

**Are we missing anything important?**

A. Kinds, K. Verlé

**Abstract**

In fisheries management, governmental bodies, fishermen and scientists interact with each other. Scientists should act as neutral, stating the facts, but are often dependent on fishers for collecting data and conducting their research. On the other hand fishers could benefit from research to improve their activities and rely upon governmental decisions.

In Belgium, 77% of the landings is accounted for by beam trawlers, which have a significant impact on benthic ecosystems. The choice of fishing technique can make a large difference both in terms of ecosystem impact and efficiency. To understand and identify the drivers behind the decision to adopt and invest in new fishing technology, semi-structured open interviews are being conducted with fifteen Belgian fishers.

Prior to the interviews, a possible set of themes that could underlie fisher attitude and behaviour were listed. An additional theme that frequently came up during the interviews was fishers' relationship with fisheries scientists and governmental bodies. This leads to an important question: how do fishermen perceive the scientific community? Is there distrust from the fishers towards scientists and governmental bodies? As the scientific community is reliant on the good relationship with fishers, distrust could hamper the will for cooperation. It will be interesting to further investigate perceptions, motivations and beliefs of fishermen and take them into account when implementing measures. On the other hand, the perception scientists have of fishers can also be important. This will be investigated through a questionnaire. Understanding the relations between fishers, scientists and governmental institutions may provide useful insights in the successes and failures of some initiatives.

**Keywords:** Fisheries management, perceptions and beliefs, interviews, questionnaire, drivers

**Contact author:** Arne Kinds, Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research (ILVO),  
arne.kinds@ilvo.vlaanderen.be