

Summary ICES advice 29 May

Central Baltic Herring

The outlook for central Baltic herring has improved significantly. ICES advises catches of 274,322 tonnes for 2027, a 74% increase compared with the previous year's advice. The increase reflects a larger stock size and improved stock status, allowing for higher catches although the stock is currently below MSY Btrigger in 2027.

Gulf of Riga Herring

The Gulf of Riga herring stock remains in good condition, with fishing pressure below FMSY and spawning biomass above all key reference points. ICES advises catches of 33,494 tonnes for 2027, an 8% increase compared with the previous year's advice. The increase is driven by a larger stock size and lower fishing mortality in recent years. However, ICES notes that recruitment estimates for 2025 and 2026 remain uncertain, and this uncertainty is reflected in projections of future stock size and catches.

Gulf of Bothnia Herring

The outlook for Gulf of Bothnia herring has improved, driven by stronger 2023 and 2024 year classes. Fishing pressure is now below FMSY. However, the stock remains below MSY Btrigger, while concerns remain over the low proportion of older fish and uncertainty in estimates of young age classes, which affects projections of future stock development.

Sprat

The status of the Baltic sprat stock has improved significantly in the last couple of years. Fishing pressure is currently at sustainable levels and spawning biomass above all key reference points. ICES advises catches of 324,277 tonnes for 2027, a 44% increase compared with the previous year's advice. The increase is driven by strong 2024 and 2025 year classes.

Stock	ICES Advice 2026 (MAP)	ICES Advice 2027 (MAP)	Change
Central Baltic herring	157,996 t	274,322 t	+74%
Gulf of Riga herring	30,913 t	33,494 t	+8%
Gulf of Bothnia herring	62,778 t	90,391 t	+44%
Sprat	224,616 t	324,277 t	+44%