**Atlantic cod**

**Barents Sea**

**Fishery:** Norway/Russia, Greenland, Single boat bottom otter trawls

### IDENTIFICATION

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**
Gadus morhua

**SPECIES NAME(S)**
Atlantic cod

**COMMON NAMES**
Barents Sea cod, NE Arctic cod, Northeast Arctic cod, Norwegian-Russian cod

### STOck IDENTIFICATION

Genetic studies support the distinctness of different populations in the Atlantic Ocean (Bradbury et al. 2013), being two stocks identified in the Barents Sea: NE Arctic and Norwegian coastal waters. There is some overlap over the spawning season in the Norwegian coast but the stocks are assessed by ICES separately as Cod in Subareas I and II (Northeast Arctic cod) and Cod in Subareas I and II (Norwegian coastal waters cod). Haddock and saithe are also targeted in this fishery.

### ASSESSMENT

**Strengths**
- The stock assessment process incorporates many best practices features.
- Scientific advice is consistent with the management plan, which is regularly revised and found to be in accordance to the Precautionary Approach by ICES, such as the harvest control rule.
- Stock biomass is following a decreasing trend but remains in a good condition.
- Catch rates have been below the set TAC, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is considered to have been effectively addressed. Unreported landings are considered zero since 2009.
- Even if not included in the current assessment, bycatch and discarding time series are being updated.
- There are several management measures in place: spatial, temporal and closures for the protection of juveniles; technical measures in the fishing measures and also control measures. Some are harmonized within Russian and Norwegian EEZ waters.

**Weaknesses**
- Several issues – related to survey coverage, catch-at-age data and catches' sampling - contribute to uncertainties in the assessment, especially on the spawning stock and recruitment estimates.
- Fishing mortality has been increasing and is currently at the target. The spawning stock has been showing a decreasing trend.
- The agreed catch limit for 2018 is above the scientific recommendation, like has been happening in the past 3 years. ICES highlights the TAC is not established in accordance to the Harvest Control Rule in place.
- Discarding levels are unknown but assumed to be negligible, below 5%. Estimates are contradictory and fragmented.
- There is bycatch of depleted species, such as golden redfish, of particular concern; this fishery is estimated to contribute to a significant share of total golden redfish catches, especially by trawls, and considered by ICES to be far above any sustainable catch level.

**SCORES**

#### Management Quality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Strategy</th>
<th>Managers Compliance</th>
<th>Fishers Compliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Stock Health:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Health</th>
<th>Future Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### FIPS

No related FIPs

#### MSC

No related MSC fisheries

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN**

- Press regulators to set the catch limit in line with the agreed harvest control rule.
- Make urgent further efforts (e.g. additional technical conservation measures) to reduce the bycatch of golden redfish and coastal cod.
- Implement an at sea monitoring programme to improve data on protected, endangered, and threatened species interactions.
- Participate in the ongoing efforts to investigate impacts of bottom trawls on the soft-bottom habitat of the Barents Sea.

**RELATED LINKS:**

- Joint Norwegian-Russian Fishery Commission (UNRFC)
- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)