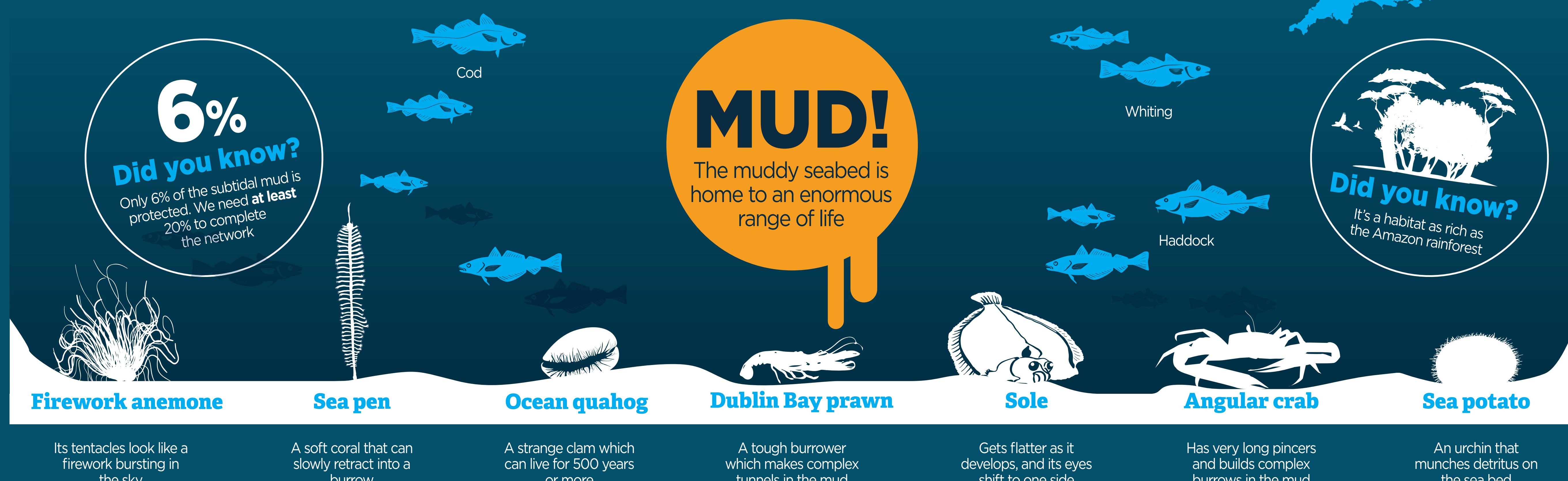




Save our Irish Sea

Slowly the UK is getting a network of Marine Protected Areas to save our precious marine life. But one of the big missing links is the Irish Sea

What's so special about the Irish Sea?



The mud is also a valuable fishing ground for prawns

Dublin Bay prawns (aka the pub-grub scampi and posh nosh langoustine) provide one of the most important and profitable fisheries in the Irish Sea

