

## Report from ICES 2019

During 2019, ICES released our latest Strategic, Advisory, and Science plans<sup>1</sup>. This trilogy lays out how we will achieve our vision of improving and sharing our knowledge about marine ecosystems and use this to provide state-of-the-art evidence to support decision-makers sustainably manage our oceans and seas. These plans provide the basis for our input to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030), which held the First Global Planning Meeting in Copenhagen in May 2019. The UN Ocean Decade will focus on the science–policy interface and, through our own work and our collaboration with others, our contributions will demonstrate how we manage to connect profound disciplinary understanding of ocean processes with solution-oriented research to generate best available evidence for decision-makers.

As a world-leading marine science organization, ICES will play a strong leadership role throughout the Ocean Decade, as we display our ongoing work in developing and producing forecasting products that are relevant to decision-makers. We will take the opportunity to highlight our quality controlled data that is publically accessible on our website. This includes regional information from across Europe, the North Atlantic, and the Central Arctic Ocean on vulnerable marine ecosystems, noise, and various ecosystem parameters, as well as our assessment tools for eutrophication, contaminants, and fish stock assessments to mention a few.

A substantial amount of ICES work - science, data, and scientific advice - relates to areas beyond national jurisdiction and together with our sister organization, the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), we have a vast scientific network and experience to draw from. This has been of relevance for new legal instruments, such as the Agreement on Prevention of Illegal Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean (an area beyond national jurisdiction) and the draft Convention on the Protection of the Biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

Our work is driven by the support and needs of our member countries and those that are dependent on our scientific advice, which in itself hinges on the work of a huge scientific community, dedicated to explore and sustain our oceans and seas.

The ICES Annual Report is available on the website: <https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/ICES%20Annual%20Report/Annual%20Report%202019.pdf>

## COVID-19

The global pandemic caused by the Corona virus/COVID 19, and the associated response of national governments of limiting international travel and movement began in Europe in early March. Social distancing requirements have further compounded the challenges for ICES to conduct its work of providing the evidence base for decision makers in the usual manner.

The ICES community responded quickly with solutions to work remotely, prioritise work and consult requesters of advice on how to respond with the information required given the disruption to normal working processes. In consultation with stakeholders, a new condensed advice format was developed.

A future concern is the availability of data, with some surveys affected by the work disruption. ICES is closely monitoring these changes and is developing approaches to ensure required analyses can be conducted in standardised ways in the event of missing or partial data. One expert group (WGSOCIAL) has also begun collecting information on the changes to usual fishing patterns across the ICES area<sup>2</sup>.

The ICES Annual Science Conference (ASC) 2020 has been postponed to 2021.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://issuu.com/icesdk/docs/ices\\_strategic\\_plan\\_2019\\_web](https://issuu.com/icesdk/docs/ices_strategic_plan_2019_web)

[https://issuu.com/icesdk/docs/ices\\_advisory\\_plan](https://issuu.com/icesdk/docs/ices_advisory_plan)

[https://issuu.com/icesdk/docs/ices\\_science\\_plan\\_2019\\_web](https://issuu.com/icesdk/docs/ices_science_plan_2019_web)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ices.dk/news-and-events/news-archive/news/Pages/wgsocialCOVID.aspx>