

# Spurdog Survivability - Background

- Case for survivability exemption submitted in 2023 based on:
  - Findings from a review of available scientific literature
  - A planned full-scale assessment of spurdog survival
  - New data on the condition and vitality of spurdog caught in Irish otter trawl fisheries
- STECF concluded that more information on fish survival, catches and discarding is needed in the new spurdog fishery.
- Work in this regard is ongoing



# Spurdog Survivability - Background

- Catches are sporadic
- Mainly occur in winter months when weather is poor
- Ram-ventilating species - generally need to swim to breathe
- Scientific literature suggests better survival in bottom trawl than gillnet fisheries
- Tailored approach in trawl and gillnet fisheries
- Fish condition assessments used to justify full survival assessment
- Survivorship pop-up archival tags (SPATS) - phased approach



# Bottom trawl progress

## Survival assessment

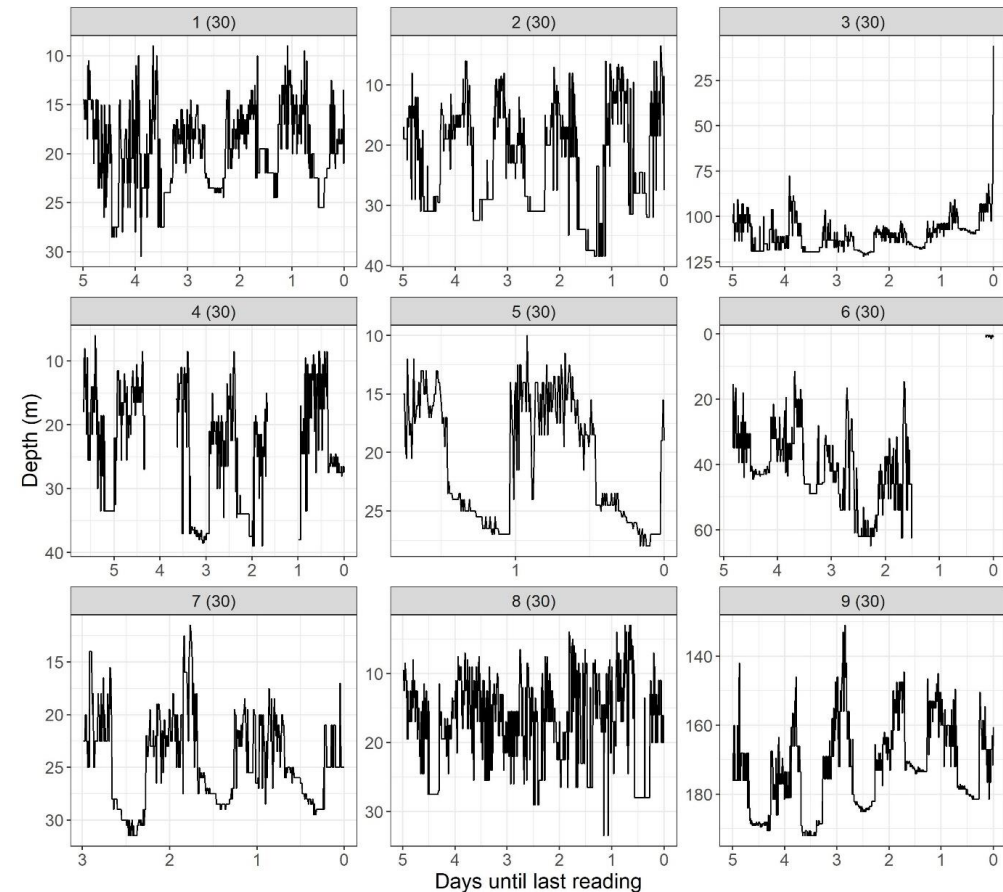
Location	Target species	Trips (No.)	Hauls (No.)	Mean haul duration (hr:min)	Spurdog (No.)	Excellent V1 (%)	Good V2 (%)	Poor V3 (%)	Moribund V4 (%)	Dead V5 (%)
7j&7g	Whitefish	2	32	03:46	8	12.5	12.5	0	0	75
7a&7b	Nephrops	5	51	03:35	461	10	18	34	36	1
	Total	7	83	03:38	469	10	18	34	35	3

- Condition of 469 fish assessed over 7 trips on board trawlers to date
- Majority of trawl-caught spurdog (72%) in poor, moribund or dead condition

# Bottom trawl progress

## Survival assessment

- 10 Spurdog in excellent or good condition tagged with SPATS in October 2023 in ICES 7b
- Size range 80 – 100 cm
- SPATs programmed to pop off after 30 days.
- 9/10 (90%) of tags popped off after 30 days
- Distinct diel vertical behaviour exhibited



