



Institute  
for  
European  
Environmental  
Policy

# Illegal fisheries

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European Union Action to  
**Fight Environmental Crime**

[www.ieep.eu](http://www.ieep.eu)

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# Overview

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- **The work within EFFACE has included work on illegal fisheries**
- **For the EU, the regulatory context is the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)**
- **May seem odd to discuss in session of wildlife related crime, but:**
  - Fisheries is extraction of living resource with its own biological value
  - Fisheries can damage other non-target species/habitats
  - An objective of the CFP is the conservation of marine biological resources

# Environmental crime and fisheries

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- **How does the concept of ‘environmental crime’ relate to fisheries?**
- **Fisheries look at IUU fishing – illegal, unreported and unregulated. For CFP there are:**
  - rules on access to waters – to control which vessels have access to which waters and areas
  - fishing effort controls – to limit fishing capacity and vessel usage
  - technical measures - to regulate gear usage and where and when fishermen can fish
- **Unregulated fisheries are obviously not a crime – but IUU often considered together**
- **IUU fishing depletes fish stocks, destroys marine habitats, distorts competition, puts honest fishers at an unfair disadvantage**

# Enforcement

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- **Fisheries is interesting in wider EFFACE context for several reasons, e.g.:**
  - Inspection system based around Joint Deployment Plans that establish the planning of the fisheries control means to be deployed by MS
  - Union inspectors carry out inspection and surveillance of fishing activities in EU waters, outside the zones under sovereignty of MS
  - To facilitate the collaboration between MS and MS and the EFCA, the EFCA has designed and created a collaboration information sharing tool called Fishnet (restricted access)
  - Vessel monitoring system - a satellite-based method of transmitting position data from a fishing vessel to the control authorities. It allows authorities to monitor fishing vessels in near real time to target control and check the historical positions of a vessel for compliance with catch records and restricted areas

# Influencing behaviour

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- **Key driver is economic – traditional view of fishers weighing up costs and benefits of actions**
- **But field evidence shows decisions not always follow a purely economic decision**
- **For example, co-management regimes (working with fishers to create management regimes) can affect behaviour**



# Rights based management

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- **Various forms of RBM, e.g. fishing rights based on quota, access to territories, etc., held by individuals, groups, communities, etc. Most are transferable.**
- **Commission sought to introduce tradable quotas in last CFP reform – unsuccessful but MS can have their own RBM systems, e.g. in how to allocate fishing consistent with the agreed Total Allowable Catch.**
- **RBM is shown to have benefits for fishers (e.g. profits) and for fisheries (e.g. reduced overfishing)**

# Lessons

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- Fisheries work within EFFACE shows value of strong regulation, co-operation on enforcement and benefits of new information
- It also shows value of alternative approaches that change to relationship of fishers to fisheries that can deliver better compliance and better outcomes

