



## **EU catch limits in the North East Atlantic, North Sea, Deep Sea and Baltic Sea not set in line with scientific advice.**

**June 2020**

The table below outlines the Total Allowable Catch limits (TACs) for 2020 that currently appear in excess of scientific advice, agreed at AGRIFISH Councils in 2019 and 2018 (Deep-Sea stocks).

### Trends:

- While fishing pressure is going down overall in terms of tonnage, and more catch limits are slowly being brought in line with  $F_{MSY}$ , the CFP is still not fully implemented. The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for fisheries (STECF) reports 38 percent of stocks with  $F_{MSY}$  estimates remain overfished (2018).<sup>1</sup>
- A Pew analysis of TACs set for 2020, which covers a greater number of stocks than the STECF report (i.e. including those stocks without MSY estimates), shows that 62 (48 percent) of all 129 TACs (Baltic Sea, Deep-Sea and North East Atlantic) were set above scientific advice.
- Of the 62 TACs set above advice, 43 (69 percent) had advice based on the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) Precautionary Approach for data-limited stocks.
- The CFP requires a Precautionary Approach to fisheries management, as defined in the United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement (UNFSA), yet 43 of the 66 TACs (65 percent) with ICES advice based on the Precautionary Approach for data-limited stocks were set above scientific advice, undermining the achievement of CFP objectives.

### Policy requirements:

- Applying the Precautionary Approach to fisheries management is particularly important in the absence of scientific certainty and/or MSY advice.
- ICES' data-limited Precautionary Approach provides a framework and set of advice rules to limit catches and manage the risk of overfishing in a prudent way based on the levels of uncertainty in the available data.
- The ICES Precautionary Approach framework for advice is based on the best available peer-reviewed science (e.g. ICES WKLIFE<sup>2</sup>) in line with UNFSA.
- ICES increasingly provides MSY indicators (proxies) for data-limited stocks, yet this Precautionary Approach advice is less likely to be applied by decision-makers than MSY advice.
- The absence of MSY advice is not an indicator of the ecosystem importance of any given stock and does not exempt the Commission or the Council from their responsibility to sustainably manage these stocks.

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<sup>1</sup> [Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries \(STECF\) – Monitoring the performance of the Common Fisheries Policy \(STECF-Adhoc-20-01\)](#), Gamito Jardim, J., Pinto, C., Mannini, A., Vasilakopoulos, P. and Konrad, C. editor(s), EUR 28359 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, ISBN 978-92-76-18115-6 (online), doi:10.2760/230469 (online), JRC120481.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/WKLIFEX.aspx>

<b>BALTIC SEA</b>		<b>Common name</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Catch Area</b>	<b>ICES Advice Basis<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Recommendation / Action</b>
<b>1</b>		Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Eastern Baltic [SDs 25-32]	<b>PA</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures. (see joint NGO recommendations) Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose a recovery (/rebuilding) plan.
<b>2</b>		Salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>	Gulf of Finland [SD 32]	<b>PA</b>	Set TAC not exceeding ICES advice on reported commercial landings. (see joint NGO recommendations) Enhance data collection.
<b>3</b>		Sprat	<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>	Baltic [SDs 22-32]	<b>MP</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches.
<b>4</b>		Salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>	Baltic [SDs 22-31]	<b>PA</b>	Consider a more precautionary TAC but in any case not exceeding ICES advice on reported projected landings. (see joint NGO recommendations) Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection.
<b>5</b>		Herring	<i>Clupea harengus</i>	Western Baltic	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Secure further remedial measures to ensure rapid return of the stock to level above BMSY as required by Baltic MAP. (see joint NGO recommendations). Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose a recovery (/rebuilding) plan.

<sup>3</sup> Based on Fishfix TAC table – <https://fishfix.eu/projects.html>. Fishfix collates data from ICES advice for fish stocks (<https://www.ices.dk/community/advisory-process/Pages/Latest-Advice.aspx>) and compares this to TACs set by the European Union ([https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing\\_rules/tacs\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs_en)).

