



## PFA fishing activities in MPAs

In response to questions raised about trawling in European Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), the Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association (PFA) wishes to address and clarify significant misrepresentations of facts about the pelagic fishing activities of our members.

We understand that it may be confusing that our vessels sometimes operate in MPAs - geographically defined zones to protect, manage and enhance marine ecosystems.

Importantly, all fishing activities of PFA members' vessels are fully legal and authorized by the EU and its Member States. They fish strictly within allocated quotas, established to ensure the responsible management of pelagic stocks. These quotas are based on scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) – the leading independent scientific body for fisheries.

International standards for what is and is not allowed in MPAs are also rooted in science. Different (types of) MPAs have different conservation goals and measures in place. As a consequence, pelagic fishing is allowed in specific MPAs due to its specific characteristics.

Pelagic freezer trawlers target only pelagic species, which constitute massive shoals of fish that swim in the water column, away from the seabed, allowing for the most selective fishing possible. This means there is a minimal, sustainable impact. In MPAs, they do not affect what is protected. In light of this and of the strict fisheries legislation and enforcement in the EU, it is impossible to understand why some label pelagic trawling (inside and outside MPAs) as 'one of the most destructive fishing techniques in the world'.

Such notions are often linked to misconceptions about size. Pelagic vessels are generally much larger than other fishing vessels. This goes especially for freezer trawlers, which for 70% are made up of processing and freezing capacity, which helps to reduce the carbon footprint of the fishing operation. Therefore, the size of our vessels does not give them disproportionate catching power, as is sometimes claimed. Our catches are limited by our quotas.

It is regretful that the length of our vessels is often used, such as in BLOOM's recent report on MPAs<sup>1</sup>, to divert attention from what is really important: the context of why certain fishing methods are compatible with the aims of MPAs.

Responsible fishing lies at the heart of PFA members' business strategy. They are committed to sustainable fishing for food in order to provide around 6 million healthy, high-quality and affordable meals a day with one of the lowest carbon footprints of all animal protein production.

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Our website [www.pelagicfish.eu](http://www.pelagicfish.eu) offers more information on pelagic fishing.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bloomassociation.org/palmares-europeen-la-france-a-laire-marine-protegee-la-plus-chalutee/>