Wolffish in Subarea 1 Advice June 2014 for 2015 – 2017

Recommendation for 2015 - 2017

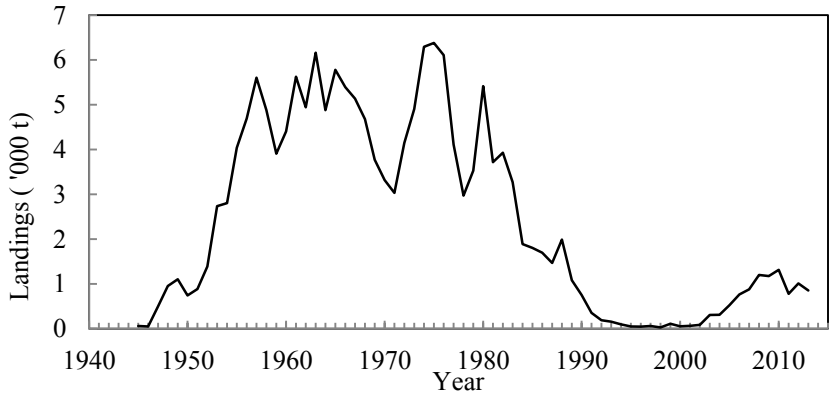
Atlantic wolfish

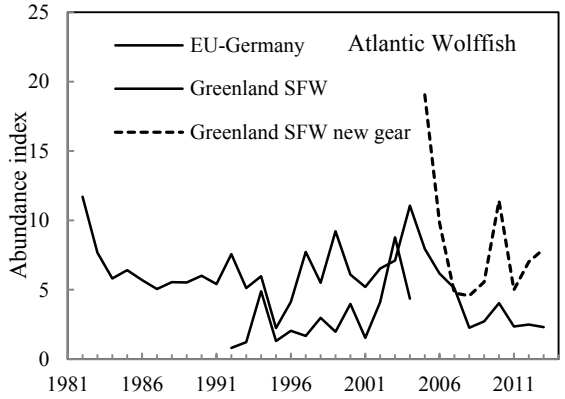
The Scientific Council recommends that there should be no directed fishery in 2015 –2017, and the bycatch in other fisheries be reduced to the lowest possible level.

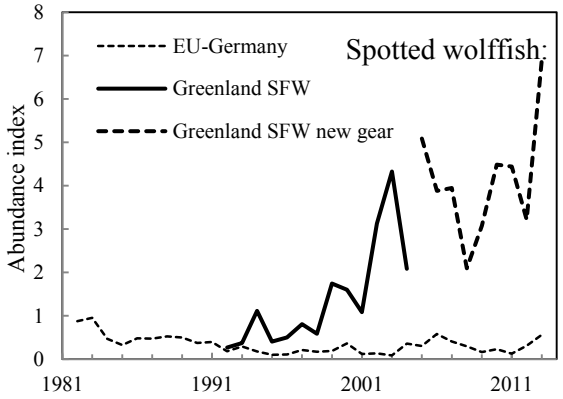
Spotted wolffish

The Scientific Council recommends that catches, including by-catches in other fisheries, should not increase beyond the 2009-13 average (1 025 t) in 2015 –2017.

Background: Spotted wolffish has a larger maximum length and higher growth rate than Atlantic wolffish. Although spotted wolffish and Atlantic wolffish are easily distinguishable from one another, the fishing industry and catch statistics have so far made no distinction between the two species. Atlantic wolffish has a more southern distribution and seems more connected to the shallow offshore banks. Spotted wolffish can be found in all divisions offshore and through survey and landing observations, still seems to be the dominant species in the fjords.







Fishery and Catches:

Recent nominal catches (t) for wolfish (combined) are as follows.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
TAC										
STATLANT 21	524	764	880	1195	50	9	752	1008	858	
STACFIS	515	764	880	1195	1175	1315	779	1008	858	

The fishery targeting Spotted wolffish started inshore in Div. 1C and gradually spread north. Annual landings reached a level of more than 5 000 t by 1957 and stayed at a level of 4 000 to 6 000 t until 1970. In 2013, 858 t of wolffish were reported, of which the majority was caught inshore in Div. 1A-C, indicating that most of the catches were spotted wolffish.

Research survey data: There are two surveys partly covering the stocks of Atlantic wolffish and spotted wolffish in Subarea 1. The EU-Germany survey (SCR Doc. 14/028) and Greenland Shrimp Fish survey in West Greenland (SCR Doc. 14/003). The EU Germany survey has a longer time series (since 1982, 0-400m, Div. 1Bs-F) and the Greenland shrimp and Fish survey in West Greenland covers a larger geographical area (since 1992, 600m, Div. 1A-F). Both surveys are appropriate in regards to main lower depth distribution of both Atlantic and spotted wolffish (100 to 400m), but do cover the inshore areas (except the Disko Bay) and are unlikely to fully cover the shallowest depths fully (0-100 m).

Assessment: No analytical assessment could be performed for any of the stocks.

Atlantic wolffish

Biomass: The biomass is stable, but below average levels.

Fishing mortality: Unknown, but likely to be at a lower level than before the introduction of grid separators in the shrimp trawl fishery.

Recruitment: Unknown.

State of the stock: The stock of Atlantic wolffish is stable at low levels in the southern divisions but expanding its distribution to Northern divisions

Spotted wolffish

Biomass: Unknown. None of the surveys fully cover the distribution of Spotted wolffish. Indices are however increasing in both surveys.

Fishing mortality: Unknown, but likely to be at a lower level offshore than during the 1990s due to the low levels of cod fishery off West Greenland and the use of grid separators in the shrimp fishery. F is unknown in the inshore areas.

Recruitment: Unknown. But the increasing abundance indices observed particularly in the Greenland shrimp and fish survey suggests increasing recruitment since 1990s.

State of the stock: The increasing survey biomasses and abundance indices and the length distribution in surveys and landings suggest that the stock is in good and increasing condition. The state of the stock compared to historic levels is however unknown.

Special comments

Lack of separation of the species in the commercial statistics provides difficulties for making detailed biological assessment. The Scientific Council reiterated the recommendation that the easily discernible species be separated in catch statistics. These stocks will next be assessed in 2017

Sources of Information: SCR Doc. 14/003 SCS Doc. 14/012.