

European seabass North and Celtic Seas and English Channel

 Fishery:  North and Celtic Seas and English Channel  EU  United Kingdom  Midwater pair trawls

IDENTIFICATION

SCIENTIFIC NAME

Dicentrarchus labrax

SPECIES NAME(S)

European seabass

STOCK IDENTIFICATION

In 2012, European seabass populations from the North, Irish and Celtic seas, and English and Bristol Channels have been grouped in a single assessment. However, there is evidence that some exchange with populations from southern Ireland and Bay of Biscay may exist. As seabass stock structure remains uncertain (ICES, 2014a,b), research programs on seabass stock identity are being carried out by France and UK, involving electronic and conventional tagging, and modelling of larval drift patterns, to try and improve knowledge of spatial dynamics (ICES, 2014a).



RELATED LINKS:

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

ASSESSMENT

Strengths

- Despite the scarcity of management measures adopted at the stock level, some countries such as the UK have already a series of measures to protect the stock. The quality of reported data for commercial fisheries has been improving overall.
- Improvements to the data and assessment allowed a new benchmark in 2014, and estimates of fishing mortality, biomass, and biological reference points to be presented, for fishing mortality and limit spawning stock biomass.
- UK and France have embarked on major programs to improve knowledge of spatial dynamics and stock identity.
- Efforts are continuing in North Sea states with assessing bycatch, developing alternative mitigation methods and developing frameworks for determining safe bycatch limits.
- In the UK there are already a series of measures to protect the stock (e.g., higher minimum landing size, 37.5 cm; closures of known seabass nursery areas; weekly catch limits).
- The quality of reported data for commercial and recreational catches has improved in recent years.

Weaknesses

- European seabass is a species with high vulnerability to over-exploitation and localized depletion, given its life history characteristics.
- The combination of declining recruitment since 2008 and increasing fishing effort is causing a rapid decline in biomass.
- Although this critical situation, no management plan to substantially reduce fishing mortality throughout the range of the stock has been agreed yet.
- Improvement in monitoring systems in seabird and marine mammal bycatch is needed to accurately quantify impacts on these populations.

SCORES

Management Quality:

Management Strategy	Managers Compliance	Fishers Compliance
< 6	< 6 to ≥ 6	≥ 6

Stock Health:

Current Health	Future Health
≥ 6	0.1

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.