

EU25 catches in the NW Atlantic fall by 29% in 2004

Statistics in focus

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Author

David CROSS

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New Member States contributed 45% to the EU25 total

The EU25 catch in the NW Atlantic was 68 thousand tonnes in 2004 (Table 1). This represents an estimated 2% of the EU25 catch world wide and also an estimated 2% of the catch by all countries in the Northwest Atlantic.

Three Member States accounted for 72% of the EU-25 total: Spain (19 thousand tonnes, 28%), Estonia (16 thousand tonnes, 24%) and Portugal (13 thousand tonnes, 20%). The new Member States, all Baltic Sea coastal states, contributed 46% to the EU25 total catch.

The data are not complete for 2003 and 2004, but in 2002 the catch of the four coastal states (Canada, Greenland, St Pierre-Miquelon and the USA) was 2.1 million tonnes, 93% of the 2.3 total catch in the region. In 2002 the EU25 was responsible for 56% of the 152 thousand tonnes caught by fishing vessels from non-coastal states.

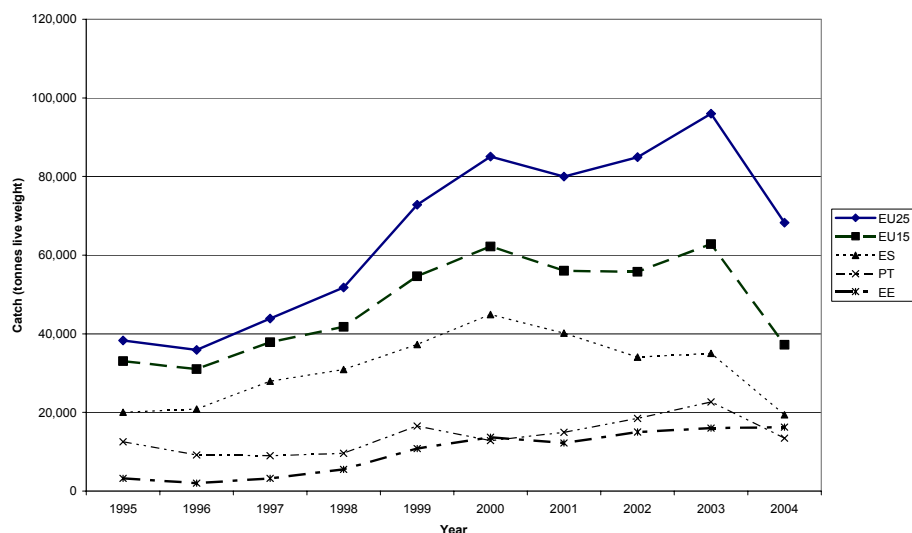


Figure 1: EU catches in the NW Atlantic, 1995-2004

A steady increase in EU25 catches since 1995 but....

There has been a steady increase in EU25 catches from 38 thousand tonnes in 1995 to 96 thousand tonnes in 2003, a 151% increase (figure 1). While the catches of the EU15 countries peaked at 62 thousand tonnes in 2000 the observed continuing increase for the EU25 was due to increases in catches by the new Member States from 23 thousand tonnes in 2000 to 33 thousand tonnes in 2003.

It should be noted that, for the most part, the activities of EU fishing vessels in the Northwest Atlantic are limited to international waters (that is, waters outside of the extended economic zones of the coastal states) and are subject to the strict management regime of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO). In many cases the catches reflect the limits resulting from this management regime.



