



WHAT DOES ARTISANAL FISHING MEAN FOR US?

Artisanal fishing is traditionally practiced in Galicia using ancestral techniques that respect the environment and are strongly linked to the sea and local culture. These include shellfish gathering on foot, the use of pots, hook gear such as longlines, and fixed and hand-operated trawl nets such as ‘bou de vara’ and ‘rapeta’, used for catching specific shellfish and fish along the Galician coast.

WHAT ARE THE TRADITIONAL FISHING TECHNIQUES IN GALICIA?





The most outstanding fishing gear in the Galician fishing tradition linked to artisanal way includes:




- Line and longline: the line, the longline and the hand line. Hook and line fishing gear, which are the most selective and eco-friendly.
- Pots and other traps: used to catch shellfish, crustaceans and octopus, as well as some fish.
- Gillnets: ‘Miño’, ‘Trasmallo’, ‘Beta’, ‘Xeito’, ‘Volanta’... these gear types use nets to catch fish. The difference between them is given by their different dimensions, the size of the mesh and the way they are set.
- Shellfish gear: Shellfish gathering on foot and floating shellfish gathering.

Shellfish gathering ‘on foot’ represents the most traditional and iconic image of Galicia associated with the maritime industry, using small tools such as ‘ferradas’, ‘truel’, ‘rasquetas’, etc. to collect barnacles, mussels, etc.

MARINE BIODIVERSITY IN THE COVE OF BALEEIRA:





The cove of Baleeira and the entire coastline of our municipality are habitat for a rich biodiversity of fish. Among the preferred fishing species for fishermen, we can mention the following ones:

- **The Ballan wrasse (*Labrus bergylta*):** The ballan wrasse is a large, heavy bodied wrasse with a relatively deep body and large head. It has a smallish mouth which is surrounded by thick, fleshy, rather wrinkled lips and a long dorsal fin which has 18–21 spines in its anterior portion and 9–13 branched rays in the rear part. Adult Ballan wrasse are highly variable in coloration, but have two main color forms: plain green or brown and reddish with white spots. 
- **The European seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*):** elongated, with a large mouth, it is distinguished by its dorsal fins and is classified as a Whitefish. It is fished and raised commercially and is considered the most important fish currently cultured. 
- **The White seabream (*Diplodus sargus sargus*):** it has a laterally compressed body. The overall color is silvery-grey (lighter or dark). It has got 9 vertical bars; these alternate between very dark and lighter bars but there may be only dark bars or none. 
- **The grey wrasse (*Symphodus cinereus*):** small in size, it has an oval body and a small mouth with a row of conical teeth and large scales. Its color is not permanently dichromatic. 

- **The fourbeard rockling or four-bearded rockling (*Enchelyopus cimbrius*):** is a long, slender fish named for its four barbels, one of which is on the chin and the others on the snout, with a maximum length of 41 cm (16 in). 
- **The European conger (*Conger conger*):** The body is very long, anguilliform, and is without scales. The color is usually grey, but can also be blackish. A row of small white spots is aligned along the lateral line. The head is almost conical, and slightly depressed. They have an average adult length of 1.5 m (5 ft), a maximum known length of around 3 m (9.8 ft) and maximum weight of roughly 72 kg (159 lb.). 
- **The common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*):** it has bilateral symmetry, with its mouth and beak located at the central point of its eight limbs. Their soft bodies are extremely flexible, allowing them to squeeze through very small openings. It has a complex nervous system and excellent eyesight. They are intelligent enough to distinguish brightness, navigate mazes, recognize individual people, learn how to unscrew a jar or raid lobster traps. 

Octopus is part of the cuisine in many cultures and, in Galicia, it is a very common culinary experience that is prepared in many different ways. ‘Polbo á feira’ is one of the most popular delicacies at fairs and festivals both on the coast and inland Galicia.

And among the seafood:

- **The European spider crab (*Maja squinado*):** a large migratory crustacean. Its shell is covered with spines and protuberances and it can reach 20 cm in diameter. 
- **The velvet crab (*Necora puber*):** They have a dark, flattened carapace which ranges from black to brown in color and is usually around 6.5 cm long and up to 10 cm across, weighing up to 250 grams. The carapace is pubescent with short yellowish hairs providing a velvety texture. Tubercles are scattered across the upper surface, with a higher concentration towards the front. The frontal part of the crab's underside has some tubercles as well and is densely hairy. The front of the carapace is mostly straight and bends slightly inwards at the center line; the front edge bears seven to ten tooth-like indentations. 
- **The Small European locust lobster (*Scyllarus arctus*):** it may reach up to 16 centimeters (6.3 in) long, although sizes of 5–10 cm (2.0–3.9 in) are more typical. It is reddish-brown in color, with a dark brown spot in the center of each abdominal somite, although this is not sharply defined. The pereopods have a dark blue ring around each segment. In Galician language it is called ‘Santiaguínos’. 
- **The Common Lobster (*Homarus gammarus*):** one of the most traditional and tasty seafoods. Bluish-black in color with light spots, it has five pairs of feet. The first pair shapes its distinctive crusher claws, which clearly distinguish it from other species. 

