

# Commission proposes fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and North Sea for 2018

Today the Commission presents its proposal for fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and the North Sea for 2018. The Commission proposes quotas for 78 stocks: for 53 stocks the fishing quota is either increased or remains the same and for 25 stocks is reduced. The fishing opportunities, or Total Allowable Catches (TACs), are quotas set for most commercial fish stocks that keep the stocks healthy, while allowing the fishing industry to profit from fishing the highest amount of fish. As the size of some key fish stocks is increasing – notably for sole in the North Sea, northern hake and southern horse mackerel – so is the profitability of the fishing sector, with an estimated EUR 1.5 billion profit for 2017.

Karmenu **Vella**, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, said: *“Our fleet is becoming more profitable and that is because some of the EU’s key fish stocks are healthier and more abundant. The perseverance of the fishermen and the responsible fisheries management decisions stand to prove that sustainability and profitability can go hand in hand. That being said now is not the time for complacency. We must continue our joint efforts to manage our seas and oceans in a way that works for the environment, for the economy and for future generations.”*

The EU has made important progress over recent years, with 44 stocks now fished at Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) levels, up from only 5 in 2009. The objective under the [Common Fisheries Policy](#) is to have all stocks fished at sustainable levels by 2020. The process towards this goal takes into account socioeconomic and environmental factors. As the legally binding deadline for the 2020 target draws closer, the margin for setting quotas that are not sustainable is narrowing. The Commission is working with Member States to support the fishermen in this transition.

Today’s proposal will be submitted for discussion and decision by the Member States at the December Fisheries Council (11-12 December in Brussels), to be applied as from 1 January 2018.

## **Details of the proposal**

The Commission proposes fishing quotas on the basis of independent scientific advice received from the [International Council for the Exploration of the Sea](#) (ICES).

The proposal covers stocks managed by the EU alone and stocks managed in cooperation with third countries, such as Norway, or through [Regional Fisheries Management Organisations](#) (RFMOs). International negotiations for many of the stocks concerned are still ongoing and some further stocks are awaiting scientific advice. For these, the figures will be included at a

later stage.

Later this autumn, the Commission will propose additional quotas, the so-called 'quota top-ups', for fisheries that in 2018 fall under the [landing obligation](#), which requires that all catches of regulated commercial species on-board are landed and counted against quota. The allowed quota is thereby increased to facilitate the transition to the new system of 'no discards'. The exact top-ups per fishery will be determined on the basis of scientific advice. The proposal does not take into account the forthcoming TAC top-ups.

- **Proposed increases:** For 19 stocks, such as **Norway lobster** in the North Sea, 4 **sole** stocks and 3 **plaice** stocks in North Western waters, and **megrims** in South Western waters, the Commission proposes to increase the Total Allowable Catch. The increases also include the socioeconomically important **sole** stock in the Bay of Biscay that has followed a management plan led by the industry, and can now be increased. The same applies to **sole** in the Eastern Channel and the Western Atlantic stock of horse mackerel which can also be increased.
- **Stocks that can be fished as before:** 14 stocks are kept at the same level as last year.
- **Proposed decreases:** Decreases are proposed for 25 stocks. For 15 of these, the decrease proposed is less than 20%. For **plaice** in the Celtic sea and **whiting** in West of Scotland and in the Irish Sea a zero TAC is proposed.
- A proposal to prohibit fishing of **eels** is introduced for all Union waters, following scientific advice emphasising the importance of ceasing all fisheries that target spawners, until there is clear evidence of improvement of the state of the stock.
- **Stocks for which scientific data are lacking:** For cases where data are not sufficient to properly estimate the stock's size, the Commission proposal follows scientific advice from ICES, i.e. cuts or increases of a maximum of 20%.

## For more information

See **tables below** for details on today's proposals for the Atlantic and the North Sea

### [TACs and quotas](#)

[Questions and Answers](#) on Commission's proposal on fishing opportunities in the Atlantic and North Sea for 2018

**Scientific advice:** the proposed TACs take due account of the [scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea \(ICES\) and the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries \(STECF\)](#).

