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Small Pelagics Market Analysis 2025: Sweden

Sweden: Navigating the decline of MSC-certified herring

MSC-CERTIFIED SMALL PELAGIC FISH have played an important role in the Swedish market. The availability of certified sustainable products has been impacted by challenges in fisheries management. The market share of MSC has declined recently, due to the loss of MSC certification for the Northeast Atlantic. For years, states fishing the Northeast Atlantic failed to reach agreement on how to share these vital stocks, resulting in catches exceeding scientific advice by more than 30%, which led to the loss of MSC certification. This is a stock that collapsed in the 1970s, leading to a fishing ban from 1972 to 1976, and taking 24 years to recover.

Swedish market lags behind Finland

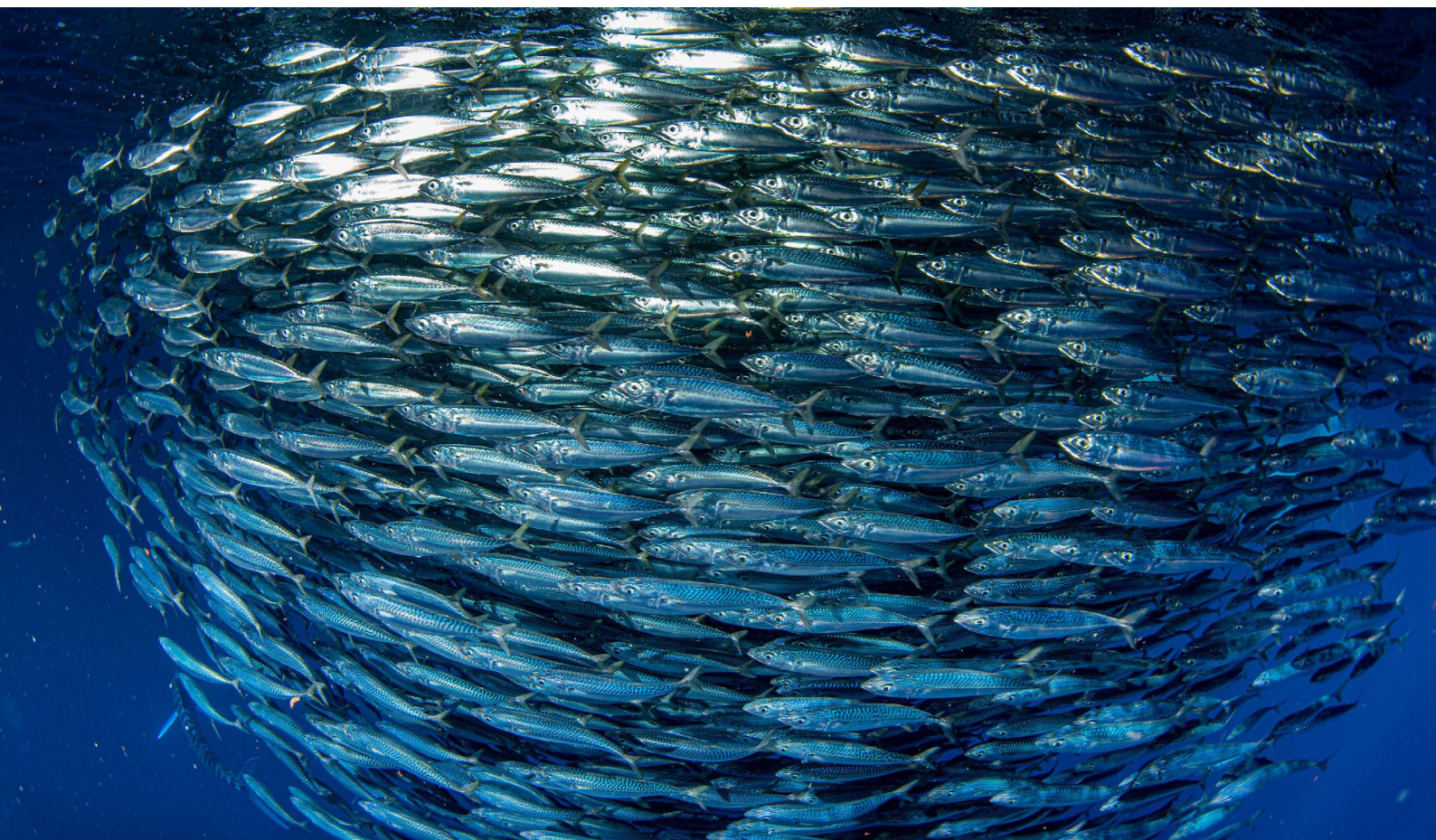
The loss of certification for Northeast Atlantic herring has been particularly damaging. For eight years, the MSC-labelled herring remained stable at 7000-8000 metric tonnes per year, but, due to fishery suspensions, this figure has dropped to below 1,000 metric tonnes.¹ The MSC-market share for herring cured in brine has fallen from 75% in 2018 to 6.5% 2024.²

When comparing Sweden to Finland, a significant difference is evident. In Finland supply chain has consistently kept MSC certified herring on the plates of the Finnish consumers. Suomen Sillikonttori, the only herring processor processing Atlantic herring in Finland, went through significant efforts to keep all their products MSC certified. In retail, both Kesko and Lidl have done the same.

Across species, price points, and product formats, there is strong consumer demand for certified sustainable fish and seafood in Sweden. With government guidelines encouraging the public to eat two to three portions of sustainable fish per week, the market needs to support consumers in making healthy and sustainable choices by offering MSC certified herring to a greater extent. ●

¹ The market data used in this piece is provided to the MSC quarterly, semesterly, or annually, by businesses using the MSC ecolabel on products and menus.

² Nielsen Consumer LLC, Grocery total 2018 and 2024.





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Find out more: <https://www.msc.org/species/small-pelagic-fish>

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