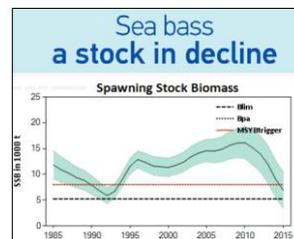


Brussels, 30 June 2015

Dear Member State representative

Sea Bass - Minimum Conservation Reference Size [MCRF] increase to 42cm

Thursday, 2 July the “Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture” will vote on increasing the Minimum Conservation Reference Size [MCRF] for sea bass from the present 36cm to 42cm. **Agenda:** ow.ly/OE3Uq



Today (30 June), ICES published its bass advice for 2016: ow.ly/OYDWA. Even less landings is advised for 2016 than was advised for this year.

This 42cm measure is the latest of emergency measures put in place this year to save Europe’s threatened sea bass stock from further depletion and will permit ca. 50% of the stock to breed at least once:

- **January¹:** A pelagic trawl ban with effect from January to the end of April (left map below – both areas).
- **March²:** A recreational fishing bag limit of three bass per person per day (left map – both areas)
- **June³:** Catch limits set for all commercial fishing vessels + a ban in Irish waters (left map)
- **July⁴:** Commission proposal: Increase of the EU minimum landing size from 36 cm to 42 cm (the whole geographical range of European sea bass ex. the Mediterranean Sea (right map).

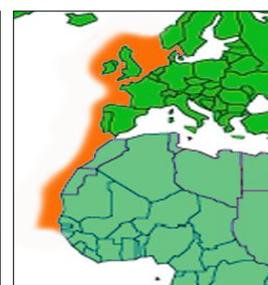
We urge you to support the increase to 42cm

Sea bass is one of the most sought after and valuable species to recreational angling in Europe. Anglers’ spend at least 200 million Euros on their bass fishing and help to maintain tens of thousands of jobs. The stock is in great trouble and needs your help to recover.

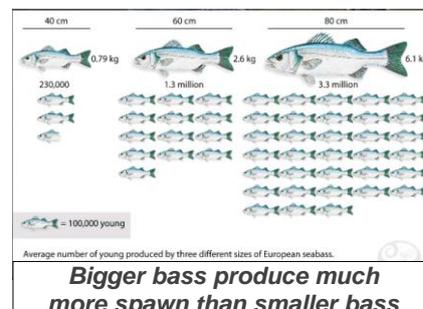
We understand that a majority of the Member States directly concerned with bass fisheries in the Northern Atlantic (FR, UK, IE, NL BE) favour 42cm and urge other Member States to also support 42cm.

We would like you to take note that:

- Below 42cm very few female bass spawn in the North Atlantic waters. In fact in these waters only at about 48cm. Would all female Bass have had the chance to spawn at least once. Also, bigger bass produce much more new bass than the smaller ones.
- 42cm is the absolute minimum required to protect immature bass and the bass spawning biomass from further fishing pressure and decline, which is urgently needed according to ICES.
- Some southern European fishers want less than 42cm to be the rule as the bass they catch are smaller they argue....



The MCRS increase applies to both recreational and commercial bass fishing in the orange area above.



However, (see next page):

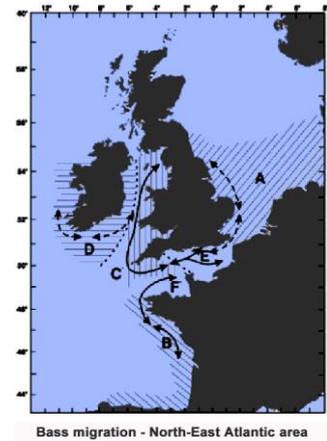
¹ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1422367312428&uri=OJ%3AJOL_2015_020_R_0005

² http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_2015.084.01.0001.01.ENG

³ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_2015.157.01.0001.01.ENG

⁴ The draft legislative proposal is not available in the public domain but can be ordered here: <http://ow.ly/OQaQS>

- 42cm MCRS is needed everywhere to secure immature fish and to increase the spawning biomass, which is urgently needed. Should some bass in southern waters be able to spawn twice at 42cm that can only be a good thing!
- Bass is highly migratory (see map). Different MCRF sizes will complicate monitoring and control, make it more costly and less efficient.
- The MCRF increase is the **ONLY** one of the new EU emergency measures, which will apply to bass fisheries in southern waters. It is only fair that **EVERYBODY** contributes to the recovery and health of the European sea bass stock.
- The “catching of smaller bass” in southern waters is a poor argument against increasing the MCRS 42cm. Bass grows faster in southern warmer waters, so fishers there will benefit faster than their northern colleagues from the availability of bigger bass (they can grow from 36cm to 42cm in 12-18 months).
- Bigger bass fetch much higher kilo prices than do small bass. An example from UK: “In May 2015, the average market prices for bass in Plymouth were as low as £3/Kg for small bass and £15/Kg for the biggest.”⁵
- 92% of the total European bass market is made up of farmed fish, small farmed bass. This is why 36-42cm wild bass sell at very low kilo prices. It makes a lot of economic sense for commercial fishers to not sell small bass but bigger bass only (42cm and above).
- French recreational fishers have been obliged by law since 2012⁶ to minimum landing size 42cm. The French recreational anglers welcomed the increase to 42cm but they are angered, of course,⁷ that commercial fishers still are allowed to catch small bass below 42cm. It doesn't make any sense from a conservation point of view and is regarded unfair by anglers.



Bass migration - North-East Atlantic area



A “big bass” 9 kg.
Bass can be about 30 y.o.
grow longer than 1 m, and
reach ca. 15 kg of weight.

Too many and too small bass have been caught for far too long!

- ENDS -

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● **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.

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EU Transparency Register: identification number 60105502183-69

● **The European Fishing Tackle Trade Association (EFTTA)** is the leading European trade association for manufacturers and wholesalers of sport fishing equipment. Membership is open to manufacturers, wholesalers, agents and press in the tackle industry. EFTTA currently has over 250 members.

info@eftta.com ●●● www.eftta.com ●●● Facebook: ow.ly/OWmV1
EU Transparency Register: identification number 08955462188-48

An EAA position paper from 2014 ow.ly/OWiOI

The European Parliament
14 April 2015
- Sea bass event -
EAA and EFTTA presentations are available here: ow.ly/OXLdn

⁵ www.blog.clientearth.org/how-do-we-make-sea-bass-sustainable
⁶ <http://legifrance.gouv.fr/eli/arrete/2012/10/26/TRAM1226985A/jo/texte>
⁷ <http://fnppsf.fr/derniere-minute/presse/Bar-nouvelles-mesures-attendues.htm>