

Fishing technical measures and landing obligation in northwest Spanish demersal fisheries

J. VALEIRAS, E. VELASCO, M. G. PENNINO, G. PIERCE

Different types of technical measures are used in different ways. They have been mainly used to protect juveniles and improve the selectivity of fishing gears, reducing the amount of fish that is discarded. Historically the measures have focused on individual stocks but in recent years they have been used to reduce the impact of fishing on multiple aspects of the marine ecosystem, including habitats and non commercial species. In northwestern Iberian waters, technical measures research has focused on the bottom trawl fisheries, as most of the discard choke situations affect these fleets and there are difficulties in improving selectivity. Over the last few years several pilot projects onboard commercial vessels have tested different selective trawl gears, including a variety of selectivity devices and changes in mesh size and geometry in the codends. The DESCARSEL project works on the aim to improve fishing strategies, gear selectivity and discard survival through the use of better practices and technological development of more selective fishing gears, to improve compliance with the landing obligation under the reformed CFP. This research follows a collaborative approach, working with fisher associations and the stakeholders related to landing obligation rules. The selectivity of mixed bottom trawling fleets with the highest discard rates of quota species in Iberian Spanish waters have been studied with the aim of increasing selectivity and reducing unwanted catches for the implementation of the landing obligation. Pilot projects on theoretical selectivity measures and selectivity trials have been conducted, focusing on square mesh and changes in mesh netting geometry and mesh size, in order to reduce bycatch.

Poster contributions