

Albacore tuna fisheries and megafauna bycatch: comparing driftnets and pair trawling using Productivity Susceptibility Analysis

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Introduction

Ecological Risk Assessment for the Effects of Fishing (ERAEF) is a hierarchical, precautionary approach used to assess ecological risk in an Ecosystem-based Fishery Management (EBFM) context (Hobday *et al.* 2011). It has been applied to many fisheries including those in Australia, where the process was developed, and is also applied as part of the certification process of the Marine Stewardship Council. The process has 3 key stages: scoping; scale intensity consequence analysis (SICA) and productivity susceptibility analysis (PSA). PSA, from a species perspective, scores each unit of analysis in terms of its intrinsic productivity and susceptibility to fishing. Whilst PSA has been widely applied to fish species its application to bycatch species, such as cetaceans, has been limited. Here we apply a generic PSA, as detailed below, to two fisheries, known, through observer programmes, to differ in degree of cetacean bycatch, to assess the utility of PSA in terms of assessing cetacean bycatch. We aim to further refine the PSA approach, by incorporating bycatch rates, to facilitate rapid screening of cetaceans, alongside fish bycatch, in the ERAEF process.

Aims

- Apply PSA to Albacore driftnet fisheries and pair trawl fisheries
- Combine PSA results and bycatch rates to produce a “likelihood risk score” for cetacean species exposed to each fishery

Method

- Species caught during onboard observer programmes were included in the PSA
- Data were taken from peer reviewed and grey literature of observer programmes from Irish, UK and French Albacore boats from the NE Atlantic
- Productivity attributes (Table 1) and susceptibility attributes (Table 2) were scored using a default set of scores developed for Australian fisheries (Hobday *et al.* 2007)
- Productivity and susceptibility scores plotted on axis and Euclidean distance used as the PSA risk score
- PSA risk score for each species multiplied by the bycatch rate, determined in the observer programme, as a measure of the likelihood of being caught – the “likelihood risk score”
- The scores for each species were compared between the two fisheries

NB. These are generic tables designed for rapid screening of all species potentially at risk from fishing including fish, mammals, birds and reptiles. Attribute tables specific for cetaceans are being developed as part of this project

Table 1. Productivity cut-off scores for species attributes taken from Hobday *et al.* (2007). Productivity determined from the mean of these scores.

Attribute	High Risk (Score 3)	Medium Risk (Score 2)	Low risk (Score 1)
Average age at maturity	>15 years	5-15 years	<5 years
Average size at maturity	>200cm	40-200 cm	<40 cm
Average maximum age	>25 years	10-25 years	<10 years
Average maximum size	>300cm	100-300cm	<100cm
Fecundity	<100 egg/year	100-20,000 egg/year	>20,000 egg/year
Reproductive strategy	Live bearer/bird	Demersal egg layer	Broadcast spawner
Trophic level	>3.25	2.75-3.25	<2.75

Table 2. Susceptibility attributes taken from Hobday *et al.* (2007). Susceptibility is determined from the product of these scores and is gear type specific.

Attribute	
Availability	Overlap of fishing effort with species distribution
Encounterability	Likelihood that species will encounter fishing gear
Selectivity	Potential of gear to capture and retain species
Post capture mortality	Condition and survival of species that are captured then released



Acknowledgements

This analysis is funded under the Beaufort Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management award, as part of the Irish Government's National Development Plan (NDP), the Beaufort Marine Research Award is grant aided by the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources (DCENR) & the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food (DAFF) under the Strategy for Science Technology & Innovation (SSTI) & the Sea Change Strategy.

