

Seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) in divisions 6.a, 7.b, and 7.j (West of Scotland, West of Ireland, eastern part of southwest of Ireland)

ICES stock advice

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, commercial landings should be no more than 4 tonnes in each of the years 2018, 2019 and 2020. ICES cannot quantify total catches.

Stock development over time

Official reported landings are low and fluctuate without any trends (a maximum of 9 tonnes was landed in 2010). Most of the reported official landings are from Division 7.j.

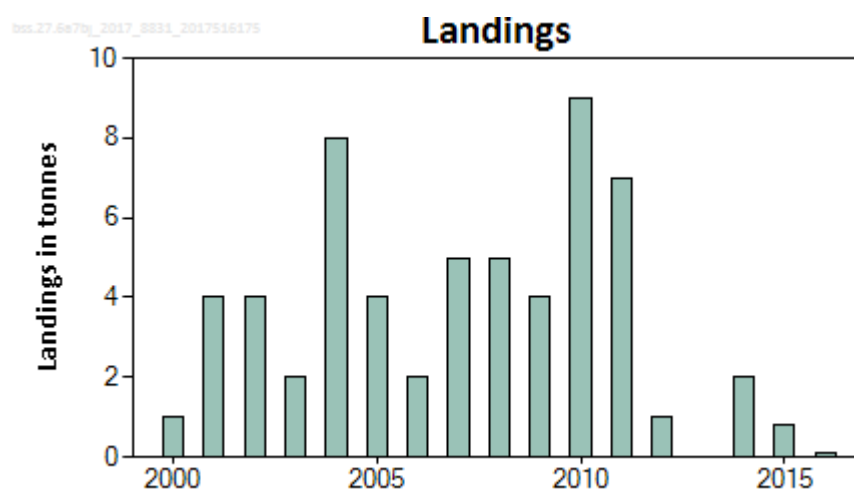


Figure 1 Seabass in divisions 6.a, 7.b, and 7.j. Official landings.

Stock and exploitation status

Table 1 Seabass in divisions 6.a, 7.b, and 7.j. State of the stock and fishery relative to reference points.

		Fishing pressure				Stock size				
		2014	2015	2016		2014	2015	2016		
Maximum sustainable yield	F_{MSY}	?	?	?	Undefined	$MSY_{escapement}$?	?	?	Undefined
Precautionary approach	F_{pa}, F_{lim}	?	?	?	Undefined	B_{pa}, B_{lim}	?	?	?	Undefined
Management plan	F_{MGT}	—	—	—	Not applicable	S_{SBMGT}	—	—	—	Not applicable
Qualitative evaluation	-	?	?	?	Unknown	Qualitative evaluation	?	?	?	Unknown

[†] Version 2: Correction of ecoregion

Catch options

The ICES framework for category 6 stocks was applied (ICES, 2012a). For stocks without information on abundance or exploitation, ICES considers that a precautionary reduction of catches should be implemented. The precautionary buffer was last applied in 2013 (advice for 2014); therefore, it has to be applied this year again.

Table 2 Seabass in divisions 6.a, 7.b, and 7.j. The basis for the catch options.

Recent advised commercial landings	5 tonnes	
Discard rate	Unknown	
Precautionary buffer	Applied	0.8
Landings advice*	4 tonnes	

*recent advised landings * precautionary buffer.

Basis of the advice

Table 3 Seabass in divisions 6.a, 7.b, and 7.j. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Precautionary approach
Management plan	ICES is not aware of any agreed precautionary management plan for seabass in this area.

Quality of the assessment

A series of official commercial landings data is available but the quality of this is unknown. Discarding of seabass on Irish observer trips since 1990 has been negligible. Data on seabass landings by shore anglers in Ireland were available and are estimated at 30 t in 2010 and 44 t in 2011 (this includes some landings from divisions 7.a and 7.g). Therefore an accurate time-series of total catches cannot be calculated.

Time-series of catches, releases, and size/age composition are needed from this component of the fishery in order to improve the assessment and advice. Stock identity remains poorly understood and tagging studies are ongoing. Seabass in divisions 6.a and 7.g around the southern and eastern coasts of Ireland is currently included in the seabass assessment in divisions 4.bc, 7.a, and 7d–h, but may be more associated with the stock in divisions 6.a, 7.b, and 7.j.

