

Exploiting the most vulnerable resources

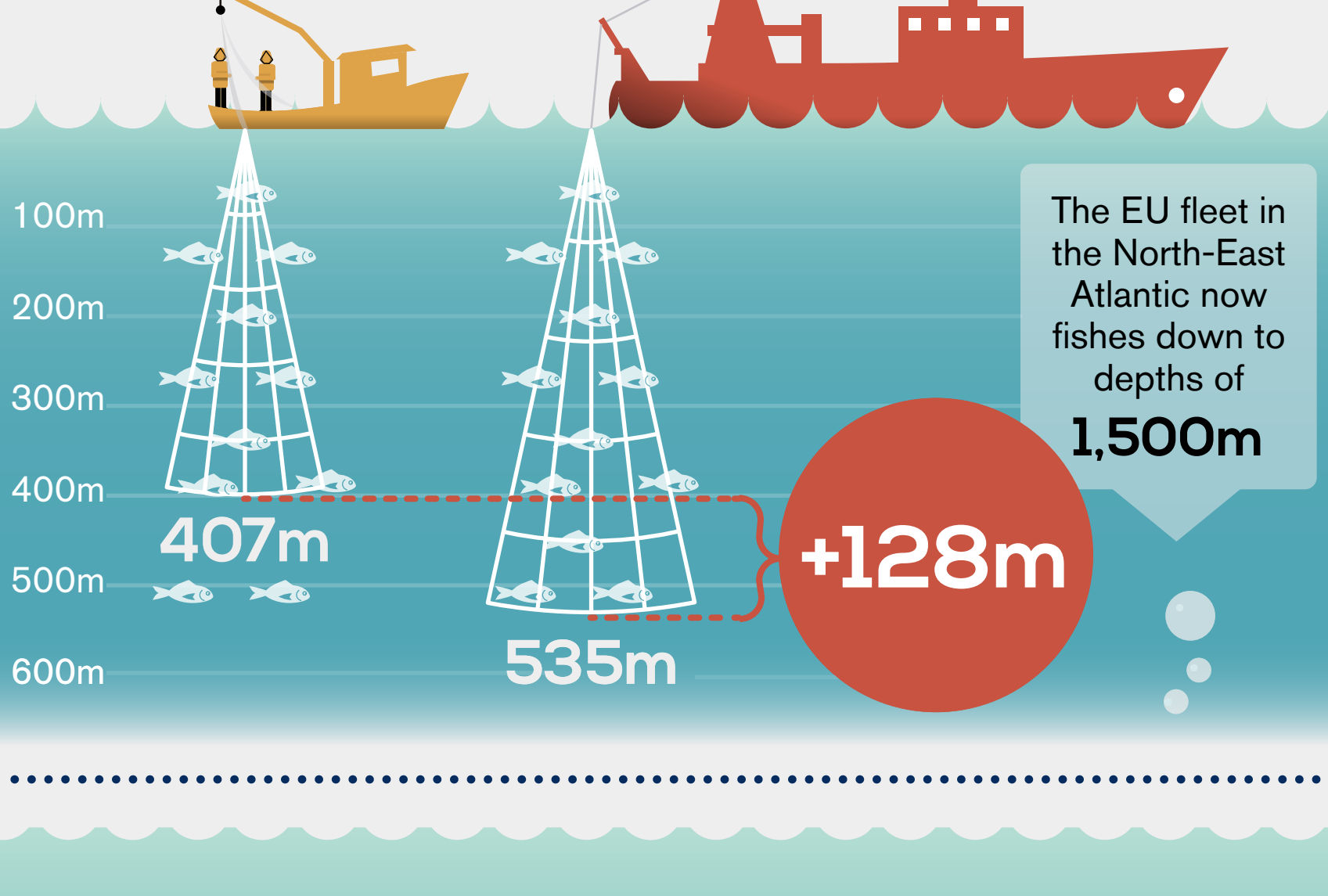
EU deep-sea fisheries in the North-East Atlantic

1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

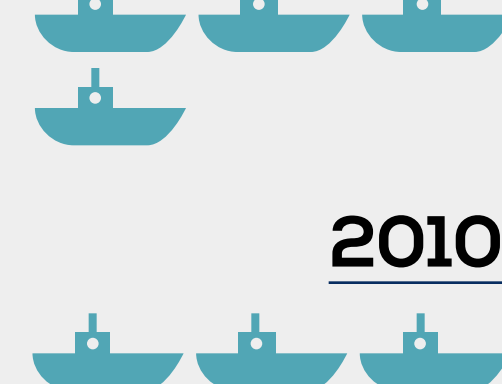
Having depleted and **overfished shallower**, inshore stocks, EU fisheries have moved into **deeper waters** in search of fish

