

# Bottom trawl selectivity and reduction of fisheries discards in European North Western Waters

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**Spanish otter bottom trawlers in European North Western Waters operate mainly in ICES 7 area called “Gran Sol fishing ground”.** Vessels target demersal species, namely megrim, monkfish and hake. This métier is reported to have discard rates of quota species: megrim, European hake, haddock, horse mackerel, mackerel, blue whiting and boardfish. Main reasons for discarding are quota restrictions and undersized fish. Several species of gadids (haddock and cod) with no quota are considered “choke species” in this fishery in the framework of the “Landing obligation”. The scientific evidence indicated that an increase in selectivity is not easily achievable in the short term, and the “de minimis exemption of Landing obligation” was apply to this fishery.

A series of fishing trials have been carried out by IEO and Fishers organization “OPP7” to study experimental codends with the objective to decrease the catch for gadids. The data obtained in “RAPANSEL” trials are positive and indicate that an important fraction of the unwanted catch of the target species with small size escapes through the experimental codend and selectivity devices as square mesh windows. The new fishing gear designs could be a possible solution for reducing the discard rates of juveniles of the target species and also of several unwanted species in the fishery minimizing the economic loss of the fishery and improving the Landing obligation compliance.

Poster contributions