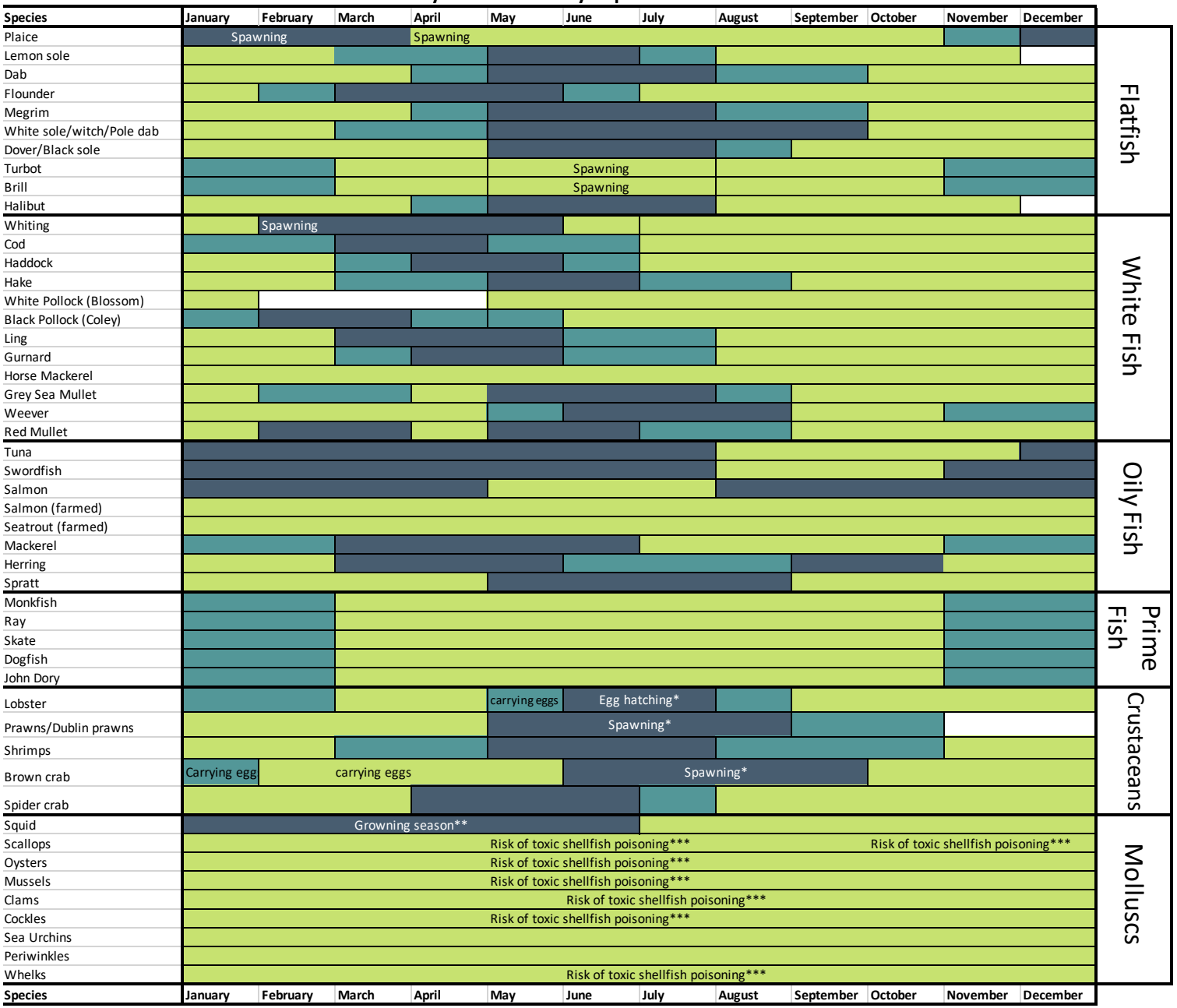
Seasonality of commercially important seafood



NOTE:

This seasonality chart is a guide only to indicate when fish is at its best in regards to taste and meat content. This varies due to local climatic and environmental conditions. We have created this one to our best knowledge for Irish seafood, but don't hold us to account. Generally all seafood spawn over a period of four to six weeks. During spawning a lot of fat and protein reserves go into egg production. This often makes the fish flesh watery and soft. Fish in this condition are termed ‘spent fish’. These fish take anything between one to two months to recover depending on the local environmental conditions. Sometimes fishing goes on despite spawning season, because the fish are then more reachable for fishing boats and often occur in bigger numbers. Set quotas are put in place to ensure sustainable harvesting of the fish stocks (in theory). Other limitations are also put in place to ensure protection of stocks such as limited hours of fishing during specific times of the day.

* Crustaceans have two different stages in which they should be avoided: carrying eggs and spawning. During the spawning period they mate as well as mould which makes their meat soft and watery. Fishing for crustaceans during the egg carrying period is not forbidden, however in Ireland fishers have an obligation to mark egg carrying females with a "v-notch" and release them back into the sea.

** Squid start to grow at the beginning of the year and typically reach adulthood in mid summer and with that their full tasty flavour.

*** Shellfish such as mussels, cockles, scallops and any other filter feeders are mostly from aquacultures in this day and age. They have a slightly higher risk of accumulating toxic phytoplankton during the summer months due to frequently occurring phytoplankton blooms. Highly advanced monitoring programmes for toxic phytoplankton are in place across the island of Ireland and generally keep you safe, however if you want to keep the risk to a minimum avoid molluscs from late May to early October.