

**EFTTA**[®]European Fishing Tackle
& Trade Association

2024 LOBBY ACTIVITIES



Promotion and protection of the tackle trade's interests

Healthy fish stocks remain the most critical issue for the tackle trade. Without fish there would be no anglers and no tackle trade.

EFTTA informs decision makers in Brussels and all over Europe about the importance of healthy fish stocks and the socio and economic importance of sportfishing in Europe.

EFTTA keeps decision makers informed and gives advice about drafted policies and legislation of importance to the aquatic environment and sportfishing.

EFTTA fights for fair access to fishing spots and fish species for anglers.

EFTTA pushes for EU fisheries policies and legislation to treat sportfishing on equal footing with commercial fishing.

The European tackle trade is worth over €2 billion

Within the EU there are approximately **3,000 manufacturing & wholesale companies** trading in sportfishing. **13,000 tackle shops**, sports chains and mass distribution shops serve more than **25 million anglers** for an estimated turnover of over **€2 billion annually**.

Other businesses dependant on anglers' spend make the **total socio- economic value at about €20 billion**. A study published in 2017 (requested and funded by the European Parliament) concluded that marine recreational fisheries alone supports an estimated 99,000 full-time jobs in Europe.

Sportfishing delivers the highest economic value per fish

A sport-caught fish is worth much more than a fish caught by commercial fishermen. In most European countries, sportfishing **generates significantly more economic output than commercial fishing**. However, commercial fishing and aquaculture get the most political attention and support, including generous funding via the EU and national budgets. EFTTA works hard to achieve full and fair recognition of the recreational sector by the EU and Member States. Sportfishing and its development potential is harmed by the expansion of fish farming and overfishing by the commercial fishing sector as well as old and new dams and hydropower plants.

Sportfishing means lots of jobs everywhere including rural and remote areas

Many of the **hundreds of thousands of jobs** supported by sportfishing are located in rural and remote areas, where employment can be hard to find. It is also worth noticing that for many people, nearby fishing possibilities are a decisive factor when they choose where to live.

Sportfishing as a Covid-19 antidote

Angling has served as a healthy antidote through the Covid-19 crisis for many people. In 2020 the sales of angling licenses increased dramatically in all European countries and world-wide.

Ecosystem-services is high on the political agenda

Sportfishing is a healthy, sustainable activity which brings considerable economic activity to wherever there is water and fish. Unfortunately, the full value and development potential of sportfishing is not always considered when ecosystem service assessments are worked out for project planning and surveys. **This can result in losses for sportfishing** as well as for society, which in effect will not receive the best outcome from its natural resources.

Sportfishing and nature conservation

Sportfishing brings people in **direct contact with nature** giving them a better understanding of man's role in the ecological system. Sportfishers learn about nature and many become engaged in aquatic habitat conservation. In Europe volunteers spend **millions of hours every year on nature conservation** and restoration projects, as well as fish tagging and other scientific programmes, all unpaid.

Sportfishers are society's 'eyes and ears' in the water habitats, most often the first ones to alarm the authorities about pollution accidents, invasive species and illegal fishing. Allowing sportfishing in protected areas is increasingly important. EU has decided to expand its protected areas, both at sea and inland, to 30% by 2030, and 1/3 shall be 'strictly protected'. Marine protected areas are poorly controlled and attract poachers. The presence of sportfishers with smartphones and cameras discourages and reduces poaching; **a win-win for society and sportfishing.**

Sportfishing is healthy

More and more people live and work a sedentary lifestyle. Working time and free time are spent increasingly indoors on the internet, movies, social media and electronic gaming. There is a need and an increasing demand for nature-based activities. Studies show that one of the key factors in **health and wellbeing is time spent outside in fresh air.** Outdoor activities increase our ability to recharge our inner batteries to prepare for the demands of modern life. Sportfishing is one of those activities with a high health/economic value. Sportfishers can also enjoy fresh and healthy food. Sportfishing contributes positively to quality of life. Sportfishing brings people into contact with nature and provides them with relaxation and physical activity.

