

Seafish guide to responsible sourcing of Pollack



Pollachius pollachius. © Scandanavian Fishing Year Book

Pollack, pollock or lythe are the UK legal names for *Pollachius pollachius* (1). Alaska pollack or pollock is the name for a different species *Theragra chalcogramma* which is an important species exploited in the north Pacific. In some countries (United States, Germany, Ireland) saithe or coley (*Pollachius virens*) is called pollock, black or Atlantic pollack.

Biology

Pollack lives over areas of rocky ground in coastal waters and feeds on other fish, squid, shrimp and crabs. The spawning areas have not been fully identified, but in the western English Channel the adults appear to leave inshore waters in November or December, migrating to depths of around 100m where they congregate in dense spawning aggregations during the spring, when they are caught in quantities by trawlers in these areas.

Fisheries and gears

The catches usually form a part of a mixed catch from vessels prosecuting fisheries using static gears; gill nets, longlines, handlines and jiggers on rocky grounds and wrecks; for details see CEFAS (2). Line caught pollack taken by the South West Handline Fishermen's Association are tagged and traceable to fishermen (3).

Aquaculture

The species grows incidentally in marine fish cultivation and experiments are being considered for full life cycle cultivation.

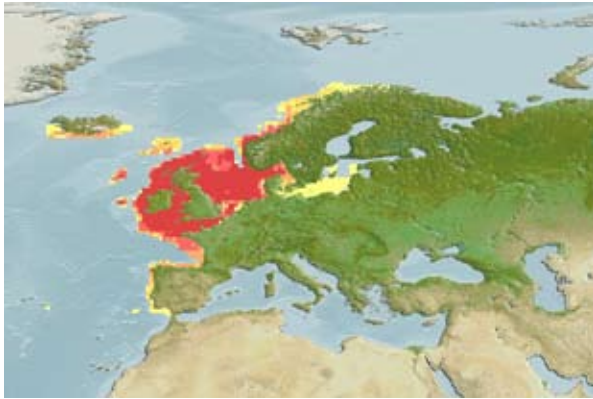
Stock assessment and catches

Although pollack are not an assessed species the European Union set a precautionary Total Allowable Catches based on previous catches (this can be modified based on evidence provided to the EU by the Member State making the request) for this species in the following ICES areas:

ICES Sub areas and divisions (4)	Agreed Total Allowable Catch 2008 (5) (Tonnes)
ICES VI, EC waters of Vb and international waters of XII and XIV	450
Norwegian waters south of 62°N ICES IIa, IIIa, IVa,	190
ICES VII	15,000
ICES VIIIa,b,d,e	1,680
ICES VIIIc	262
ICES IX and X	288

Distribution

This species is mainly distributed over the North East Atlantic: Norway, the Faeroes, and Iceland to the Bay of Biscay (2).



Management and Conservation

The species are subject to management under the European Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and local management control in coastal waters. Pollack make up part of the diverse catches of the inshore fleet which play an important part in the social and economic livelihoods of many coastal communities (2).

European measures

Pollack are managed by precautionary Total Allowable Catches (5) usually based on previous catches. Pollack are subject to a minimum landing size in most European waters of 30cm. Regulations in European waters stipulate permitted mesh size ranges for both static and towed gears with which particular target species may be taken. Fishermen are only allowed to retain a limited level (5-70% dependent on mesh size and target species) of by catch of non target species. These regulations ban the use of 70-89mm static gears and encourage the use of static gear mesh sizes of greater than 120mm and a minimum trawl cod end mesh of 80mm for catching pollack (6).

National and local legislation

In England and Wales regulation within the six mile limit is principally undertaken by Sea Fisheries Committees (7). Much of the local regulation of static gears is designed to prevent catches of salmon and trout; local legislation has to authorize the use of fixed nets or traps within the six mile zone. National legislation to protect sea bass also bans the use gill and similar enmeshing nets of 65-89mm.

Product Characteristics

Pollack is a strongly flavoured whitefish with a slight grey colour. Those grown incidentally in fish cages can take on salmon like characteristics. In the UK pollack it is becoming considered an alternative to cod and haddock.

Supply chain standards

Seafish has developed supply chain standards from capture to retailer:

- **Responsible Fishing Scheme.** Sets best practice standards for fishing vessels: (BSi: PAS 72:2006).
- **British Retail Consortium (BRC) Global Standard/Safe and Local Supplier Approval (SALSA)** certification. Designed to raise standards in the seafood processing and wholesaling sectors.

References and sources

1. www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2006/may/fishlist
2. www.cefas.co.uk
3. www.linecaught.org.uk
4. www.ices.dk/aboutus/icesareas.asp
5. Council Regulation (EC) 40/2008
6. Council Regulation (EC) 850/98
7. www.asfc.org.uk

Responsible Sourcing Services

This guide is one of a series of Seafish Responsible Sourcing Guides. For further information: www.seafish.org/b2b/rss