

EU sets fish quotas for 2007

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The European Union fisheries ministers have set the 2007 limits for fish catches in European waters.

Scientists said their surveys were ignored in favor of anecdotal material from fishermen, NewScientist.com said.

As a result, EU Fisheries Minister Joe Borg said, the proposal "has been severely criticized by all sides for being too drastic for some and too weak for others."

The new quotas represent a "gradual but sustained approach to delivering sustainable fisheries," Borg said.

Before the meeting, the union's scientific advisers sought a total ban on cod fishing in European waters. Ministers agreed to a 20 percent cut in waters to the west of the United Kingdom, 14 percent in the North Sea and 15 percent elsewhere. The number of days allowed for cod fishing was reduced between 7 percent and 10 percent.

For other fisheries, the ministers adopted these quotas: increases in quotas for prawns, haddock, mackerel and monkfish; a 12 percent increase in Bay of Biscay sole; a 20 percent increase in northern hake; a limited lifting of ban on anchovy fishing; a 12 percent decrease in plaice and a 10 percent decrease in tuna fishing in the Mediterranean.

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