

Northern shelf cod advice for 2026

Colm Lordan Advisory Committee Chair

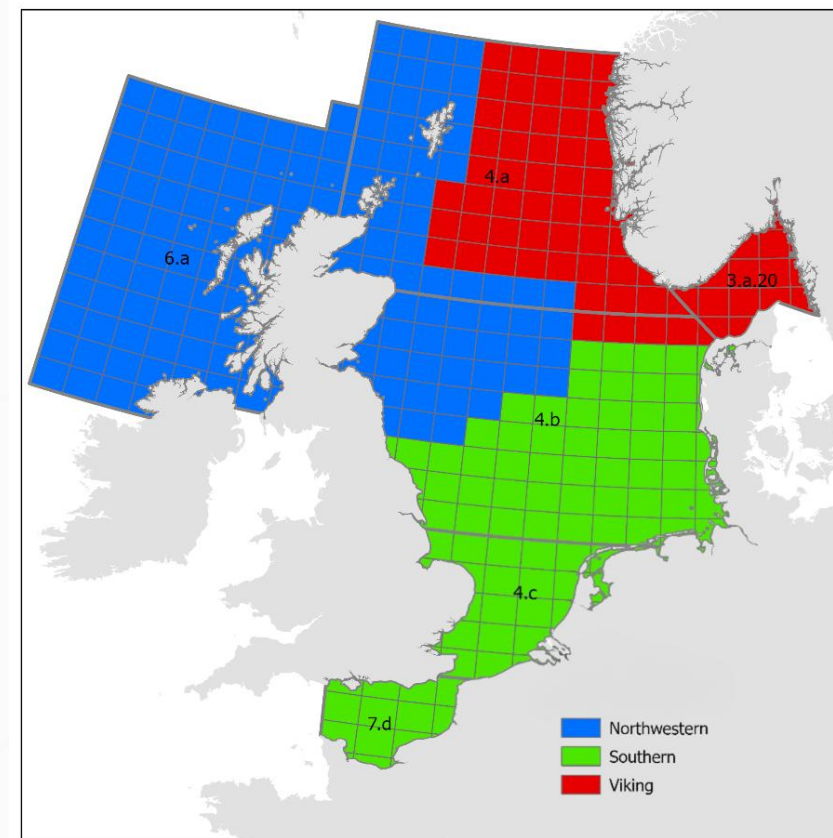
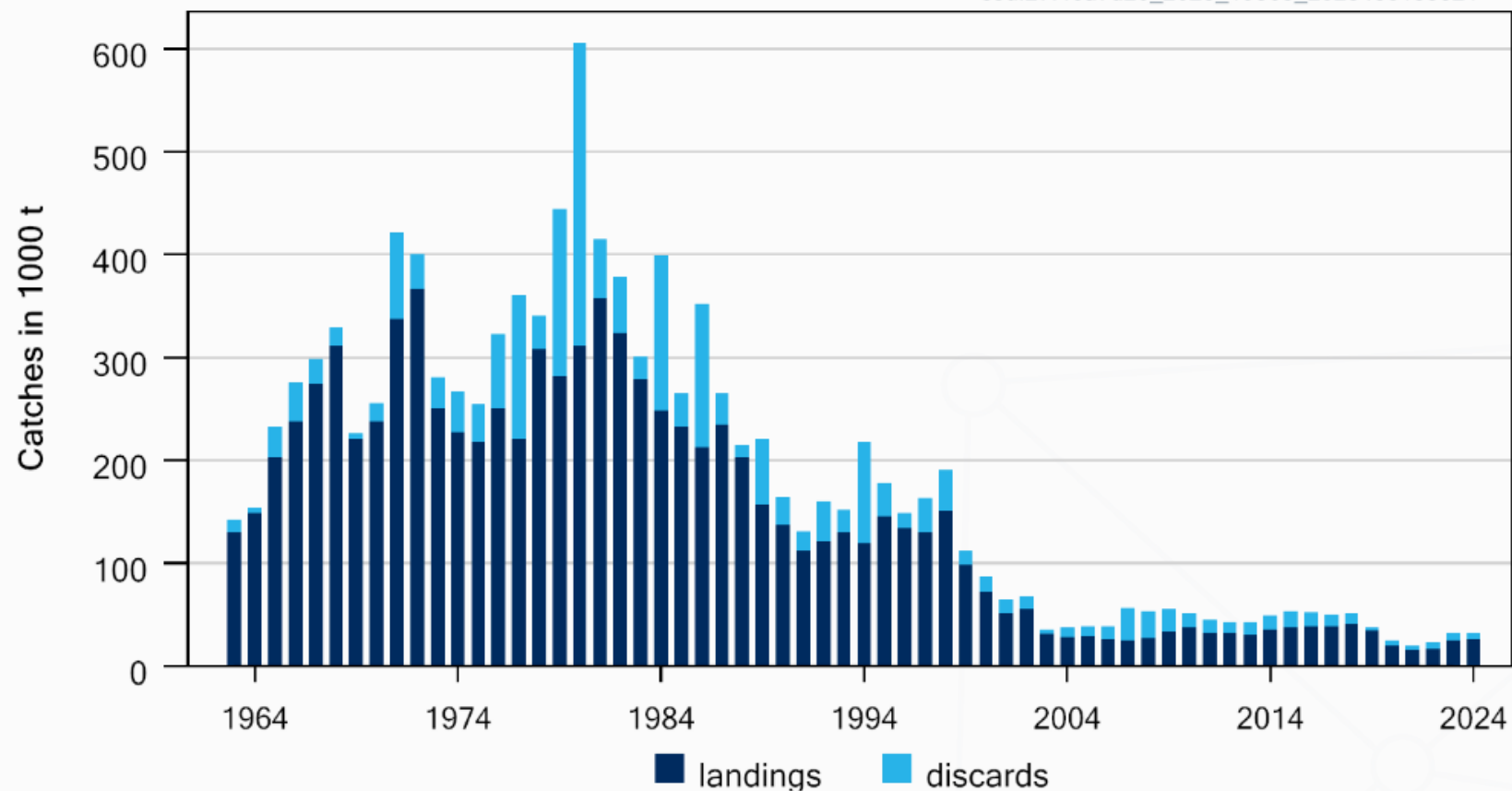