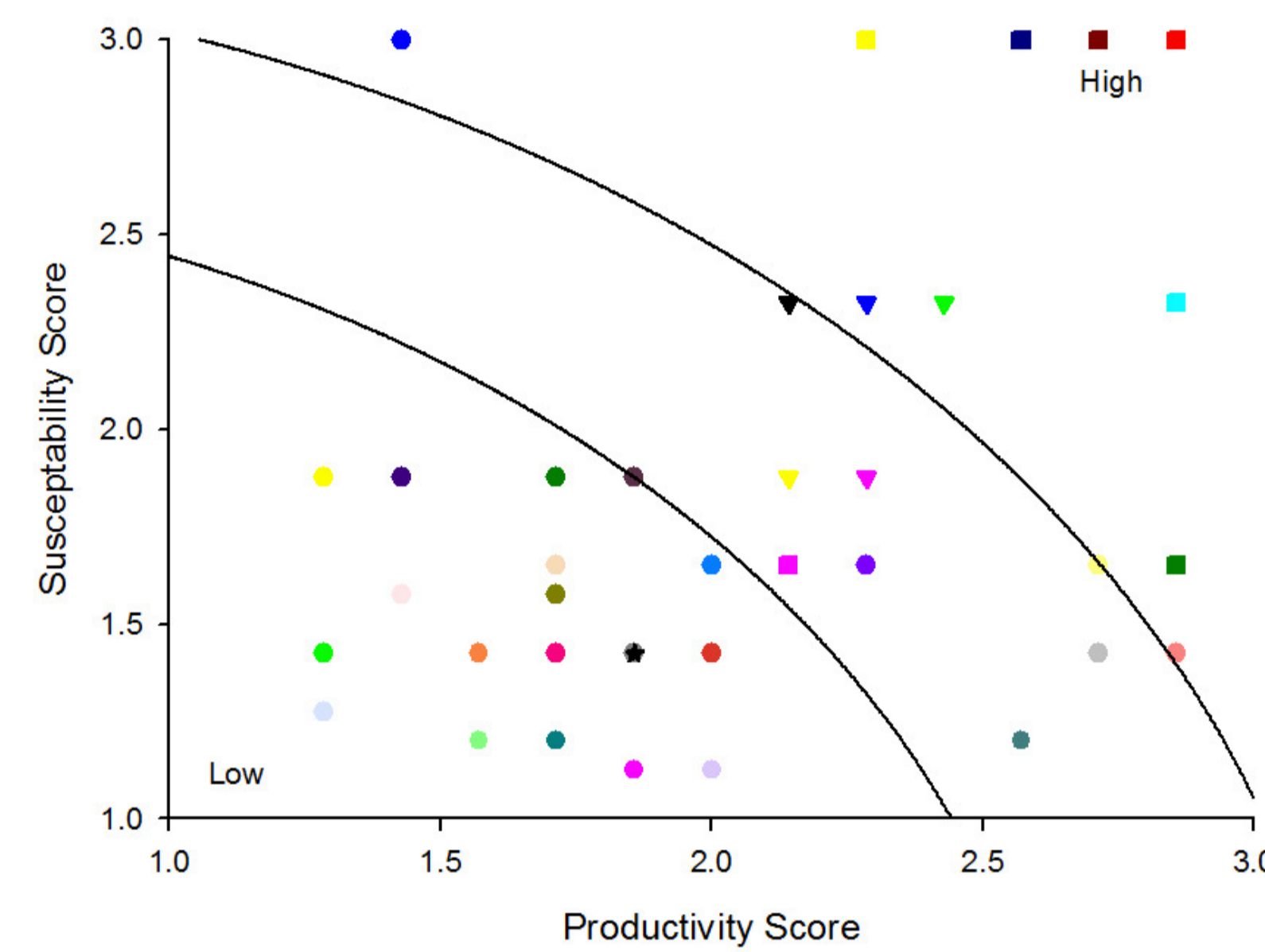
References

Hobday *et al.* (2011) Ecological Risk Assessment for the Effects of Fishing. *Fisheries Research* 108, 372-384
Hobday *et al.* (2007) Ecological Risk Assessment for the Effects of Fishing: Methodology. Report R04/1072 for the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, Canberra.

