

Issue 4/2019

Marine environment

Emergency measures in the Baltic Sea: ban, with immediate effect, of commercial fishing for cod in most of the Baltic Sea until 31 December 2019



Photo source: European Commission

The Commission has on 23 July 2019 announced emergency measures to save the ailing eastern Baltic cod stock from impending collapse. Emergency measures will ban, with immediate effect, commercial fishing for cod in most of the Baltic Sea until 31 December 2019. [...]

The ban came into force immediately and will last until 31 December 2019. It will cover all fishing vessels and apply in all those areas of the Baltic Sea where the largest part of the stock is present (i.e. subdivisions 24-26), except for some specific targeted derogations.

For map of Baltic Sea fishing zones see

https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/sites/fisheries/files/docs/body/baltic_fishing_zones.pdf

The EU measures follow measures that have already been taken by some Member States. Given that these measures do not ensure a uniform approach in all areas where the eastern Baltic cod stock is found, and that not all Member States intend to adopt national measures, the Commission has decided that further emergency action is warranted.

While this fishing ban is an essential immediate step to help protect this vulnerable stock, the Commission and Member States will revisit the need for longer-term action later in the year, when Ministers meet to decide on next year's fishing opportunities. Scientists also warn of many factors besides fishing that threaten the stock and that need to be addressed separately, including a lack of salinity, too high water temperatures and too little oxygen, as well as parasite infestation.

The legal basis for this drastic measure is the Regulation on the Common Fisheries Policy (EU) No 1380/2013: It provides in its article 12¹ that, in case of evidence of a serious threat to the conservation of a stock, and on imperative grounds of urgency, the Commission can adopt emergency measures to alleviate the threat.

Read the full text of the Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/1248 of 22 July 2019

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019R1248&from=DE>

¹ Article 12(1): On duly justified imperative grounds of urgency relating to a serious threat to the conservation of marine biological resources or to the marine ecosystem based on evidence, the Commission, at the reasoned request of a Member State or on its own initiative, may, in order to alleviate that threat, adopt immediately applicable implementing acts applicable for a maximum period of six months in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 47(3).