	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
DK	447	403	421	550	236	0	93	359	1,006	2,754
DE	0	495	450	355	569	4,475	817	2,861	3,549	1,587
ES	20,065	20,847	27,938	30,922	37,274	44,907	40,191	34,077	35,050	19,393
PT	12,543	9,172	9,010	9,621	16,561	12,842	14,949	18,483	22,680	13,452
UK	0	129	23	332	0	0	0	0	547	0
EU15	33,055	31,046	37,842	41,780	54,640	62,224	56,050	55,780	62,832	37,186
EE	3,243	2,010	3,239	5,533	10,835	13,697	12,233	15,016	16,000	16,261
LV	1,026	1,253	997	1,191	3,080	3,397	3,330	2,742	4,575	3,979
LT	980	1,585	1,785	3,107	3,370	4,048	7,596	10,948	11,671	8,644
PL	0	0	0	148	894	1,732	761	428	921	2,199
EU25	38,304	35,894	43,863	51,759	72,819	85,098	79,970	84,914	95,999	68,269
IS	8,232	20,682	7,197	6,572	9,148	9,363	5,077	6,878	7,226	7,588
NO	12,017	7,534	3,808	2,684	4,343	4,424	14,527	14,428	26,308	12,434
EEA	58,553	64,110	54,868	61,015	86,310	98,885	99,574	106,220	129,533	88,291
FO	6,884	10,209	8,451	10,094	10,560	8,543	12,732	6,268	14,388	:
JP	4,333	3,883	2,572	3,109	3,112	2,941	3,627	3,389	3,216	1,948
RU	10,663	6,956	1,465	2,872	6,022	27,660	32,138	34,311	34,353	:
TW	206	83	30	8	127	351	618	570	161	-
UA	-	-	-	-	-	-	405	-	389	580
Total foreign vessels	80,639	85,241	67,386	77,098	106,131	138,380	149,094	150,758	182,040	:
CA	615,698	649,827	712,225	770,054	805,785	854,704	871,254	864,832	817,787	:
GL	108,887	94,341	94,093	97,912	117,852	121,886	124,154	151,533	130,366	186,972
PM	309	740	8,553	6,108	5,916	6,635	4,206	3,846	3,890	3,702
US	1,226,186	1,162,409	1,097,404	1,042,981	1,015,197	1,032,035	1,170,543	1,112,855	:	:
Total coastal states	1,951,080	1,907,317	1,912,275	1,917,055	1,944,750	2,015,260	2,170,157	2,133,066	:	:
Total	2,049,796	2,016,550	1,991,849	2,001,782	2,055,320	2,153,335	2,318,633	2,285,254	:	:

Table 1: Catches in the NW Atlantic, 1995-2004 (tons live weight)

However in 2004 the EU25 catch decreased sharply by 29% to 68 thousand tonnes. Most of the EU25 countries fishing in the region experienced decreased catches in 2004. Of the major fishing EU countries the greatest decreases were recorded by Spain (45% from 35 thousand tonnes in 2003 to 19 thousand tonnes in 2004) and Portugal (41%, from 23 thousand tonnes in 2003 to 13 thousand tonnes in 2004). Only Denmark and Poland, both with relatively minor contributions to the fisheries, experienced increased catches between 2003 to 2004 (of 173% and 139% respectively).

In 2002, the latest year for which complete data are available, foreign vessels (that is, vessels other than those from the coastal states) were responsible for only 6.6% of the total catch in the Northwest Atlantic.

EU25 are responsible for 54% of catch by foreign vessels in the Regulatory Area

In 2002 the latest year for which full data are available, EU25 fishing vessels were responsible for 84 thousand tonnes (57%) of the 147 thousand tonnes caught by foreign vessels in the NAFO Regulatory Area. (See the Methodological Notes on page 7 for the definition of the Regulatory Area.) Only 0.6% of the EU-25 catch and 1.2% of the total catch by all foreign vessels in the NW Atlantic was taken outside of the NAFO Regulatory Area.

The NAFO Secretariat reports that 132 vessels from 15 countries fished in the Regulatory Area in 2004 (see Figure 2). 72 of these were from EU25 Member States. A typical fishing trip in the NAFO RA extends between one and four months, on average about three months.

