



Northeast Arctic Cod – Challenges and opportunities

Tor Bjørklund Larsen, Senior Advisor, Norwegian Fishermen
Association



Norwegian cod:

-Putting years of certifications and sustainability claims to the test

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Norwegian Fishermen's Association

- Represents breadth of Norwegian catching sector
- **MSC client for all Norwegian MSC certificates**
 - North sea herring
 - Sandeel (NS)
 - Sprat (NS)
 - North Sea demersal fisheries
 - NEA prawn
 - Greenland halibut
 - Beaked redfish
 - Snow crab
 - **NEA Cod**
 - **NEA haddock**
 - **NEA saithe**



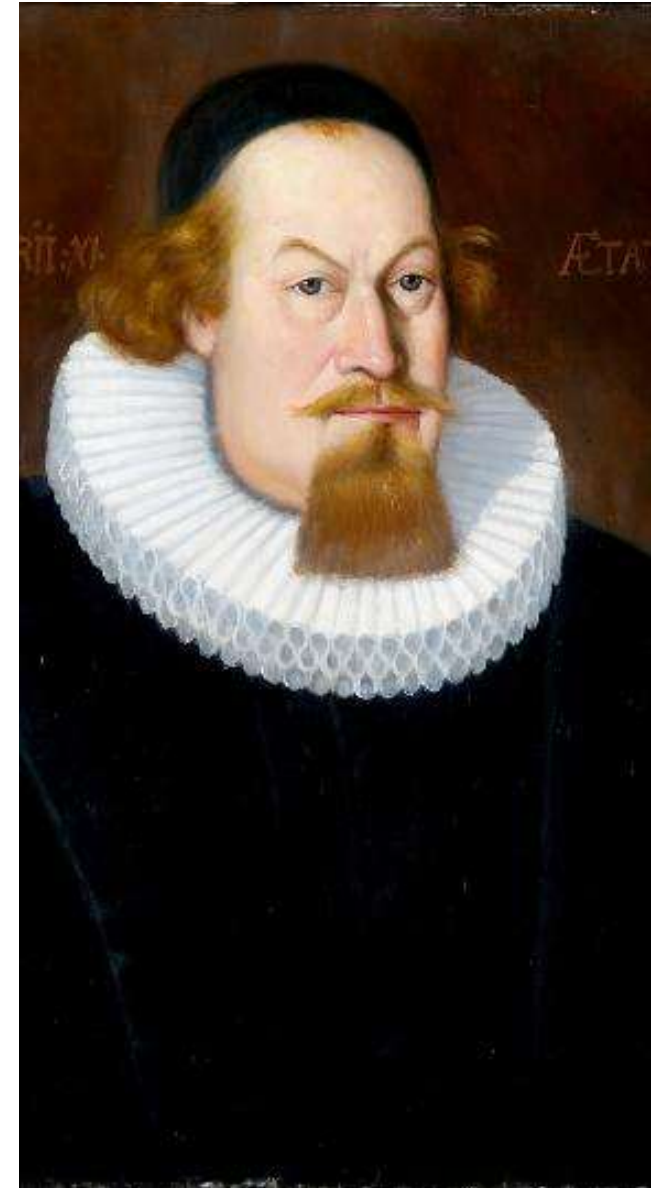
Northeast Arctic Cod / «Skrei»



Deeply intertwined with National culture

*Barmhiertige Fader oplade din Hand,
Velsigne os fattige Folk her i Land
Med dine Velsignelser søde!
Skuld' Torsken os feyle, hvad havde vi da?
Hvad skulle vi føre til Bergen herfra?
Da seyled' vist Jægterne tomme*

