



# *European Atlas of the Seas: "a picture is worth a thousand words"*

*Vittorio Barale,  
Institute for Environment and Sustainability  
Joint Research Centre, European Commission  
Ispra (Italy)*

EMODnet Jamboree, Oostende, 21 Oct 2015



1




*The idiom "a picture is worth a thousand words" ...*

*which first appeared in a 1911 newspaper article, in the USA, and in various commercial advertisements in successive years*

*... refers to the notion that a complex idea can be conveyed with just a single still image, or that an image of a subject conveys its meaning/essence more effectively than any description does.*

*It also aptly characterizes one of the main goals of visualization, namely making it possible to absorb large amounts of data very quickly.*

*from Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia (consulted on 16/10/2015)*

EMODnet Jamboree, Oostende, 21 Oct 2015



2









The European Atlas of the Seas  
GET INFORMED IN JUST A FEW CLICKS

European Commission  
<http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeatlas>

EMODnet Jamboree, Oostende, 21 Oct 2015

Joint Research Centre

- long time in the makings

- 2007 first idea by the EC "Blue Paper" on IMP
- 2008 conceptual work by the EC (DG MARE)
- 2010 prototype, public consultation, user survey
- 2011 Version 1 (~70 maps) and user survey
- 2012 Version 2, Version 2.1 (at EEA) in 2013
- 2014 Version 3 implemented by EC JRC

9



The European Atlas of the Seas  
GET INFORMED IN JUST A FEW CLICKS

European Commission  
<http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeatlas>

EMODnet Jamboree, Oostende, 21 Oct 2015

Joint Research Centre

- supporting the EU policy-making process

- Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP)
  - ✓ Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)
  - ✓ Integrated Coastal Management (ICM)
- Common Fishery Policy (CFP)
- Blue Growth Strategy

- up-to-date data retrieval and publication

- dynamical database: not a collection of static maps
- new datasets uploaded and updated continuously
- multiple use: normal & advanced (& restricted) modes

10



The European Atlas of the Seas  
GET INFORMED IN JUST A FEW CLICKS

European Commission  
<http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeatlas>

EMODnet Jamboree, Oostende, 21 Oct 2015

European Commission

Joint Research Centre

11

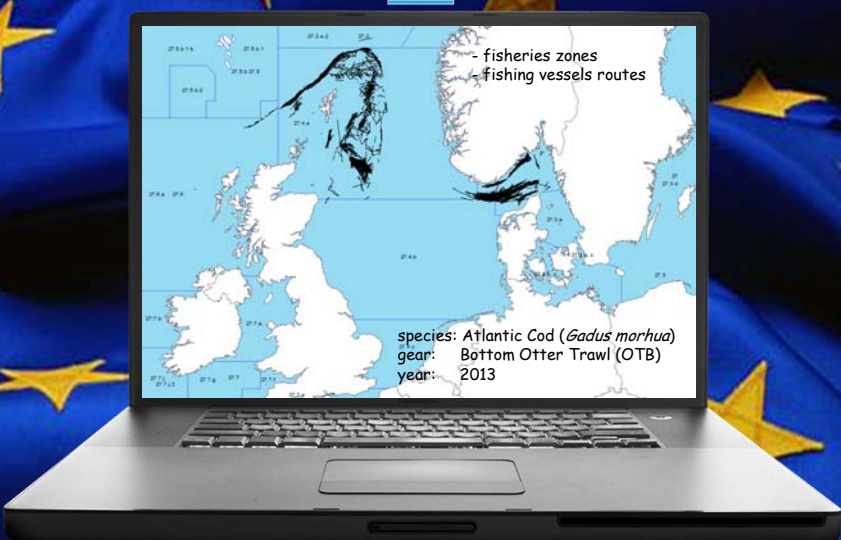
- environmental & socio-economic data layers

- geography
- environment
- security and safety
- fisheries and aquaculture
- tourism and protected areas
- transport, energy and maritime resources
- people and employment
- governance and European policies

- technical features

- multi-theme, map overlay
- selection with drop-down menu
- time slider
- bar chart with time series
- map queries (pop-up frames)
- data layer description (with the "info" button)
- metadata & sources

