

Exploiting the most vulnerable resources

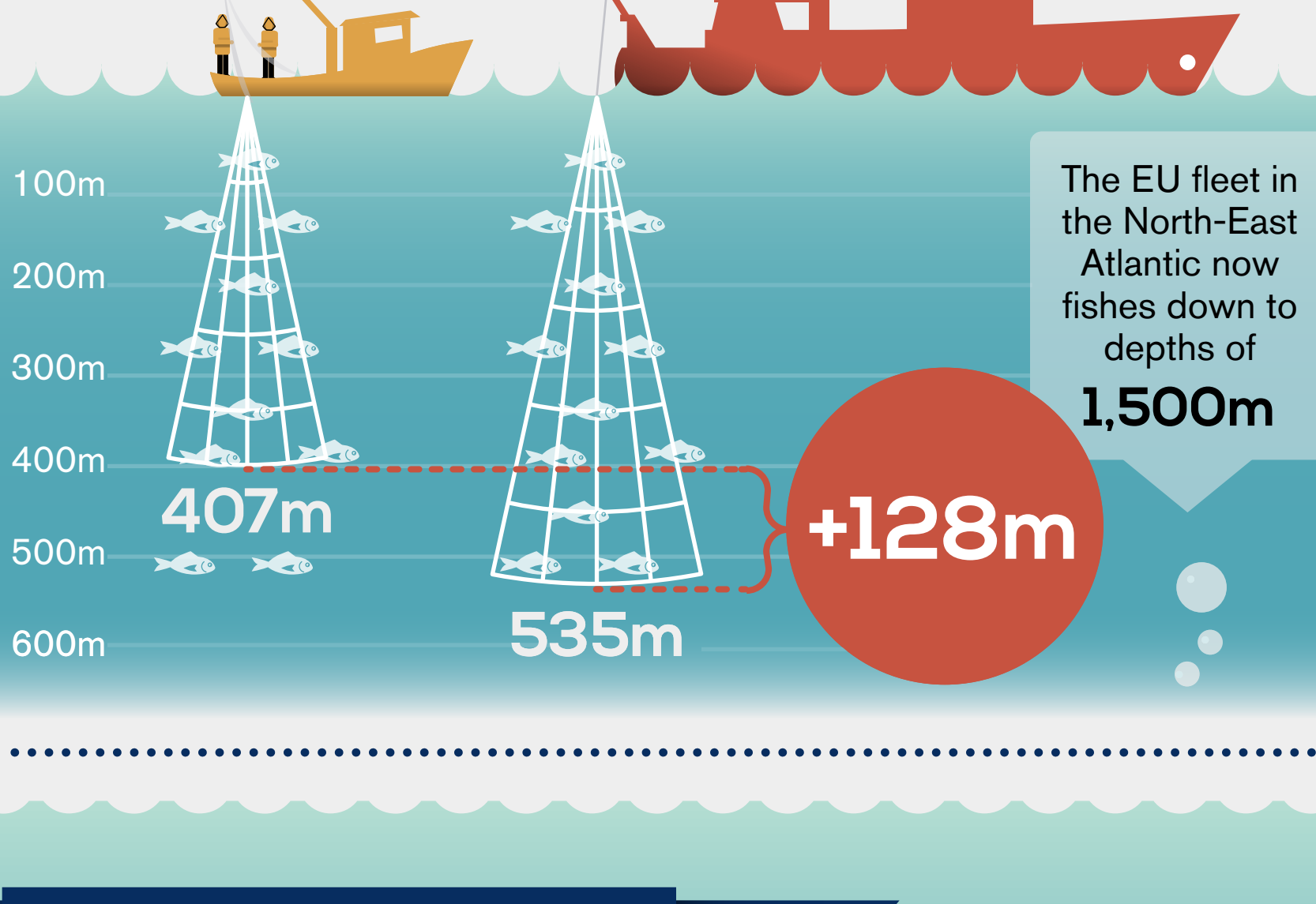
EU deep-sea fisheries in the North-East Atlantic

1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

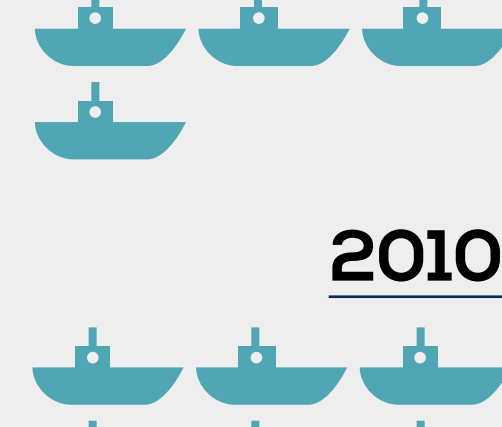
Having depleted and **overfished shallower**, inshore stocks, EU fisheries have moved into **deeper waters** in search of fish