Sportfishing strengthens social family ties and improves relationships between generations.



EFTTA lobby policy

EFTTA continuously urges and lobbies:

- that the fisheries, environment and development policies recognise and consider the value and benefits of sportfishing.
- that legislation is not implemented in such a way that it unintentionally or unfairly damages sportfishing.
- that overfishing must stop.
- for abundant fish populations in healthy waters, which are of paramount importance for the future of sportfishing.
- for access to sportfishing in the so called **Marine Protected Areas** which in fact ought to be named more correctly 'Marine Conservation Areas'- wherever appropriate, and to provide areas open for sportfishing only.
- that Sportfishing becomes a much more integrated and important part of European fisheries policies. Together with the **European Anglers Alliance (EAA)**, EFTTA lobbies on prioritised lobby projects. EFTTA regularly meets with the commission in Brussels together with EAA on various subjects.
- EFTTA and EAA provide the secretariat to the 'Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment', which arranges three to four events annually within the European Parliament on legislation and topics of importance to sportfishing.
- EFTTA is working for conservation of the aquatic environment, alone and with EAA and other organisations.

Sportfishing tourism

Fishing tourism is a growing business with **huge development potential in most European countries.** Sportfishing has the ability to attract tourists out of the regular tourist seasons. We now see more governments taking an active role in developing their Sportfishing tourism potential, more recently Denmark. However, the full development potential cannot be exploited unless action is taken to **secure healthy European rivers, lakes and seas.** Politically, sportfishing needs to be given the same political attention and weight as is given to commercial fishing and aquaculture. In the future **Europe could be a 'paradise' for sportfishing** as Europe has tens of thousands of lakes and rivers, a long coastline and mighty seas.

Sportfishing is sustainable fishing

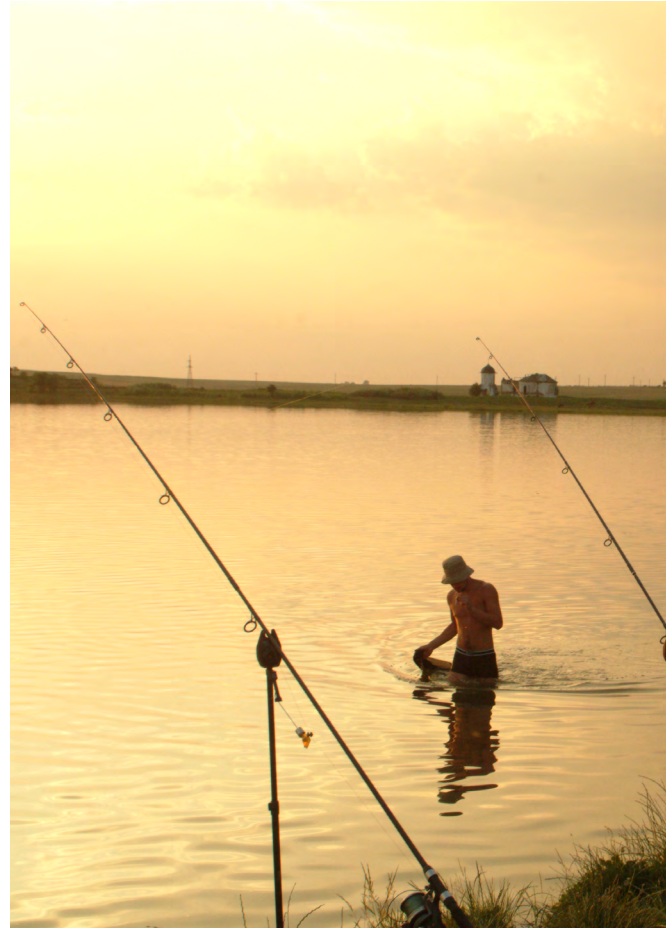
Sportfishing is a sustainable way to **fish with negligible impact on fish stocks and the aquatic environment.** Our decision-makers need to know that sportfishing is one of very few activities, which can provide sustainable economic activity within a marine protected area. That's why sportfishing is allowed in most marine protected areas world-wide. Sportfishing is carried out using rods, lines and hooks. Fish are caught one or few at a time, undersized and unwanted fish are returned so that they can continue to grow and breed. Sportfishing as opposed to trawling and most other kinds of netting, does not take out whole fish schools or cut off the migration routes to and from the spawning areas at sea or in the rivers. For all Europeans, healthy lakes, rivers and seas are an important part of our heritage and **it is our responsibility to preserve these for generations to come.**

