

EEA FISHERIES IN THE NORTHEAST ATLANTIC

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Introduction.

The Northeast Atlantic, which includes the Baltic Sea, is the major fishing area for most of the member countries of the European Economic Area. Table 1 and Figure 1 show that, with the exception of Greece, Italy (both of which in most years do not fish in the area) and Spain, over two-thirds of the total catch of the countries is taken from the Northeast Atlantic.

	All areas	NE Atlantic	% NE Atl.
EU-15	6 558 646	4 998 034	76
B	29 989	29 862	100
DK	1 826 620	1 824 396	100
D	236 436	205 389	87
GR	153 890	0	0
E	1 092 075	400 703	37
F	537 758	362 156	67
IRL	289 063	288 343	100
I	339 284	0	0
NL	449 506	348 507	78
P	221 923	184 515	83
FIN	132 469	111 807	84
S	355 395	352 347	99
UK	894 238	890 009	100
ISL	2 205 520	2 191 138	99
NOR	2 855 728	2 850 301	100
EEA	11 619 894	10 039 473	86

Table 1: EEA catches in 1997 (tonnes)

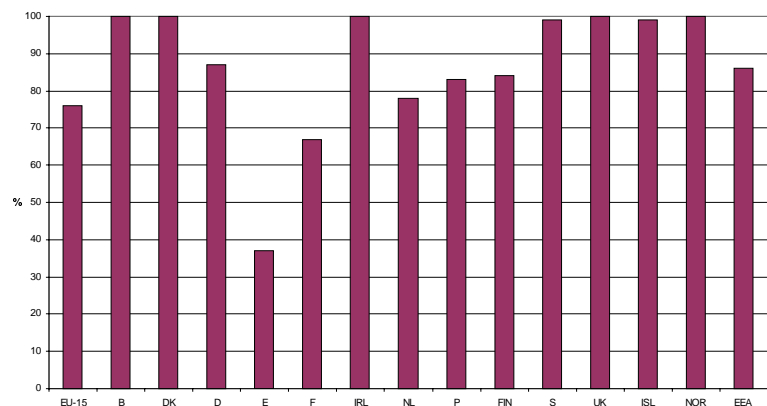


Figure 1: Percentage of catches from the NE Atlantic, 1997

Statistics in focus

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Furthermore, the EEA with a total catch of just over 10 million tonnes was responsible for 86% of the 11.7 million tonnes caught in the area in 1997.

Table 2 shows that in all countries fish accounted for over 80% of the catch. Shellfish (molluscs and crustacea) were relatively minor components of the catch.

Country	Code	Marine fish	Shellfish	Total	% fish
EU-15	EU-15	4 560 726	437 308	4 998 034	91
Belgium	B	28 087	1 775	29 862	94
Denmark	DK	1 714 892	109 504	1 824 396	94
Germany	D	185 381	20 008	205 389	90
Spain	E	375 083	25 620	400 703	94
France	F	297 431	64 725	362 156	82
Greece	GR	-	-	-	-
Ireland	IRL	261 263	27 080	288 343	91
Italy	I	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	NL	323 716	24 791	348 507	93
Portugal	P	168 817	15 698	184 515	91
Finland	FIN	111 807	0	111 807	100
Sweden	S	348 507	3 840	352 347	99
United Kingdom	UK	745 742	144 267	890 009	84
Iceland	ISL	2 104 748	86 390	2 191 138	96
Norway	NOR	2 807 446	42 855	2 850 301	98
EEA	EEA	9 472 920	566 553	10 039 473	94

Table 2: Catches by EEA countries in the NE Atlantic in 1997 (tonnes).

Catch by EEA member countries.

In 1997 Norway (2.8 million tonnes, 28% of the total EEA catch) and Iceland (2.2 million tonnes, 22% of the EEA catch) were the major fishing countries. Denmark (1.8 million tonnes, 18% of the EEA total and 37% of the EU total) and the United Kingdom (0.9 million tonnes, 9% of the EEA total and 18% of the EU total) were the only EU Member States making significant contributions to the total catch from the area (see Figure 2).