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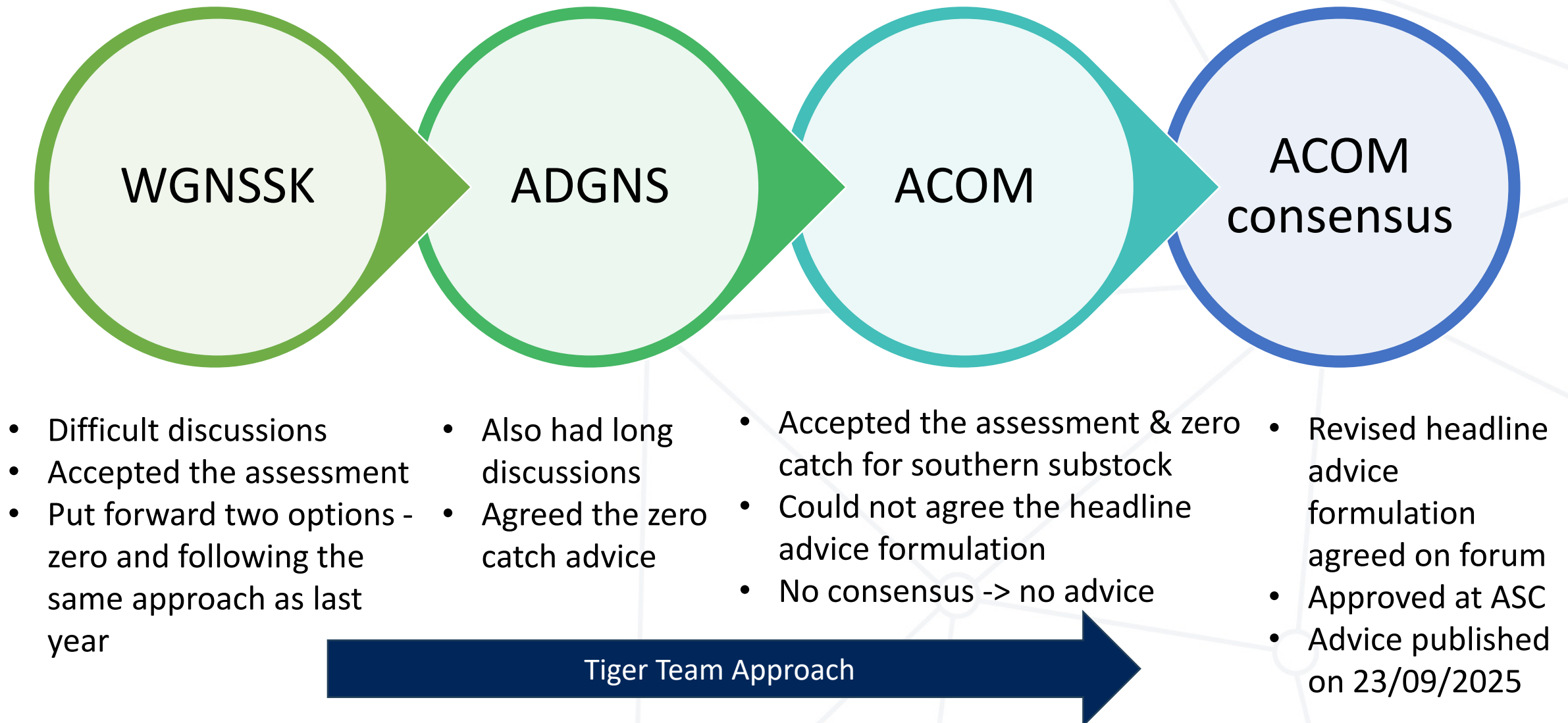
<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.27202566>

