

Four-spot megrim (*Lepidorhombus boscii*) in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d (West and Southwest of Ireland, Bay of Biscay)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES has not been requested to provide advice on fishing opportunities for this stock.

Management of catches of the two megrim species, *L. whiffiagonis* and *L. boscii*, under a combined species TAC, prevents effective control of the single-species exploitation rates and could lead to overexploitation of either species.

Stock development over time

Catch data for all countries is only available for the last two years.

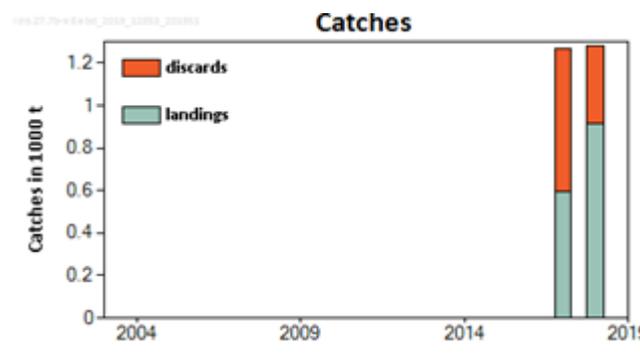


Figure 1 Four-spot megrim in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d. Catches are only available from 2017.

Stock and exploitation status

ICES cannot assess the stock and exploitation status relative to MSY and precautionary approach (PA) reference points, because the reference points are undefined.

Table 1 Four-spot megrim in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d. 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}	?	?	?	Unknown	B_{MGT}	?	?	?	Unknown
Qualitative evaluation	-	?	?	?	Unknown	-	?	?	?	Unknown

Catch scenarios

ICES has not been requested to provide advice on fishing opportunities for this stock.

Basis of the advice

ICES has not been requested to provide advice on fishing opportunities for this stock.

Table 2 Four-spot megrim in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	No advice requested.
Management plan	The EU multiannual plan (MAP; EU, 2019) for stocks in the Western Waters and adjacent waters applies to this stock.

Quality of the assessment

Only two years of catch data are available for all countries involved in the fishery. A time series is required to estimate the status of the stock using data-limited approaches.

Data-limited assessments were explored for a time series of length data from the Spanish Porcupine survey (SPPGFS-WIBTS-Q4; the only survey that catches this stock in reasonable numbers). Length-based indicators suggested that the portion of stock in this area may be exploited close to F_{MSY} . The survey only covers a small geographical area, however, and catches are not considered fully representative. ICES cannot, therefore, assess the stock status relative to reference points.

Issues relevant for the advice

The two megrim species (*L. whiffiagonis* and *L. boscii*) are not totally separated in the landings. A single TAC covers both, and species-specific landings are estimated by ICES (ICES, 2019). ICES considers that management of the catches of the two megrim species under a combined TAC prevents effective control of single-species exploitation rates, and could lead to overexploitation of either species.

Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

Basis of the assessment

Table 3 Four-spot megrim in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d. The basis of the assessment.

ICES stock data category	5 (ICES, 2018).
Assessment type	No assessment (ICES, 2019).
Input data	None.
Discards and bycatch	Estimated at 29% in 2018.
Indicators	One survey index (SPPGFS-WIBTS-Q4).
Other information	None.
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 4 Four-spot megrim in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d. ICES advice and catches. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice	Catch / landings corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC *	ICES landings ^	Discards ^	ICES catch ^
2010	No advice	-	20425	-	-	-
2011	No advice	-	20106	-	-	-
2012	No advice	-	19101	-	-	-
2013	No advice	-	19101	-	-	-
2014	No advice	-	19101	-	-	-
2015	No advice	-	19101	-	-	-
2016	No advice	-	20056	-	-	-
2017	No advice	-	15043	627	567	1194
2018	Precautionary approach: 20% reduction in catch	-	15720	913 **	364 **	1277 **
2019	No catch advice requested	-	12576	-	-	-

Year	ICES advice	Catch / landings corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC *	ICES landings ^	Discards ^	ICES catch ^
2020	No catch advice requested					

* Combined *Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis* and *L. boscii* TAC (for Subarea 7 and divisions 8.a–b,d–e).

** Preliminary.

^ No catch data available prior to 2017.

History of the catch and landings

Table 5 Four-spot megrim in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d. Catch distribution by fleet in 2018 as estimated by ICES.

Catch (2018)	Landings				Discards
1 277 tonnes	97% Demersal Otter Trawl	< 1% Nephrops Otter Trawl	2% Beam Trawl	< 1% Other gears	364 tonnes
	913 tonnes				

Summary of the assessment

There is no assessment for four-spot megrim in this area.

Table 6 Four-spot megrim in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d. The data that are presented in Figure 1 are available here. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	Landings	Discards
2017	627	567
2018*	913	364

* Preliminary.

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. 2018. Advice basis. In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2018. ICES Advice 2018, Book 1, Section 1.2. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.4503>

ICES. 2019. Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Waters Ecoregion (WGBIE). ICES Scientific Reports. 1:31. 692 pp. <http://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5299>

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