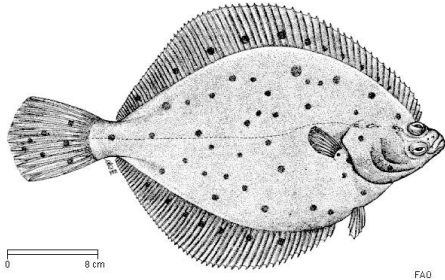


European plaice Celtic Sea

 Fishery:  Celtic Sea  EU  United Kingdom  Beam trawls

IDENTIFICATION



SCIENTIFIC NAME

Pleuronectes platessa

SPECIES NAME(S)

European plaice

STOCK IDENTIFICATION

Several genetic and tagging experiments have been conducted in the NE Atlantic region (e.g. Hoarau et al., 2002; Was et al., 2010; Ulrich et al. 2013). The stock complex consists of sub-populations with distinct spawning grounds; some of them present a strong fidelity behaviour (Hunter et al., 2003) however gene flow is also found among some populations (Hoarau et al., 2002). Different assessments are performed within ICES division VII: [Irish Sea](#) (VIIa), [West of Ireland](#) (VIIb,c), [Eastern English Channel](#) (VII d) and [Western English Channel](#) (VIIe), Celtic Sea (VII f,g), [SW of Ireland](#) (VII h-k).



RELATED LINKS:

- [European Commission \(EC\)](#)
- [International Council for the Exploration of the Sea \(ICES\)](#)

ASSESSMENT

Strengths

- Biomass is indicated to be increasing based on recent trends.
- Fishing mortality is indicated to be stable over the long term.
- Discards are included in the assessment.
- The quality and coverage of discard data has improved in recent years.
- Model generated spawning stock biomass, recruitment and fishing mortality trends are considered relevant despite areas of uncertainty.
- Quantitative stock assessment methods are expected to evolve and be validated over time.
- The set TAC is coincident with the stock area.
- Contrary to past years, landings misreporting is not an issue.
- ICES quantitative advice is suited for data limited stocks.

Weaknesses

- Data is insufficient to allow reliable quantitative estimation of stock abundance, recruitment, fishing mortality and associated reference points; rather, scientific advice is based on qualitative assessment of trends. Stock assessment is particularly limited by lack of precise discard data over a suitable time series. Additional uncertainty is associated with survey indices and understanding of stock migration patterns.
- Biomass is indicated to be near historical low levels based on long-term trends and recruitment in recent years is also estimated to be low.
- Discards of plaice exceed landings and are increasing, and comprise a growing component of total fishing mortality (F).
- The TAC is frequently set in excess of ICES' recommended catch.
- Catches slightly exceeded the TAC in 3 of 4 years between 2009-2014, and increased discarding is a likely contributing factor.
- In addition to plaice, many non-target and undersized target species are discarded in the fishery, particularly elasmobranchs, and including some conservation status species.
- Some bycatch is not well quantified.
- The trawl gear employed in this fishery has negative impacts on the benthic ecosystem and indirect effects on feeding success and growth rate of European plaice (and likely other species, though effects are variable), which is associated with reduced carrying capacity of the seabed.
- The allowable 80mm mesh size limit is ineffective at excluding undersize plaice.

SCORES

Management Quality:

Management Strategy	Managers Compliance	Fishers Compliance
≥ 6	8.4	8.3

Stock Health:

Current Health	Future Health
≥ 6	≥ 6

FIPS

No related FIPs

MSC

No related MSC fisheries

RECOMMENDATIONS

CATCHERS & REGULATORS

- Start a fishery improvement project to address sustainability issues in this fishery. For advice on starting a FIP, see SFP's Seafood Industry Guide to FIPs at <http://www.sustainablefish.org/publications/2014/04/30/the-seafood-industry-guide-to-fips>.
- Communicate to fishery managers that there are sustainability issues in this fishery that may be affecting the sale of products, and request that they comprehensively evaluate and address such issues.

RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN

- Encourage your supply chain to start a fishery improvement project. For advice on starting a FIP see SFP's Seafood Industry Guide to FIPs at <http://www.sustainablefish.org/publications/2014/04/30/the-seafood-industry-guide-to-fips>.
- Work with other suppliers and buyers on a pre-competitive basis to start a supplier roundtable to review improvement needs in this and other similar fisheries, catalyze fishery improvement projects, and monitor progress in improvement efforts.