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EFTTA 2023/2024 Prioritised Lobby Action Plan

- **EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP):** we are lobbying for years to be full part of the CFP. Although we are in a good position, the recent reform has just been postponed to the next legislative period from 2024 onwards. EFTTA stays behind this topic.
- Convince EU decision makers that recreational fishing should be recognised on an **equal footing with commercial fisheries and aquaculture** in the next CFP reform.
- Lobby that the ongoing revision of the EU's Fisheries Control Regulation will be beneficial to fish stocks and sportfishing.
- Call for and promote **closed containment fish farming systems**.
- Lobby that the **EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030** will be a positive for sportfishing and biodiversity.
- Continue to engage proactively with the implementation of the **Single Use Plastics Directive** and the pending **lead restriction proposal**.
- Lobby that **Brexit won't be a threat to the bass** or other EU-UK shared stocks of sportfishing interest.
- Continue our **work on cormorants with the EAA** to follow up on the EU funded cormorant project CorMan, its stakeholders' platform and its European cormorant documentation centre. (This project went live in 2011 because of active lobbying from the angling community. It is one of the outcomes of the Kindermann Report adopted by the European Parliament in 2008. EFTTA delivered substantial input to this report).
- Lobby for an **end to subsidies to small hydroelectric power stations**, minimise negative effects from already existing power stations and safeguard waters and biodiversity from further hydropower expansion.



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- Continue **promotion of our hydropower campaign** film, which so far has been viewed by more than 50,000 people on YouTube and other video channels.
- Promote the **socio-economic value of sportfishing** and make sure that the socio-economic side of sportfishing is not overlooked or excluded by fisheries policies, management and legislation.
- Lobby that a **comprehensive pan-European sportfishing socio-economic study** is conducted every five year.
- Watch closely the extremist animal activists who want fishing banned.
- Fight **against any unfair recreational fishing regulations** or licenses.
- Support invasive species policies and legislation, but demand changes if unnecessarily harmful to sportfishing.
- Investigate and **push for a fee on angling related items to be reinvested into sportfishing**.
- Continue **running together with EAA relevant events at the European Parliament within the 'Forum on Recreational Fisheries and Aquatic Environment'** to which EFTTA and EAA provide the secretariat, and arrange meetings chaired and attended by Members of the European Parliament and other invited official experts and stakeholders.
- Attend and give presentations at conferences and workshops and to deliver responses to consultations which are relevant for EFTTA's interests and lobby programme.
- Increase our **cooperation with related industries** like the European Boating Industry (EBI).



Recent lobby successes

The importance of sportfishing in EU policy making grows more visible and stronger year on year thanks to EFTTA and EAA's lobby efforts.

Sea bass

In recent years 'sea bass' has been one of our greatest successes in directing EU and Member States' attention to the overfished bass stocks. However, bass management measures applied to sportfishing is a cause for frustration. They are disproportional and unfair. In 2015 emergency measures were put in place to bring down the excessive amount of bass catches. Sportfishing was imposed a bag limit of three bass which EFTTA found acceptable at the time, everything considered. However, in 2016 and 2017 the measures were tightened with a moratorium for the first six months and only one bass per recreational fisher per day during the second half of the year; and last year only catch & release was allowed!

On top of that some commercial fishers were allowed to continue catching bass as much as they used to. This triggered EFTTA and EAA to take the matter to the European Court of Justice. Revised scientific catch data showed that sportfishing had much less of an impact on the bass stock than previously claimed. The Commission and the Council changed the legislation and reinstated a bag-limit for the last three months of 2018, whereafter EFTTA and EAA dropped the court case.

