Status of Fish Stocks in Europe (2018)

Northeast Atlantic

The figure above shows that over time conservation levels are increasing (in brown) and exploitation levels improving (in blue). Nevertheless, many stocks remain overfished, 40% in 2016, and/or in biological risk, 35% in 2016 (pie charts). Progress to achieve optimal exploitation (MSY) until 2016 seems too slow to ensure that all stocks will meet policy objectives by 2020.

Short glossary:
- **MSY**: “maximum sustainable yield”. The maximum catch a natural resource can provide each year for a long time, in theory forever, which requires that fishing activity doesn’t reduce the stock reproductive capacity below its maximum productivity level.
- **Overfishing**: the situation of having a fishing pressure larger than the level which produces catches equal to MSY.
- **Biological risk**: same as “safe biological limits”. A stock is within safe biological limits, or exploited at low biological risk, when there’s no overfishing and the adult biomass of the stock is in its maximum productivity;
- **Exploitation level**: fishing mortality relative to the MSY reference value;
- **Conservation level**: weight of adult biomass relative to the 2003 value.

In the Mediterranean and Black sea stocks remain in a very poor situation, with no change apparent in terms of fishing pressure or stock biomass. In 2015 85% of the stocks were overfished (pie chart).