



NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE

Atlantic Cod (*Gadus morhua*)

Description

The Atlantic Cod is a well-known bottom dwelling fish that is commercially harvested for food. They have a brown to green coloration with spots and a silver shaded underside. Atlantic Cod have three dorsal fins, two anal fins, whiskers on their chin, and a clearly visible lateral line.

Habitat and Distribution

The Atlantic cod is found on both sides of the North Atlantic in a wide variety of habitats from the shoreline to the continental shelf. They are demersal fish which live on or near the ocean bottom. In the Northwest Atlantic, cod occur from North Carolina to Greenland. In the Northeast Atlantic, cod occur along the coasts of Europe from the Bay of Biscay to the Barents Sea. Adult cod form spawning aggregations from late winter to spring, and the fertilized eggs drift with the currents as they develop into larvae.



Dieter Craasmann

Sounds

Adult cod make a deep brief grunting sound in a variety of situations. Males use the grunt sound as a mating display, either to attract females or to ward off other males. Cod also tend to grunt when frightened by a predator.



Gilbert van Ryckevorsel

Feeding

Cod are omnivorous and feed at dawn or dusk on a variety of invertebrates and fish, including young cod.

Threats

Several stocks of Atlantic Cod went through a population crash in the 1990s and have failed to recover. The primary threat they face is overfishing.

Fun Fact

Cod don't grunt if the water temperature drops below 4° Celsius!

Family:	Gadidae
Population:	1.6 million tons
Status:	Vulnerable
Length:	up to 51 inches
Weight:	55 – 77 lbs