

# SYMPOSIUM 2025



## OPERATIONALISING EUROPEAN ECOSYSTEM BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

*June 30 - July 3 2025 | Herman Teirlinckgebouw, Brussels*



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## Symposium co-organised with:



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



General Fisheries  
Commission for  
the Mediterranean



**ILVO**  
Flanders Research Institute for  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food



**EcoScope**



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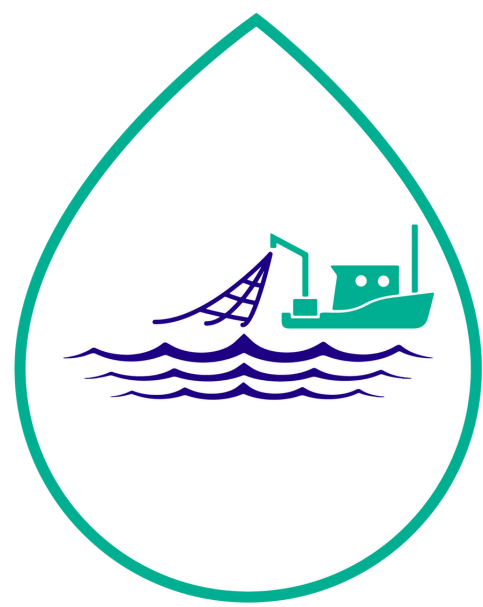


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# OPERATIONALISING EUROPEAN ECOSYSTEM BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

## Overview

Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) recognises the need to enhance their derived social and economic benefits whilst actively minimising the impacts that fisheries have on the environment. While the benefits of EBFM are widely recognised, several core challenges pose barriers to its effective uptake in fisheries across Europe – from complexity and interdependencies to uncertainties and values.

Co-convened by SEAwise and key partners, including the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the **Operationalising European Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Symposium** will be held from 30 June to 3 2025, in Brussels, Belgium, to document and synthesise available and new approaches to producing operational ecosystem based fisheries management advice in a European setting.

Co-organised by the Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (ILVO) and Denmark's National Institute of Aquatic Resources (DTU Aqua), the symposium will bring together experts from across the world with fisheries policymakers, managers and stakeholders to exchange ideas and innovative solutions in support of practical implementation of EBFM.

The symposium will provide an opportunity to review, discuss and evolve progress on operational EBFM in Europe, via a mixture of scientific oral and poster presentations, interactive and policy sessions, offering a unique opportunity for knowledge sharing and advancement in support of sustainable management of fisheries socio-ecological systems and operationalisation of EBFM.

Opening soon for submissions, presentations and posters are invited across the following dedicated theme sessions:

- Sustainable management of social systems
- Sustainable management under changes in productivity of fished stocks
- Sustainable management of ecological effects of fisheries
- Spatial management for EBFM
- Management advice integrating predicted effects on social and ecological systems
- Operational scope of EBFM approaches

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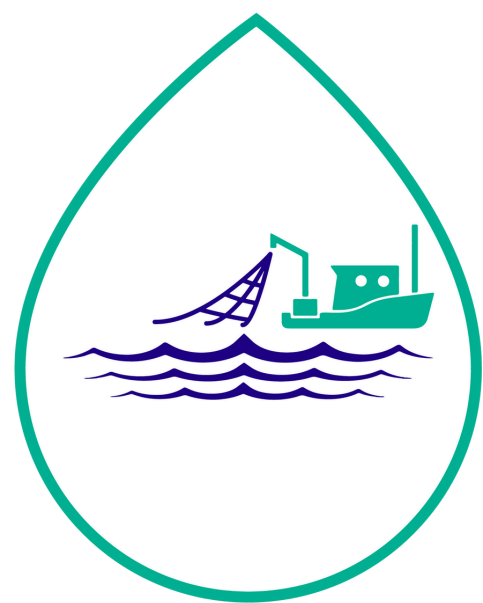
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## Outline Sessions

**Session 1: Why do we need operational Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management and what are the advice barriers holding us back?**

Keynote: Mark Dickey-Collas (Marine consultant), further keynotes TBC

**Session 2: Sustainable management of social systems**

Conveners: Marta Ballesteros (IEO-CSIC) and Isabella Bitetto (COISPA)

Keynote: Manuel Hidalgo (IEO): 'Carbon impact of fisheries'

**Session 3: Sustainable management under changes in productivity of fished stocks**

Conveners: Geir Huse (IMR) and Marie Savina-Roland (Ifremer)

Keynote: Kathy Mills (Gulf of Maine Research Institute)

**Session 4: Sustainable management of ecological effects of fisheries**

Conveners: Marija Sciberras (HWU) and Dave Reid (ICES)

Keynote: Caterina Fortuna (ISPRA)

**Session 5: Spatial management for Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management**

Conveners: Maria Grazia Pennino (IEO-CSIC) and Athanassios Tsikliras (AUT)

Keynote: Howard Townsend

**Session 6: Management advice integrating predicted effects on social and ecological systems**

Conveners: Lotte Worsøe Clausen (ICES) and Elisabetta Morello (GFCM)

Keynote: Eva Plaganyi-Lloyd (CSIRO)

**Session 7: Operational scope of EBFM approaches**

Conveners: Anna Rindorf (DTU Aqua) and Joost Paardekooper (former European Commission-DGMARE)

