

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Anarhichas lupus

English name: Atlantic wolf-fish	Scientific name: <i>Anarhichas lupus</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Actinopterygii Order: Perciformes Family: Anarhichadidae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: 14 years	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Fishing (both commercial and recreational) (F02), By-catch (F02)	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Fishing (both commercial and recreational) (F02), By-catch (F02)	
IUCN Criteria: A2d	HELCOM Red List Category:	EN Endangered
Global / European IUCN Red List Category NE / NE	Habitats Directive: –	
Previous HELCOM Red List Category (2007): EN		
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/–, Estonia –/–, Finland –/–, Germany –/– (Baltic Sea), Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/–, Russia –/–, Sweden –/EN		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

The Atlantic wolf-fish is found in the deeper parts of the Kattegat, and it occurs regularly in the Sound and the Belt Sea. The species has been occasionally reported as far into the Baltic Sea as the Eastern Gotland Basin. Swedish commercial landings in the Kattegat have decreased continuously from more than 30 tonnes in 1999 to less than 2 tonnes in 2011.

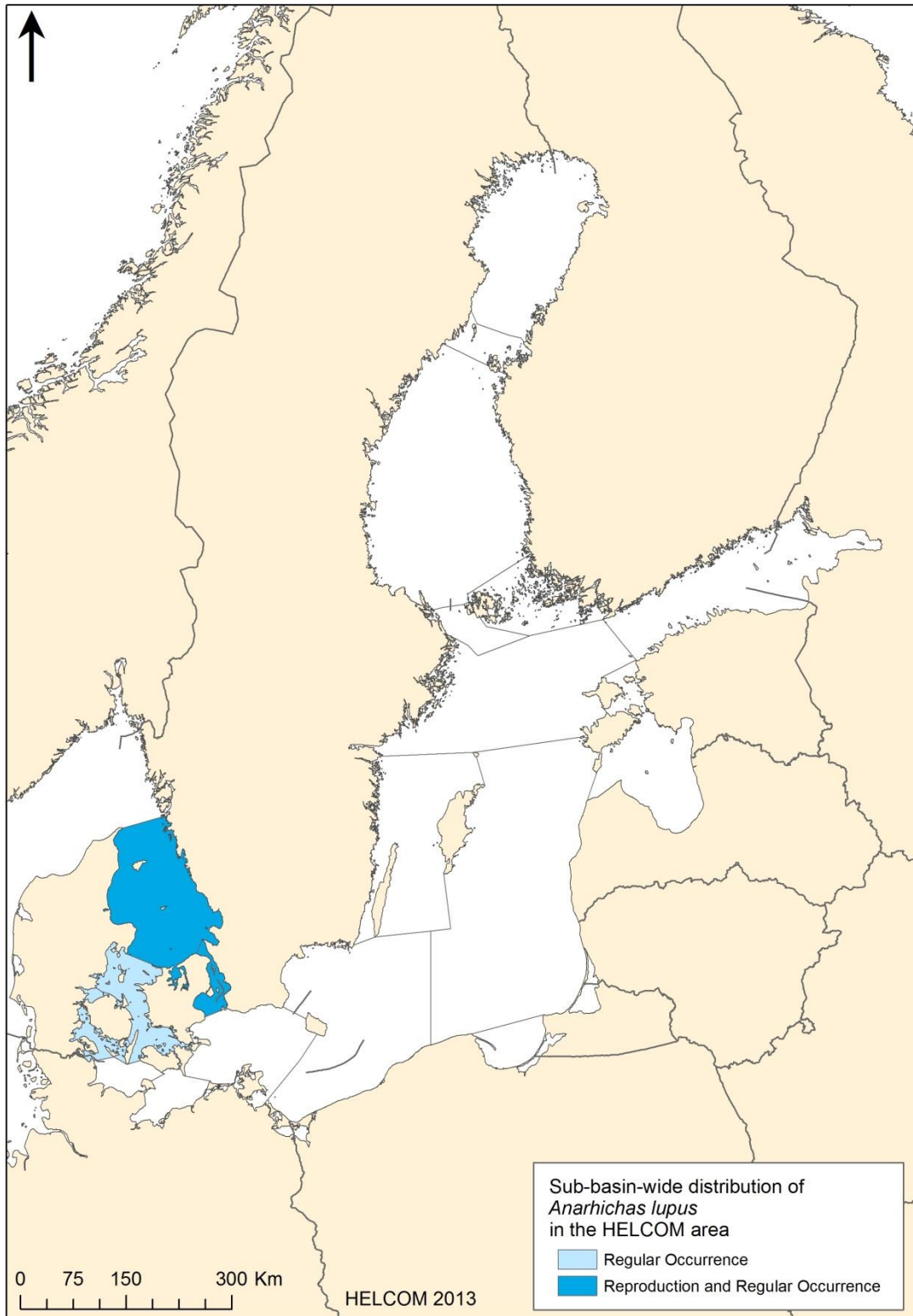


Atlantic wolf-fish. Photo by David Andersson, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

*Anarhichas lupus***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).



SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Anarhichas lupus

Habitat and ecology

Atlantic wolf-fish is a demersal species which inhabits rocky bottoms. Sometimes it can also be found foraging on sandy or muddy bottoms. It occurs normally in shallow coastal waters between 20 to 60 m in summer and it migrates to deeper waters offshore in winter. The wolf-fish has very strong jaws and it feeds on hard-shelled molluscs, crabs, lobsters, sea urchins and other echinoderms, as well as fish. It is a solitary species and forms pairs for mating. The male guards the eggs for 2–3 months until hatching. The wolf-fish becomes sexually mature at ages of 6–12 years, measuring 50–60 cm. Maximum known life span is 22 years (Froese & Pauly 2012, Kullander et al. 2012).

Description of major threats

Atlantic wolf-fish is threatened by fishery induced mortality, including effects of bycatch and accidental catches.

Assessment justification

