**European plaice**

North Sea and Skagerrak

**SCIENTIFIC NAME**

Pleuronectes platessa

**SPECIES NAMES(S)**

European plaice

**STOCK IDENTIFICATION**

It has been recently determined, based on larval drift, otolith characteristics, genetics, and tagging studies, that plaice in the North Sea and Skagerrak conform a single stock, and a combined assessment and advice was conducted in 2015 (ICES, 2015a,b).

**RELADED LINKS:**

- European Commission (EC), Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries (DoF)
- International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

**ASSESSMENT**

**Strengths**

- A precautionary plaice and sole management plan is in operation; goal of stage one (recovery plan) is achieved. The plaice spawning stock is at a historical high and increasing further.
- Mixed fisheries advice takes into consideration the status of other North Sea species.
- Uncertainty in the assessment has been resolved.
- Data about retained and discarded species, namely PET species, and the interaction with sensitive habitats is available.

**Weaknesses**

- Bottom trawls, with high bycatch rates and impacts on the seabed, dominate catches.
- Rules of the second stage of the management plan are not yet defined.
- Changes in management measures have contributed to increased discarding of undersized plaice in the southern North Sea.

**SCORES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Quality</th>
<th>Management Strategy</th>
<th>Managers Compliance</th>
<th>Fishers Compliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 6 to ≥ 8</td>
<td>8.6 to 10</td>
<td>9.1 to 10</td>
<td></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>&lt; 6 to 8</td>
<td>&lt; 6 to 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 6 to 10</td>
<td>8.9</td>
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**FIPS**

- United Kingdom European plaice & lemon sole - seine/trawl: Stage 5, Progress Rating A, Type: Fip, Evaluation Start Date: 1 Nov 2018

**MSC**

- Cooperative Fishing Organisation (CVO) North Sea plaice and sole: MSC Certified
- SFSAG Northern Demersal Stocks: MSC Recertified

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RETAILERS & SUPPLY CHAIN**

- Monitor the progress in closing out conditions placed upon the MSC certification of the fishery and if agreed timelines are met, offer assistance in closing conditions where possible.