In **20 years**, EU deep-sea fishing capacity has increased by **37-47%**

AVERAGE DEPTH OF EU DEEP-SEA FISHING



1990



2010



With the help of **EU subsidies**

2. FRAGILE SPECIES

Very few deep-sea animals are appropriate for commercial exploitation. In the **deep ocean**, species are characterised by **slow growth**,

late sexual maturity, and **low productivity**, making them highly vulnerable to overfishing and very slow to recover.

DEPTH (m)	SPECIES	AGE AT FIRST REPRODUCTION	MAXIMUM AGE
SHALLOW-WATER SPECIES			
0 to 100	Sardine	1	15
0 to 600	Cod	2-4	25
DEEP-WATER SPECIES			
230 to 2,400	Gulper shark	30-35	70
180 to 1,800	Orange roughy	32	149

DEEP SEA ECOSYSTEMS



Sponge beds and cold-water corals play a critical role, by providing food and shelter for many species.

More than **1,300 species** live amongst cold-water corals in the NE Atlantic.

Some corals **grow extremely slowly**, 4 mm/year...

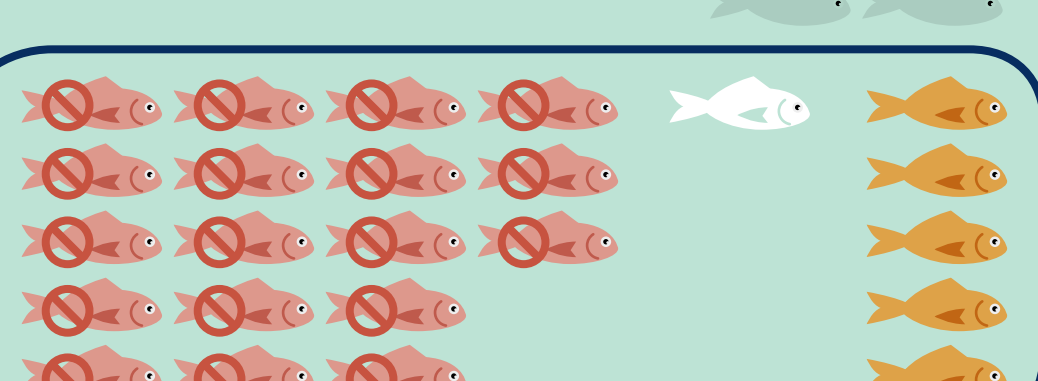
...less than the edge of a couple of coins!



Many deep-sea ecosystems are **classified as vulnerable**, because they are fragile, rare, unique, or important for other species.

3. MANAGEMENT IN THE EU

Around **100** deep-sea species are captured in EU fisheries



24 are currently managed under the current (2002) regulation, of which...

18 are now prohibited because they have been overfished and only...

