

Fish stocks sensitive to sea temperature

The growth of individual fish depends on the temperature of the seawater. A model study by an international research team now shows that fluctuations in temperature also have a big effect at the population level. A year with favourable conditions soon leads to a population boom in short-lived fish that eat plankton. Long-lived predatory fish respond much more slowly: fluctuations in seawater temperatures result in population changes over a period of decades.

The findings can give a better understanding

of the effects of climate change on marine fish populations, says lead author Peter van der Sleen, a researcher at the Wildlife Ecology & Conservation chair group. That is why they performed model simulations with a range of climate scenarios. 'These are not hopeful results,' says Van der Sleen. 'Climate change will make fish stocks fluctuate more, which will have major implications for how marine ecosystems function and for the fishing industry.'

Info: peter.vandersleen@wur.nl



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