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## End overfishing

### Why saving the fish will bring profits to fishermen

The Greens today [denounced](#) a decision by EU fisheries ministers attempting to delay an end to overfishing. In the ongoing fisheries reform, the [Commission had proposed](#) to set sustainable catch levels in line with the "[Maximum Sustainable Yield](#)" (MSY) by 2015, but early Wednesday morning the Council adopted a 'general approach' in which they propose to delay this date to 2020 and remove protection for the most vulnerable stocks.



Fisheries ministers often say that ending overfishing would have "[socioeconomic consequences](#)" and that the EU therefore should go on with business as usual. But this is a flawed argument. A vast body of evidence shows that sustainable catch levels are not a hindrance to a profitable fishing industry, but are in fact a precondition for it. A [paper](#) published by OECD in April showed considerable economic gains from rebuilding fisheries. According to a [recent study](#) by the New Economics Foundation, restoring 43 of the EU's fish stocks to their maximum sustainable yield would generate 3.53 million tonnes of additional landings; almost doubling the value of catches. The European Commission's [impact assessment](#) on the CFP reform concludes that going for MSY could allow for EU fishermen's catches to increase by 588 000 tonnes (+18%) by 2020. In fact, MSY is not ambitious enough. The maximum gross profit for the industry, sometimes referred to as "Maximum Sustainable Economic Yield" (MSEY), is obtained from stocks with substantially larger biomass levels than those required to produce MSY. In a detailed [study](#) commissioned by the Greens, fisheries scientist [Sidney Holt](#) describes how a slight reduction to 95% of the MSY catch could be achieved with approximately half the amount of fishing, which would be an enormous saving for the industry, combined with much greater catch rates. Other countries are already ahead of the EU. Australia has introduced fishing control rules whereby there should be less than a 10% chance that stocks fall below their targets. As a result the Australian fishing industry has seen [an increase in profits](#) since 2005. The USA has also found the political will to make overfishing illegal, and as a result their fish stocks are rapidly recovering. Six more fish stocks in the USA were [rebuilt in 2011](#). Putting an end to overfishing is possible and will benefit fishermen and the economy in coastal communities. It will be a

difficult transition for some fishermen during a period when they have to fish less, but if the EU postpones the transition to sustainable fisheries we will condemn the industry to continuing unprofitability which will make the situation even more serious for a greater number of people.

- [Learn more about MSY on CFP-reformwatch.eu](https://www.cfp-reformwatch.eu)

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