Results

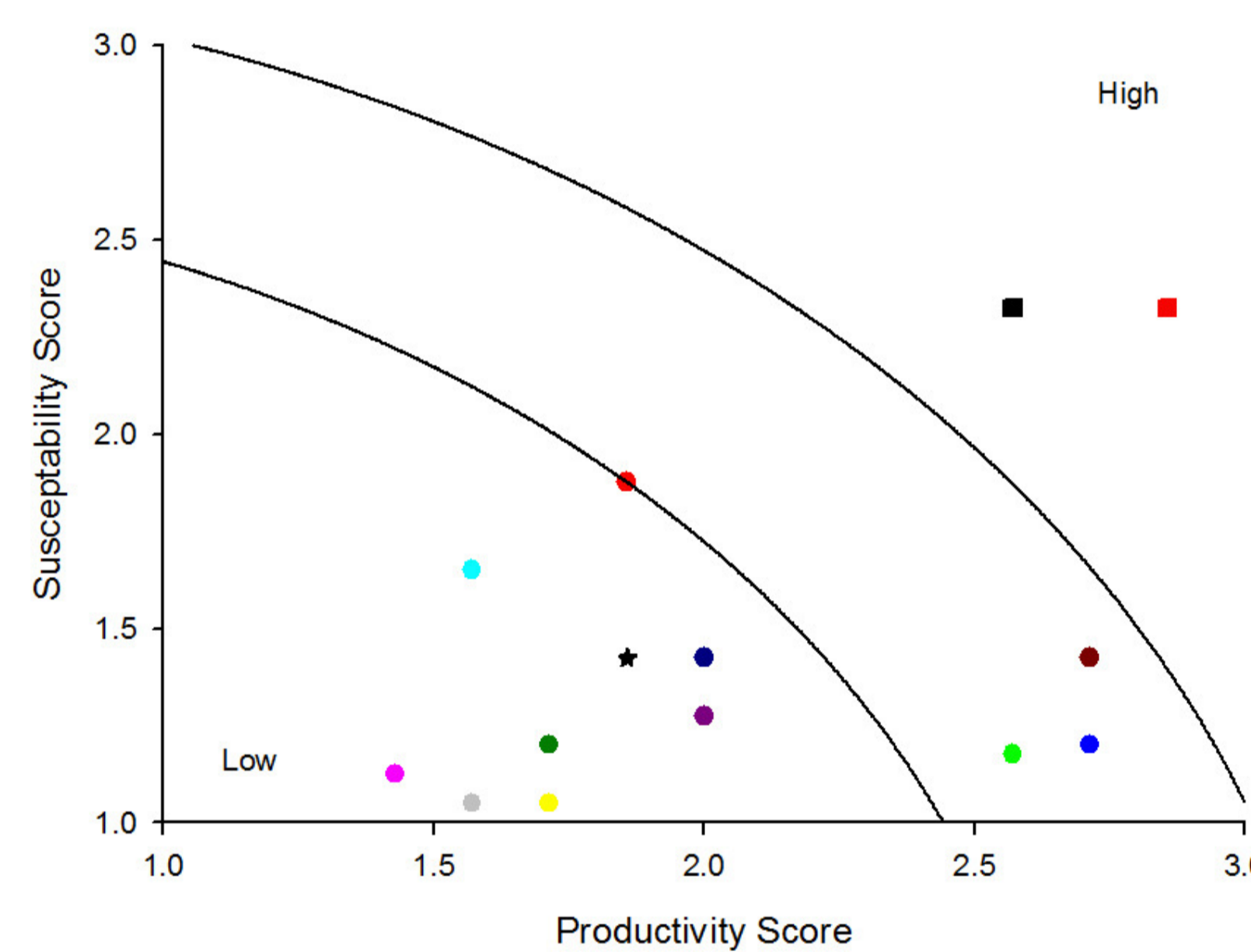
Data recorded by onboard observers indicated that, in addition to albacore, 50 species were caught by gillnets and 13 species were caught by pair trawling. In the case of driftnets the additional species included fish, seabirds, turtles and 10 cetacean species. In pair trawling additional species caught included 2 cetacean species (common dolphin *Delphinus delphinus* and bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*) and 11 fish species. Common dolphin and bottlenose dolphin occurred as bycatch in both fisheries and were scored as being at high risk from both fisheries (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Figure 1: Gillnet PSA



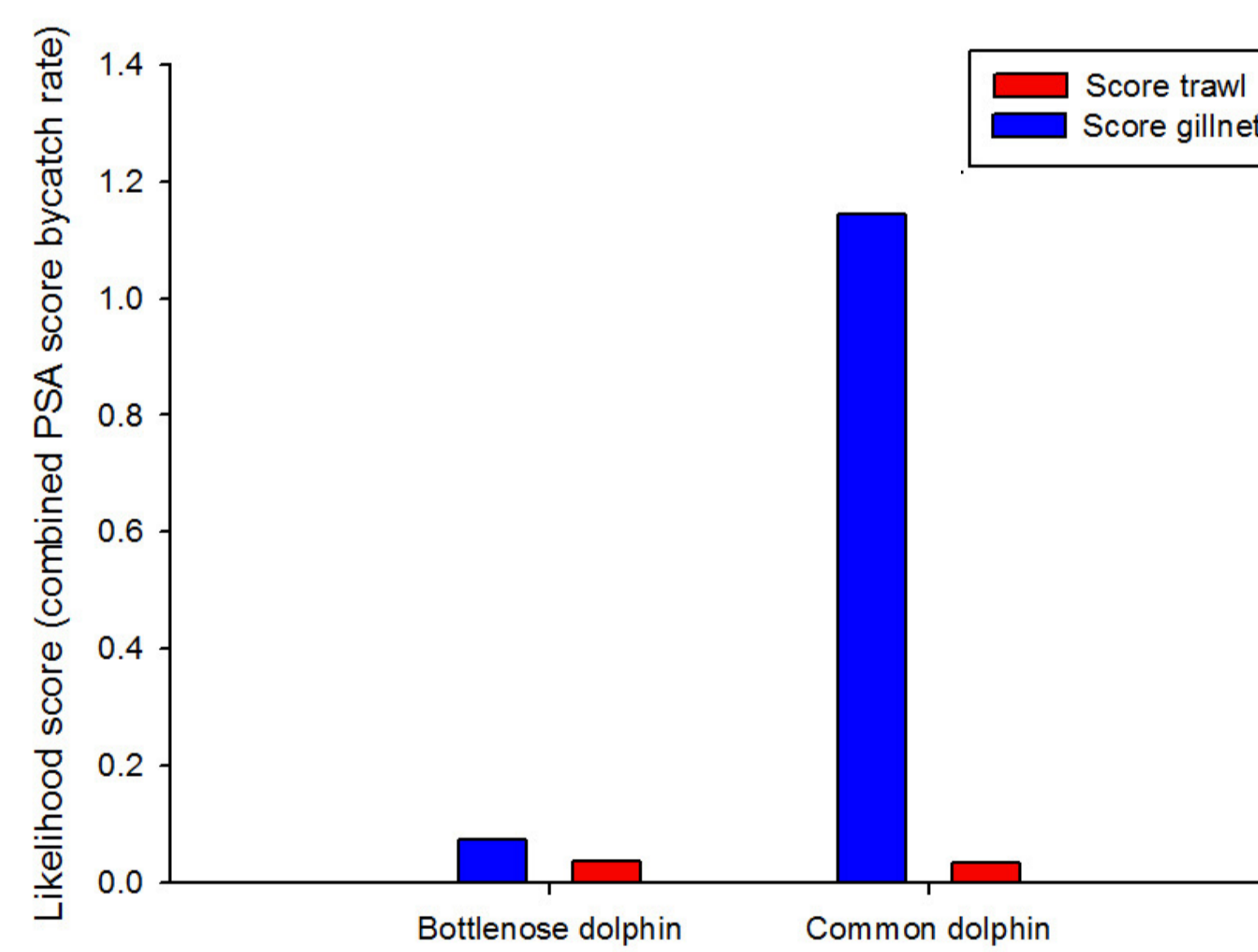
- Long snouted lancetfish *Alepisaurus ferox*
- Thresher shark *Alopias vulpinus*
- Frigate tuna *Auxis thazard thazard*
- Triggerfish *Balistes carolinensis*
- Garfish *Belone belone*
- Ray's bream *Brama brama*
- Blackfish *Centrolophus niger*
- Basking shark *Cetorhinus maximus*
- Common dolphin fish *Coryphaena hippurus*
- Driftfish *Cubiceps gracilis*
- Seabass *Dicentrarchus labrax*
- Snake pipefish *Entelurus aequoreus*
- Velvet belly *Etmopterus spinax*
- Skipjack *Euthynnus pelamis*
- Atlantic sailfish *Istiophorus albicans*
- Mako *Isurus oxyrinchus*
- Porbeagle *Lamna nasus*
- Opah *Lampris guttatus*
- Escolar *Lepidocybium flavobrunneum*
- Luvu *Luvuus imperialis*
- Sunfish *Mola mola*
- Common eagle ray *Myliobatis aquila*
- Pilot fish *Naucrates ductor*
- Yellowfin tuna *Neothunnus albacora*
- Wreckfish *Polyprion americanum*
- Blue shark *Prionace glauca*
- King of herrings *Regalecus glesne*
- Remora *Remora remora*
- Benito *Sarda sarda*
- Albacore tuna *Thunnus alalunga*
- Bigeye tuna *Thunnus obesus*
- Bluefin tuna *Thunnus thynnus*
- Swordfish *Xiphias gladius*
- Cory's shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*
- Atlantic puffin *Fratercula arctica*
- Northern fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*
- Storm petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*
- Northern gannet *Morus basanus*
- Manx shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*
- Pygmy sperm whale *Kogia breviceps*
- Minke whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*
- Fin whale *Balaenoptera physalus*
- Loggerhead turtle *Caretta caretta*
- Common dolphin *Delphinus delphinus*
- Leatherback turtle *Dermochelys coriacea*
- Long-finned pilot whale *Globicephala melas*
- Risso's dolphin *Grampus griseus*
- Atlantic white-sided dolphin *Lagenorhynchus acutus*
- Sperm whale *Physeter macrocephalus*
- Striped dolphin *Stenella coeruleoalba*
- Bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

