

MSC Fishery Fact Sheet: Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association North Sea herring



Latin name	<i>Clupea harengus</i>
Deutsch	Hering
English	Atlantic herring
Español	Arenque
Français	Hareng de l'Atlantique
Nederlands	Haring

Basic information

Location	North Sea and Eastern English Channel, within the EEZs of the EU and Norway
Fishing gear	Pelagic trawl
Season	Year round
Quota / TAC	ca. 70.000 MT - ca. 35% of TAC (2011)
Products	whole, headed & gutted, fillets, portions, canned, chilled, coated, diced, frozen, frozen block, marinated, pickled, ready meals
Date certified	May 2006, re-certified May 2011

Background information

Herring is a pelagic species which is distributed widely throughout the North Sea. It produces eggs which are attached to gravelly areas on the seabed, suggesting an evolutionary origin of spawning in rivers. Due to specific substrate requirements, spawning occurs in small, discrete areas. Herring are plankton feeders, and an important food source for various demersal fish.

Herring fishing in the North Sea has been conducted for centuries by a variety of fleets. Following a stock collapse in the 1970s, the fishery is now controlled by quotas. The certified fishery comprises pelagic trawlers from the Netherlands, the UK, France and Germany. Trips last approximately three weeks, and all catch is frozen and boxed on-board.

MSC webpage <http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/certified/north-east-atlantic/pfa-north-sea-herring>



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Sustainability notes

Stock levels

The Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association is harvesting North Sea herring sustainably. The distribution and range of the herring is well known and the 2010 herring stock assessment indicated the spawning stock biomass, the total quantity of all sexually mature fish in the population, was above the precautionary level and well above the predicted value. The fishery's new harvest strategy has been endorsed by the EU and Norway who together agree annually the fishing possibilities for the stock.

Environmental impact

Observers on-board monitor the effects of the fishery on Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species and show that interactions with benthic species are negligible; there is little or no capture of ETP fish, mammal or bird species by the fishery. Fishing for the North Sea herring by this fishery takes place within the upper and mid-water column, with no interaction with the seabed. The seasonal distribution of fishing operations is mapped, and environmental factors and habitat interactions are regularly monitored.

Management plan

Management of this fishery is conducted under the EC-Norway Fisheries Agreement, the EC Common Fisheries Policy and national legislation. It involves scientists, stakeholders and fisheries managers in a process that explicitly defines and explains the respective roles of all parties in all areas of responsibility. Scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) forms the core of the management system, and local knowledge is sought through the involvement of Regional Advisory Councils and the Advisory Committee on Fisheries Affairs in the management process.

Fishery improvements

The fishery needs to demonstrate clear, significant progress towards ensuring that in future the harvest control tools determine an exploitation rate that is consistent with harvest control rules set out in the management plan for the North Sea herring.

Useful websites

Suppliers: www.msc.org/where-to-buy/find-a-supplier

Fishbase: www.fishbase.org/Summary/SpeciesSummary.php?id=24

Certificate holder

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