Commission proposes Baltic Sea fishing opportunities for 2016: more stocks than ever to be fished at sustainable levels

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Commission proposes Baltic Sea fishing opportunities for 2016: more stocks than ever to be fished at sustainable levels.

The European Commission today tabled its proposal on fishing opportunities in the Baltic Sea for 2016. This is the annual proposal for the amount of fish that EU fishermen may catch from the Baltic Sea’s 10 main commercial fish stocks, also known as Total Allowable Catch (TAC). For 9 of the 10 stocks for which data is available, the catch limits are sustainable, or more stocks than ever before. The only exception is the Baltic herring, which is measured in pieces.

In contrast, both Baltic herring and Baltic cod would experience the biggest overall TAC decrease in 2016: a drop of 40-50% in 2015. This reduction reflects ICES’ decision to change the way this stock is assessed. The Commission expects this change will improve the quality of ICES’ assessment of fishing stocks in the Baltic Sea.

ICES stock advice

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, catches in 2016 for the eastern Baltic cod stock should be no more than 29,220 tonnes.

In line with ICES’ advice, the Commission proposed to decrease the TAC for Eastern Baltic cod by 20% to 41,143 tonnes.

Cod

In line with ICES’ advice, the Commission proposed to decrease the TAC for Eastern Baltic cod by 20% to 41,143 tonnes.

Data shows that Western cod stocks are overfished and have fallen below sustainable biological limits. The Commission expects Member States within the Council to agree on effective and adequate additional measures in order to improve the status of this stock. As the Commission is still awaiting additional data from ICES, it has not yet proposed a quota for this stock.