

{rokbox title=|Map of the study area :: Image: Authors|
thumb=|images/stories/ieo/imagenespublicaciones/centro-oceanografico-baleares-ieo-csic-discards-reduction-non-commercial-benthic-species-simple-net-modification-farriols-et-al-2021-thumb.jpg|}images/stories/ieo/imagenespublicaciones/centro-oceanografico-baleares-ieo-csic-discards-reduction-non-commercial-benthic-species-simple-net-modification-farriols-et-al-2021.jpg{/rokbox}

M. Teresa Farriols, Francesc Ordines, Enric Massutí, 2021. [Discards reduction of non-commercial benthic species from a simple net modification.](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2021.105985)

Fisheries Research Volume 241, September 2021, 105985.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2021.105985>

Abstract: The high discards rates of non-commercial benthic species is one of the main problems of the Mediterranean bottom trawl fishery developed on the continental shelf. The present work analyzes data from 22 bottom trawls, carried out in parallel by two commercial trawlers between 70 and 90 m depth on ma"erl beds off eastern Menorca (Balearic Islands). One vessel used an experimental trawl gear (EXP) equipped with a lighter and smaller groundrope in the mouth of the net, leaving a gap without net between the main groundrope and the secondary one. The other vessel used a trawl gear traditionally used by the fleet operating in the area (TRA), without that modification. Catches, discards and commercial yields between both gears were compared. Discarded biomass of non-commercial benthic species with EXP was reduced by half when compared to TRA, particularly for rhodoliths (54%) and ascidians (51%). The reduction of discarded rhodoliths is especially relevant in the Balearic Islands where sensitive habitats, such as ma"erl beds, are an important part of the benthic communities. The modification of the net, at the same time, does not imply a reduction of yields of commercial captures and can easily be implemented in any bottom trawl net. It is concluded that this could be an appropriate and plausible technical measure to improve the ecological efficiency and the sustainability of the Mediterranean bottom trawl fishery.

Keywords: Bottom trawl impact, Selectivity, Discards, Rhodoliths, Western Mediterranean