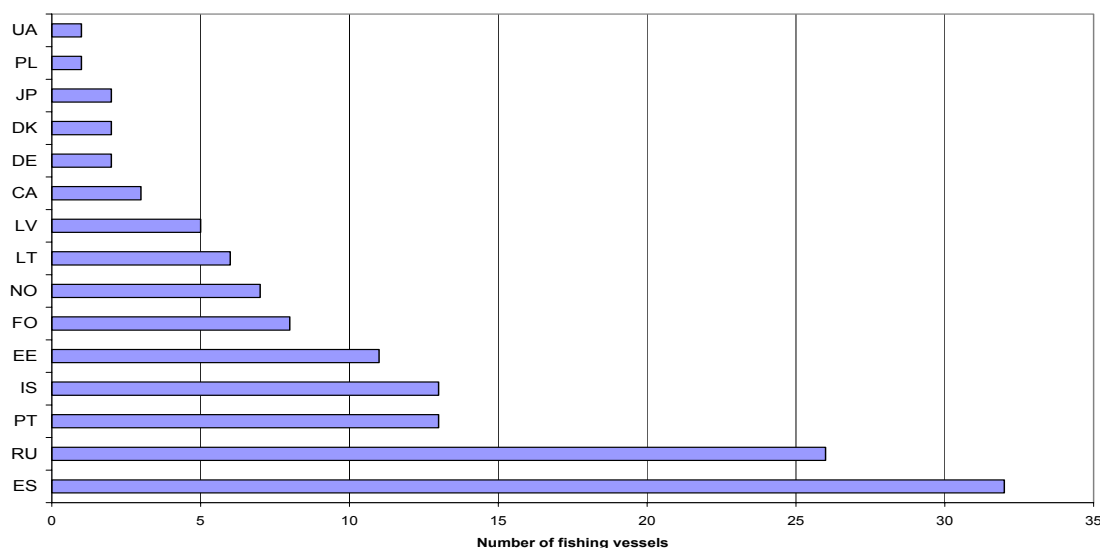


Figure 2: Number of vessels fishing in the NAFO Regulatory Area in 2004 (Source: NAFO)

	Area I	Area II	Area III	Area IV	Area V	Total
DK	-	-	-	-	359	359
DE	-	538	-	-	2,323	2,861
ES	-	-	-	-	34,077	34,077
PT	-	-	-	-	18,483	18,483
EU-15	-	538	-	-	55,242	55,780
EE	-	-	-	-	15,016	15,016
LV	-	-	-	-	2,742	2,742
LT	-	-	-	-	10,948	10,948
PL	-	-	-	-	428	428
EU25	-	538	-	-	84,376	84,914
IS	-	1,070	-	-	5,808	6,878
NO	785	1,751	-	-	11,892	14,428
EEA	785	3,359	0	0	102,076	106,220
RU	2,551	940	-	-	30,862	34,353
FO	5	300	-	-	5,963	6,268
JP	-	-	-	-	3,389	3,389
TW	-	-	-	-	-	0
Total foreign countries	3,341	4,599	0	0	142,290	150,230
CA	630,332	-	35,493	-	199,007	864,832
GL	-	149,738	-	-	1,795	151,533
PM	-	-	3,846	-	-	3,846
US	-	-	-	1,112,855	-	1,112,855
Total coastal states	630,332	149,738	39,339	1,112,855	200,802	2,133,066
World	633,673	154,337	39,339	1,112,855	343,092	2,283,296

NB: See Methodological Notes for explanation of the fishing areas

Table 2: Catches by fishing areas in the Northwest Atlantic in 2002 (tonnes live weight)

The four coastal states accounted for 93% of the total catch in the NW Atlantic in 2002 with 68% of this being taken from areas I – IV (within their extended economic zones).

catch of this species has increased over ten-fold since 1995. Other species to have shown an increase in catches over this period, though generally with a drop in 2004, are the Atlantic redfishes (*Sebastes* spp.), rays (*Raja* spp.), and white hake (*Urophycis tenuis*).

