



Large Marine Ecosystems of the North Atlantic: Changing States and Sustainability

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This is the first book to provide assessments of multidecadal changes in resources and environments of the Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) of the North Atlantic. Using the case study method, researchers examine the forces driving the changes and actions underway aimed at turning the corner from declining trends in biomass yields, toward recovery of depleted species populations and improvements in ecosystem integrity.

Recently a distinguished group of 24 scientists argued eloquently that a new *Sustainability Science* was emerging that was focused on "meeting fundamental human needs while preserving the life support systems of planet Earth". The contributions contained in this volume are at the cutting edge of *Sustainability Science* and the results presented by the contributors are pertinent to one of the core questions: "How are long-term trends in environment and development, including consumption and population, reshaping nature-society interactions in ways relevant to sustainability?" (*Science* Vol. 292, 27 April 2001). The case studies demonstrate the utility of an ecosystem-based approach to the assessment and management of biomass yields and species sustainability.

Movements toward ecosystem-based management have emerged from the case studies on the initiation of recoveries of several depleted groundfish stocks of the US Northeast Shelf LME; the collapse of the Newfoundland-Labrador Shelf cod; the assessment of physical and biological changes on the Scotian Shelf, West Greenland Shelf, Iceland Shelf LME, and the Faroe Plateau, the North Sea, and the Barents Sea LMEs. Uncertainties, with regard to environmental and human-generated forcing, are addressed in assessment of the states of the Iberian Coastal and Biscay-Celtic LMEs, and in broad-scale studies of the influences at the base of the food chain of climatic variability on the productivity and biodiversity of plankton communities of the North Atlantic. The volume concludes with an insightful perspective on the approaches used and the results reported by the eminent marine scientist and former President of ICES, Professor Gotthilf Hempel.

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