

Oh my cod!

Where did all the fish go?



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About the artist: Jacek Matysiak is a Dublin based illustrator and designer, focused primarily on marine wildlife, biodiversity and environmental issues. You can find his work on twitter [@bighippoart](https://twitter.com/bighippoart), Instagram [@big.hippo.art](https://www.instagram.com/big.hippo.art) or visit his website jacekmatysiak.com.

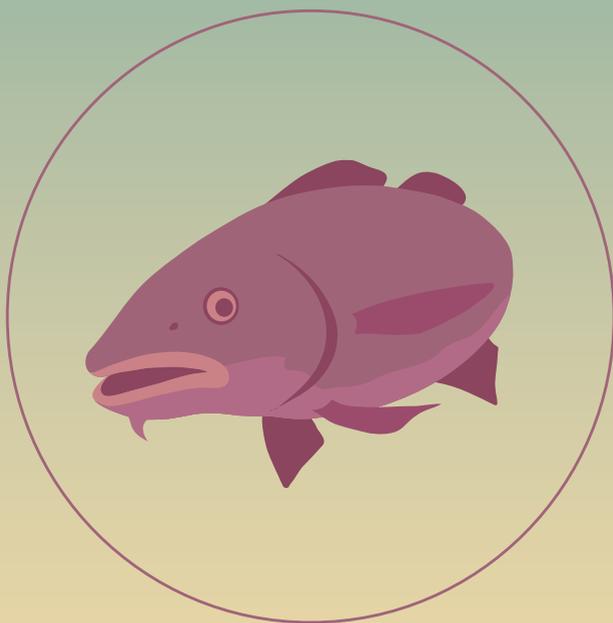
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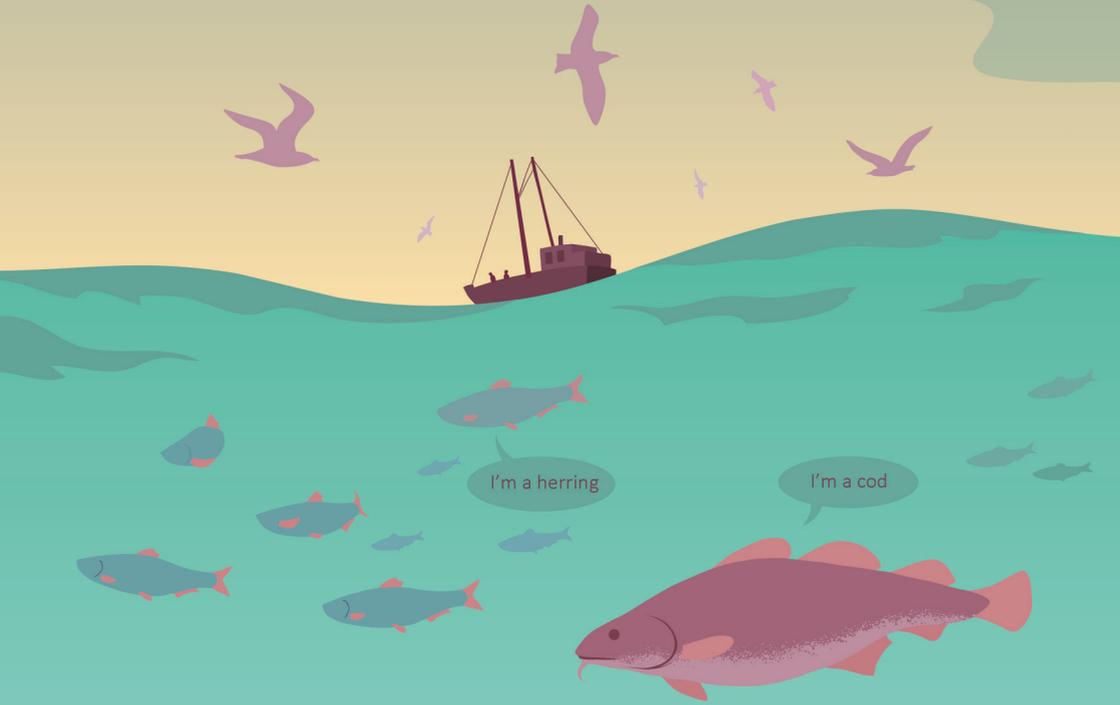
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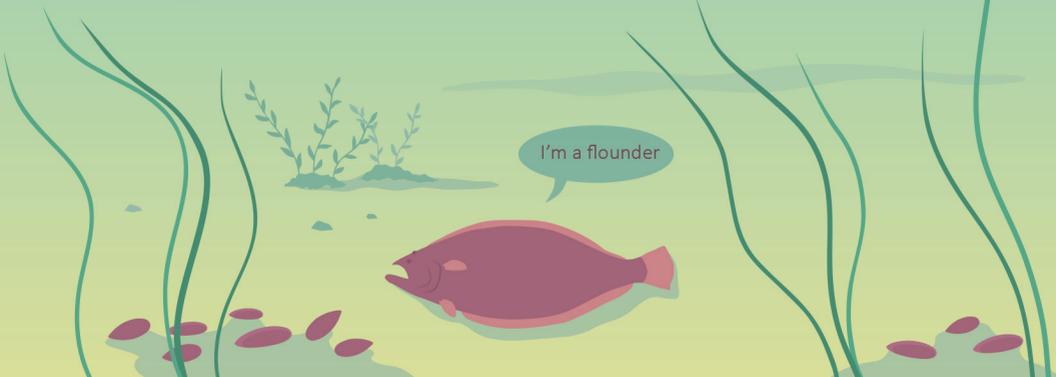


