

## Socio-Economic Impact of the 2019 Cod Fishing Ban on Polish Fishermen in the Baltic Sea

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**Abstract :** Many fishing stocks around the world are overfished or on the brink of collapse, forcing governments to restrict access to these resources. Studying the aftermath of stock closures provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by fishing communities who lose access to their primary source of income and must either adapt or abandon the profession entirely. This study contributes to discussions on sustainable fisheries management, advocating for support measures tailored to the needs of affected communities and emphasizes the necessity of inclusive policies that consider diverse stakeholder perspectives. This is done through the lens of the socio-economic impact of the 2019 ban on commercial cod fishing in the Baltic Sea on Polish fishermen, employing a mixed-methods approach. A survey using a Likert scale gathered data from 129 respondents across 17 fishing harbors, assessed the ban's effects on economic viability, perceptions of regulatory effectiveness, adaptation to quota changes, and prospects for cod population recovery. The Kruskal-Wallis test further analyzed these responses, exploring variations based on port location, employment status, and vessel size among respondents. Additionally, in-depth interviews with 28 fishermen provided qualitative insights, complementing quantitative survey data. The findings reveal how impacts have been influenced by regional factors, employment status, and vessel size. Most notably, smaller fishermen operators heavily reliant on cod fishing reported significant economic losses. Meanwhile, those who successfully adapted to quota changes expressed more positive outlooks regarding cod population recovery. Regional variability highlighted that while some areas, such as Ustka and Łeba, experienced severe hardship, others showed mixed or optimistic views on recovery prospects. This underscores the need for future policies to address both the ecological and socio-economic dimensions of fisheries management while striving for sustainable stock recovery.

**Keywords :** adaptive strategies, cod population, fishing communities, regulatory effectiveness, sustainable fisheries management

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