



THE BALEARIC SEA: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY



DECOMPOSING TUNA FLOATING IN THE SEA



by Aniol Esteban

At the end of July, a Balearic fleet trawler accidentally caught 13 dead and decomposing tuna. The specimens were found between the Bay of Palma and Andratx.

The situation is not new. Just a month earlier, this same vessel captured 5 dead and decomposing tuna weighing 200 kilos each.

These bad practices have been a constant in recent years. They have very negative consequences, both for Balearic Islands fishers and for the environmental health of our sea. It is very serious that a fish of the highest commercial and ecological value such as tuna is lost in this way and it impacts the Balearic fleet.

But where do these carcasses come from?

The main hypothesis is that the tuna boats that fish in the Balearic Sea to feed the fattening farms in Murcia and Tarragona throw the tuna that die during the operation (fishing, transfer to cage, transport of cages) back into the sea so that they are not counted in their quota.

This is unacceptable and has multiple impacts.

It negatively affects the Balearic fishing fleet because fishing for decomposing tuna causes them to lose wages and puts their

working gear at risk.

It represents a double waste: the dead tuna that is not used and the catch of the trawler that is unusable and cannot be marketed.

It threatens the sustainability of the resource since several tons of tuna are fished but are not counted because they are thrown

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Decomposing tuna.

into the sea, in addition to the loss of wasted Balearic fishing resources.

These impacts are even more difficult to assume considering that the Balearic fleet has less than 1% of the total tuna quota that the Ministry of Fisheries distributes among the Spanish fishing fleet. Recreational fishers have it much worse; they can't access a single ton of tuna, although it is a species that is fished accidentally and poached.

In addition, the Balearic Sea is a key area for the reproduction of different species of tuna; we have the highest density of bluefin tuna eggs and larvae detected anywhere in the world.

In Marilles, we have publicly requested a thorough investigation to identify the vessels and companies responsible for this activity and the extent of the problem. Right now, we don't know if the dead tuna thrown into the Balearic Sea number a few tens, hundreds, or thousands. The companies that have committed these practices should be penalised with a quota reduction in addition to a financial penalty.

We have been suffering from this intolerable practice for too long. It is time to put an end to this impunity. Tuna is a species of great strategic value for the Balearic fleet and recreational fishing.

The Balearic Islands have a lot of tuna, but very little right to fish it. That other vessels come to squander this resource under our noses and do so causing problems to the Balearic fleet is an unacceptable insult. Every tuna wasted would have been a tuna used by Balearic fishers. We ask the Ministry of Fisheries to take courageous and immediate action to stop this nonsense and redistribute the tuna quota in favour of Balearic vessels. We don't want a tuna cemetery in our waters. Something smells bad in the business of tuna-fattening farms.

Out & About



by Peter Clover

Some years previous, before Mallorca became my dream home in the sunshine, we moved, collectively, out of London and lived in the glorious location of North Devon for almost two decades. Being centred within the cultural compass of the West Country, we were surrounded by local history and a plethora of local traditions. A bit like Mallorca I suppose, yet sadly without the vibrant colour or sparkling enthusiasm!

I remember vividly, a few weeks before that final departure from UK, Other Half and I were lounging in a typical 'tea room', partaking of cake and traditional scones – a favourite afternoon treat, when a small procession passed outside the bay window. I say small procession, yet it was no more than a few Morris dancers leading a sad looking hobby horse along to the beat of tired tambourines and the jingle of once jaunty, jangling bells. I think there might have even been a maypole, but no-one was really paying much attention. The warm scones and clotted cream were a much bigger draw. It was also grey and drizzly outside by contrast to the toasty confines of 'The Brown Sugar Pot'.

Of course, there were many other, numerous county fairs and local cultural craft shows which we attended throughout our British summers, but generally, nothing ever compared with the excitement, scale, or sheer enthusiasm behind the Mallorcan fiestas we experience here!

