LOW IMPACT FISHERS OF EUROPE

LOW-IMPACT FISHING

AS THE SOLUTION FOR A DECENT LIVING AND A HEALTHY OCEAN

Since 2015, LIFE Platform works for a fairer and more sustainable EU fishing sector by including small-scale fishers at the centre of policies and as key environmental and social change agents.

THE NETWORK

MISSION

LIFE is a pan-European platform of small-scale fishing organizations across Europe aiming to unite them to achieve fair fisheries, healthy seas and vibrant communities.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

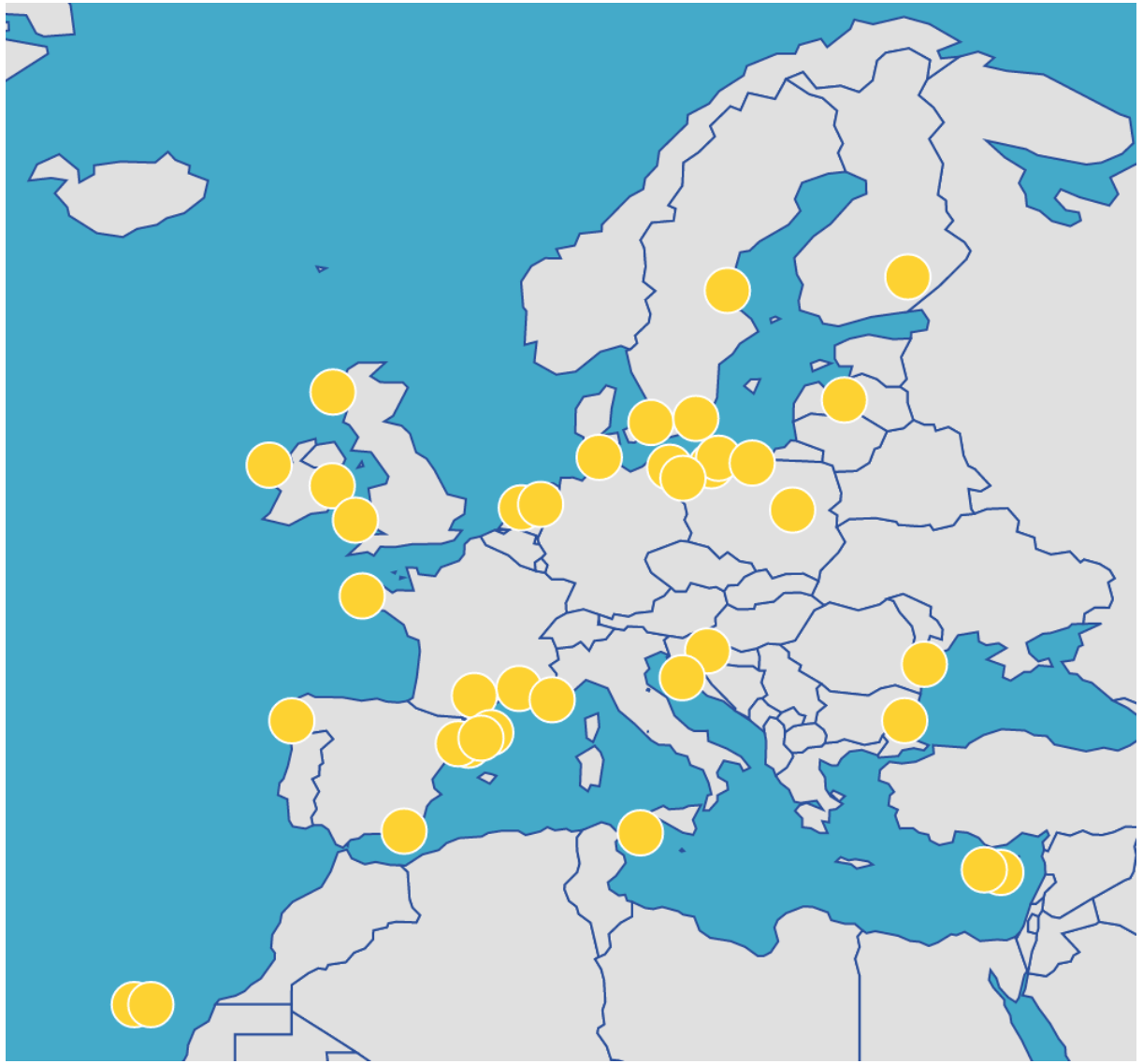
36 org, 15 MS, 10.000 SSF

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

9 elected working fishers from 3 Sea Basins

SECRETARIAT

4 Members of staff



A differentiated approach benefitting coastal fishers

- Higher biomass thresholds
- Precautionary buffers
- Stock structure valued and prioritised
- Fishing mortality adapted to prey species
- Regulatory burden
- Local ecological knowledge

Subtitle

Policy framework - in need of reform or better implementation?

- Management Plan
- CFP - article 2 and 17
- Maximum Sustainable Yield
- Control Regulation
- Differentiated approach

1. Fuente: CCTEP

LOW IMPACT FISHERS OF EUROPE

Article 3

Objectives

1. The plan shall contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the common fisheries policy (CFP) listed in Article 2 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, in particular by applying the precautionary approach to fisheries management, and shall aim to ensure that exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce MSY.

2. The plan shall contribute to the elimination of discards by avoiding and reducing, as far as possible, unwanted catches, and to the implementation of the landing obligation established in Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 for the species which are subject to catch limits and to which this Regulation applies.

3. The plan shall implement the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management in order to ensure that negative impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are minimised. It shall be coherent with Union environmental legislation, in particular with the objective of achieving good environmental status by 2020 as set out in Article 1(1) of Directive 2008/56/EC.

In particular the plan shall aim to:

(a) ensure that the conditions described in descriptor 3 contained in Annex I to Directive 2008/56/EC are fulfilled; and

(b) contribute to the fulfilment of other relevant descriptors contained in Annex I to that Directive in proportion to the role played by fisheries in their fulfilment.

4. Measures under the plan shall be taken in accordance with the best available scientific advice.

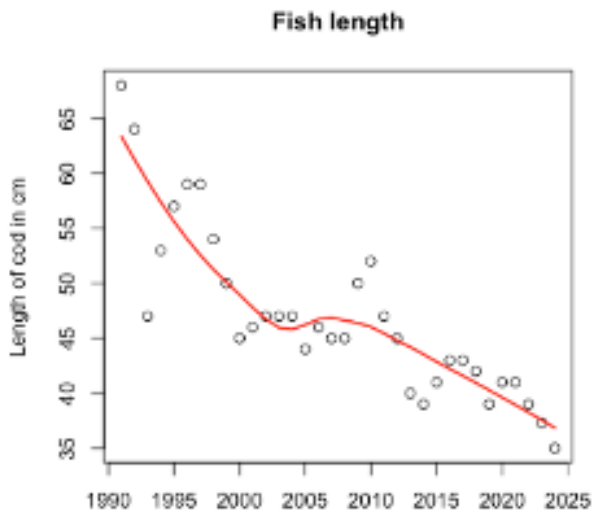
European Commissioner for Environment, Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Karmenu Vella said: "This plan is very important for us. It is the first multiannual plan to be adopted under the new Common Fisheries Policy and a litmus test for the basic precepts of the policy itself. It is based on scientific advice, it is decided at regional level and it maintains an inherent flexibility that addresses the changing reality on the ground."

