

PRESS RELEASE

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Intensive research collaboration between PFA and Wageningen Marine Research for sustainable fisheries

On 1 June, the Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association (PFA) and Wageningen Marine Research signed an agreement that further intensifies their current research collaboration. The new agreement focuses on jointly conducting strategic research on sustainable fishing of pelagic fish stocks, such as herring, mackerel and blue whiting. Within this collaboration, we will jointly use data collected on board the pelagic freezer trawlers, along with data from statutory sampling programmes, to produce more accurate estimates of fish stocks.

This agreement highlights the shared commitment of both parties to work together in the long term to improve the management of fish stocks, as well as the development of an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management. In the new intensified collaboration, the parties strengthen each other even more as sparring partners, which also allows marine knowledge to better find its way into research. The two organisations will also cooperate more intensively in the development of new techniques for the use of acoustic measuring equipment in fish research.

On behalf of the PFA, Chief Science Officer Dr. Niels Hintzen says he is very excited with this new agreement:

"With this step, we can use our self-sampling data much more effectively for stock management in international fora, such as ICES. Close cooperation with Wageningen Marine Research is crucial for this, as the research institute has been active in this field for decades. We can now much more effectively present all the different samples, and better assess what they tell us about fish stocks and fishing pressure. Especially also because hundreds of thousands of additional measurements will become available on an annual basis."

Tammo Bult, director of Wageningen Marine Research, also welcomes the new intensive collaboration between science and practice at sea:

"Involvement of fishers in stock management is very important: for better information, for sharing information, better understanding of stocks, and also for better understanding of each other. Together you get a lot further. This agreement shows that both parties recognise this, take responsibility and want to make a substantial difference together."

Sieto Verver, Head of Centre for Fisheries Research, stresses the importance of data collected at sea:

"The long-standing cooperation between the institute and the fisheries sector, both project-based and from EU obligations, is strengthened with this agreement. This offers opportunities for more accurate data on fish stocks. Existing obligations, such as at-sea observers and biological data collection, will continue independently and in good cooperation with vessels. These data will be supplemented by additional measurements, increasing fleet-wide understanding."

About the Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association (PFA)

The PFA represents the interests of 8 pelagic freezer trawler companies from six countries in Europe with a combined fleet of 18 vessels. With its own science department, the PFA, together with its members, actively promotes the maintenance of a sustainable fishery on pelagic fish stocks. Cooperation with researchers from various (international) research institutes is an essential part of this ambition.

About Wageningen Marine Research

Research institute Wageningen Marine Research provides independent scientific research and advice on more sustainable management and use of marine, coastal and freshwater areas.

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NOTE TO EDITORS (NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

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