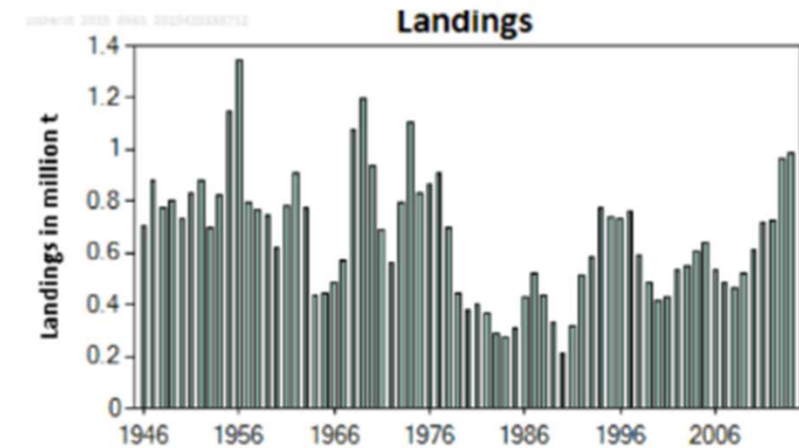
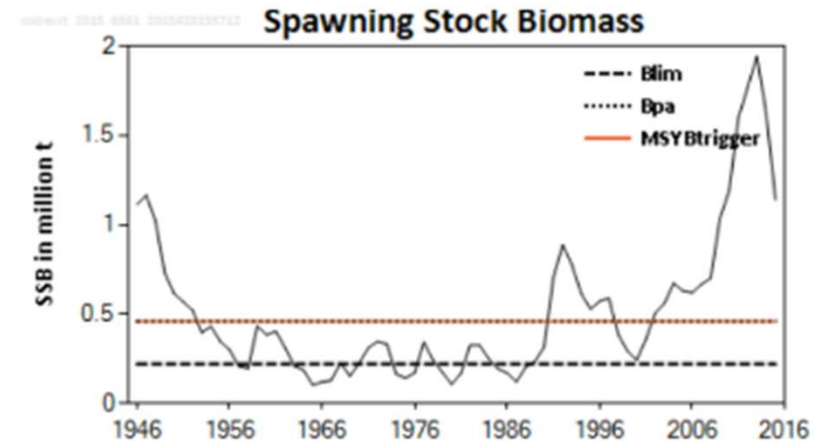
Petter Dass, Nordlands Trompet 1647-1707



A spoiled generation of fishers and industry professionals

- 2015: «recovering» from 1 million MT quota in 2013.
- «Main challenge»; cull the stock to reduce cannibalism.
- NEA stocks even seen as «climate change winners».
- MSC certified since:
 - Saithe: 2008
 - Cod/Haddock: 2010/2011

Has been very easy to talk a good game



2026

Norway, Russia reach agreement on fisheries

After record-long negotiations, the two sides agree on next year's catch quotas in the Barents Sea.



Atle Staafsen

19 December 2025 - 13:14

"The total quota for Northeast Arctic cod in 2026 is set at 285,000 tonnes, a reduction of 18 percent compared to this year's quota", the Norwegian Ministry of Fisheries reports after negotiations with Russia's Fishery Agency resulted in an agreement.

"This quota level will significantly reduce fishing pressure from 2025 to 2028," the ministry explains.

The cod quota for 2026 is the lowest since 1991.

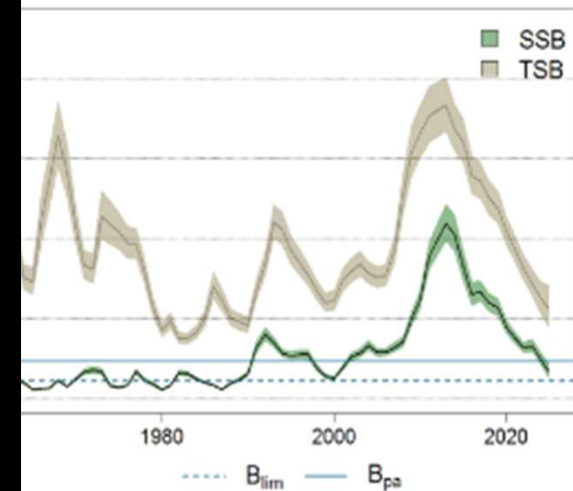
While cod quotas are down, haddock quotas are up. The total quota for haddock is set at 153,293 tonnes for 2026, an increase of 18 percent compared to the current year.

Norway's Minister of Fisheries Marianne Sivertsen Næss admits that the talks have been tough.

