

## MSC Fishery Fact Sheet: Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group Ltd mackerel



<b>Latin name</b>	<i>Scomber scombrus</i>
<b>Deutsch</b>	Makrele
<b>English</b>	Atlantic mackerel
<b>Español</b>	Caballa
<b>Français</b>	Maquereau commun
<b>Nederlands</b>	Makreel

### Basic information

<b>Location</b>	North Sea (within EEZs of the EU and Norway) and West and South coast of the UK.
<b>Fishing gear</b>	Pelagic (mid-water) trawl
<b>Season</b>	October to January
<b>Quota / TAC</b>	140,000MT (2009 quota)
<b>Products</b>	Whole, headed & gutted, fillets, portions, canned, chilled, dry goods, frozen, frozen-block, marinated, pickled, ready meals, smoked, tubes
<b>Date certified</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2009

### Background information

Mackerel is distributed in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean, and found in concentrations over the continental shelf. It is a pelagic fish, spending most of its time in large shoals, often moving at great speed, and an important predator. The north-east Atlantic stock comprises three different components, the western, the southern and the North Sea component, however these may be found together at times, particularly during summer and autumn in the North Sea.

The certified fleet currently comprises 24 large, modern and technologically advanced pelagic vessels, which use mid-water trawl nets. They catch predominantly mackerel from the western component of the stock. The Scottish fleet holds around 75% of the UK quota for mackerel.

**MSC webpage** [www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/certified/north-east-atlantic/scottish-pelagic-sustainability-group-ltd-spsg](http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/certified/north-east-atlantic/scottish-pelagic-sustainability-group-ltd-spsg)



Pelagic trawler Christina S © David Linkie



## Sustainability notes

- Stock levels** The western component of the mackerel stock, targeted by Scottish pelagic vessels, appears resilient. After a period of lower levels, the spawning stock biomass has now increased to above the precautionary reference point. Fishing mortality has also reduced in recent years. In contrast, the North Sea component has remained severely depleted since a stock collapse in the 1970s, and there are special management arrangements in place to protect it.
- Environmental Impact** The mid water pelagic fishery has very limited bycatch (around 1%), mainly comprising herring or horse mackerel. Sophisticated equipment allows crews to distinguish and avoid mixed shoals, which has led to a reduction in non-target species. No discarding occurs, as the boats pump fish onboard directly into seawater tanks, with no prior sorting. No cetacean or seal bycatch has been observed.
- Management plan** The fishery is managed according to the EU Common Fisheries Policy, in accordance with a Coastal State agreement between the EU, Norway and the Faroe Islands that details rules for setting and sharing quotas. Management objectives involve a precautionary approach to achieving sustainable fisheries at a high yield. Closed areas are used to protect juvenile mackerel (the South-West mackerel box).
- Further notes** There is good understanding of mackerel's role in the wider marine ecosystem, both as a predator and a prey, through the ICES multispecies model for the North Sea. Whilst bycatch is low, the main species are subject to separate assessment, and all bycatch landings deducted from the appropriate quota.
- Fishery Improvements** A substantial revision of the monitoring and enforcement process has been undertaken to ensure compliance. Monitoring now uses satellite Vessel Monitoring Systems, patrol vessels and aerial surveillance. There are regular inspections at sea and almost 100% monitoring of landings. Where necessary, strong punitive action has been taken in cases of under-reporting and illegal landings. The cooperation of fisheries with these measures has resulted in a considerable improvement in the reliability of landings data.

## Useful websites

- Suppliers:** [www.msc.org/where-to-buy/find-a-supplier](http://www.msc.org/where-to-buy/find-a-supplier)  
**Fishbase:** [www.fishbase.org/Summary/speciesSummary.php?id=118](http://www.fishbase.org/Summary/speciesSummary.php?id=118)

## Certificate holder

- Company Address** Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group Ltd  
1 Firthside Street  
Fraserburgh  
Aberdeenshire  
AB43 9AR
- Contact** Derek Duthie  
**Phone** +44 (0) 1346 510714  
**Email** [spfa@btconnect.com](mailto:spfa@btconnect.com)  
**Website** [www.scottishpelagicsg.org](http://www.scottishpelagicsg.org)



Peterhead harbour © Seafood Scotland

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