DEEP SEA		Common name	Species	Catch Area	ICES Advice Basis <sup>4</sup>	Recommendation / Action
6		Black scabbardfish	<i>Aphanopus carbo</i>	Cantabrian Sea & Atlantic Iberian waters [8-10]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
7		Alfonsinos	<i>Beryx</i> spp	Northeast Atlantic [1-7, 9, 10, 12 & 14]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice Enhance data collection.
8		Roundnose grenadier	<i>Coryphaenoides rupestris</i>	Skagerrak & Kattegat [3]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice Enhance data collection.
9		Roundnose grenadier	<i>Coryphaenoides rupestris</i>	Cantabrian Sea & Atlantic Iberian waters [8-10 & 12]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice Enhance data collection. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures.
10		Red seabream	<i>Pagellus bogaraveo</i>	Celtic Seas, English Channel, and Bay of Biscay [6-8]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
11		Red seabream	<i>Pagellus bogaraveo</i>	Azores Grounds [10]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.

<sup>4</sup> Based on Fishfix TAC table – <https://fishfix.eu/projects.html>. Fishfix collates data from ICES advice for fish stocks (<https://www.ices.dk/community/advisory-process/Pages/Latest-Advice.aspx>) and compares this to TACs set by the European Union ([https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing\\_rules/tacs\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs_en)).

NORTH EAST ATLANTIC		Common name	Species	Catch Area	ICES Advice Basis <sup>5</sup>	Recommendation / Action
12		Herring	<i>Clupea harengus</i>	West of Scotland (North) [5b, 6b & 6a(N)]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose a recovery (/rebuilding) plan.
13		Herring	<i>Clupea harengus</i>	West of Scotland (South) & West of Ireland [6a(S) & 7bc]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose a recovery (/rebuilding) plan.
14		Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Kattegat (exclusively for by-catch) [SD21]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures.
15		Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Rockall [5b(W), 6b, 12 & 14]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
16		Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Irish Sea [7a]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose further remedial measures to ensure rapid return of the stock to levels above MSY Btrigger. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures.

<sup>5</sup> Based on Fishfix TAC table – <https://fishfix.eu/projects.html>. Fishfix collates data from ICES advice for fish stocks (<https://www.ices.dk/community/advisory-process/Pages/Latest-Advice.aspx>) and compares this to TACs set by the European Union ([https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing\\_rules/tacs\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs_en)).

17		Anglerfish	<i>Lophius budegassa</i>	Greater North Sea [2a & 4]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
18		Whiting	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>	Skagerrak & Kattegat [3a]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures.
19		Blue ling	<i>Molva dypterygia</i>	Greater North Sea [2 & 4]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
20		Blue ling	<i>Molva dypterygia</i>	Skagerrak & Kattegat [3a]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
21		Plaice	<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	West of Ireland [7bc]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection.
22		Plaice	<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	Bay of Biscay & Atlantic Iberian waters [8, 9-10 & EU waters of CECAF 34.1.1]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.

23		Pollack	<i>Pollachius pollachius</i>	Northern Bay of Biscay [8abde]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
24		Pollack	<i>Pollachius pollachius</i>	Southern Bay of Biscay [8c]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
25		Pollack	<i>Pollachius pollachius</i>	Atlantic Iberian waters [9-10 & EU waters of CECAF 34.1.1]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
26		Pollack	<i>Pollachius pollachius</i>	Celtic Seas west of Scotland [5b, 6, 12 & 14]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
27		Pollack	<i>Pollachius pollachius</i>	Celtic Seas & English Channel [7]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
28		Sole	<i>Solea solea</i>	Cantabrian Sea & Atlantic Iberian waters [8cde, 9-10 & EU waters of CECAF 34.1.1]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
29		Common sole	<i>Solea solea</i>	West of Ireland [7bc]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.

30		Northern prawn	<i>Pandalus borealis</i>	Greater North Sea [2a & 4]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
31		Norway lobster	<i>Nephrops norvegicus</i>	Southern Bay of Biscay [8c]	PA	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Functional unit management. Enhance data collection.
32		Greater silver smelt	<i>Argentina silus</i>	North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat [2a, 3a & 4]	PA MSYproxy	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
33		Greater silver smelt	<i>Argentina silus</i>	Celtic Seas, West of Scotland [5-7]	PA MSYproxy	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
34		Tusk	<i>Brosme brosme</i>	Skagerrak & Kattegat & Baltic [3a & SDs 22-32]	PA MSYproxy	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
35		Tusk	<i>Brosme brosme</i>	North Sea [4]	PA MSYproxy	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
36		Whiting	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>	Bay of Biscay & Atlantic Iberian waters [8 & 9a]	PA MSYproxy	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
37		Ling	<i>Molva molva</i>	Skagerrak & Kattegat [3a-d]	PA MSYproxy	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.

