

Migration of saithe (*Pollachius virens*) in the Northeast Atlantic

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Saithe (*Pollachius virens*) stocks in the Northeast Atlantic intermingle as a result of migration among stock areas. The extent of migration has been poorly quantified. Here, we estimate measures of the migration based on existing tagging data from Icelandic, Faroese and Continental (Scotland, North Sea and Norway) waters. Saithe tagged in Icelandic waters were seldom caught outside Icelandic waters (<1% of tag returns), whereas 42% of adult saithe tagged in Faroese waters were recaptured outside Faroese waters. Of adult saithe tagged in Norwegian waters 6.6% were recaptured outside Continental waters. In broad terms, there was a net migration of saithe towards Icelandic waters. The distance between tagging and recapture increased with increasing size and age, with saithe tagged in Norwegian waters moving the longest distances. The results demonstrate significant, but variable, migration rates of adult saithe in the Northeast Atlantic. More detailed studies are needed to clarify the mechanisms behind the migration and what causes the differences among the areas.

Keywords: migration, Northeast Atlantic, *Pollachius virens*, Saithe, tagging.