European sprat
North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat

Stock: European sprat

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** Sprattus sprattus

**SPECIES NAMES:**
- European sprat

**RELATED LINKS:**
- European Commission (EC)
- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**

**SPECIES NAME(S)**

European sprat

**STOCK EXTERNAL NAME(S)**

European sprat

**STOCK CODE(S)**

North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**

European sprat

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** Sprattus sprattus

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**ASSESSMENT**

**Strengths**
- Analytical assessment, conducted in the North Sea since 2013, has expanded to include the Skagerrak and Kattegat population in a single unit. Biomass reference points for the new unit were defined in 2018, excluding a revised fishing mortality cap ($F_{	ext{msy}}$). The merging of the North Sea and Skagerrak and Kattegat into a single assessment unit has improved the performance of the stock assessment model.
- The newly assessed stock unit is indicated to be in a healthy condition.
- The $F_{	ext{msy}}$ is designed to ensure the advice strategy is precautionary, despite uncertainty in forecasts of abundance.
- Since 2017, the timing of TACs and management advice for Subarea 4 in the North Sea (where the majority of the catch occurs) has been aligned in the timeframe of the following year. The new model includes the Skagerrak and Kattegat population in a single assessment unit. The FMSY proxy, $F_{	ext{msy}}$, was often exceeded by relatively large proportions.
- There are no explicit management objectives for this stock.
- TACs have not consistently conformed to catches advised by ICES, and in Division 3a, they have been up to 6 times the advised limit. Further, the TAC timing is misaligned with the advice timing (TAC for the 3a unit is per calendar year, while the advice for the assessment unit is applicable for 1 July - 30 June of the following year).
- There are no explicit management objectives for this stock.
- There is concern regarding potential incentive for illegal sulphar, and resultant uncontrolled catch of target and non-target species.
- Research on the indirect impacts of the fishery (i.e., by means of food web relationships) on other fish species, marine mammals and seabirds is still incomplete.
- Although the impact of purse seines and pelagic trawls in bottom habitats is typically assumed to be negligible, it remains to be tested in this specific fishery especially taking into account that the sea bottom might be impacted when fishing in shallow waters.
- Direct impacts of the fishery on sea mammals and birds is considered to be very low.
- There are no related FIPs.
- No related MSC fisheries.

**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>≥ 6</td>
<td>&gt; 6</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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>≥ 6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**FIPS**

No related FIPs

**MSC**

No related MSC fisheries

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**FISHERY & SUPPLY CHAIN**
- Press ICES to conduct further scientific research to fully define the stock structure to improve management.
- Press regional advisory bodies, national fisheries administrations and the European Commission to develop a multi-species, ecosystem-based management plan, with specific management objectives for the pelagic fisheries in the North Sea and associated areas.
- Ensure that managers set the TAC in line with scientific advice.
- Engage with the EU Pelagic Advisory Council (https://www.pelagic-advisory-council.eu) directly or through one of the General Assembly members, to
ensure sustainable exploitation.

- Engage as a stakeholder in all MSC certifications for this stock and support the MSC Client groups to ensure all conditions attached to the Certifications are fully addressed.