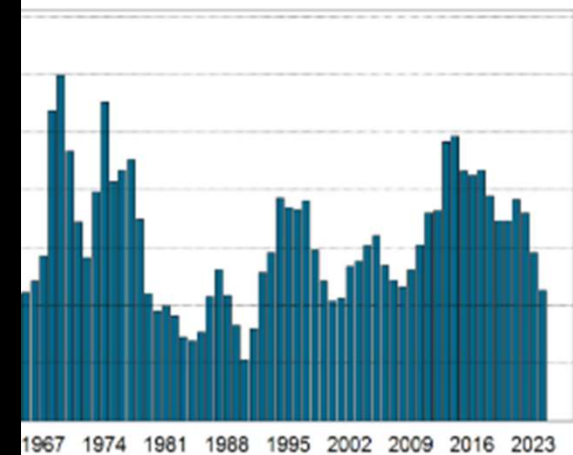
"This year's negotiations have been challenging," she says in a statement.



Marianne Sivertsen Næss is Norway's Minister of Fisheries. Here from a visit to Kirkenes. Photo: Atle Staafsen



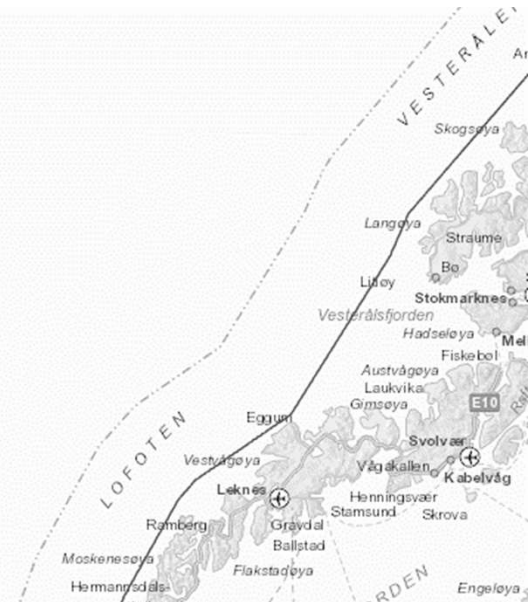
Catch (1000 tonnes)



Season recap: Cod

Low quota, good fishing, crazy prices.

- Good weather, good accessibility – half of the quota caught by April 1.
- Despite low volume, value **up** by 0,5 BNOK
- More sold as fresh – comparable prices fresh/frozen. Frozen volume down 29 %.
- Western Finnmark the dominant region, Lofoten keeps diminishing (and most of that is caught on the outside)
- Prices over 100 NOK/kg H/G (97,70 avg). 10X 2013 level!
- Haddock: fishing a bit slow for those vessels that pursued, but has picked up a little. Prices up by 40 %.



Season recap: Saithe

- Landings sharply reduced so far, both for coastal fleet and trawlers.
- Early saithe fishery failed in Senja, Vesterålen and Lofoten. Not totally dark; e.g. up in Træna-region.
- Voices of concern about stock – has it been overestimated?
- Immediate action taken:
 - Planned quota rollover from 2025 **cancelled.**
 - New regulations for purse seiners from April 15 to protect juveniles.
- Long term:
 - Adjust the HCR?
 - Improve the stock assessments?



Foto: Silje Helene Nilsen

4th reassessment t Cod Haddock

- Site visits in late January this year.
- We expect completion without major issues.
- Stock is above Blim. Quotas provide a credible rebuilding path satisfying 1.1.2.
- Good progress/closure on conditions.
- Positive signals on coastal cod.
- A lot of ongoing scientific work on redfish.
- Management and quotas within sensible boundaries.
 - But: we are after all $Blim < X < Bpa$
- Margins **are** lower than usual, and risk remains present.

MSC & Norway

- All projections by IMR indicate we are past the bottom.
- Should be aware of our own arrogance.
- Remain committed to MSC-certification, but rocky roads ahead:
 - State of affairs in the ecosystem.
 - Strict application of P2, even before 3.0.
- Barents sea 2026: ongoing disaster or success story to celebrate?



Improve the rest? –Or torture the best?





