

## Interview with Francisco Canals, fisherman in the Minorca Channel, Spain

Francisco Canals (Cisco) has been, over the past three decades, an artisanal fisherman in the Minorca Channel, located in the Balearic Islands, Spain. In this interview, he offers us his testimony about how he carries out his activity and how he faces the future.



Cisco Canals hauling the trammel net with several lobsters (*Palinurus elephas*) in the Minorca Channel, Spain

### Is the Minorca Channel a good place to fish?

It is an excellent place, with high biodiversity and a great variety of seabed with abundant large-sized species

### How do you develop your activity? Which are your main problems?

I perform my activity complying with the regulations related to effort, operational time and size. But the fishing inspection leaves much to be desired, and the unfair competition exists, fishermen that develop their activity breaching the rules systematically, and this interferes with my work.

In addition, over the recent years, although the recreational fishing has greatly increased, still there is not enough surveillance, and I think that it would be necessary to establish a much more severe regulation of this activity, with rest days settle down by decree. It is unbelievable that in 2015 they have no obligation of doing rest days, taking into account that us the professionals we are obliged to it.

### What is the importance of the artisanal fishing in Balears?

It is of great importance; most of the fleet carries out this kind of activity.

### How can artisanal fishermen encourage the marine ecosystem conservation? In what way can you contribute in particular?

Listening to the scientists that are working on this issue, they can give us advice, and we can implement.

### What is your opinion in regards to the ECOSAFIMED project?

I greatly appreciate it; I consider it crucial for the preservation of seabed, species and fisheries.

### Do you agree with the recommendations proposed by the project, for instance the one prescribing to return into the same place the accidental catches and in less than 30 minutes?

I totally agree with this, and, furthermore, I would recommend returning it immediately so it is more effective.

### What impact do you think the recommendations will have on the conservation of the marine ecosystems and the artisanal fishing at national and Mediterranean level?

I am convinced that the impact will be very positive.

### Do you think is necessary to establish a long term way of collaboration between researchers and

**fishermen, so they can work together in best fishing practices that result in an improvement of the fish and the ecosystems?**

In my opinion is more than necessary, it should be mandatory. For several years, my vessel collaborates with the Spanish Oceanography Institute of Baleares in the European lobster fishing (*Palinurus elephas*) and I've learned a lot from the biologists that are in charge of the project; it has been of great help in order to understand and protect this specie, so we can be able to fish for years. I humbly would have liked to have helped more and continue cooperating with it. If I could collaborate in other projects I would not hesitate to do it.

200m depth. The bottoms of the Esquerquis benches are rugged and house hard substrates with soft sediments located between the rocky shoals. However, this area is not yet a subject of marine protection. The selected study area is located in the central part of the Esquerquis banks, between 50 and 120 meters depth.

The same methodology used to determine study areas in La Galite Archipelago was used again for Esquerquis benches: data were collected from bibliography, inquiries and surveys conducted to fishermen from different harbours from the northern region of Tunisia. Information was also provided by the General Directorate of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Tunisian Agriculture Ministry.

collected data served as base to select the no trawl zone in Esquerquis benches and to identify, within this area, three different subareas according to the level of fishing effort they bear (low, medium and high).

**ECOSAFIMED study area: Esquerquis benches, Tunisia**

The selection of study areas was the first step for the assessment of the impact of artisanal fisheries in the ENPI regions selected by the ECOSAFIMED project. In Tunisia, one of the selected areas was Esquerquis Benches.

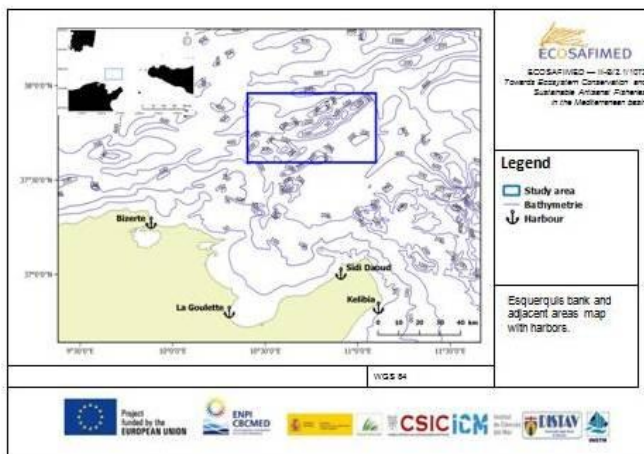
The majority of fishing boats acting in this area are from Kelibia harbour and a reduced number from Bizerte and Tabarka regions. The distance to the harbour is an essential factor that largely affects the artisanal fishing effort distribution. But it seems not to be the case for Esquerquis benches, which are located far away from the coast (about 45 nautical miles from the nearest harbour). The highest fishing effort is mainly observed in rocky and shallower areas, while the lowest fishing effort is localized in the sandy and deeper bottoms and also in an area with strong currents, one of the main characteristics in Esquerquis.

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*Fisheries in Kelibia*

The Nabeul region has a complete port infrastructure, which includes one deepwater seaport and three coastal ports. These ports are:

The deepwater seaport of Kelibia: built in 1964, is placed at the Eastern facade of the Cape Bon in a mountainous coastal area that has a northern steep-terrain.



Map of the Esquerquis Benches: one of the study areas developed in ECOSAFIMED

The Esquerquis benches is located at 51 nautical miles north-east from Bizerte and 45 nautical miles from Sidi Daoud port. It is an extension of Bizerte and Ghar El Melh chains. They are separated from the shallows of the north-eastern region of Bizerte by a channel of



Kelibia fishing port

The coastal port of Sidi Daoud: it is located in the western coast of the peninsula of Cape Bon and to the north of a bay about 2 km wide and 1,3 km deep. Its construction was completed in 1983.

The coastal port of Haouaria: it is located in the eastern facade of the Cape Bon peninsula, south of Ras Addrag. It is about 4 km from the city with the same name in the right side of a popular beach frequented by fishermen and vacationers. Protection works have been recently completed in 2015 since the port had problems with silting and accumulation of algae.

The coastal port of Beni Khia: built in 1984, has been the object of protection works against silting. This port opens on the Gulf of Hammamet and the related fleet does not fish in the study areas of ECOSAFIMED.

The fishing fleet of the Nabeul governorate accounts for 446 fishing units including 368 artisanal vessels, 19 trawlers and 59 purse seiners. The motorization rate of the artisanal fleet is relatively higher than the one from Bizerte region, with 73% of artisanal units equipped with engines.

In Nabeul, artisanal fishing is present in all the ports with varying importance from one port to another. This importance could be seen through the following figures:

-The artisanal units are more concentrated in the ports of Beni Khia and Sidi Daoud with respective percentages of 35% and 34% of the total number. They are followed by the port of Kelibia (23%) and the port of Haouaria (8%).

- The artisanal fishing activity in the port of Sidi Daoud is the largest compared to other ports both in weight and value. So, it stands out from the Port of Beni Khia hosting almost the same number of artisanal boats.

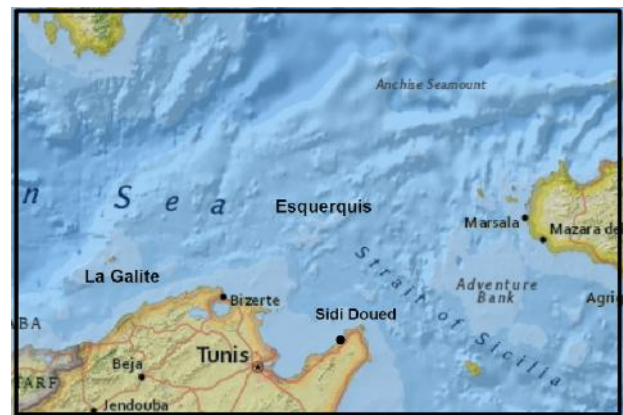
This indicates a better working efficiency and hence higher yields per boat in the port of Sidi Daoud.

- The port of Kelibia holds the highest unit price of products of artisanal fisheries because of its fish marketing pole status in the northern region of Tunisia that implies serving to multitude of tourist restaurants.

- By comparing ports, we noted that in relative terms, artisanal fishing is exclusively engaged in the port of Haouaria, followed by the port of Sidi Daoud where artisanal fishing activity contributes by 60% in weight and 80% in value of total fisheries production due to the coexistence of purse seine fishing (targeting small pelagic). In the port of Kelibia, artisanal fishing activity has not such an important place in the total fisheries production due to the existence of highly developed purse seine and trawl fishing activities.

- The active artisanal fleet in the study areas of ECOSAFIMED project is attached to the ports of Sidi Daoud and Kelibia. The units of port Haouaria are small and do not fish away from their home site, while those of the port of Beni Khia are only active in the Gulf of Hammamet and rarely fish in the ECOSAFIMED project study areas.

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Map of Esquerquis benches showing its proximity to Sidi Daoud (Nabeul governorate)

### *Fishing Metiers' in Kelibia*

In the region of Nabeul, 10 associations Species/Gear or métiers, were identified as mainly used in the Bank of Esquerquis. The most important métier in this region is the gillnet targeting Bonito (*Sarda sarda*) from March to June and from October to December. This métier is declared by all the boats sampled in the region of Nabeul.





In second position we find longlines targeting swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*: 96% of the fleet) in winter, spring and summer. This métier is followed by the boat seine net for dolphinfish (*Coryphaena hippurus*).

In forth position we find two métiers: longlines targeting the red porgy (*Pagrus pagrus*), the common dentex (*Dentex dentex*) and the red scorpionfish (*Scorpaena scrofa*), all year round; and longlines targeting various species of groupers (*Epinephelus* sp.) with predominance of dusky grouper (*Epinephelus marginatus*) in spring, late summer, autumn and early winter.

Unlike the region of Bizerte, the métiers using trammel nets are not very practiced in Nabeul. Among the

trammel net métiers, the one targeting spiny lobster is the most practiced (30% of the boats sampled) from March to September. The boats targeting the spiny lobster are concentrated in the port of Sidi Daoud.

### More information

Website

<http://ecosafimed.eu>

Contact us at:

[ecosafimed@fundacion-biodiversidad.es](mailto:ecosafimed@fundacion-biodiversidad.es)

The 2007-2013 ENPI CBC Mediterranean Sea Basin Programme is a multilateral Cross-Border Cooperation initiative funded by the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). The Programme objective is to promote the sustainable and harmonious cooperation process at the Mediterranean Basin level by dealing with the common challenges and enhancing its endogenous potential. It finances cooperation projects as a contribution to the economic, social, environmental and cultural development of the Mediterranean region. The following 14 countries participate in the Programme: Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Palestine, Portugal, Spain, Syria (participation currently suspended), and Tunisia. The Joint Managing Authority (JMA) is the Autonomous Region of Sardinia (Italy). Official Programme languages are Arabic, English and French. ([www.enpicbcmmed.eu](http://www.enpicbcmmed.eu)).

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