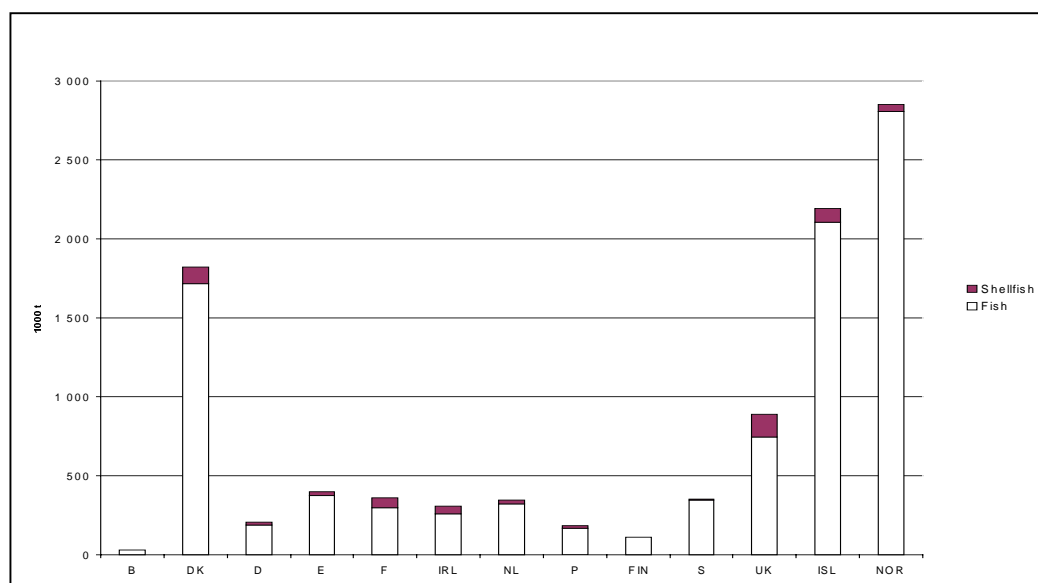


Figure 2: Catch of fish and shellfish by EEA countries in the NE Atlantic in 1997

EEA catches in the period 1970-97

The general trend in the catches of EEA member countries in the Northeast Atlantic was for an increase of 16%, from 8.6 million tonnes in 1970 to 10.0 million tonnes in 1997 (see Table 3 and Figure 3). However the increase was not steady with catches rising to a maximum of 10.1 million tonnes in 1977, followed by a steady decline to a minimum of 7.5 million tonnes in 1990 and a more rapid rise to the current level of 10 million tonnes. Throughout the period the EU catches remained relatively constant, at around 5 million tonnes (with a maximum of 5.8 million tonnes in 1974 and a minimum of 4.5 million tonnes in 1990).

There were considerable differences between the trends in the different countries. Iceland showed a three-fold increase in catches from 0.7 million tonnes in 1970 to 2.1 million tonnes in 1997. Five EU Member States reported increased catches in the period (Ireland +275%, Finland +110%, Denmark +51%, Sweden +25% and the Netherlands +16%). The remaining EU countries reported decreased catches (Germany -64%, Belgium -43%, France -39%, Spain -38%, Portugal -26% and the United Kingdom -18%)

