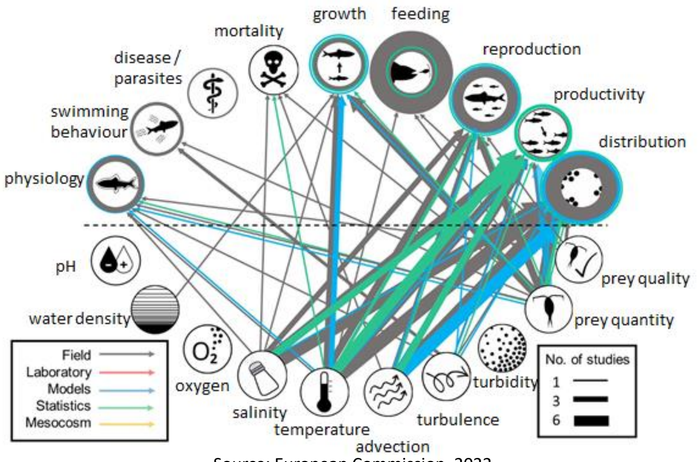
FISHERS of the FUTURE

Brussels, Belgium, 19 March 2024

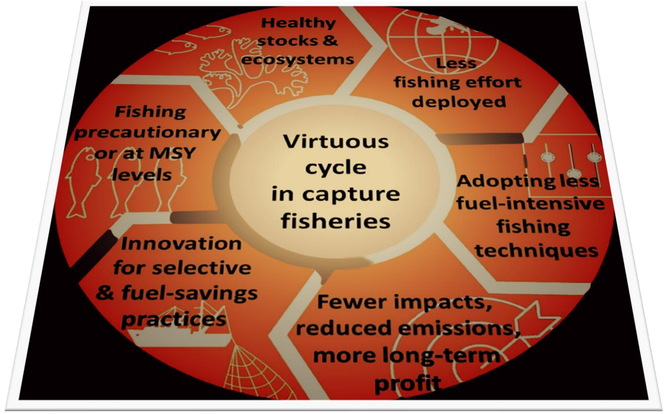
François Bastardie, Technical University of Denmark

Transitioning to the future

- Maintaining the natural capital of marine ecosystems and long-term assets in fisheries
  - How to **reduce the risk** of the EU fleet's negative impacts on the marine environment by comparing the opportunities from **different fishing techniques** and fleet segments?
- Miminising economic impact and protecting ecological benefits
  - The Fishers of the Future have a deep **understanding** of ecosystem dynamics, species interactions, and human activities acknowledging that healthy marine habitats are a pre-requisite to sustainable exploitation.
  - The Fishers of the Future **focus on finding alternative ways to achieve the goal of responsible fishing and sustainability**.