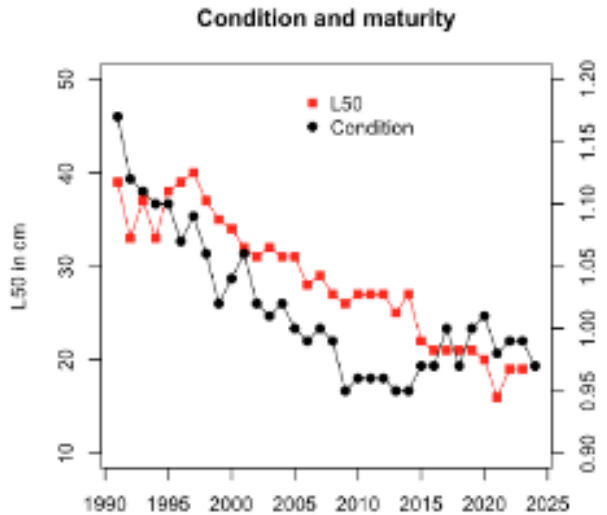
“The report on the multiannual plan for the Baltic Sea clearly demonstrates the complexity of managing fish stocks in an environment with multiple and constantly evolving pressures. I have called the Our Baltic conference later this month to agree a comprehensive approach, so that we can turn around the situation in the Baltic Sea and put it on a long-term sustainable footing. We cannot blame the fishing sector alone, we must address various pressures on the Baltic Sea altogether”, said Virginijus Sinkevicius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries.

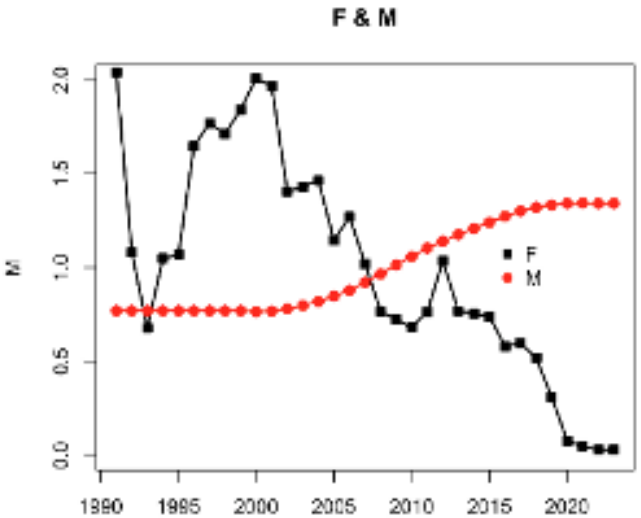
"The impact of this cod stock collapsing would be catastrophic for the livelihoods of many fishermen and coastal communities all around the Baltic Sea. We must urgently act to rebuild the stock – in the interest of fish and fishermen alike. That means responding rapidly to an immediate threat now, through the emergency measures the Commission is taking. But it also means managing the stock – and the habitat it lives in – properly in the long term." Karmenu Vella in 2019 announcing Emergency Measures

The poor status of the Eastern Baltic cod is largely driven by biological changes in the stock during the last decades. Growth, condition (weight at length) and size at maturation have substantially declined. These developments indicate that the stock is distressed and is expected to have reduced reproductive potential. Natural mortality has increased and is estimated to be considerably higher than the fishing mortality in recent years. Population size structure has continuously deteriorated during the last years.

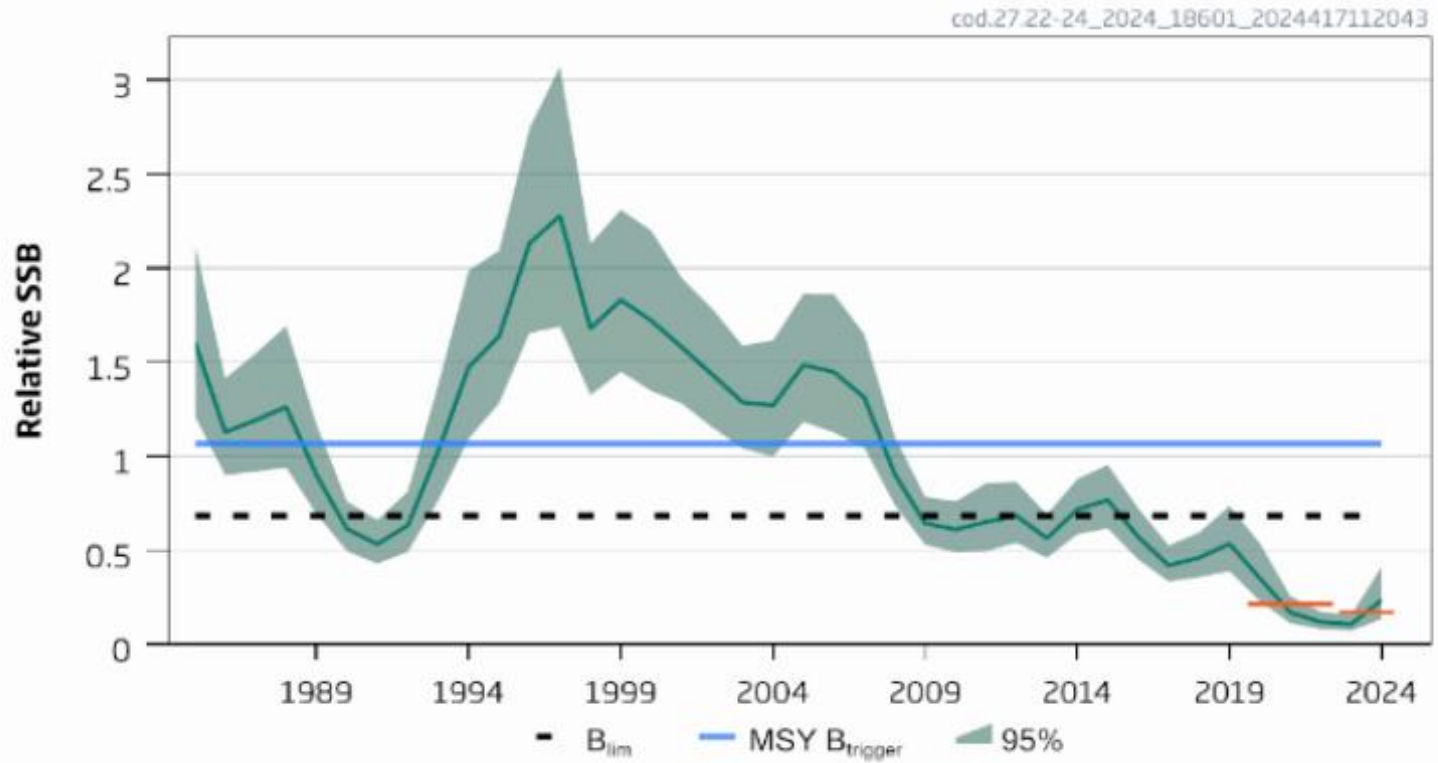
The low growth, poor condition and high natural mortality of cod are related to changes in the ecosystem, which include: i) Poor oxygen conditions that can affect cod directly via altering metabolism and via shortage of benthic prey, and additionally affect the survival of offspring. ii) Low availability of fish prey in the main distribution area of cod, as sprat and herring are more northerly distributed with little overlap with cod, especially in autumn. (iii) High infestation with parasites, which is related to increased abundance of grey seals. The relative impact of these drivers for the cod stock is unclear.