All substock combined catches

cod.27.46a7d20_2025_19565_2025430155321

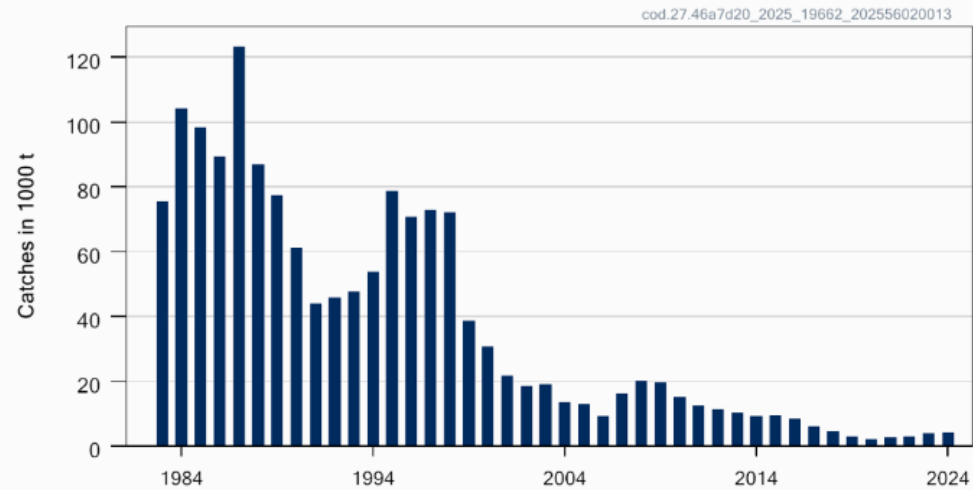


Process steps to date

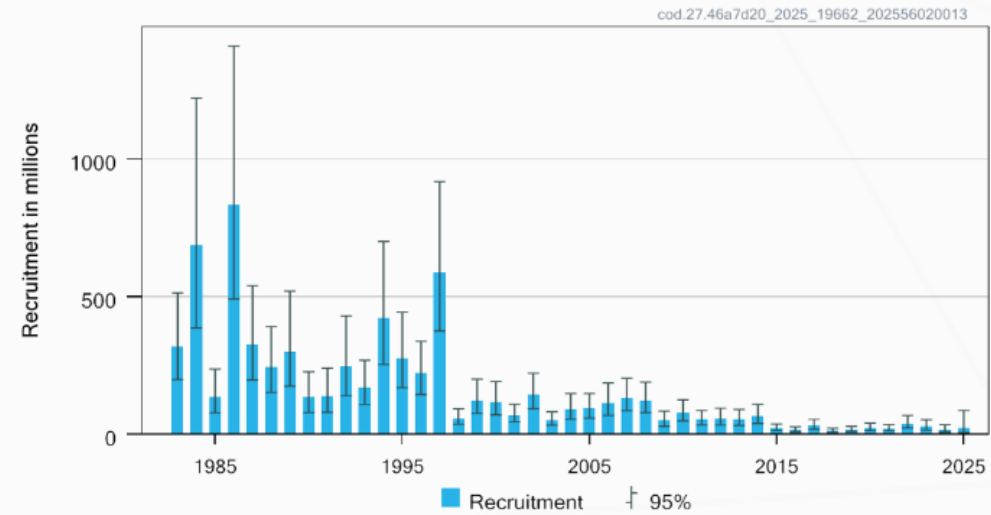


Southern

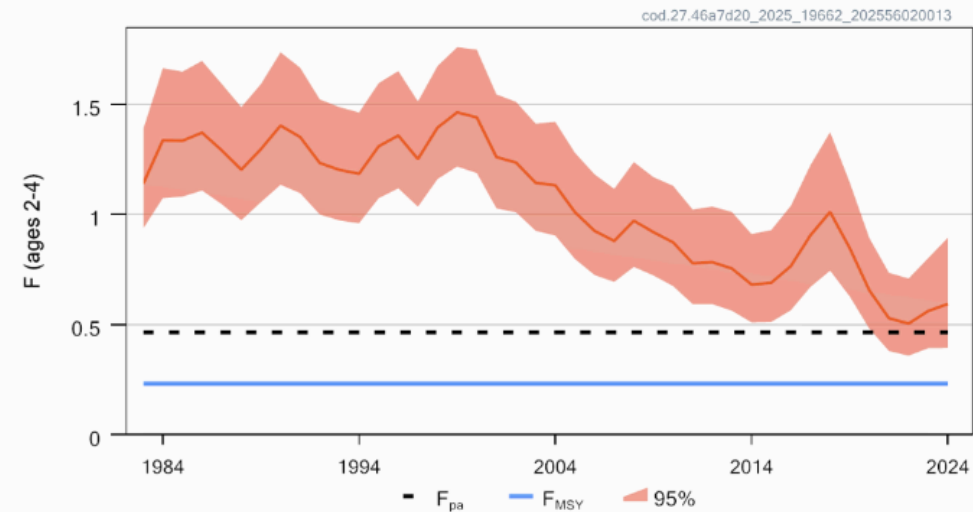
Model estimated catches



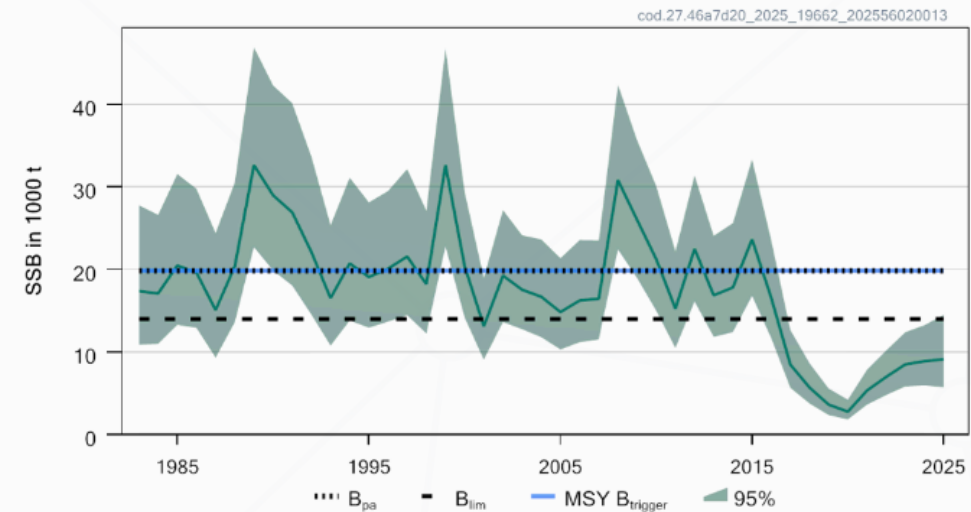
Recruitment (age 1)



