



Risk Assessment for Sourcing Seafood (RASS) profiles; haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*) in Northern European and Scandinavian waters

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Introduction

This document is a summary of information for a selection of Northeast Atlantic haddock stocks derived from scientific assessments and risk assessed using Seafish's [RASS scoring guidance](#).

Fish populations are divided into fish stocks. A fish stock is a sub population of a fish species which inhabits a defined area of sea. Fish stocks are the units by scientists and governments to assess and manage stock sustainability, so each RASS profile relates to a specific stock within a defined sea area shown on the maps.

RASS applies a framework which scores risk levels for stocks on a five-point scale; from 1 very low risk to 5 very high risk, as indicated by the number of solid blue circles shown on the profiles below. Two aspects are assessed for each stock;

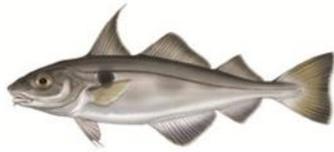
1. Stock status as advised by [ICES¹ annually](#)
2. Stock management, using information from ICES and other sources.

Scores should not be used in isolation to decide on a purchase of seafood from a stock. Profiles are designed to:

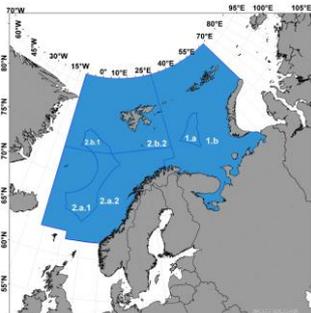
- enable the main features of a stock to be examined within a structured format,
- inform buyers of questions they might ask about a stock and where improvements could be made to improve sustainability

Inevitably there are several technical terms used. Please see the Glossary at the end of the document, where there are also links to further reading.

¹ ICES; International Council for Exploration of the Sea, the scientific body charged with carrying out stock assessment and advising Governments concerning management of Northeast Atlantic stocks



Haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*) in subareas 1 and 2 (Northeast Arctic)



Stock area for Northeast Arctic (Barents Sea) haddock

Stock status 2021

● ● ○ ○ ○ Low risk

This stock is subject to regular assessments by ICES and is **advised** as being at **full reproductive capacity and harvested sustainably but at a fishing mortality rate above optimum in 2020**. This corresponds a low risk under the [RASS scoring guidelines](#). The most recent advice was published in 2021 shows that there has been good recruitment of young fish in 2019, which will help sustain catches. Spawning stock biomass, an indication of the reproductive capacity of the stock, is forecast to remain stable during 2022 if catches are in line with advice.

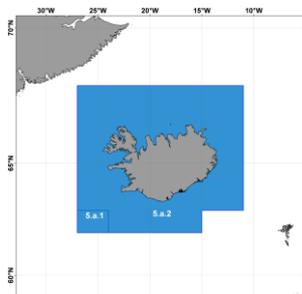
Management 2022

● ○ ○ ○ ○ Very low risk

This stock is managed under a management plan assessed as precautionary by ICES and agreed by Norway and Russia under the **Joint Norwegian–Russian Fisheries Commission**. The plan, first agreed in 2009, is designed to maintain the stock at a rate of harvest corresponding to maximum sustainable yield. The agreed Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and landings have corresponded to the management plan for most years since 2009. The TAC of 178,532 tonnes in 2022 is in line with the current ICES advice. Compliance with regulations is good.



Haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*) in Division 5.a (Iceland grounds)



Stock area for Icelandic haddock

Stock status 2022



Low risk

This stock is subject to regular assessments by ICES. In 2022 ICES advises that this stock is at full reproductive capacity and harvested sustainably but at a fishing mortality rate above optimum levels (above that corresponding with the management plan and maximum sustainable yield).

This corresponds a low risk under the [RASS scoring guidelines](#). The ICES assessment shows that there has been good recruitment of young fish in 2021 and 2022, which will help sustain catches. The spawning stock biomass, an indication of the reproductive capacity of the stock, is expected to increase by 37% in 2024, if catches are $\leq 62,219$ tonnes in 2022/23* in line with those advised under the management plan.

Management



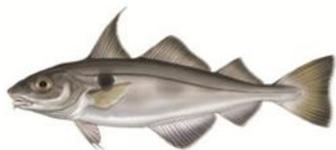
Very low risk

This stock is managed under a management plan implemented by the Icelandic Government and assessed as precautionary and in accordance with the maximum sustainable yield approach by ICES.

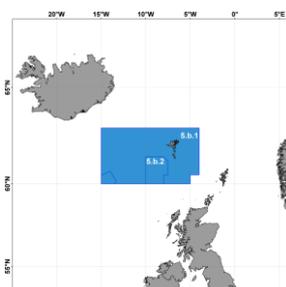
The current version of the plan was implemented in 2018/19*, although a similar approach has been adopted since 2013/14*. The agreed Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and landings have corresponded to the advice in most years since 2003/4.