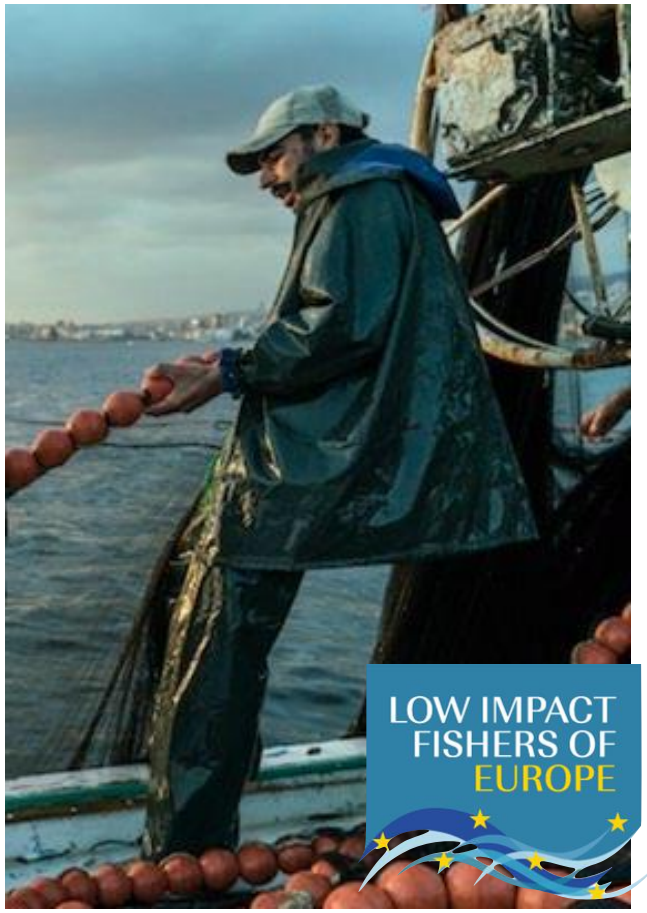


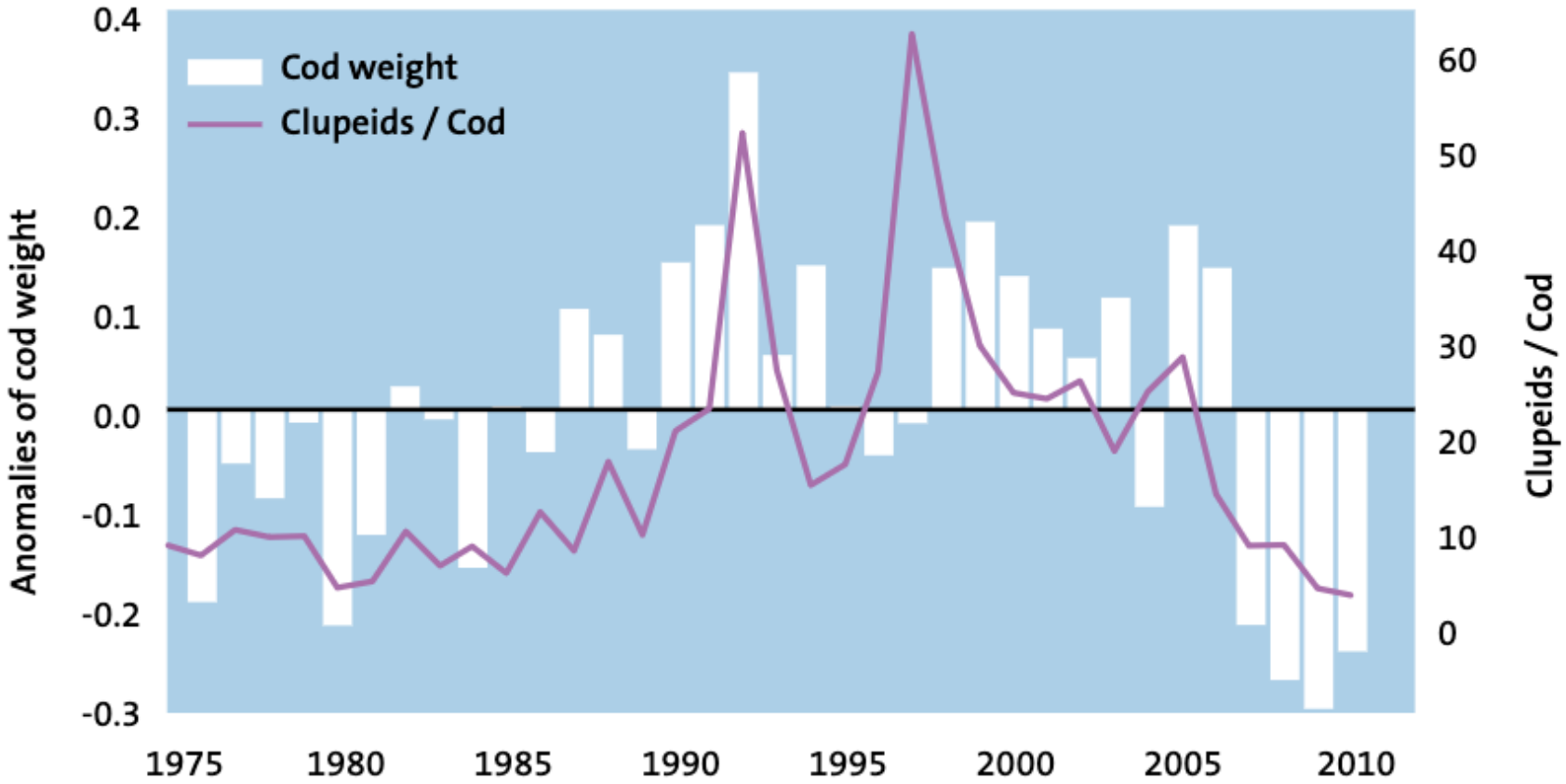
Relative Spawning-Stock Biomass



We have much less fish

We have lost 50% of the fish biomass in the Baltic since the 1970s and since 2013, when the EU reformed its fisheries policy promising a new era with healthy fish stocks, stocks have declined by around 800.000 tonnes and catches by 130.000 tonnes, 40% of which is due to the cod closure. Coastal low impact fishers have been making clear demands for many years: the quotas for herring and sprat need to be reduced and the trawl fisheries restricted.





