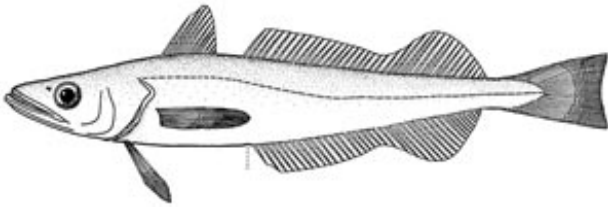




Species Fact Sheets

Merluccius merluccius (Linnaeus, 1758)



Merluccius merluccius: [\(click for more\)](#)

Synonyms

- *Gadus ruber* Lacepède, 1803
- *Merluccius vulgaris* Fleming, 1828
- *Merluccius smiridus* Rafinesque, 1810
- *Merlucius esculentus* Risso, 1826
- *Hidronus marlucius* Minding, 1832
- *Merlucius sinuatus* Swainson, 1838
- *Merlucius ambiguus* Lowe, 1840
- *Merlucius lanatus* Gronow, 1854
- *Merfuccius argentatus* Günther, 1862
- *Merluccius linnei* Malm, 1877
- *Onus guttatus* Collett, 1890
- *Trachinoides maroccanus* Borodin, 1934

FAO Names

En - European hake, Fr - Merlu européen, Sp - Merluza europea.

3Alpha Code: HKE Taxonomic Code: 1480500401

Scientific Name with Original Description

Gadus merluccius Linnaeus, 1758, Systema Naturae, ed. X:254 (locality 'Habitat in Oceano').

Diagnostic Features

Body long and rather slender compared with other hake species. Head large, 25.1 to 30.5% of standard length. Measurements in relation to head length: upper jaw 47.8 to 53.5%; snout 30.2 to 34.5%; interorbital space 21.5 to 28.4%; gill rakers short and thick, with blunt tips; total number of gill rakers on first arch 8 to 11 (mostly 9 to 11). 1D 8 (10) 11 rays; 2D 35 (38-39) 40 rays; A 36 (38) 40 rays. Pectoral fins with 10 (14) 15 rays, length 14.1 to 18.7% of standard length, tips of pectoral fins reaching to level of anal-fin origin in small fish (less than 20 cm standard length). Ventral fins 14.0 to 19.1% standard length. Posterior caudal-fin margin usually truncate, becoming progressively concave with growth. Scales small, 127 to 156 along lateral line. Number of vertebrae 23 to 25 (precaudal) + 25 to 29 (caudal) 49 to 54 (total). Colour: steel grey on back, lighter on sides and silvery white on belly.



Launch the Aquatic Species Distribution map viewer

Atlantic coast of Europe and western North Africa; northward to Norway and Iceland, southward to Mauritania. Also found in the Mediterranean Sea and along the southern coast of the Black Sea.

Habitat and Biology

The European hake is usually found between 70 and 370 m depth, but may also occur within a wider depth range, from inshore waters (30 m) to 1 000 m. It lives close to the bottom during day-time, but moves off-bottom at night.

The spawning period is very long and varies with populations, (latest in the northern part of the range): December-June in the Mediterranean, February-May in the Bay of Biscay, April-July off W. Iceland, and May- August off W. Scotland. In the Mediterranean, spawning occurs between 100 and 300 m depth, in the Celtic Sea, above 150 m. Up to age 3, juveniles live on muddy bottoms, moving toward the coast at age 3. First maturity is reached during the seventh year for most females (57 cm) and during the fifth year for males (40 cm) for the Atlantic population; in the Mediterranean, males mature at 26-27 cm, females at 36-40 cm. Females grow faster than males. At the end of 2 years, the fish reach 24-25 cm; at 20 years: 79 cm for males and 100.5 cm for females. The Mediterranean stock grows slower. The fecundity is reported as 2 to 7 million eggs per female. Adults feed mainly on fish (small hakes, anchovies, sardines and gadoid species) and squids. The young feed on crustaceans (especially euphausiids and amphipods).