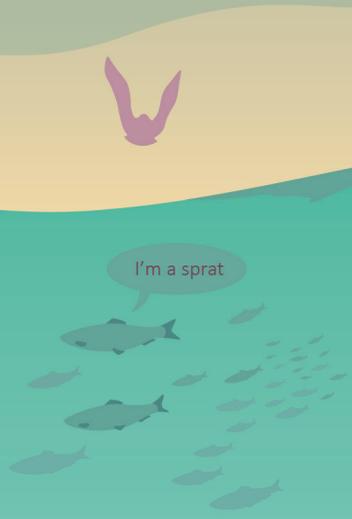
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The Baltic Sea



Many species in the Baltic Sea interact and are dependant upon one another. Cod eats sprat and herring while sprat and herring feed on cod eggs and even small cods. This creates an interesting dynamic as large sprat and herring population mean more food for cod, but at the same time larger amounts of cod eggs and larvae eaten by sprat and herring. More fishing pressure on cod stocks mean that the ecosystem can sustain larger populations of sprat and herring.



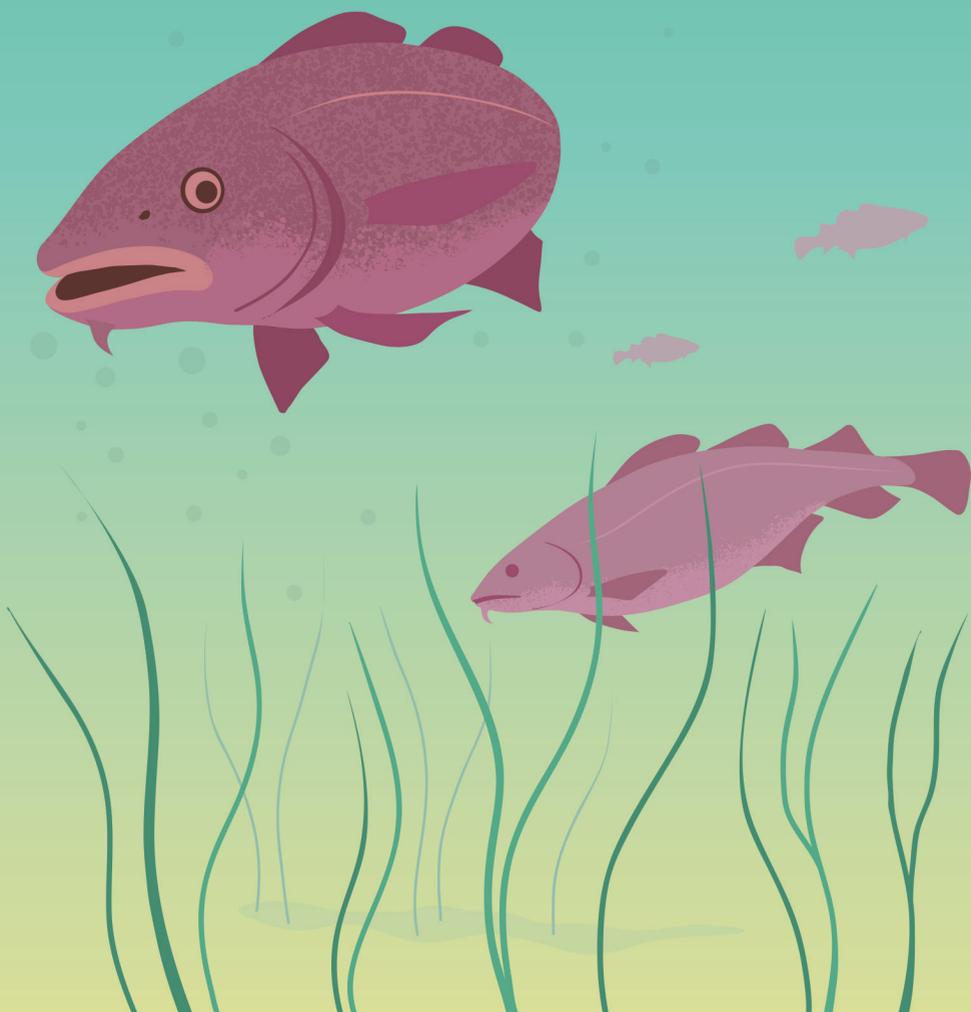


Baltic Sea is a rather shallow sea filled with “brackish” water (a mixture of saline and freshwater coming from open ocean