



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Baltic Sea: Commission confirms sustainability of herring stocks and proposes increased fishing opportunities for 2015

For the first time under the reformed Common Fisheries Policy, the European Commission today tabled its proposal on fishing opportunities for the main commercial fish stocks in the Baltic Sea for 2015. Since some of the fish stocks are now fished at sustainable levels, the total allowable catch (TAC) will increase by 12% when compared to 2014 and will be set at approximately 629 000 tonnes.

An average increase by 31% is proposed for four herring stocks, while decreases are proposed for the western cod stock (-48%), sprat (-17%) and two salmon stocks (-15%). If the Council, in its October meeting, adopts the catch limits as proposed by the Commission, the number of stocks fished at sustainable level (MSY - Maximum Sustainable Yield) could double in the Baltic in 2015 from three to six stocks, according to scientists.

Herring

After a reduction of western herring catch limits in the past year, the Commission is able to propose a TAC increase of 12% for this stock. Western herring is expected to be at MSY level and will join the group of three other herring stocks which were at MSY already last year.

Since Baltic Member States last year adopted lower TACs than the levels proposed by the Commission, the Commission is able to propose for 2015 an increase of fishing opportunities for the two largest stocks of the Baltic Sea, i.e. herring in Central Baltic and herring in the Gulf of Bothnia for the second consecutive year. Their TACs will represent an increase of 51% and 35% respectively, while being within MSY level. For herring in the Gulf of Riga, the TAC will be increased by 26% and amount to 38 780 tonnes.

On the basis of this proposal, the value of fishing opportunities for herring stocks in 2015 could increase by almost €80 million to a total value of €164 million.

Cod

The Commission proposes to decrease the total allowable catch (TAC) for *western* Baltic cod by 48%, to 8 793 tonnes. This reduction reflects the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea's (ICES) decision to change the underlying data for establishing the TAC. It also corresponds to a TAC at MSY level and would follow the provisions of the Baltic cod management plan.

Due to changes in the *eastern* cod stock biology, ICES was unable to provide full assessment of the stock, hence its advice is based on methods applied to limited data of

stocks. As a consequence, the Commission is not in a position to propose figures for 2015 yet. This is still expected in September.

Salmon

After catch limits had to be reduced in the past years for two salmon stocks in the main basin and in the Gulf of Finland, the Commission is proposing further reductions by 8% and 23% respectively for next year in order to preserve the stocks. The reduction in fishing mortality will lead towards reaching 75% of the potential smolt production capacity in rivers which is considered to be MSY level for salmon stocks. The TACs for both salmon stocks are fully in line with scientific advice and are based on the harvest control rule proposed in the Baltic salmon management plan.

Sprat

The Commission proposes to decrease the TAC for sprat by 17%, to 199 622 tonnes in line with scientific advice to reach MSY.

Plaice

Scientists have developed a methodology that allows estimating the size of the plaice stock for which limited data is available. Based on this methodology, which has been applied for several years, the proposed TAC for plaice constitute a decrease by 5% to 3 249 tonnes.

Background

The present proposal shall be discussed by ministers at the Fisheries Council on 13-14 October. It is based on scientific advice from the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries (STECF) and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES). The Baltic Sea Advisory Council (BSAC) has been also consulted on this proposal, on the basis of the advice received from ICES.

More information:

- TACs and quotas (with link to the proposal):
http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/tacs/index_en.htm
- Scientific advice:
http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/fishing_rules/scientific_advice/index_en.htm
- [Memo/14/516](#)

Table: Overview of TAC changes 2014-2015 (figures in tonnes except for salmon which is in number of pieces)

Stock	ICES fishing zone;	Adopted TAC for 2014	Basis for 2014 TAC	for TAC proposal for 2015	Basis for TAC proposal 2015
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	subdivision				
Eastern Cod	25-32	65 934	Management plan (Article 6(1)) / MSY	-	-
Western Cod	22-24	17 037	Management plan (Article 6(2))	8 793 (-48%)	Management plan (Article 7) / MSY
Western Herring	22-24	19 754	MSY transition	22 220 (+12%)	MSY
Bothnian Herring	30-31	137 800	MSY	186 534 (+35%)	MSY
Riga Herring	28.1	30 720	MSY	38 780 (+26%)	MSY
Central Herring	25-29, 32	112 725	MSY	170 185 (+51%)	MSY
Plaice	22-32	3 409	Data limited approach	3 249 (-5%)	Data limited approach
Main Basin Salmon	22-31	106 587	Management plan	97 911 (-8%)	Management plan
Gulf of Finland Salmon	32	13 106	Precautionary considerations	10 034 (-23%)	Precautionary considerations
Sprat	22-32	239 979	Precautionary approach	199 622 (-17%)	MSY

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