

Seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) in divisions 8.c and 9.a (southern Bay of Biscay and Atlantic Iberian waters)

ICES stock advice

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, commercial catches in each of the years 2020 and 2021 should be no more than 478 tonnes. All commercial catches are assumed to be landed. Recreational catches cannot be quantified and therefore total catches cannot be calculated.

Stock development over time

The commercial landings in the last two decades have been variable. Recreational catch is unknown but may be substantial.

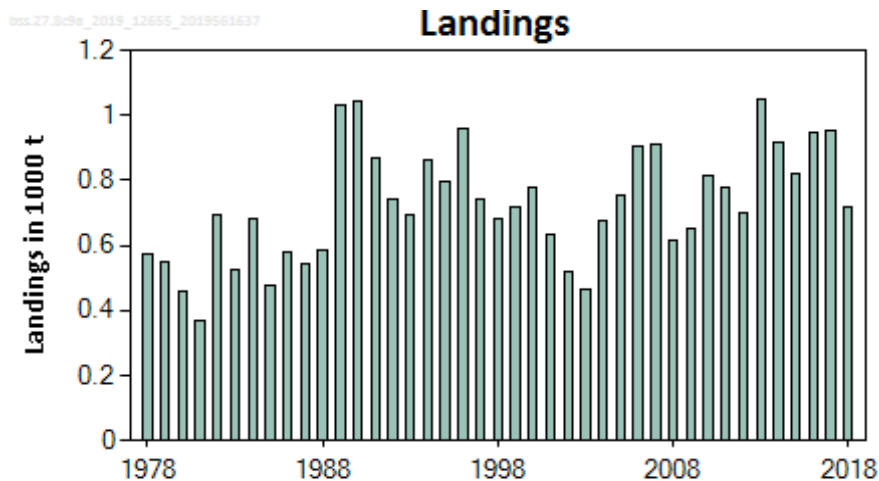


Figure 1 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. ICES estimated commercial landings (in thousand tonnes).

Stock and exploitation status

Table 1 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. State of the stock and fishery relative to reference points.

		Fishing pressure			Stock size					
		2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018			
Maximum sustainable yield	F_{MSY}	?	?	?	Unknown	$MSY B_{trigger}$?	?	?	Unknown
Precautionary approach	F_{pa}, F_{lim}	?	?	?	Unknown	B_{pa}, B_{lim}	?	?	?	Unknown
Management plan	F_{MGT}	—	—	—		B_{MGT}	—	—	—	
Qualitative evaluation	-	?	?	?	Unknown	-	?	?	?	Unknown

Catch scenarios

The ICES framework for category 5 stocks was applied (ICES, 2012a). 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. The precautionary buffer was applied in 2017 (for the 2018 advice) and has, therefore, not been applied again. Discarding is assumed to be negligible and recreational catches are unknown, therefore ICES cannot quantify the corresponding total catch.

Table 2 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. The basis for the catch scenarios.

Recent advised commercial catch (for 2018 and 2019)		478 tonnes
Discard rate		Negligible
Precautionary buffer	Not applied	-
Commercial catch advice *		478 tonnes
% advice change ^		0%

* [Advice for 2019]

^ Advice value 2020 relative to advice value 2019.

Basis of the advice

Table 3 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Precautionary approach.
Management plan	The EU multiannual plan (MAP; EU, 2019) for stocks in the Western Waters and adjacent waters applies to this stock. The MAP stipulates that when the F_{MSY} ranges are not available, fishing opportunities should be based on the best available scientific advice.

Quality of the assessment

There is anecdotal information that underreporting is occurring in small artisanal fleets.

Issues relevant for the advice

Historical sampling of the commercial catches is of variable quality, and data sampling should cover all fleets involved in this fishery.

Recreational fisheries contribute to removals from this stock and are unquantified.

Data on length frequency and life-history parameters are missing. Time-series of relative abundance indices for both the adult and the pre-recruit components of the stock are also needed to aid in the development of the assessment, and to provide robust advice.

Stock structure is poorly understood and further studies (including tagging, genetics, or other types of markers) are needed.

Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

Basis of the assessment

Table 4 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. Basis of the assessment and advice.

ICES stock data category	5 (ICES, 2018).
Assessment type	No assessment (ICES, 2019).
Input data	Commercial landings.
Discards and bycatch	Commercial discards are unknown, but considered to be negligible.
Indicators	None.
Other information	Last benchmark in 2012 (ICES, 2012b).
Working group	Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Waters Ecoregion (WGBIE)

Information from stakeholders

There is no additional available information.

