



# Let us fish4tomorrow

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All over the world, governments and stakeholders are trying to cope with overfishing. Overfishing is when too much fish is caught which leads to an overall degradation of the marine ecosystem. It is the non-sustainable use of ocean resources.

The Mediterranean is one of the most severe cases of overfishing in the world. The former fisheries commissioner for the EU, Maria Damanki recently said that 90% of fish stocks in the Mediterranean are overfished. The fish are being caught in a way that will lead to their population collapsing. Species such as the Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) and Swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*) are in such a bad state that they are listed on the IUCN red list: at risk from extinction. The Dusky Grouper (*Epinephelus marginatus*), known locally as *Ċerna* is also endangered.

In 2010 University-based NGO, Greenhouse Malta formed a coalition to help tackle the issue locally. The result came to be known as the fish4tomorrow campaign. The aim is to create a culture of sustainable fishing and fish consumption in Malta. For the past four years fish4tomorrow has slowly built up a campaign based around scientific research, open communication with various stakeholders, and different plans to help solve the problem of overfishing in Malta.

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Two years ago, the campaign launched a report and mini documentary, both entitled *25 Nautical Miles*. The report focused on the fisheries sector in Malta and researched people’s consumption habits. The documentary aimed to introduce the people to the problem of overfishing and featured interviews with fishers, divers, restaurateurs, and the Director of Fisheries. Two years later, fish4tomorrow is now launching its second project also funded by the EU Youth in Action Programme.

Following the release of the *25 Nautical Miles* documentary, many people grew concerned over the state of Mediterranean fish stocks and started to ask: “which fish can I eat?” The latest project tackles that question with the Quickfish guide. It contains 45 commonly consumed fish in the Maltese islands, in

a wallet-sized guide, and rates them on a 3 point scale: ‘recommended’ (for eating), ‘eat with caution’ (in moderation), and ‘avoid’.

University students from the Greenhouse Malta and fish4tomorrow team worked with scientists and local experts over a number of months to research and rate each fish species’ level of environmental and social sustainability. Fish were rated on health of fish stocks, fishing method and its consequences, and any other environmental impacts of fishing, farming, importation, and so on.

Fish given three ‘dots’ are recommended for consumption. These fish are generally caught in ways beneficial for the fish stocks, the environment, the fishers, and society at large. With the fish with two ‘dots’ there were one or two issues with the way they are caught, produced, or brought to the local market. For these reasons, fish4tomorrow suggests that they are eaten in moderation. Fish with only one ‘dot’ are usually caught in ways which are detrimental to the fish stocks, other species, and the different ecosystems involved and are best avoided—they are overfished. ●

Check out fish4tomorrow’s *Quickfish* guide at: [www.fish4tomorrow.com](http://www.fish4tomorrow.com) for the fish ratings of each fish species. Contact them on [info@fish4tomorrow.com](mailto:info@fish4tomorrow.com) for a copy. You can also follow them on Facebook and Twitter.