Northern prawns are now major EU25 species in the NW Atlantic

In 2004 one species, the Northern prawn (*Pandalus borealis*), accounted for 40% of the catch by EU25 vessels in the Northwest Atlantic, 27,114 tonnes out of a total of 68,269 tonnes. (see Table 3 and Figure 3). The

To this list should be added the Greenland halibut (*Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*) whose catches rose from 11 thousand tonnes in 1995 to nearly 19 thousand tonnes in 2003. However, concern as to the state of the stock and resultant management measures reduced the catch to 8.4 thousand tonnes in 2004.

	3-alpha code	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Northern prawn - <i>Pandalus borealis</i>	PRA	2,677	2,578	7,035	11,644	19,673	22,380	17,362	20,085	23,242	27,114
Atlantic redfishes nei - <i>Sebastes</i> spp	RED	5,093	2,723	2,514	5,054	12,016	16,115	14,686	18,380	22,931	14,047
Greenland halibut - <i>Reinhardtius hippoglossoides</i>	GHL	11,077	11,101	11,738	10,831	13,354	14,652	18,728	18,881	18,990	8,356
Raja rays nei - <i>Raja</i> spp	SKA	6,572	5,373	10,237	9,216	11,563	14,958	12,440	7,876	10,746	8,201
Roundnose grenadier - <i>Coryphaenoides rupestris</i>	RNG	2,649	261	4	5	0	20	5,134	4,552	3,464	2,578
White hake - <i>Urophycis tenuis</i>	HKW	38	186	304	487	426	806	688	4,941	6,123	1,811
Witch flounder - <i>Glyptocephalus cynoglossus</i>	WIT	1,469	1,872	1,694	1,734	1,692	1,721	1,929	1,282	1,617	1,233
Roughhead grenadier - <i>Macrourus berglax</i>	RHG	1,377	3,884	4,505	7,140	7,017	8,470	1,747	1,419	1,591	1,154
American plaice - <i>Hippoglossoides platessoides</i>	PLA	724	949	1,391	1,494	2,181	1,934	1,852	1,457	1,765	1,116
Red hake - <i>Urophycis chuss</i>	HKR	339	1,013	1,012	1,218	1,428	1,605	2,034	3,131	1,248	831
Wolffishes (=Catfishes) nei - <i>Anarhichas</i> spp	CAT	1,553	814	719	611	1,071	588	928	620	725	444
Dogfish sharks nei - <i>Squalidae</i>	DGX	0	135	211	605	554	402	676	474	612	365
Yellowtail flounder - <i>Limanda ferruginea</i>	YEL	64	261	656	649	1,182	990	1,021	351	425	357
Atlantic cod - <i>Gadus morhua</i>	COD	2,234	1,642	1,570	550	328	203	406	496	625	308
Atlantic halibut - <i>Hippoglossus hippoglossus</i>	HAL	84	63	61	89	150	124	179	203	315	133
Total fishery products		38,304	35,894	43,863	51,759	72,819	85,098	79,970	84,914	95,999	68,269

Table 3: Major species caught by EU25 in NW Atlantic in 1995-2004 (tonnes live weight)

However, the outstanding feature given the history of fisheries in the NW Atlantic is the fact that catches of the Atlantic cod (*Gadus morhua*) contributes less than 0.5% to the EU25 catches. This is explained by the

poor state of the stocks of this species and the resulting implementation of drastic management measures (a moratorium) which prohibits fisheries directed on this species.

