



## SUMARiS NEWSLETTER 6 - November 2020



### What is going on in the SUMARiS project?

The Rederscentrale, the only officially recognised Belgian fish Producer Organisation (PO) defends the interests of all Belgian companies operating fishing vessels under the Belgian flag. Primarily, the Rederscentrale acts as a link between the fishery sector and the different authorities involved in fisheries. Although sole and plaice are the main target species for the Belgian fishery, rays are a very important bycatch species. For more than ten years rays have always been the top 10 species in the Belgian sector in terms of the landing value.

Hence the importance of a sustainable management of the ray fishery and the decision of the Rederscentrale to become a partner in the SUMARiS consortium in 2017.



Currently in the different areas there is a single TAC for all different skate and ray species. Not only this restricts the possibility to protect vulnerable rays but it also limits the fishing opportunities of skate and ray stocks that are doing well. An improved and sustainable ray management is therefore certainly desirable.

*« The European fishermen see more and more skate and rays in their nets, so it's a useful achievement of the consortium to have succeeded in increasing the scientific knowledge of various skate and ray species in the English Channel and the North Sea. During several trips on English, French and Belgian fishing vessels missing data were collected and the survival rate of by-caught rays was studied. By obtaining new data to elaborate management strategies for the skate and ray fishery, SUMARiS contributes to the sustainability objectives of the European Fisheries Policy. In addition, thanks to training workshops and free information and education tools, the SUMARiS project has enhanced the support by fishermen and other workers in the sector for adopting best practice in handling of the skate and ray species on board of the vessels and ashore and for learning how to identify them correctly. »*

**Emiel Brouckaert, Chief Executive of the Rederscentrale**



### What is going on in the SUMARiS project?

#### The SUMARiS project is online!

In 2017, the partners of the SUMARiS project began to collaborate in order to propose a sustainable and cross-border management measures for skate and ray stocks in the Channel and the North Sea.

Three years later, what is the situation?

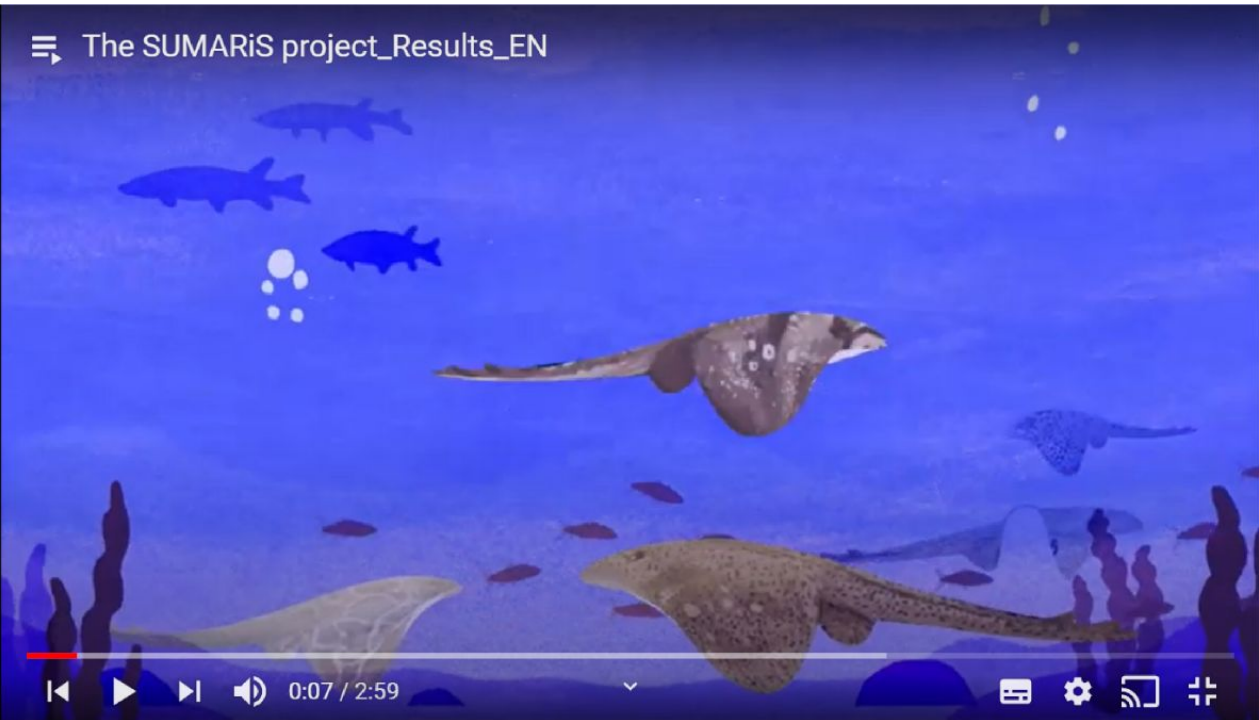
From 2017 to 2020, many studies were carried out to improve the knowledge of these species: stock status, biology, life cycle, spatial distribution, survival rate after capture, etc. those were the subjects addressed by the SUMARiS partners.

At the same time, an awareness-raising campaign about how to recognise different skate and ray species was carried out among the professionals in the sector (fishermen, auction employees, fishery students, etc.) and the general public.



Training sessions made it possible for the fishermen to learn how to better handle skates and rays in order to guarantee reliable data in the future.

Today, at the end of the project, the partners are proposing two concrete measures for the sustainable and cross-border management of skate and ray species in the Channel and North Sea. To know what they are, **watch the video**:



In three years, many reports presenting the SUMARiS study results and educational tools have been produced. The project partners have made them available to you on the website:

[sumaris-project.com](http://sumaris-project.com)

Don't hesitate to visit it and and have a look around!

However, to achieve sustainable management of these species, more research and collaboration are still necessary.

In the coming months, the partners of the SUMARiS project will continue to increase knowledge in order to move towards a sustainable management of skates and rays.

In Belgium, fish producer organisations will continue to raise awareness of the diversity of these species among professionals in 2021, whereas in France other projects using the methodology of survival rate evaluation are being set up. In England, the promotion of locally caught skates and rays is a key issue for fishermen. All these examples show the importance of continuing to work together in the years to come.

The adventure continues...



Latest events

On 30th September, the partners of the SUMARiS project presented their work results to more than 90 stakeholders from various sectors: fishermen, scientists, NGOs, etc. at the SUMARiS final conference held online. A summary of three years of the project in two hours, a real challenge!

Thank you to all speakers and participants for stimulating presentations and interesting discussions!



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