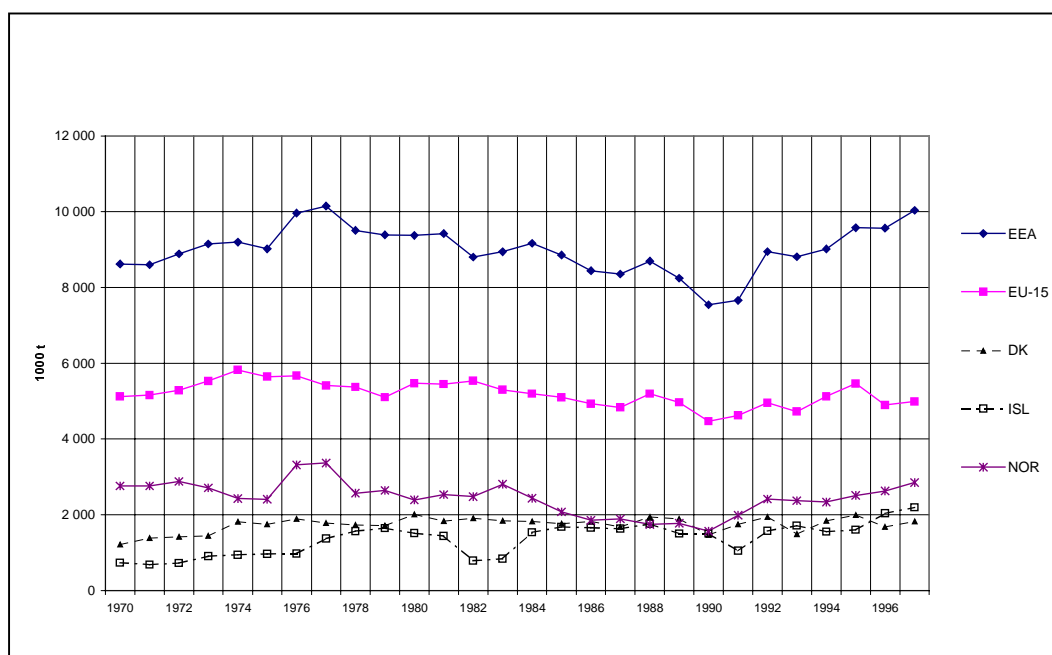


Figure 3: Catches in the NE Atlantic, 1970-97.

	1970	1980	1990	1997
EU-15	5 121 444	5 470 040	4 454 758	4 998 034
B	53 000	45 622	40 965	29 862
DK	1 211 400	2 009 145	1 471 832	1 824 396
D	575 915	354 749	274 383	205 389
E	642 503	462 665	345 007	400 703
F	597 895	740 464	412 888	362 156
GR	-	-	-	-
IRL	76 800	148 388	212 119	288 343
I	-	2 412	-	-
NL	298 200	338 234	402 093	348 507
P	248 024	209 501	221 703	184 516
FIN	53 300	95 941	67 966	111 807
S	280 804	221 434	244 112	352 346
UK	1 083 603	841 485	761 690	890 009
ISL	733 300	1 514 376	1 505 159	2 191 138
NOR	2 762 863	2 393 414	1 569 083	2 850 301
EEA	8 617 607	9 377 830	7 529 000	10 039 473

Table 3: EEA catches in the NE Atlantic in the period 1970-97 (tonnes)

Species composition of the EEA catch in the NE Atlantic.

In 1997 the Atlantic herring was the major species in the catch in the NE Atlantic: 1.9 million tonnes or 19% of the total, though two species caught for industrial purposes, capelin and sandeels, were not far behind (see table 4).

		1970	1980	1990	1997
HER	Atlantic herring - <i>Clupea harengus</i>	1 211 700	474 464	1 028 806	1 887 246
CAP	Capelin - <i>Mallotus villosus</i>	1 492 800	2 007 708	777 762	1 525 604
SAN	Sandeels - <i>Ammodytes</i> spp	191 600	781 553	751 415	1 230 895
COD	Atlantic Cod - <i>Gadus morhua</i>	1 485 800	1 210 810	778 240	888 185
WHB	Blue whiting - <i>Micromesistius poutassou</i>	10 400	267 753	395 391	520 951
HOM	Atlantic horse mackerel - <i>Trachurus trachurus</i>	172 700	143 662	410 417	476 249
SPR	Sprat - <i>Sprattus sprattus</i>	91 500	516 873	116 922	450 442
MAC	Atlantic mackerel - <i>Scomber scombrus</i>	407 800	589 543	539 619	446 066
POK	Saithe - <i>Pollachius virens</i>	498 300	344 099	299 617	278 762
HAD	Haddock - <i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>	484 600	258 587	160 644	255 355
NOP	Norway pout - <i>Trisopterus esmarkii</i>	276 400	514 977	271 502	200 179

Table 4: Major species caught by EEA countries in the NE Atlantic in 1970-97 (tonnes)

Figure 4, with the catches of fish primarily for human consumption in the period 1970-97, shows the rapid decline in the catches of Atlantic herring in the early 1970's which resulted in the closure of the fishery in the North Sea. With the recovery of the stock and the re-opening of the fishery in the early 1980's the catches have risen from a low of 0.4 million tonnes in 1979 to 1.9 million tonnes in 1997. The major country in the fishery for the herring is Norway (0.9 million tonnes in 1997, or 49% of the total EEA catch of this species) followed by Iceland (0.3 million tonnes). However this species is an important component of the catch of most EU Member States fishing in the area: This is particularly the case for Sweden and Finland where the 1997 catches of 166 thousand tonnes and 90 thousand tonnes (in the Baltic Sea) accounted for 47% and 82% of the total catches of those countries respectively.

