

G 5.3 FISHING AND AQUACULTURE



G5.3.6

Aquaculture

To understand the advantages of this method over other traditional fishing methods. To talk about the Aquaculture Centre in Malta and the fish which is grown there.

Research by Etienne Vella - Għajnsielem

A. What is Aquaculture?

Aquaculture is the farming of fish, which are grown on land in ponds and tanks. People choose what kind of fish they want to breed, such as sea bream, sea brass, tuna and others. This depends on the market demand (what the people and shops want). When the fish is small, it is grown in ponds and tanks on land. When the fish grows, it is taken into net cages in the sea (fish farms).



B. Why is Aquaculture Important?

The number of fishing catches is constantly decreasing; hence aquaculture helps to provide a supply of fish for the market (people, restaurants, hotels) throughout the year.

Catching fish is made safer for fishermen because the work to raise fish in aquaculture is not dangerous.

Fish can be sold to other countries. Indeed, Malta only keeps 5 of every 100 sea breams it produces. The other 95 are exported to other countries, especially Italy.

St. Lucian's Tower



Aquaculture in Malta started in 1988. **The Aquaculture Centre** was founded in **St. Lucian Tower**, in Marsaxlokk.

The Grandmaster Wignacourt built St. Lucian Tower in the 17th century to defend the bay of Marsaxlokk.

Since 1988 many large and small tanks have been built - with seawater running through them.

Apart from fish farming, in St Lucian Tower there are also:

- ❖ Studies on healing fish diseases
- ❖ Laboratory experiments on fish
- ❖ Healing of fish, like turtles, which are caught in nets

C. What is overfishing, and what damage can it bring?

Overfishing is when people catch more fish from the sea than they are supposed to. When this happens the fishermen do not give enough time for fish to reproduce.

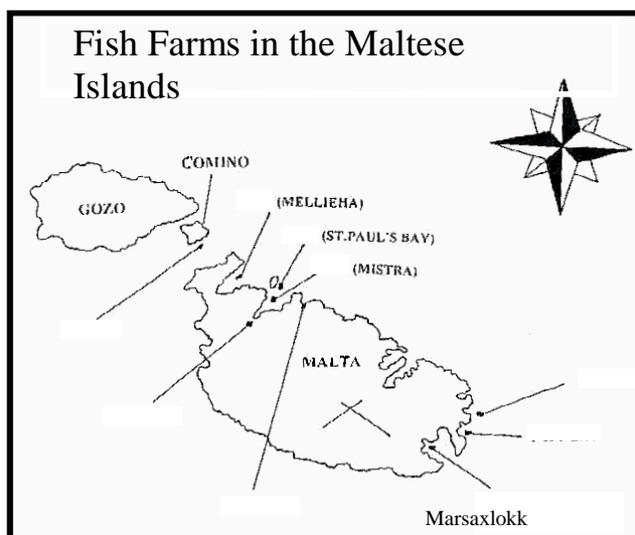
Overfishing is also when catching fish which is too small to be sold. Generally this fish is thrown back into the sea - **dead**.

The damage caused by overfishing is huge:

- ❖ Fish is prevented from reproducing since it is small and caught too early.
- ❖ This lack of fish hinders the work of fishermen. Their lives depend on the sale of the fish they catch.
- ❖ Certain types of fish species can become extinct forever! One of these is the turtle - this is protected by law.

D. The Aquaculture Centre and other fish farms

- ❖ **When the fish in the tanks of St. Lucian Tower begin to grow, it is then taken to the fish farms.** Fish farms are made in the open sea and the fish are kept in cages made of nets.
- ❖ The first private fish farm company of Malta, is found in Mistra.



- ❖ Nowadays, we find around 8 private fish farms, mostly found in the **North of Malta**.
- ❖ **The fish in the fish farms is given food daily** in order to keep growing until they become the right size to be sold.

- ❖ The fish from these fish farms are exported mostly to Italy.

E. The main fish grown in Aquaculture.

The type of fish that is mostly grown in Malta's Aquaculture is the **Sea bream**.

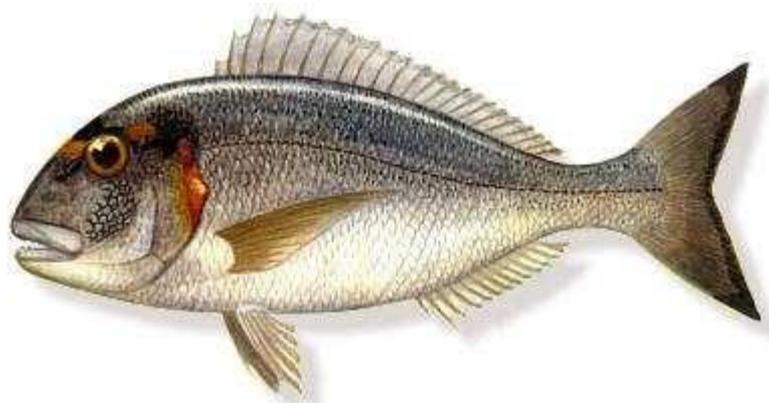
In Malta we can grow other types of fish, including **bass (spnott)**, **tuna (tonn)**, **amberjack (aċċjol)**, **eel (sallur)**, **dentex (denċi)**, and **fish with shells** such as **oysters (gajdri)** and **shrimps (gambli)**.



The Sea Bream (L-Awrata)

- ❖ It is the most farmed fish in the Maltese industry.
- ❖ It takes one and a half years to grow from an egg to **350 grams**.
- ❖ It is round and short.
- ❖ It has white meat and no fats.
- ❖ It chews and breaks snails and small shells.
- ❖ It can also chew the fish farm nets - it can escape.

More info on Maltese fish - <http://www.maltabookers.com/fishesofmalta.html>



Sparus auratus