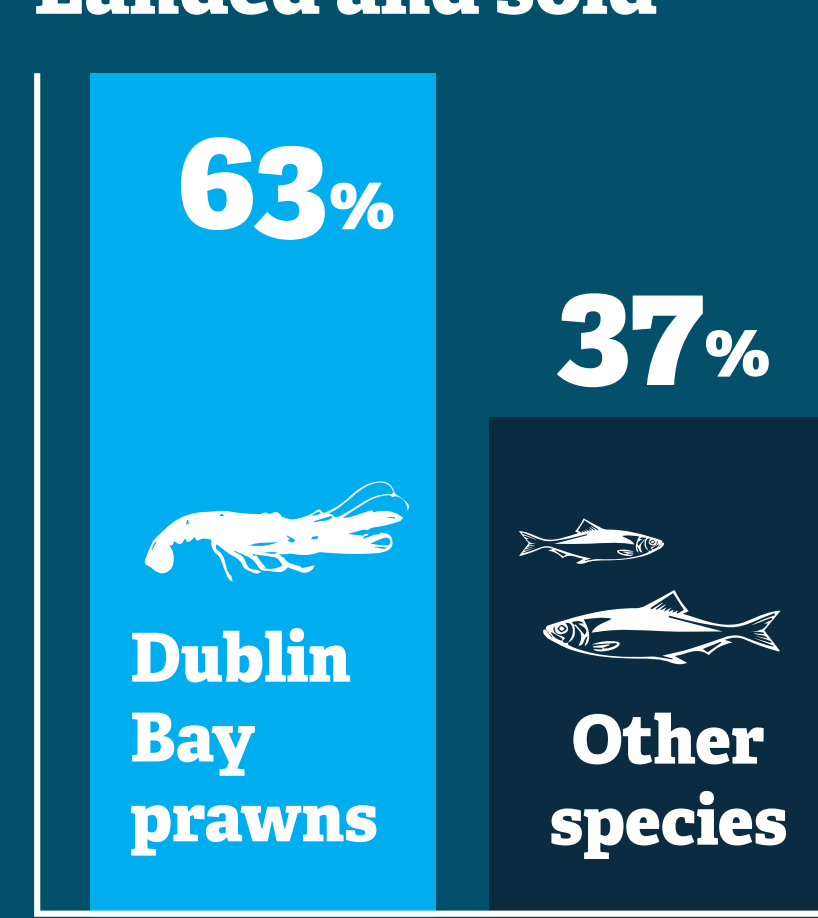


How sustainable is the fishery?

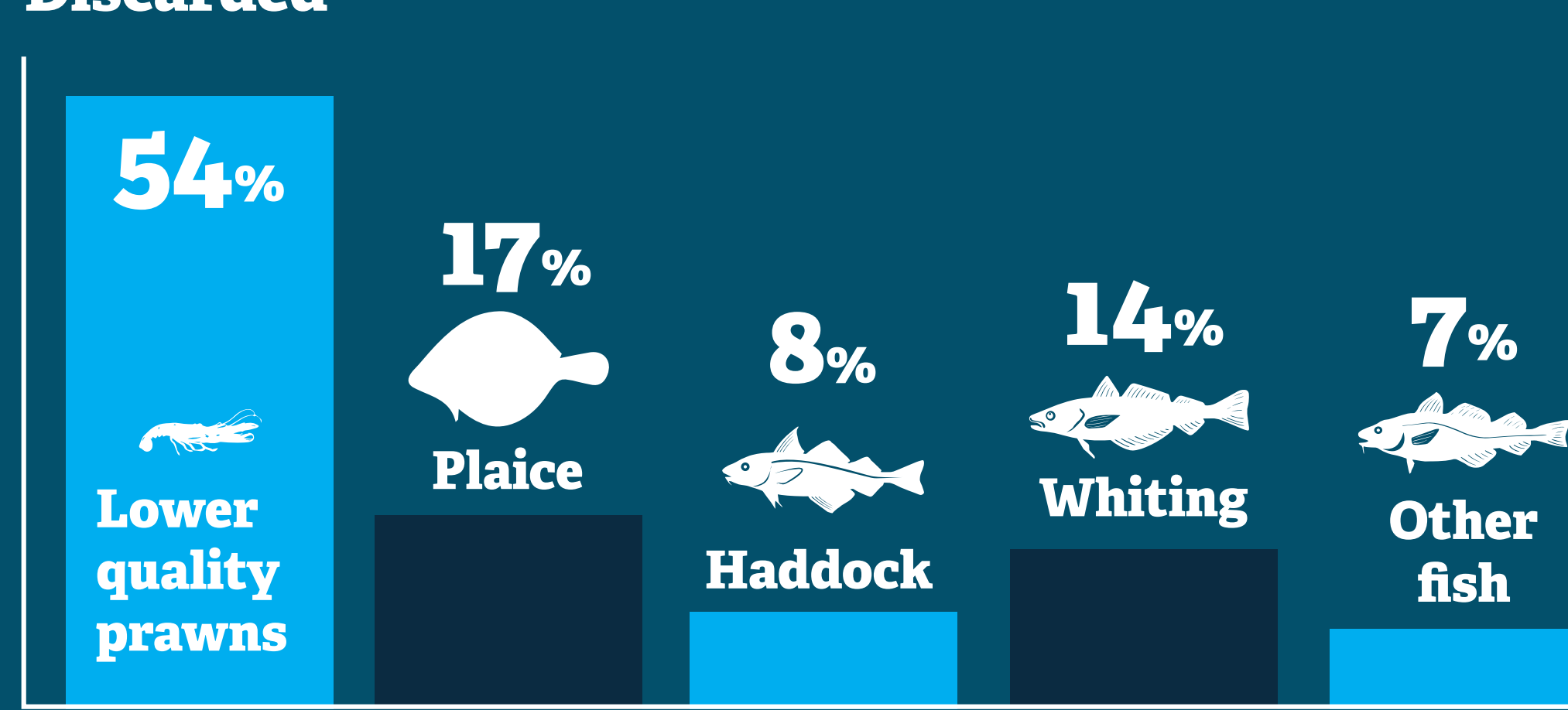
It's not just prawns

As the heavy nets are dragged across the seabed, other species are caught too. Some are sold but tonnes of lower quality and juvenile fish are thrown back, along with crabs, starfish and soft corals. 2012 figures from the Northern Irish prawn fleet

Landed and sold

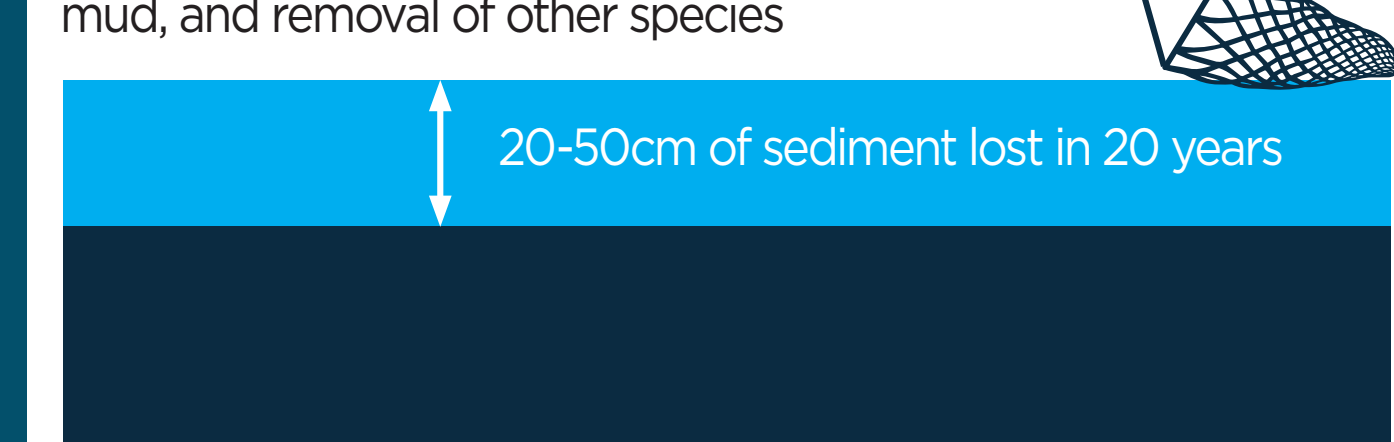


Discarded

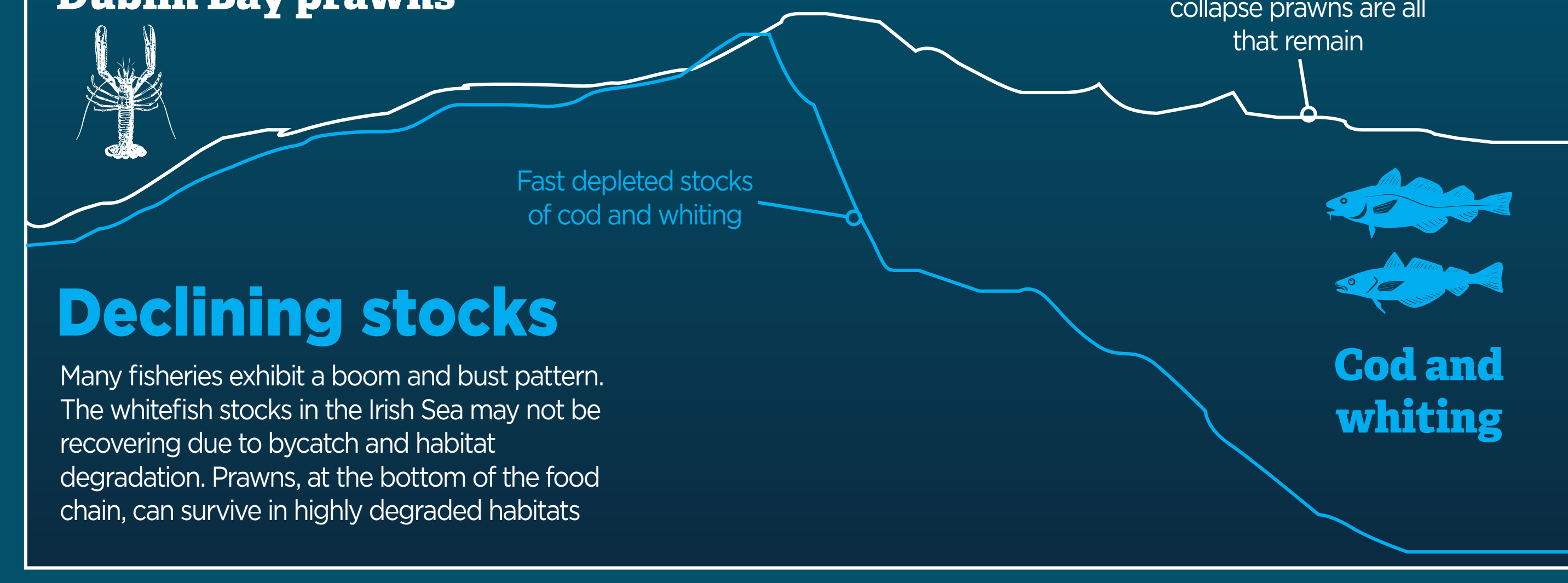


Sediment loss

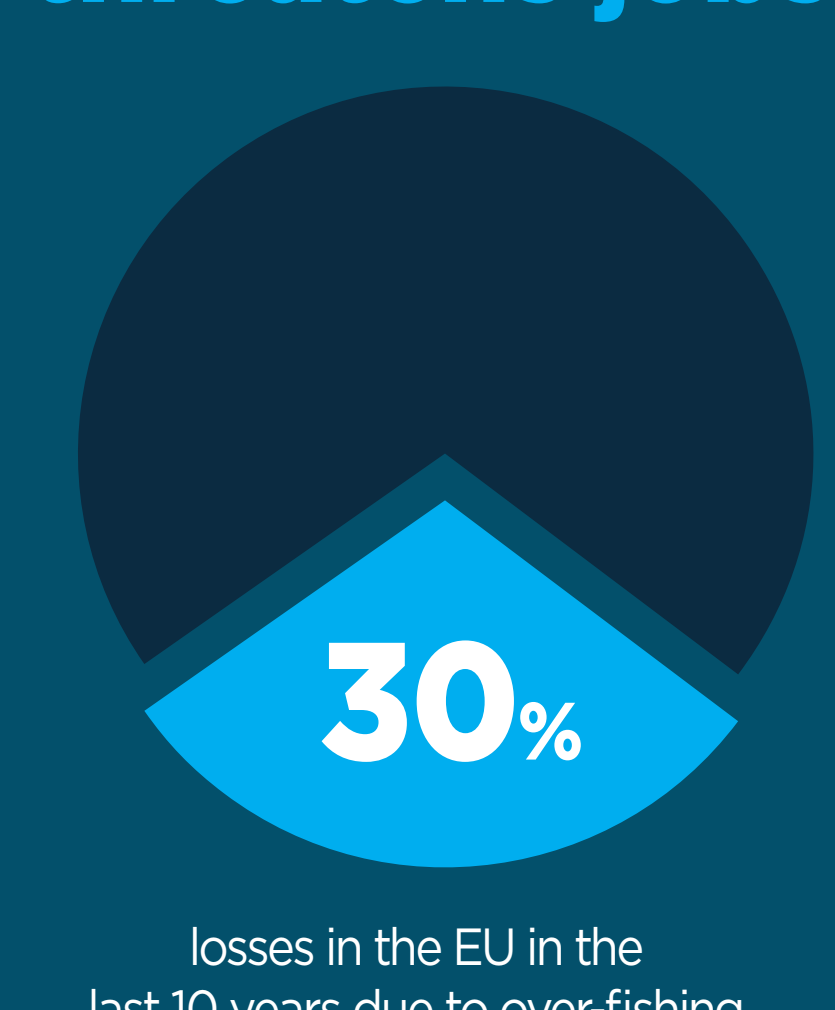
A consequence of the fishing method is a gradual reduction in the depth of the mud, and removal of other species