PLEASE NOTE WHEN YOU ARE FISHING AND EATING FISH:

- 1 You must have a fishing license, and in specific areas or zones you will need an additional fishing authorization.
- 2 There are minimum sizes and daily catch limits for each species. Any fish that are under the minimum size or exceed the catch limit must be immediately dumped back into the water.
- 3 Fishing is not allowed during periods of closure.
- 4 The use of toxic bait and the use of fish as live bait in inland waters is forbidden.
- 5 Recreational Surface fishing must not take place within 100 meters from beaches with bathers.
- 6 Spearfishing is banned in marine reserves, navigable channels, within 250 meters from beaches with swimmers and close to professional fishing gear.
- 7 Choose fishing that respects reproductive cycles and fishing quotas.

8 Eat fish and seafood caught by the Spanish fishing fleet, symbol of respect for the environment and marine biodiversity.

For more information, visit:

<https://pescreativa.xunta.gal/es/preguntas>

THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAXE

What is the Natura 2000 Network?

Natura 2000 is a network for protected natural species within the European Union. It was created by virtue of the Directive 92/43/CEE of the Cabinet Meeting from May 21st, 1992. This one is related to the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna (the so-called Habitats Directive) in order to safeguard the most important European natural spaces. They consist of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which were declared by all the Member States in relation to the Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds, which are designed in accordance with the Directive 79/409/CEE of the Cabinet Meeting from April 2nd, 1979. This one is related to the conservation of wild birds.

What is the Natura 2000 Network for?

The Natura 2000 Network allows us to preserve our natural heritage, recover areas, protect species, keep up and revitalize traditional farming and livestock activities, develop more sustainable patterns and techniques in farming, agriculture, fishing, and forest management, stimulate development, improve the quality of life for people living in these areas, and promote nature tourism.

HOW DOES THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK INFLUENCE THE COASTLINE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF LAXE?

The coastline of the municipality of Laxe is included in the Special Area of Conservation [SAC] Costa da Morte (ES1110005), in which a marine protected area around Cape Laxe is located.

Furthermore, the coastline of our municipality is also included in the Special Protection Area for Birds (SPA) Costa da Morte 'Norte' (ES0000176), in which the surroundings of the Traba Lagoon and Dunes stand out.

WHAT IS THE BIODIVERSITY OF THIS COASTAL STRIP LIKE?

The Costa da Morte SPA is important as a refuge for wildlife, especially migratory birds in summer and autumn.

Among the protected fauna in the area, which is also listed in the Galician catalogue of threatened species, you will find: the loggerhead sea turtle, the shag, different species of storm petrels, the Iberian guillemot, the shearwater, the dolphin, the Atlantic gannet, the harbor porpoise, and many other species.

We are on a coastline with great environmental value and high biodiversity.

BEHAVIORAL RULES IN ORDER TO SAVE THIS ENVIRONMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS:

1. Respect for Flora and Fauna:

Do not damage, collect, or disturb plants and animals. Keep a safe distance from wildlife and do not feed them.

2. Rubbish and Waste:

Take all rubbish with you and throw it away in designated areas. If there are no bins, take it back with you.

3. Trails and Designed Areas:

Stay on the trails and in designed areas to prevent damage to the natural environment. Do not enter restricted areas or go off the marked trails.

4. Noise: Keep noise levels to a minimum so as not to disturb wildlife or other visitors.

5. Pets:

Please keep them on a leash and under control always. Pick up and correctly dispose of their waste.

6. Do Not Remove Natural Elements:

Do not collect stones, shells, plants, or any other natural elements. Everything must remain in place to maintain the balance of the ecosystem. **DO NOT TAKE GLASS** from the crystal beach.

7. Environmental Education:

Use your visit to learn about the place and its importance.

8. Personal and Environmental Safety:

Please be aware of natural hazards and follow safety recommendations. Keep yourself and others safe. You are on the Costa da Morte, a place where nature can show its harshest side.

Together, we can help preserve this unique coastal area so that future generations can enjoy it and the balance of ecosystems can be preserved.

Thank you for your cooperation.

WHALING

Whaling, also known as the hunting of whales, is the harvesting of resources from marine mammals, mainly whales, such as the right whale, the fin whale, and the blue whale, among others.

Historically, it was of great economic and cultural importance in Galicia, with records dating back to 3000 BC and whaling stations in many places along the Galician coast.

In Galicia, we do not have historical documents related to cetacean hunting before the 13th century, but it is reasonable to assume that it was already practiced several centuries earlier. Like pigs, every part of the whale was used: whale oil for lamps, meat, baleen for brushes or luxury clothing, pharmaceutical and cosmetic products, beams for houses, etc.

Whaling was an important resource for the socio-economic development of the Galician coast, creating ports and coastal towns such as Burela (Lugo) and Suevos (Arteixo).

Centuries of hunting led to a decline in whale populations in the world's oceans. The 21st of October 1985 was the day the last whale was hunted in Galicia, as Spain joined the international moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986, which meant the end and oblivion of an activity that had been practiced on the Galician coast for centuries.

From 1986 onwards, this moratorium was respected by almost all countries, with the exception of Japan and, occasionally, Norway and Iceland.

Various scientific organizations now point out that the ban on whaling in 1986 is allowing species to recover, as we have been able to watch first-hand in recent months in Galicia, where sightings of these animals are increasing year on year.

We hope that, in the next few years, the Baleeira area, as its name suggests, will once again become a suitable place for sighting marine cetaceans and whales.



THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK MAP OF MUNICIPALITY OF LAXE



THE COVE OF BALEEIRA IN OLD PHOTOGRAPHS BY PLACIDO AND JOSÉ VIDAL:





Laxe (A Coruña), 12/04/2025



Concello
de Laxe



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