



For the benefit of future generations

# THIRD PARTY CERTIFICATION OF ICELANDIC FISHERIES

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# IMPORTANCE OF FISHERIES IN ICELAND

FISHERIES ARE A MOST IMPORTANT SECTOR  
OF THE ICELANDIC PEOPLE'S ECONOMY:

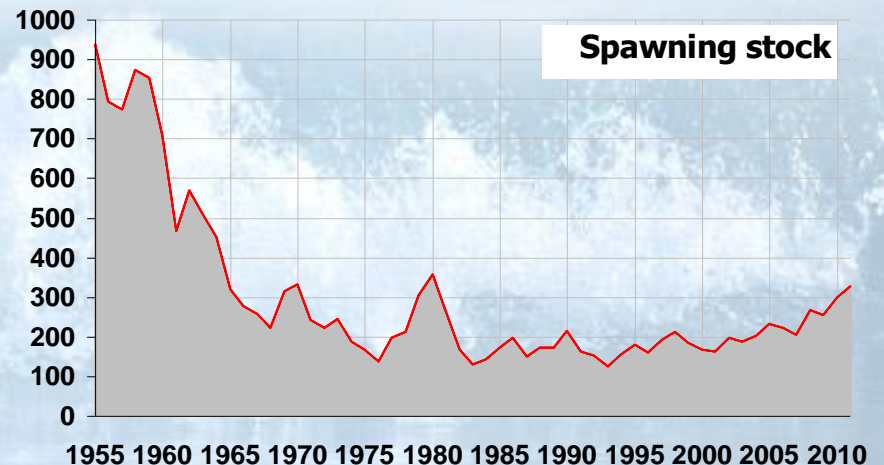
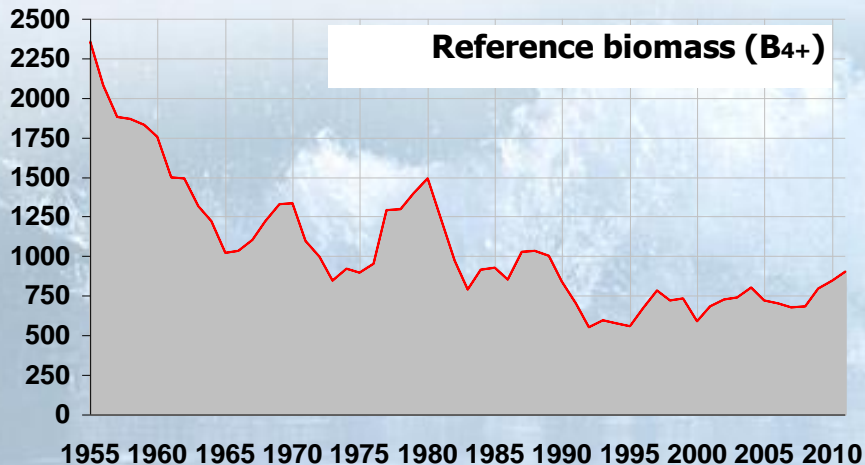
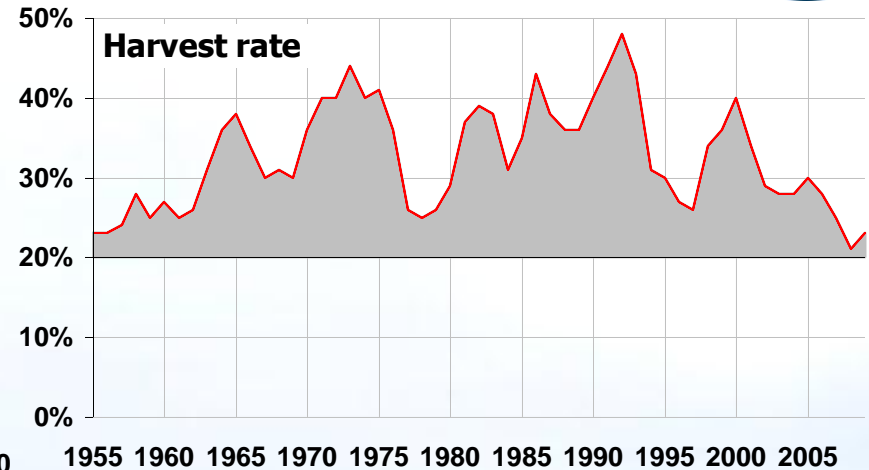
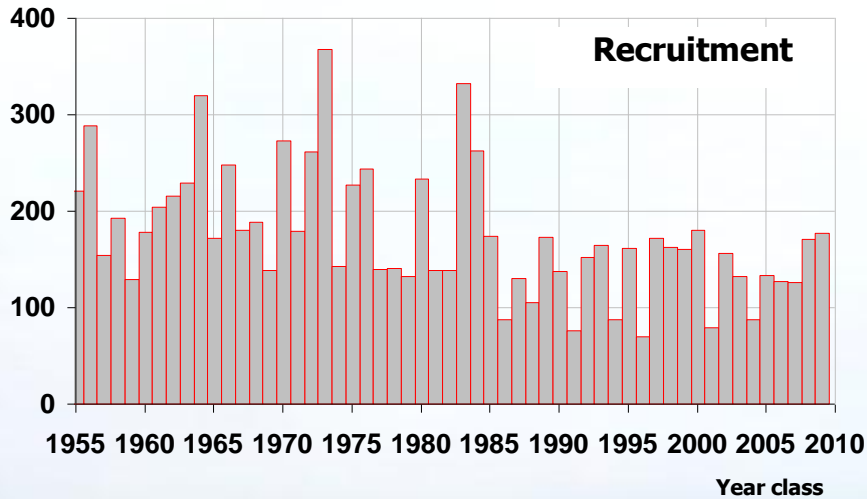
- Conservation and sustainable use is key.
- Must strive to keep our house in order with good fisheries management.



