

Our Ref: C.4.b/CL/jm

17 December 2024

Subject: Benchmark Workshop on the Application of Stock Synthesis (SS3) on Selected Stocks (WKBSS3 2025)

Dear Stakeholder,

On behalf of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), I am writing to invite your input to the upcoming benchmark workshop on the application of Stock Synthesis (SS3) on selected stocks (WKBSS3 2025), which will consider the assessment methodologies for black-bellied (*Lophius budegassa*) and white anglerfish (*Lophius piscatorius*) in divisions 8.c and 9.a (Cantabrian Sea, Atlantic Iberian waters), pollack (*Pollachius pollachius*) in subareas 6-7 (Celtic Seas and the English Channel), and blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*) in Subarea 9 (Atlantic Iberian waters). A data evaluation workshop will take place online and at ICES headquarters, Copenhagen during 20-24 January, and the benchmark workshop during 17-21 February.

As part of ICES' commitment to incorporating diverse sources of knowledge into our scientific processes (as outlined in our [Stakeholder Engagement Strategy](#)), in addition to your participation, we are seeking contributions from stakeholders like yourself who have valuable insights and information about this stock and fishery. Your input could help improve the quality and robustness of the stock assessment and resulting advice ([ICES, 2023](#)).

In addition to your participation, we invite you to submit working papers related to these four stocks and the fisheries which target them. For example, information on the following topics could be particularly relevant:

- Observations on stock abundance and distribution trends
- Environmental or ecological factors that may be influencing the stock
- Information on stock structure, fish size/age composition, or condition
- Indicators of recruitment strength
- Catch rate (CPUE) data for target and non-target species
- Factors affecting interpretation of catch rates (e.g. changes in fishing practices)
- Data on catches and discards

Working papers should be submitted by 10 January for consideration at our data collation workshop. Papers should be well-organized, include verifiable information, and be applicable at the scale of the overall stock/fishery rather than just individual experiences. We recognise that the timeline is very short. We will ensure that more time will be given in future benchmarks.



ICES
CIEM

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To assist in preparing your input, we have attached guidelines on the format and quality criteria for working papers. Our team is also available to provide guidance on data preparation if needed.

We greatly appreciate your willingness to contribute your knowledge and observations to this important process and thank you for your engagement in improving ICES scientific advice. We look forward to your contributions, and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colm Lordan'.

Dr Colm Lordan

Advisory Committee (ACOM) Chair

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Guidelines for Stakeholder Working Papers

These guidelines aim to ensure that stakeholder contributions are presented in a format that is easily usable by ICES working groups, while meeting the quality standards necessary for inclusion in the scientific process. Remember, the goal is to provide the best available information to support sound fisheries management decisions.

Format:

1. Title: Clearly state the topic and stock/fishery
2. Author(s): Include names, affiliations, and contact information
3. Summary: Provide a brief overview (250 words max)
4. Introduction: State the purpose and context of the paper
5. Methods: Describe how information was collected or derived
6. Results/Observations: Present your findings or observations
7. Discussion: Interpret the results and their implications
8. Conclusion: Summarize key points and any recommendations
9. References: List any cited sources
10. Appendices: Include any supporting data or additional information

Quality Criteria:

1. Relevance: Information should be directly applicable to the stock assessment or advisory process for the specified stock/fishery.
2. Representativeness: Data or observations should represent broader patterns or trends, not just individual experiences or local scale. Aim for information that is representative of the fishery or stock at an appropriate scale.
3. Verifiability: Include clear explanations of how information was obtained. For quantitative data, provide details on sampling methods, sample sizes, and any quality control procedures.
4. Objectivity: Present information in an unbiased manner. If presenting an interpretation, clearly distinguish between observed facts and inferred conclusions.
5. Timeliness: Information should be recent enough to be relevant to the current assessment. Clearly state the period covered by your observations or data.
6. Consistency: If providing time series data, use consistent methods over time. Explain any changes in data collection or analysis methods.
7. Completeness: Provide all relevant details. Do not omit important information, even if it seems to contradict your main points.
8. Transparency: Clearly state any assumptions made in your analysis or interpretation. Acknowledge any limitations or potential biases in your data or methods.

9. Ethics: If relevant, confirm that any data or information provided has been ethically obtained and does not violate any confidentiality agreements.
10. Conflict of Interest: Include a statement declaring any potential conflicts of interest.