

INTERNATIONAL BALTIC SEA FISHERY COMMISSION
Twenty Seventh Session
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PRESS RELEASE

The International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission concluded its 27th Annual Session on the 7 September, fixing the conditions for fishing in the year 2002. The fixing of the year 2002 TACs was based on the scientific advice provided by ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea). TACs for Cod (-28%) and Herring (-33%) were reduced to protect the stocks following the precautionary approach. The Sprat TAC was slightly increased (+6%). The stock is considered to be within safe biological limits. This is also an indication that the long term management strategy of the Commission for this stock pays off.

After the upward trend in the mid nineties, the TAC for Cod was reduced to reflect the downward trend of the Eastern Cod stock. The reproduction of Cod is indeed highly dependent, among other things, on the salinity and oxygen content of the Baltic Sea. The inflow of fresh salt water from the North Sea continues to be irregular and weak and under such conditions the reproduction of Cod is less successful. The TAC was therefore reduced by 29,000 tonnes.

In conformity with the Long Term Management Strategy for Baltic Cod adopted in 1999 the Contracting Parties agreed to establish a comprehensive recovery plan for the Baltic Cod (inter alia reduction of the fishing mortality in the Eastern stock, extension of the summer ban on Cod fishing, changes to the Fishery Rules concerning by-catch of Cod, strengthening of control and enforcement measures).

The Salmon TAC in the Main Basin and Gulf of Bothnia has been maintained at the same level as in 2000-2001 (450,000 fish). A low TAC reduces the catch of wild Salmon so that more individuals can return to their home rivers for spawning.

As a result of this policy an improvement of the wild Salmon has been achieved in certain rivers in 1997-2001.

According to ICES: most stocks are improving but still not all.

Significant further improvements are expected in implementing the comprehensive IBSFC Salmon Action Plan 1997-2010 adopted in 1997.

In further implementing the Salmon Action Plan a resolution on the definition of Terminal Fishery Areas was adopted.

The Commission was working along the lines of the Fishery Sector Action Plan of the „Baltic 21” initiative. The aim of this initiative is to achieve sustainability in the Baltic region by the year 2030 in all sectors of the economy, as foreseen in the “Agenda 21 for the Baltic Sea Region” adopted at the 7th Ministerial Session of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in June 1998. It is expected that this goal shall be achieved in the fisheries sector well before the target date of 2030.

In the interest of transparency of the work of the Commission for the first time observers from non-governmental organizations were invited and attended the Session.

Principal catch quotas in the Baltic Sea

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Herring ⁽¹⁾ Main Basin	560,000	476,000	405,000	300,000	200,000
Herring ⁽¹⁾ Management Unit III	110,000	94,000	85,000	72,000	60,000
Sprat ⁽¹⁾	550,000	468,000	400,000	355,000	380,000
Cod ⁽¹⁾	145,000	126,000	105,000	105,000	76,000
Salmon ⁽²⁾ Main Basin + Gulf of Bothnia	410,000	410,000	450,000	450,000	450,000
Salmon ⁽²⁾ Gulf of Finland	110,000	100,000	90,000	70,000	60,000

(1) tonnes

(2) (2) units of Salmon