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Canadian Cod – A recovery and Success Story

Carey Bonnell from Ocean Choice International



NORTHERN COD FROM COLLAPSE TO RECOVERY



CAREY BONNELL

VP, Sustainability & Engagement, Ocean Choice International

MARINE STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL APRIL 2026



AGENDA

OCEAN CHOICE INTERNATIONAL

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NORTHERN COD

COLLAPSE OF THE FISHERY

NORTHERN COD FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

REBUILDING THE NORTHERN COD FISHERY

OUTLOOK FOR NORTHERN COD



OUR PILLARS



VERTICALLY INTEGRATED SEAFOOD COMPANY

full control, from harvesting and processing to global markets

SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTOR

employing **1,600+** people in **300** communities

TRUSTED GLOBAL SUPPLIER

to **30+ countries** through our international sales network

DEEP INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

With **~1,900** independent harvesters

GLOBAL LEADER IN SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

over 90% of products MSC certified or advancing via FIP

MODERN, EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

6 land-based processing facilities + **3** factory freezer vessels supporting responsible offshore harvesting

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR
SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2024

SUSTAINABILITY RUNS DEEP

Became the **first and only** fishing company in North America to achieve **Green Marine Certification**

93% of products (by value) MSC Certified or in a Fishery Improvement Plan

More than **\$89 million** invested in local businesses

45 charities and community initiatives supported

Re-opening of a commercial Northern cod fishery



THE IMPORTANCE AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NORTHERN COD



One of the most productive and valuable fisheries in North Atlantic for **500+ years**

The Foundation of the province's coastal economy, culture, and settlement patterns

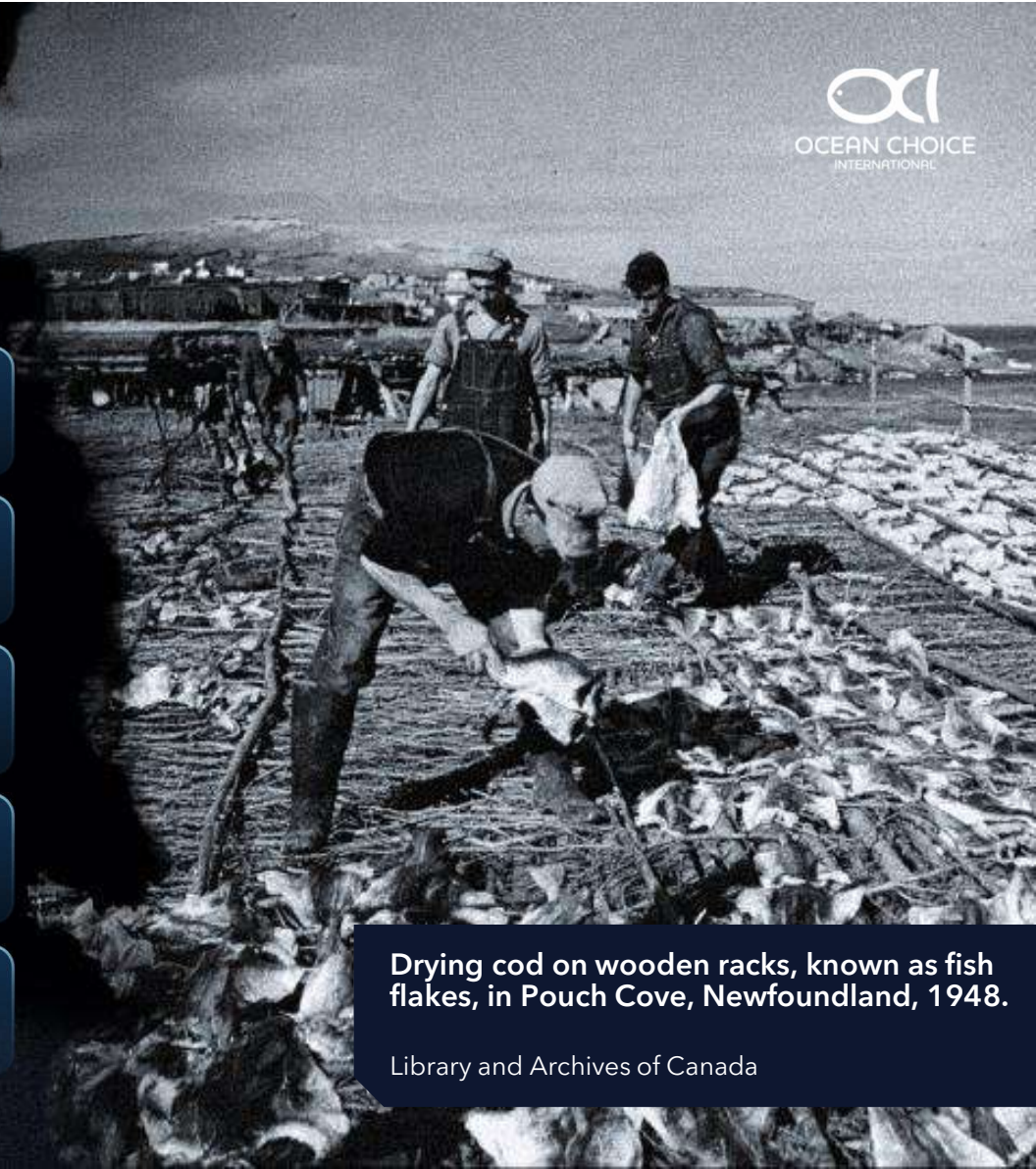
Supported tens of thousands of jobs across harvesting, processing, and global trade

