

5.3.23 Thornback ray (*Raja clavata*) in Division 7.e (western English Channel)

ICES stock advice

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, landings should be no more than 212 tonnes in each of the years 2017 and 2018. ICES cannot quantify the corresponding catches.

Stock development over time

Landings ranged from 206 to 391 tonnes between 2009 and 2015. No stock size indicator is currently available.

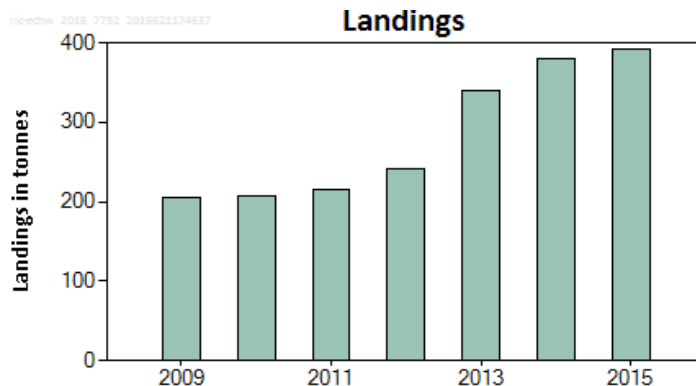


Figure 5.3.23.1 Thornback ray in Division 7.e. ICES estimated species-specific landings (in tonnes). Species-specific data are not available for earlier years.

Stock and exploitation status

Table 5.3.23.1 Thornback ray in Division 7.e. State of the stock and fishery relative to reference points.

		Fishing pressure			Stock size					
		2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015			
Maximum sustainable yield	F_{MSY}	?	?	?	Undefined	MSY	?	?	?	Undefined
Precautionary approach	F_{pa} , F_{lim}	?	?	?	Undefined	B_{pa} , B_{lim}	?	?	?	Undefined
Management plan	F_{MGT}	-	-	-	Not applicable	SSB_{MGT}	-	-	-	Not applicable
Qualitative evaluation	-	?	?	?	Unknown		?	?	?	Unknown

Catch options

The ICES framework for category 5 stocks was applied (ICES, 2012). For stocks without information on abundance or exploitation, ICES considers that a precautionary reduction of catches should be implemented unless there is ancillary information clearly indicating that the current level of exploitation is appropriate for the stock. Thus, the precautionary buffer was applied for this stock.

The recent advised landings for 2015 and 2016 were originally derived using landings statistics from 2011-2013. In 2016, a review of the landing statistics of elasmobranchs (ICES 2016a) was conducted. As a result, the basis which was used to provide advice in 2014 for 2015 and 2016 has been adjusted to account for the update in the landing statistics in the period 2011-2013.

Table 5.3.23.2 Thornback ray in Division 7.e. For stocks in ICES data categories 3–6, one catch option is provided.

Recent advised landings (2015–2016)		260 t
Recent advised landings adjusted (2015–2016)* [260 t x 1.02]		265 t
Discard rate		Unknown
Precautionary buffer	Applied	0.8
Landings advice (for stock)**		212 t

* Recent advised landings adjusted for the revision of the landings statistics in 2011-2013

** (Recent advised landings adjusted x PA buffer)

Basis of the advice

Table 5.3.23.3 Thornback ray in Division 7.e. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Precautionary approach.
Management plan	There is no management plan for this stock.

Quality of the assessment

The stock structure of thornback ray in the western English Channel is unclear, and it is unclear as to whether it is discrete or associated with the neighboring stocks in the eastern Channel/southern North Sea or the Bristol Channel/Irish Sea. Until the stock structure is clarified, ICES provides advice separately for Division 7.e.

Issues relevant for the advice

The thornback ray is one of the most commercially important skate species in this division.

Trawl survey data in Lyme Bay indicated that the relative abundance of this species was stable or increasing over the period 1989–2011 (Burt *et al.*, 2013). While this survey no longer operates, it is expected that time-series data from recently initiated English and French surveys in this area will provide stock indicators in the near future.

The increase in landings from 2009 to 2013 might have also been influenced by the introduction of mandatory species-specific reporting of skate landings.

Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

Basis of the assessment

Table 5.3.23.4 Thornback ray in Division 7.e. The basis of the assessment.

ICES stock data category	5 (ICES, 2016b)
Assessment type	No assessment. (ICES, 2016c)
Input data	ICES estimated landings
Discards and bycatch	Discarding is known to take place but cannot be quantified.
Indicators	None
Other information	None
Working group	Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEEF)

Information from stakeholders

No information has been provided.

History of advice, catch, and management

Table 5.3.23.5 Thornback ray in Division 7.e. History of ICES advice and ICES estimates of landings**. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice	Predicted landings corresp. to advice	ICES species-specific landings: minimum estimate based on reported landings*
2006	Zero catch	0	
2007	Zero catch	0	
2008	No new advice, same as 2007		
2009	<i>Status quo</i> catch		
2010	No new advice, same as 2009		
2011	<i>Status quo</i> catch		216
2012	No new advice, same as 2011		242
2013	No TAC, species-specific measures needed, catch could increase by max. 20%	-	339
2014	No new advice, same as 2013	-	379
2015	No increase in landings from average of last 3 years' landings	260	391
2016	No new advice, same as 2015	260	
2017	Precautionary approach	≤212	
2018	Precautionary approach (same value as advised catches for 2017)	≤212	

* Data revised in 2016 (ICES, 2016a).

** There is no a specific TAC for this stock. Fishing opportunities are managed through an overall TAC by management unit, which includes all species of skates and rays.

History of catch and landings

The distribution of this stock does not extend into the NEAFC regulatory area.

Table 5.3.23.6 Thornback ray in Division 7.e. Catch distribution by fleet in 2015 as estimated by ICES.

Catch (2015)	Landings	Discards
Unknown	391 tonnes	Discarding is known to take place but cannot be quantified.

Table 5.3.23.7 Thornback ray in Division 7.e. History of landings. ICES estimates of landings by country (in tonnes). Data revised in 2016 (ICES, 2016c).

Year	Spain	France	Belgium	UK	Ireland	Netherland	Total
2009		122	2	82		0.17	206
2010	0.22	101	8	98		1.92	208
2011	0.02	114	3	98		0.53	216
2012		108	4	129		0.36	242
2013		181	4	151	0.24	1.54	339
2014		224	3	151			379
2015		225	9	155	2.04	0.01	391

Summary of the assessment

There is no assessment for this stock in this area.

Sources and references

ICES. 2012. ICES implementation of Advice for Data-limited stocks in 2012 in its 2012 Advice. ICES CM 2012/ACOM:68. 42 pp.

ICES. 2016a. Report of the Workshop to compile and refine catch and landings of elasmobranchs (WKSHARKS), 19–22 January 2016, Lisbon, Portugal. ICES CM 2016/ACOM:40. 69 pp.

ICES. 2016b. General context of ICES advice. *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2016. ICES Advice 2016, Book 1, Section 1.2.

ICES. 2016c. Report of the Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEF), 15–24 June 2016, Lisbon, Portugal. ICES CM 2016/ACOM:20.