

FISHERY FACTSHEET: ATLANTIC HERRING



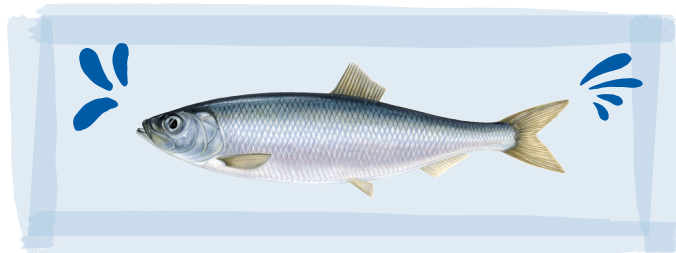
Learning resources



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FISHERY FACTSHEET

ATLANTIC HERRING



The Boulogne-sur-Mer herring fishery is managed by FROM Nord, a French producers' association which established in 1965. Herring is one of the most important species by volume for the region with over 5,000 tonnes landed in 2016. The herring fishery received MSC certification in 2015 and is one of 15 certified herring fisheries around the world.

Atlantic herring

Size: 20-25cm long (though have been known to grow up to 40cm!)

Diet: Tiny planktonic shellfish called copepods as well as shrimps, small fishes and marine worms

Eaten by: Lots of top predators, including fish like cod, sea birds, dolphins, seals, whales, and us, of course!

Habitat: Throughout the continental shelf waters of the North Atlantic, from the Gulf of Maine to the Gulf of St Lawrence off the east coast of North America, around Iceland, and from the Barents Sea to the English Channel and Celtic Sea in the Northeast Atlantic

Where do herring live?



J F M A M J J A S O N D

The fishery

The Boulogne-sur-Mer fishery is concentrated in the **North Sea and English Channel**. The fishery operates **five mid-water trawls**, which catch herring about 10-20 m below the surface. The fishing season **starts in October** in the southern North Sea, and follows the herring through the winter months as they migrate down through the eastern Channel, **ending in February or March** when the quota has been met.

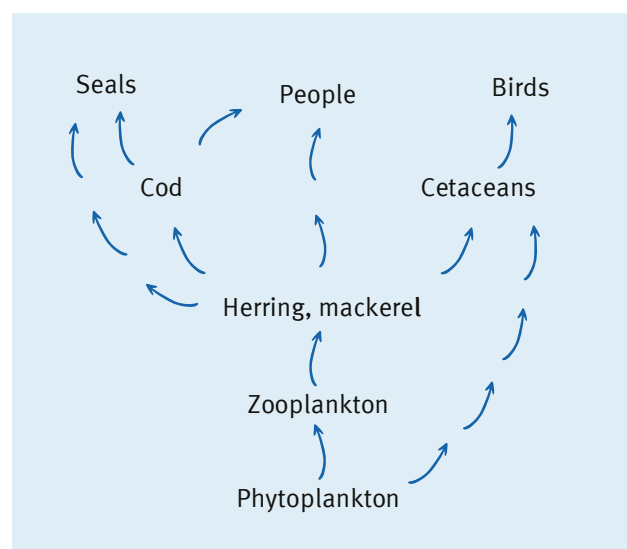
Family & lifecycle

Herring belong to the same family of fish as sprat and pilchard and young herrings processed as sardine in Norway are called sild.

Small, silvery and streamlined, herring move around in huge schools near to the surface of the water.

Each year, schools of herring migrate between between spawning and wintering grounds in coastal areas and feeding grounds in open water.

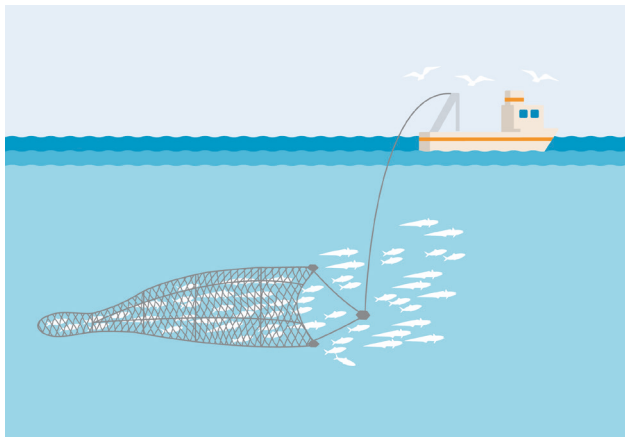
Herring food web





Environmental impact

Mid-water trawls are a relatively **selective type of fishing gear**, only catching the species that are being targeted. Mid-water trawls are also non-damaging to the seabed.



A mid-water trawl

Fishing is made **even more selective through the use of acoustic technology** which locates the position and depth of a school of herring and adjusts the path of the boat(s) and trawls accordingly.

The fishing nets are rigged in a way that means any **excess fish that are caught can escape** via large mesh panels.

Due to the type of gear used and the locations where fishing takes place, **interactions with threatened fish species, seabirds and marine mammals are rare.**

The fishery also allows **observers on-board** to monitor whether they are fishing sustainably.

The fishery passed all MSC assessment criteria during its **first assessment**, clearly demonstrating its sustainability.

Markets

At the beginning of the fishing season, part of the **herring catch is sold fresh** at the herring fairs (“foires au hareng”) that take place at ports throughout the Normandy region. **Later in winter**, the majority of the catch is **sold fresh to canneries in Boulogne-sur-Mer and Fécamp** who export canned herring across European markets.

Herring has long been a **popular fish** to eat across **Scandinavia** and **Northern Europe** where it is commonly eaten in pickled form and is considered a celebration food when cured.

Herring is also enjoying a resurgence in the UK, where it is traditionally eaten as smoked kippers, **thanks to the certification** of a number of **fisheries on the South Coast.**

The MSC Fisheries Standard

The MSC Fisheries Standard is designed to assess if a fishery is well-managed and sustainable. To meet this standard, fisheries must demonstrate that they meet three principles:

1. Sustainable fish stocks

The fishing activity must be at a level which ensures that it can continue indefinitely.

2. Minimising environmental impact

Fishing operations should allow for the maintenance and diversity of the ecosystem.

3. Effective management

The fishery must comply with relevant national and international laws and have a management system that is responsive to changing circumstances.