Dublin Bay prawns

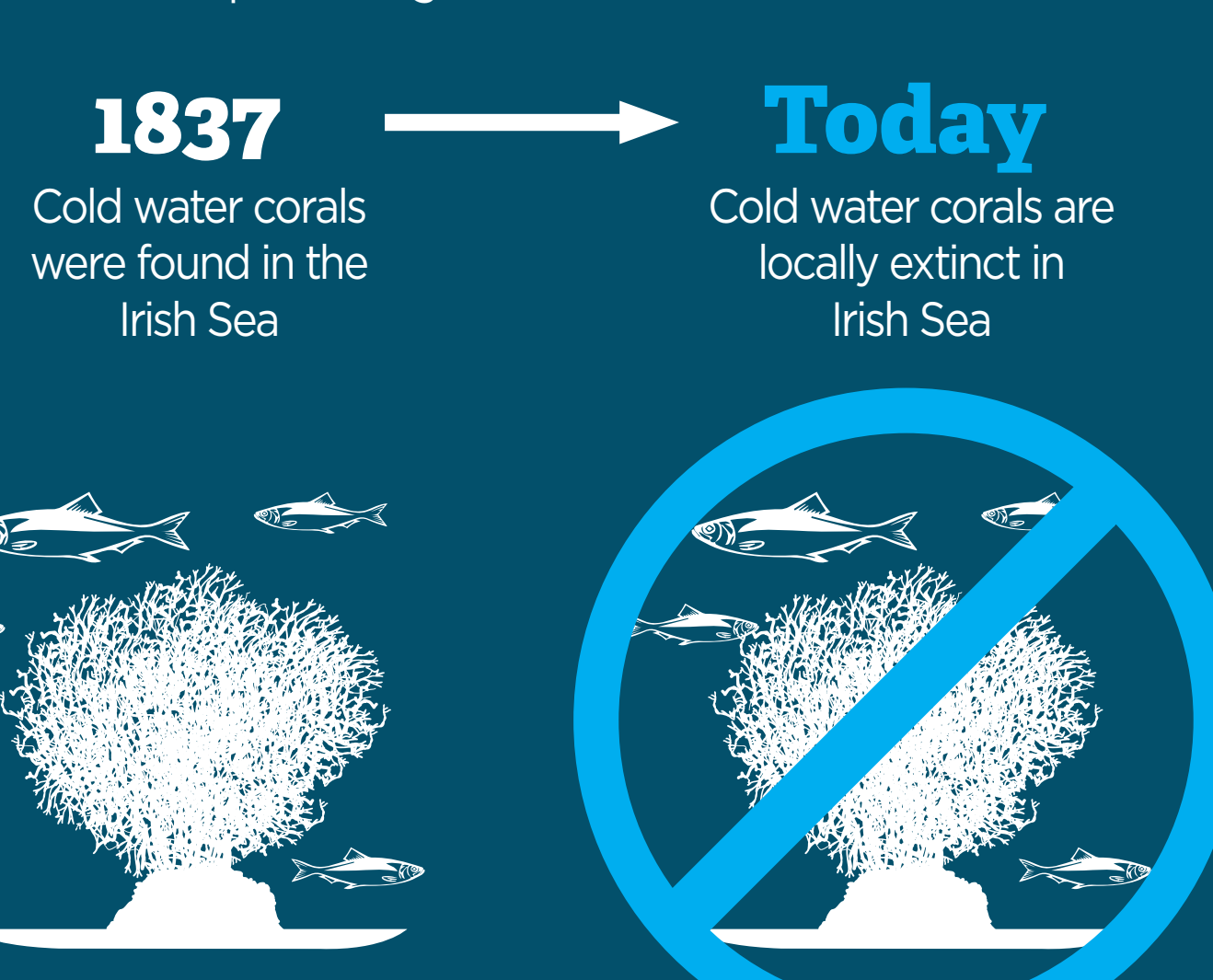


Overfishing threatens jobs



Vanished coral

Slow-growing cold water corals – thought to have been herring spawning grounds – are no longer found after being trawled up in fishing nets



Everyone agrees that protection is needed