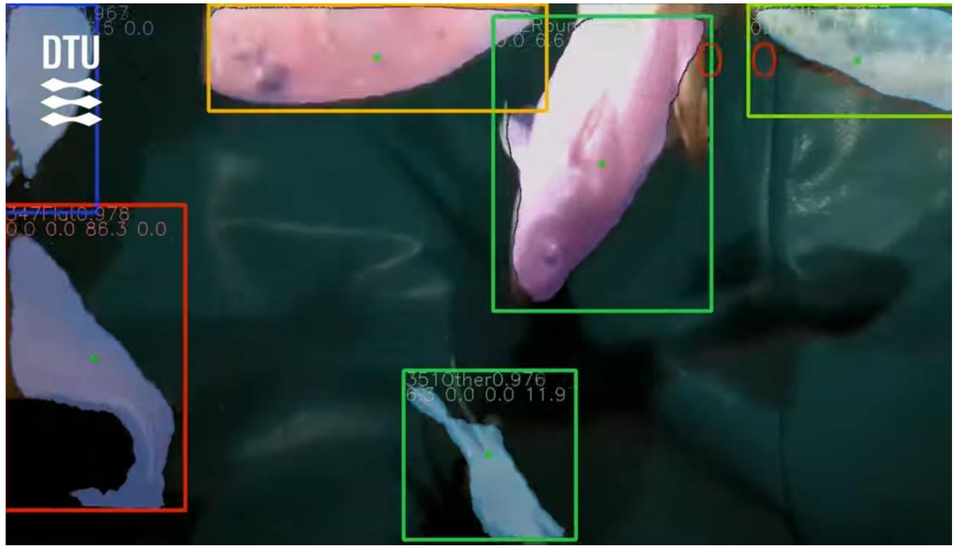


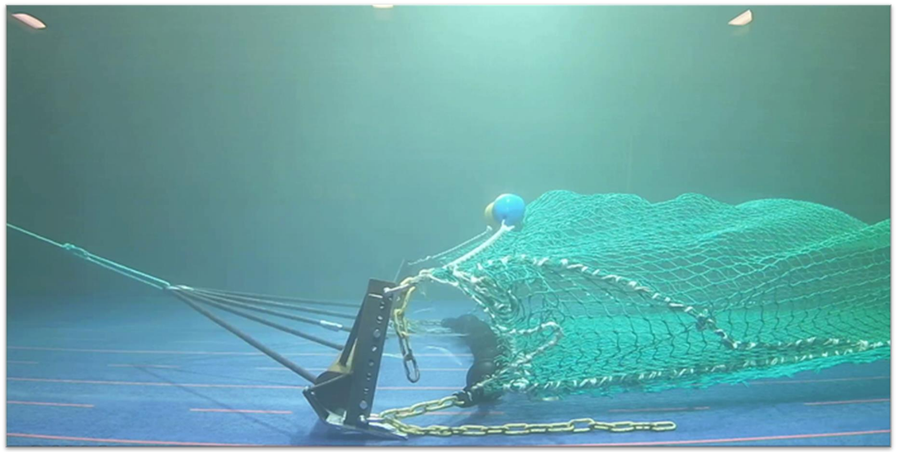
Source: European Commission, 2022



Opportunities from fishing techniques

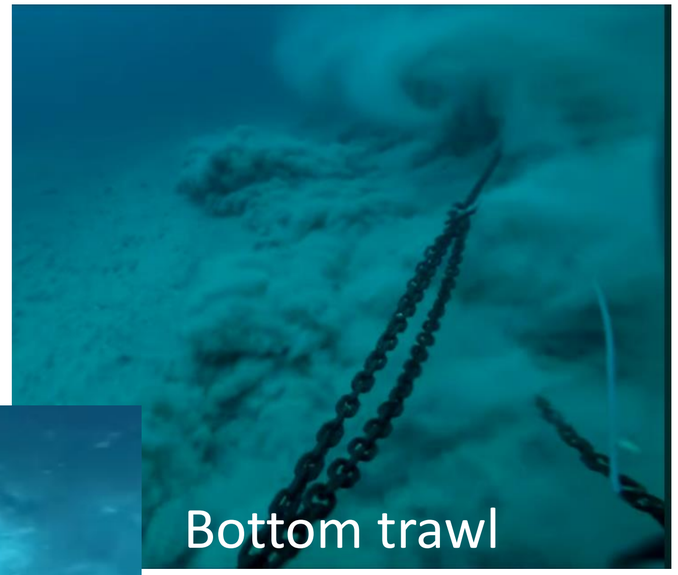
- “Precision fishing”, “smart” trawl, etc.
  - Can help to mitigate the fishing impacts: more selective gears may reduce bycatch and seabed contact, and improve catch rates(?)
  - Is likely **insufficient** if it leads to further degradation of marine resources by inducing more effort due to less catch efficiency





Opportunities from fishing techniques

- Widespread use of ‘best available fishing techniques’
  - The Fishers of the Future will contribute to maintaining natural capital and the capacity for renewal of fish stocks, not only focusing on the maximum quantity of fish caught (e.g., MSY) but also the **methods used to catch them**.
  - Given sustainability evaluations, the Fishers of the Future will **likely not** use bottom trawls but passive gears instead.


