

Care of food-producing animals Part 2 of 4

June 2022

☀️ 1001 cod recipes

Cod (*Gadus Morhua*), a staple of the Portuguese diet, forms the basis of more than two Portuguese cod recipes per day of the year. Cod is a cold-salt-water fish, not available off the Portuguese coast.

The innate sailing talent of the Portuguese enabled them to harvest cod in distant seas. They invented the “Latin sail”, a right-angled sail still used in fishing boats in several Mediterranean-area waters. It was they who discovered one could point into the wind and sail forward, and perfected the art. Sailing once was to Portugal what NASA is now to the USA – a leadership position in an advanced technology with which to explore unknown frontiers.

☀️ Terra Nova (“new land”)

The Grand Banks - so named because the underwater plateaus form one of the world’s richest fishing grounds - of Newfoundland were named “Terra Nova” by the Portuguese, their main source of cod from the mid-16th C until the 1970’s. The Portuguese used an angling technique and a fleet consisting of a mother ship and several small wooden dories. Fishing lines equipped with fish hooks radiated from the main ship to the dories. Once the hooks were full, the fishermen pulled up anchor and skillfully made their way to the mother ship to offload the catch.

Portuguese cod fishing in the Grand Banks became obsolete due to a lack of skilled fishermen willing to take the risks at the pay level offered. Today, Portugal imports cod from Scandinavia.

☀️ The beginning of the end

Fishing trawlers emerged in the 1920’s. A trawl is a fishing net dragged behind a motorized vessel, catching anything and everything in its wake, including non-commercial species critical to the ocean’s ecosystem. By the 1960’s, powerful trawlers equipped with radar, sonar and electronic navigation depleted the North Atlantic cod stock at a rate higher than replenishment. In 1992, with cod stocks at 1% of historical levels, Canada declared a moratorium on the Northern Cod fishery. Thirty years on, the Newfoundland [cod stocks have not yet recovered](#).

☀️ Controlling the high seas

Gone are the days when fish stocks in the high or low seas are there for the taking. Since 1977, sea coastal states have fishing rights over their coastal waters for 200 nautical miles from the shore. That was a starting point, as fishing in these areas is regulated, but not prohibited. The question remains as to how to not only regulate commercial fishing (coast guard vessels and air craft are currently used) in coastal waters, but moreover, commercial fishing in the high seas, or, as the [Law of the Sea: United Nations Convention](#) refers to it, the BBNJ, “the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction”.

☀️ Marine Stewardship Council

One means is through the global [Marine Stewardship Council](#) founded in London, UK in 1996. A few days ago, on June 24th, the MSC approved a new sustainability standard which was four years in the making and involved multi-functional consultation with more than 1,000 stakeholders. Slated as “the most comprehensive review [...] undertaken in the 25-year history of the organization”, the mandate includes stricter procedures to protect endangered species, and, “new evidence requirements [to] ensure that fisheries - especially those operating on the high seas with unwanted catch that includes, for example, marine birds - will have to produce stronger proof of how they are managing their impacts.”

☀️ The Economist and the FAO weigh in

In “The World Ahead 2022”, The Economist warned “the world will wake up to the scourge of illicit fishing” citing IUU fishing – [Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated](#) as the driver behind plummeting fish stocks, as only 1/5 of commercial species are sustainably fished. IUU fishing is also on the FAO radar, as it disadvantages those who abide by the fishing regulations and threatens sustainable use. In 2017, the FAO declared June 5th as [International Day against IUU fishing](#). **FF**