Established Canada as a major global supplier of cod and groundfish products

A catalyst for global fisheries sustainability and the creation of the MSC

Drying cod on wooden racks, known as fish flakes, in Pouch Cove, Newfoundland, 1948.

Library and Archives of Canada



A blue-tinted photograph of fishermen on a boat, with large white text overlaid. The text reads "COLLAPSE OF THE FISHERY".

COLLAPSE OF THE FISHERY

The Path to an Unprecedented Fisheries
Moratorium

Moratorium news coverage
Courtesy CBC, 1992



DRIVEN BY CUMULATIVE
PRESSURE + SYSTEMIC GAPS

COLLAPSE OF THE FISHERY

Domestic and international harvest levels exceeding the stock's biological limits

Environmental + ecosystem changes reducing recruitment

Significant overestimation of stock abundance, relying on over-optimistic projections and questionable data

Delayed management response as indicators of decline emerged

Rapid expansion of fishing capacity outpacing management controls

By the early 1990s, spawning biomass declined to critical levels – resulting in 1992 moratorium

Changes in predator-prey dynamics, including increased seal predation, contributing to elevated natural mortality

NORTHERN COD FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (FIP)

Sustainable Fisheries Partnership (SFP) brings together academia, governments, supply chain partners, and industry with independent oversight + public reporting

Science-based approach is foundational to long-term fisheries management + advancing MSC-certified fisheries

\$9M+ invested to study cod migration, genetic linkages, and natural mortality – strengthening inputs for stock assessment model