Anomalies in mean weight of cod (average of age-groups 4-7) in SD 25 (bars) compared with changes in the biomass of sprat and herring, relative to the number of adult cod (at age 4 and older) in the same area (line). *From: Eero et al. 2012*

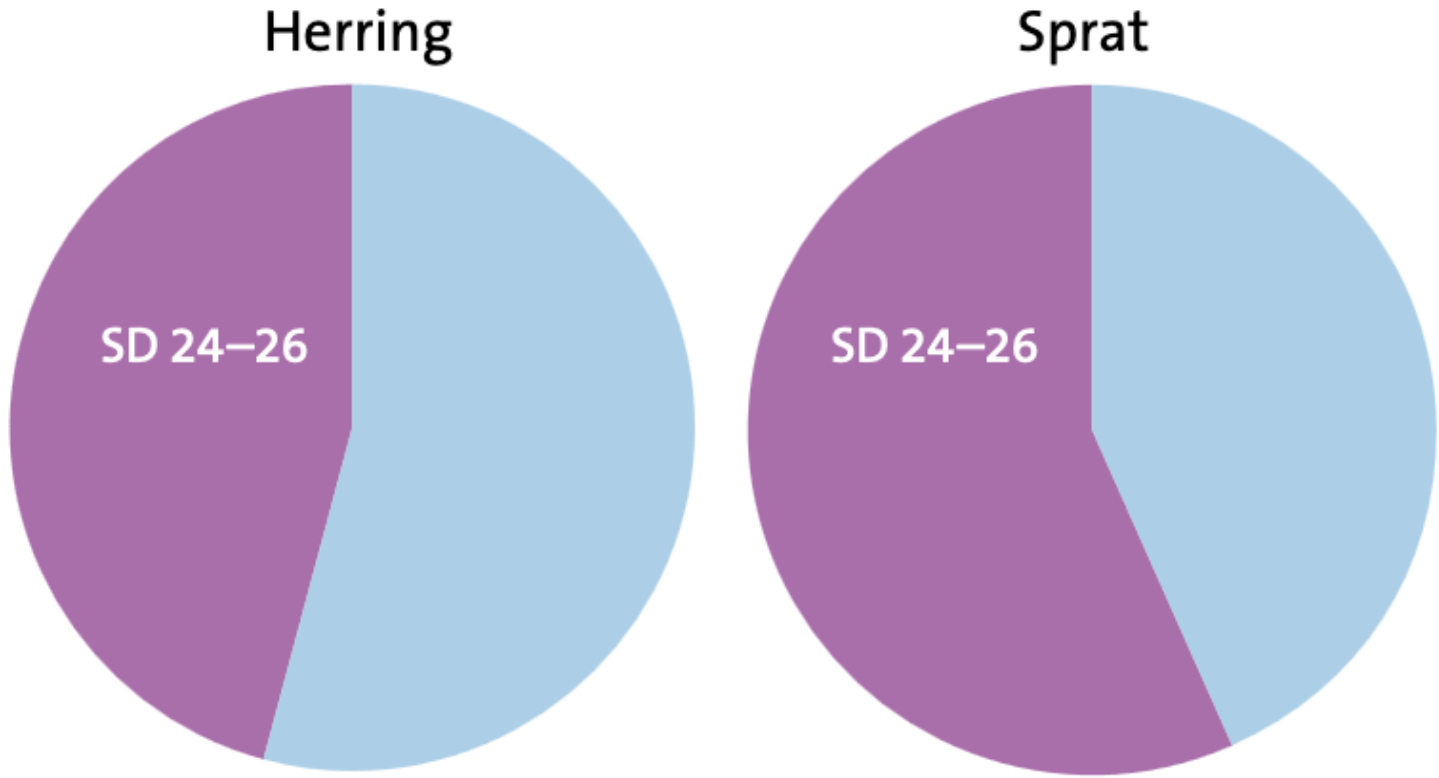
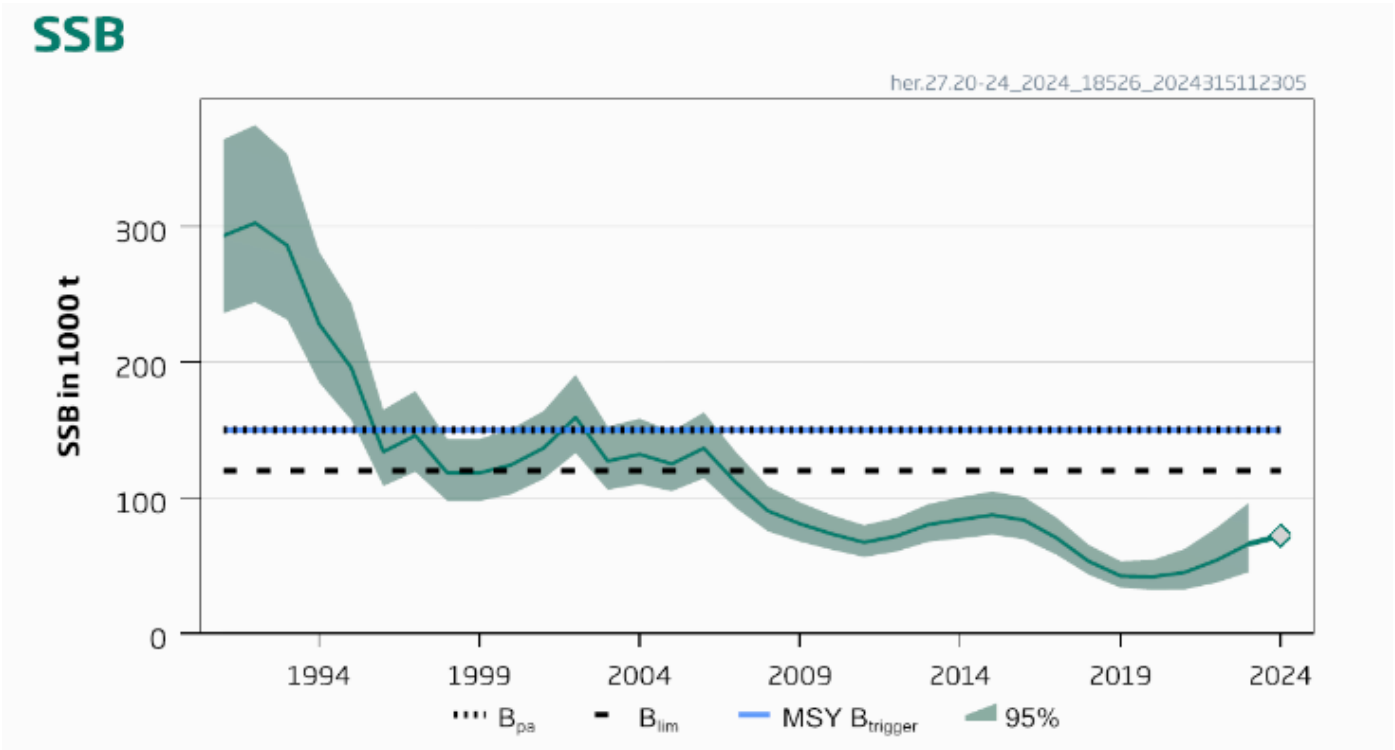