Bottom trawl


Bottom longline

FISHERS of the FUTURE

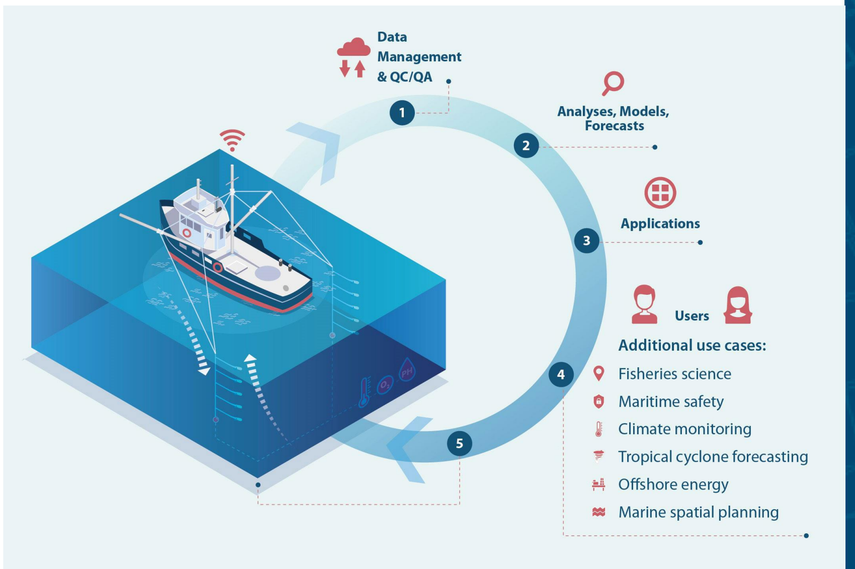
The role of the regulators

- The Fishers of the Future have opportunities protected by spatial and non-spatial **conservation measures**.
- The regulators identify co-benefits, compensate for trade-offs, and upfront costs during the **transition**.
- The EU Member States should promote sustainable fishing by re-activating old-fashioned business models. These include community-based models to **manage the "commons"**, which ensures a **fair share** for small-scale fishing using passive gears.

FISHERS of the FUTURE

Collaborative partnerships

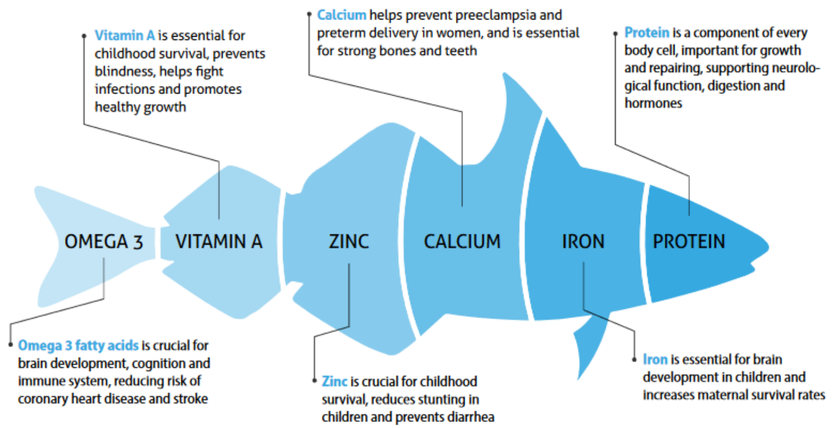
- With science: to continue collecting Earth Observatory **data** to monitor biodiversity features and detect/predict VMEs occurrences, Essential Fish Habitats
- Between regulators and fishers: to understand co-benefits to design **large protected areas** to sustain ecosystem services and enhance stock biomasses, carbon storage, and more.
- With society: to provide a correct valuation of biodiversity. Since it is usually **easier to identify costs than benefits**, the potential cost of repairing biodiversity is likely the most relevant metric.



FISHERS of the FUTURE

Fishers of the Future to…

- Contribute as **experiential knowledge and data providers** for use in science.
- **Uptake research & innovation outcomes**, for saving fuel, reducing impact, and improving profitability/jobs (depending on “fishing style”) – requiring financing and upskilling and profit redistribution, redirection of subsidies toward responsible practices, etc.
- Continue or shift toward delivering high-quality and nutritious seafood to consumers, not expanding farther away without restoring closer fish stocks.



FISHERS of the FUTURE

Brussels, Belgium, 19 March 2024

François Bastardie, Technical University of Denmark