Grade A (1) rating, reflecting strong progress and measurable improvement

2015
FIP started

2016
Research plan developed

2018
Published on
FisheryProgress.org

2019
Started NC Acoustic
Tracking Program

2020
Deployed 75
receivers

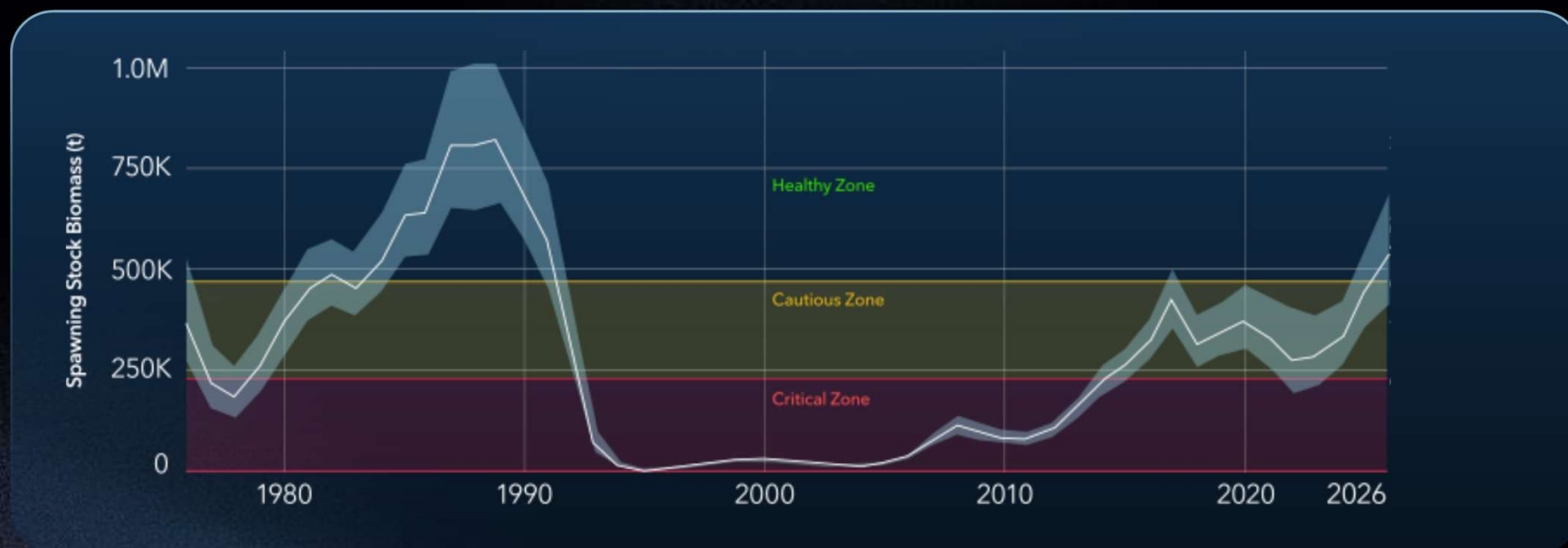
2019–2025
Tagged
1,100 cod



REBUILDING THE FISHERY

Understanding Current Stock Status and Pathways to Sustainability

NORTHERN COD STOCK RECOVERY TIMELINE



2010

Spawning stock biomass begins to grow, population stabilizes, though below 1980s levels