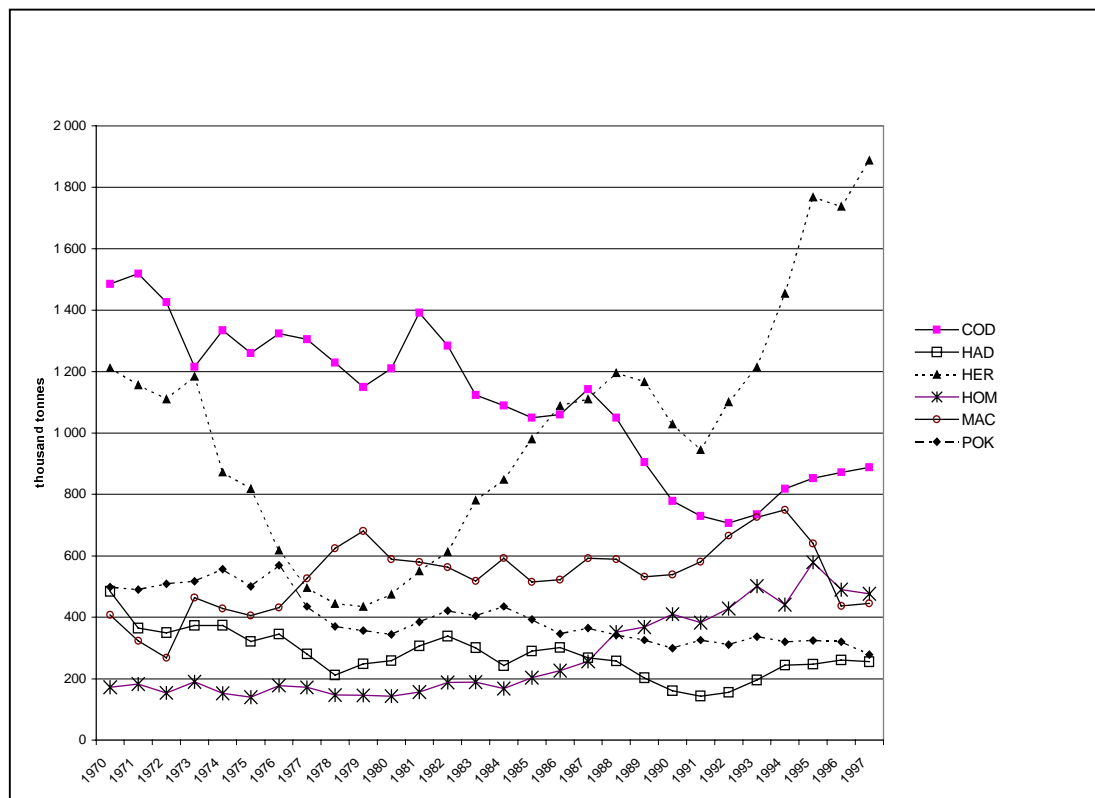


Figure 4: Catches of consumption species by EEA countries in the NE Atlantic, 1970-97

The EEA catches of the next most important consumption fish caught in the area, the Atlantic cod, have decreased in a more or less steady manner from around 1.5 million tonnes in 1970 to 0.9 million tonnes in 1997. Again Norway (0.4 million tonnes or 45% of the EEA total) and Iceland (0.2 million tonnes, or 23%) were the most important countries in the fishery for this species in 1997. This species figured in the catches of all 11 EU Member States fishing in the area in 1997 though even the catch of the major EU Member State in the fishery, Denmark, at 80 thousand tonnes was only had one-fifth of those of Norway.

Two consumption species which figured increasingly in the EEA catch statistics of the NE Atlantic in the period 1970-97 were the Atlantic mackerel and the Atlantic horse mackerel.

For the Atlantic mackerel the catches started at around 0.4 million tonnes and rose fairly steadily to a maximum of 0.75 million tonnes in 1994. Subsequently they have dropped rapidly to near the initial value. In 1970 Norway was the major EEA country in the fishery, with a catch of 279 thousand tonnes, 68% of the total EEA catch. However in the early 1970's the United Kingdom developed a strong interest in the fishery, associated with the decline in the herring fishery (see above) and, in 1997, with a catch of 149 thousand tonnes (33% of the EEA total) vies with Norway (137 thousand tonnes, 31% of the total) as the major country in the fishery.