Herring
SD 24–26
Sprat
SD 24–26

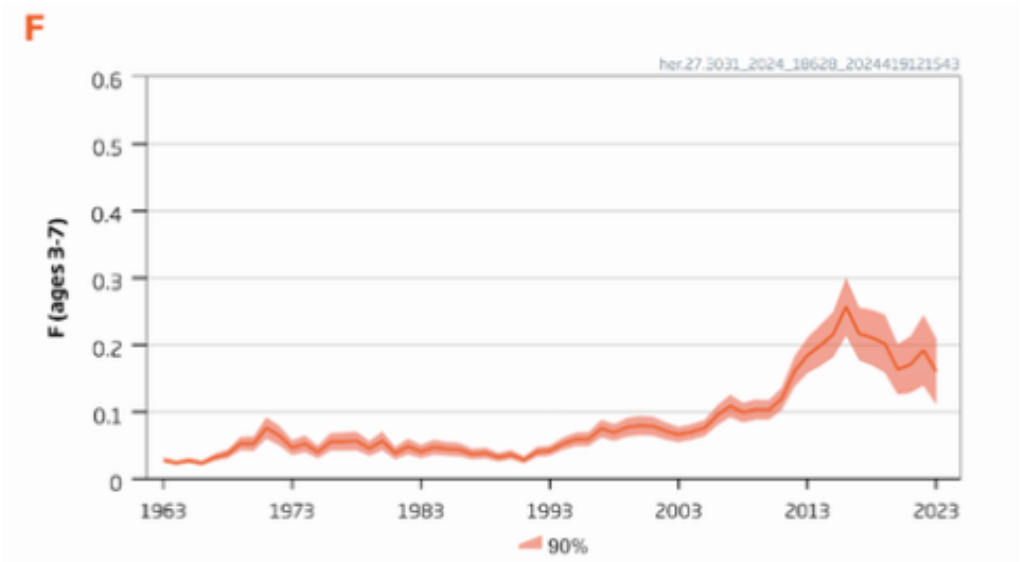
Table 4.1.1 Pelagic landings ('000 t) and species composition (%) in 2023 by subdivision and quarter.

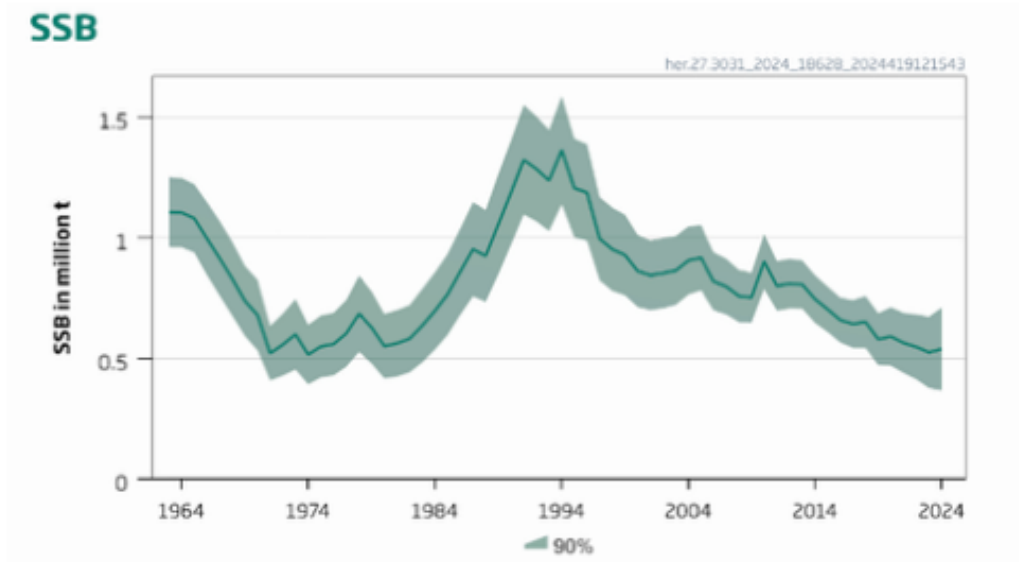
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total
SD 25	Landings ('000 t)	24.91	16.75	5.01	8.25	**54.92**
	Herring (%)	16.83	17.38	86.00	71.66	**31.55**
	Sprat (%)	83.17	82.62	14.00	28.34	**68.45**
SD 26	Landings ('000 t)	84.93	31.66	5.09	16.42	**138.10**
	Herring (%)	15.13	16.04	65.66	29.48	**18.91**
	Sprat (%)	84.87	83.96	34.34	70.52	**81.09**
SD 27	Landings ('000 t)	16.11	2.57	0.00	0.18	**18.86**
	Herring (%)	31.22	31.65	45.65	98.02	**31.91**
	Sprat (%)	68.78	68.35	54.35	1.98	**68.09**
SD 28*	Landings ('000 t)	27.49	8.96	5.18	24.01	**65.64**
	Herring (%)	11.68	7.97	23.20	15.67	**13.55**
	Sprat (%)	88.32	92.03	76.80	84.33	**86.45**
SD 29	Landings ('000 t)	19.59	1.03	0.32	11.39	**32.32**
	Herring (%)	31.09	96.99	24.47	23.17	**30.34**
	Sprat (%)	68.91	3.01	75.53	76.83	**69.66**
SD 30	Landings ('000 t)	28.77	26.63	1.88	10.85	**68.13**
	Herring (%)	96.92	97.61	99.46	94.79	**96.92**
	Sprat (%)	3.08	2.39	0.54	5.21	**3.08**
SD 31	Landings ('000 t)	0.00	0.37	0.15	0.22	**0.74**
	Herring (%)	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	**100.00**
	Sprat (%)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	**0.00**
SD 32	Landings ('000 t)	10.94	4.43	4.77	14.08	**34.22**
	Herring (%)	41.19	60.09	26.60	37.76	**40.19**
	Sprat (%)	58.81	39.91	73.40	62.24	**59.81**
Total	**Landings ('000 t)**	**212.73**	**92.40**	**22.39**	**85.40**	**412.92**
	Herring (%)	**29.97**	**42.79**	**54.55**	**38.82**	**36.00**
	Sprat (%)	**70.03**	**57.21**	**45.45**	**61.18**	**64.00**

*** Gulf of Riga included**

SSB


her.27.20-24_2024_18526_2024315112305
SSB in 1000 t
300
200
100
0
1994
1999
2004
2009
2014
2019
2024
B_{pa}
B_{lim}
MSY $B_{trigger}$
95%


F
her.27.3031_2024_18628_2024419121543
F (ages 3-7)
0.6
0.5
0.4
0.3
0.2
0.1
0
1963
1973
1983
1993
2003
2013
2023
90%