The number of mature individuals exceeds the limit for red listing. The extent of occurrences (EOO) and the area of occupancy (AOO) also exceed the limits for red listing. The population is still declining or is expected to do so in the future. Based on the drastic decline in Swedish landings in the Kattegat (Fiskeriverket 2011) the rate of decline has amounted to 70 (50–90) % in the last 40 years. Depending on which of the estimated values is used the assessment varies from Endangered (EN) to Critically Endangered (CR). However, based on the most plausible values the species meets the criteria for Endangered (EN) in the A criterion (A2d). Immigration from outside the HELCOM area is too low to have a rescue effect since the situation for the wolf-fish is severe also in the adjacent area of Skagerrak.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

A prerequisite for recovery of this species is an effectively reduced fishery in the Kattegat. If the reduction of fishing is not sufficient to turn the population trend to recovery, spawning areas should also be identified and marine protected areas could be implemented on offshore grounds in order to improve survival.

Common names

DK: Stribet havkat; ES: -; FI: Merikissa; DE: Seewolf; LV: Viklzivs; LT: Paprastoji vilkžuvė; PL: Zębacz, RU: Polosataja zubatka; SE: Havskatt

References

- Fiskeriverket (2011). Ask, L., Westerberg, H. (eds.). Fiskbestånd och miljö i hav och sötvatten – Resurs och miljööversikt 2011. Danagårds Grafiska, Ödeshög. 247 pp. [in Swedish] Available at: <https://www.havochvatten.se/download/18.472732f513318aaf1af800075/1319016178229/ROM+2011.pdf>
- Froese, R., Pauly, D. (eds.) (2012). FishBase. World Wide Web electronic publication. Available at: www.fishbase.org, version (10/2012).
- HELCOM (2007). HELCOM Red list of threatened and declining species of lampreys and fish of the Baltic Sea. Baltic Sea Environmental Proceedings No. 109. Helsinki Commission, Helsinki. 40 pp.
- HELCOM (2012). Checklist of Baltic Sea Macro-species. Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 130. Helsinki Commission, Helsinki. 203 pp.
- Kullander, S.O., Delling, B. (2012). Nationalnyckeln till Sveriges flora och fauna. Strålfeniga fiskar. Actinopterygii. Art databanken, SLU, Uppsala. 517pp. [in Swedish]
- Svensson, M., Degerman, E., Florin, A.-B., Hagberg, J., Kullander, S. O., Nathanson, J. E. & Stenberg, C. (2010). Fiskar – Fish. Pisces. In Gärdenfors, U. (ed.) Rödlistade arter i Sverige 2010 – The 2010 Red List of Swedish Species. ArtDatabanken, SLU, Uppsala. P. 323–332. Red List categories available also at <http://www.artfakta.se/GetSpecies.aspx?SearchType=Advanced>