Fishing Pressure

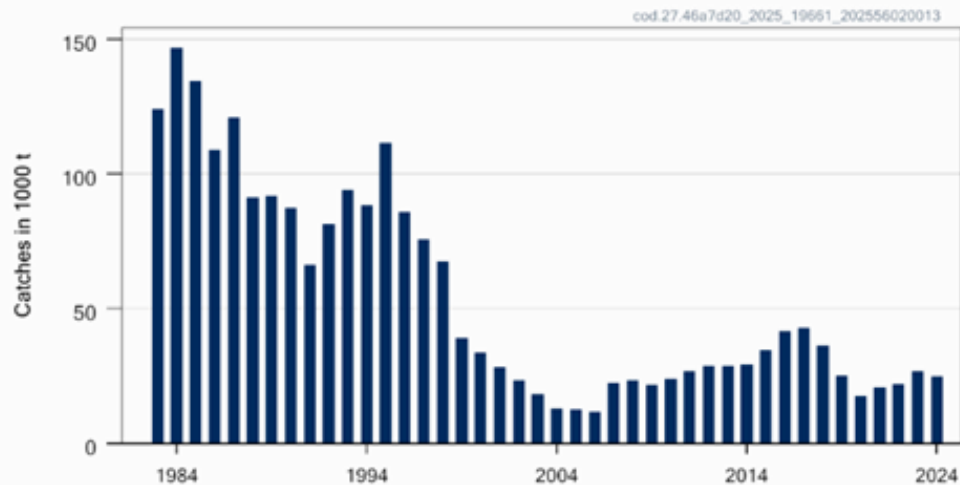


Spawning Stock Biomass

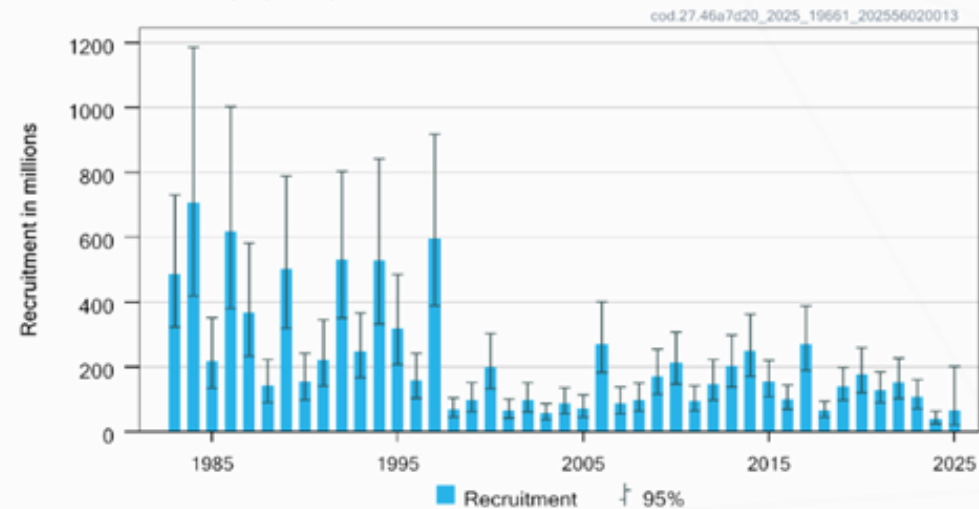


Northwestern

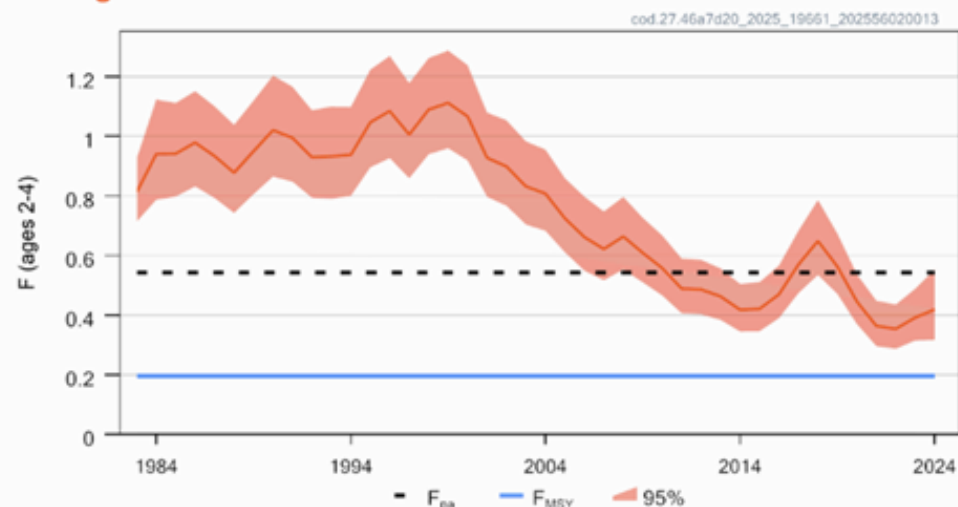
Model estimated catches



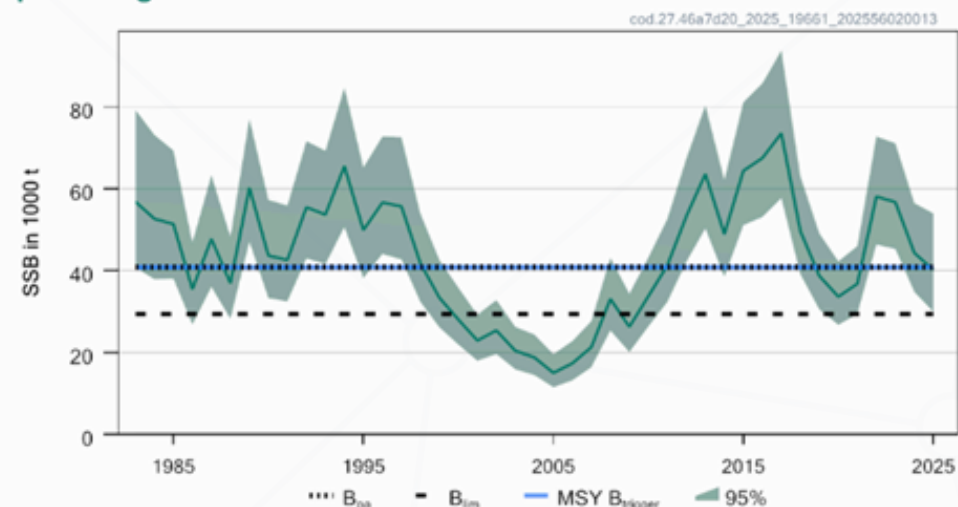
Recruitment (age 1)