SSB
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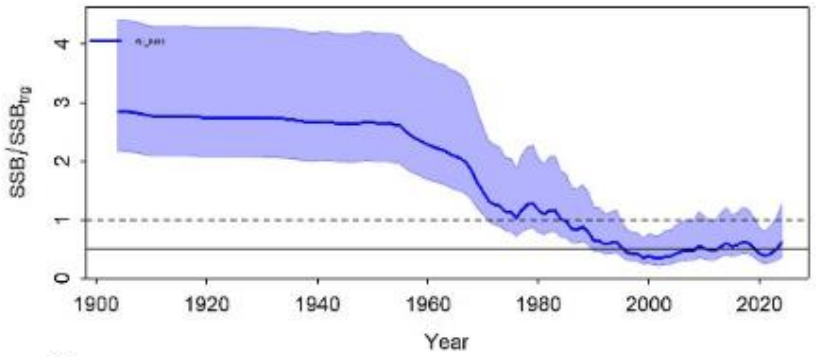
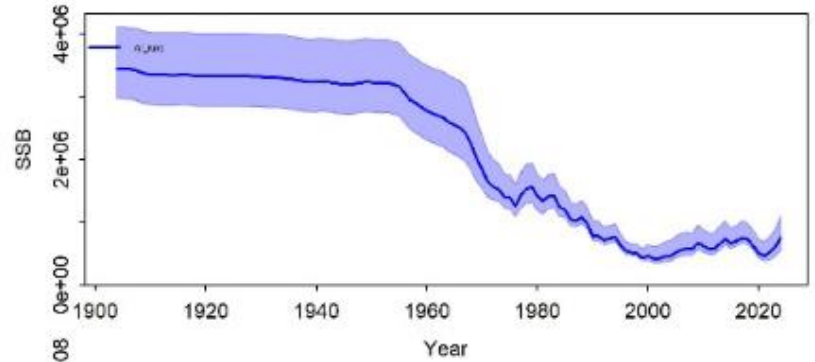
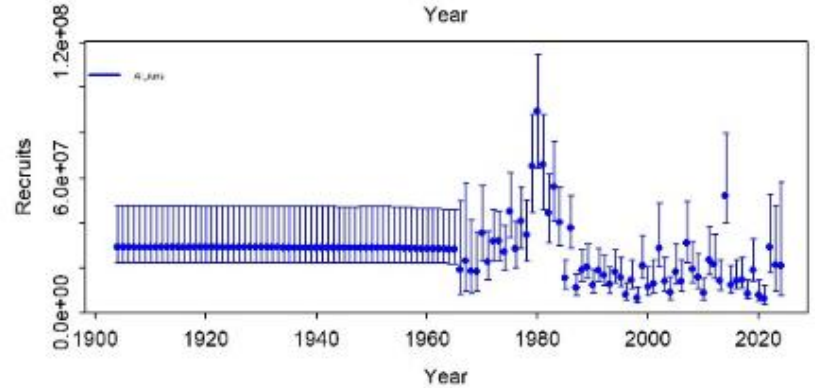
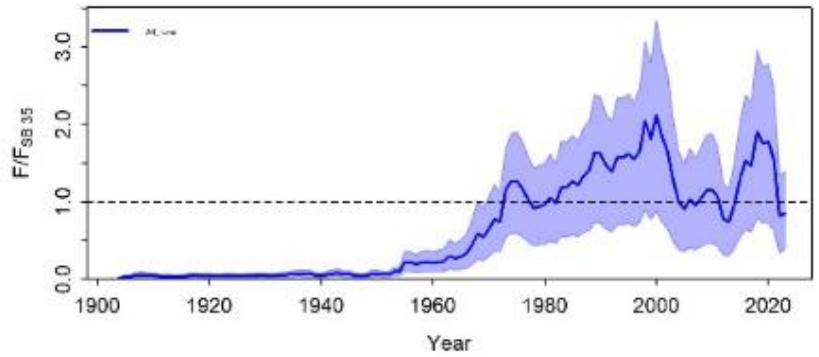
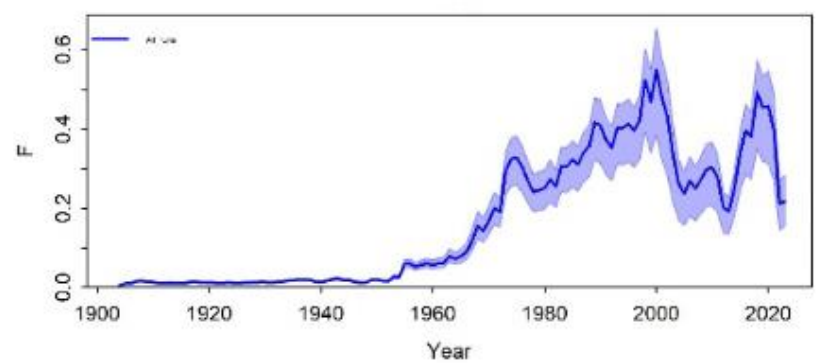
SSB in million t
1.5
1
0.5
0
1964
1974
1984
1994
2004
2014
2024
90%

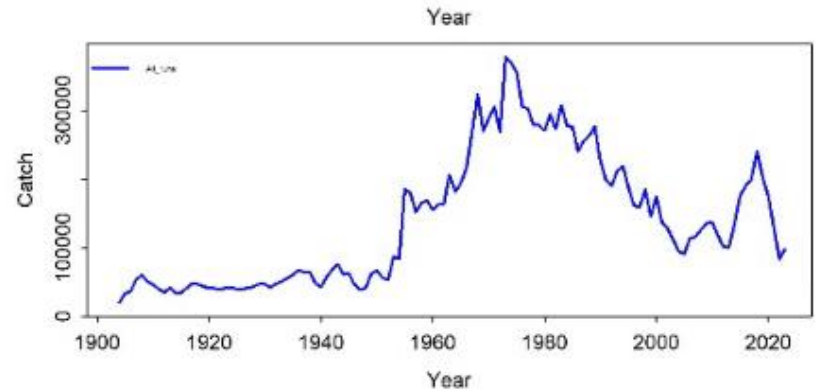

SSB/SSB$_{trg}$
0
1
2
3
4
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
2020
Year


SSB
0e+00
2e+06
4e+06
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
2020
Year


Recruits
0.0e+00
6.0e+07
1.2e+08
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
2020
Year


F/F$_{SB\ 35}$
0.0
1.0
2.0
3.0
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
2020
Year


F
0.0
0.2
0.4
0.6
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
2020
Year