**Stakeholders were also consulted**, based on the [Commission's Consultation document](#)

### [Multiannual management plans](#)

### [Map of fishing areas](#)

Note: The tables below only list EU stocks not shared with third countries

**Table 1: Stocks with proposals for increased TAC**

Common name	Scientific name	TAC Unit	final TAC in 2017, incl top-up	TAC 2018 (Proposal, excl top-up)	TAC change: 2017 – 2018 (Proposal)
Cod	Gadus morhua	7a	146	292	100%
Common sole	Solea solea	7d	2724	2933	8%
Common sole	Solea solea	8ab	3420	3621	6%
Common sole	Solea solea	7e	1178	1202	2%
Common sole	Solea solea	7fg	845	901	7%
Greater silver smelt	Argentina silus	Union waters of 3 and 4	1028	1234	20%
Greater silver smelt	Argentina silus	Union and international waters of 5, 6 and 7	3884	4661	20%
Haddock	Melanogrammus	7a	2615	2796	7%
Herring	Clupea	7a	4127	7016	70%
Horse Mackerel	Trachurus	Union waters of 2a, 4a; 6, 7a-c, 7e-k, 8abde; Union and international waters of 5b; international waters of 12 and 14	83829	101070	21%
Horse Mackerel	Trachurus	8c	13271	16000	21%
Megrims	Lepidorhombus	8c, 9 and 10; Union waters of CECAF 34.1.1	1159	1387	20%
Norway lobster	Nephrops	Union waters of 2a and 4	20034	20851	4%
Plaice	Pleuronectes	7a	1098	1793	63%
Plaice	Pleuronectes	7de	10022	10360	3%
Plaice	Pleuronectes	7fg	405	511	26%
Tusk	Brosme brosme	3a, subdivision 22-32	29	31	7%

Tusk	Brosme brosmes	4	235	251	7%
Tusk	Brosme brosmes	Union and international waters of 5, 6 and 7	3860	4130	7%

**Table 2: Stocks with no changes in TAC<sup>(1)</sup>**

Common name	Scientific name	TAC Unit	final TAC in 2017, incl top-up	TAC 2018 (Proposal, excl top-up)	TAC change: 2017 – 2018 (Proposal)
Cod	Gadus morhua	Kattegat	525	525	0%
Cod	Gadus morhua	6a; Union and international waters of 5b east of 12° 00' W	0	0	0%
Common sole	Solea solea	7a	40	40	0%
Greenland halibut	Reinhardtius hippoglossoides	Union waters of 2a and 4, international waters of 5b and 6	2500	2500	0%
Herring	Clupea harengus	Union and international waters of 5b, 6b and 6aN	4170	4170	0%
Herring	Clupea	6a (S), 7b, 7c	1630	1630	0%
Lemon sole and witch	Microstomus kitt and Glyptocephalus cynoglossus	Union waters of 2a and 4	6391	6391	0%
Ling	Molva molva	4 (EU)	3494	3494	0%
Ling	Molva molva	Union and int. waters of 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14	20396	20396	0%
Norway lobster	Nephrops	8c	0	0	0%
Picked dogfish	Squalus	Union and international waters of 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12 and 14	270	270	0%
Pollack	Pollachius pollachius	7	12146	12141	0%
Pollack	Pollachius pollachius	8abde	1482	1482	0%

Whiting	Merlangius	8	2540	2540	0%
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**Table 3: Stocks with proposals for decreased TAC**