The catch of Atlantic horse mackerel has increased over threefold from 173 thousand tonnes in 1970 to 579 thousand tonnes in 1995. It has decreased somewhat subsequently, to 476 thousand tonnes in 1997. In 1970 the two major countries in the fishery for this species were Spain (98 thousand tonnes, 57% of the EEA total) and Portugal (63 thousand tonnes, 36% of the EEA total). In 1997 the interest in this species is much more widespread amongst the EU Member States with the Netherlands (at 123 thousand tonnes, 26% of the total EEA catch) having the largest catches but with Ireland, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Norway all having catches of over 45 thousand tonnes. In contrast Spain and Portugal with a combined catch of 50 thousand tonnes (11% to the total catch) make a much smaller contribution than previously.

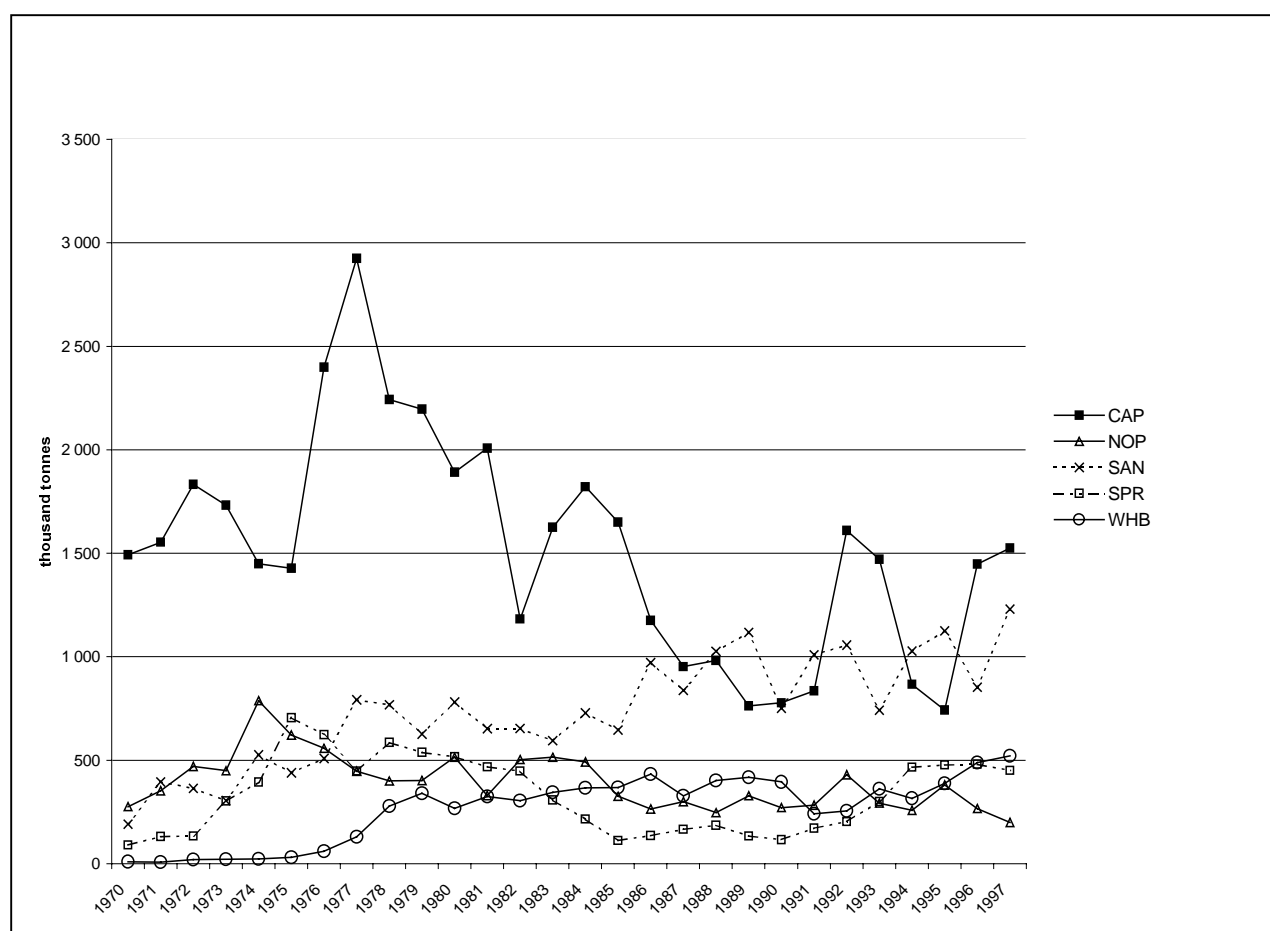


Figure 5: Catches of species for industrial uses by EEA countries in the NE Atlantic, 1970-97

Of the species for industrial uses (see Figure 5) the capelin has been the most important in EEA fisheries of the NE Atlantic. Catches reached a peak of 2.9 million tonnes in 1977 but then declined rapidly to a minimum of 762 thousand tonnes (25% of the maximum) in 1995 due to the poor state of the stocks and the resultant implementation of fishing restrictions. With the more recent relaxation of these restrictions the EEA catch has risen to around 1.5 million tonnes in 1997. The major fishing nations are Norway and Iceland (only Germany and Denmark of the other EEA countries have made minor contributions to the fishery), though the proportion of the total EEA catch taken by Norway has fallen from 87% in 1970 to 11% in 1997 and that by Iceland has risen from 13% in 1970 to 89% in 1997

The industrial species for which catches have shown the most dramatic rise is the sandeel: a more than 6-fold increase from 192 thousand tonnes in 1970 to 1.2 million tonnes in 1997. The major countries in the fishery in 1997 were Denmark (841 thousand tonnes, 68% of the EEA total) and Norway (351 thousand tonnes, 28% of the total). The only EU Member States making a significant contribution to the fishery was the United Kingdom (39 thousand tonnes, 3% of the total).

Blue whiting catches have risen from only 10 thousand tonnes in 1970 to 521 thousand tonnes in 1997 with the major part of the increase taking place in the late 1970's. Norway makes by far the greatest contribution to the fishery (348 thousand tonnes, 67% of the EEA total, in 1997) with the next largest contributions being made by the Denmark, Spain and the United Kingdom (all around 33 thousand tonnes, 6% of the total).