The TAC of 41,229 tonnes in 2021/22* is below the 50,429 tonnes advised under the management plan. Compliance with regulations is good.

*Icelandic fishing year = 1st September- 31st August.



Haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*) in Division 5.b (Faroes grounds)



Stock area for Faroe haddock

Stock status; 2021

● ● ● ○ ○ Moderate risk

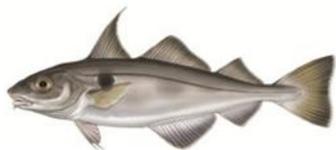
This stock is subject to regular assessments by ICES and in 2021 is advised as being at full reproductive capacity and harvested sustainably, but at a rate above optimum (maximum sustainable yield) and precautionary levels, though inside safe biological limits. This corresponds a moderate risk under the [RASS scoring guidelines](#).

Management

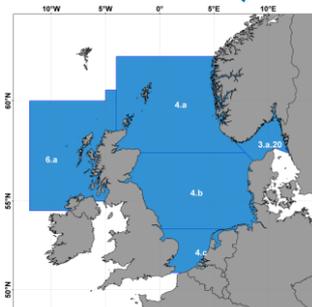
● ● ● ○ ○ Moderate risk

This stock is managed under a management plan implemented by the Faroe Islands Government in 2021. The plan is designed to regulate the number of fishing days for the mixed fishery for cod and haddock (also saithe) in the Faroe Plateau fishery. Of importance is that the Faroe Plateau cod stock is in a much poorer state than the haddock stock, and the application of the MSY approach requires a reduction in fishing effort for both stocks, more so for cod, in 2022, relative to recent years.

However, the plan has not been evaluated by ICES, so it is currently uncertain whether the plan will lead to a sustainable pattern of exploitation in this mixed fishery, and this corresponds to a moderate risk in the [RASS scoring guidelines](#).



Haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*) in Subarea 4, Division 6.a, and Subdivision 20 (North Sea, West of Scotland, Skagerrak)



Stock area for North Sea haddock

Advice 2022; Stock status



This stock is subject to regular assessments by ICES and [advice for 2022](#) is that the stock is at full reproductive capacity and harvested just below levels associated with maximum sustainable yield. This corresponds a low risk under the [RASS scoring guidelines](#).

The assessment shows that there has been increased recruitment of young fish into the stock during 2019 and 2020, with these year classes being the largest since 2000. This will help sustain the stock and catches over the coming years.

Management



This stock is managed by agreement between the UK, EU and Norway with Total Allowable Catches (TACs) agreed annually. The agreed TAC for 2022 is 53,398 tonnes, which is below the 101,908 tonnes projected landings which would correspond with MSY. However, although there is a landing obligation in place within the fishery for UK, EU and Norwegian vessels, there is an issue with the reported catches not reflecting the total catch as estimated by observers. See the [ICES advice 2022](#) for details. This may affect the accuracy of the assessments the so the stock is scored a moderate risk under the [RASS scoring guidelines](#).

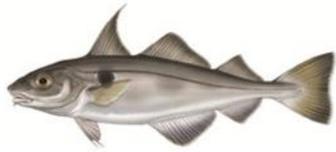


Glossary

Term	Definition
Fishing Mortality: F	The rate of mortality due to fishing. In some texts it is referred to as “Fishing pressure”. The scientists and managers seek to adjust fishing mortality through management measures such as catch limits (or TACs) on a stock to keep the stocks inside safe biological limits and optimise yields at MSY (see below)
International Council for Exploration of the Sea: ICES	International scientific body responsible for carrying out fish stock assessments in the ICES Area: the Northeast Atlantic and Baltic Seas. Also advises governments on other scientific issues concerning the marine environment www.ices.dk
Management plans	Management plans are agreed between the parties exploiting a stock, usually governments. They can take the form of a set of decision rules guiding the management of the stock with pre agreed reference points. This is particularly important when the aim is to recover a stock from outside safe biological limits. Governments can ask ICES to carry out a scientific assessment of their plans to assess whether they are precautionary and will achieve the objectives set out for the stock
Maximum Sustainable Yield: MSY	Catching the maximum quantity that can safely be removed from the stock while maintaining its capacity to produce sustainable yields in the long term.
Precautionary approach	The ICES precautionary approach requires that the risk of a stock being outside safe biological limits is less than 5-10% in any one year.
Safe Biological Limits: SBL	When a stock is inside safe biological limits there is considered to be sufficient reproductive capacity to support a fishery. If a stock is outside safe biological limits there may not be sufficient reproductive capacity to support a fishery
Spawning stock biomass ('SSB');	This is an estimation of the quantity of breeding adults and hence the reproductive capacity of the stock, measured in tonnes.
Total Allowable Catch: TAC	The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is a catch limit (expressed in tonnes for a fishery generally for a year or a fishing season.

Further reading

Seafish has produced a series of further information including detailed guides to fisheries management and assessment. These can be accessed from [here](#)



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