Brexit is a new challenge for us and bass. Bass is now a shared EU-UK stock, which might complicate proper management of this species.

EU legislation

A number of EU fisheries management and environment policies and laws have been revised lately. We have lobbied them all with good result. Recreational fishing is now mentioned explicitly in more EU fisheries and environment policies and regulations, and more frequently than ever before. Other important policy and legislative proposals are pending (see the lobby plan above). We expect that our efforts will lead to an acceptable outcome for sportfishing.

The EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 & Natura 2000:

In particular 'strictly protected areas'. We managed to get angling free from being deemed an 'extractive activity' on par with mining and forestry, which, per definition, should not be allowed access to any strictly protected area.

Despite this success, we cannot rest on our laurels. Process continues, implementation, evaluations, revisions etc.

Single-Use-Plastic (SUP):

Fishing gear: The Single-Use-Plastic Directive, also named 'the SUP Directive', took effect in June 2019.

The first draft from May 2018 made the tackle trade very nervous because plastic fishing lines and lures were included in the scope. The fear was that these tackle products would be banned.

EFTTA strongly engaged in amending the directive in writing, one-to-one meetings with the Commission, and expert committee meetings. We were successful in our efforts! The current legislative text is no longer a significant threat to plastic tackle products today. Even so, it remains essential to closely monitor this issue!

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): The EPR Schemes are part of the SUP Directive. This environmental policy makes producers responsible for the entire life cycle of products. For producers of fishing gear containing plastics it means that they must cover costs related to waste management, litter cleanup and awareness-raising measures. The EPR schemes differ from one country to another. The various national EPR schemes shall all be in force until the end of 2024 at the latest.

To be prepared and minimise potential EPR costs EFTTA recommends producers of tackle gear:

- to check the EPR schemes of the countries you are active in. See the following example of the clear guidance that is used in Sweden: <https://www.naturvardsverket.se/en/guidance/extended-producer-responsibility-epr/extended-producer-responsibility-for-fishing-gear/>
- to shift to biodegradable plastics and rubber if possible.
- to support, or initiate, collection schemes like the 'Anglers National Line Recycling Scheme' www.anglers-nlrs.co.uk

Our RecFish Forum

With the assistance of consultancy AlienorEU we've organised successful events at the EU Parliament: go to www.eaa-europe.org/european-parliament-forum

About EFTTA

EFTTA Ltd, the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association, was established in London in 1981, as an international association to serve the European fishing tackle trade by campaigning to promote sportfishing, environmental issues and international business. EFTTA is the leading European trade association for manufacturers and wholesalers of Sportfishing equipment. Membership is open to Manufacturers, Wholesalers, Agents and Press in the tackle industry.

EFTTA AISBL

Due to Brexit and the closure of EFTTA Ltd. & EFTTEX Ltd. in England in 2021, **EFTTA AISBL was established as a registered Nonprofit Lobbying Association** in Brussels, Belgium in early 2022. (AISBL = *association internationale sans but lucratif*).

EFTTA has all the biggest players of the angling industry in the board. We have a close working relationship with international trade associations in the USA, Italy, Australia, Japan and Canada – as well as national links with other tackle associations, the European Anglers Alliance (EAA) and China Fish.

EFTTA is the only EU association to defend the interests of the European Recreational Angling Industry and related companies in this sector. On behalf of the tackle trade sector we lobby in the EU institutions to ensure that the economic, environmental, cultural and social values of Recreational Angling are safeguarded, now and in the future.

EFTTA's lobbying team interacts continuously with the responsible decision-makers of the EU to raise awareness and provide background information when required. We collaborate closely with all concerned parties to find mutual solutions to enable a future in which sustainable recreational angling plays an important role for people and the environment.

Trade Support: www.eftta.com is a valuable source of news and information for our members. We have a dedicated PR and marketing resource that communicates EFTTA activities to the world's angling trade and international media. EFTTA members are automatically kept informed through **the EFTTA newsletter NewsLines.**



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