

3 Northeast Atlantic boarfish (*Capros aper*)

The boarfish (*Capros aper*, Linnaeus) is a deep bodied, laterally compressed, pelagic shoaling species distributed from Norway to Senegal, including the Mediterranean, Azores, Canaries, Madeira and Great Meteor Seamount (Blanchard & Vandermeirsch 2005).

Boarfish is targeted in a pelagic trawl fishery for fish meal, to the southwest of Ireland. The boarfish fishery is conducted primarily in shelf waters and the first landings were reported in 2001. Landings were at very low levels from 2001-2005. The main expansion period of the fishery was 2006-2010 when unrestricted landings increased from 2 772 t to 137 503 t. A restrictive TAC of 33 000 t was implemented in 2011. In 2011, ICES was asked by the European Commission to provide advice for 2012.

An analysis of bottom trawl survey data suggests a continuity of distribution spanning ICES Subareas 27.4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 (Figure 3.1). Isolated occurrences appear in the North Sea (ICES Subarea 27.4) in some years indicating spill-over into this region. A hiatus in distribution was suggested between ICES Divisions 27.8.c and 9.a as boarfish were considered very rare in northern Portuguese waters but abundant further south (Cardador & Chaves 2010). Results from a dedicated genetic study on the stock structure of boarfish within the Northeast Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea suggests that this hiatus represents a true stock separation (Farrell *et al.* (2016); see section 3.12). Based on these data, a single stock is considered to exist in ICES Subareas 27.4, 6, 7, 8 and the northern part of 9.a. This distribution is slightly broader than the current EC TAC area (27.6, 7 and 8) and for the purposes of assessment in 2020 only data from these areas were utilized.

3.1 The fishery

3.1.1 Advice and management applicable from 2011 to 2019

In 2011 a TAC was set for this species for the first time, covering ICES Subareas 6, 7 and 8. This TAC was set at 33 000 t. Before 2010, the fishery was unregulated. In October 2010, the European Commission notified national authorities that under the terms of Annex 1 of Regulation 850/1998, industrial fisheries for this species should not proceed with mesh sizes of less than 100 mm. In 2011, the European Parliament voted to change Regulation 850/1998 to allow fishing using mesh sizes ranging from 32 to 54 mm.

For 2012, ICES advised that catches of boarfish should not increase, based on precautionary considerations. As supporting information, ICES noted that it would be cautious that landings did not increase above 82 000 t, the average over the period 2008-2010, during which the stock did not appear to be overexploited. In 2012 the TAC was set at 82 000 t by the Council of the European Union.

For 2013, ICES advised that catches of boarfish should not be more than 82 000 t. This was based on applying a harvest ratio of 12.2% ($F_{0.1}$, as an F_{MSY} proxy). For 2013, the TAC was set at 82 000 t by the Council of the European Union.

For 2014, ICES advised that, based on F_{MSY} (0.23), catches of boarfish should not be more than 133 957 t, or 127 509 t when the average discard rate of the previous ten years (6 448 t) is taken into account. For 2014 the TAC was set at 133 957 t by the Council of the European Union. This advice was based on a Schaefer state space surplus production model (see section 3.6.3 for further details).

In 2014 there was concern about the use of the production model (see stock annex). ICES considered that the model was no longer suitable for providing category 1 advice and further model development was required. The model is still considered suitable for category 3 advice. The advised catch for 2015 of 53 296 t was based on the data limited stock HCR and an index calculated (method 3.1; ICES, 2012) using the total stock biomass trends from the model. Further work has been undertaken in 2015 to address the issues with the surplus production model and this work has been continued since.

For 2016, ICES advised based on the precautionary approach that catches should be no more than 42 637 t.

For 2017, ICES advised based on the precautionary approach that catches should be no more than 27 288 t. For the first time, the precautionary buffer has been applied resulting in a 36% reduction compared to the year before. The acoustic survey suggested that the stock abundance was at an historic low.