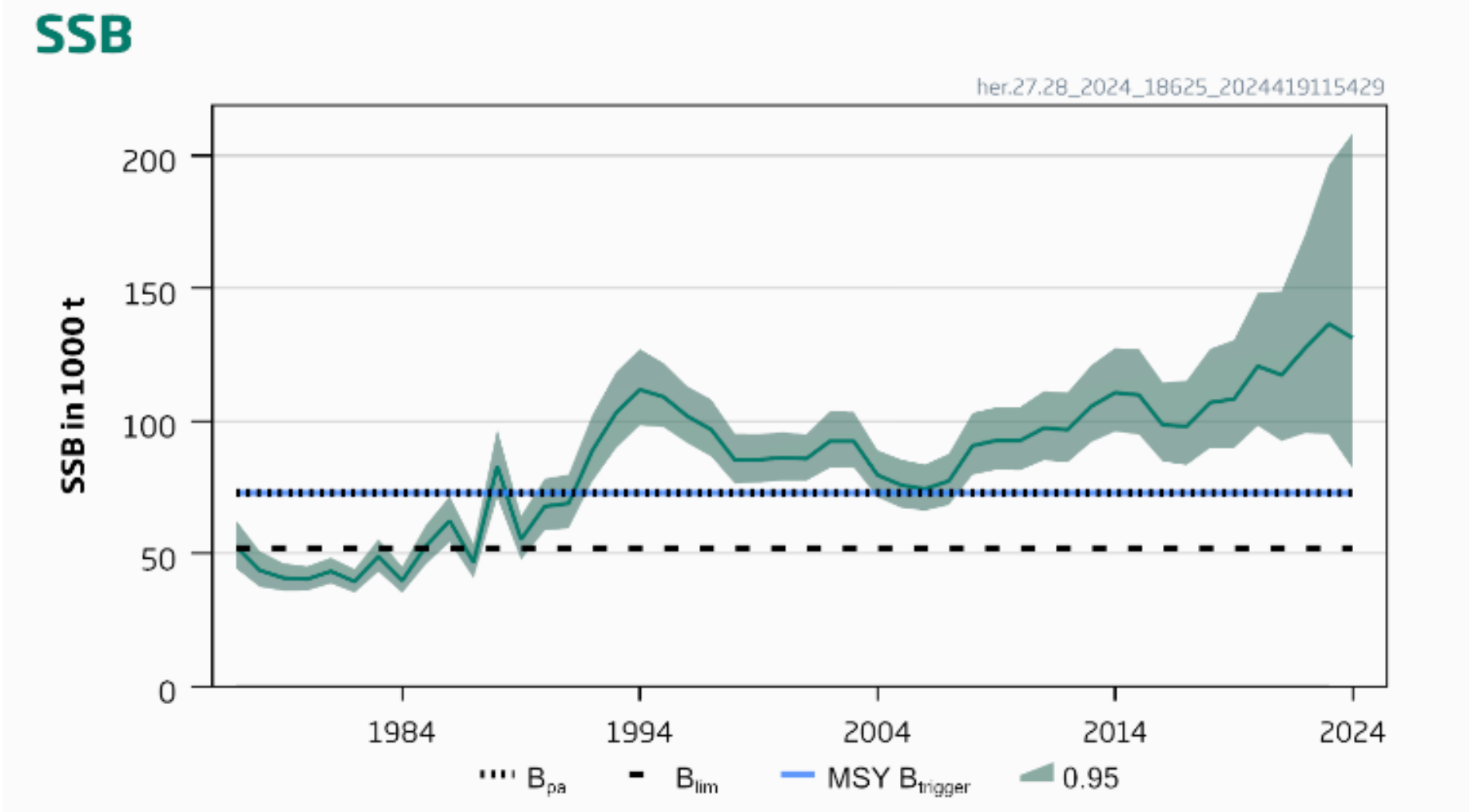

Catch
0
100000
300000
1900
1920
1940
1960
1980
2000
2020
Year

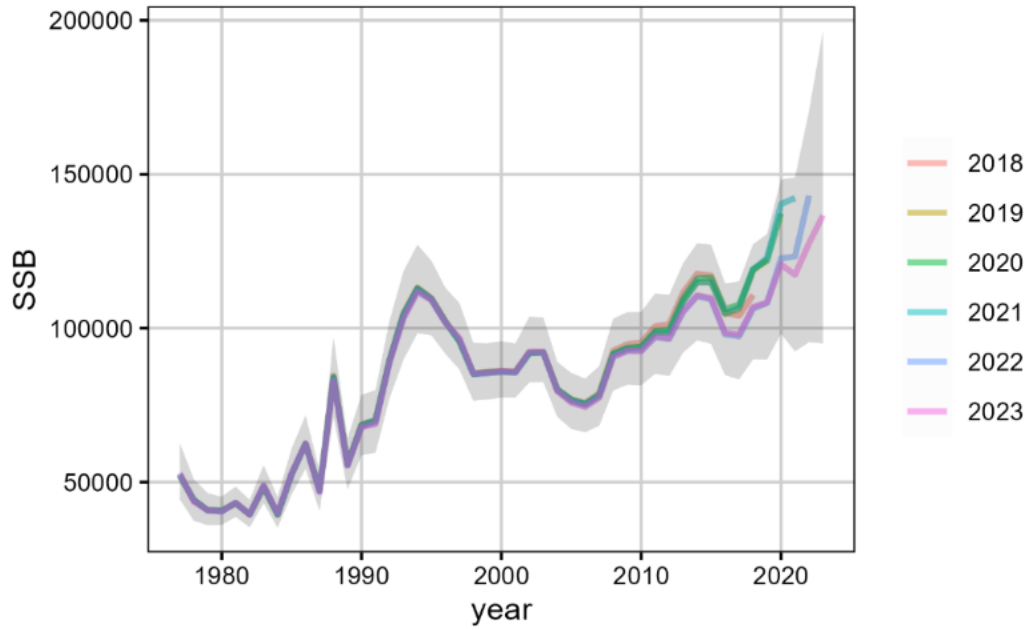
Quality of the assessment

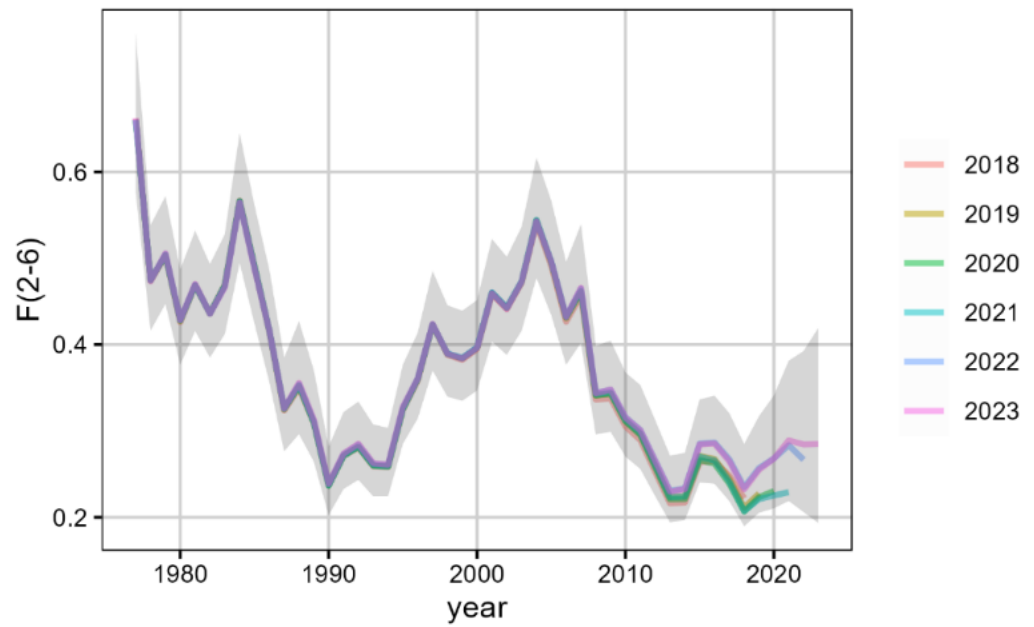
The recent interbenchmark assessment (ICES 2020a), which introduced updated natural mortalities for 1974-2018, lead to a downward revision of SSB and upward revision of fishing mortality. The estimate of the large 2014 year class is imprecise. Species misreporting of herring has occurred in the past and there are again indications of sprat being misreported as herring. These effects have not been quantified but may affect the quality of the assessment.