Sprat catches by EEA countries rose from 92 thousand tonnes in 1970 to 450 thousand tonnes in 1997. In the intervening period the catches rose rapidly to a maximum of 705 thousand tonnes in 1975, followed by a slower decrease to a minimum of 112 thousand tonnes in 1985 and a slow increase to present levels. The two major countries in the fishery are Denmark (284 thousand tonnes, 63% of the total in 1997) and Sweden (126 thousand tonnes, 28% of the total in 1997).

The catch of Norway pout increase rapidly from 276 thousand tonnes in 1970 to a maximum of 788 thousand tonnes in 1974. This has been followed by a general trend of decreasing catches to 200 thousand tonnes in 1997. The major countries in the fishery are Denmark (153 thousand tonnes, 76% of the EEA total in 1997) and Norway (47 thousand tonnes, 23% of the total).

The combined catch of the 5 industrial species by EEA countries mentioned above was 3.9 million tonnes in 1997, or 39% of the total catch.

➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Most of the catch data used in this report were submitted to Eurostat by the national authorities under the conditions of Council Regulation (EEC) no. 3880/91. However Eurostat gratefully acknowledges the contribution made to its database for the NE Atlantic by FAO and ICES particularly as regards data for non-EEA countries and the collaboration with these organisations in the validation of the data

The European Economic Area comprises the Member States of the European Union plus Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway. (However, note that Lichtenstein has no marine fisheries.)

In this report Germany refers to the current territory of that country. Thus, for data prior to 1990, Germany includes the former German Democratic Republic.

The catch data are expressed in tonnes live weight equivalent. This is normally derived from the weight of the product landed to which a suitable conversion factor has been applied. Quantities of fish caught but not landed are excluded.

The main criterion for allocating a nationality to the catch is the flag flown by the vessel performing the major part of the fishing operation.

The Northeast Atlantic refers to FAO fishing major fishing area 27 and includes the Baltic Sea (see Figure 6)

Eurostat wishes to thank Mr Klaus Hegar, currently seconded by Eurostat from his duties in the German Statistical Office, for the major role he played in preparing the manuscript.