In 2017, the Advice Drafting Group decided the advice of 21 830 proposed (20% reduction) would stand for 2 years. The update assessments in 2018 and 2019 confirms that the biomass is rather stable and at a low level.

In 2019, advice of 19 152 t was issued for each of 2020 and 2021 on the basis of the precautionary approach.

Since 2011, there has been a provision for bycatch of boarfish (also whiting, haddock and mackerel) to be taken from the Western and North Sea horse mackerel EC quotas. These provisions are shown in the text table below. The effect of this is that a quantity not exceeding the value indicated of these 4 species combined may be landed legally and subtracted from quotas for horse mackerel.

Year	North Sea (t)	Western (t)
2011	2 031	7 779
2012	2 148	7 829
2013	1 702	7 799
2014	1 392	5 736
2015	583	4 202
2016	760	5 443
2017	912	4191
2018	759	5053
2019	912	4191

In 2010, an interim management plan was proposed by Ireland, which included a number of measures to mitigate potential bycatch of other TAC species in the boarfish fishery. A closed season from the 15th March to 31st August was proposed, as anecdotal evidence suggests that mackerel and boarfish are caught in mixed aggregations during this period. A closed season was proposed in ICES Division 7.g from 1st September to 31st October, in order to prevent catches of Celtic Sea herring, which is known to form feeding aggregations in this region at these times. Finally, if catches of a species covered by a TAC, other than boarfish, amount to more than 5%

of the total catch by day by ICES statistical rectangle, then fishing must cease in that rectangle for 5 days.

In August 2012 the Pelagic RAC proposed a long term management plan for boarfish (see section 3.15). The management plan was not fully evaluated by ICES. However, in 2013, ICES advised that Tier 1 of the plan can be considered precautionary if a Category 1 assessment is available.

A revised draft management strategy was proposed by the Pelagic AC in July 2015. This management strategy aims to achieve exploitation of boarfish in line with the precautionary approach to fisheries management, FAO guidelines for new and developing fisheries, and the ICES form of advice. ICES evaluated the plan and considered it to be precautionary, in that that it follows the rationale for TAC setting enshrined in the ICES advice, but with additional caution.

The closed season, in the interim and revised management plans, has been enacted in legislation in Ireland, but not in other countries.

3.1.2 The fishery in recent years

The first landings of boarfish were reported in 2001. Landings fluctuated between 100 and 700 t per year up to 2005 (Tables 3.1.2.1 & 3.1.2.2). In 2006 the landings began to increase considerably as a target fishery developed. Cumulative landings since 2001 exceed 500 000 t. The fishery targets dense shoals of boarfish from September to March. Catches are generally free from bycatch from September to February. From March onward a bycatch of mackerel can be found in the catches and the fishery generally ceases at this time. Information on the bycatch of other species in the boarfish fishery is sparse, though thought to be minimal. The fishery uses pelagic pair trawl nets with mesh sizes ranging from 32 to 54 mm. Preliminary information suggests that only the smallest boarfish escape this gear.

From 2001 to 2006 only Ireland reported landings of boarfish. In 2007 UK (Scotland) reported landings of 772 t. Scottish landings peaked at 9 241 t in 2010 and have declined since with no fishery since 2015. Denmark joined the fishery in 2008 and landed 3 098 t. Danish landings increased to 39 805 t in 2010 but have declined considerably to only 29 t in 2015. The fishery has been slowly increasing in recent years with 757 t landed in 2019. The vast majority of catches have come from ICES Division 27.7.j and 27.7.h (Figure 3.1.2.1 and Table 3.1.2.1). Since 2011 landings have been regulated by a TAC.

