European plaice

North Sea and Skagerrak

**Identification**

**Scientific Name**
Pleuronectes platessa

**Species Names**
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).

**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 sea bed, 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**

- **Management Quality:**
  - **Management Strategy:** ≥ 6 to ≥ 8
  - **Managers Compliance:** 8.6 to 10
  - **Fishers Compliance:** 9.1 to 10

- **Stock Health:**
  - Current Health: < 6 to < 10
  - Future Health: 8.9

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

- **MSC**
  - SFSAQ 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 wherever possible.