

Are Norwegian fjords important spawning areas for anglerfish (*Lophius piscatorius*)?

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The knowledge about anglerfish spawning in the northeastern Atlantic is limited. Mature females are rarely seen in the major commercial fisheries within the area, and the general perception has been that the main spawning takes place at great depths west of the British Isles.

The seabed temperature north of the Wyville-Thomson ridge is usually close to 0°C at water depths greater than 500 m, which probably make these areas unsuitable for anglerfish spawning. However, in the deep fjords of western Norway, warmer water is found all the way down to the seabed (down to more than 1000 m). During the last few years we have collected information on large, mature female anglerfish in shallow water from some of these fjords, which is presented here. Most of these occurrences appeared in late winter/early spring, and most reports came from the Hardangerfjord area.

A drift model for this fjord and the adjacent offshore areas was configured to simulate the drift of egg-bands and pelagic larvae at different buoyancies and duration of the pelagic phase. The work indicates that the fjords could represent important spawning areas providing recruitment to the major fishing grounds along the Norwegian coast.

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