# Progress to date – Gillnets

## Vitality assessments in gillnet fisheries 2024

Location	Target species	Trips (No.)	Hauls (No.)	Mean soak time (hr:min)	Spurdog (No.)	Excellent V1 (%)	Good V2 (%)	Poor V3 (%)	Moribund V4 (%)	Dead V5 (%)
7j	Whitefish	5	5	8:24	90	16	36	14	14	20

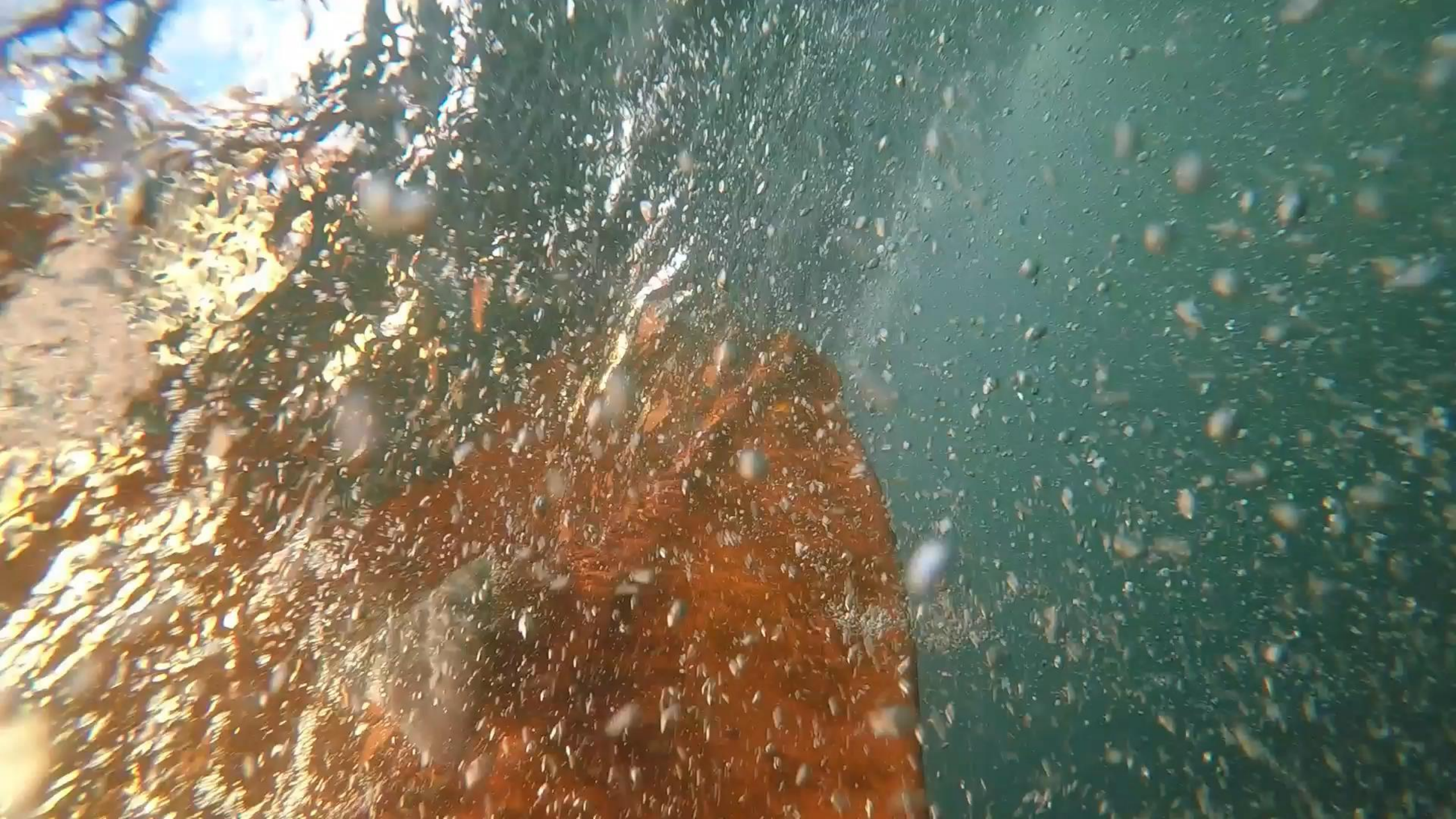
- Condition of 90 fish assessed over 5 trips on board gillnetters to date
- Just over half of gillnet caught spurdog (51%) in excellent or good condition
- Further assessment needed



# Next steps

- Further SPAT tagging on trawler
- Continue to assess spurdog condition in trawl and gillnet fisheries
- Continue building evidence base on spurdog survivability
- Progress report due early April





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Rialtas na hÉireann  
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an Aontas Eorpach

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