



Press release 03/06/2021

Annick Girardin, Minister of the Sea in France, on a visit to Toulouse, discusses the utility of space in the management of maritime territories

On Friday, March 26, 2021, during a trip to Toulouse, Annick Girardin, Minister of the Sea, visited CLS' Head Quarters, a subsidiary of CNES (French Space Agency), to explore the benefits of space in the management of maritime territories. Connected fishing gear, marine meteorology, the fight against plastic pollution, limiting dolphin bycatch, scallop fishing, coastal resilience and support for aquaculture were among the topics discussed today. A look back at a space dedicated to the service of our blue planet.

Limit the incidental catch of dolphins - Observe, correlate, model to define habitats to be regulated

For several years, dolphin strandings related to fishing activities in the Bay of Biscay have been increasing. This very worrying situation requires the mobilization of all stakeholders, at both French and European levels. Since 2017, the national working group, led by the Ministry of the Sea (DPMA) and the Ministry of Ecological Transition (DEB), composed of all stakeholders of the Atlantic coast (administrations, scientists, NGOs, fishing professionals), has been aiming to better understand these interactions between fishing activities and these protected species in order to implement measures to limit these phenomena in a sustainable manner and in co-construction with fishing professionals.

This winter 2020-2021, France is implementing an ambitious action plan based on the improvement of knowledge on these interactions between fishing activities identified at risk and on the status of the common dolphin population in the Northeast Atlantic. This action plan also includes regulatory measures and 7 commitments:

- to make the declarations of all incidental catches mandatory,
- to record strandings, to publish the data and to report on the progress of the actions,
- to equip all trawlers that interact with cetaceans with repellent devices and to continue the development of technical solutions,
- to set up aerial observation programs,
- test the use of on-board cameras on the Bay of Biscay's gillnetters for scientific purposes, complete an international project with Spain and Portugal on cetacean by-catch
- or to carry out a voluntary fisheries observation campaign on board trawlers and gillnetters.



The Ministry of the Sea, always looking for complementary solutions, decided to meet with CLS to study together how space could bring a solution to this ecological problem.

During her visit to Toulouse, Mrs. Annick Girardin, Minister of the Sea, met with CLS, a subsidiary of CNES, specialized in sustainable fisheries management. One of the objectives of this meeting was to discover a space-based solution to forecast the presence of dolphins in the Bay of Biscay. Strategic spatio-temporal information that would improve knowledge on habitats occupied by dolphins in the Bay of Biscay and then use these results to implement strategies for fisheries to avoid dolphins. In short, to know the distribution of dolphins and to regulate human activities on a seasonal basis in areas to be protected.



CLS has previously collaborated with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to develop a better description of the habitats occupied by swordfish and loggerhead turtles in the North Pacific from electronic tagging data. The results were used in numerical models to predict their respective distributions and to study potential turtle avoidance strategies for fisheries. This work has led to informed and effective regulation. This allowed the authorities to dynamically prohibit certain fishing areas when the probability of maximum interaction between the two species was high. The use of the model, developed by CLS, has allowed to significantly reduce the incidental catch rate of loggerhead turtles and to avoid taking measures that are too penalizing for the fisheries.

Scallop: a fishery under high surveillance

Other topics, such as the current monitoring of the scallop fishery in the Bay of Saint Brieuc, were also discussed with the Minister. CLS monitors nearly 800 French fishing vessels (out of 1200 active vessels), thanks to satellite tracking beacons developed by its experts in rational fisheries management.

During the high season, as is currently the case, the French authorities ask fishermen to communicate their positions not every hour but every quarter of an hour, thus allowing for a more accurate monitoring of the activity zones and the enforcement of the prohibited fishing zones to be protected.



Sustainable fisheries management by satellite: CLS a world leader

CLS, created in 1986 by CNES, has been developing sustainable fisheries management solutions since the 1990s. As the historical operator of the ARGOS tracking and data collection system, the Toulouse-based company, now an international group, is positioned as a world leader in sustainable fisheries management. With more than 15,000 fishing boats equipped with their tracking beacons around the world, and more than 50 fisheries monitoring centers equipped, the CNES subsidiary is an internationally renowned industrialist in the fisheries sector. Its next challenge: to connect fishing gear by satellite, on a large scale, to limit their loss. The company is currently conducting tests in the Mediterranean, French Guiana and soon in Brittany. An ocean increasingly connected from space to support a secular economy, limit plastic pollution and put an end to illegal, unreported, unregulated ghost fishing.

MINISTRY OF THE SEA

The Ministry develops and implements the government's policy in the field of the sea in its various national and international aspects, particularly in terms of the environment, the maritime economy, and maritime influence.

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CLS

CLS is a global company and pioneer provider of monitoring and surveillance solutions for the Earth, created in 1986. We are subsidiary of the French Space Agency (CNES) and CNP, an investment firm. Our mission is to create innovative space-based solutions to understand and protect our planet and to manage its resources sustainably. CLS employs 800 people at our headquarters in Toulouse (France) and in 29 other sites around the world. The company works in five strategic markets: sustainable fisheries management, environmental monitoring, maritime surveillance, fleet management, and energy & mining. CLS processes data from 100,000 transponders per month (such as drifting buoys, animal tags, VMS transponders, & LRIT tracking) and observes the oceans and inland waters (more than 20 instruments onboard satellites daily deliver information to CLS on the world's seas and oceans). In addition, we monitor land and sea activities by satellite (nearly 10,000 radar images and several hundred drone flights are processed each year). The CLS Group had revenue of nearly 138,4 million Euros in 2020. Committed to a sustainable planet, the company works every day for the Earth, from Space. www.cls.fr

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