



About ICES-FishMap

What is ICES-FishMap?

ICES-FishMap is an electronic atlas of 15 North Sea fish species. The atlas uses data collected by research vessels in the North Sea 1983-2004.

In the ICES area (Northeast Atlantic), research vessels from different countries participate in a variety of trawl surveys. During these surveys, fisheries scientists collect information on the distribution and abundance of juvenile fish or of the adult stock. The results are generally used in the preparation of the ICES advice on fisheries management.

Different surveys target different (commercial) fish species, and therefore use specific fishing gears. Catches taken at each station are sorted into species and routinely samples of all species are measured to derive frequency distributions. For the (commercial) target species, additional information may be collected, e.g. on the age composition and reproductive stage.

Data on the distribution and length frequency composition from a single survey (International Bottom Trawl Survey - IBTS) and for a limited number of years have been published by ICES in 1993 as the *Atlas of North Sea Fishes*.

Since that time much more information has become available, both for earlier and later years. Moreover, new information is continuously being collected. Therefore, the wish has emerged to produce an electronic atlas that can be annually updated and that allows for flexibility in selecting periods to allow changes in the fish fauna to be studied.

The *ICES-FishMap* project is ultimately aimed at producing such an electronic atlas for a much larger area than the North Sea and based on a variety of surveys. However, as a first step a pilot project has concentrated on 15 species regularly caught during North Sea IBTS surveys. In a second phase we plan a total revision of the *Atlas of North Sea fishes*, providing similar information on all (\pm 150) fish species caught during research surveys in the North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat. Ultimately we hope to increase the coverage to include a large part of the west-European shelf.

What can you find on ICES-FishMap?

On *ICES-FishMap* you can make your own distribution maps (North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat) for the 15 fish species selected. You can select years and quarters for which you want to see data mapped. These data are derived from the DATRAS survey database kept at the ICES Secretariat in Copenhagen and will be updated annually.

ICES-FishMap also offers a short summary of relevant information for each of the 15 species (basic pages), and gives you the possibility to download and read in more detail about distribution, life history and exploitation (pdf files). In addition, through *ICES-FishMap*, you will be able to find information on the surveys used, the factors affecting the distribution, the fish communities, and the limitations of the data presented. Also a glossary of technical or biological terms is provided.



About ICES-FishMap

Funding and partners

ICES-FishMap is the outcome of an EU-funded project under the same name (a Specific Support Action, contract nr. 513661, Integrating and Strengthening the ERA). The project lasted 14 months, from 1 October 2004 to 1 December 2005, and was a cooperative exercise involving the Netherlands Institute for Fisheries Research RIVO in IJmuiden (the Netherlands), the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science CEFAS in Lowestoft (United Kingdom) and the Secretariat of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) in Copenhagen (Denmark).

Participants from the different organisations were:

RIVO, IJmuiden, the Netherlands

Dr. Henk Heessen (co-ordination)

Dr. Niels Daan

Mr. Remment ter Hofstede

CEFAS, Lowestoft, United Kingdom

Dr. Paul Eastwood

Dr. Jim Ellis

Mr. Colin Kirk

ICES Secretariat, Copenhagen, Denmark

Mr. Neil Fletcher

Dr. Henrik Sparholt

Mrs. Lena Larsen

Acknowledgements

Many people have in one way or another contributed to the realization of *ICES-FishMap*, and the authors wish to thank them for their cooperation. First of all the crews of the various research vessels should be mentioned as well as our colleagues who sorted and measured large amounts of fish and later worked up the data. Staff members of the ICES Secretariat put a lot of effort into setting up the DATRAS database. Without the financial support of the Directorate General for Fisheries of the Commission of the European Communities, the *ICES-FishMap* project would not have been possible.

The line drawings of fish species used in the detailed species accounts are by Peter Stebbing (© 1993 Peter Stebbing).