and surrounding rivers). The environmental conditions of the Baltic Sea change drastically along its length, the southwestern part is warmer and more saline while the water in northern parts is colder and almost freshwater.

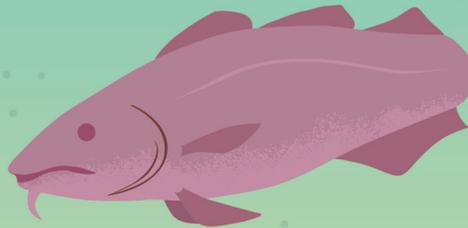


Meet the Baltic Cod

The Baltic cod is an iconic species that plays a key role in the Baltic Sea ecosystem, both environmentally and commercially. It is also an important and valuable fish, it has been supporting the livelihoods of coastal communities for centuries.



I am a commercially important species and a very popular food fish. My meat is white, lean, delicate and very tasty.

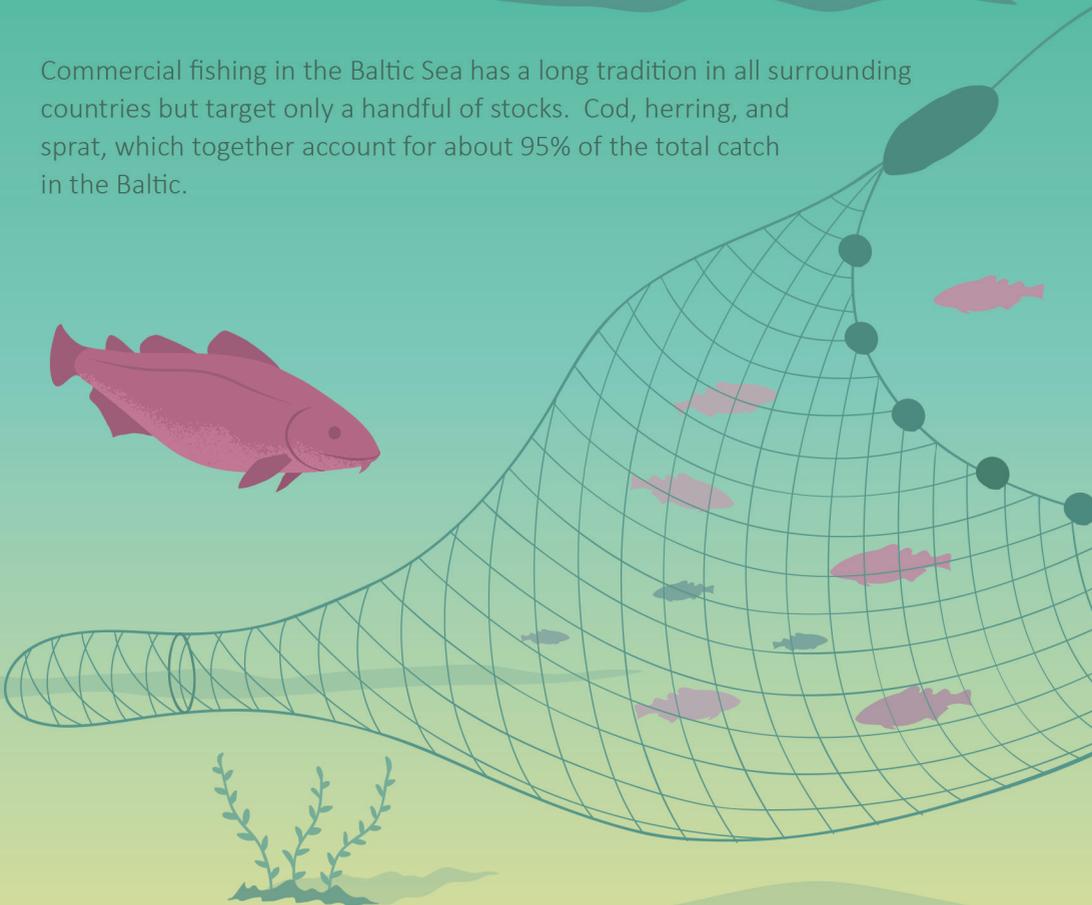
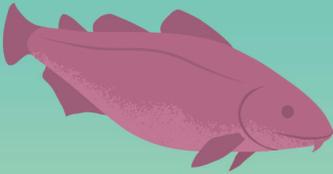


