

# COD: Doing our bit...



## Why is there a problem?

Because supply isn't limitless. The Northern Cod Fishery off the eastern Canadian coast used to yield over 100,000Tns per year but then collapsed to practically nothing in the early 90s. Quite simply without proper management of the fisheries across the oceans the same will happen elsewhere.

## Cod – What is it?

There are two types:

- **Atlantic Cod** (*Gadus morhua*) – comes from the Atlantic, funny enough, and is the most favourite fish eaten in the UK – accounts for approx 21% of sales volume across all of retail, catering etc.
- **Pacific Cod** (*Gadus macrocephalis*) – comes from the Northern Pacific

It is wild caught (there are some tentative attempts to farm it), it spawns in the spring and can live to the age of 25 years reaching close to 100Kg.

Cod inhabit the northern shallow shelves of the Atlantic and Pacific. And the species form massive discrete shoals that stick to a certain part of the ocean – they have their own spawning areas etc.

These shoals, or bio stocks, are approx 24 in number and each shoal corresponds to one of the 24 stock management units assessed and measured by the different international organisations (eg The UN's Food & Agricultural Organisation, European Union, etc.).

## Who is doing what to conserve stocks?

Fisheries management has to balance sustainability and fishermen's livelihoods. So, catching plans take a long 5-10 year view to slowly rebuild but to keep fishermen in business. Closer to home, the following are being implemented by the EU in the North Sea, Irish Sea, West of Scotland etc:

- Reductions in the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) – the TAC reduced by a further 13% in '07 vs '06 in some of our local fisheries
- Using larger mesh sizes so the smaller younger fish escape
- Reducing the number of days boats are allowed out fishing
- Protection of spawning grounds

## How is Exciting Foods playing a role in this?

- **We** make sure we know which management stock our Cod is fished from and we are aware of the sustainability programmes controlling that particular supply
- **We** make sure that what we buy has been legally fished and that we can trace the Cod back to the boats.
- **We** are actively now developing new products using species that can be sustainably managed.

Need more information?

If we can help you with further information please do give us a call. Good sources of information are as follows:

[www.seafish.org](http://www.seafish.org)

[www.fao.org/fi/default.asp](http://www.fao.org/fi/default.asp)