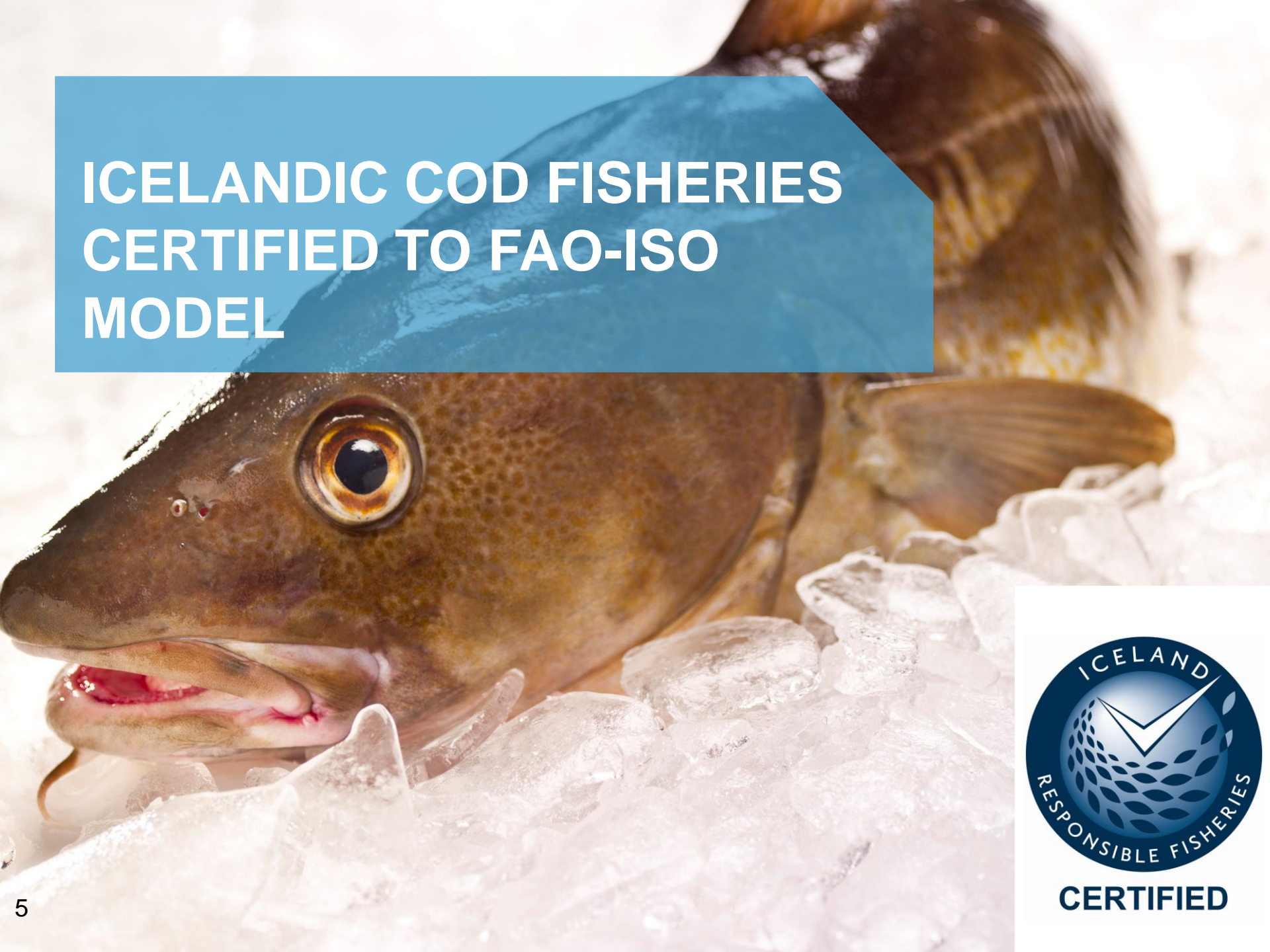
## LONGSTANDING ICELANDIC TRADITION

- Law on the scientific conservation of fishing grounds on the continental shelf 1948
- Extension of fishing limits and “cod wars”, culminating in 200 mile limit in 1976
- ITQs for some fisheries since late ‘70s
- ITQs for demersal fisheries 1984 & 1991
- Harvest control rule for cod 1995; revised 2007
  - limited fishing effort and low harvest rate
- Good international reputation for effective fisheries management

# 2010 MRI Cod Stock Assessment



# ICELANDIC COD FISHERIES CERTIFIED TO FAO-ISO MODEL



**CERTIFIED**



- In December 2010 Icelandic cod fisheries were certified as "Responsible and well managed" by the independent accredited third party certification body Global Trust Certification Ltd. of Ireland.
- The certification awarded is based on international best practice standards as derived from two leading and world recognized institutions, the UN FAO and the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO).
- This certification achievement is the result of an Icelandic initiative to develop an international approach offering a credible choice for fisheries. The purpose is to serve our customers for Icelandic seafood and to promote choice in the marketplace.



# HOW DID WE GET THIS FAR?

Brief historical background