In 2014 and subsequent years, the full TAC has not been caught. This is thought to be partly due to lesser availability of fishable aggregations, and partly due to economic and administrative reasons. According to the industry, fishable aggregations were not always available during the fishery season which coincides with the mackerel and horse mackerel fisheries. Also, the Irish quota was allocated to individual boats, with non-specialist vessels receiving allocations that were not used. In 2015, Q3 and Q4 individual boat quotas were removed in Ireland, in an attempt to allow the specialist 6-7 vessels target the stock without (what the industry considers to be unnecessary) constraints. The same year, the Netherlands (375 t), UK England (104 t) and Germany (4 t) reported boarfish landings for the first time. These landings were mainly bycatch from freezer trawlers.

In 2016 a total of 19 315 t of boarfish were caught (Table 3.1.2.1). Ireland continued to be the main participant taking 17 496 t but is below its 29 464 t quota. Denmark took only 337 t, significantly under its national quota of 10 463 t. Scotland reported no boarfish landings. Table 3.1.2.2 shows that two thirds of the Irish landings were taken in ICES divisions 7.h and 8.a. Thirty-two Irish registered fishing vessels reported catches with the majority made in Q1 (7 143 t) and Q4 (8 711 t).

Previous to the development of the target fishery, boarfish was a discarded bycatch in pelagic fisheries for mackerel in ICES Subareas 7 and 8. A study by Borges *et al.* (2008) found that boarfish may have accounted for as much as 5% of the total catch of Dutch pelagic freezer trawlers. Boarfish are also discarded in whitefish fisheries, particularly by Spanish demersal trawlers (Table 3.1.2.3).

In 2017 a total of 17 388 t of boarfish were caught (Table 3.1.2.1). Ireland continued to be the main participant landing 15 484 t but is almost 20% below its 18 858 quota. Denmark landed only 548 t, not even 10% of its national quota of 6 696 t. UK reported almost null boarfish landings. Discards accounted for 1 173 tonnes overall. About 90% of the Irish landings were taken in ICES divisions 7.h and 8.a. Thirty-five Irish registered fishing vessels reported catches with almost the entirety made in Q1 (8 570 t) and Q4 (6 270 t).

In 2018 a total of 11 286 t of boarfish were caught (Table 3.1.2.1). This represents 55% of the 2018 quota of 20 380 t. Ireland continued to be the main participant landing 9 513 t (68% of its national quota). The Irish catch represents 85% of the total boarfish catch in 2018. Other countries reporting boarfish in 2018 were Denmark (94 t), The Netherlands (172 t), Spain (148 t), UK England (0.085 t) and UK Scotland (0.229 t). Discards accounted for 1 359 t overall. Table 3.1.2.2 shows that about 82% of the Irish landings were taken in ICES divisions 7.h and 8.a.

3.1.3 The fishery in 2019

A total of 11 312 t of boarfish was caught in 2019 (Table 3.1.2.1). This represents 52% of the 2019 quota of 21 830 t. The main participant in the fishery, Ireland, landed 9 910 t (75% of its national quota). The Irish catch represents 88% of the total boarfish catch in 2019. Other countries reporting boarfish catches in 2019 were Denmark (757 t), the Netherlands (317 t), England (19 t) and Spain (2.5 t). Discards accounted for 306 t overall. Table 3.1.2.2 shows that about 87% of Irish landings were taken in ICES divisions 7.h and 8.a.

3.1.4 Regulations and their effects

In 2010, the fishery finished early when the European Commission notified member states that mesh sizes of less than 100 mm were illegal. However, in 2011, the European Parliament voted to change Regulation 850/1998 to allow fishing for boarfish using mesh sizes ranging from 32 to 54 mm. The TAC (33 000 t) that was introduced in 2011 significantly reduced landings.

3.1.5 Changes in fishing technology and fishing patterns

The expansion of the fishery in the mid-2000s was associated with developments in the pumping and processing technology for boarfish catches. These changes made it easier to pump boarfish ashore. Efforts are underway to develop a human consumption market and fishery for boarfish. To date the majority of boarfish landings by Danish, Irish and Scottish vessels have been made into Skagen, Denmark and Fuglafjørður, Faroe Islands to be processed into fishmeal. A small number of Irish vessels have landed into Killybegs and Castletownbere, Ireland. These landings into Irish ports were expected to increase in the future with the development of a human consumption fishery but this development now seems unlikely. This is due to the species' small size and difficulty being processed on conventional equipment.