Figure 2: Pelagic trawl PSA



- Albacore tuna *Thunnus alalunga*
- Bluefin tuna *Thunnus thynnus*
- Blue shark *Prionace glauca*
- Blackfish *Centrolophus niger*
- Porbeagle shark *Lamna nasus*
- Ray's bream *Brama brama*
- Garfish *Belone belone*
- Opah *Lampris guttatus*
- Electric ray *Torpedo nobiliana*
- Sunfish *Mola mola*
- Swordfish *Xiphias gladius*
- King of herrings *Regalecus glesne*
- Common dolphin *Delphinus delphinus*
- Bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

Figure 3: Cetacean likelihood



However bycatch rates, based on observer days at sea were lower in pelagic trawling and therefore the likelihood risk score was lower in pelagic trawls than in driftnets for both cetacean species (Figure 3). When bycatch rates were combined with PSA scores for the 12 bycatch species occurring in both fisheries likelihood risk scores were significantly lower in the pair trawl than in driftnet fishery ($Z=-2.98, p=0.003$).

Discussion and Further work

The above example indicates that, although bycatch rates are lower in pair trawls than driftnets, the potential risk to bottlenose and common dolphins was high for both fisheries. This illustrates that PSA scores alone may not be sufficient in determining risk from a fishery and could potentially be considered misleading by stakeholders. Stakeholder support is crucial to the successful implementation of ERAEF and the inclusion of a likelihood risk score may encourage stakeholder “buy-in” to the process. Bycatch rate, estimated from observer programmes, can be used to further refine risk scores but will require the co-operation of stakeholders in observer programmes. Further work is required to determine appropriate cut-off points for likelihood risk scores to make these scores meaningful. To refine the PSA process work is currently underway to incorporate productivity attributes which are relevant for mammal, bird and reptile bycatch species, such as inter-birth/brood interval and/or gestation period. Work is also in progress to develop selectivity attributes for different gear types, for fish, mammal, bird and reptile species, to produce gear specific susceptibility scores.