

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 advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, catches should be no more than 867 tonnes in 2022.

Management of four-spot megrim and megrim under a combined species TAC prevents effective control of the single-species exploitation rates and could lead to the overexploitation of either species.

Stock development over time

ICES cannot assess the stock and exploitation status relative to MSY and precautionary approach (PA) reference points because the information needed to define reference points is not available.

Catches

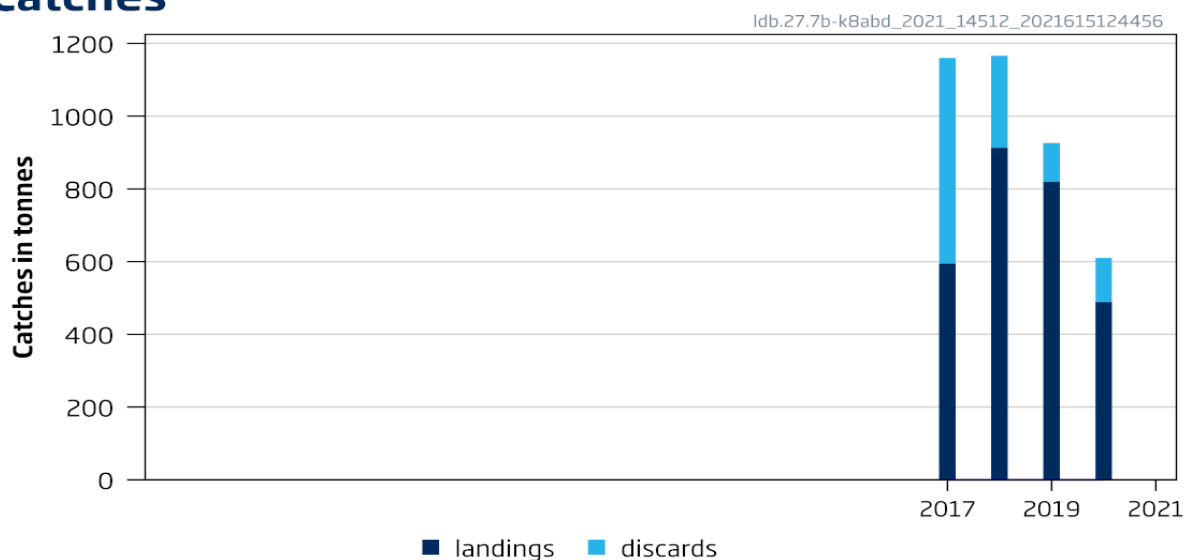


Figure 1 Four-spot megrim in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d. ICES estimated catches.

Catch scenarios

The ICES framework for category 5 stocks (ICES, 2012) was applied. For stocks without information on abundance or exploitation, ICES considers that a precautionary reduction of catches should be implemented where there is no ancillary information clearly indicating that the current level of exploitation is appropriate for the stock. The precautionary buffer was applied in 2017 and its application has, therefore, been considered again this year. The stock status relative to candidate reference points is unknown, so the precautionary buffer was applied in the advice.

The average discarding rate (2017–2019) is 27% of the total catch.

Table 1 Four-spot megrim (*Lepidorhombus boscii*) in divisions 7.b-k, 8.a-b, and 8.d. The basis for the catch scenarios*.

Average catch (2017–2019)		1084 tonnes
Discard rate (2017–2019)		27%
Precautionary buffer	Applied	0.8
Catch advice**		867 tonnes

* The figures in the table are rounded. Calculations were done with unrounded inputs and computed values may not match exactly when calculated using the rounded figures in the table.

** [average catch × precautionary buffer].

Basis of the advice

Table 2 Four-spot megrim (*Lepidorhombus boscii*) in divisions 7.b-k, 8.a-b, and 8.d. 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 FMSY ranges are not available, fishing opportunities should be based on the best available scientific advice.

Quality of the assessment

Prior to 2017, four-spot megrim in this area was not assessed. This stock was included in the ICES data call for the first time in 2018 and historical catch data were also requested.

Sampling in 2020 was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and France could not estimate four-spot megrim catches for this year. Length frequency distributions for landings and discards were also not available from all countries due to difficulty accessing samples in 2020. For this reason, the catch data from 2017 to 2019 are deemed to be the most reliable in the time series and are used to determine recent average catches.

Issues relevant for the advice

There is no information to present for this stock.

Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

Basis of the assessment

Table 3 Four-spot megrim (*Lepidorhombus boscii*) in divisions 7.b-k, 8.a-b, and 8.d. The basis of the assessment.

ICES stock data category	5 (ICES, 2021a).
Assessment type	No assessment (ICES, 2021b).
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).

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	594	566	1160
2018	Precautionary approach: 20% reduction in catch	-	15720	913	253	1166
2019	No catch advice requested	-	12576	820	106	926
2020	No catch advice requested	-	20526	488 **	122 **	611 **
2021	No catch advice requested	-	18365 ***			
2022	Precautionary approach: 20% reduction in catch	867				

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

** Preliminary.

*** DEFRA (2021).

^ No catch data are available prior to 2017.

History of catch and landings

Table 5 Four-spot megrim in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d. Catch distribution by fleet in 2020 as estimated by ICES.

Catch (2020)	Landings			Discards
	Demersal otter trawl (96%)	Beam trawl (3%)	Other gears (1%)	
611 tonnes	488 tonnes			122 tonnes

Summary of the assessment

There is no assessment for four-spot megrim (*Lepidorhombus boscii*) in this area.

Sources and references

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA). 2021. Written record of fisheries consultations between the United Kingdom and the European Union for 2021. Policy paper, International Fisheries Management collection. London, UK. 44 pp. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fisheries-consultations-between-the-uk-and-the-eu-in-2021>. Last accessed 24 June 2021.

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.). <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5322>

ICES. 2021a. Advice on fishing opportunities. In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2021. ICES Advice 2021, Section 1.1.1. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.7720>.

ICES. 2021b. Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Waters Ecoregion (WGBIE). ICES Scientific Reports. 3:48. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.8212>.

[Download the stock assessment data and figures.](#)

Recommended citation: ICES. 2021. Four-spot megrim (*Lepidorhombus boscii*) in divisions 7.b–k, 8.a–b, and 8.d (west and southwest of Ireland, Bay of Biscay). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2021. ICES Advice 2021, Idb.27.7b–k8abd, <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.7780>.