Atlantic herring
North Sea autumn spawners

IDENTIFICATION

SCIENTIFIC NAME
Clupea harengus

SPECIES NAME(S)
Atlantic herring

STOCK IDENTIFICATION
North Sea autumn spawning herring is considered and assessed as a single stock, consisting of four spawning components, which are genetically homogeneous. Some mixing with other neighboring stocks occurs, particularly in Division IIIa (with Western Baltic Spring Spawning herring) (ICES, 2015b).

ASSESSMENT

Strengths
- There is an updated management plan since 2008 which is consistent with the precautionary and MSY approaches.
- Fishing mortality has been low in recent years.
- Spawning stock biomass has been increasing and is currently estimated to be well above the precautionary reference point, Bpa.
- The directed herring fishery is considered a “very clean” fishery, with almost no impact on the seabed and minimal/nil bycatch, including of Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) species.
- Slippage associated to highgrading is not allowed in the North Sea and Skagerrak, and discarding is prohibited in Norway.
- Fishers’ compliance has been improving.

Weaknesses
- The series of weak recruitment observed since 2002 is the lowest observed; the stock is considered to remain in a low productivity phase.
- TACs are generally set higher than ICES recommendations.
- The only open MSC certification condition is related with the harvest control rule, specifically the 15% cap on inter-annual TAC variation, which has not been applied as intended.

SCORES

Management Quality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Strategy</th>
<th>Managers Compliance</th>
<th>Fishers Compliance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
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Stock Health:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Health</th>
<th>Future Health</th>
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<td>10</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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MSC

- SPFPO: Swedish North Sea herring: MSC Recertified
- DFFP, DFFP and SPFPO: Skagerrak, Kattegat and Western Baltic Herring Fishery: Suspended

RECOMMENDATIONS

Retailers & Supply Chain
- Monitor the progress in closing out conditions placed upon the MSC certification of the fishery and if agreed timelines are met, offer assistance in closing conditions where possible.