Size

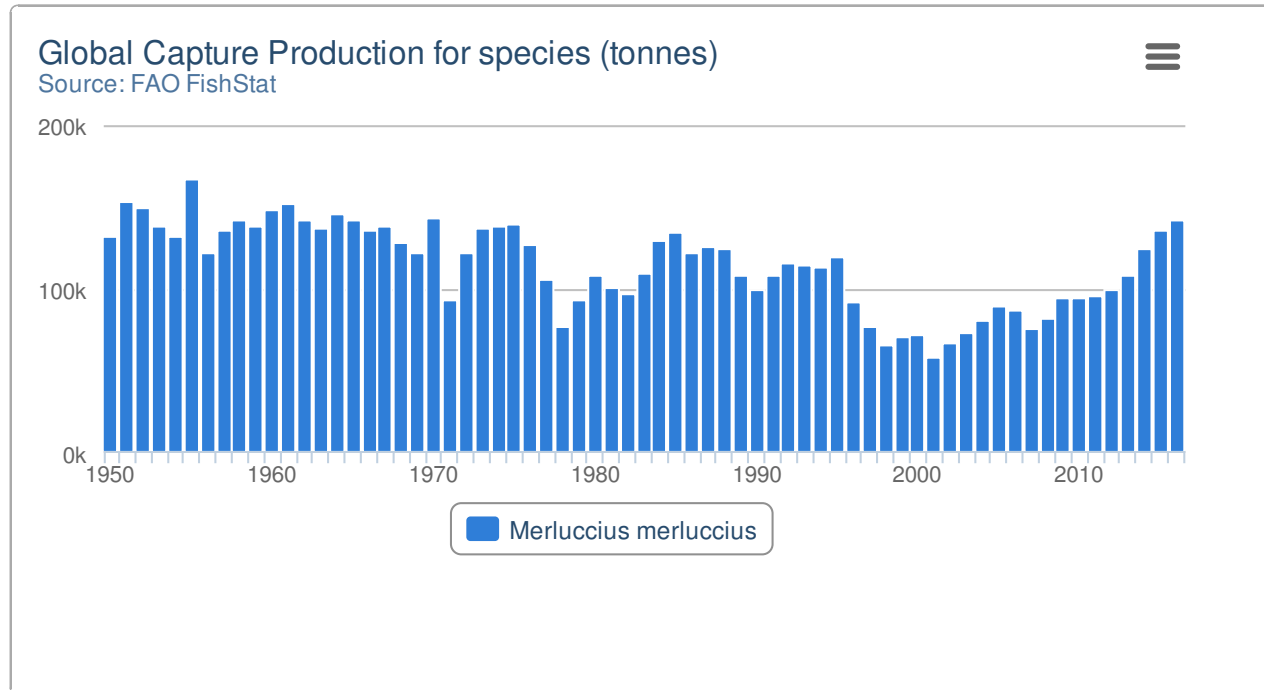
Maximum length: 140 cm and 15 kg weight; commonly from 30 to 60 cm.

Interest to Fisheries

European hake has been an important food for the population of western Europe throughout historic times. It is primarily caught by bottom and pelagic trawls but also with longlines, bottom-set gillnets lines and Danish seines. Most common fishing techniques are "demersal bottom trawling", "groundfish longlining" and "Hake trawling". The main fishing grounds are the areas north and west of Scotland, west and South of Ireland, the Bay of Biscay, the Portuguese coast and the coast of western North Africa. The catch reported to FAO for

1996 totalled 92 332 t, of which 41 354 t were taken in the eastern North Atlantic (mainly by Spain: 18 076 t; France: 8 899 t and UK: 5 380 t), 45 309 t in the Mediterranean (mainly Italy: 30707 t, Greece: 4 579 t and Spain: 3 600 t), 10 722 t in the eastern Central Atlantic (mainly Spain: 5 536 t, Morocco: 3 086 t and Portugal 986 t). The potential yield of this hake in the eastern North Atlantic is estimated at around 150 000 t. The total catch reported for this species to FAO for 1999 was 68 569 t. The countries with the largest catches were Spain (22 931 t) and Italy (9 754 t).

Regularly marketed, mainly fresh, but also frozen (especially on distant fishing grounds), dried, salted and canned.



Local Names

FRANCE : Brochet de mer , Merlu , Merluche , Merluchón (small).

GERMANY : Hechtdorsch , Seehecht .

GREECE : Bakaliáros .

ICELAND : Lysingur .

ISRAEL : Saai , Saqqaya .

ITALY : Merluzzo , Nasello .

MALTA : Marloz .

NETHERLANDS : Stokvisch heek .

NORWAY : Lysing .

POLAND : Morszczuk .

Marmota

PORTUGAL : Pescada , Pescadinha .

SPAIN : Carioca (breeding), Merfuza , Pescadilla (young).

SWEDEN : Kummel .

TUNISIA : Nasalli .

TURKEY : Berlam .

UK : Hake , Herring hake .

former USSR : Merluzovye , Merluzy .

former YUGOSLAVIA : Oslic .

ALGERIA : Merluzzo .

DENMARK : Kulmule .

EGYPT : Nazelli .

FINLAND : Kummeli .

Remarks

This species is separated in two distinct subspecies: *Merluccius merluccius smiridus* Rafinesque, 1810 for the Mediterranean population and *M. merluccius merluccius* (Linnaeus, 1758) for the Atlantic population.

Source of Information

FAO species catalogue. Vol.10. Gadiform Fishes of the world (Order Gadiformes). An Annotated and Illustrated Catalogue of Cods, Hakes, Grenadiers and other Gadiform Fishes Known to Date. Daniel M. Cohen Tadashi Inada Tomio Iwamoto Nadia Scialabba 1990. FAO Fisheries Synopsis. No. 125, Vol.10. Rome, FAO. 1990. 442p. Hakes of the world (Family Merlucciidae). An annotated and illustrated catalogue of hake species known to date. Lloris, D. Matallanas, J. Oliver, P. 2005. FAO Species Catalogue for Fishery Purposes. No. 2. Rome, FAO. 2005. 57p. 12 colour plates.

Bibliography

Inada, (1981a and b)

Svetovidov, (1948, 1973)