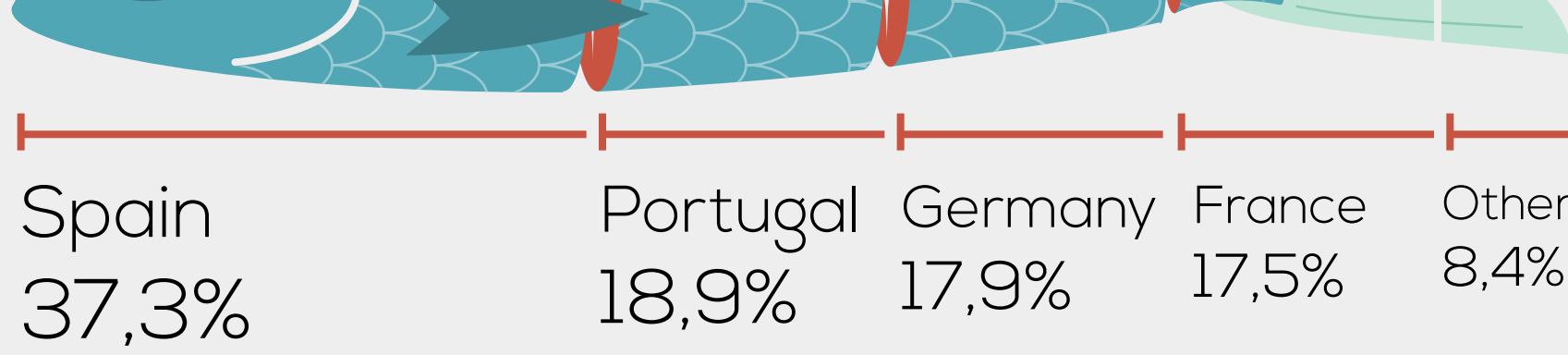
5 are managed with catch limits

In **60%** of cases, limits agreed by the Council of Ministers have exceeded scientific recommendations, and in **51%** of cases, catches by Member States fishermen have exceeded the agreed limits

4. SIGNIFICANCE

CATCHES BY COUNTRY

EU deep-sea fishing in the North-East Atlantic is dominated by four Member States

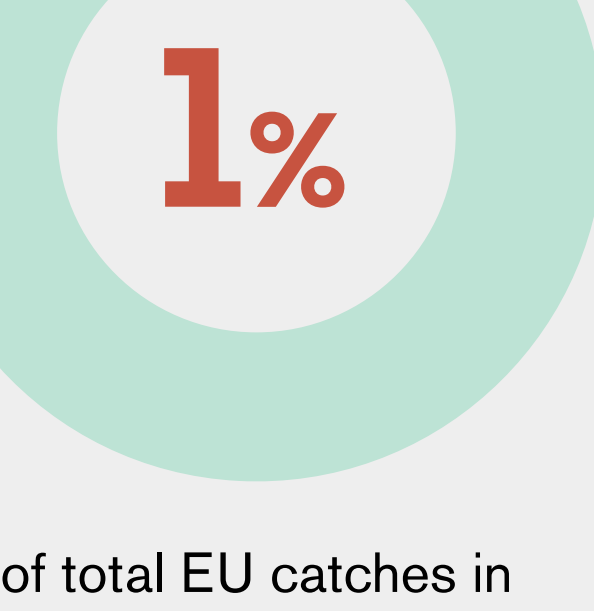


CATCHES BY GEAR-TYPES



THE BIGGER PICTURE

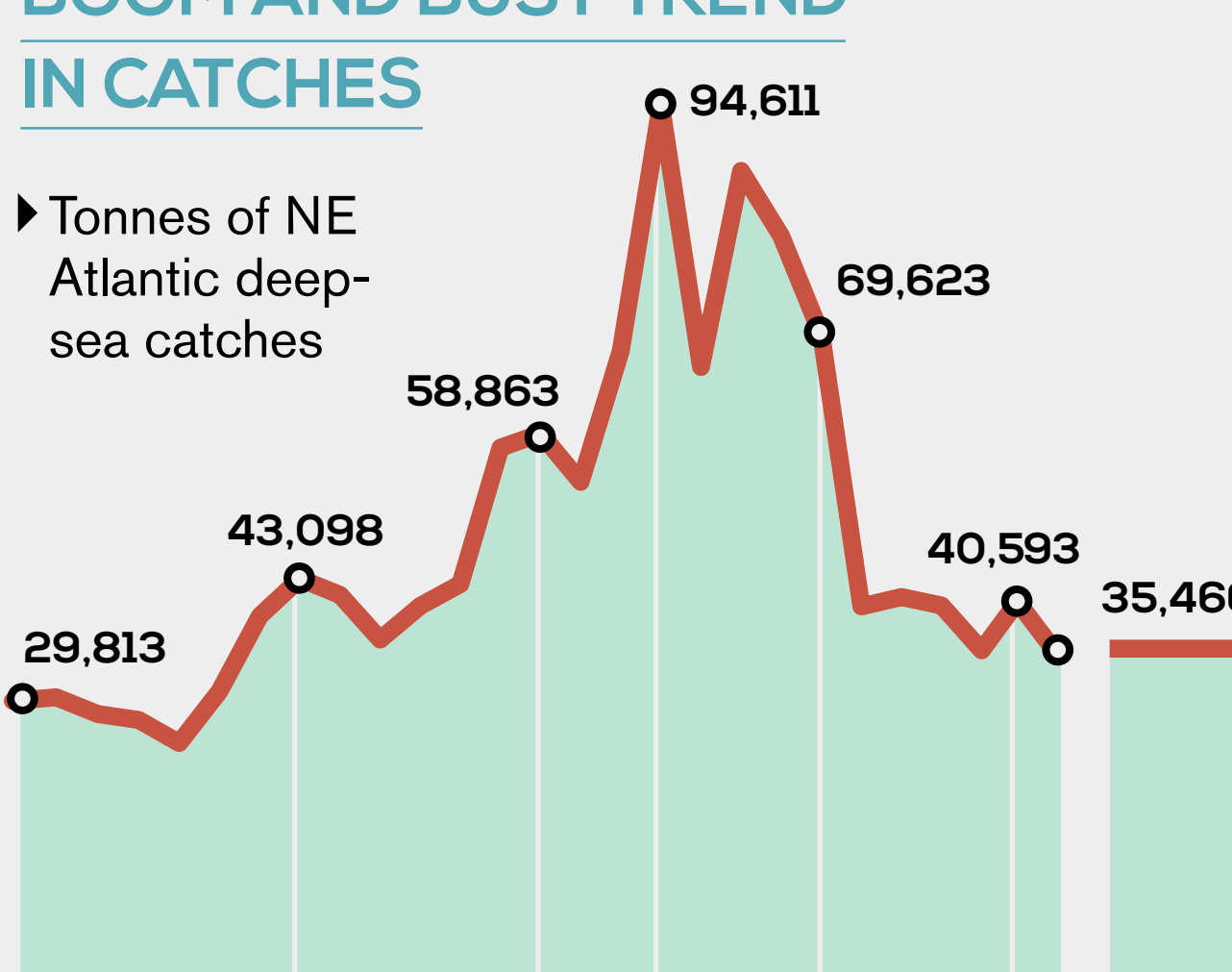
Catches of **deep-sea species** in the NE Atlantic represent only



