IDENTIFICATION

SCIENTIFIC NAME
Solea solea

SPECIES NAME(S)
Common sole, European Dover sole

STOCK IDENTIFICATION
Several studies indicated absence of population structure for sole populations in the Northeast Atlantic (Rolland et al., 2007). Recently, Cuveliers et al. (2012) revealed a clear genetic structure for sole in this region with at least three different populations: Kattegat/Skagerrak region, the North Sea and the Bay of Biscay, and with indications for a fourth population, namely the Irish/Celtic Sea. This study supports the current approach by ICES for assessing sole as biological stock units in the North Sea (ICES subarea IV), Skagerrak and Kattegat (ICES Division IIIa and Subdivisions 22–24) and Bay of Biscay (ICES Divisions VIIIb).

Adjacent sole assessment units defined by ICES—although not clearly identified as biological stocks—are: Eastern Channel (ICES Division VIIc), Western Channel (ICES Division VIIa), Celtic Sea (ICES Divisions VIIIc,g), Irish Sea (ICES Division VIIIb), SW of Ireland (ICES Divisions VIIh-k), West of Ireland (ICES Divisions VIIb,c) and Atlantic Iberian waters (ICES Divisions VIIIc and IXa).

RELATED LINKS:
- European Commission (EC)
- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

ASSESSMENT

Strengths
The stock has been within safe biological limits since 2012 and objectives of stage 1 (i.e., stock rebuilding) are currently met. IUU fishing is not an issue. A precautionary management plan is in place.

MSC Condition 2 (retained species information) ended in 2010. The fishery does not interact with PET species and discards are considered to be low. 2009 year class is strong.

Weaknesses
Stock recovery can be related to strong year classes rather than to management options. Fishing mortality is decreasing but remains slightly above FMSY.

Options
Mesh size and minimum land size should be revised to promote discards’ reduction (of plaice) and benefit the stock. The recent increase in discard should also be investigated. Fishing mortality should continue to be reduced. Objectives, TAC procedures and effort limitations will be redefined in line with the second stage of the management plan.

Conditions set under the MSC certification process include the revision of the rebuilding strategy, better evaluation of plaice discarding by the fishery; collection of data on interactions with PET species; improve information on bycatch; and improved management and monitoring of impacts on benthic habitats.

SCORES

Management Quality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Strategy</th>
<th>Managers Compliance</th>
<th>Fishers Compliance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 8</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>10</td>
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Stock Health:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Health</th>
<th>Future Health</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9</td>
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FIPS
No related FIPs

MSC

<table>
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<tr>
<th>CVO pulse sole &amp; plaice:</th>
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<td>Wijk رسول</td>
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RECOMMENDATIONS

CATCHERS & REGULATORS
1. Work actively to address and close out conditions placed upon the certification of the fishery in the agreed timeframe.
2. Report achievements publicly to share progress with buyers.

RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN
1. Start a fishery improvement project (FIP) to evaluate and address sustainability issues in this fishery. For advice on starting a FIP, see SFP’s Seafish Industry Guide to FIPs and other resources at https://www.sustainablefishing.org/Programs/Professional-Guidance/FIP-Resources.
2. Express your support for help meet conditions that may be at a government/regulatory level (where applicable).