

A trans-Atlantic examination of haddock *Melanogrammus aeglefinus* food habits - DTU Orbit (08/11/2017)

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The food habits of *Melanogrammus aeglefinus* were explored and contrasted across multiple north-eastern and north-western Atlantic Ocean ecosystems, using databases that span multiple decades. The results show that among all ecosystems, echinoderms are a consistent part of *M. aeglefinus* diet, but patterns emerge regarding where and when *M. aeglefinus* primarily eat fishes v.

echinoderms. *Melanogrammus aeglefinus* does not regularly exhibit the increase in piscivory with ontogeny that other gadoids often show, and in several ecosystems there is a lower occurrence of piscivory. There is an apparent inverse relationship between the consumption of fishes and echinoderms in *M. aeglefinus* over time, where certain years show high levels of one prey item and low levels of the other. This apparent binary choice can be viewed as part of a gradient of prey options, contingent upon a suite of factors external to *M. aeglefinus* dynamics. The energetic consequences of this prey

choice are discussed, noting that in some instances it may not be a choice at all

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