## THE UN FAO CODE OF CONDUCT FOR RESPONSIBLE FISHERIES

- Problems on many fishing grounds because of overfishing and poor treatment of resources
  - North Sea, Newfoundland, ..., etc.
- These developments, among others, led to creation of the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in 1995.
- The Code defines what constitutes good fisheries management practice, incl. Precautionary Approach





## FOLLOWING THE CODE ...

- States have agreed what constitutes good fisheries management ...
- ... Therefore: How do we hold them accountable?
- One answer: certification and ecolabelling



## MSC

- WWF and Unilever announce The Marine Stewardship Council Initiative in 1996
- Aggressively promoted
- Initially seen as a threat to industry
  - Fisheries management
  - Barrier to trade



- Nordic contact network
  - formed by fisheries ministers
  - follow developments
  - investigate possibility for a Nordic ecolabel
- FAO since 1997 – by Nordic initiative
- Nordic Criteria Working Group Report 2000



## GUIDELINE DEVELOPMENT

- Iceland in leadership role.
- FAO Expert Consultation in 2003.
- Following Technical Consultations in 2004 and 2005, the FAO produced Guidelines for the Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries.
- Those guidelines were **adopted** by COFI in 2005.
- Another FAO Expert Consultation in 2008.
- Extensions adopted in 2009.