- user feedback



European Commission

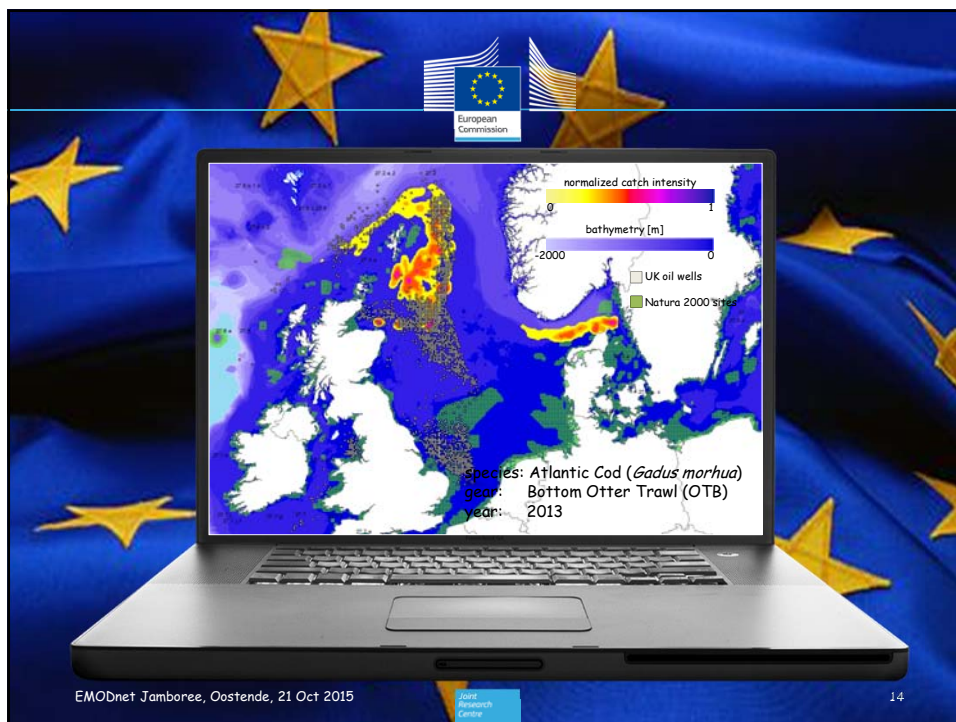
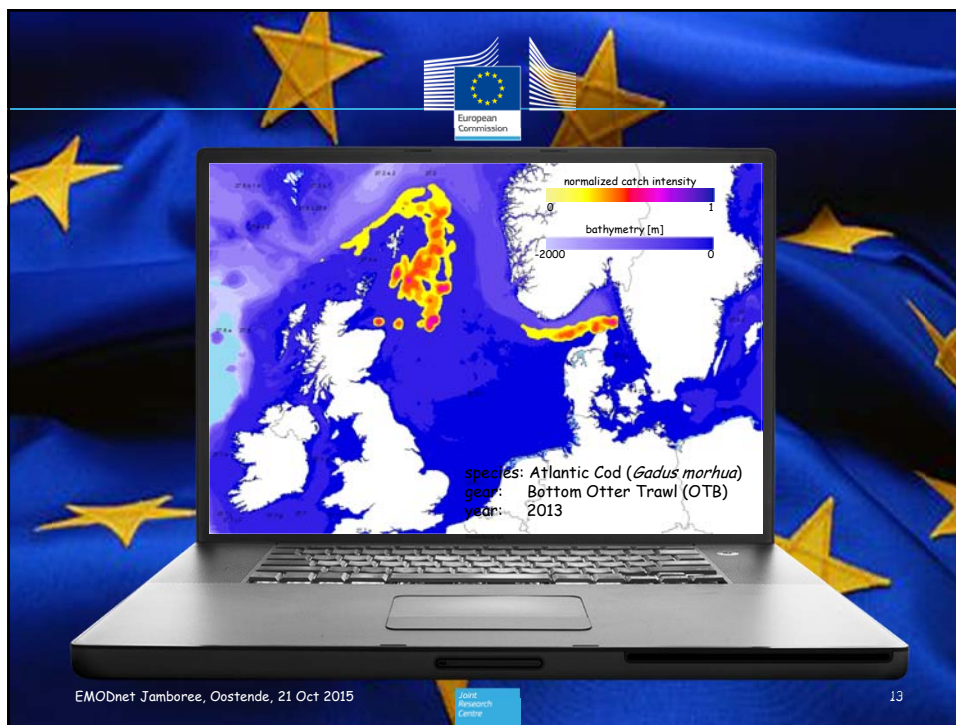
Joint Research Centre

12

EMODnet Jamboree, Oostende, 21 Oct 2015

species: Atlantic Cod (*Gadus morhua*)  
gear: Bottom Otter Trawl (OTB)  
year: 2013

- fisheries zones  
- fishing vessels routes





The European Atlas of the Seas  
GET INFORMED IN JUST A FEW CLICKS

European Commission  
Joint Research Centre

<http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeatlas>

EMODnet Jamboree, Oostende, 21 Oct 2015

15

### AIMS OF THE ATLAS

- *mapping activities: data collection, regular updates, map validation*
- *offering access to complex information in pictorial form*
- *conflicts (problems) and synergies (opportunities)*



The European Atlas of the Seas  
GET INFORMED IN JUST A FEW CLICKS

European Commission  
Joint Research Centre

<http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeatlas>

EMODnet Jamboree, Oostende, 21 Oct 2015

16

### AIMS OF THE ATLAS

- *mapping activities: data collection, regular updates, map validation*
- *offering access to complex information in pictorial form*
- *conflicts (problems) and synergies (opportunities)*

### TARGET USERS

- *General Public: simple to understand parameters and indicators*
- *Students and Researchers: access & retrieval of datasets*
- *Stakeholders & Policy Makers: easy to query and use*

### AIMS OF THE ATLAS

- mapping activities: data collection, regular updates, map validation
- offering access to complex information in pictorial form
- conflicts (problems) and synergies (opportunities)

### TARGET USERS

- General Public: simple to understand parameters and indicators
- Students and Researchers: access & retrieval of datasets
- Stakeholders & Policy Makers: easy to query and use

### VIEWING STATISTICS

In 2014, the European Atlas of the Seas received from 6000 to 8000 visits per month (228 per day), up 13% from 2013. Sharp increase (about 20%) of the traffic in the last quarter of 2014, after the publication of Version 3.

EMODnet Jamboree, Oostende, 21 Oct 2015

Joint Research Centre

17

EMODnet Jamboree, Oostende, 21 Oct 2015

Joint Research Centre

18