of total EU catches in the area, and therefore contribute very little to food security

5. RESULTS OF WEAK MANAGEMENT

BOOM AND BUST TREND IN CATCHES

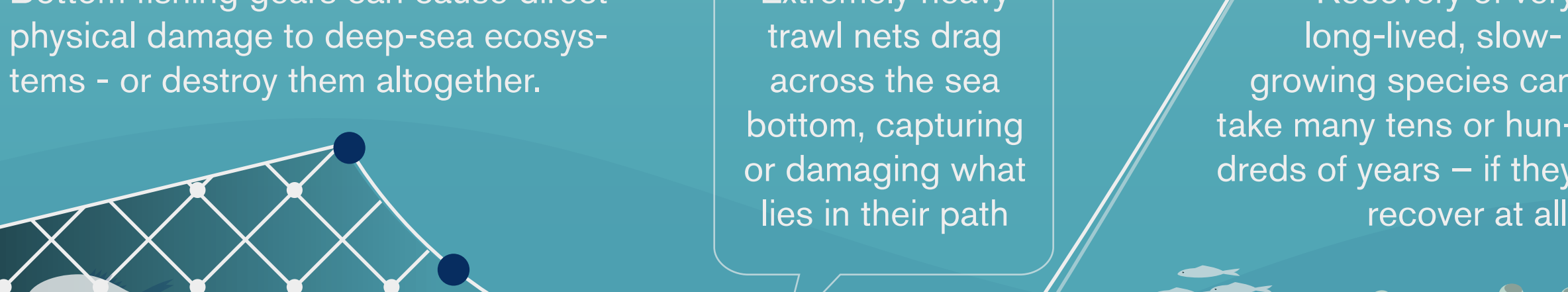


DISCARDS

up to **80%** of **trawl catches** are **thrown away dead**, because they consist of non-marketable species or juveniles

6. IMPACTS ON VULNERABLE ECOSYSTEMS

Bottom fishing gears can cause direct physical damage to deep-sea ecosystems - or destroy them altogether.



