

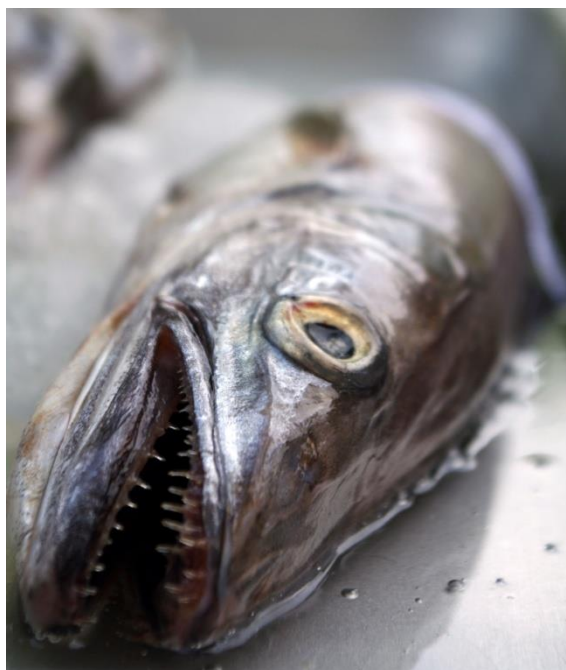
SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Merluccius merluccius

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| English name: European hake | Scientific name: <i>Merluccius merluccius</i> | |
| Taxonomical group: Class: Actinopterygii Order: Gadiformes Family: Gadidae | Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758 | |
| Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: – | Generation length: 11.3 years | |
| Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Fishing (F02.02), Random Threat Factors (U) | Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Fishing (F02.02), Random Threat Factors (U) | |
| IUCN Criteria: B1a+2a | HELCOM Red List Category: | NT Near Threatened |
| Global / European IUCN Red List Category NE/NE | Habitats Directive: – | |
| Previous HELCOM Red List Category (2007): RA | | |
| Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/–, Estonia –/–, Finland –/–, Germany –/–, Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/–, Russia –/–, Sweden <i>Minimum landing size of 30 cm in Kattegat / NA</i> | | |

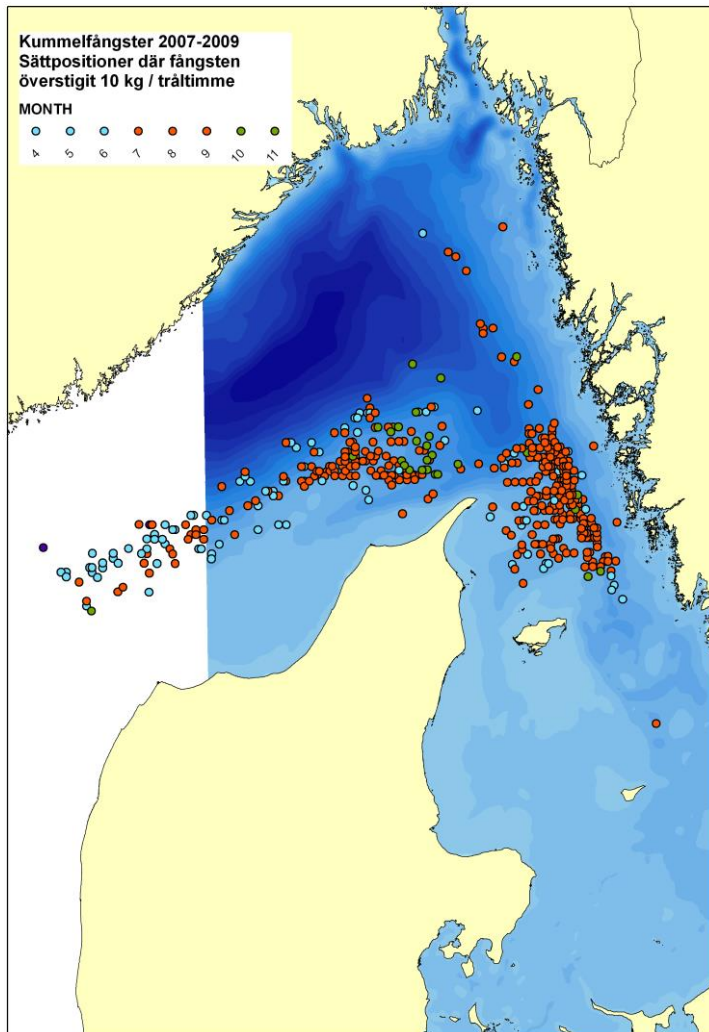
Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

Hake is a widely spread species in the North East Atlantic. The spawning biomass in the northern part of the North East Atlantic (from Kattegat down to Bay of Biscay) has been increasing since 1998 and is estimated to be on record high in 2011 (ICES 2011). However, the Kattegat stock status is unknown since reproduction was recently rediscovered in this area. Hake spawning sites have newly been revisited in northern part of the Kattegat, and have been found active (Svensson 2010). Recruits and feeding fish are estimated to be found in deeper parts of the Kattegat. The stock in the Kattegat is on verge of the distribution area and this species do not occur elsewhere in the Baltic area.



