

Email: Mr M Gilbert

My background in marine fisheries is varied. I have fished recreationally for more than 50 years around west Cornwall and during the last 20 years have travelled to a number of global destinations on a regular basis to sportfish. During the late 1970's I started a business catching (I skippered a small inshore commercial vessel for over 25 years), processing and distributing frozen fish products for a specialist market comprising angling bait and feed for sea life centres/aquariums. I sold up and retired in 2007.

I have in the past been a member of the Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee (prior to setting up of IFCA's); I have represented the interests of recreational sea anglers for many years locally, nationally and at EU level working for the National Federation of Sea Anglers, the Bass Anglers Sportfishing Society and the European Anglers Alliance. I am currently a consultant for the Angling Trust but am slowly winding down the amount of time working at the coalface particularly if it involves international travel.

Fisheries data is fraught with complexities. I have watched with a mixture of incredulity and vexation the annual Fisheries Debate in Parliament for a number of years where the activities of the UK commercial catching sector and the UK seafood sector are regularly confused. The seafood sector is actually a substantial business valued at around £7 billion. The vast majority of this has nothing whatsoever to do with the UK catching sector that only lands £689 million worth of fish/shellfish into the UK, well over half of which takes place in Scotland. The UK seafood sector is mainly reliant on imported fish and aquaculture.

Even the Government's White Paper may be misleading. Paragraph 7 of the Forward reads: *"In 2016, the UK exported £1.17 billion of seafood to the EU."* I suspect the assumption for most readers is that this all derives from UK catches. In fact 25% (£300 m) is farmed salmon. In 2016 UK vessels landed £38m worth of cod but the UK imported £491m of cod. The UK exported £59 m of cod, some of which was patently imported cod.