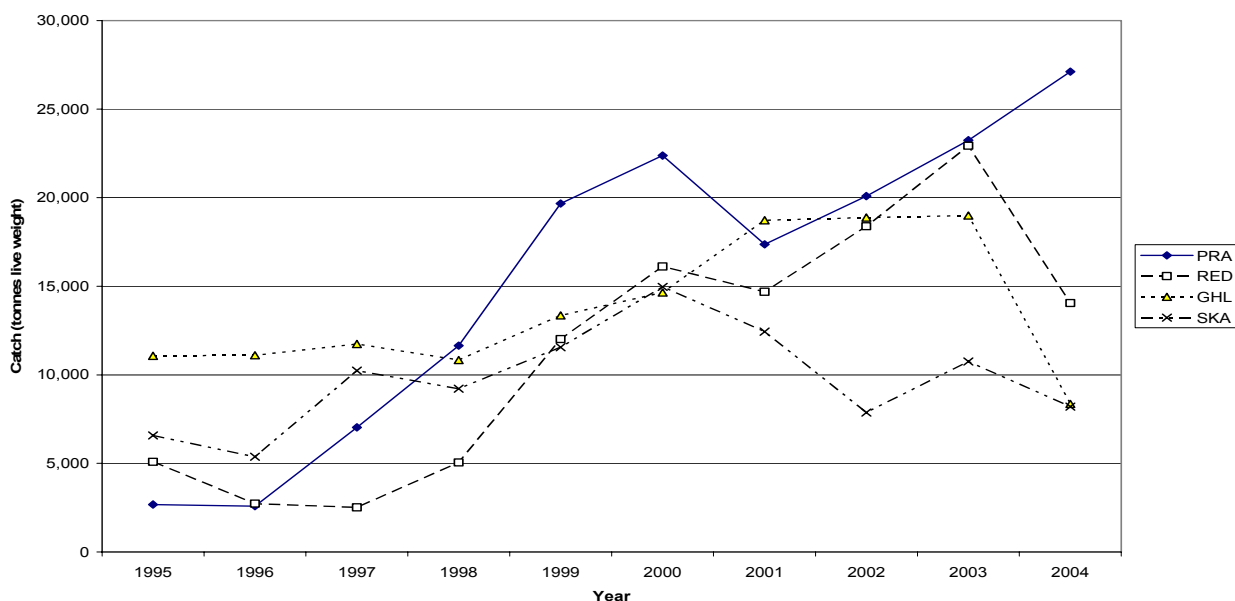


Figure 3: Catch of major species by the EU25 in the Northwest Atlantic in 1995-2004 (tonnes live weight)

A historical review of EU fisheries in the Northwest Atlantic

Historically the fisheries of the Northwest Atlantic have been of major importance to Western European countries, primarily due to the abundance of the Atlantic cod in this region. From the early 16th century the Portuguese, English, French and Spanish have fished there and folk lore tells of vessels not being able to drop their anchors because of the abundance of cod and of men being able to walk across the backs of the cod on the Grand Banks off the Canadian coast. It has been

[estimated](#) that in five centuries 200 million tonnes or more have been taken from this fishery.

Records for more recent years show that the total catch from the NW Atlantic doubled from 2.2 million tonnes in 1950 to a maximum of 4.6 million tonnes in 1968. Since then the catches have decreased equally sharply to return to the 1950 levels in 2002 (see figure 4). In 1968 two species, the Atlantic cod and the Atlantic herring (*Clupea harengus*) dominated the catch with 1.9 and 0.9 million tonnes respectively: that is 61% of the total catch.