Fishing Pressure

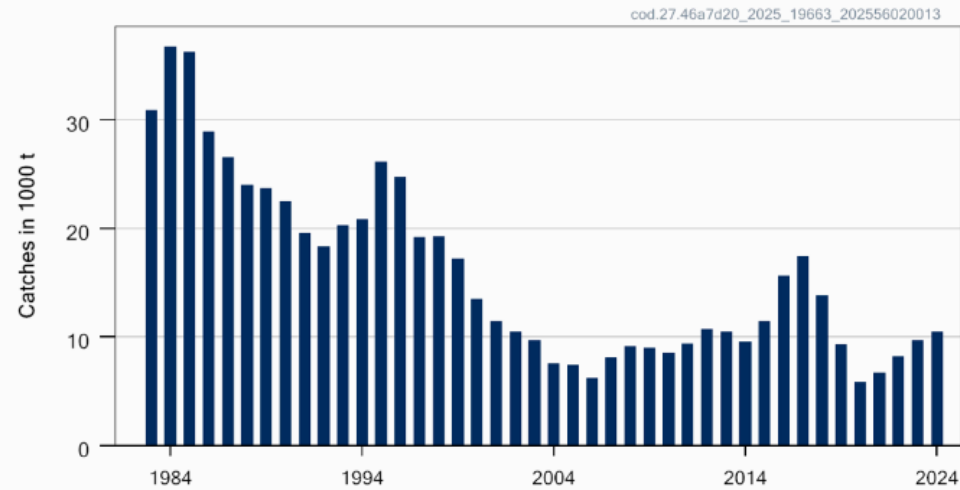


Spawning Stock Biomass

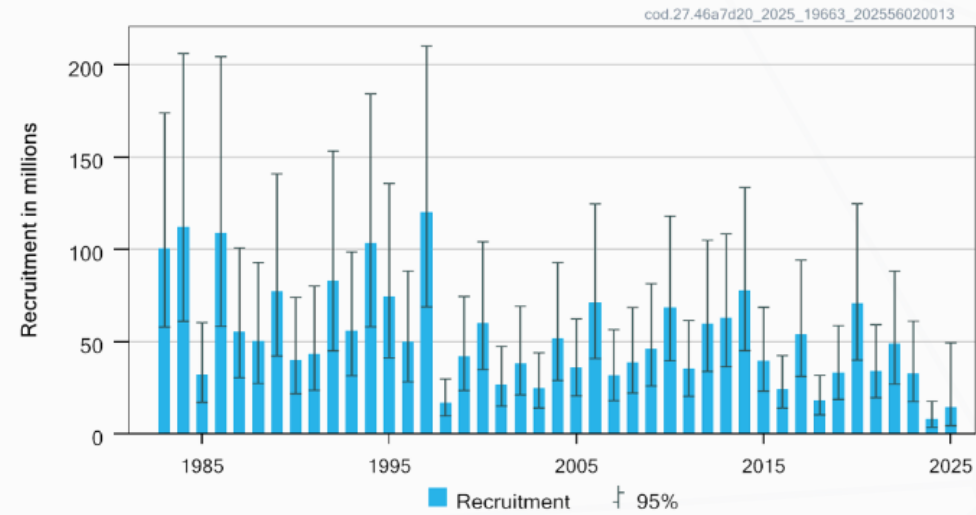


Viking

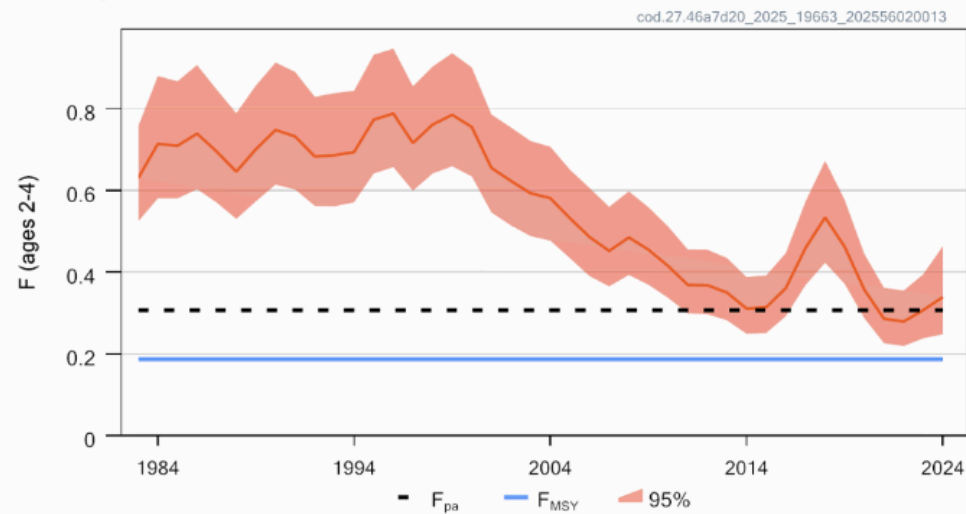
Model estimated catches



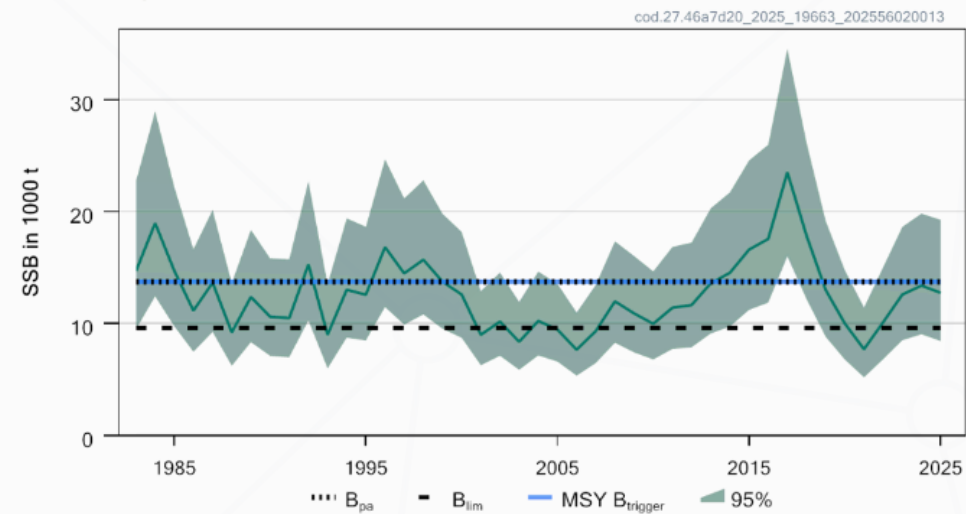