Common name	Scientific name	TAC Unit	Final TAC in 2017, incl top-up	TAC 2018 (Proposal, excl top-up)	TAC change: 2017 – 2018 (Proposal)
Anchovy	Engraulis	9 and 10; Union waters of CECAF 34.1.1	12500	7115	-43%
Anglerfish	Lophius	7	33516	29534	-12%
Anglerfish	Lophius	8abde	8980	7914	-12%
Anglerfish	Lophius	8c, 9, 10, CECAF 34.1.1	3955	3879	-2%
Blue ling	Molva dypterigia	Union and int. waters of 5b, 6, 7	11314	10763	-5%
Blue ling	Molva dypterigia	Int. waters of 12	357	286	-20%
Boarfish	Caproidae	Union and international waters of 6, 7 and 8	27288	20380	-25%
Common sole	Solea solea	Union waters of 2a and 4	16123	14027	-13%
Common sole	Solea solea	3a; Union waters of Subdivisions 22-32	551	336	-39%
Haddock	Melanogrammus aeglefinus	Union and international waters of 6b, 12 and 14	4690	4202	-10%
Hake (overall N. TAC)	Merluccius	Overall northern TACs (3a / 2a and 4 / 5b, 6, 7, 12 and 14 / 8abde)	119765	97581	-19%
Hake	Merluccius	8c, 9 and 10; Union waters of CECAF 34.1.1	10520	7366	-30%
Herring	Clupea	7ghjk	14467	5445	-62%
Horse Mackerel	Trachurus	Union waters of 4b, 4c and 7d	18247	15179	-17%
Horse Mackerel	Trachurus	9	73349	55555	-24%
Megrims	Lepidorhombus	Union waters of 2a and 4	2639	2526	-4%
Megrims	Lepidorhombus	8abde	1352	1218	-10%
Megrims	Lepidorhombus	Union and international waters of 5b; 6;	5682	4691	-17%

Megrims	Lepidorhombus	7	13691	12310	-10%
Norway lobster	Nephrops	3a; Union waters of Subdivisions 22-32	12715	11738	-8%
Plaice	Pleuronectes	7hjk	128	0	-100%
Plaice	Pleuronectes platessa	Kattegat	2343	1467	-37%
Sprat	Sprattus	7de	4120	3296	-20%
Whiting	Merlangius	6; Union and international waters of 5b; international waters of 12 and 14	213	0	-100%
Whiting	Merlangius	7a	80	0	-100%

**Table 4: Stocks subject to late advice or ongoing negotiations** [\[2\]](#)

Common name	Scientific name	TAC Unit	final TAC in 2017
Anchovy	Engraulis	8	33000
Anglerfish	Lophiidae	Union waters of 2a and 4	13521
Anglerfish	Lophius	6; Union and international waters of 5b; international waters of 12 and 14	7650
Blue ling	Molva dypterygia	Union and int. waters of 5b, 6, 7	11314
Cod	Gadus morhua	7b, 7c, 7e-k, 8, 9 and 10; Union waters of CECAF	2830
Haddock	Melanogrammus	5b,6a	3697
Haddock	Melanogrammus	7b-k, 8, 9 and 10; Union waters of CECAF 34.1.1	7751
Norway lobster	Nephrops	6; Union and international waters of 5b	16407
Norway lobster	Nephrops	7	25356
Norway lobster	Nephrops	7 – Porcupine Bank special condition	3100
Norway lobster	Nephrops	8abde	4160
Norway lobster	Nephrops	9 and 10; Union waters of CECAF 34.1.1	336

Norway pout	Trisopterus esmarki	3a, Union waters of 2a and 4	176250
Picked dogfish	Squalus	Union and international waters of 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12 and 14	270
Sandeel	Ammodytes	Union waters of 2a, 3a and 4	486.115
Skates and rays	Rajidae	Union waters of 2a and 4	1378
Skates and rays	Rajidae	Union waters of 3a	47
Skates and rays	Rajidae	Union waters of 6ab, 7a-c and 7e-k	8434
Skates and rays	Rajidae	Union waters of 8 and 9	3762
Skates and rays	Rajidae	7d	1063
Sprat	Sprattus sprattus	Union waters of 2a and 4	176411
Turbot and Brill	Psetta maxima & Scopthalmus rhombus	Union waters of 2a and 4	4937
Whiting	Merlangius	7b-k	27500

**Table 5: Stocks for which the TAC is delegated to an individual member state**

Common name	Scientific name	TAC Unit	Delegated to
Herring	Clupea	VI Clyde(1)	United Kingdom
Horse Mackerel	Trachurus	CECAF(Canaries)	Spain
Horse Mackerel	Trachurus	CECAF(Madeira)	Portugal
Horse Mackerel	Trachurus	X,CECAF(Azores)	Portugal
Penaeus shrimps	Penaeus	French Guyana	France

[1] This table [Table 2] does not include the 20 stocks included in the Joint Statement by the Council and the Commission "Ad statement stable stocks" (see Council document PECHE 491, 15502/15 REV1).

[2] Final TAC figures for 2017 are including transfers, and reflect the total TAC set by the EU for a certain stock