3.1.6 Discards

Since 2003, the major sources of discard estimates are the Dutch pelagic freezer trawlers and both the Irish and Spanish demersal fleets. More sporadic discards are observed in German pelagic

freezer trawlers and the UK demersal fleet. In 2016, Lithuania declared discards for the first time. Discard estimates are not obtained from French freezer trawlers, though discard patterns in these fleets are likely to be similar to the Dutch fleet. Discard data from the Portuguese bottom otter trawl fleet in ICES Division 9.a are also available but are not included in the assessment as they are outside the TAC area. Table 3.1.2.3 shows available discard estimates.

It is to be expected that discarding occurred before 2003, particularly in demersal fisheries, however it is difficult to predict what the levels may have been.

Discard data were included in the calculation of catch numbers at age. All discards were raised as a single métier using the same age length keys and sampling information as for the landed catches. In the absence of better sampling information on discards, this was considered the best approach. This placed the stock in Category A2 for the ICES Advice in October 2013: Discards 'topped up' onto landings calculations. With the introduction of the discard ban in 2015 this stock was placed in A4: Discards known, with discard ban in place in year +1. As such the advice will be given for catch in ICES Advice October 2014 and onwards.

3.2 Biological composition of the catch

3.2.1 Catches in numbers-at-age

Catch number-at-age were prepared for Irish, Danish, Dutch, German and English landings using the ALK in Table 3.2.1.1 together with available samples from the fishery (Table 3.2.1.2). This general ALK was constructed based on 814 aged fish from Irish, Danish and Scottish caught samples from 2012 (see the stock annex for a description of ALKs prior to 2012). In 2019, allocations to unsampled métiers were made according to Table 3.2.1.3. In total, 18 samples with the appropriate 0.5 cm length bin measurements were collected in 2019 (Table 3.2.1.4). These samples covered the most heavily fished areas (Table 3.2.1.5) and equated to one sample per 629 t landed. The samples comprised 371 fish measured for length frequency.

The results of the application of the ALK to commercial length-frequency data available for the years 2007-2019 to produce a proxy catch numbers-at-age are available in Table 3.2.1.6. There have been no strong year classes with poor cohort tracking in the catch numbers. A high number of 2 year olds are present in the 2015 data but this does not echo in the number of 3-year-old fish in 2016. The modal age from 2007-2011 was 6 and in 2012-2018 it was 7. It should be noted that in WGWIDE 2011 and 2012 the plus group for boarfish was 20+. This was reduced to 15+ in WGWIDE 2013 due to potential inaccuracy of the age readings of older fish. Ageing was based on the method that has been validated for ages 0-7 by Hüsey *et al.* (2012a; b). The age range is similar to the published growth information presented by White *et al.* (2011).

3.2.2 Quality of catch and biological data

Table 3.2.1.3 shows allocations that were made to unsampled métiers in 2018. Length-frequencies of the international commercial landings by year are presented in Table 3.2.2.1.

Sampling in the early years of the fishery (2006-2009) was sparse as there was no dedicated sampling programme in place. The sampling programme was initiated in 2010 and good coverage of the landings has been achieved since then. Full details of the sampling programme in the earlier years are presented in the stock annex. Until 2017, boarfish was not included on the DCF list of species for sampling. Irish sampling comprises only samples from Irish registered vessels. Samples are collected on-board directly from the fish pump during fishing operations and are frozen until the vessel returns to port, which ensures high quality samples. Each sample consists

of approximately 6 kg of boarfish. This equates to approximately 150 fish which, given the limited size range of boarfish, is sufficient for determining a representative length frequency. The established sampling target is one sample per 1 000 t of landings per ICES Division, which is also standard in other pelagic fisheries such as mackerel. Since 2017, all fish in each sample should be measured to the 0.5 cm below for length frequency. Following standard protocols 5 fish per 0.5 cm length class should be randomly selected from each sample for biological data collection *i.e.* otolith extraction, measurement to the 1mm below and sex and maturity determination.

