

SPECIES INFORMATION SHEET

Scomber scombrus

English name: Mackerel	Scientific name: <i>Scomber scombrus</i>	
Taxonomical group: Class: Actinopterygii Order: Perciformes Family: Scombridae	Species authority: Linnaeus, 1758	
Subspecies, Variations, Synonyms: –	Generation length: 8.2	
Past and current threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): –	Future threats (Habitats Directive article 17 codes): –	
IUCN Criteria: –	HELCOM Red List Category:	NA Not Applicable
Global / European IUCN Red List Category: LC/NE	Habitats Directive: –	
Previous HELCOM Red List Category (2007): VU		
Protection and Red List status in HELCOM countries: Denmark –/–, Estonia –/NA, Finland –/–, Germany –/* (Not threatened, Baltic Sea), Latvia –/–, Lithuania –/–, Poland –/–, Russia –/–, Sweden –/LC		

Distribution and status in the Baltic Sea region

Mackerel is a long-migrating marine species that is occasionally caught in all parts of the Baltic Sea, including the Gulfs. It is however only regularly occurring in the southern Baltic Sea and Kattegat while spawning takes place outside the HELCOM area. The Northeast Atlantic mackerel comprises three spawning components, the southern, western and North Sea (including Skagerrak). Mackerel from the southern and western areas migrate north to feed in autumn and then mix with the North Sea component. Mackerel is targeted by both recreational and commercial fishery and assessment of mackerel in the Northeast Atlantic by ICES shows that fishing mortality is above the target level but the spawning stock biomass nevertheless increased between 2002 and 2010 and is well above Biological precautionary level (ICES 2011, Collette et al. 2011).



Mackerel. Photo: Maria Boström, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

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Habitat and ecology

The mackerel is a pelagic species which forms large schools near the surface in shelf areas (Collette et al. 2011). It feeds on plankton and small fish. It reaches maturity at an age between 2–7 years and can live up to 18 years. It is seldom over 50 cm long (Froese & Pauly 2012).

Description of major threats

No major threats identified with in the HELCOM area.

Assessment justification

Mackerel is a widely distributed and migratory species. The Northeast Atlantic Mackerel is a combination of southern, western, and North Sea spawning components. There is no reproduction within the HELCOM area (HELCOM 2012) and it is only a small part of the total North East Atlantic stock, presumably less than 2% of the European population that migrates to feed within the HELCOM area. This species is therefore considered Not Applicable for assessment according to the IUCN system in the HELCOM area.

Recommendations for actions to conserve the species

No protection actions currently needed in HELCOM area.

Common names

DE: Makrele; DK: Makrel; ES: makrell; skumbria; FI: Makrilli; GB: Mackerel ; LA: Makrele; LI: Atlantiné skumbrè; PL: Makrela; RU: Atlanticheskaja skumbrija; SE: Makrill

References

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- Estonian eBiodiversity. Red List 2008 results and species information available at <http://elurikkus.ut.ee/prmt.php?lang=eng>
- Froese, R., Pauly, D. (eds.) (2012). FishBase. World Wide Web electronic publication. Available at: www.fishbase.org, version (10/2012).
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- HELCOM (2012). Checklist of Baltic Sea Macro-species. Baltic Sea Environment Proceedings No. 130. Helsinki Commission, Helsinki. 203 pp.
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