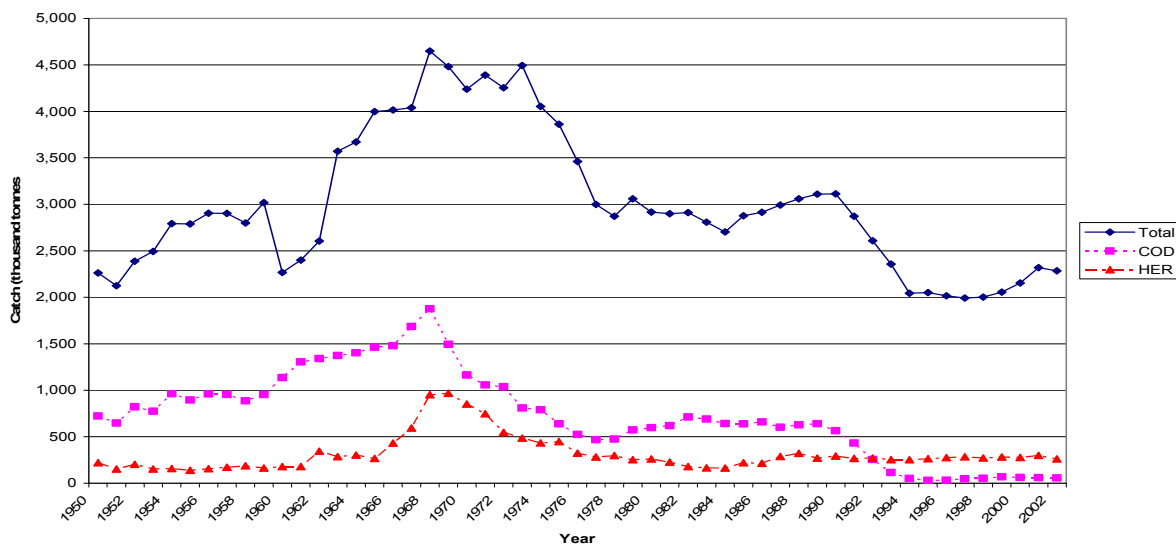


Figure 4: Total catches in the NW Atlantic in the period 1950-2002 (thousand tonnes live weight)

The EU15's catch in the Northwest Atlantic increased from 374 thousand tonnes in 1950 (17% of the total catch for the region) to 1.2 million tonnes in 1968 (27% of the total) and then decreased to 56 thousand tonnes (2% of the total) (see figure 5). The EU15 decline from

1968 to the present day is due to the deteriorating state of the fish stocks (and the resulting drastic management measures) combined with the loss of access to fishing grounds due to the extension of economic zones by the coastal states.