Recruitment (age 1)



Fishing Pressure



Spawning Stock Biomass





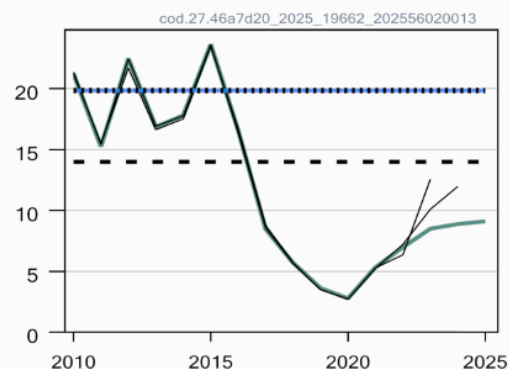
Southern substock.

Northwestern substock.

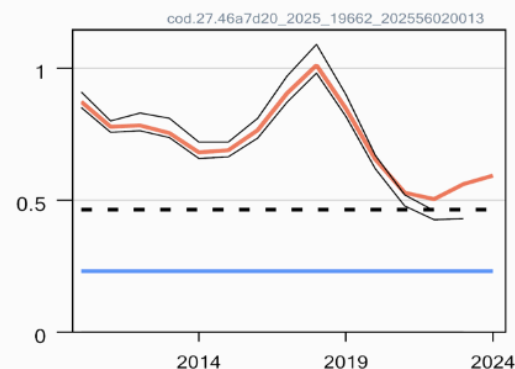
Viking substock.

