

# Bloom points to UK study as evidence of pulse fishing's damage

By [Undercurrent News](#)

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 Credit: Pulsefishing.eu

French NGO BLOOM has held up a report by the UK's Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) as "crucial and explosive" evidence of the impact of electric pulse fishing on marine ecosystems.

BLOOM has used the report -- published in June -- to illustrate its case against the fishing method as the Netherlands challenges the new EU regulation that prohibits electric fishing at the European Court of Justice.

"The study...was eagerly awaited by BLOOM and many small-scale fishers around the North Sea, as this study is the first to look at the impact of electric fishing in the natural environment, far from the targeted and weak studies produced by Dutch researchers... funded by Dutch industrials," said the NGO.

The study was conducted in two comparable areas in the south of England, one regularly fished by electric trawlers and the other not. "Results are clear, as the electrified area has a much

lower species composition and biomass," said BLOOM, though the CEFAS report itself notes:

"The main difference between the two areas is the type and intensity of fishing activity, however, the results cannot be attributed exclusively to the effects of pulse trawling. Area 1 has seen a concentration of pulse trawl activity in recent years, but previously it was an area fished by large beam trawlers, and the relative impact of these two fishing methods cannot be separated."

In "area one" species diversity was 21-57% lower compared to the area that was preserved from pulse fishing, the report found. It also states there were 2.6 times fewer sole — the species targeted by electric trawlers — in their area of activity.

"This result confirms reports by small-scale fishers around the North Sea, who have been complaining for years about the graveyard-like state of the seabed after the passage of electric trawlers," claimed BLOOM. "It also corroborates the drastic drop in sole catches by small-scale fishers in recent years. Electric trawlers are also clearly struggling to reach their quota themselves: in 2018, they caught only 62% of their quota compared to 100% only two years earlier," it said, citing reports from the Dutch industry.

As BLOOM acknowledges, the CEFAS authors remain cautious, stating, "this study demonstrates that [large scale and long-term] research is still needed to fully understand the ecosystem impacts of using pulse trawl technology".

Still, the French NGO backs it as crucial.

"It at least confirms the harmful nature of beam trawls — electrified or not — and reinforces the idea that the electrification of trawls was only carried out to save this destructive fishing method from rapid and unavoidable bankruptcy, without bringing any reduction in impact despite the constant lies of Dutch representatives," claimed Frederic Le Manach, scientific director for BLOOM.

The NGO concluded by noting the number of Dutch vessels utilizing pulse fishing is currently being reduced by new EU regulations, from 84 in 2018 to around 15 by the end of this year, "before their final disappearance in June 2021".

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