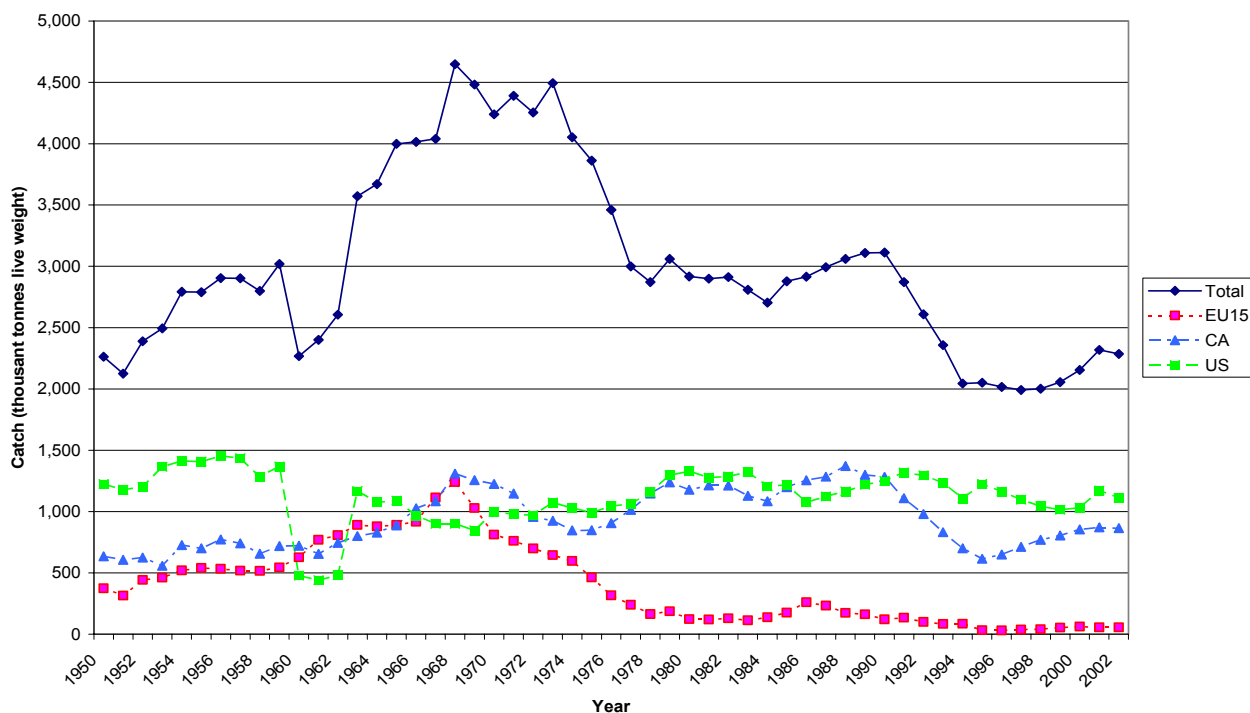


Figure 5: Catches by the major fishing countries in the NW Atlantic, 1950-2002 (thousand tonnes live weight)

In 1968, the year in which the maximum catch of 4.6 million tonnes was taken from the NW Atlantic and which was before the extension of the eez's by the coastal states and the application of strict management measures, 41% of the EU15 catch and 49% of the total

catch by foreign vessels was taken from Areas I - IV (that is, within the future eez's of the coastal states) (see Table 4) compared with only 1% and 5% respectively in 2002.

	Area I	Area II	Area III	Area IV	Area V	Total
DE	18,601	106,097	1,960	143,214	193,066	462,938
ES	65,386	20,773	28,416	18,016	208,721	341,312
FR	26,325	38,880	1,128	-	103,232	169,565
PT	7,610	26,318	8	-	185,430	219,366
UK	156	5,628	-	-	41,456	47,240
EU15	118,078	197,696	31,512	161,230	731,905	1,240,421
EE	:	:	:	:	:	:
LV	:	:	:	:	:	:
LT	:	:	:	:	:	:
PL	1,275	906	-	92,493	104,836	199,510
EU25	119,353	198,602	31,512	253,723	836,741	1,439,931
IS	-	268	-	292	398	958
NO	-	48,562	-	-	12,978	61,540
EEA	119,353	247,432	31,512	254,015	850,117	1,502,429
RO	-	-	-	2,892	-	2,892
FO	-	46,002	-	-	-	46,002
CU	-	-	-	182	1,016	1,198
JP	2,022	127	-	7,264	1,100	10,513
SU	73,920	1,596	32,867	334,860	358,780	802,023
Total foreign countries	195,295	295,157	64,379	599,213	1,211,013	2,365,057
CA	799,283	-	149,010	103,961	210,726	1,262,980
GL	-	22,398	-	-	10,785	33,183
PM	2,727	-	2,924	53	775	6,479
US	25,920	-	-	874,581	12	900,513
Total coastal states	827,930	22,398	151,934	978,595	222,298	2,203,155
World	1,023,225	317,555	216,313	1,577,808	1,433,311	4,568,212

NB: See Methodological Notes for the explanation of fishing areas.

Table 4: Total catches in the Northwest Atlantic by fishing area in 1968 (tonnes live weight).



Figure 6: Northwest Atlantic

Although the fisheries in 1968 were concentrated on the prolific Grand Banks in Area V, substantial quantities were taken by foreign fishing vessels from the future eez'z of all four coastal states. The closure of these fisheries to foreign vessels obviously required an adjustment of fishing operations.

The volume and species composition of the catch by EU15 countries in the NW Atlantic in 1968 differs markedly from that in 2003. The EU15 catch in 1968 at 1.24 million tonnes was 33 times greater than that in 2003.

The dominant species in 1968 was, by far, the Atlantic cod with a catch of over 1 million tonnes, 83% of the total (see Table 5). The only other species contributing more than 2% to the total was the Atlantic herring with a catch of 157 thousand tonnes (13% of the total).

