



Uta Bellion,  
Director,  
Marine Programme,  
The Pew Charitable Trusts,  
Square du Bastion 1A boîte 5,  
1050 Brussels,  
Belgium

**cc. Tom Wathen,**  
**Vice-President for Global Strategies and Operations,**

11th November 2015

**Re. An open letter to Pew Charitable Trusts**

Dear Ms Bellion,

In March of this year Pew Charitable Trusts published a report *Turning the Tide: Ending Overfishing in North Western Europe*.

That report contained a number of statements which are demonstrably untrue and contrary to scientific opinion.

The report makes the assertion that:

- Fishing in recent decades, in pursuit of food and profit, off North West Europe has dramatically expanded
- Calls by scientists and environmentalists to reduce fishing pressure have been ignored
- Many fish stocks collapsed throughout the region
- The reformed CFP should prove a successful *first* step in restoring and maintaining the health of the fisheries and fish stocks

The unambiguous view of the scientific community has been clearly stated, most recently at the *State of the Stocks* Seminar in Brussels:

*"Over the last ten to fifteen years, we have seen a general decline in fishing mortality in the Northeast Atlantic and the Baltic Sea. The stocks have reacted positively to the reduced exploitation and we're observing growing trends in stock sizes for most of the commercially important stocks. For the majority of stocks, it has been observed that fishing mortality has decreased to a level consistent with Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) – meaning levels that are not only sustainable but will also deliver high long term yields."*

**Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair, ICES Advisory Committee**

In fact, the data confirming these general trends has been available in the ICES advice for several years, for those who wished to look with unbiased eyes.

The motives for Pew to publish misleading and untrue statements, remain obscure but this is not a matter of misinterpretation of data or different opinion. These statements are clearly part of an organized coherent campaign to influence legislators. But they are untruths and Pew must know that they are untruths.

We all have our different opinions and different constituents to please. But it is becoming increasingly difficult to accept that Pew acts in good faith when it publishes deliberately misleading reports like this. Neither should it have escaped your notice that the scientific community at a recent conference on MSY in Athens, also expressed concern about the lack of transparency in NGOs' use of science.

For the record, we firmly believe that eNGOs have a legitimate and important role to play in fisheries. It is healthy for the industry and fisheries managers to be held to account for their actions and practices. There is always room for improvement and there is a legitimate role for NGOs to suggest where improvements could be made.

However, even if you are openly contemptuous of the opinion of the fishing industry, we urge you to examine your own motives, tactics and reputation and ask yourselves what is achieved by these publishing deliberately misleading statements. It goes without saying that organisations publishing so far beyond obvious realities and scientific facts are losing out to more serious and rational NGOs and are undoubtedly relinquishing all impact and credibility in influential fora such as the Advisory Councils.

Yours sincerely,

Javier Garat ,



President of Europêche

Pim Visser,



President of EAPO

# EAPO Member Logos

		
		
		
		
		
		