And the Irish Sea is the missing link in the UK's network of Marine Protected Areas

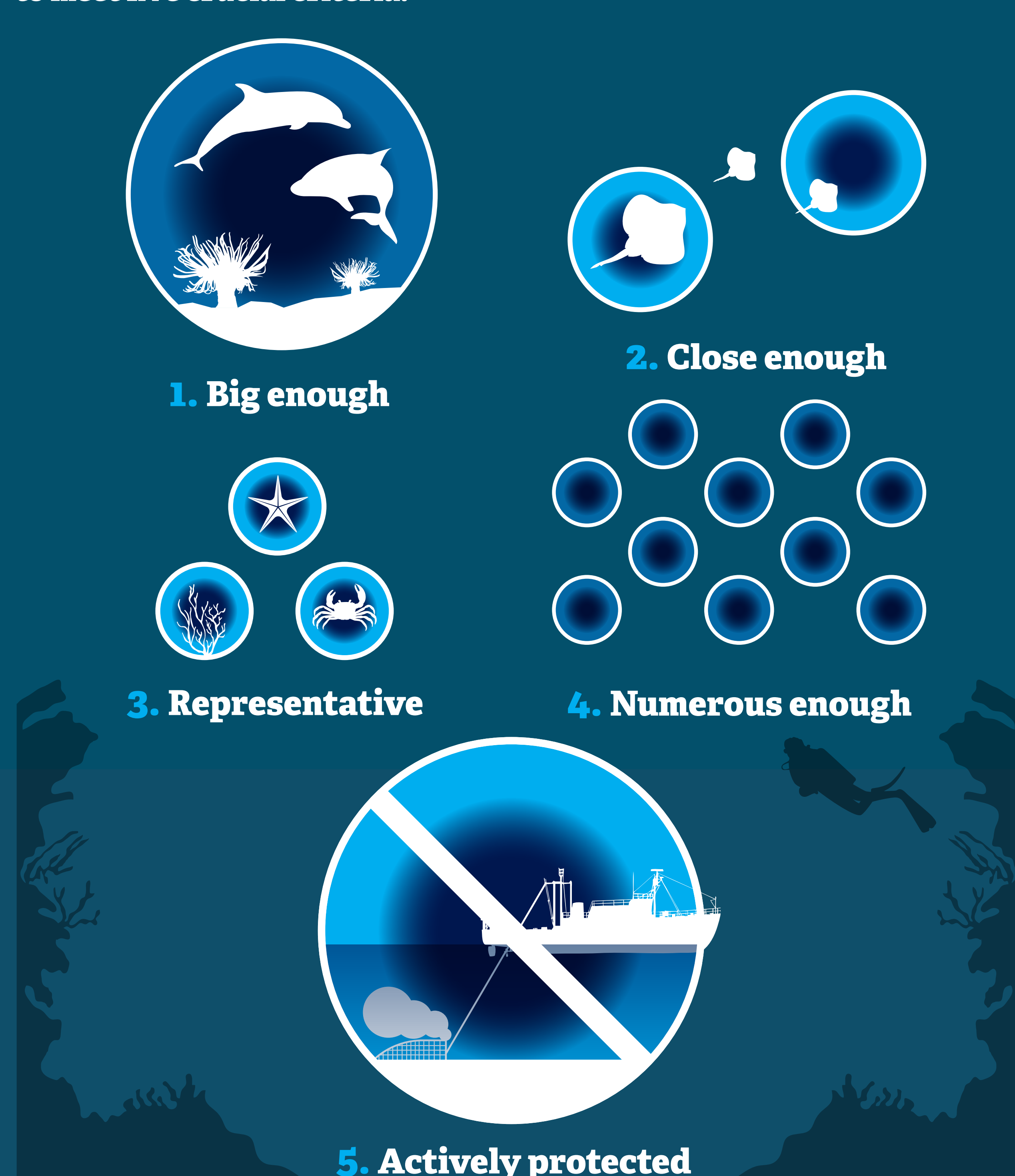
Since 2009 the Government has set up Marine Conservation Zones around England. These will contribute to a network that should allow our marine life to recover after decades of abuse. One of the big gaps is the Irish Sea

Key

Areas so far designated as Marine Conservation Zones

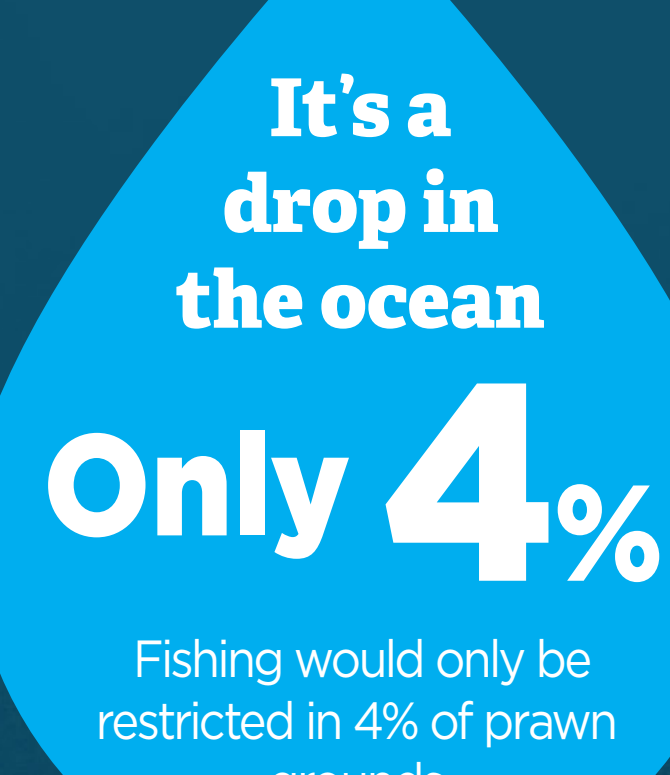
A 10-second guide to Marine Conservation Zones

To be sustainable, the sites in the UK network need to meet five crucial criteria:

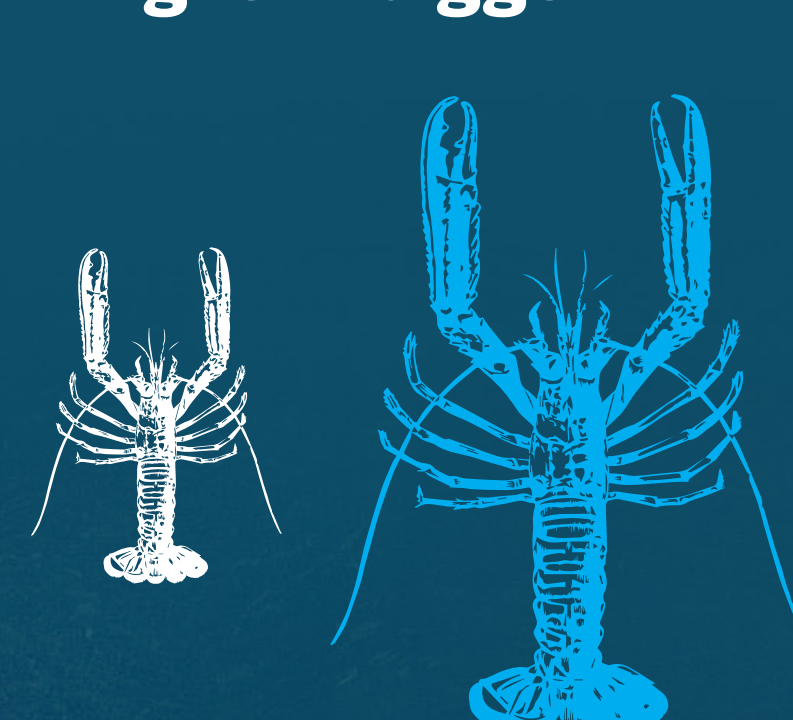


Protection will help the fishery too

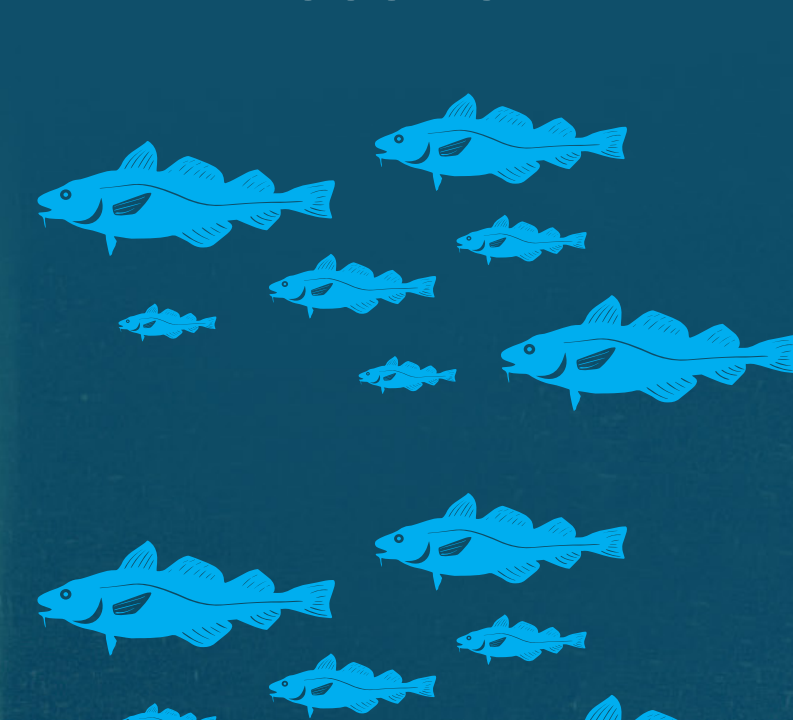
Scientific studies around the world show that protecting sensitive marine areas actually benefits fisheries. In the Irish Sea, protecting areas from bottom trawling could allow prawns to grow bigger, and spill over into the fished areas. The whitefish stocks could recover too.



Prawns would grow bigger



And cod stocks recover



Healthier fish stocks

=
more profit and higher wages

In fact, protection could benefit everyone

Sustainable local economies

Saving species and habitats would, in time, create a wider range of incomes in the area. The focus on nature would attract more visitors, making local port and harbour economies more resilient

More seabirds, whales and dolphins

Charismatic wildlife improves people's wellbeing

More coastal tourism

Wildlife watching, angling, diving and coastal heritage could all expand



It's a good story. No one knows how long quahogs really live!

Healthy habitats

Protected areas would allow marine life to recover

Information

Awareness

Protect it!

Please help us to save our Irish Sea. Find out more at irishsea.org/MCZs

Action