

Recreational fisheries across Europe

Recreational fisheries are non-commercial fishing activities exploiting living aquatic resources for recreation or sport.



EFFORT

Marine recreational fishers

9 M

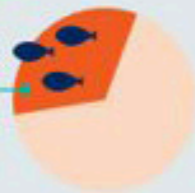
in European waters

58 M

globally

TARGETED SPECIES

Recreational fishing landings can account for up to a third of the total catches on important stocks shared with commercial fisheries in Europe.



Catch-and-release is used mainly in Northern European countries.



Fish consumption is a key motivation for recreational fishers in southern European countries.

Key species for big game recreational fishing



Tuna, marlin and other billfish

Important targeted species in the North Atlantic Ocean



Atlantic cod

European sea bass

Popular targeted species in the Mediterranean Sea



Seabream and relatives

MODALITIES



75% operate from shorelines



20% operate from boats



5% are spear fishers

Gender gap

Most recreational fishers are men. The origin and consequences of the gender gap remain unexplored.



BENEFITS

Blue economy Important asset especially in rural and peripheral areas.

Annual expenditures generated by marine recreational fishers

6 B

in Europe

+60 B

globally

Recreational fishing benefits health and wellbeing of practitioners, derived from **stress reduction**.



GEARS

Recreational anglers use **rod and lines** although **traps and nets** are allowed in some countries.



Spear fishers use **spearguns**.

OPPORTUNITIES

Economic development of coastal communities through tourism initiatives, such as charter fishing.



The expansion of new technologies, such as **fishing apps**.



Development of citizen science programmes in which scientists, fisheries managers, and fishers collaborate.

GOVERNANCE

Management of recreational fisheries is complex with **local, national and international** levels of government involved depending on the species and region.



In Europe, the Common Fisheries Policy establishes the need to **develop recreational fishing in a sustainable manner**.



Need for inclusive marine governance

Marine spatial planning frameworks need to incorporate interests of different marine ecosystem users, including recreational fishers.

ENVIRONMENTAL INTERACTIONS

Long-living, slow-growing, and low reproductive potential species are vulnerable, especially if commercial catches are significant.

Fishing mortality of retained catches and after catch-and-release.

Alterations in the ecosystem

Accidental introductions into the wild from the use of exotic species as bait.

Displacement of native species because of competition, predation, or epizootics.

Selective pressures on fish stocks causes alternations of size structure and genetic variability that can drive evolutionary changes.



Impacts of lost fishing gear

Poisoning, mortality from ghost fishing, and entanglements of different marine fauna, including reptiles, birds, and mammals.

