



Are there plenty of fish in the sea?

An IUCN European overfishing campaign proposal

Draft as of 14 October 2005

1 The overfishing crisis

The fisheries homepage of the European Environment Agency succinctly explains the overfishing crisis we are facing:

“There is a critical overcapacity in the European fishing fleet. Over-fishing can have serious consequences for the entire marine environment. Certain trawling techniques, for example, cause damage to the highly important seabed habitat. At the other end of the food chain, seabirds, seals, whales and other marine mammals will be left with nothing to eat.

“The key question is whether Europe can avoid ‘fishing out’ its remaining stocks and instead develop an industry that is sustainable for both the environment and those making a living from it.”

The European Union is fully aware of the problem. At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the EU stated:

“Global fish stocks are being seriously depleted. Almost one third have been overexploited in recent years and will need time to recover. Another half are already fully fished and can stand no more catch increases or they will go into serious decline. In other words, just a quarter of the world fish stocks are, what the UN terms, 'moderately exploited'.

The EU is in the process of reforming its fisheries policy, with the aim of reducing fleets and total catch, and calls on other countries to do the same in order to restore stocks to sustainable levels by 2015 at the latest. This is in line with the Biodiversity Action Plan on Fisheries, which also provides other measures to preserve or rehabilitate biodiversity.



Indeed, by improving the integrated management of oceans, establishing marine and coastal protected areas and supporting the sustainable management of fish stocks, the overfishing crisis can become a thing of the past.

An EU fishing inspectorate is also planned, as well as regional advisory councils to bring the EU's Common Fisheries Policy closer to fishermen, the fish industry, NGOs, local authorities and other stakeholders.

To achieve sustainable fisheries beyond EU waters, on the basis of stronger international co-operation, the reform package includes an action plan against illegal fishing and a strategy for EU fisheries development partnerships with third countries.”

Unfortunately, though progress has been made, a good deal still needs to be done. Speaking in September 2005, Dr. Joe Borg, Member of the European Commission responsible for Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, explained that the:

... overall the picture is positive: we have made significant progress in the right direction. The process of cutting back on fishing to replenish stocks may sometimes have to be more gradual than the immediate, one-step correction that some scientists would prefer. We try to avoid asking the fishing industry to accept sudden and large reductions in fishing except in critical cases of over-fishing, as severe shocks to the industry can have wide-ranging social, as well as economic, consequences. But the basic direction of our policy remains the same: the implementation of a new EU management framework with special emphasis on multi-annual management plans, a reduction in the size of the fishing fleet, the end of public aid for the building of new fishing vessels, the promotion of environmentally-friendly fishing methods and the establishment of recovery plans for particularly over-exploited stocks. All this is intended to fundamentally change past behaviour.

“We still have some way to go, however, before achieving sustainable fisheries and a secure economic future for our fisheries sector.” (italics added)

The overfishing crisis – its threat on marine biodiversity and Europe’s central role in it – continues. If we want to have plenty of fish in our



seas more action by the EU, by European states, by European businesses and by Europeans citizens is needed now.

2 Campaign goals and objectives

The goal of this pan-European campaign is to raise awareness of citizens on the impact of European fisheries on marine biodiversity in Europe and beyond.

In recent years there have been few large-scale awareness raising activities in Europe. One notable exception is the WWF 2002 Stop Overfishing Campaign which had the objective to “raise awareness of, and generate action to halt, the depletion of the oceans through unsustainable fishing: the fisheries crisis.”

Another interesting exception is the 2005 overfishing campaign by the Sea Life Centres which has 20 branches across 8 western European countries. Also of note is the turtle conservation campaign of the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria. Both of these campaigns build a basis for this campaign proposal

This campaign proposal will raise awareness in order to encourage Europeans to take action

- by changing their consumption patterns and
- by increasing their political engagement.

To achieve these two objectives, the campaign will work directly with aquaria and zoos to educate Europeans – adults and children – on the crisis of overfishing and on possible actions to change fisheries practices.

By way of example, the campaign will work with aquaria to raise awareness on opportunities for consuming fish from sustainable fisheries. This effort could build on the excellent wallet-sized guide from WWF Switzerland: “Fish - A Consumer's Guide” and also from the very successful set of guides produced by the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California, USA.

Over the three year period, the campaign will deliver not only a heightened sense of awareness across Europe of the overfishing crisis, but, if successful, it will also achieve real change by Europeans in both their consumption patterns and their political decisions.



3 Campaign logo and messages

The proposed logo for the campaign is a threatened commercially harvested fish from European waters such as the North Atlantic cod. (For example, see the picture in the header of this document.)

The proposed strap line for the overall campaign is: *“Are there plenty of fish in the sea?”*

The first key campaign message is: *“No, there are not enough fish in the sea.”*

The second key campaign message is: *“Indeed, there are initiatives to conserve marine biodiversity.”*

The third key campaign message is: *“Yes, the EU and its member states should reform their regulation of the seas.”*

The fourth key campaign message is: *“I too can do my part to conserve marine biodiversity.”*

4 Campaign partnership

The campaign will be run as a partnership with the IUCN Secretariat playing a partnership coordination and campaign management role.

The partnership will consist of institutions willing and able to play an active role in the campaign including European:

- aquaria and zoos
- aquaria and zoos associations
- marine certification organisations, and
- marine scientific networks.