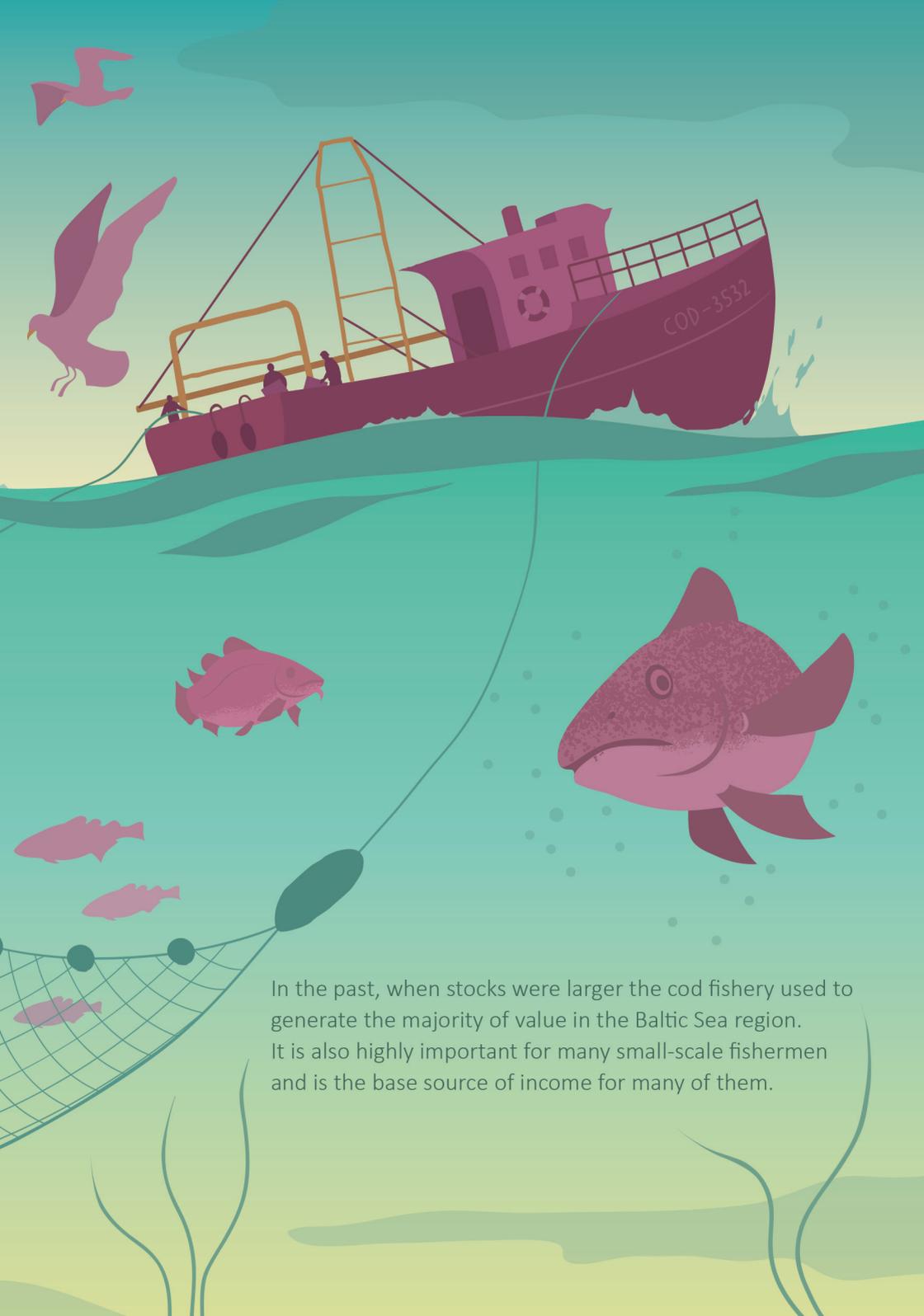
Cod is a predator, and not a very picky one, it tends to eat whatever it can catch. Smaller cod typically eat invertebrates like small crustaceans or mussels. When they grow up they start feeding on other fish like sandeel, stickleback, sprat and herring. Adult cod are also cannibalistic and do not hesitate to eat smaller cod!

