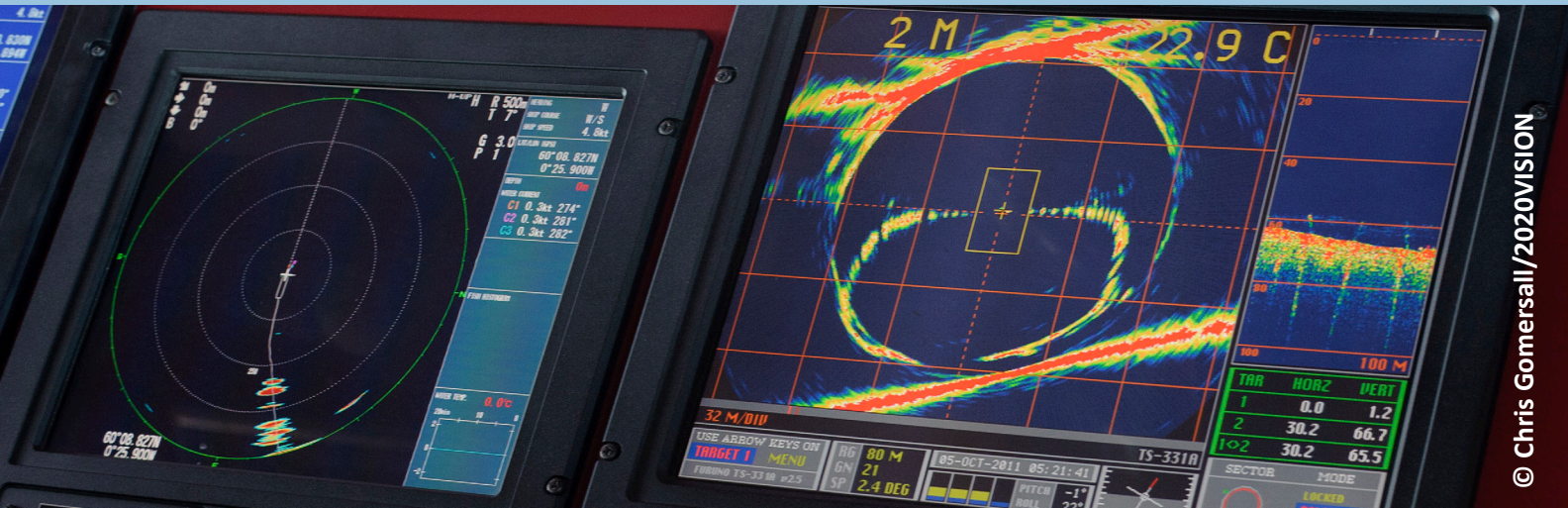# Fisheries in brief

3: The use of technology

Nov 2021

Fishing activity is recognised as one of the most significant and widespread pressures in Scottish waters, and a key driver of climate change and biodiversity loss. To ensure fisheries operate sustainably, it is essential that management measures are in place that are responsive, adaptable, and enforced.

Effective monitoring, transparency and knowledge of fishing activity throughout the marine environment are essential for establishing progressive fisheries management. The adoption of modern technology in fisheries management can provide the tools needed to create a world-leading climate and nature friendly fishing industry.

The benefits of integrating technology into fisheries management include:

• Improved understanding of the impact climate change is having on the fishing industry and how fishing activity contributes towards climate change.

• Better reporting on fishing activity, catch composition, and mortality rates resulting in improved compliance, a level playing field, and reduced discards and bycatch.

• Effective management and monitoring of marine protected areas.

• Improved traceability, informed consumer decisions, and improved market support for sustainable practices through real-time reporting.

What the Scottish Wildlife Trust would like to see:

• Modernisation of the fishing industry, using digital technology, to improve monitoring, compliance and enforcement whilst increasing transparency and accountability in the supply chain.
• A requirement for all vessels operating in Scottish waters, and Scottish vessels fishing elsewhere, to be equipped with Vessel Monitoring Systems (with GPS) and Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) with cameras, to improve monitoring, mapping and management of fishing activity. Vessels for digital transformation are identified along with a timescale for the phased implementation, starting with high-risk vessels and fisheries with large ecological footprints.
• An assessment of existing methods/tools for monitoring fishing activity, facilitated by knowledge sharing and collaboration with stakeholders, to inform the introduction of REM.
• All data collected made available to support compliance, accountability and facilitate further research and effective decision-making.
• The development and delivery of smart technology for vessels to encourage climate-smart fishing through innovative technological enhancements, such as Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things.
• Multi-stakeholder partnerships that drive innovation, roll-out trials, and facilitate partnership working, similar to existing groups such as Clyde 2020, Fisheries Innovation Scotland and The Gear Innovation and Technology Advisory Group (GITAG)

To read our full Fisheries Management Policy, visit: **scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/living-seas**

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