Hake. Photo by Francesca Vitale, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

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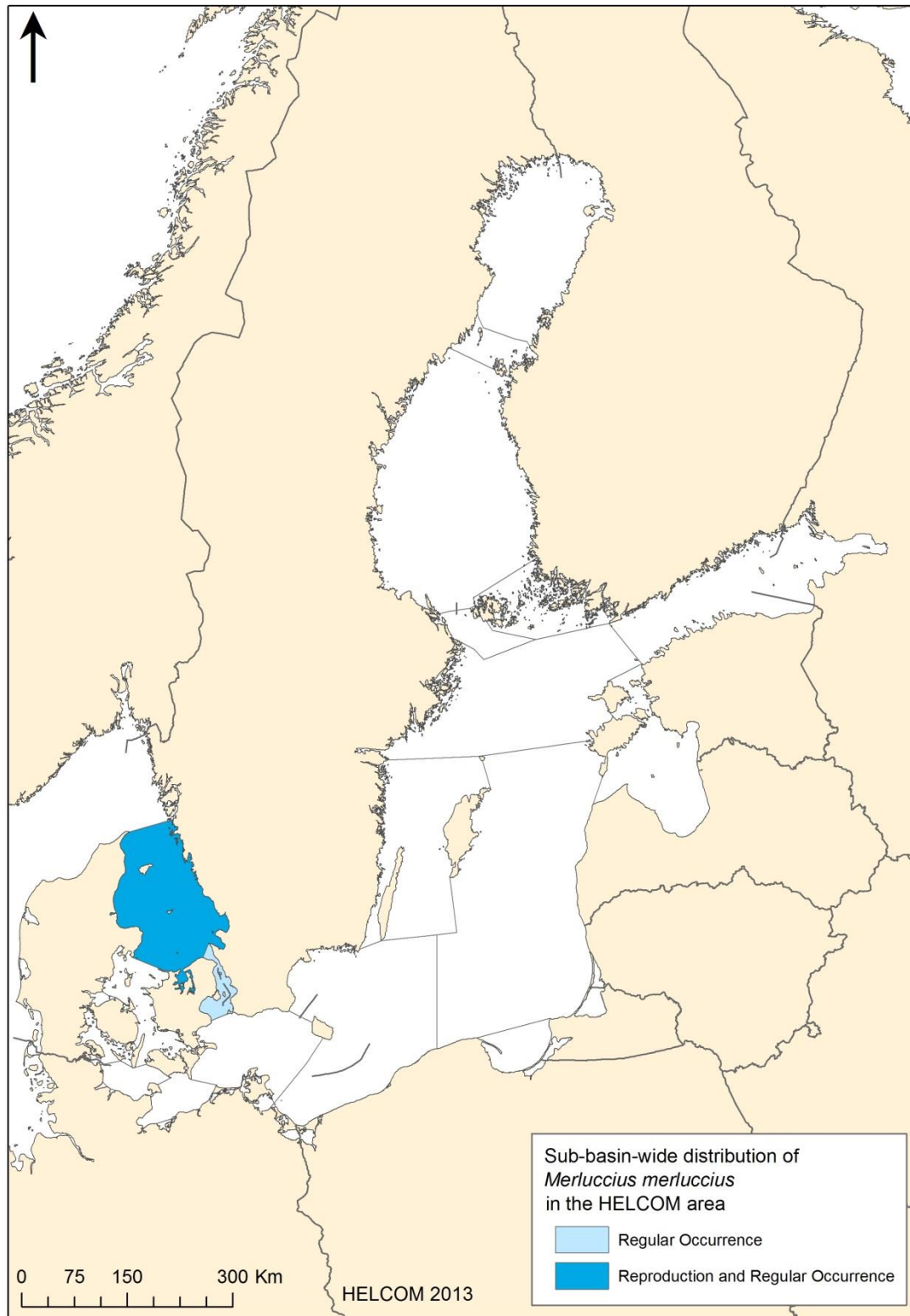
Hake catches between 2007 and 2009. The figure is showing the setting position of commercial trawl hauls where the catches of hake were above 10 kg. From Svenson (2010).

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Distribution map

The map shows the sub-basins in the HELCOM area where the species is known to occur regularly and to reproduce (HELCOM 2012).



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Habitat and ecology

The species lives on soft bottoms usually between 200 and 1000 m depth. It rarely reaches a size above 100 cm. In summer time it occurs at shallower depths. Hake spawn at 20 m depth in the Kattegat. It is a batch spawner and eggs and larvae are pelagic. Age at first maturity is 4 for males and 10 for females.

Adults live close to the bottom during day-time, but move off-bottom at night for foraging. It occurs sometimes in shoals. Adults are mostly foraging on herring, sprats, cephalopods and younger hake. The young feed on crustaceans.

Description of major threats

Professional active fishing, i.e. benthic or demersal trawling are the major identified threats. The small area of occupancy and only one spawning site furthermore makes this species sensitive to stochastic population dynamics and other random threat factors. There is a risk of mismanagement as at present TACs are set for both the Kattegat and Skagerrak stocks together. In addition there is no monitoring of the sub-stock in the Kattegat. Furthermore there is a risk of increased fishery on the spawning grounds.

Assessment justification

The spawning biomass in the Northern Stock (including a wide area from Kattegat and Skagerrak, the North Sea, the water around the British Isles and down to the Bay of Biscay) has been increasing since 1998 and is estimated to be record high in 2011 (ICES 2011). The stock status in Kattegat is however unknown since reproduction was recently rediscovered in Kattegat. A small extent of occurrence (<100km²) and area of occupancy (<10km²) together with only one spawning site fulfils the criteria for NT B1a+2a. Although immigration is possible from outside the HELCOM area this is not deemed to currently be of significance to change the threat status.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

The Kattegat stock is in need of a management plan, as its existence is entirely neglected. The stock is at the margin of its distribution area and is as such vulnerable. More biological knowledge is also needed.

Common names

D – Seehecht; DK Kulmule-; GB – European Hake; FIN – Kummeliturska; LV - Eiropas heks, Eiropas merlūza; LT- Europinė paprastoji jūry lydeka-; PL Morszczuk-; RUS - Evropeiskaja merluza; S – Kummel

References

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