

EU looks to boost boat tracking to fight overfishing

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An NGO called the EU's proposed measures to prevent overfishing a 'landmark moment'

The EU is moving towards extra tracking and putting cameras on fishing boats to monitor their catches in order to prevent overfishing, under a

deal Wednesday that environmentalists hailed as a "landmark moment".

The planned overhaul of existing fishing rules for the bloc—the world's biggest seafood market—was worked out in talks between the 27 European Union member states and the European Parliament, EU officials said.

Once made into EU law, the revised measures would impose technological monitoring of catches and set an EU minimum level of fines for violators calculated on the value of their illegal catch.

All [fishing boats](#) would have to be fitted with electronic recording systems, with those over 18 meters (59 feet) or fishing vulnerable stocks facing reinforced monitoring requirements such as onboard cameras and sensors.

Smaller vessels under 12 meters (39 feet) would have until 2030 to comply with the monitoring rules.

The tolerance for discrepancies between logged and actual catches would be 10 percent, although that margin would rise in certain cases, for instance for small-scale fishers. The margin of [tolerance](#) for incidentally caught sea-life would be 0.5 percent.

Recreational fishers catching certain species would have to go through a registration process and electronically report their catch.

The revised rules also call for a new digital system to record catches and help detect illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Non-EU countries importing fisheries products into the bloc would need certification through that system.

EU fisheries commissioner Virginijus Sinkevicius, said the revised rules

were "making fisheries control fit for the future through increased use of digital technologies".

Steve Trent, CEO of the Environmental Justice Foundation, called it a "landmark moment" against [illegal fishing](#).

"This reform can prevent unscrupulous vessel owners from 'shopping around' to find Member States with weak controls," Trent said.

"If the deal is approved and fully implemented, it would increase transparency, reduce hidden overfishing, and establish a more level playing field for EU fishers," he added.

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