<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.27202566>

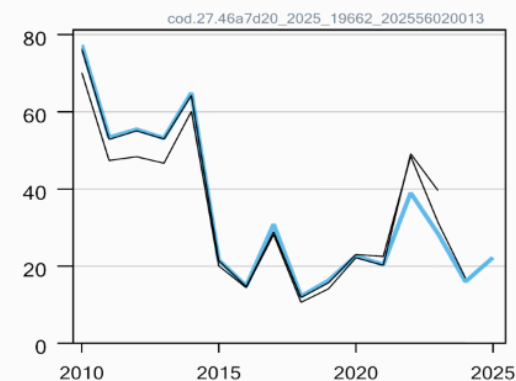
SSB ('000t)



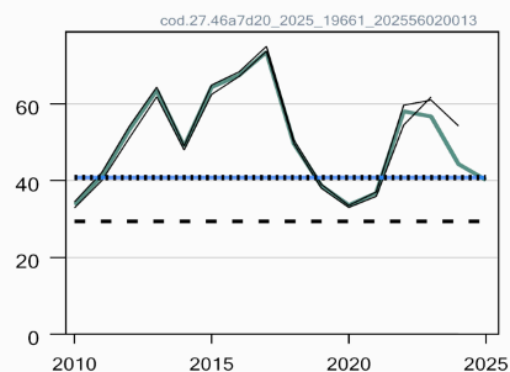
Fishing Pressure



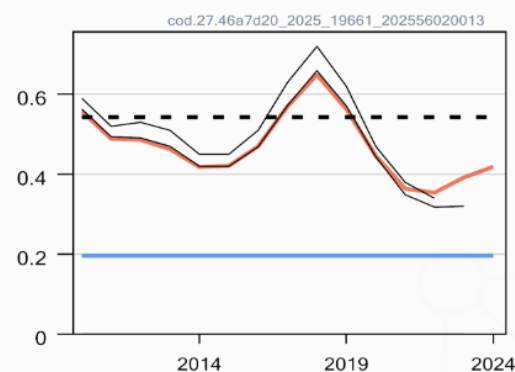
Rec (age 1; Millions)



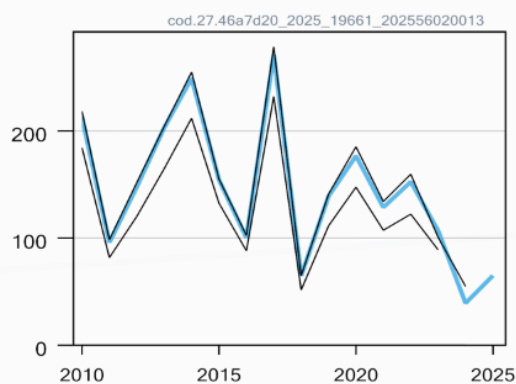
SSB ('000t)



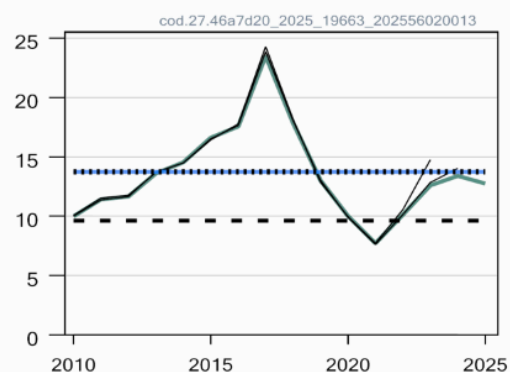
Fishing Pressure



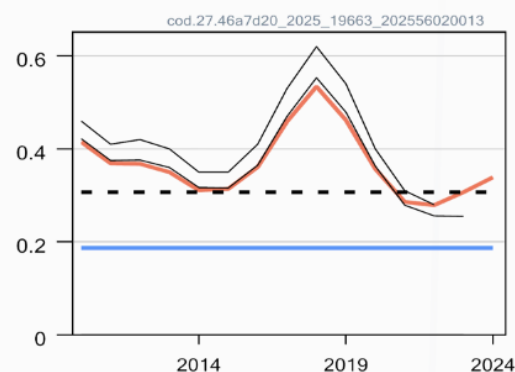
Rec (age 1; Millions)



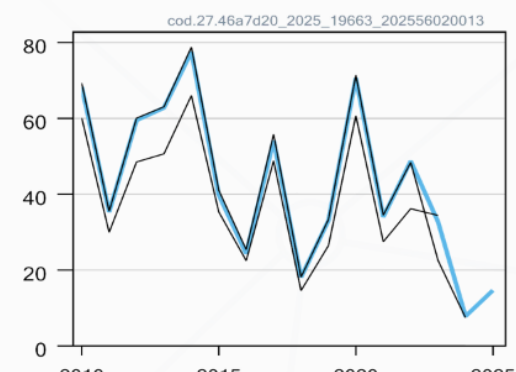
SSB ('000t)



Fishing Pressure



Rec (age 1; Millions)



— MSY B_trigger — B_lim B_pa

— F_MSY — F_pa

Southern substock Catch Scenarios Table



Basis	Total catch -2026	total (ages 2- -2026	Spwaning- stock biomass	% SSB change	% advice change**	Probability of SSB (2027) < Blim
ICES advice basis						
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach and precautionary considerations: F = 0	0	0	14605	58	-100	44
Other scenarios						
F2025 × 0.35***	1744	0.214	12048	30	-22	67
MSY approach: SSB (2027) = Blim	399	0.044	14002	51	-82	50
FMSY × SSB (2026)/MSY Btrigger	933	0.108	13219	43	-58	56
FMSY lower × SSB (2026)/MSY Btrigger	595	0.067	13706	48	-74	53
FMSY	1866	0.231	11878	28	-17.0	69
FMSY lower	1221	0.144	12769	38	-46	61
FPA	3312	0.464	9839	6.3	47	85
SSB (2026) = MSY Btrigger = BPA^						
F = F2025	3958	0.591	8905	-3.8	76	89
SSB(2027) = SSB(2026)	3717	0.542	9259	0	65	87