There is no sampling programme in place for Scottish catches.

The current surplus production model used to assess boarfish is considered an interim measure prior to the development of an age-based assessment. In 2017, boarfish was included in the list of species to be sampled by the Data Collection Multi Annual Programme (DCMAP) which should provide estimates of catch at age and facilitate the future development of an age-based stock assessment method.

3.3 Fishery Independent Information

3.3.1 Acoustic Surveys

The Boarfish Acoustic Survey (BFAS) was first conducted in July 2011 and is now in its tenth year. The 2020 survey was carried out on-board the RV *Celtic Explorer* and run in conjunction the Malin Shelf herring survey as the WESPAS survey (Western European Shelf Pelagic Acoustic Survey). The survey was carried out over a 42-day period beginning on the 3 June in the south (47°30N) and working northwards to 59°30N ending on 10 July.

Change in abundance calculation method

The StoX software package and ICES acoustic database have been fully adopted as the processing and repository for acoustic survey data (Johnsen *et al.*, 2019). Survey design and execution of the WESPAS survey adhere to guidelines laid out in the Manual for International Pelagic Surveys (IPS) (ICES, 2015).

Survey results 2020

The estimate of boarfish biomass is presented in Table 3.3.1.1 and the spatial distribution of the echotraces attributed to boarfish in 2020 are presented in Figure 3.3.1.1. Overall, the WESPAS survey provided continuous synoptic coverage from south to north over 42 days covering relating to an area coverage of almost 56,686 nmi² (boarfish strata) and transect mileage of over 5,531 nmi. In total, 35 trawl stations were undertaken with 15 hauls containing boarfish providing 3,091 individual lengths, 1,204 length and weight measurements and 651 otoliths for use during the analysis.

The 2020 estimate of total stock biomass was over double that observed in 2019 (179,000 t in 2019, and 399,000 t in 2020). Over 65.6% of the biomass was observed in the Celtic Sea followed by 22% along the Irish west coast. The southern Celtic Sea/Northern Biscay area was found to contain a high abundance of immature boarfish as observed to a lesser extent in 2019. Immature boarfish represented 41.4% of the total abundance observed across the combined survey area.

The age composition of in 2020 was dominated by oldest age classes (15+), in terms of biomass, followed by the 8 and 9-year-old fish occurring as a second obvious cohort grouping. In terms of abundance, the older fish (15+) dominated (17%) followed by the influence pre-recruit immature fish (0-3-year-old fish), which combined contribute over 41% of the total abundance. The last two years of the survey have observed higher than average numbers of immature fish some

of which will recruit to the spawning stock in the next 1 to 3 years. This pulse of recruitment is similar to that observed in the now 7-9-year-old fish (2011-2013 year classes).

During the 2020 survey access to French waters (southernmost transects) was hampered by naval operations which prevented trawling. This was problematic given this area contains variable proportions of immature and mature fish. Trawl samples from further north were applied during the analysis. The use of a static age-length-key to estimate the age composition remains an issue for this survey. Aging of survey derived samples would likely improve the ability to track cohorts more effectively within the survey index and reduce this potential source of error.

