

FISHING AND FISTERRA

Fishing in Fisterra throughout time

The history of fishing in Fisterra followed a similar evolution to that of fishing in small ports in the rest of Galicia. In the 18th century fishermen guilds were created and whale fishing was still in practice until the 20th century.

Fishermen guild and the surrounding nets or Cerco Real: community fishing

During the first half of the 18th century the fishermen of the fishermen guild could fish instead of going to the military service in the navy. This guild had a surrounding net for fishing sardine. In this process participated may net proprietors, known as *quiñoneiros*, because they owned the pieces of net, named *quiñóns*, which were put together to form the Cerco Real or surrounding net.

In order to extend the net they needed a large boat, a trincado, with 20 to 30 fishermen and several auxiliary boat. The Cerco Real could get to be 9 kilometres long.

Conserves were introduced in Galicia through Fisterra

In 1840 a French vessel sank in front of Fisterra loaded with preserved food in tins and glass jars. This caused a lot of expectation in our ports. One year later the first tinned food factory was installed in Galicia.

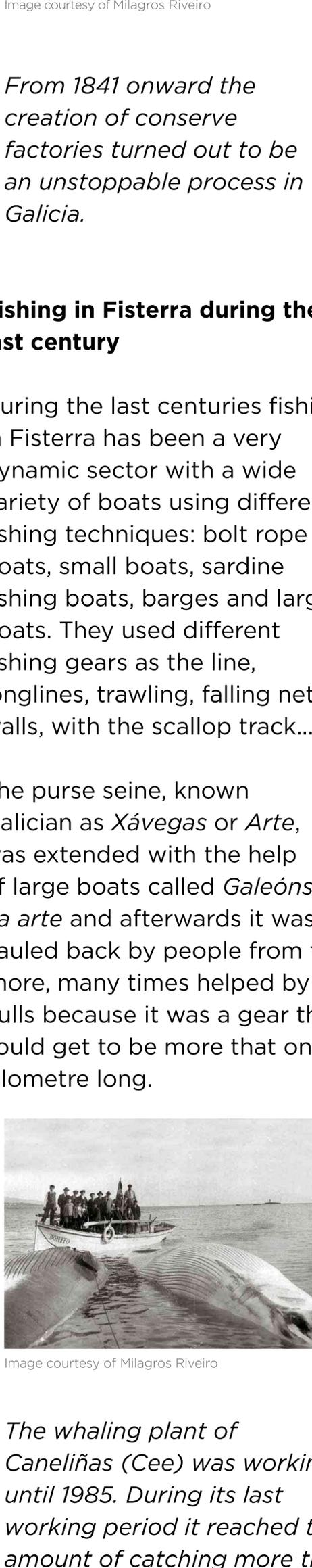


Image courtesy of Milagros Riveiro

From 1841 onward the creation of conserve factories turned out to be an unstoppable process in Galicia.

Fishing in Fisterra during the last century

During the last centuries fishing in Fisterra has been a very dynamic sector with a wide variety of boats using different fishing techniques: bolt rope boats, small boats, sardine fishing boats, barges and larger boats. They used different fishing gears as the line, longlines, trawling, falling net walls, with the scallop track...

The purse seine, known Galician as *Xávegas* or *Arte*, was extended with the help of large boats called *Galeóns da arte* and afterwards it was hauled back by people from the shore, many times helped by bulls because it was a gear that could get to be more that one kilometre long.

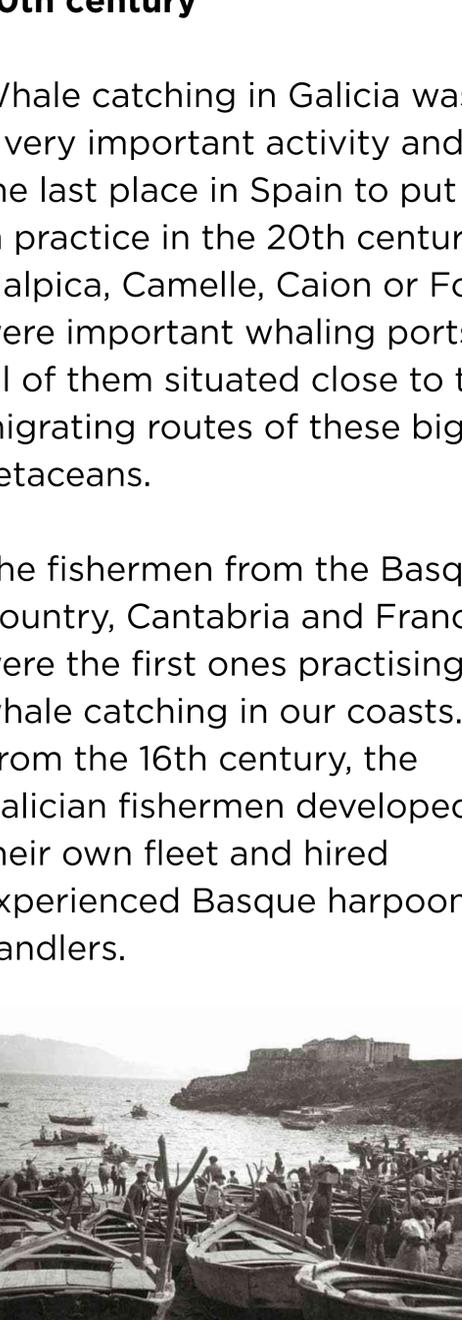


Image courtesy of Milagros Riveiro

The whaling plant of Caneliñas (Cee) was working until 1985. During its last working period it reached the amount of catching more that 300 whales in one year.

THAR SHE BLOWS!

From the vantage point, an elevated spot in the mountains close to the shore, a man used to watch the shore and warn the fishermen when he saw a whale passing by.

Fishermen from several boats armed with harpoons and long ropes rowed close to the whale, drove the harpoons into it and let it go until it died from bleeding. Afterwards it was pulled to the beach where they cut it and boiled the pieces to obtain whale oil.

In the Middle Ages whales were caught to produce mainly whale oil to be used as illuminate in lamps, and baleen, used to make combs or used as sticks for umbrellas, fans and corsets.

The whaling world in Galicia and in the Costa da Morte still existed until the end of the 20th century

Whale catching in Galicia was a very important activity and the last place in Spain to put it in practice in the 20th century. Malpica, Camelle, Caion or Foz were important whaling ports, all of them situated close to the migrating routes of these big cetaceans.

The fishermen from the Basque Country, Cantabria and France were the first ones practising whale catching in our coasts. From the 16th century, the Galician fishermen developed their own fleet and hired experienced Basque harpoon handlers.

Image courtesy of Milagros Riveiro

At the beginning of the 20th century, in Fisterra there were a lot of different types of boats used in different fishing techniques.

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