More detailed information on the catches of EEA and other countries in all regions of the World may be found in Eurostat's New Cronos database "FISH"

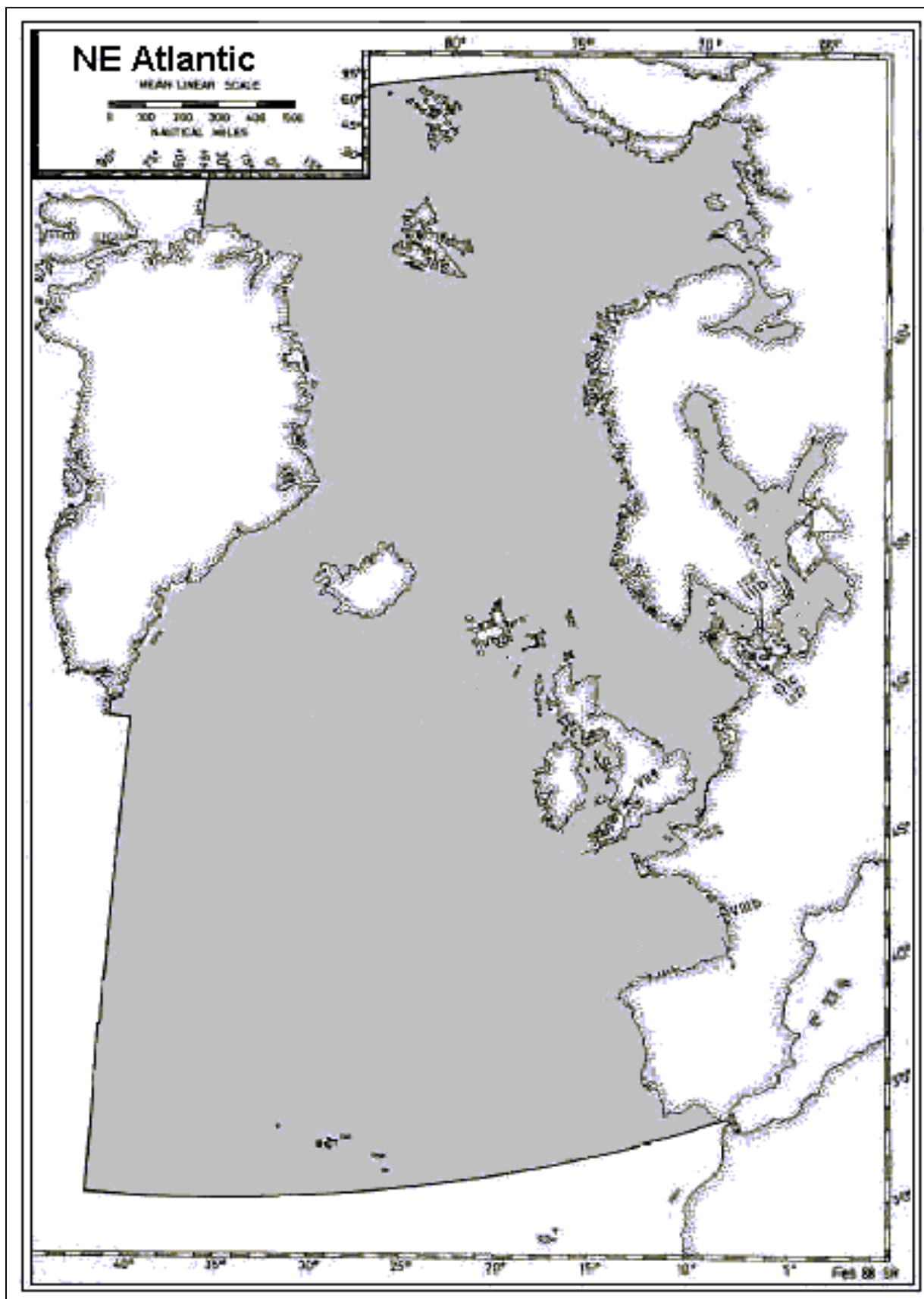


Figure 6: Map of the Northeast Atlantic

Further information:

➤ Reference publications

Title European fisheries in figures
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➤ Databases

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