3.3.2 International bottom trawl survey (IBTS) Indices Investigation

The western IBTS data and CEFAS English Celtic Sea Groundfish Survey were investigated for their use as abundance indices for boarfish for the first time in 2012. An index of abundance was constructed from the following surveys:

- EVHOE, French Celtic Sea and Biscay Survey, (Q4) 1997 to 2011
- IGFS, Irish Groundfish Survey, (Q4) 2003 to 2011
- WCSGFS, West of Scotland, (Q1 and Q4) 1986 to 2009 (survey design changed in 2010)
- SPPGFS, Spanish Porcupine Bank Survey, (Q3) 2001 to 2011
- SPNGFS, Spanish North Coast Survey, (Q3/Q4) 1991 to 2011
- ECSGFS, CEFAS English Celtic Sea Groundfish Survey, (Q4) 1982 to 2003

From the IBTS data, CPUE was computed as the number of boarfish per 30 min haul. The abundance of boarfish per year per ICES statistical rectangle (used for visualisation only) was then calculated by summing the boarfish in a given rectangle and dividing by the total number of hauls in that rectangle. Length frequencies are presented in Table 3.3.2.1 for each survey. These surveys cover the majority of the observed range of boarfish in the ICES Area (Figure 3.1). Figure 3.3.2.1 also includes the spatial range of the Portuguese Groundfish Survey (1990-2011), however this survey is outside the current EC TAC area and has never been used in the assessment.

A detailed analysis of the IBTS data was carried out in 2012 to investigate the main areas of abundance of boarfish in these surveys. This analysis included GAM modelling based on the probability of occurrence of boarfish. The full details of this work are presented in the stock annex. The IBTS appears to give a relative index of abundance, with good resolution between periods of high and low abundance. The main centres of abundance in the survey Figure 3.3.2.2 correspond to the main fishing grounds (Figure 3.1.2.1). Figure 3.3.2.3 shows the signal in abundance, increasing in the 1990s, declining again in the early 2000s, before increasing again.

For subsequent surplus production modelling (see Section 3.6.3), biomass indices were extracted from each of the IBTS surveys using a delta-lognormal model (Stefánsson 1996). Many of the surveys exhibited a large proportion of zero tows with occasionally very large tows, hence the decision to explicitly model the probability of a non-zero tow and the mean of the positive tows. A delta-lognormal fit comprises fitting two generalized linear models (GLMs). The first model (binomial GLM) is used to obtain the proportion of non-zero tows and is fit to the data coded as 1 or 0 if the tow contained a positive or zero CPUE, respectively. The second model is fit to the positive only CPUE data using a lognormal GLM. Both GLMs were fit using ICES statistical rectangle and year as explanatory factor variables. Where the number of tows per rectangle was less than 5 over the entire series, they are grouped into an “others” rectangle. An index per rectangle and year is constructed, according to Stefánsson (1996), by the product of the estimated probability of a positive tow times the mean of the positive tows. The station indices are aggregated by taking estimated average across all rectangles within a year. To propagate the uncertainty, all survey index analyses were conducted in a Bayesian framework using Markov chain Monte

Carlo (MCMC) sampling (Kery 2010). As WinBUGS is no longer updated, the analyses were migrated from WinBUGS to JAGS in 2017. Indeed, JAGS has an almost identical language to WinBUGS and its outputs have been proven equivalent to the previous software (Plummer 2003; Spiegelhalter *et al.* 2003). In 2018, the assessment was reverted back to WinBUGS as its MCMC sampler appeared more efficient than that of JAGS. The outputs derived from both software implementations are similar.

3.4 Mean weights- at-age, maturity-at-age and natural mortality

Mean weight-at-age was obtained from the ageing studies of Hüsey *et al.* (2012b). These mean weights are presented in the text table below. The variation in weight-at-age is due to small sample size and seasonal variation in weight and maturity stage.

Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Mean Weight (g)	0.84	6.65	14.6	19.5	23.7	26.8	33.3	37.7	40	47.1

Age	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Mean Weight (g)	50.2	51.2	62.8	56.4	62.2	68.9	50.5	86.7	77.9	64.6

Age	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Mean Weight (g)	63.5	75	86	71	77	84.4	79.4	-	67.6	52.8

Maturity-at-age was obtained from the ageing studies of Hüsey *et al.* (2012a; b) and the reproductive study by Farrell *et al.* (2012).

Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6+
Prop mature	0	0	0.07	0.25	0.81	0.97	1

Natural mortality (M) was estimated over the life span of the stock using the method described by King (1995). This method assumes that M is the mortality that will reduce a population to 1% of its initial size over the lifespan of the stock. Based on a maximum age of 31, M is calculated as follows

$$M = -\ln(0.01)/31$$

Following this procedure, $M = 0.16 \text{ year}^{-1}$. $M = 0.16$ is considered a good estimate of natural mortality over the life span of this boarfish stock, as it is similar to the total mortality estimate from 2007, ($Z = 0.18$, see Section 3.6.5). Given that catches in 2007 were relatively low, this estimate of total mortality is considered a good estimate of natural mortality, assuming negligible fishing mortality in previous years.

Similarly, total mortality was estimated from age-structured IBTS data from 2003 to 2006 (years from which data was available for all areas). The total mortality is considered a good estimate of

natural mortality as fishing mortality was assumed to be negligible during this period. Total mortality ranged from 0.09–0.2 with a mean of 0.16.

The special review in 2012, questioned the validity of a single estimate of M across the entire age range. If an age based assessment is possible in the future, age specific estimates of natural mortality are required. However, the current estimate of M , which covers the whole age range, is considered appropriate in the context of the current situation where age data are used as an indicator approach, rather than as a full assessment method. Given that Z and F are also calculated over the entire (fully selected) range (Section 3.6.5) a single value of M is considered appropriate.

3.5 Recruitment

The IBTS data were explored as indices of abundance of 1-year-old, and 1-5 years old as a composite recruitment index (Figures 3.5.1 & 3.5.2). The EVHOE and SPNGFS surveys provide the best indices of recruitment as this is where the juveniles appear to be most abundant (Table 3.3.2.1). It appears that recruitment was high in the late 1990s but declined to a low in 2003. However, this apparent dip in recruitment was not observed in the commercial catch-at-age data. The recruitment signal for ages 1-5 combined has been stable since 2004 with a small increase evident in 2015. The recruitment signal for 1-year-old shows a more variable pattern with an increase in 2015 also evident (Figure 3.2.1.1). In 2016, almost all values for age 1 and combined ages 1-5 decreased compared to 2015. The decreases were rather important in the SPNGFS survey and led to historical lows for this survey.

3.6 Exploratory assessment

In 2012, a new stock assessment method for Boarfish was tested. In 2013 this Bayesian state space surplus production model (BSP; Meyer & Millar (1999)) was further developed following reviewers' recommendations in 2012. Different applications of a Bayesian biomass dynamic model were run in 2013 incorporating combinations of catch data, abundance data from the groundfish surveys, and estimates of biomass (and associated uncertainty) from the acoustic surveys (see stock annex for more details of the sensitivity runs). The model and settings from the final accepted run in 2013 were used as the basis of ICES category 1 advice for catch in 2014. However, in 2014 there was concern about the use of the production model for a number of reasons and ICES considered this model as no longer suitable for providing category 1 advice. Since 2014, the assessment model has been used as a basis for trends for providing DLS advice (ICES category 3). ICES considers the current basis for the advice on this stock to be an interim measure prior to development of an age-based assessment.

3.6.1 IBTS data

The common ALK (Table 3.2.1.1) was applied to the IBTS number-at-length data. The length-frequency is presented in Table 3.3.2.1 and the age-structured index in Table 3.6.1.1 and Figure 3.6.1.1. A cohort effect can be seen with those cohorts from the early 2000s appearing weak. This coincides with a decline in overall abundance in the early 2000s. From the mid-2000s onwards recruitment improved as observed in the abundance of 1-5 year olds in the EVHOE and Spanish northern shelf surveys (Figures 3.5.1 & 3.5.2). It should be noted however that the IBTS data is measured to the 1.0cm not the 0.5cm until 2015. Therefore, application of the common ALK to this data must be viewed with caution.