Issues relevant for the advice

A moratorium on landings of seabass in commercial fisheries has been in place in Ireland since 1990. The industry reports high sporadic catches which are discarded due to the moratorium. Recreational fisheries in Ireland are subject to bag limits of 2 fish/24 hrs, a 40 cm minimum size limit, and a closed season from 15th May to 15th June annually.

Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

Basis of the assessment

Table 4 Seabass in divisions 6.a, 7.b, and 7.j. Basis of assessment and advice.

ICES stock data category	6 (ICES, 2016)
Assessment type	No assessment
Input data	Official landings
Discards and bycatch	Unknown
Indicators	None
Other information	Benchmarked in 2012 (ICES, 2012b)
Working group	Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion (WGCSE)

Information from stakeholders

There is no additional available information for this stock.

History of the advice, catch, and management

Table 5 Seabass in divisions 6.a, 7.b, and 7.j. ICES advice and official landings. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice	Predicted catch corresp. to advice	Agreed TAC	Official landings*
2000	-	-	none	1
2001	-	-	none	4
2002	No increase in effort or F**	-	none	4
2003	No increase in effort or F**	-	none	2
2004	No increase in effort or F**	-	none	8
2005	-	-	none	4
2006	-	-	none	2
2007	-	-	none	5
2008	-	-	none	5
2009	-	-	none	4
2010	-	-	none	9
2011	-	-	none	7
2012	No increase in catch**	-	none	1
2013	20% reduction in catches (last 3 years' average) **	< 6000**	none	0
2014	20% reduction in commercial landings (last 3 years' average 2009–2011)	< 18	none	2
2015	20% reduction in commercial landings (average 2009–2011)	< 5	none	0.8***
2016	Precautionary approach (same advised commercial landings value as given for 2015)	≤ 5	none	0.1***
2017	Precautionary approach (same advised commercial landings value as given for 2015)	≤ 5	none	
2018	Precautionary approach	≤ 4		
2019	Precautionary approach (same advised commercial landings value as given for 2018)	≤ 4		
2020	Precautionary approach (same advised commercial landings value as given for 2018)	≤ 4		

* Landings between 2007–2011 were revised.

** Advice for the European sea bass in the Northeast Atlantic (combined stock).

*** Preliminary.

History of the catch and landings

Table 6 Seabass in divisions 6.a, 7.b, and 7.j. Catch distribution by fleet in 2016 as estimated by ICES.

Catch	Commercial catch		Recreational catch
Unknown	commercial landings	Commercial discards	unknown
	0.1 tonnes	Not available, but known to occur	

Table 7 Seabass in divisions 6.a, 7.b, and 7.j. History of commercial landings presented by country. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	Belgium	Spain	France	UK	Ireland	Total official
1995						0
1996						0
1997						0
1998						0
1999						0
2000			1			1
2001			4			4
2002			4			4
2003			2			2
2004		2	6			8
2005			4			4
2006			2			2
2007			5			5
2008			5			5
2009			3		1	4
2010			9			9
2011			7			7
2012			1			1
2013						0
2014			2	< 0.5		2
2015*			0.8			0.8
2016*			0.1			0.1

*Preliminary.

Summary of the assessment

There is no assessment for seabass in this area.

Sources and references

- ICES. 2012a. ICES Implementation of Advice for Data-limited Stocks in 2012 in its 2012 Advice. ICES CM 2012/ACOM:68. 42 pp.
- ICES. 2012b. Report of the Inter-Benchmark Protocol on New Species (Turbot and Sea bass; IBPNew 2012), 1–5 October 2012, Copenhagen, Denmark. ICES CM 2012/ACOM:45. 239 pp.
- ICES. 2016. Advice basis. *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2016. ICES Advice 2016, Book 1, Section 1.2.
- ICES. 2017. Report of the Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion (WGCSE) 9–18 May 2017 Copenhagen, Denmark. ICES CM 2017