The Baltic Sea Fisheries



Commercial fishing in the Baltic Sea has a long tradition in all surrounding countries but target only a handful of stocks. Cod, herring, and sprat, which together account for about 95% of the total catch in the Baltic.





In the past, when stocks were larger the cod fishery used to generate the majority of value in the Baltic Sea region. It is also highly important for many small-scale fishermen and is the base source of income for many of them.

Overfishing - what is that?



Overfishing is a global environmental problem. It means we are catching too much fish, more than is being produced and the fish stocks shrink. If too much fish is taken away, the future of the stock could be at risk, as well as the livelihoods of fishermen.

The eastern Baltic cod population is in a critical state due to environmental conditions and long-term overfishing. The cod stock is not able to reliably reproduce itself and in the recent years has disappeared from large areas in the Baltic. It is difficult to imagine summer vacations by the Baltic Sea without friend cod.



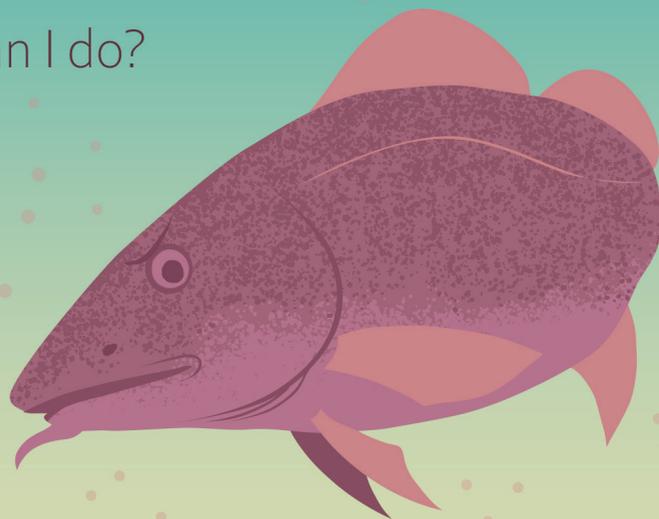
The future of cod?

The overfishing crisis can be reversed! Scientists have been recommending a complete halt to all fisheries in the foreseeable future. A long term rebuilding plan for eastern Baltic cod is needed and should be developed as soon as possible.



Rebuilding of the eastern Baltic cod population must be done urgently to safeguard the future of many coastal communities. If the population is restored to its former glory and fished sustainably we can increase the catch fivefold!

What Can I do?



Decision-makers: Think long-term. Set catch limits in line with scientific advice!



Media and citizens: Download the booklet and spread the message!



Act! Visit: eu.oceana.org/en/save-cod



eu.oceana.org

Oceana is the largest international advocacy organization dedicated solely to ocean conservation. Oceana is rebuilding abundant and biodiverse oceans by winning science-based policies in countries that control one third of the world's wild fish catch. With over 200 victories that stop overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution and killing of threatened species like turtles and sharks, Oceana's campaigns are delivering results. A restored ocean means that one billion people can enjoy a healthy seafood meal, every day, forever. Together, we can save the oceans and help feed the world. Visit eu.oceana.org to learn more.

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Learn more about Baltic cod at:

eu.oceana.org/en/our-work/baltic-cod/overview

The Baltic cod is an iconic species that plays a key role in the Baltic Sea ecosystem, but it is also in deep trouble. The eastern Baltic cod stock has shown signs of crisis and steep declines for many years.

Reversing this collapse and securing future of coastal communities and livelihoods of fishermen in the Baltic Sea region is possible but requires ambitious and difficult decisions. The time to act is now! In this book you will read a brief story of the eastern Baltic cod.