

Plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*) in Subarea 8 and Division 9.a (Bay of Biscay and Atlantic Iberian waters)

ICES stock advice

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, wanted catches in each of the years 2020 and 2021 should be no more than 155 tonnes. ICES cannot quantify the corresponding total catches.

Stock development over time

Landings have steadily decreased since 2010, with lowest values observed in 2017 and 2018. The available information is insufficient to evaluate stock trends and exploitation status.

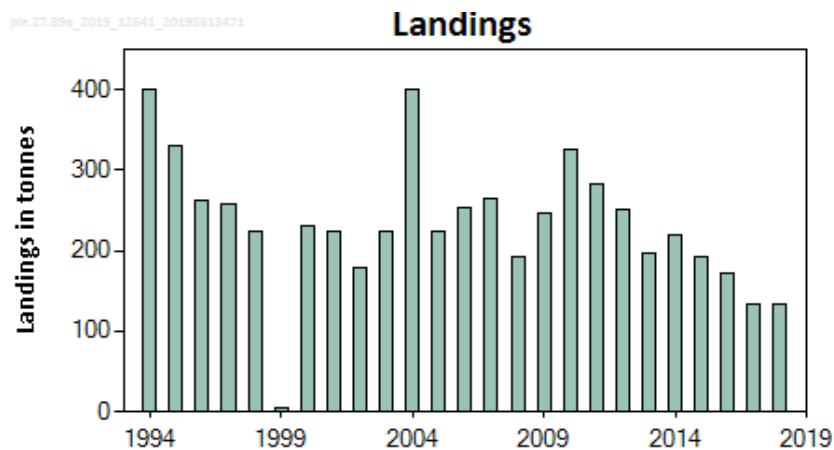


Figure 1 Plaice in Subarea 8 and Division 9.a. Official landings (in tonnes). The 2018 data are preliminary. Landings for Subarea 8 for 1999 are incomplete.

Stock and exploitation status

Table 1 Plaice in Subarea 8 and Division 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, 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. The stock status relative to reference points remains unknown. The precautionary buffer was not applied in 2017 (for the 2018 and 2019 advice) and is therefore applied this year. Discarding is likely to be greater than 5% of the catch, but the information is uncertain; therefore, no catch advice can be given.

Table 2 Plaice in Subarea 8 and Division 9.a. The basis for the catch scenarios.

| | | |
|--|---------|------------|
| Recent advised wanted catch (for 2019) | | 194 tonnes |
| Discard rate | | Unknown |
| Precautionary buffer | Applied | 0.8 |
| Wanted catch advice (for 2020 and 2021)* | | 155 tonnes |
| % advice change^ | | -20% |

*[Advice for 2019] × [precautionary buffer].

^ Advice value 2020 relative to advice value 2019.

The advice has decreased as a result of applying the precautionary buffer.

Basis of the advice

Table 3 Plaice in Subarea 8 and Division 9.a. The basis of the advice.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Advice basis | Precautionary approach. |
| Management plan | The EU Multiannual Plan for the Western Waters (MAP; EU, 2019) takes bycatch of this species into account. |

Quality of the assessment

ICES estimates of the landings are available from 2014 onwards. Only official landings are available prior to 2014.

The stock definition of plaice in this area is not clear. The bulk of the fishery takes place on the northern boundary of the stock area.

Issues relevant for the advice

Discard data are only available for the last two years for some fleets. The available discard rates are variable, but below 10%. Discarding is assumed to be greater than 5% of the catch, and owing to this uncertainty, total catch advice cannot be given.

Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

Basis of the assessment

Table 4 Plaice in Subarea 8 and Division 9.a. Basis of the assessment and advice.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ICES stock data category | 5 (ICES, 2018). |
| Assessment type | No assessment (ICES, 2019). |
| Input data | Official landings prior to 2014 and ICES estimated landings from 2014. |
| Discards and bycatch | Limited data. |
| Indicators | None. |
| 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 5 Plaice in Subarea 8 and Division 9.a. ICES advice and official landings. All weights are in tonnes.

| Year | ICES advice | Catch corresponding to advice*** | TAC* | Official landings # | ICES landings |
|------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------|---------------------|---------------|
| 2000 | | - | 700 | 230 | - |
| 2001 | | - | 560 | 223 | - |
| 2002 | | - | 560 | 179 | - |
| 2003 | | - | 448 | 223 | - |
| 2004 | | - | 448 | 399 | - |
| 2005 | | - | 448 | 224 | - |
| 2006 | | - | 448 | 256 | - |
| 2007 | | - | 448 | 263 | - |
| 2008 | | - | 448 | 193 | - |
| 2009 | | - | 448 | 244 | - |
| 2010 | | - | 403 | 325 | - |
| 2011 | | - | 395 | 283 | - |
| 2012 | No increase in catch | - | 395 | 252 | - |
| 2013 | 20% reduction in catches | - | 395 | 197 | - |
| 2014 | Same catch value advised for 2013 | - | 395 | 222 | 217 |
| 2015 | Same catch value advised for 2013 | - | 395 | 194 | 193 |
| 2016 | Precautionary approach | ≤ 194 | 395 | 175 | 174 |
| 2017 | Precautionary approach | ≤ 194 | 395 | 134 | 134 |
| 2018 | Precautionary approach | ≤ 194 | 395 | 133** | 133** |
| 2019 | Precautionary approach | ≤ 194 | 395 | | |
| 2020 | Precautionary approach | ≤ 155 | | | |
| 2021 | Precautionary approach | ≤ 155 | | | |

* For subareas 8, 9, and 10; EU waters of CECAF 34.1.1.

** Preliminary.

*** Advice is for wanted catch.

In 2019, official landings from 2006 onwards have been revised (ICES, 2019).

History of the catch and landings

Table 6 Plaice in Subarea 8 and Division 9.a. Catch distribution by fleet in 2018 as estimated by ICES.

| Catch (2018) | Landings | | | Discards |
|--------------|------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| | 34% trawl | 32% nets | 34% other | |
| Unknown | 133 tonnes | | | Unknown |

Table 7 Plaice in Subarea 8 and Division 9.a. History of official landings. All weights are in tonnes. The landings data for 1999 are incomplete.

| Year | Belgium | France | Portugal | Spain | Total |
|-------|---------|--------|----------|-------|-------|
| 1994 | | 365 | 33 | 1 | 399 |
| 1995 | | 319 | | 12 | 331 |
| 1996 | | 248 | | 14 | 262 |
| 1997 | | 255 | | 3 | 258 |
| 1998 | | 219 | | 6 | 225 |
| 1999 | 1 | | | 3 | 4 |
| 2000 | 15 | 193 | | 22 | 230 |
| 2001 | | 201 | | 22 | 223 |
| 2002 | 1 | 167 | | 11 | 179 |
| 2003 | 1 | 217 | 1 | 4 | 223 |
| 2004 | | 229 | 163 | 7 | 399 |
| 2005 | 4 | 186 | 1 | 33 | 224 |
| 2006 | 2 | 248 | 1 | 5 | 256 |
| 2007 | 5 | 214 | 41 | 4 | 263 |
| 2008 | 2 | 98 | 89 | 4 | 193 |
| 2009 | 2 | 133 | 101 | 8 | 244 |
| 2010 | 2 | 200 | 112 | 12 | 325 |
| 2011 | 2 | 208 | 65 | 9 | 283 |
| 2012 | 3 | 183 | 63 | 4 | 252 |
| 2013 | 0 | 147 | 45 | 5 | 197 |
| 2014 | 1 | 164 | 51 | 6 | 222 |
| 2015 | 2 | 142 | 45 | 5 | 194 |
| 2016 | 1 | 121 | 49 | 4 | 175 |
| 2017 | 1 | 98 | 33 | 2 | 134 |
| 2018* | 0 | 90 | 39 | 3 | 133 |

* Preliminary.

Summary of the assessment

There is no assessment for plaice 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. 2012. ICES Implementation of Advice for Data-limited Stocks in 2012 in its 2012 Advice. ICES CM 2012/ACOM:68. 42 pp.

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>.

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