

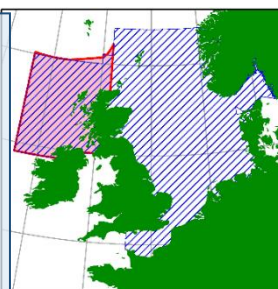
NORTHERN SHELF COD

Subarea 4, divisions 6.a and 7.d, and Subdivision 20



ADVICE FOR 2024

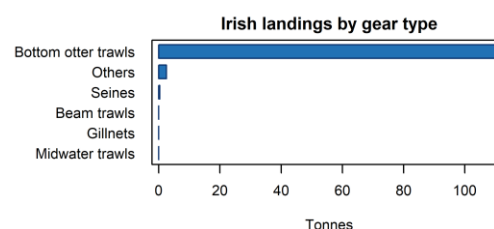
ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied for the southern substock and precautionary considerations to protect the southern substock are applied for the northwestern and Viking substocks, catches in 2024 should be no more than 22,691 t which corresponds to 13,529 t from the northwestern substock, 5,240 t from the Viking substock, and 3,922 t from the southern substock. These catches by substock should not be taken as area-specific advice.



■ TAC/Management area
▨ Assessment area

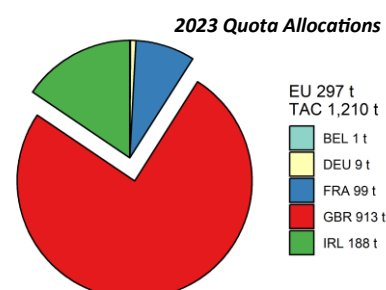
KEY POINTS

ICES Assessment Category	I (Quantitative Assessment)	
Management Plan	ICES is not aware of any agreed precautionary management plan for cod in this area.	
Advice Basis	ICES MSY approach and precautionary considerations	Catch= 22,691 t
Ranges	F _{MSY} Range Lower	Catch= 22,959 t
	F _{MSY}	Catch= 35,293 t
	F _{MSY} Range Upper	Not Applicable
Landing Obligation	From 2019	No derogations or exemptions



MANAGEMENT IN 2023

- Quota is exclusively for bycatch in fisheries for other species.
- Division 6.a cod falls under a quota exchange mechanism related to the Landing Obligation, through which up to 6% of national quota is made available to other Member States who lack quota.
- The TAC Area covers Division 6.a, EU and international waters of 5.b east of 12° 00' W. The assessment now covers Subarea 4, divisions 6.a and 7.d, and Subdivision 20.



KEY STOCK CONSIDERATIONS

- This stock was benchmarked in 2023. The new assessment merged the 6.a stock with the North Sea and Skagerrak into a Northern Shelf assessment unit. Three new sub-stocks are defined in the new assessment. The north-western sub-stock occurs in 6.a but is also found in the north of area 4. This sub-stock is assessed and being above biomass reference points (MSY $B_{trigger}$) but is also fished above F_{MSY} .
- The new assessment for Northern Shelf cod represents progress in terms of acknowledging the biological complexity of cod sub-populations in the area. It does, however, create new and complex advisory and management dilemmas. ICES in its advice has implemented precautionary considerations which is appropriate and in line with international policy requirements
- The catch advice is given for all three substocks together. This is because the substocks area dynamically mix during quarters 2 to 4. Separate catch scenarios are presented by substock but this should not be taken as advice for each of the substock areas.

- Because the degree of mixing between substocks is unknown, precautionary considerations are applied in the advice to protect the weakest substock (the southern substock).
- It is not clear how this advice can be used to set international fishing opportunities. There are currently 4 TAC management areas covering the distribution of the Northern Shelf cod. This issue will be discussed at trilateral meetings between the EU-UK-Norway.
- The advice above replaces the advice of zero catch given for two years in June 2022 covering cod in Division 6.a (West of Scotland) for 2023 and 2024.
- There is no targeted fishery for cod in Division 6a. Landings are from bycatch in the mixed bottom trawl fishery targeting haddock, saithe, hake, anglerfish and megrim.



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Cod (*Gadus morhua*) in Subarea 4, divisions 6.a and 7.d, and Subdivision 20 (North Sea, West of Scotland, eastern English Channel, and Skagerrak)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

Please note: the present advice replaces the advice given in September 2022 for cod in Division 6.a (West of Scotland) for 2024.

ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied for the southern substock and precautionary considerations to protect the southern substock are applied for the northwestern and Viking substocks, catches in 2024 should be no more than 22 691 tonnes, which corresponds to 13 529 tonnes from the northwestern substock, 5240 tonnes from the Viking substock, and 3922 tonnes from the southern substock.

These catches by substock should not be taken as area-specific advice.

ICES advice on conservation aspects

ICES has not identified any conservation aspects.

Stock development over time

Fishing pressure on all three substocks is above F_{MSY} but below F_{pa} and F_{lim} .

The spawning-stock size is:

- below MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{pa} , and B_{lim} for the southern substock
- above MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{pa} , and B_{lim} for the northwestern substock
- below MSY $B_{trigger}$ and between B_{pa} and B_{lim} for the Viking substock

All substocks combined