## DESIRABLE OBJECTIVES – NORDIC PERSPECTIVE

- Open international discussion.
- Voluntary ecolabeling.
- Clear separation of roles in the ecolabeling process.  
(criteria, certification accreditation, label)
- Avoid private monopoly on criteria.
- Avoid too many labels or private label monopoly.
- Avoid technical barriers to trade.
- Avoid expensive verification processes.



## WHY HAVE WE TAKEN THIS NATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR AN INTERNATIONAL APPROACH?

- To ensure external environmental parties don't take control of the Iceland Fisheries Agenda
- To remove emotional influence and replace with science and management facts
- To document well managed Icelandic fisheries
- To serve the needs of our business partners
- To preserve the principles adopted by the international community -- equivalence, competition, and avoidance of barriers to trade
  - Choice is essential!
- To promote UN fisheries management principles
  - FAO Code and Guides, i.e. back to the beginning



## OTHER BENEFITS

- Reasonable cost
- Objective certification based on international best practice standards
- Promotion of Icelandic seafood through certification and marketing incl. logos



## HOW DID WE GET THIS FAR?

- The Icelandic Project





# THE ICELANDIC CERTIFICATION PROJECT

- The project was started in 2007
- The project is carried out on behalf of the Icelandic fisheries sector.
- Project group under FAI
  - Technical committee
- Supported by a grant from the Icelandic AVS Fisheries Research Fund.
- The project is on a cost basis, *i.e.* not for profit.
- Support and participation from public authorities.



# INTERNATIONAL APPROACH – ICELANDIC INITIATIVE

- International standard
  - The standard consists of two documents:
    - FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (1995) and
    - FAO Guidelines for Ecolabelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries (2005/2009)
  - Open and transparent process
    - Agreed by all FAO member states
    - Participation by experts in various fields and NGO representatives
  - Adapted for application through the IRFM Specification
    - Technical committee with review from certification body and accreditation body



# CONTENT OF SPECIFICATION

- The product is derived from a specified fish stock; that stock is harvested responsibly
- This entails:
  - Harvesting policy: Decisions on TAC are based on scientific advice with responsible and sustainable use as the objective;
  - Implementation: Decisions on TAC are implemented in a specified manner;
  - Ecosystem considerations: Effects of fishing on the ecosystem are limited through a defined methodology



## PROPER CERTIFICATION IS NOT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, FISHERIES ADVICE OR FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

- Certification is not marine research nor is it fisheries advice;
  - certification includes verification that research and fisheries advice is based on generally accepted methodology.
- Certification and ecolabelling is not fisheries management
  - fisheries management remains the task of the competent authorities.
- Certification entails, *i.a.*, third party verification of government fisheries management performance which facilitates market access for seafood.
  - Do authorities meet the commitments that they themselves have made in international fora?



## LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE

- Our approach is innovative yet based on common sense
- Alaska has already adopted the same model
  - Alaska salmon certified in March 2011
- Fisheries in other regions plan to follow suit



## POSITIVE RESPONSE IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

- Large buyers welcome independent certification.
  - Large supermarket chains have adopted, or plan to adopt, their own procurement policy
    - made public in annual reports and on websites.
  - Will sell both certified and non-certified seafood, but may prefer certified.
  - Own evaluation whether harvesting and management are in good order concerning non-certified seafood.
- Certification will provide valuable support for Icelandic fisheries management and the sale of Icelandic seafood.



## MODEL RECOGNITION

- Meets the requirements of the Walmart statement March 2011 stating MSC or equivalent
- Meets the requirements of the EU Fisheries Eco label Framework

It will always have opposition from competitive standards



# WHAT NEXT?

- Other fish stocks will be entering the process for adoption of formal fisheries management plans
  - Haddock, saithe, golden redfish, ... ?





**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION !**