



ICES

International Council for
the Exploration of the Sea

CIEM

Conseil International pour
l'Exploration de la Mer

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A NEW CHANCE FOR NORTH SEA COD?

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) will release a report on the status and perspectives of North East Atlantic fish stocks in the Celtic Seas, the North Sea, the Bay of Biscay and Iberian Seas, Deepwater and Widely Distributed stocks.

The ICES advice will be available at 12:00 on Friday 19 October at:
<http://www.ices.dk/committe/acfm/comwork/report/asp/advice.asp>

The 21 international scientists of the Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM) have analysed the status of these commercial fish stocks at their October advisory meeting in Copenhagen. The general status for many groundfish is that stock size is low and fishing pressure is still high although there are positive signals of decreases in fishing pressure. The large pelagic stocks are generally more abundant in the Northeast Atlantic.

While the information on the major stocks is sufficient to capture the big picture clearly the reliability of data from some fisheries is doubtful and therefore restricts ICES' possibilities to provide accurate assessments of stock sizes. On the other hand, there are now several science-industry partnerships developing and this could improve the situation in the near future.

Positive message for cod in the North Sea

The North Sea cod stock declined severely during the late 1990s and early 2000s. The fishing pressure on this stock has been too high for many years and the number of young fish has been very low. Martin Pastoors, ACFM Chair, said today: *"Our scientific surveys show that the number of young fish has increased, although only to half of the long term average. These young fish could contribute substantially to the recovery of the North Sea cod stock. We also observe a decrease in mortality which is a welcome signal in response to the management efforts from the past year. But it is not enough. We recommend constraining catches in 2008 to less than 50% of the 2006 catches. And this should include measures to constrain discards and illegal catches. This should give these young fish the opportunity to grow and to reproduce and thereby to contribute to the recovery of this important fish stock."*

Norwegian spring spawning herring: the biggest stock in ICES area

The Norwegian spring spawning herring stock in the Northeastern Atlantic remains at a high level. ICES estimates that the spawning stock size is around 12 million tons and it is by far the largest stock in the ICES area. The fishing pressure on this stock is low and therefore the outlook is very positive.

Norway pout in the North Sea is recovering

After several years when the North Sea Norway pout fishery has been closed, due to low stock size, the stock has now produced a strong yearclass that allows a sustainable fishery in 2008.

Blue whiting faces rapid decline

The blue whiting stock is declining rapidly due to a much lower supply of young fish and a fishing pressure that is not sustainable. ICES recommends larger reductions in catches than have been agreed by the management bodies.

Recruitment of anchovy in Bay of Biscay remains low

The outlook for anchovy in the Bay of Biscay is still poor. The number of young fish in 2006 and 2007 has been very low. Because anchovy is a short-lived species, there are very few adult fish in the population and ICES recommends to keep the fishery closed.

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<http://www.ices.dk/aboutus/pressroom.asp>

Additional information on the **Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM)**

The Advisory Committee on Fishery Management (ACFM) provides scientific information and advice on living resources and their harvesting. In formulating its annual advice on the management of ca. 135 stocks of fish and shellfish, ACFM uses information prepared by numerous ICES stock assessment Working Groups. ACFM consists of one scientist from each of the 20 ICES member countries along with chairs of relevant ICES science committees and observers from the European Commission, Faroe Islands/Greenland, NGO's and industry representatives from non-EU countries, and the Regional Advisory Committees (RAC).

ACFM meets twice a year (spring and late autumn) to prepare its advice, which is published annually in the ICES Advice Report series. The advice is also available in pdf format on the ICES Website at www.ices.dk

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) coordinates and promotes marine research in the North Atlantic. This includes adjacent seas such as the Baltic Sea and North Sea. ICES acts as a meeting point for a community of more than 1600 marine scientists from 20 countries around the North Atlantic.

Scientists working through ICES gather information about the marine ecosystem. Besides filling gaps in existing knowledge, this information is also developed into unbiased, non-political advice. The advice is then used by the 20 member countries, which fund and support ICES, to help them manage the North Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas. The annual budget is DKK 30 million/EUR 4 million.

ICES plans and coordinates marine research through a system of committees, more than 100 working groups, symposia, and an Annual Science Conference. Most meetings take place either at the ICES Headquarters in Copenhagen, Denmark or in the member countries.

ICES has been based in Copenhagen, Denmark since 1902. Today, its Secretariat with 44 staff members provides scientific, administrative, secretarial support and data management expertise to the ICES network of marine scientists.