Regarding aquaria and zoos, a small group of high-quality and popular aquaria across Europe will be approached. The short list will include institutions such as the L'Acquario di Genova, Le Musée océanographique de Monaco and L'Aquàrium de Barcelona.

Regarding aquaria associations, the two major ones which will be approached are the European Union of Aquarium Curators and the European Association of Zoos and Aquaria



Regarding marine certification organisations, the two major ones which will be approached are the Marine Aquarium Council and the Marine Stewardship Council.

Regarding marine scientific networks, the campaign will work closely with the IUCN Global Marine Programme, relevant IUCN Commissions groups and IUCN members in Europe.

Several organisations, both from within Europe and outside Europe, will also be approached to play an advisory role to the campaign partnership. Of note, from the USA are the Smithsonian Institution, which organised a travelling exhibition on the oceans in peril in 1995, and Seafood Choices Alliance, which mobilises support across America for sustainable fisheries.

As describe below, during the first phase of the campaign the campaign partnership will be established and together the partners will finalise the campaign programme and set of campaign activities and materials.

5 Campaign programme

The campaign programme will focus addressing the overfishing crisis through achieving two objectives:

- changing European consumption patterns, and
- increasing European political engagement.

The campaign programme will have four phases:

- Phase 1 (late 2005 to mid 2006)
Organise the campaign
- Phase 2 (mid 2005 to mid 2006)
Implement the campaign in larger EU countries
- Phase 3 (mid 2006 to mid 2007)
Roll out the campaign in smaller EU countries
- Phase 4 (late 2007)
Evaluation and forward planning



Phase 1 (late 2005 to mid 2006) **Organise the campaign**

The primary tasks during of Phase 1 will be to

- establish the campaign partnership,
- finalise the campaign programme,
- finalise the core set of campaign activities, and
- develop and produce the campaign materials.

Phase 2 (mid 2005 to mid 2006) **Implement the campaign in larger EU countries**

During Phase 2, the campaign will be implemented by campaign partners in larger European countries such as France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland and the United Kingdom.

By focusing first on larger European countries, the campaign will be able to take advantages of economies of scale in the production of campaign materials and in influencing large numbers of Europeans.

Phase 3 (mid 2006 to mid 2007) **Roll out the campaign in smaller EU countries**

During Phase 3 the campaign will be implemented by campaign partners in smaller European countries including the recent member states. The campaign may also be implemented in non-EU states such as Switzerland and Norway as well as the EU accession states such as Croatia and Turkey.

Materials developed and used in the larger EU countries will be available for use in the smaller countries.

Phase 4 (late 2007) **Evaluation and forward planning**

During Phase 4 a thorough evaluation of the campaign will be undertaken. This will build on the on-going monitoring which took place throughout the campaign. (Please see the section below on monitoring and evaluation.)

Also, during Phase 4 the campaign partnership will meet to review the evaluation and, as appropriate, plan a new round of activities or a new campaign.



6 Campaign themes and activities

For each year of implementation – Phases 2 and 3 – the campaign will feature four quarterly themes with associated activities and materials. The proposed quarterly themes are:

- overfishing within European waters,
- overfishing outside European waters,
- marine conservation initiatives, and
- what you and the EU can do.

Associated with each quarterly theme, there will be an associated programme of activities and materials such as:

- special live fish exhibitions of commercial marine life within European waters and outside European waters,
- newsletters,
- lecture series,
- museum-quality displays,
- education resource kits for teachers,
- sustainable fish menus at the facility's eating places,
- pocket-sized sustainable fish guides,
- campaign merchandise,
- petitions to the EU and its member states,
- press materials, and
- so on.

7 Monitoring and evaluation

The campaign will require careful monitoring at two levels:

- implementation, and
- impact.

Implementation monitoring will focus on the development and implementation of the campaign programme including the quarterly activities and the production and dissemination of materials.

Campaign partners will produce quarterly reports on the campaign efforts. The IUCN campaign coordination unit will also undertake independent monitoring and consultations.



Impact monitoring will focus specifically on the impact the campaign has on changing European consumption patterns and increasing European political engagement.

During Phase 1, the IUCN campaign coordination unit will work closely with the monitoring and evaluation expertise within IUCN to design a robust impact monitoring programme. During Phase 2 and 3, the monitoring outputs will feed directly into adjustments in the programme and its implementation as required to achieve the desired impacts. During Phase 4, the monitoring outputs will feed directly into an evaluation of the campaign and forward planning.

8 Campaign risks

This campaign, like any other major environmental campaign, faces many risks including:

- lack of sustained commitment by the partners,
- lack of adequate support from the donors,
- lack of interest by the target audience – Europeans,
- lack of interest by the European media,
- lack of response by the policy makers – EU and member states,
- lack of response by European businesses,
- lack of scientific integrity,
- poorly designed campaign activities and materials, and
- unexpected developments which overshadow the campaign.

In finalising the programme during Phase 1, the campaign partnership will need to specify the material risks facing the campaign and ensure that these are adequately addressed.

9 Campaign budget

A rough indicative budget for the IUCN European overfishing campaign is approximately **€4 million**:

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Total
Management and coordination	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,200,000
Activities and materials	750,000	750,000	375,000	125,000	2,000,000
Monitoring and evaluation	75,000	100,000	100,000	75,000	350,000
Accounting and reporting	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000	300,000
Total	1,200,000	1,225,000	850,000	575,000	3,850,000