



Bird bycatch in the Baltic Sea



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Sea birds in the Baltic Sea

Sea ducks – Eider, Long-tailed Duck

Diving ducks – Tufted Duck, Common Pochard

Divers – Loons

Auks – Common Guillemot, Razorbill

Grebes – Little Grebe, Great Crested Grebe

Cormorants – Great Cormorant

Photo: Baltic Seabird

Photo: Andreas Trepte
(www.photo-natur.de)

Photo: Baltic Seabird
Research Project





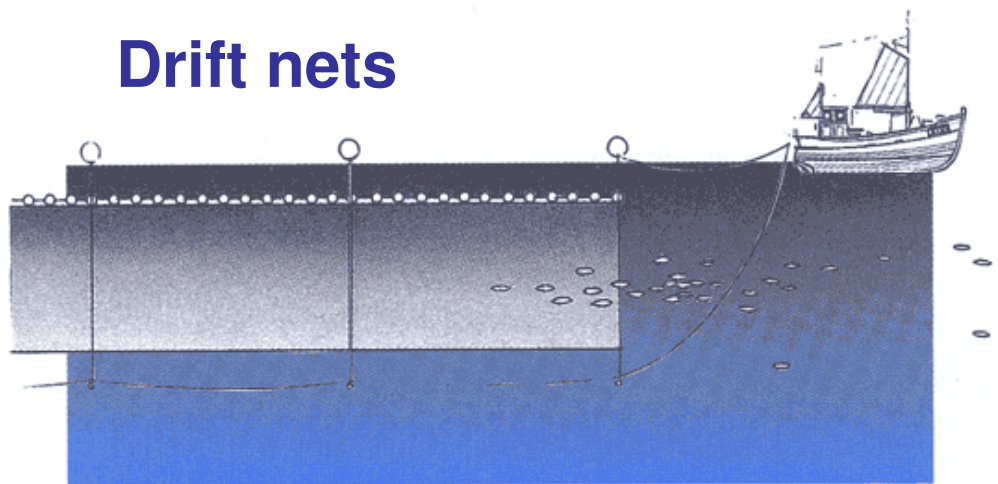
Fishing gear

- Longlines
- Trawlers
- Fish traps
- Gillnets

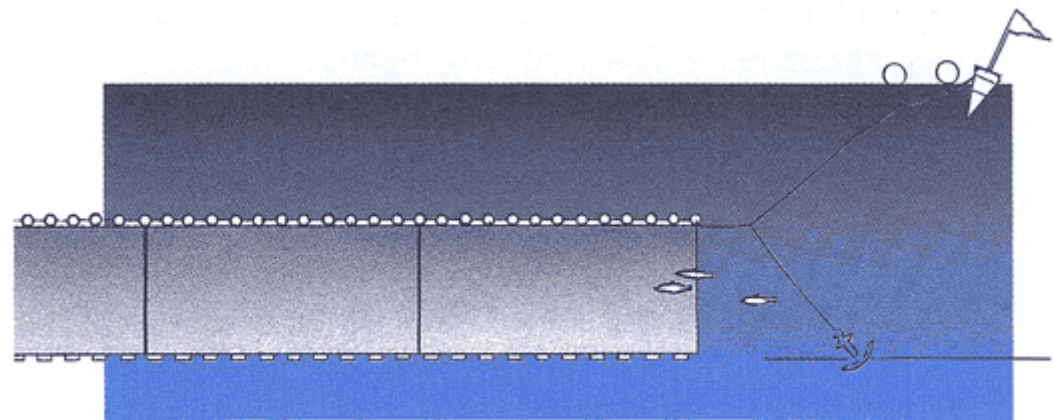


Gillnets

Drift nets



Drivgarn



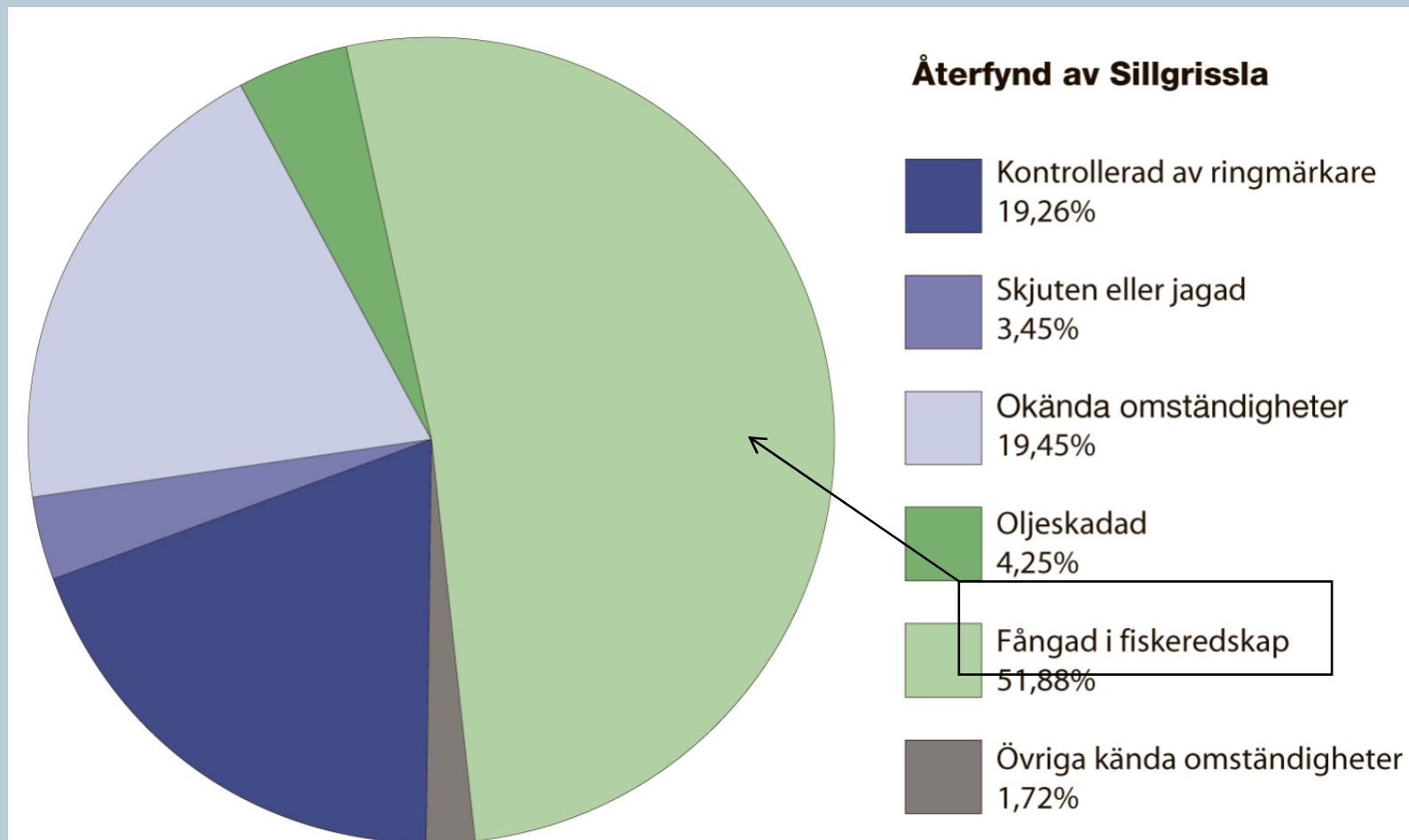
Sættegarn

Set gillnets

Illustrations from
www.fiskeforum.dk



50 % of the recoveries dead in fishing gear





Bycaught Common Guillemots

- **The proportion of bycaught common guillemots increased until the 1990's, after that we see a stabilization**
- **Most are caught in the southern and central part of the Baltic Sea and this is true also for other bycaught seabirds**



Bycaught Common Guillemots

There is a seasonal pattern of bycatch of common guillemots in the Baltic Sea:

- The majority are caught in the spring when the cod gillnet fisheries are most intense
- More young birds are caught during the spring, which can have an effect on the population viability



Improvements

- Recovered birds never reported → Consistent monitoring program
 - Gear modifications
 - Protected areas
 - Shift in fishing gear
 - Fishermen an important resource
- Trade offs between bycatches, economy, selectivity & efficiency



Conclusions

- **The scale of the bycatch varies with many factors**
- **Gillnet fisheries produces the largest bycatch of seabirds in the Baltic Sea**
- **Trade offs between different fishing methods & acceptable levels of seabirds mortality**



Conclusions

Bycatches in small-scale coastal gillnets are not in itself an argument for a reduction of this fishing method, but rather an important signal for continued monitoring and work with mitigation strategies.