

# Atlantic Cod

*Gadus morhua*

Fish · Best inshore in autumn and winter



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A heavy-bodied fish with three separate dorsal fins, two anal fins, a squarish tail, a distinct barbel on the chin and a pale, curving lateral line. Colour ranges from greenish to sandy-brown with fine speckling depending on the bottom. Cod move into the Solway and inshore Irish Sea, most reliably from autumn through winter, over rough ground and around structure.

## BEHAVIOUR

Cod are opportunistic predators with famously indiscriminate appetites — crabs, sandeels, small fish, molluscs and, on occasion, indigestible rubbish. They shoal loosely and move inshore as water cools in autumn. Irish Sea cod have been heavily depleted and the stock is subject to strict management: this is a species whose local abundance is a fraction of what it was a century ago.

## WHEN TO SEE IT

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## QUICK FACTS

|           |                                                                          |
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| FAMILY    | Cods (Gadidae)                                                           |
| SIZE      | Commonly 40–80 cm inshore                                                |
| UK STATUS | Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List; Irish Sea stock under strict management |

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