One year under the landing obligation: Atlantic and North Sea demersal fisheries

DiscardLess Project Conference

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Conveners: ***Dave REID / Youen VERMARD***

Speakers: ***Olivier LEPRÊTRE / Antoine BALAZUC***

Photographs: A. BALAZUC - 2015

What have we learnt from EODE program ? (1/4)

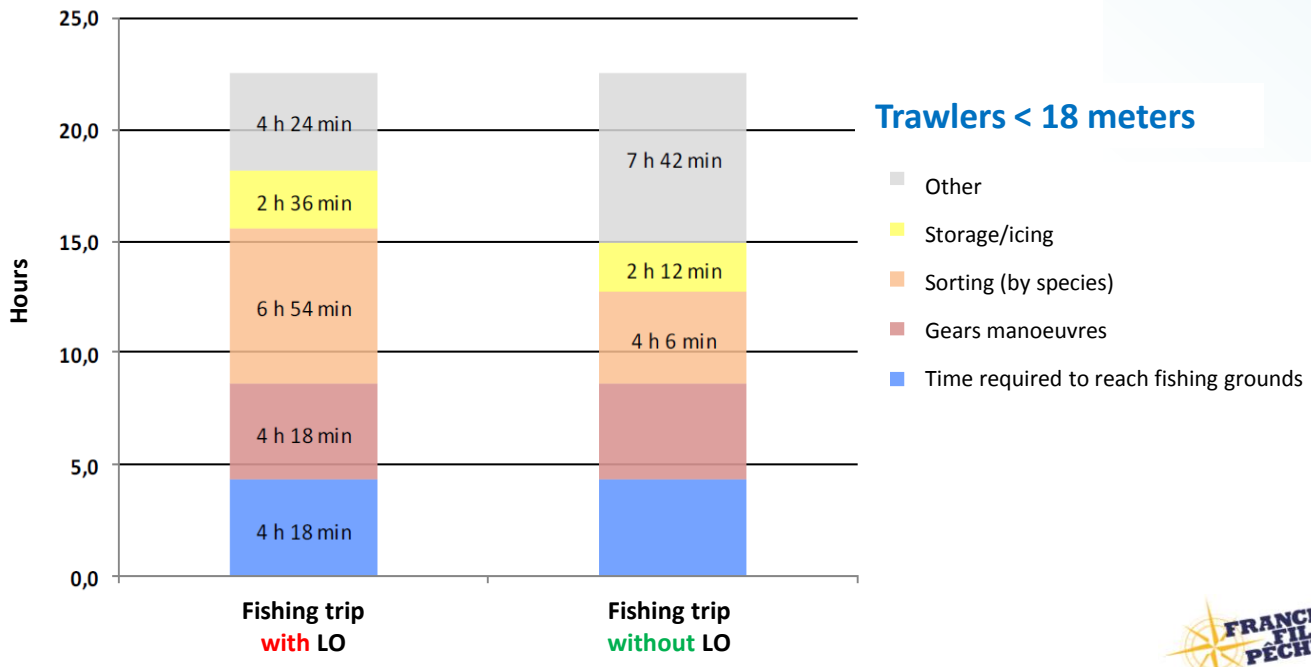
Aboard artisanal and demersal trawlers…

The experiment was conducted as if we were already in 2019, with a full landing obligation (LO)

Depending on numerous factors (season & targeted species / zone / vessel length) : from 10 to 70 % of catches were discarded and should be kept aboard in 2019 !

Without any change, the **LO would jeopardize:**

- **The crew's health** (and might sap their morale too)



What have we learnt from EODE program ? (2/4)

Aboard artisanal and demersal trawlers…

But also:

- **The security of vessels at sea :**

  Fish holds were full for 22 fishing trips out of 27 (trawlers < 18m) and 3 fishing trips out of 36 (trawlers > 18m)… and the deck should be kept free for the crew's security

- **The sustainability of fishing companies :**

  Skippers and crews will refuse to work more… for lower incomes

  Fishing vessels owners cannot support costs for developing new gears and adapting old vessels to unavoidable catches (and we have seen how hard is it to mobilise EMFF in France)

LO requires fundamental changes in the working habits of fishermen, **<u>specially for multi-specific</u> and small-scale <u>demersal fisheries</u>**

(And everyone knows it will take more than one year… to change a model which has been developed and perfected for over 40 years !)

What have we learnt from EODE program ? (3/4)

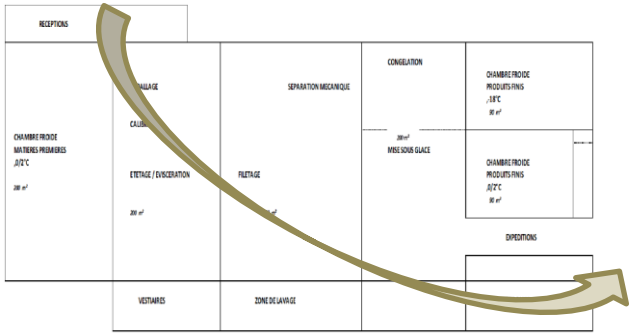
Ashore: valorisation of unavoidable catches…

In 2015, our interpretation of CFP was not clear enough to develop sustainable ways to proceed and valorize the unavoidable catches:

Do the seafood companies have to pay for the catches landed (to support extra-costs at sea) **?**

Are they willing to bear the investments required to do so ?

For instance, EODE program estimated the cost of a 1400 m² platform to pre-proceed the unwanted catches of the 53 demersal trawlers of **Boulogne-sur-Mer** (including 32 longer than 18 meters) : **from 4,2 to 5,3 M€ !**



1400 m² platform draft plans to pre-procced the unavoidable catches

(And to do it ethically… would that be possible to **valorize these catches for food aid – direct human consumption -** if it is strictly supervised by authorities ?)

Progressive implementation of landing obligation (LO)

Demersal trawlers of Boulogne-sur-Mer (1/2)

Region (CIEM area)	TRAWLS Mesh size (mm)	Species concerned from	
		2016	2017
North Sea (IVc)	≥ 100	Haddock, Northern Prawn, Plaice, Saithe (50%)	Cod, Nephrops, Sole, Whiting
	70 – 99	Sole, Nephrops, Northern Prawn	Haddock
	32 – 69	Northern Prawn	Haddock, Nephrops, Sole, Whiting
Eastern Channel (VIId)	*All mesh size*	Hake (30%), Nephrops (30%), Whiting (25% gad)	Hake (20%), Nephrops (20%), Whiting (20% gad)
	< 100	Sole (5%)	*(no more obligation)*

Whiting in VIId :

- Several trawlers, over 18 meters long, were concerned (more in 2017)
- *De minimis* exemption of 7 % was important enough to cover the undersized catches

Sole in both VIId and IVc :

- Around 20 trawlers-dredgers under 18 meters long were concerned
- The scallop's season was long enough to minimize the problem (shorter fish season)
- Small quantities were landed BUT NOT VALORISED (undersized sole thrown to the bin) !

Progressive implementation of landing obligation (LO)

Demersal trawlers of Boulogne-sur-Mer (2/2)

Considering 2016 situation:

- **Fishing activities are not the same every year**… in case of shorter scallop's season, the undersized soles landings may become a problem which cannot be ignored any longer (it is delicate to conclude about LO's implementation after one year only)

- **It is neither conceivable for crews members to see undersized soles thrown to the bin again**… while, in France, organisers of food aid desperately need more fish !

- It is **nor** conceivable **for fishing companies to give it for free to the seafood industry**

- Minimum thresholds to apply or not the LO (ex: if gadoids represent more than 25 % landings in 2013 and 2014, the LO applies to whiting in 2016) may cause the incomprehension between two skippers doing substantially the same work but apparently not treated equally by the CFP

- For the moment, in 2016, we can say the LO's implementation for these demersal trawlers was so progressive that it did not entail any overwhelming consequences…

- Fishermen have begun to ask whether the implementation of LO is too progressive… we actually **fear the "big bang situation" highlighted by the EODE experiment**

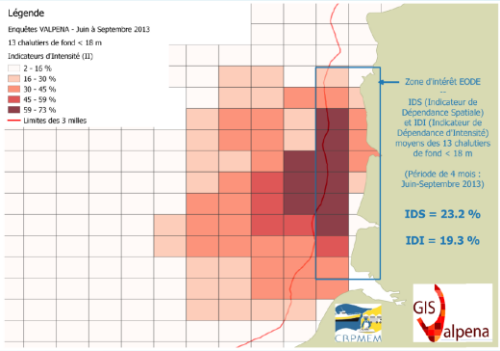
What can fishermen could expect from scientists ?

Reduce unwanted catches by adapting the regulation:

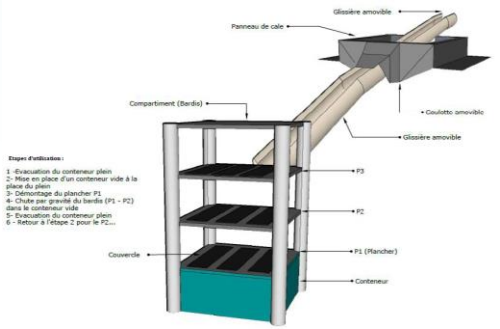
Synthesise all the relevant studies on both…

- gear selectivity (giving the priority to both ease-of-use and commercial losses minimization)
- and fishing strategies (to understand how fishermen could reduce their dependence to sensitive areas without endanger the artisanal fishing companies)

…to identify best options fisheries by fisheries, and help fishermen to make the regulation evolve !



Define, test and approve technical improvements to proceed unavoidable catches on board



Find how to valorize the unavoidable catches - ethically:

- LO's implementation inevitably leads to more working hours at sea and investments to adapt old vessels to the new regulation… it seems normal fishermen ask to be retributed for that
- Argue <u>and solve</u> the food aid issue (direct human consumption)

Picture showing the diversity of the catches on board Mr LEPRETRE 's trawler (2015)

Olivier LEPRÊTRE

Owner and skipper of a 24 meters long demersal trawler in Boulogne-sur-Mer

President of the CRPMEM (regional fisheries committee) of "Hauts de France"

crpm.nord@wanadoo.fr

Antoine BALAZUC

Former coordinator of EODE experiment at the CRPMEM of "Hauts de France"

antoine.balazuc@outlook.fr

CRPMEM

Link to EODE experiment (FR):

http://www.comitedespeches-npdcp.fr/nos-actions/gestion-de-ressource/eode/

Photographs: A. BALAZUC - 2015