



European
Commission



Sea trial of the software on board a Dutch fishing vessel
© photo copyright Wageningen Marine Research



GENERAL INFORMATION

Member State:

Netherlands

EMFF measure:

Innovation linked to conservation of marine biological resources

Total operation budget:

EUR 797 428

EU budget contribution:

EUR 598 071

Keywords:

- Landing obligation
- Sustainable production
- Marine fisheries

Operation dates:

2016-2019

Contact details:

Wageningen Marine Research
and Redersvereniging voor de
Zeevisserij, NL

STORY OF THE MONTH

SUPPORTED BY THE **EMFF (European Maritime and Fisheries Fund)**

Identifying fish species with echo sounder data

Operation description

Under EU sustainability rules, fishermen are not allowed to catch fish below a certain minimum size. Nor are they any longer allowed to throw unwanted fish overboard. Instead, they must land everything they catch. As a result, the fishing industry requires new and better ways of identifying fish species and sizes *before* bringing the catch aboard.

The RealFishEcho project in the Netherlands, financed with nearly €600 000 from the EMFF, is developing methods to identify fish species and to estimate their size in close to real time. Using broadband echo sounder data, fishermen are able to avoid unwanted catches. This allows them to only bring aboard the fish they are targeting – mainly herring, mackerel, and horse mackerel –, making their fishing practices more sustainable.

The funding has allowed fishermen and researchers to collect and analyse more data. This has not only made the technology more accurate and reliable; it can also recognise more fish species than before. Data are collected from commercial freezer trawlers and research vessels.

For more information:

<https://www.wur.nl/en/Publication-details.htm?publicationId=publication-way-353333383235>