

Species: Spurdog

OSPAR Recommendation 2014/02:

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 Spurdog include, fisheries measures, designation of MPAs and awareness raising with fishermen



© H Gervais

Description

The North-East Atlantic Spurdog (*Squalus acanthias*) occurs in temperate and boreal waters along continental shelves and slopes. It is most common on or near the seabed in coastal waters. In the OSPAR Area, it occurs from Iceland and Murmansk south to Gibraltar and undertakes seasonal migrations in at least part of this range. Elsewhere, it is found in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, South Atlantic, North and Southeast Pacific, New Zealand and Australia. Trans-Atlantic genetic exchange is very limited. Several stock assessments for *S. acanthias* in the North-East Atlantic, including the OSPAR Area, have been undertaken but these estimated very low stocks (between 100,000 and 500,000 mature individuals in 2000) of this formerly highly abundant species.

51%

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. Some recent examples include:

1. Managed through the Common Fisheries Policy with a zero Total Allowable Catch;
2. France, Germany, and the UK have undertaken a number of research projects;
3. Parties submit spurdog data to the ICES DATRAS database
4. Spain and Sweden have MPAs;
5. Spain, Sweden, and the UK have undertaken a range of awareness raising activities such as workshops with fishermen and identification guides;
6. Belgium, France, Sweden, and the UK are signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding on Migratory Sharks under the Convention on Migratory Species.

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 Spurdog (OSPAR Publication 470)
OSPAR Recommendation 2014/02
OSPAR List of Threatened and/or Declining Species and Habitats (Agreement 2008-06)

Condition

Spurdog is seriously depleted in the OSPAR Area and the stock may be in danger of collapse as a result of unsustainable removal in former target fisheries. Although almost all target fisheries are now closed and by-catch is regulated, the shortage of mature breeding females means that population recovery will be extremely slow and likely take many decades. For example, projected recovery models in the North-West Atlantic suggest that the spawning stock biomass will continue to decline for several years despite the adoption of a stock rebuilding plan. This is because only small numbers of new recruits will be entering the breeding stock to compensate for the natural mortality of the oldest females.



© NOAA