - How much of the catches are exempt from the LO?
  - To what extent is granting high survival exemptions without adequate conditions for improving selectivity or maximizing survival removing the incentive to avoid and reduce unwanted catch?

# How could unwanted catches have been reduced (more)?

- More swaps between Member States



- Implement selectivity studies in reality



# Financial support is available

- **EMFF (2014-2020) funding:**
  - 26.9% of the current EMFF is foreseen for sustainable fisheries
  - >280 Million Euro are reserved for the implementation of the LO
    - Until end of 2017,
      - 30 Mio Euro had been spent,
      - 19 Mio Euro had been planned
    - Uptake is increasing, but not sufficient
    - Big differences between Member States:
      - DK and NL are positive examples of utilising the funds so far now, but
      - From 2018 on, there is no planned support by e.g. ES, FR, DE, UK, PT and others

## Changing the scope of the LO

- Additional exemption for ‘predator damaged fish’ added in 2015 without control provisions
- Removing species from the TAC list
- Adding species to the “prohibited species” list
- Most recently: Request by Member States to change the interpretation of Art. 15 and limit the scope of species where the LO applies (>4 years after adopting the CFP...)
- These steps do not facilitate the implementation of the LO, but undermine the legal basis and reduce the positive impact of its objective

# How can we still reduce unwanted catches?

- Member States must stop holding on to quotas for strategic reasons and exchange to greatest extent possible with other Member States
- Fully and faster utilisation of the available and foreseen EMFF support, channelling the money to fishers, ports and projects.
- Implement results from scientific projects in the fisheries
- Ensure monitoring and control of the landing obligation



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