History of the advice, catch, and management

Table 5 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. ICES advice and official landings. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice *	Landings corresponding to advice #	Agreed TAC	Official landings ***	ICES landings
2000	-	-	none	380	775
2001	-	-	none	277	635
2002	No increase in effort or F	-	none	172	518
2003	No increase in effort or F	-	none	161	466
2004	No increase in effort or F	-	none	362	676
2005	-	-	none	453	753
2006	-	-	none	731	905
2007	-	-	none	888	910
2008	-	-	none	655	614
2009	-	-	none	634	652
2010	-	-	none	777	814
2011	-	-	none	759	777
2012	No increase in catch	-	none	686	701
2013	20% reduction in catches (last 3-year average)	< 6000	none	1001	1046
2014	20% reduction in catches (last 3-year average)	< 598	none	1026	917
2015	Same advice as last year	< 598	none	818	821
2016	Precautionary approach	< 598	none	923	947
2017	Precautionary approach	≤ 598	none	757	952
2018	Precautionary approach	≤ 478	none	832 **	716 **
2019	Precautionary approach	≤ 478	none		
2020	Precautionary approach	≤ 478			
2021	Precautionary approach	≤ 478			

* 2014 was the first time that ICES provides specific advice for seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. Prior to the 2014 ICES advice was provided for European seabass in the Northeast Atlantic.

** Preliminary.

*** Official landings were extracted from the ICES Official Statistics webpage for BSS and divisions 8.c and 9.a. The difference between ICES statistics and the official statistics are primarily that, prior to 2006, most of the seabass catches in the Portuguese statistics were registered under the code BSE, i.e. *Dicentrarchus* spp. After the implementation of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) there was a progressive increase in the correct identification of species in the official statistics (BSS increase, BSE decrease) that consider *Dicentrarchus* spp. landings minus 2.3% of *Dicentrarchus punctatus* based on DCF market and on-board sampling between 2008 and 2012.

Advice is for commercial landings.

History of the catch and landings

Table 6 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. Catch distribution by fleet in 2018 as estimated by ICES.

Total catch (2018)	Commercial landings	Commercial discards	Recreational catch
Unknown	100% All gears	Unknown, but considered to be negligible	Known to be substantial but cannot be quantified
	716 tonnes		

Table 7 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. History of commercial catch and landings; both the official and ICES estimated values are presented by area for each country participating in the fishery. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	France official landings **	Portugal official landings **	Spain official landings **	Total official landings **	Total ICES estimates ***
1978	0	576	0	576	576
1979	0	550	0	550	550
1980	0	460	0	460	460
1981	0	370	0	370	370
1982	0	556	135	691	691
1983	0	408	114	522	522
1984	0	431	250	681	681
1985	0	311	164	475	475
1986	0	219	182	401	580
1987	0	216	194	410	542
1988	14	115	93	222	586
1989	0	105	417	522	1029
1990	1	90	541	632	1042
1991	2	77	411	490	867
1992	0	53	348	401	743
1993	0	57	351	408	694
1994	0	57	440	497	863
1995	0	42	446	488	798
1996	0	48	534	582	956
1997	0	39	474	513	742
1998	0	38	373	411	683
1999	0	37	355	392	720
2000	2	49	329	380	775
2001	0	42	235	277	635
2002	8	43	121	172	518
2003	1	47	113	161	466
2004	39	67	256	362	676
2005	57	177	219	453	753
2006	2	461	268	731	905
2007	1	545	342	888	910
2008	0	403	252	655	614
2009	8	414	212	634	652
2010	2	489	286	777	814
2011	5	441	313	759	777
2012	2	368	316	686	701
2013	4	502	495	1001	1046
2014	3	661	365	1026	917
2015	0	437	381	818	821
2016	0	546	377	923	947
2017	2	596	159	757	952
2018 *	0	500	332	832	716

* Preliminary.

** Official catch statistics for “BSS” in divisions 8.c and 9.a and Subarea 9 (Subarea 9 has been retained for Portuguese statistics because it was reported as Division 9.a prior to 2007).

*** The difference between ICES statistics and the official statistics are mainly due to the fact that prior to 2006 most of the seabass catches in the Portuguese statistics were registered under the code BSE, i.e. (*Dicentrarchus* spp.). After the DCF implementation there was a progressive increase in the correct identification of species in the official statistics (BSS increase, BSE decrease) that consider *Dicentrarchus* spp. landings minus 2.3% of *Dicentrarchus punctatus* based on DCF market and on-board sampling between 2008 and 2012.

Summary of the assessment

There is no assessment for seabass in this area.

Sources and references

EU. 2019. Regulation (EU) 2019/472 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 establishing a multiannual plan for stocks fished in the Western Waters and adjacent waters, and for fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Regulations (EU) 2016/1139 and (EU) 2018/973, and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007 and (EC) No 1300/2008. Official Journal of the European Union L 83: 1–17. <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/472/oj>

ICES. 2012a. ICES Implementation of Advice for Data-limited Stocks in 2012 in its 2012 Advice. ICES CM 2012/ACOM:68. 42 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5322>

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