



# Species: Ocean Quahog

OSPAR Recommendation 2013/05:

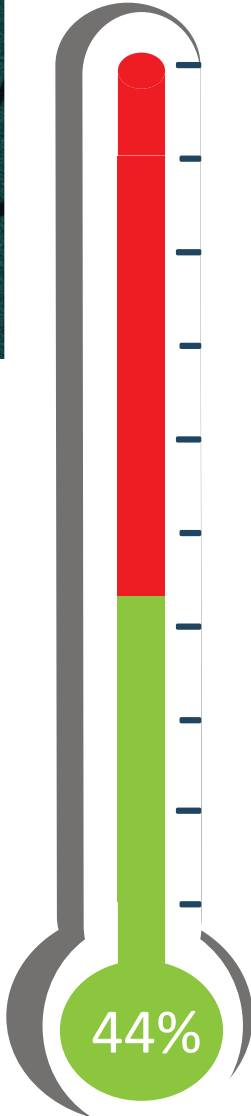
Contracting Parties are required to report progress with implementation of recommendations every six years, with initial more frequent reporting until 2019.

Measures taken by Contracting Parties to protect the Ocean Quahog include adoption of national legislation and designation of MPAs



## Description

Ocean Quahog (*Arctica islandica*) is found buried in sandy and muddy sediments from the low intertidal zone down to 400 m. The species occurs on both sides of the North Atlantic and in the Baltic Sea. Within the OSPAR Maritime Area its distribution extends from Iceland and the Faroes to the Bay of Biscay and includes the Irish Sea and North Sea, but not the wider Atlantic area. This comprises approximately 60% of its distribution area. They can grow to a length of about 100 mm and a height of about 85 mm. The optimum temperature range for their development seems to be 13 - 15°C. Ocean Quahog are a long-lived species with a very slow growth rate. Populations of 40 - 80 year old specimens with a substantial proportion over 100 years old have been observed.



## Action Highlights

Each Recommendation requires Contracting Parties to report on the methods used to implement the measures. The methods are Legislation, Administrative action and Negotiated agreement, or any combination of these. Recent examples include:

1. UK has adopted national legislation;
2. MPAs introduced in Denmark, Sweden, and the UK;
3. Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK have general monitoring programmes in place;
4. Sweden has undertaken a national status assessment.

## Engagement

The engagement index (left) measures how well Contracting Parties have engaged with the national measures in the Recommendation. The higher the score the greater the number of actions that Contracting Parties, which have reported, have taken to implement the measures in the Recommendation. Click here for more information on the index.

References:  
 Background Document for Ocean Quahog (OSPAR Publication 407)  
 OSPAR Recommendation 2013/05  
 OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats (Agreement 2008-06)

## Condition

Ocean Quahog are impacted by bottom trawling fisheries which has led to a decline in some regions. However there is no indication that the entire population is threatened (for example, there is no decline in the Baltic and the species is common along the Norwegian coast). Therefore they are only nominated for the North Sea. The failure of recruitment for many years in the North Sea is a possible point of concern and may be a signal, but there are no clues to the cause at the present time. Further work is needed on the recruitment biology of this species to find possible explanations.