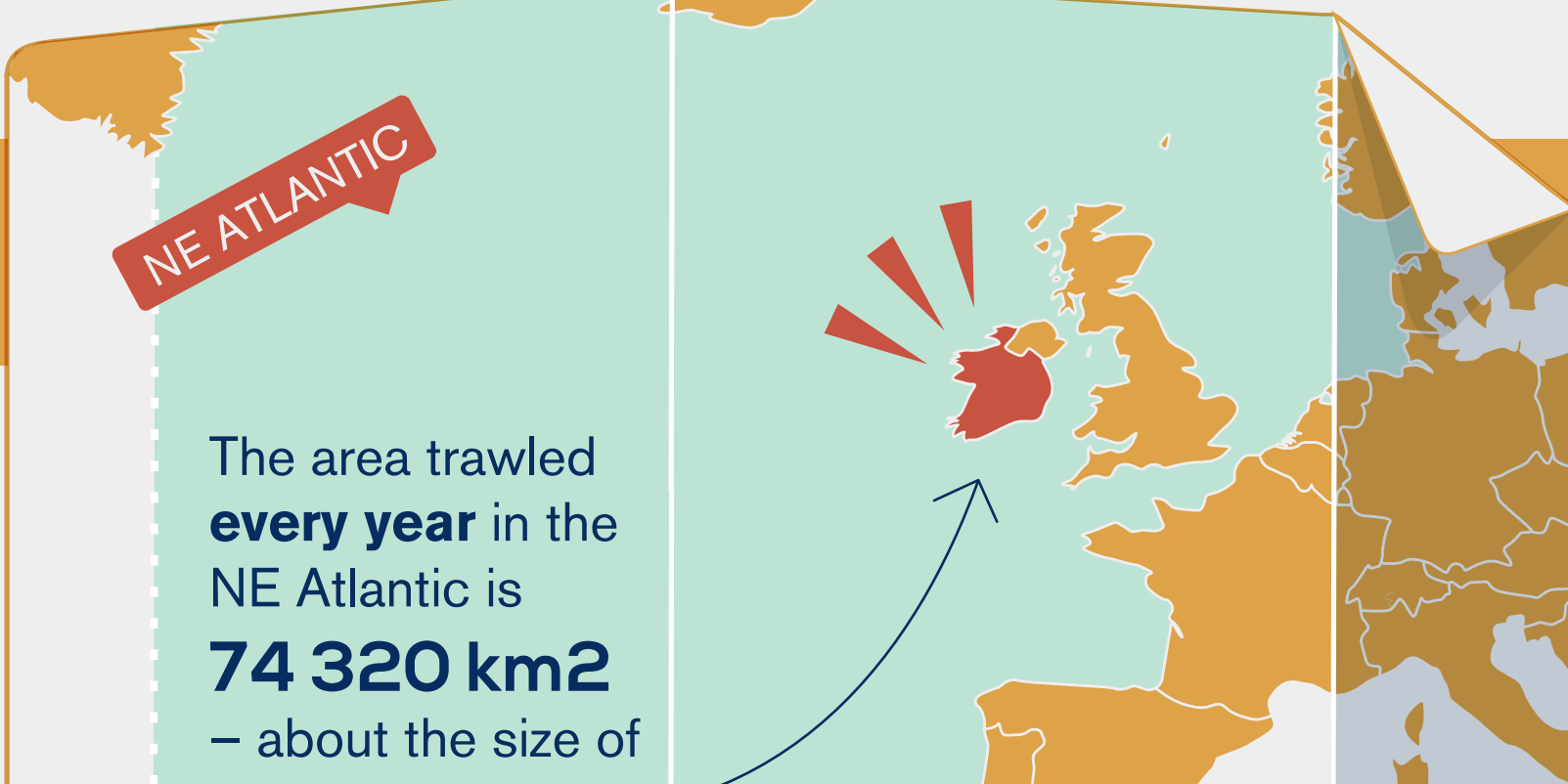
Extremely heavy trawl nets drag across the sea bottom, capturing or damaging what lies in their path

Recovery of very long-lived, slow-growing species can take many tens or hundreds of years - if they recover at all.

LIMITED PROTECTION



Only **8%** of the NE Atlantic is protected from bottom trawling



7. NEW PROPOSED REGULATION

- Inclusion of 30 additional species**
- Information requirements** before vessels are permitted to fish
- Quotas and fishing effort to be set in **accordance with scientific advice**
- Impact assessments** prior to fishing in new areas
- Progressive phase-out** of destructive and non-selective fishing gears (bottom trawls and gillnets)

8. FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- All captured species **should be managed** under the new regulation. The list of most vulnerable species should be updated, and should include all deep-sea sharks.
- Levels of fishing should be set with explicit consideration of **fishing impacts** on non-target species. No fishing opportunities should be allocated for the most vulnerable species.
- All deep-sea fisheries should implement **conservation measures** to reduce overcapacity, overfishing, illegal fishing, and by-catch.
- Impact assessments** should be required in new and existing fishing areas. Areas where vulnerable ecosystems occur should be identified and closed to fishing with bottom gears.