Northwestern substock Catch Scenarios Table

Basis	Total catch 2026	$F_{\text{total (ages 2-4)}}$ -2026	Spawning- stock biomass(SSB; 2027)	% SSB change *	% advice change**	Probability of SSB (2027) < B_{lim} (%)^
ICES advice basis						
Precautionary considerations: $F = 0$	0	0	50332	40	-100	0.6
Other scenarios						
$F_{2025} \times 0.35^{***}$	7619	0.149	41547	15.9	-23	5.5
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach: $F_{\text{MSY}} \times \text{SSB (2026)}/\text{MSY } B_{\text{trigger}}$	8670	0.172	40379	12.7	-12.6	6.8
$F_{\text{MSY lower}} \times \text{SSB (2026)}/\text{MSY } B_{\text{trigger}}$	5603	0.106	43816	22	-44	2.8
F_{MSY}	9712	0.196	39170	9.3	-2.1	9.3
$F_{\text{MSY lower}}$	6315	0.121	42997	20	-36	3.4
F_{PA}	21524	0.543	26058	-27	117	68
$\text{SSB (2027)} = B_{\text{lim}}$	18393	0.43	29378	-18.0	85	50
$\text{SSB (2027)} = \text{MSY } B_{\text{trigger}} = B_{\text{PA}}$	8242	0.163	40823	13.9	-16.9	6.1
$F = F_{2025}$	17967	0.421	29901	-16.6	81	47
$\text{SSB(2027)} = \text{SSB(2026)}$	12657	0.269	35837	0	28	17.3

Viking substock Catch Scenarios Table



Basis	Total catch (2026)	F_{total} (ages 2–4) -2026	Spawning- stock biomass (SSB; 2027)	% SSB change *	% advice change**	Probability of SSB (2027) < B_{lim} (%)^
ICES advice basis						
Precautionary considerations: $F = 0$	0	0	15171	37	-100	3.9
Other scenarios						
$F_{2025} \times 0.35^{***}$	2925	0.119	12230	10.2	-12.5	18.7
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach: $F_{\text{MSY}} \times \text{SSB (2026)}/\text{MSY } B_{\text{trigger}}$	3610	0.151	11571	4.3	8	25
$F_{\text{MSY lower}} \times \text{SSB (2026)}/\text{MSY } B_{\text{trigger}}$	2090	0.082	13047	17.6	-37	12.9
F_{MSY}	4322	0.187	10825	-2.4	29	32
$F_{\text{MSY lower}}$	2541	0.102	12596	13.5	-24	15.4
F_{PA}	6402	0.307	8812	-21	92	62
$\text{SSB (2027)} = B_{\text{lim}}$	5522	0.25	9619	-13.3	65	50
$\text{SSB (2027)} = \text{MSY } B_{\text{trigger}} = B_{\text{PA}}$	1406	0.054	13732	24	-58	8.6
$F = F_{2025}$	6898	0.342	8327	-25	106	68
$\text{SSB (2027)} = \text{SSB (2026)}$	4045	0.173	11096	0	21	30

Cod (*Gadus morhua*) in Subarea 4, divisions 6.a and 7.d, and Subdivision 20 (North Sea, West of Scotland, eastern English Channel, and Skagerrak)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

Northern shelf cod consists of three substocks (Northwestern, Southern, and Viking) which mix and are caught together. ICES advises that when the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach and precautionary considerations are applied, there should be zero catch in 2026 for all substocks.

ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied to the Northwestern and Viking substocks without precautionary considerations, and the MSY approach with precautionary considerations is applied to the Southern substock catches in 2026 should be no more than 8670 tonnes, 3610 tonnes and 0 tonnes respectively. As the three substocks are caught together, this will result in a higher probability (67%) for the Southern substock of remaining below B_{lim} . The available evidence suggests this risk to the Southern substock may be reduced by fishing in quarter one (January-March), when the three stocks are thought to mainly separate to the areas shown in Figure 2. ICES is not able to quantify the degree of mixing between substocks in quarters 2-4 and any level of catch of Southern substock will increase the probability of being below B_{lim} in 2027, predicted to be 44% even with zero catch. However, the indirect effects of more intensive fishing in Q1 have not been quantified and may lead to undesirable outcomes, such as alterations in the selection pattern.

Issues relevant for the advice



- ICES is not in a position to provide area-specific catch advice without additional stock composition samples, data with a high spatial resolution.....
- Given that ICES is not in a position to quantify the degree of mixing between substocks, an approach to protect the weakest substock has been taken.
- The forecast for 2026, assuming low productivity in terms of recruitment, even with zero catch, gives a probability of 44% of the SSB in 2027 being below B_{lim} . This is highly dependent on the uncertain and low recruitment in 2025–2027, which would contribute ~42% of the 2027 SSB for the Southern substock.
- Survey data for quarters 3 and 4 in 2024 and quarter 1 in 2025 show very low abundances of cod, with particularly low values in the southern North Sea and no sign of improved incoming recruitment.

Thank you



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