38		Ling	<i>Molva molva</i>	North Sea [4]	<b>PA MSYproxy</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
39		Ling	<i>Molva molva</i>	Northeast Atlantic [7-10, 12 & 14]	<b>PA MSYproxy</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
40		Common sole	<i>Solea solea</i>	Celtic Sea & Southwest of Ireland [7hjk]	<b>PA MSYproxy</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.
41		Spurdog/ dogfish	<i>Squalus acanthias</i>	Northeast Atlantic [1, 5-8, 12 & 14]	<b>PA MSYproxy</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Propose management plan including bycatch reduction and monitoring measures.
42		Plaice	<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	Celtic Sea & Southwest of Ireland [7hjk]	<b>PA MSY proxy</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures.
43		Tusk	<i>Brosme brosme</i>	Celtic Seas west of Scotland [5-7]	<b>PA MSYproxy &amp; PA</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance data collection.

44		Turbot	<i>Psetta maxima</i>	Greater North Sea [2a & 4]	<b>MP &amp; PA MSY Proxy</b>	Should be managed using separate TACs for each stock/species.  Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice.
		Brill	<i>Scophthalmus rhombus</i>	Greater North Sea [2a & 4]		
45		Hake	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Cantabrian Sea & Atlantic Iberian waters [8c, 9-10 & EU waters of CECAF 34.1.1]	<b>MP</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice.
46		Megrim	<i>Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis</i>	Celtic Seas (ICES area 7)	<b>MP</b>	Should be managed using separate TACs for each stock/species.  Enhance data collection. Requires ICES advice. <sup>6</sup>
			<i>Lepidorhombus boscii</i>		<b>[None]</b>	
47		Herring	<i>Clupea harengus</i>	Skagerrak & Kattegat (by-catches) [3a & SDs 22-32]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice.

<sup>6</sup> Currently data does not support the provision of ICES advice.

48		Herring	<i>Clupea harengus</i>	Skagerrak & Kattegat [3a & SDs 22-32]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice.
49		Herring	<i>Clupea harengus</i>	Celtic Sea & Southwest of Ireland [7ghjk]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Propose a recovery (/rebuilding) plan.
50		Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Skagerrak [3a]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures.
51		Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Greater North Sea [2a, 3a & 4]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures.
52		Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Eastern English Channel [7d]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures.
53		Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	West of Scotland [6a]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures. Propose a recovery (/rebuilding) plan.

54		Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Southern Celtic Sea & Western English Channel [7bc, 7e-k, 8-10 & EU waters of CECAF 34.1.1]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures. Propose a recovery (/rebuilding) plan.
55		Whiting	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>	Irish Sea [7a]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures. Propose a recovery (/rebuilding) plan.
56		Hake	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Skagerrak & Kattegat & Baltic [3a & SDs 22-32]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice.
57		Hake	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Greater North Sea [2a & 4]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice.
58		Hake	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Celtic Sea [5-7, 12 & 14]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice.
59		Hake	<i>Merluccius merluccius</i>	Northern Bay of Biscay [8abde]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice.

60		Sprat and associated by-catches	<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>	Skagerrak & Kattegat [3a]	<b>MSY</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Requires updated TAC-setting procedures <sup>7</sup> .
61		Lemon sole  Witch	<i>Microstomus kitt</i>  <i>Glyptocephalus cynoglossus</i>	Greater North Sea [2a & 4]  Greater North Sea [2a & 4]	<b>MP &amp; PA MSY Proxy</b>	Should be managed using separate TACs for each stock/species.  Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice.
62		Whiting	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>	West of Scotland [5b, 6, 12 & 14]	<b>MSY &amp; PA</b>	Set TACs ensuring total catch does not exceed scientific advice. Enhance at-sea monitoring of catches. Enhance data collection. Propose bycatch reduction and monitoring measures. Propose a recovery (/rebuilding) plan.

<sup>7</sup> For consideration regarding the splitting of advice between areas, please see ICES (2018a). Report of the Benchmark Workshop on Sprat (WKSPRAT 2018), 5–9 November 2018, ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark. ICES CM 2018/ACOM:35. 60 pp.