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Brussels, 10 June 2014

PRESS NEWS

EU Sea Bass Management Plan – EAA Position Paper

A sea bass management plan is under preparation by EU Member States. The plan concerns only some of the northern Atlantic EU waters (Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea).

European sea bass is one of the most important and valuable species to recreational angling and its dependant businesses. Sea bass were historically exploited primarily by recreational anglers until commercial fisheries for bass expanded dramatically in the 1960-70s. Now European sea bass stocks are in decline due to overfishing and poor recruitment in recent years. Something needs be done, say scientists, the European Commission and the European Anglers Alliance.

If the EU Member States involved don't agree a regional plan soon then the European Commission might include sea bass in the TAC [total allowable catches] and quota system for the first time. Only France would be happy about that and could reasonably expect to be allocated the biggest part of any such TAC, more than 60% based on historic declared landings. EAA is opposed to a sea bass TAC for a number of reasons. EAA has developed a position paper, which it hopes will help to avoid a sea bass TAC and encourage Member States to agree a sea bass management plan.

The preparation of a suitable sea bass management plan is a difficult task, lack of sufficient scientific information presents a significant problem. The change in the European fisheries management regime based on landings to one based on catches, which includes discard bans for some fisheries, is another issue, which may need to be factored in. Existing CFP management areas complicate the development of such a plan. This sea bass plan only concerns some Northern EU waters but there are sea bass in other EU waters also. Therefore, an EU wide sea bass management plan has to be developed gradually and adjusted in the short/medium term and in the longer term.

Commercial catches in 2012 were 4060 tonnes. ICES, the scientific fisheries adviser to the European Commission, has advised that commercial landings should be no more than 2707 tonnes this year, 2014. This is a significant reduction, but only mirrors the fact that the sea bass stock is in serious trouble.

In its position paper EAA has given an estimate for the number of anglers fishing for sea bass and the socio-economic value of these anglers to Europe as a whole. EAA estimates that 2 million sea

anglers, out of 8-10 million in total, regularly or occasionally target sea bass in EU waters. One million of these anglers fish the waters concerned by this bass management plan.

EAA conservatively estimates the socio-economic value of recreational bass angling to be an average of 100 euro per bass angler per year. Government surveys show much higher values for sea anglers in general, for example the Sea Angling 2012 study in the United Kingdom estimated that (1):

“..annual trip spend per angler is £761 (£795 including major items) and annual spend on major items is £633 per sea angler giving an overall total of £1,394 per sea angler”; (ca. 1,700 euros).

However, European Anglers Alliance has chosen a much lower estimate – a portion of the total spend – to reflect that most sea anglers would also target and catch fish other than bass, even if bass is their preferred species.

Note 1: - “Sea Angling 2012 – a survey of recreational sea angling activity and economic value in England,” Annex 2: The Economic and Social Value of Recreational Sea Angling in England www.marinemangement.org.uk/seaangling/documents/finalreport.pdf

ENDS

- **Attached: EAA sea bass position paper**
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Notes to Editors

The European Anglers Alliance, EAA is a pan-European NGO for recreational angling, which promotes and defends European recreational anglers' interests at the European level and beyond. There are about 3 mill. affiliated members to EAA's 18 member organisations and associates from 17 European nations. EAA is a member of or observer to a number of committees and councils involved with EU's fisheries and environment policy shaping and implementation. EAA has close co-operation with the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association, [EFTTA](#), which shares common goals with the EAA. EAA dialogue and network with angling organisations and other relevant organisations all over Europe and globally.

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