European sprat

**Baltic Sea**

### Fishery

**Baltic Sea**

**EU**

**Estonia**

**Midwater trawls**

### Stock Health:

**Current Health**

**Future Health**

10

7.1

### Recommendations

**Retailers & Supply Chain**

- Work with managers to develop a stock-wide, spatially explicit management plan for the fisheries that catch Baltic sprat (including Russia), ensuring there are adequate amounts of sprat in all areas to serve as prey for cod stocks and other ecosystem needs.
- Ensure catch and discards data collection and reporting are adequate to support the stock assessment, including addressing species misidentification.
- Bycatch data collection and reporting should include interactions with birds and mammals, especially for the gillnet fleet.
- A new benchmark stock assessment is needed which should address uncertainties due to retrospective overestimation of spawning stock biomasses and underestimation of fishing mortality.
- Ensure future TACs are set in accordance with scientific advice.
- Ensure these recommendations are represented to the EU Pelagic Advisory Council ([https://www.pelagic-ac.org/](https://www.pelagic-ac.org/)) directly or through one of the General Assembly members.

### ASSESSMENT

#### Strengths

- An EU multiannual plan (MAP) for the stocks of cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea was established in 2016. ICES advice is based on this MAP and is considered precautionary.
- Spawning stock biomasses has been well above the target reference point in the last years and has increased since 2014.
- Specific management measures are incorporated in the MAP in cases where SSB is below the limit reference point.
- Around 71% of the marine and coastal areas are currently being protected by the network of Baltic Sea Protected Areas.

#### Weaknesses

- The current multiannual plan does not include Russia.
- The retrospective pattern of over estimating SSB and under estimating F increases uncertainty.
- Fishing mortality is above F_{MSY} currently and historically.
- Quotas are generally set slightly higher than advised.
- A spatial management plan must consider prey availability for cod in light of fishing pressure on sprat and other Clupeids in the Baltic Sea.
- The last benchmark was in 2013, fairly old for a short lived stock such as sprat.
- There is a species misreporting issue which may affect the quality of the assessment.
- Gillnetters, especially the smaller ones that usually operate closer to the shore not annually can have rather big number of birds in the nets.

### 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</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.8</td>
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**Stock Health:**

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**FIPS**

For related FIPs.

**MSC**

For related MSC fisheries.