A notable absentee from the 1968 list is the Northern prawn which has figured prominently in the catches in the period since 2000

	3 alpha code	Tonnes
Atlantic cod - <i>Gadus morhua</i>	COD	1,032,651
Atlantic herring - <i>Clupea harengus</i>	HER	157,494
Atlantic redfishes nei - <i>Sebastes</i> spp	RED	19,091
Haddock - <i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>	HAD	10,207
Roundnose grenadier - <i>Coryphaenoides rupestris</i>	RNG	4,735
Greenland halibut - <i>Reinhardtius hippoglossoides</i>	GHL	4,396
Groundfishes nei - <i>Osteichthyes</i>	GRO	3,684
Atlantic mackerel - <i>Scomber scombrus</i>	MAC	3,463
Saithe(=Pollock) - <i>Pollachius virens</i>	POK	1,910
Wolffishes (=Catfishes) nei - <i>Anarhichas</i> spp	CAT	1,013
Total fishery products		1,240,421

Table 5: Major species caught by EU15 in the Northwest Atlantic in 1968 (tonnes live weight)

➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

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Council Regulation no 2597/96 requires EU/EEA member countries to submit to the Commission statistics on their catches in the Northwest Atlantic with a breakdown by species and by statistical subdivision.

Data for other countries have been supplied by the NAFO Secretariat whose assistance in compiling this report is gratefully acknowledged.

The data are expressed in the live weight equivalent of the landings and exclude all quantities which are caught but not landed.

Since the extension of economic zones to 200 miles by the 4 coastal states (Canada, Greenland, St Pierre-Miquelon and the USA) the fishing activities of vessels from other countries have been largely restricted to waters outside of the 200 mile extended economic zones (e.e.z.) of the coastal states. These waters are known as the Regulatory Area of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO), the organisation responsible for the management of these fisheries. They are also referred to as "international waters".

In a limited number of cases agreements exist between foreign nations and the coastal states permitting fishing activities within the e.e.z. limits

The statistical divisions of the NW Atlantic (see Figure 6) do not correspond to the e.e.z. limits in most cases. This complicates the identification of catches made by foreign fishing vessels in the NAFO Regulatory Area and in the e.e.z. of coastal states.

However, for the purposes of this report the following areas have been designated:

Area I: Divisions 0A, 0B, 3Pn, 4R, 4S, 4T, 4Vn, 4Vs, 4W, 4X. In this report this area is considered to correspond approximately to the **extended economic zone of Canada**.

Area II: Divisions 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D. In this report this area is considered to correspond approximately to the **extended economic zone of Greenland**.

Area III: Division 4Ps. In this report this area is considered to correspond approximately to the **extended economic zone of St Pierre-Miquelon**.

Area IV: Divisions 5Y, 5Ze, 5Zw, 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D, 6E, 6F, 6G, 6H. In this report this area is considered to correspond approximately to the **extended economic zone of the USA**.

Area V. Divisions 1E, 1F, 2G, 2H, 2J, 3K, 3L, 3M, 3N, 3O. In this report this area is considered to correspond approximately to the **NAFO Regulatory Area**.

It must be stressed that these areas have been designated solely for use in this report and that their wider application should be subject to careful consideration.

The countries fishing in the Northwest Atlantic in the period covered by this report are Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), France (FR), Portugal (PT), Spain (ES), United Kingdom (UK), Estonia (EE), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Poland (PL), Iceland (IS), Norway (NO), Canada (CA), Greenland (GL), St Pierre-Miquelon (PM), USA (US), Cuba (CU), Faroe Is (FO), Japan (JP), Roumania (RO), Russian Federation (RU), Soviet Union (SU), Taiwan (TW) and Ukraine (UA).

Further information:

Reference publications

Title	Pocketbook of fishery statistics
Catalogue No	KS-DW-05-001-EN-C
Price	EUR 10

Data:

[EUROSTAT Website/Agriculture, forestry and fisheries/Fisheries/Catches - Atlantic ocean and adjacent seas/Catches - North-west Atlantic](#)

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