

ISF Iceland saithe and ling

Last Updated: 21 March 2016

MSC Status

Certified as sustainable in September 2014.

Summary

Species: Saithe (*Pollachius virens*), Ling (*Molva molva*)

Location: North East Atlantic, FAO statistical area 27, ICES Va

Fishing methods: Bottom trawl, Danish seine, Gillnet Handline & Long line

Number of fisheries: 1

More about saithe

Saithe (*Pollachius virens*; pollock in NW-Atlantic) is a gadoid species occurring on both sides of the north Atlantic, from the Barents Sea to the Bay of Biscay, around Iceland, in southwest Greenland, and in the western Atlantic from Hudson Strait to North Carolina. In the Northeast Atlantic there are several stocks e.g. southwest Greenland, around Iceland, off the Norwegian coast into the Barents Sea, and north, east and west of the British Isles (Cargnelli et al. 1999; Jónsson 1996).

Saithe occurs all around Iceland but is less common in colder waters at the north and east coasts. It is found at different depths, from the surface to 450m (Jonsson 1992; Gunnarsson et al. 1998). Based on logbook data from Icelandic vessels, it is most common at 250m (Armansson et al., 2007). The size of saithe in Icelandic catches is generally 70-110cm, but the largest fish caught around Iceland was 132cm.

Saithe is an opportunistic predator, can be classified as benthopelagic, in addition to displaying some schooling behaviour. It feeds mainly on pelagic organisms, with krill being important for juveniles as well as for adults. Capelin and sandeel are important food items for saithe around Iceland (Jónsson 1996 & 1997). The diet of saithe consists almost entirely of fish (mainly ammodytids and capelin) and euphausiids. The most important variables in diet were season (particularly in summer) and depth (Jaworski & Ragnarsson 2006).

Icelandic saithe is near the northern boundary of its distribution, and its distribution around the country may be dependent on water temperature (i.e. the northern and eastern coasts are habitable for saithe only in warm years). The fishery and the survey show a more northerly distribution in recent years, possibly because of relative warming in the northern waters (ICES 2013).

<https://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/fisheries-in-the-program/certified/north-east-atlantic/isf-saithe-ling/isf-saithe-ling>