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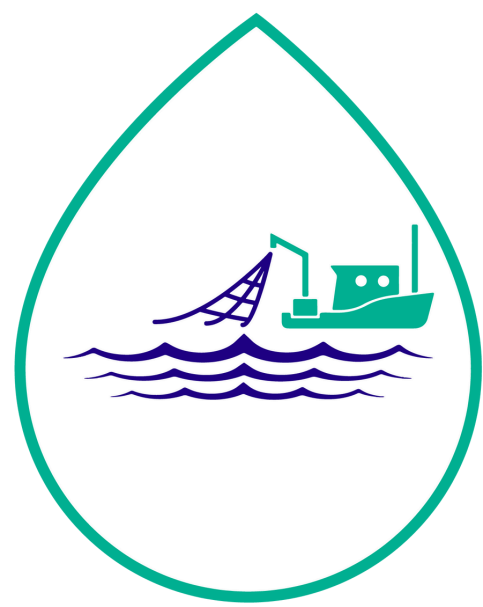
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## Background, Aims and Structure

### Background

Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) is tasked with the dual aims to ensure recovery and conservation of marine biodiversity, sustainable use of the components of biological diversity and fair and equitable sharing of benefits (CBD 2022) in a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy (EC 2019, EC 2020). The complexity and interdependency of the components in the ecosystem makes this task complicated to advice and decide on. The decisions are further complicated by the substantial uncertainty around the consequences of management measures under climate change and spatial management as well as differences in values and decision-making power of the multiple benefitting stakeholders.

### Aims

The symposium will provide an opportunity for scientists, policymakers, managers and other stakeholders to review, discuss and evolve progress on operational Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management in Europe. By targeting a global international audience, the symposium will promote the exchange of knowledge on these topics within and beyond Europe.

### Structure

We seek presentations and posters which focus on sustainable management of social and ecological systems in a changing world, the role of spatial management in attaining objectives and potential solutions for operational management advice for social and ecological systems. We encourage contributions from all geographic areas to enable discussions at a global scale of challenges and questions raised when operationalising Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management.

The symposium is organized as a combination of interactive sessions, plenary key note talks and dedicated theme sessions on each of the themes:

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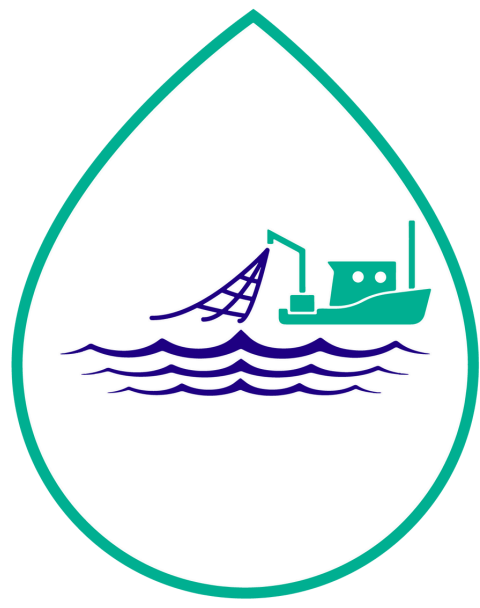


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- Sustainable management of social systems.
- Sustainable management under changes in productivity of fished stocks.
- Sustainable management of ecological effects of fisheries.
- Spatial management for EBFM.
- Management advice integrating predicted effects on social and ecological systems.
- Operational scope of EBFM approaches.

The sessions will include invited and contributed presentations of a format reflecting the specific session balance between presentations and interactive participation. Keynote speakers will give talks on the major themes. Keynote talks will be 30 minutes; all other talks will be 10 minutes including questions.

Authors will be limited to one oral presentation and one poster as senior author. Presentations must be given by the lead author. Poster sessions will be introduced with a brief description of each poster within the appropriate theme and topic session. The symposium will be conducted in English.

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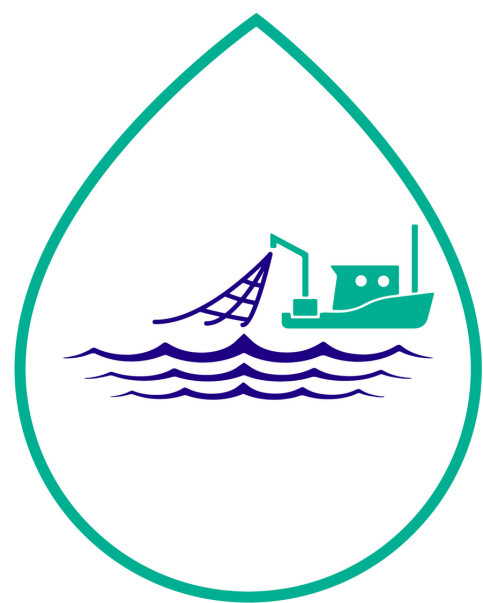


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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Monday 30 June

**10:00 Registration coffee and posters**

**11:00 Session 1: Introductory session and welcome**

**Why do we need operational Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management and what are the advice barriers holding us back?**

Chaired by: SEAwise coordinator Anna Rindorf  
Welcome from Nikos Zampoukas, DGRTD