Figure 2 Herring in subdivisions 25–29 and 32, excluding the Gulf of Riga. Historical assessment results (final-year recruitment estimates included, Interbenchmark in March 2020).

SSB

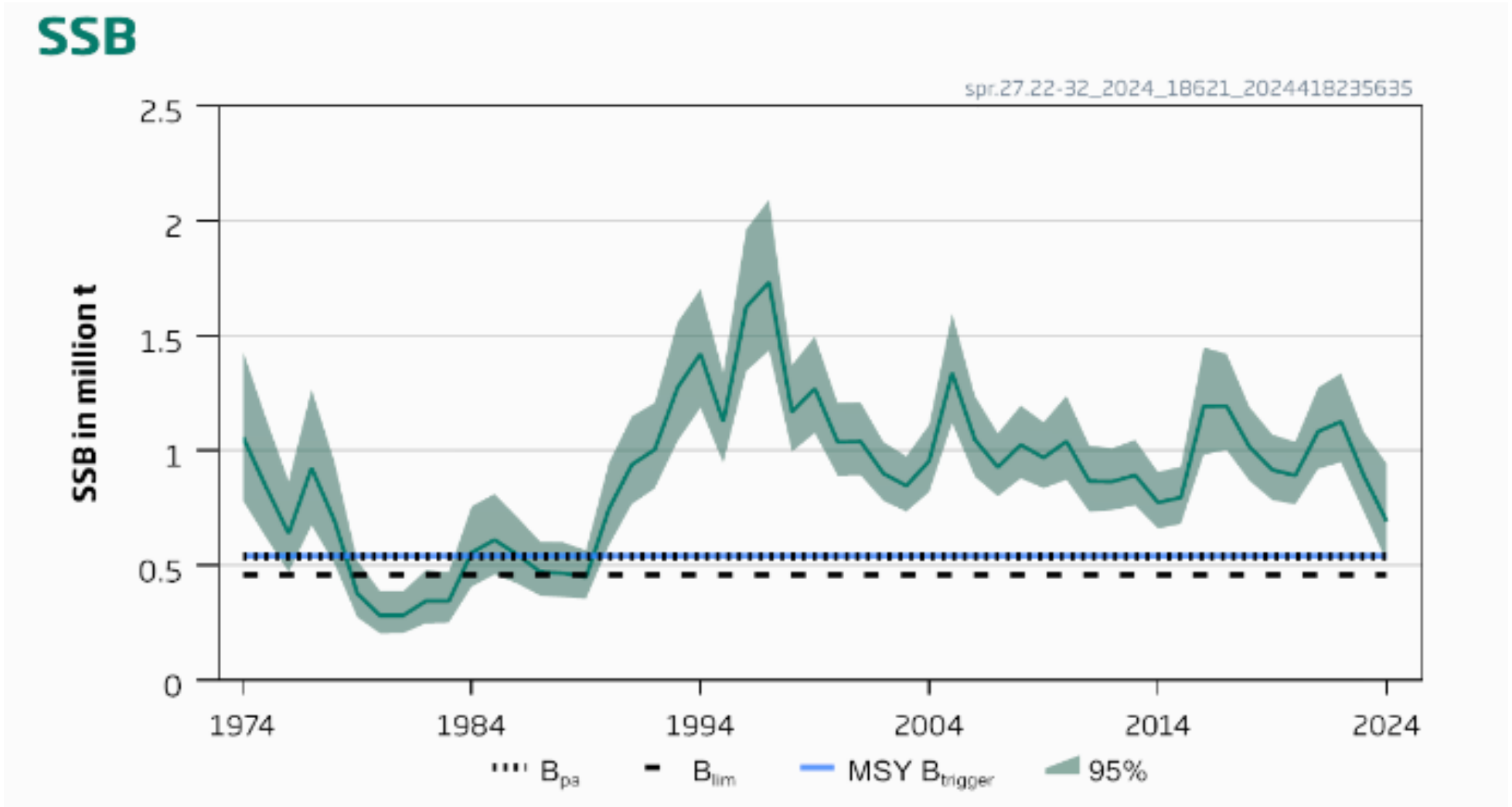

her.27.28_2024_18625_2024419115429
SSB in 1000 t
200
150
100
50
0
1984
1994
2004
2014
2024
B_{pa}
B_{lim}
MSY $B_{trigger}$
0.95


200000
150000
100000
50000
SSB
1980
1990
2000
2010
2020
year
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023


0.6
0.4
0.2
F(2-6)
1980
1990
2000
2010
2020
year
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023

Year	Country	Coastal fishery			Trawl fishery
		Number of allowed fishing gears in the specialized herring fishery	Total limit	Regulations	Closures
2023	Latvia	In total 115 pound-nets and 610 herring gill-nets.	No less than 15% of the Latvian quota. 4 % of the total coastal limit is allocated to the gillnet fishery.	The total herring coastal limit in the Gulf of Riga is distributed by three coastal areas (Eastern, Southern and Western). When the area limit is reached, the fishery is ceased in a given area. In a situation, when there are indications that the total limit in the area will not be taken, it is possible to allocate part of this limit to the area where it has been already reached.	12th May - 10th June
2023	Estonia	In total 155 herring pound-nets	Total EST quota in the Gulf of Riga is divided between trawl and coastal fishery according to historical share of the companies/fishers involved. Currently 40% for coastal fishery and 60% for trawls. The quota for coastal fishers is divided between Saaremaa Island (9%) and Pärnu county 93% (Pärnu area and Kihnu Island).	The total herring quota for coastal fishery within area is distributed between fishing companies/fishers according to their historical share (90%). The rest 10% is distributed between companies/fishers through open auctions.	April 20- May, 22 , 31 days, can be shifted depending on ice conditions in winter; Additional closure in certain rectangles from 1st April to 20 May. "Unofficial" (not established by the authorities) closure for trawl fishery 15th June -15th September.

SSB


spr.27.22-32_2024_18621_2024418235635
SSB in million t
2.5
2
1.5
1
0.5
0
1974
1984
1994
2004
2014
2024
B_{pa}
B_{lim}
MSY $B_{trigger}$
95%

HIGH SOCIAL IMPACT

Fair access to the resources

Fisheries are managed in a sustainable and inclusive way, taking into account economic, social and environmental factors.

Fair access to markets

Fishers become empowered “price makers” enabled to negotiate a fair price for their products that reflects their quality and social value.

Participative decision making

SSF engage as equals with other interested parties to formulate local, national and European fishing policies.

Sustainable and fair food systems

Direct sales and short value chains are developed, helping local economies to thrive and allowing consumers and fishers to have direct and transparent relationships.

LOW ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Low impact fishing techniques

Fishers are committed to using the most appropriate methods, minimizing impact on fish stocks and the marine environment.

Fishing in season

Fish migrate, grow and reproduce, and each has an appropriate season to be caught, respected by low impact SSF fishers.

Recovering fish stocks

Low impact SSF fishers promote management plans and MPA when they are in the heart of the decision making process

Values Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) is valued and integrated with marine science into fisheries management.

SDG Goals: