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FACTSHEET A

CLASSIFICATION OF FISH

Different varieties of fish can be classified in the following ways:

1. By Habitat

Swimming in surface waters: **PELAGIC FISH** e.g. herring, mackerel, sprats

Bottom of sea swimmers: **DEMERSAL FISH** e.g. cod, dogfish, haddock, hake, saithe, whiting, and flat-fish

Most **pelagic fish** feed on microscopic plants and animals i.e. **plankton** which flourish in surface waters. **Demersal fish**, on the other hand, live on small fish and crustaceans found on the sea-bed. At certain times of year, however, demersal fish may move up to the surface if food supplies are plentiful there e.g. dogfish may come up to feed on herring. Young flat-fish develop in surface waters and eventually travel to the sea-bed when they begin to mature. On the other hand, herring eggs hatch on the sea-bed, staying there for their early stages of development.

2. By Shape

FLAT FISH: brill, dab, flounder, plaice, skate, turbot, halibut, megrim

ROUND FISH: cod, saithe, dogfish, haddock, hake, salmon, sea bream, whiting

3. By their Flesh

WHITE FISH: bass, brill, cod, saithe, flounder, haddock, hake, halibut, plaice, sea bream, sole, turbot, whiting

OILY FISH: anchovy, herring in all its forms, mackerel, red or grey mullet, pilchards, salmon, sea trout, sardines, sprats, tuna (tunny), whitebait

4. Shell Fish

Those with jointed shells: **CRUSTACEANS** e.g. crawfish, crab, crayfish, lobster, prawns -all varieties

Those with unjointed shells: **MOLLUSCS**

- a. **UNI-VALVES**, which have a one-part shell e.g. whelks, winkles
- b. **BI-VALVES** which have two-part, hinged shells e.g. cockles, mussels, oysters, scallops, queens