**Keynote presentation: Mark Dickey-Collas** (Marine Science Consultant, former Chair of the ICES Advisory Committee)

**Keynote presentation: TBC**

**Keynote presentation: TBC**

**12:10 Session 1 Interactive Group Activity**

**13:00 Lunch**

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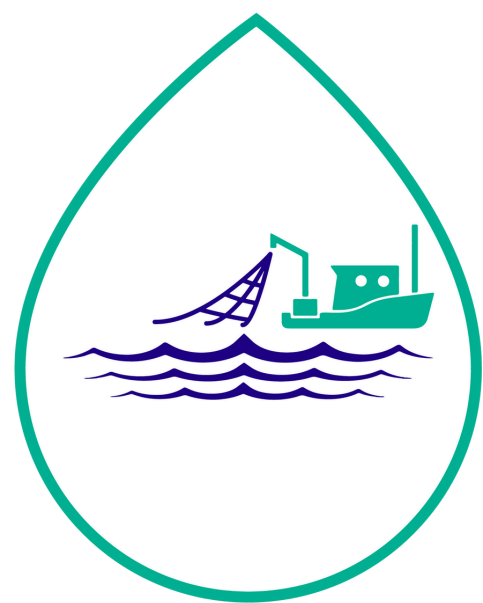
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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Monday 30 June

### 14:00 Session 2: Sustainable management of social systems

**Conveners:** Marta Ballesteros (IEO-CSIC) and Isabella Bitetto (COISPA)

#### Session overview

Sustainable management of social systems is based on an evaluation of the benefits of fisheries along with the likely chance of achieving these benefits through specific fisheries management measures. Traditionally, evaluations of fisheries benefits have often focused on economic benefits, direct employment and to some extent governance. However, a variety of other social indicators have been developed in recent years, including impacts on and of large and small-scale fishers, effects on coastal communities, distribution of benefits, Carbon emissions and human health and nutrition. The models used to predict the effects of different management measures have concurrently increased in their ability to predict future changes and their realism has further improved through the inclusion of enhanced knowledge of fisheries and fisher behaviour, economic developments and aspects such as climate change in models. Session 2 reviews recent improvements to all of these topics.

#### We welcome contributions on

- Identification and quantification of social benefits of fisheries management measures.
- Innovative and operational social indicators
- Models of increased realism and ability to predict future changes in response to management and ecosystem change.

### Keynote: Manuel Hidalgo (IEO): 'Carbon impact of fisheries'

#### Scientific presentations and Q&A

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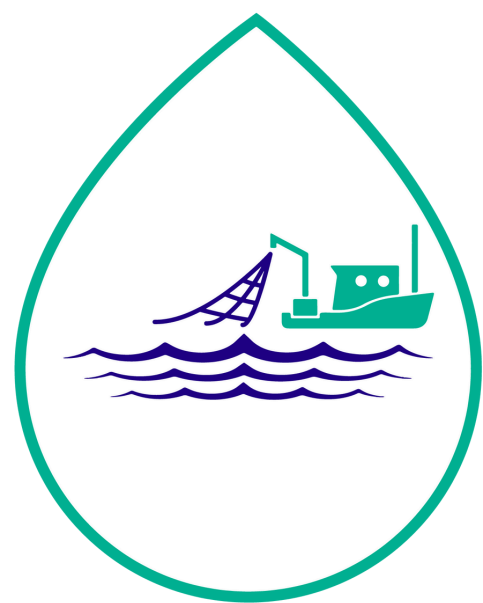


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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Monday 30 June

15:30 Coffee break

### 16:00 Session 2 continued: Sustainable management of social systems

**Conveners:** Marta Ballesteros (IEO-CSIC) and Isabella Bitetto (COISPA)

Scientific presentations and Q&A

16:50 Session 2 Interactive Group Activity

17:40 Day 1 Conclusions

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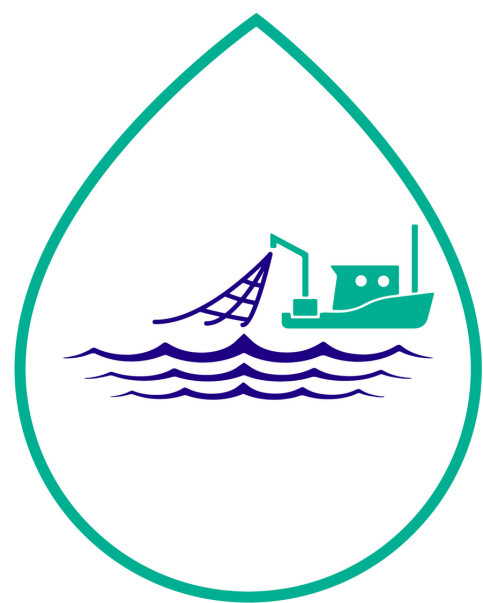


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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Tuesday 1 July

**09:00 Welcome back and opening day 2**

**09:10 Session 3: Identifying trade-offs and conflicting objectives**

**Conveners:** Geir Huse (IMR) and Marie Savina-Roland (Ifremer)

### Session overview

Productivity of fished stocks is constantly changing in response to environmental conditions and fisheries management must account for these changes to be sustainable in the long term. While interannual variability is considered in most management strategies, directional or step-like changes must be addressed using models tailored to evaluating management strategies under different environmental scenarios for which the likelihood of their occurrence is often not well known. Session 3 investigates improved predictive models of commercial stock productivity including environmental drivers to determine if their inclusion improves predictive ability and the sustainability of different management strategies.

### We welcome contributions on

- Quantification of the effect of environmental changes on recruitment, growth and natural mortality
- Quantification of predictive ability of models of recruitment, growth and natural mortality
- Evaluations of impacts of different management strategies when productivity exhibits long term change

**Keynote: Kathy Mills (Gulf of Maine Research Institute)**

Scientific presentations and Q&A

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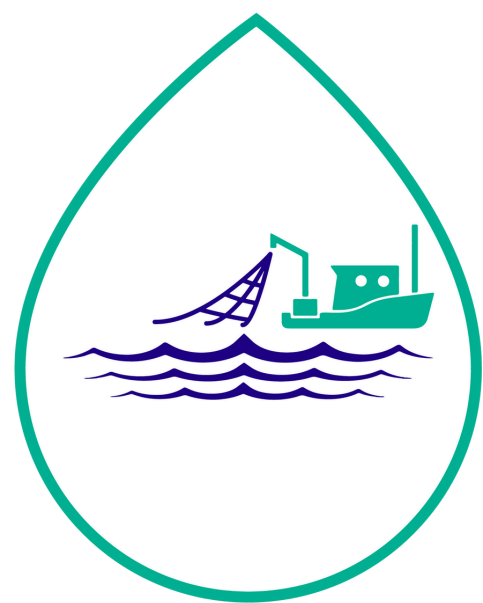
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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Tuesday 1 July

10:45 Coffee Break

### 11:15 Session 3 continued. Identifying trade-offs and conflicting objectives

**Conveners:** Geir Huse (IMR) and Marie Savina-Roland (Ifremer)

Scientific presentations and Q&A

12:10 Session 3 Interactive Group Activity

13:00 Lunch

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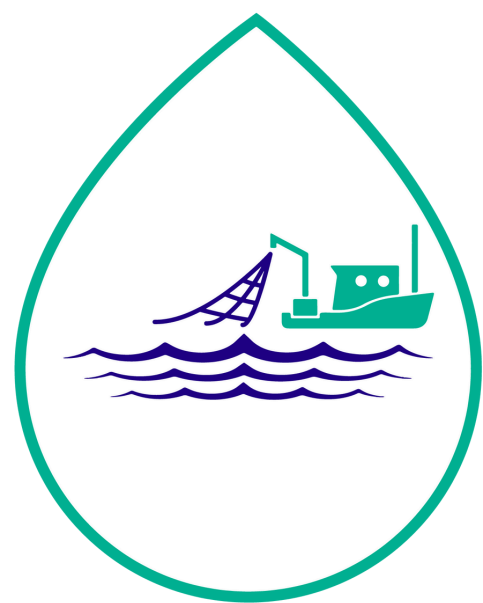


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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Tuesday 1 July

### 14:00 Session 4: Sustainable management of ecological effects of fisheries

**Conveners:** Marija Sciberras (HWU) and Dave Reid (ICES)

#### Session overview

Fisheries impact the ecological system through impacts on retained species, bycaught (non-retained) species, habitats, food webs and marine litter and quantifying the link between these impacts and fishing effort is key in providing managers with options which ensure ecological sustainability. In session 4, we investigate how the links can be quantified using tailored methods for different parts of the ecological system with differences in data availability along with recent improvements in estimation of bycatch risk for sensitive species and habitat impact. Further, approaches to illustrating effects across several species together will be welcomed.

#### We welcome contributions on

- Quantification of links between fisheries by different fishing fleets and sustainability of retained species
- Quantification of links between fisheries by different fishing fleets and sustainability of bycaught species
- Quantification of links between fisheries and sustainability of habitat and food web impacts
- Approaches to collate information for several ecological components for specific fleets

### Keynote: Caterina Fortuna (ISPRA)

Scientific presentations and Q&A

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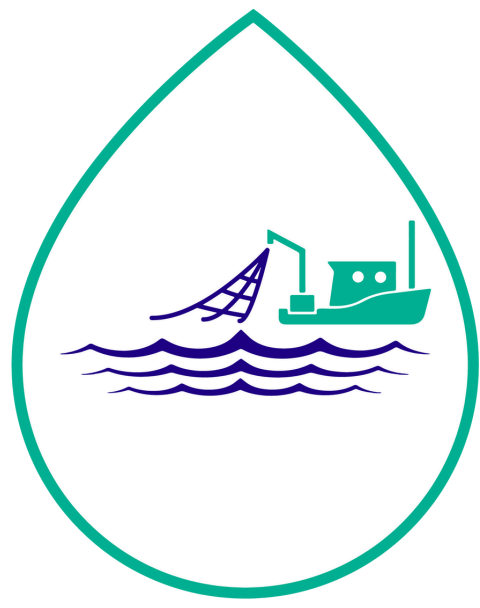


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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Tuesday 1 July

15:35 Coffee break

**16:05 Session 4 continued. Sustainable management of ecological effects of fisheries**

**Conveners:** Marija Sciberras (HWU) and Dave Reid (ICES)

Scientific presentations and Q&A

17:00 Session 4 Interactive Group Activity

**17:50 Closing statement end of Day 1**

**17:55 Networking & Posters** (Closes at 18:00)

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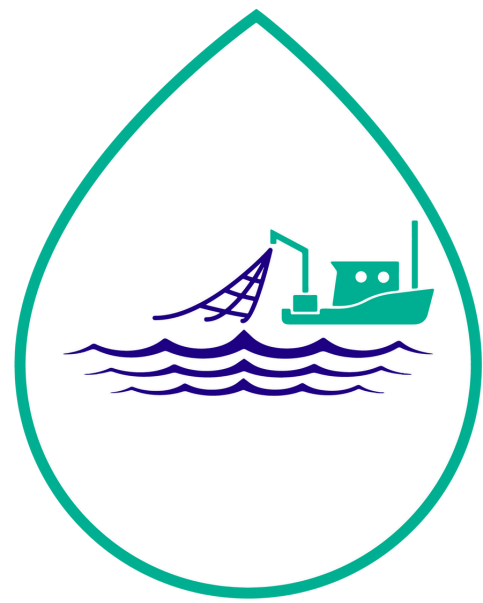
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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Wednesday 2 July

**09:00 Welcome to day 3**

### **09:10 Session 5: Spatial management for Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management**

**Conveners:** Maria Grazia Pennino (IEO-CSIC) and Athanassios Tsikliras (AUT)

#### **Session overview**

Spatial management is a key tool in achieving the aims of Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management and hence, evaluations of the impacts of closures with different extents and locations to achieve the objectives are crucial in a knowledge based decision making process. Knowledge and models of the impact of factors such as climate change, protected areas and other maritime activities on the spatial distribution of fish and fisheries and the resulting changes in ecological and social costs and benefits of fisheries is essential to these evaluations. The models can be used to evaluate social and ecological impacts of fisheries management measures including spatial management strategies aiming to decrease the catch of juveniles and choke species, ensure food availability for predators, reduce impact on sensitive species and habitats, decrease CO2 emission (carbon footprint), and increase socio-economic benefits for fishers.

#### **We welcome contributions on**

- Approaches to evaluate future distributions of fish and fisheries
- Approaches to evaluate effects of spatial management measures on social and ecological benefits
- Approaches to compare results of spatially explicit models with results of non-spatial models

### **Keynote: Howard Townsend**

Scientific presentations and Q&A

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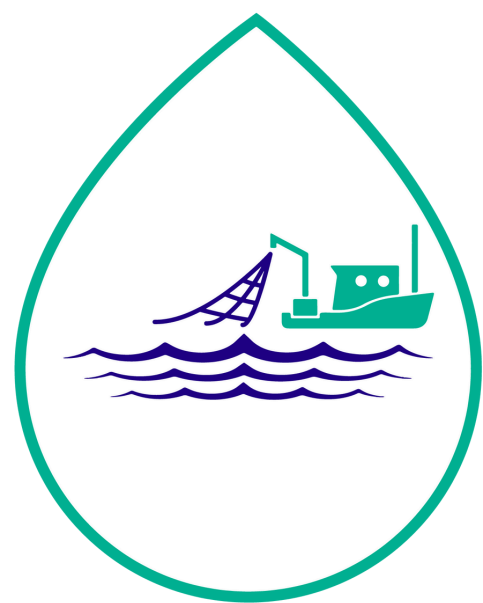


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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Wednesday 2 July

10:45 Coffee break

**11:15 Session 5 continued**

### **Spatial management for Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management**

**Conveners:** Maria Grazia Pennino (IEO-CSIC) and Athanassios Tsikliras (AUT)

Scientific presentations and Q&A

12:10 Session 5 Interactive Group Activity

13:00 Lunch

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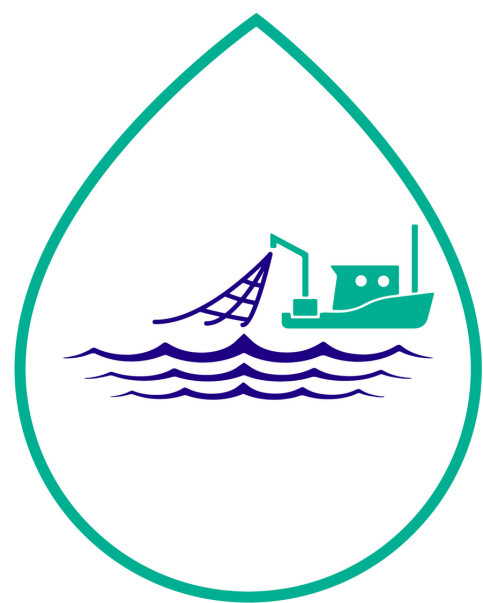


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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Wednesday 2 July

### 14:00 Session 6: Management advice integrating predicted effects on social and ecological systems

**Conveners:** Lotte Worsøe Clausen (ICES) and Elisabetta Morello (GFCM)

#### Session overview

Providing operational management advice on Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management requires the integration of impacts on and of fisheries for larger areas under different management strategies. The integration should be based on quality assured predictive knowledge of key ecological, economic and social processes and account for interannual variability to be able to predict the risk of different management measures to various social and ecological concerns. Session 6 invites examples of applications of management strategy evaluation frameworks with appropriate consideration of uncertainty and parameter correlation. The evaluations can examine the degree of attainment of agreed objectives and risks under future and present environmental conditions, different fisher behaviour models and management dependent selectivity patterns in multispecies-multifleet models.

#### We welcome contributions on

- **Multispecies and multistock models evaluating impacts of fishing fleets on retained species under different management strategies**
- **Multispecies and multistock models evaluating impacts of fishing fleets on ecological considerations under different management strategies**
- **Multispecies and multistock models evaluating impacts of fishing fleets on social considerations under different management strategies**

### Keynote: Eva Plaganyi-Lloyd (CSIRO)

Scientific presentations and Q&A

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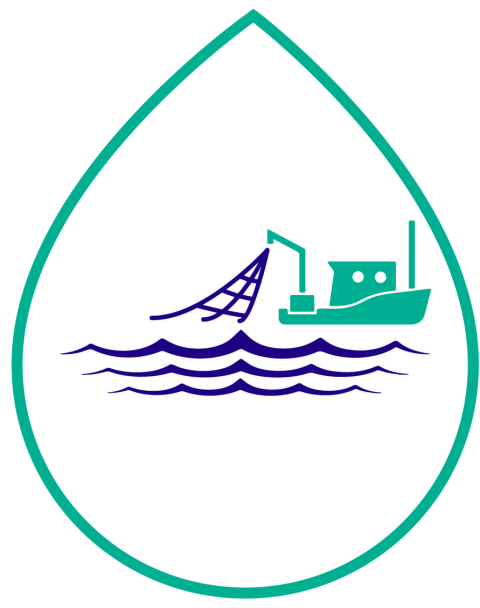
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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Wednesday 2 July

15:35 Coffee

**16:05 Session 6 continued. Management advice integrating predicted effects on social and ecological systems**

**Conveners:** Lotte Worsøe Clausen (ICES) and Elisabetta Morello (GFCM)

Scientific presentations and Q&A

12:10 Session 6 Interactive Group Activity

**17:50 Closing statement end of Day 3**

**19:30 Symposium dinner**

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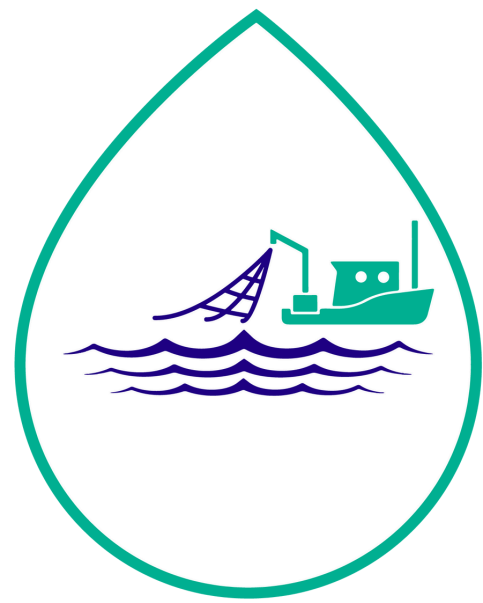


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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Thursday 3 July

**09:00 Welcome to day 4**

### **09:10 Session 7: Operational scope of Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management**

**Conveners:** Anna Rindorf (DTU Aqua) and Joost Paardekooper (former European Commission-DGMARE)

#### **Session overview**

Session 7 is an interactive session tailored to discussing the operational scope of the topics addressed during the symposium. The sessions are initiated with a summary of the impressions of each session (presentations as well as group sessions) delivered by invited speaker.

**09:20 Talk 1: Why do we need Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management and what is holding us back in the operationalisation?**

**09:40 Talk 2: Sustainable management of social systems**

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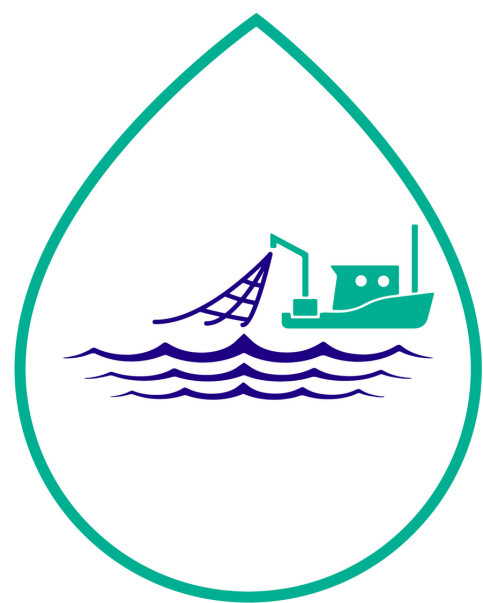


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# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Thursday 3 July

10:00 Talk 3: Sustainable management of fished stocks under changes in productivity

10:20 Talk 4: Sustainable management of ecological effects of fisheries including group conclusions

10:40 Coffee break

11:10 Talk 5 - Spatial management for Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management

11:30 Talk 6 - Management advice integrating fisheries management impacts on social and ecological systems

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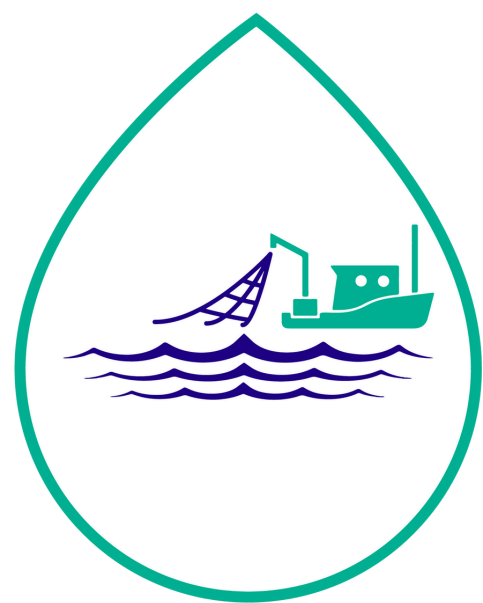
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## SYMPOSIUM 2025

OPERATIONALISING EUROPEAN ECOSYSTEM  
BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

*June 30 - July 3, Brussels*



# SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME

## Thursday 3 July

**11:50: Group session: How do we ensure that scientific knowledge becomes operational in supporting EBFM decisions?**

12:30: Reporting back

13:00 Lunch

**14:00 Group session. What is the role of science in ensuring that public perception reflects scientific advice?**

15:00: Reporting back

**15:45 Reflections**

**16:00 End of the symposium**

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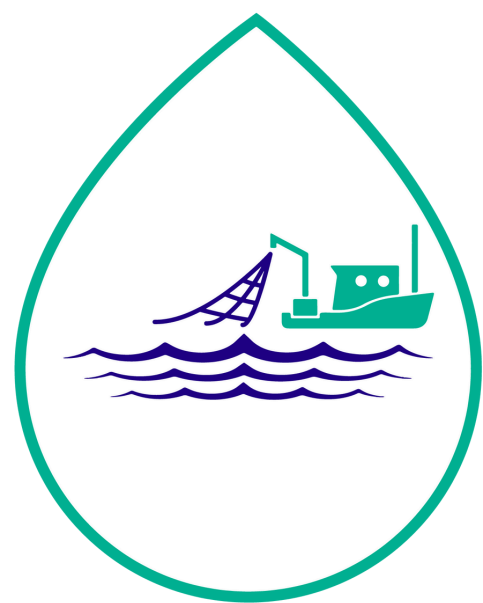


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## Registration

We urge interested participants to pre-register with us via our On-line Pre/Registration as early as possible, even if you have not made firm travel arrangements, so we can plan our events more efficiently. The Registration Fee applies to the Symposium sessions and workshops. Registration is not considered complete until the Registration Fee is received.

### Registration by 1 June 2025:

Full symposium 180 Euros (Single day, no social events 25 €)

Thursday policy discussions are open to all but require registration to ensure room for all participants

The full fee covers coffee, lunch, reception, and the conference dinner.

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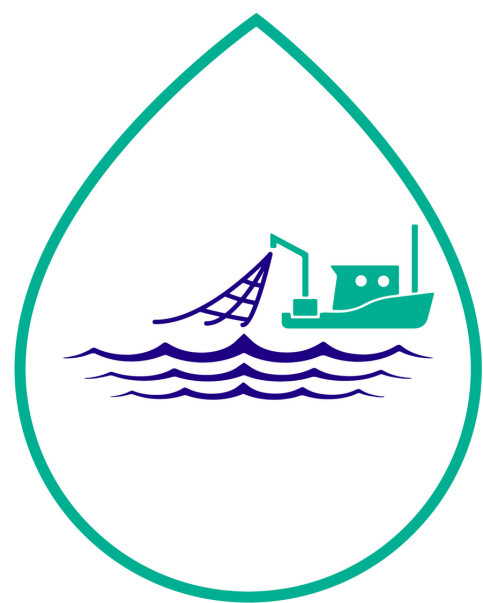


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## Call for Abstracts

**Abstracts should include:** title; author(s); author addresses, plus email address; key words; not exceeding 300 words. Submissions must indicate which session the abstract is submitted to and the preferred format of the contribution (oral or poster).

**The deadline for submission is 1 May 2025.**

Invited keynote speakers will give 30-minute presentations, while oral presentations are allotted 10 minutes. Posters will be displayed during the whole meeting, and a late-afternoon poster session will be arranged on Tuesday. The official language of the symposium is English.

In order to support the development of synthesis manuscripts and manuscripts based on keynotes, group meeting rooms will be available for 3 days following the symposium. If you wish to use such a group room, please indicate the topic and duration of your meeting together with a tentative list of participants.

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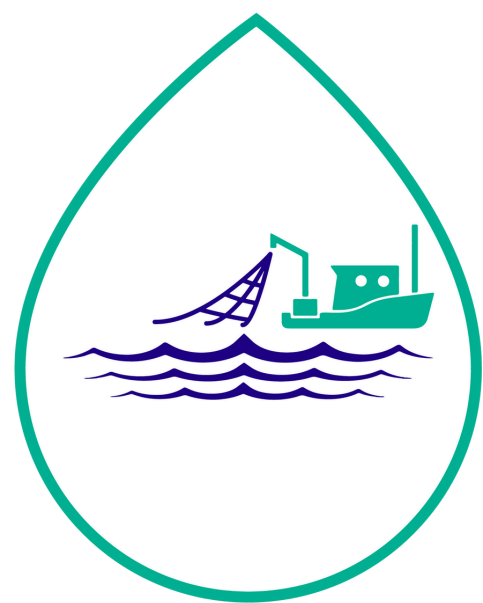
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## Special Issue Publication

**ICES Journal of Marine Science** will publish a special issue based on the symposium in January 2027. The issue will cover contents from the symposium's theme sessions, alongside a general introduction.

Participants may submit work presented at the symposium for publication in the special issue of the ICES Journal of Marine Science. Manuscripts can be submitted at any time from January 1st 2025 to December 31st 2025. Papers will be released as they are accepted for publication (i.e., not held until the final completion of the special issue).

The submission process will follow the [standard process for the IJMS](#), please read the [“How to get published in ICESJMS”](#). Please indicate in your cover letter that the submitted manuscript is intended for the Operationalising European Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Symposium special issue and associate your submission with the symposium by selecting it from the drop-down menu during the submission process.

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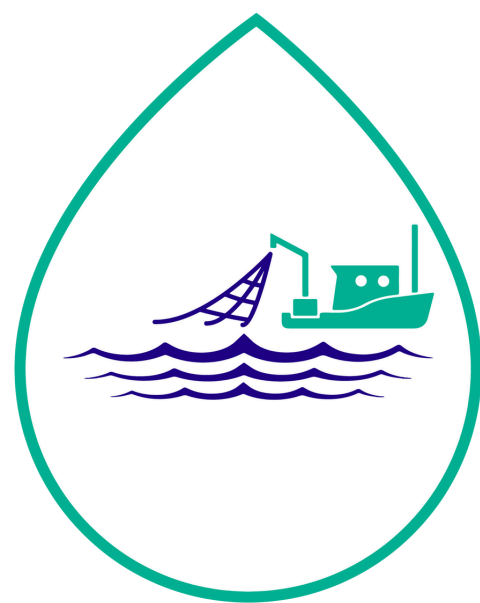


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# OPERATIONALISING EUROPEAN ECOSYSTEM BASED FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

## Venue

The symposium will be held at Herman Teirlinckebouw, Brussels, Belgium

Avenue du Port / Havenlaan 88, 1000 Brussels

[More information on how to reach Herman Teirlinckebouw](#)

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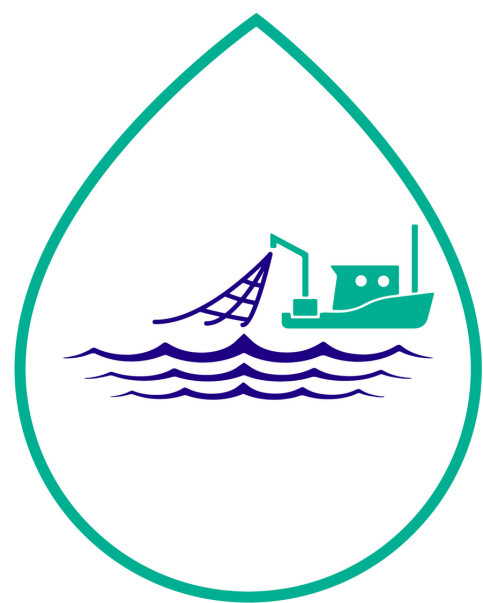


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## Sponsors

The symposium is sponsored by DTU Aqua, ILVO and the SEAwise project.

DTU Aqua is the National Institute of Aquatic Resources at the Danish Technical University. The institute conducts research, provides advice, educates at university level and contributes to innovation in sustainable exploitation and management of aquatic resources. You can read more about DTU Aqua [here](#).

ILVO is the Flanders Research Institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The institute works toward food systems that are healthy in all respects, from production to processing to consumption, firmly embedded in a healthy environment and characterized by fair socioeconomic relationships. You can read more about ILVO [here](#).

The SEAwise project works to deliver a fully operational tool that will allow fishers, managers, and policymakers to easily apply Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) in their own fisheries. With the input from advice users, SEAwise identifies and addresses core challenges facing EBFM, creating tools and advice for collaborative management aimed at achieving long-term goals under environmental change and increasing competition for space.

SEAwise operates through four key stages, drawing upon existing management structures and centred on stakeholder input, to create a comprehensive overview of all fisheries interactions in the European Atlantic and Mediterranean. Working with stakeholders, SEAwise acts to:

- Build a network of experts - from fishers to advisory bodies, decision makers and scientists - to identify widely accepted key priorities and co-design innovative approaches to EBFM.
- Assemble a new knowledge base, drawing upon existing knowledge and new insights from stakeholders and science, to create a comprehensive overview of the social, economic, and ecological interactions of fisheries in the European Atlantic and Mediterranean.
- Develop predictive models, underpinned by the new knowledge base, that allow users to evaluate the potential trade-offs of management decisions, and forecast their long-term impacts on the ecosystem.
- Provide practical, ready-for-uptake advice that is resilient to the changing landscapes of environmental change and competition for marine space.

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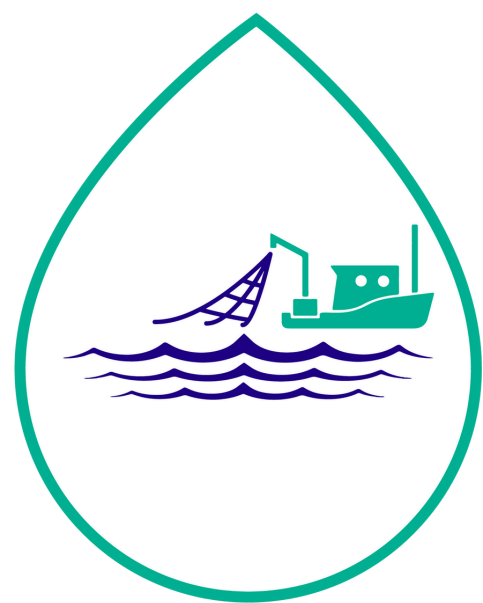
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The project links the first ecosystem-scale impact assessment of maritime activities with the welfare of the fished stocks these ecosystems support, enabling a full-circle view of ecosystem effects on fishing productivity in the European Atlantic and Mediterranean. Drawing these links will pave the way for a whole-ecosystem management approach that places fisheries at the heart of ecosystem welfare.

In four cross-cutting case studies, each centered on the link between social and economic objectives, target stocks and management at the regional scale SEAwisE provides:

- Estimates of impacts of management measures and climate change on fisheries, fish and shellfish stocks living close to the bottom, wildlife bycatch, fisheries-related litter and conflicts in the use of marine space in the Mediterranean Sea,
- Integrated EBFM advice on fisheries in the North Sea, and their influence on sensitive species and habitats in the context of ocean warming and offshore renewable energy,
- Estimates of effects of environmental change on recruitment, fish growth, maturity and production in the Western Waters,
- Key priorities for integrating changes in productivity, spatial distribution, and fishers' decision-making in the Baltic Sea to create effective EBFM prediction models.

You can read more about the SEAwisE project [here](#).

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