

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Hippoglossus hippoglossus

English name: Halibut	Scientific name: <i>Hippoglossus hippoglossus</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Actinopterygii Order: Pleuronectiformes Family: Pleuronectidae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: 8.5 years	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Fishing (F02)	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): Fishing (F02)	
IUCN Criteria: –	HELCOM Red List Category:	NA Not Applicable
Global / European IUCN Red List Category: EN/NE	Habitats Directive:	
Previous HELCOM Red List Category (2007): EN		
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/–, Estonia –/–, Finland –/–, Germany –/–, Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/–, Russia –/–, Sweden: Protected from fishing during spawning time, 20 December to 31 of March / EN		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

This marine flatfish is currently a rare visitor in the Kattegat and occasionally observed in the Belt Sea and the Sound. It was probably a more frequent visitor with feeding migration to Kattegat before the populations in the Skagerrak and North Sea were reduced. There are however no evidence of regular reproduction within the HELCOM area during the timeframe for the redlisting process (1800– current date).



Halibut. Photo: Leif Krause.

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Hippoglossus hippoglossus



Halibut. Photo by Timo Moritz Deutsches Meeresmuseum.

Habitat and ecology

The Atlantic halibut is a marine deepwater species spawning during December–April in 200–300m in coastal areas but down to 2000m at sea. It is remarkable for a flatfish that this species swims quite often freely in the water column. Halibut feed mainly on other fish (cod, haddock, sand-eels, herring, capelin), but also takes cephalopods, large crustaceans and other bottom-living animals. Halibut is largest of all flatfishes in the HELCOM area with males about 150 cm and females of 200 cm. Males sexually mature at a length of 55–110 cm and females at length of 110–135 cm, which correspond to ages between 4–18 years. Maximum lifespan is estimated to be 50 years.

Description of major threats

Due to slow growth rate and late onset of sexual maturity, halibut populations can be seriously affected by overfishing.

Assessment justification

As the species is not reproducing in the HELCOM area and less than 2% of the European population can be found within the HELCOM area, the species categorized Not Applicable (NA).

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

This species is currently a rare visitor to the HELCOM area but since it is threatened in adjacent areas (globally listed as Endangered) fishing for this species should be regulated and a management plan established to promote re-colonisation of feeding migrating halibut in the Kattegat.

Common names

D: Heilbutt; DK: Helleflynder; EST:-; FI: Ruijanpallas; GB: Halibut; PL: Halibut biały; LV: Atlantijas paltuss; LT: Atlantinis paltusas; RUS: Atlanticheskij belokoryj paltus; SE: Hälleflundra

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Hippoglossus hippoglossus

References

- 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., Nyman, L., Jilg, K., Delling, B. (2012). Nationalnyckeln till Sveriges flora och fauna. Strålfeniga fiskar. Actinopterygii. ArtDatabanken, SLU, Uppsala. 517 pp. [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>