2024

First reopening since 1992, conservative TAC 18,949 MT

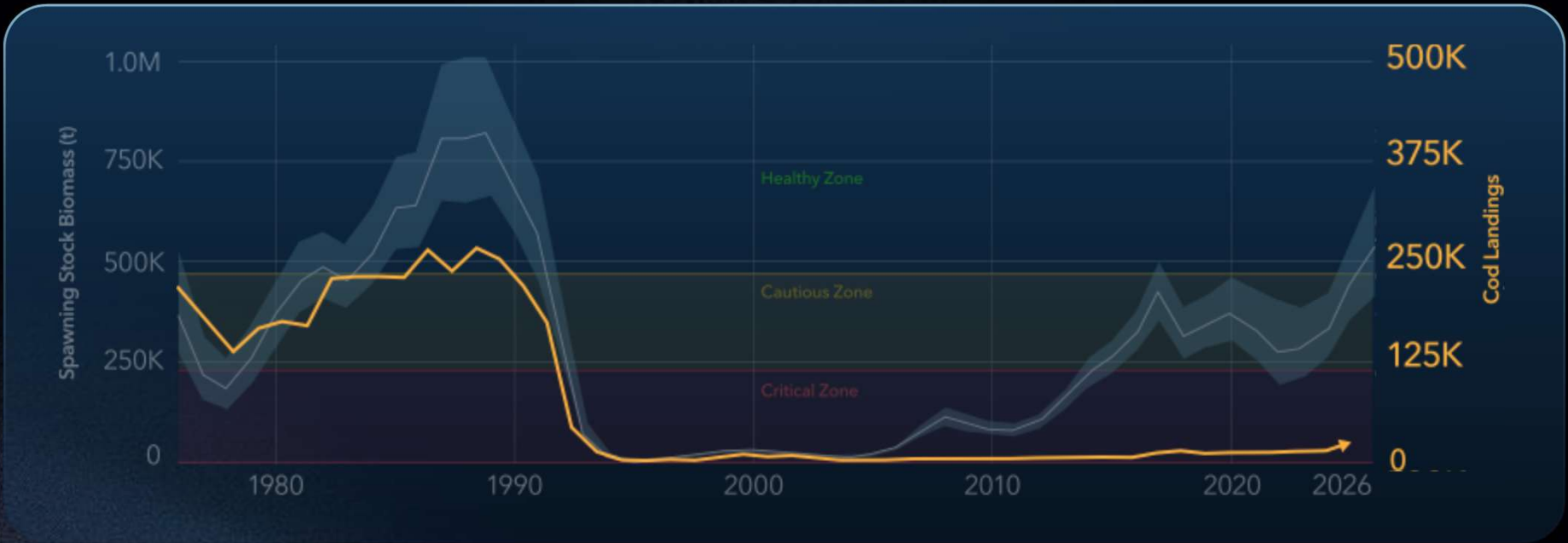
2025

TAC doubled to 40,000 MT, ongoing recovery under science-based management

2026

SSB increased to 540kt marking a 20% growth over 2025

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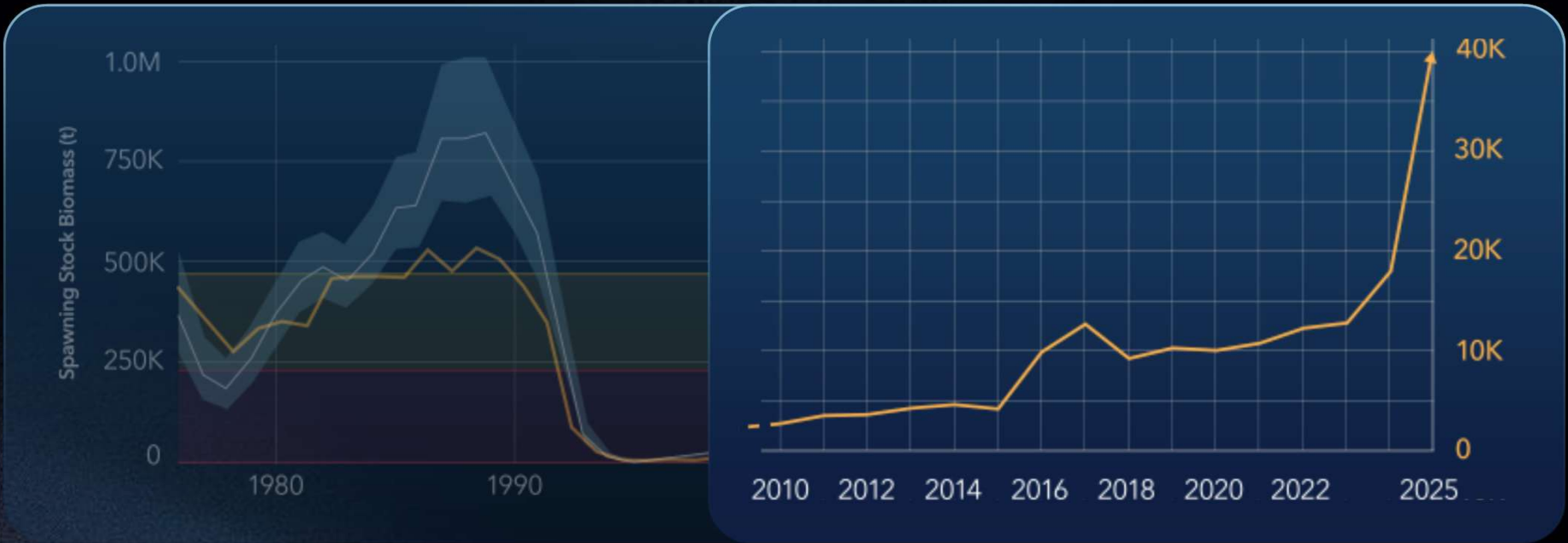
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NORTHERN COD TODAY STOCK OVERVIEW



LARGEST
cod spawning stock
biomass in the world

- 20% single year growth
- 90% BMSY



**4% MODELLED
FISHING MORTALITY**

is extremely conservative



**RECRUITMENT
90% HISTORIC
LEVELS**



**POSITIVE
ECOSYSTEM SIGNALS**

- Capelin 766,000 mt
- Decreasing natural mortality (M) since 2021
- Improved survival

THE OUTLOOK FOR NORTHERN COD

SCIENCE-BASED MANAGEMENT

Develop Harvest Control Rule to guide sustainable catch limits. Stock resilience prioritized.

CERTIFIED SUSTAINABLE FISHERY

Prioritize MSC certification, reinforcing practices and market confidence.

LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY FOCUSED

Integrating Innovation, science, and disciplined management to support stock growth and long-term viability.

POSITIVE STOCK TRAJECTORY

Growth under precautionary management; long-term discipline critical.



THANK YOU

CAREY BONNELL

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**SUSTAINABILITY
REPORT**