In **20 years**, EU deep-sea fishing capacity has increased by **37-47%**

AVERAGE DEPTH OF EU DEEP-SEA FISHING



1990



2010



2. FRAGILE SPECIES

Very few deep-sea animals are appropriate for commercial exploitation. In the **deep ocean**, species are characterised by **slow growth**,

late sexual maturity, and **low productivity**, making them highly vulnerable to overfishing and very slow to recover.

DEPTH (m)	SPECIES	AGE AT FIRST REPRODUCTION	MAXIMUM AGE
SHALLOW-WATER SPECIES 0 to 100	Sardine	1	15
0 to 600	Cod	2-4	25
DEEP-WATER SPECIES 230 to 2,400	Gulper shark	30-35	70
180 to 1,800	Orange roughy	32	149

DEEP-SEA ECOSYSTEMS



Sponge beds and cold-water corals play a critical role, by providing food and shelter for many species.

More than **1,300 species** live amongst cold-water corals in the NE Atlantic.

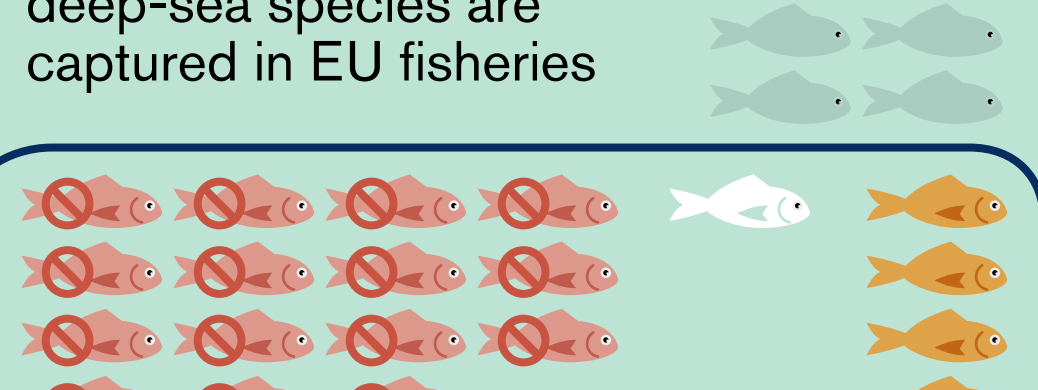
Some corals **grow extremely slowly**, 4 mm/year...

...less than the edge of a couple of coins!

Many deep-sea ecosystems are **classified as vulnerable**, because they are fragile, rare, unique, or important for other species.

3. MANAGEMENT IN THE EU

Around **100** deep-sea species are captured in EU fisheries



24 are currently managed under the current (2002) regulation, of which...

18 are now prohibited because they have been overfished and only...

5 are managed with catch limits



In **60%** of cases, limits agreed by the Council of Ministers have exceeded scientific recommendations, and in **51%** of cases, catches by Member States fishermen have exceeded the agreed limits

4. SIGNIFICANCE

CATCHES BY COUNTRY

EU deep-sea fishing in the North-East Atlantic is dominated by four Member States



THE BIGGER PICTURE

Catches of **deep-sea species** in the NE Atlantic represent only



of total EU catches in the area, and therefore contribute very little to food security

CATCHES BY GEAR-TYPES



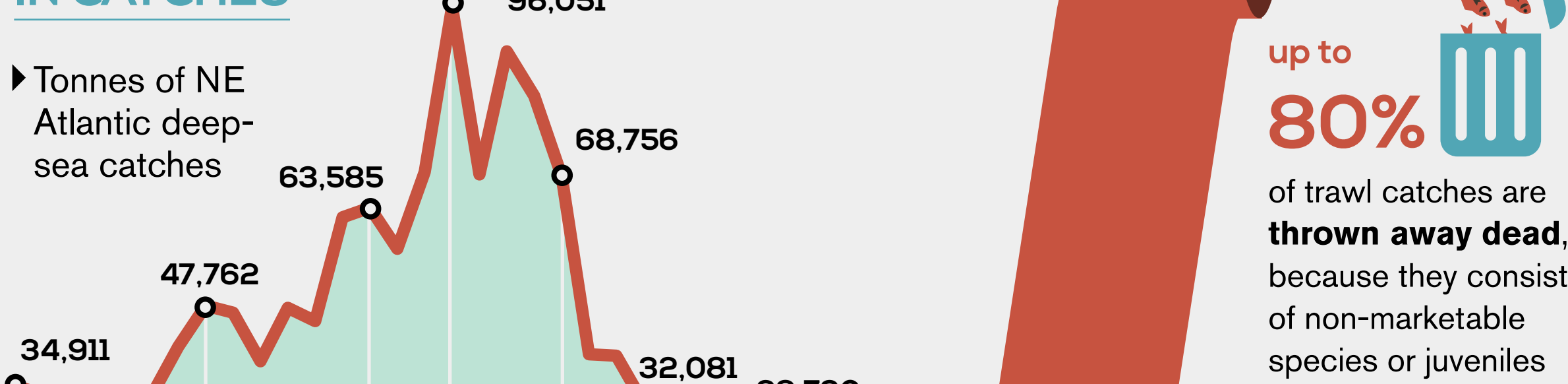
5. RESULTS OF WEAK MANAGEMENT

BOOM AND BUST TREND IN CATCHES



DISCARDS

up to **80%** of trawl catches are **thrown away dead**, because they consist of non-marketable species or juveniles



6. IMPACTS ON VULNERABLE ECOSYSTEMS

Bottom fishing gears can cause direct physical damage to deep-sea ecosystems - or destroy them altogether.



Extremely heavy trawl nets drag across the sea bottom, capturing or damaging what lies in their path

Recovery of very long-lived, slow-growing species can take many tens or hundreds of years - if they recover at all.

LIMITED PROTECTION



Only **8%** of the NE Atlantic is **protected** from bottom trawling

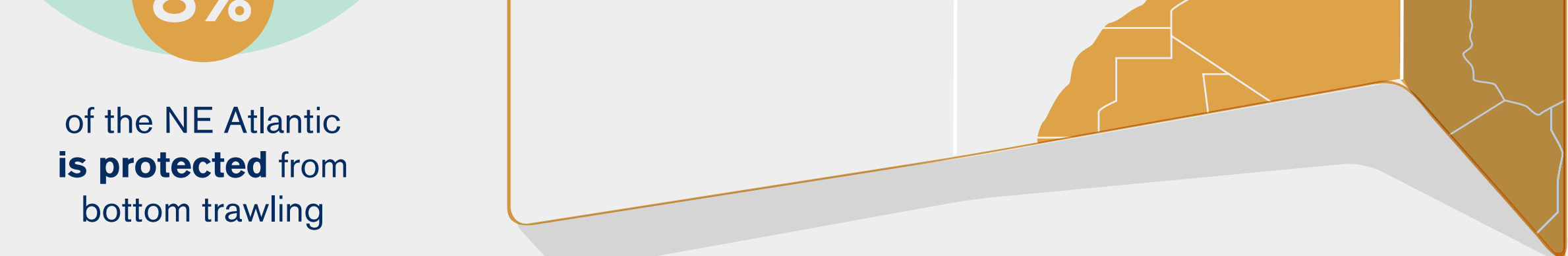


7. NEW PROPOSED REGULATION

- Inclusion of **30** additional species
- Information requirements** before vessels are permitted to fish
- Quotas and fishing effort to be set in accordance with **scientific advice**
- Impact assessments** prior to fishing in new areas
- Progressive phase-out** of destructive and non-selective fishing gears (bottom trawls and gillnets)

8. FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- All species covered by the regulation should be **fully managed**; none should be exempt. The list of most vulnerable species should be updated, and should include all deep-sea sharks.
- A clear and **precise definition** of deep-sea fishing is essential for ensuring that all deep-sea fishing vessels are fully covered under the regulation. Vessel masters should not be able to choose which criteria are applied.
- Levels of fishing should be set with explicit consideration of **impacts on non-target species**. Wherever possible, fishing should be managed through a combination of catch limits and effort restrictions.
- Impact assessments** should be required in both new and existing fishing areas. Areas where **vulnerable marine ecosystems** occur should be closed to fishing with bottom gears.
- Conservation measures** should be implemented in all EU deep-sea fisheries, to rebuild depleted stocks, and to reduce overcapacity, overfishing, by-catch, and illegal fishing.



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