**Common sole**

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**North Sea**

**Fishery:** EU/Norway, Denmark, Bottom trawls

**Stock Health:**

- **Current Health:** 9.3  
- **Future Health:** 9

**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.

**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. Objective, 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 evaluation and mitigation of impacts on cod, Norway lobster and harbour porpoise, and spurdog stocks due to bycatch by the fishery; collection of data on interactions with PET species; collection of recent discarding data for set net and longline fisheries; and management and evaluation of impacts on benthic habitats.**

**SCORES**

- **Management Quality:**  
  - Managers: 9.5  
  - Fishers: 10

- **Stock Health:**  
  - Current: 9.3  
  - Future: 9

- **FIPs:**  
  - No related FIPs

**MSC**

- **DFIPS Denmark North Sea sole:**  
  - MSC Certified

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN**
  - Monitor the performance of the fishery and its management to ensure the fishery continues to be eligible for condition-free MSC re-certification.

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**RELATED LINKS:**

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

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**References:**

- Rolland et al., 2007
- Cuveliers et al., 2012