Even with current summer temperatures on 'ignite', nothing seems to keep the locals away from a party, or any excuse to drink, sing, dance, twirl, meet up with friends, shout, and be jubilant and jolly. The Mallorcans are an exuberant, cheery lot, and won't be put off by any extremes of weather, heatwaves, hurricanes, thunderstorms or monsoons. They would probably even 'rock' through an earthquake!

When we first came to the Island we rallied to every fiesta and celebration going. As you can imagine, it was a tiring task with the average summer season showcasing an impressive array of organised events. These days we tend to be more selective, and only show up at favourite, hand-picked fiestas. Living in the north of the island, Pollensa never fails to delight with its cultural commitment to the 'arts', along with its great thirst for culture across a wide spectrum of celebrated and select exhibitions, concerts and exciting events.

Undoubtedly, the most spectacular event ever, has to be 'La Patrona', recently celebrated in the old mediaeval town of Pollensa, which to everyone in the know, showcases the re-en-

actment of a famous battleground, and the presiding victory of Saintry Christians over Marauding Moors!

The first time we witnessed this lively spectacle, we were swept away through the cobbled streets of Pollensa on a wave of hysteria, where our feet literally didn't touch the ground. It was frighteningly boisterous yet great fun. Not something you might enjoy though if you are a tad 'claustrophobic' or crowd shy!

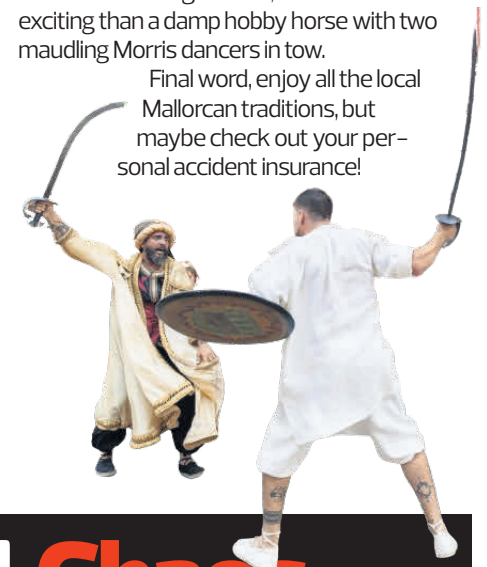
I also remember with great passion, the second time I witnessed this spectacular re-enactment. We were staying at a Hotel in Plaça de Sant Jordi, and delighted to discover our room actually overlooked the charming square below, where the drama of the Moors and Christians would kick-off with the ceremonial firing of muskets and a rustic canon sited just below our window. By leaning out of the casement and balancing gingerly on the stone sill, I had a perfect view, and could film everything, away from the heaving hosts, slashing swords and stomping sandals. This promised to be my perfect observer's bliss.

"I hope those muskets aren't loaded," I joked, suddenly realising I was perched directly above the grinning gun bearers. "Don't be daft," said Other Half. Then the canon fired, the muskets went bang, and all the colourful bunting strung across the window inches above my head, burst into a thousand fragments! I have never moved so fast in my entire life. With the second volley I threw myself backwards into the room like Bruce Willis in the first *Die Hard* movie. I could easily have won silver in the recent Paris Olympics, under artistic gymnastic display!

I watched the rest of the ensuing battle peering nervously through sheltered wooden shutters. We were later assured that the muskets were only packed with harmless paper and cardboard, yet they took out the fiesta bunting with one easy blast. Hello!!! I don't think the organisers have even heard of Health and Safety, but apparently no one has ever died, so that's a big thumbs up in the name of reckless island tradition!

Think exploding fireworks in crowds, naked flames fanning the famed dimonis' fire run, alcohol fueled mock battles, drunken youths climbing slippery pine poles, and children let loose in crowds with pitchforks!!! Thankfully, the island doesn't promote any suicidal bull runs of mainland fame. We have cyclists instead! And it's all great fun, and so much more exciting than a damp hobby horse with two maudling Morris dancers in tow.

Final word, enjoy all the local Mallorcan traditions, but maybe check out your personal accident insurance!



Traditional Chaos