Some of the IBTS CPUE indices displayed marked variability with a large proportion of zero tows and occasionally very large tows (*e.g.* West of Scotland survey, Figure B.4.7 stock annex).

More southern surveys displayed a consistently higher proportion of positive tows. The variability of the data is reflected in the estimated mean CPUE indices (Figure 3.6.1.2). The West of Scotland survey index had been increasing between 2000 and 2009 but is uncertain, whereas the estimated indices from the other series are typically less variable (Figure 3.6.1.2). In 2014 four of the five current bottom trawl surveys experienced a sharp decline in CPUE, particularly the West of Scotland, the Spanish North Coast, the Spanish Porcupine and Irish Groundfish surveys. Both Spanish surveys remained low in 2015 whereas the latest IGFS and EVHOE surveys indicate an increase. In 2016, values were similar to those of the previous year for all surveys. In 2017, surveys suggest that the stock abundance increased compared to the year before. The only exception is the EVHOE survey but its coverage was only partial year due its research vessel breakdown. The CEFAS English Celtic Sea Groundfish Survey displays a steady increase from the mid-1980s to 2002 with a large but somewhat uncertain estimate in 2003 (Figures 3.6.1.2 & 3.6.1.3). The spatial extent of each survey is shown in Figure 3.3.2.1.

Diagnostics from the positive component of the delta-lognormal fits indicate relatively good agreement with a normal distribution on the natural logarithmic scale (Figure 3.6.1.4). There is an indication of longer tails in some of the surveys (*e.g.* WCSGFS, SPPGFS).

Pair-wise correlation between the annual mean survey indices varied. The IGFS, EVHOE and SPNGFS displayed positive correlation (Figure 3.6.1.5). The WCSGFS also displayed a negative correlation with the 2 Spanish surveys (SPPGFS and SPNGFS). The SPPGFS also displayed a negative correlation with EVHOE (Figure 3.6.1.5). Weighting the correlations by the sum of the pair-wise variances resulted in a largely similar correlation structure, though the WCSGFS and SPPGFS were more strongly correlated with the ECGFS (Figure 3.6.1.6). Note that though some surveys displayed weak or no correlation, no surveys were excluded a-priori from the assessment. Sensitivity tests were conducted in 2013, which led to the exclusion of the surveys mentioned previously (see the stock annex).

3.6.2 Biomass estimates from acoustic surveys

The Boarfish Acoustic Survey (BFAS) series was initiated in July 2011 and is now in its 10th year. The initial survey in 2011 collected data over 24 hours. Since 2012, acoustic data has been collected between the hours of 04:00 and 00:00. The 2011 data was reworked in 2015 to exclude the data between 00:00 and 04:00. A TS model of -66.2dB was developed in 2013 (Fässler *et al.* (2013)) and is applied to all surveys in the time series (Figure 3.3.1.1). Over the time series of the survey total biomass has been estimated in the range 863 kt (in 2012) to 70 kt (2016). The precision on the estimates has been good, with coefficients of variation in the range 11 to 21. An overall downward trend is evident in the first years while estimates have been more stable since 2014. No strong evidence exists for removing any of the survey points from the time series although 2016 may look like an outlier (Table 3.3.1.1).

It should be noted that two acoustic surveys are conducted annually to the south of the southern limit of the dedicated Boarfish survey. In 2016 the PELACUS recorded an increase in biomass from 2015 although not of the order of the decrease seen further north. The Spanish PELGAS surveys recorded low levels of biomass, similar to that in 2015. Both these surveys take place 2-3 months prior to the boarfish survey. Neither survey was conducted in 2020 due to the COVID emergency.

3.6.3 Biomass dynamic model

In 2012 an exploratory biomass dynamic model was developed. This was a Bayesian state space surplus production model (Meyer & Millar 1999), incorporating the catch data, IBTS data, and acoustic biomass data. The assessment was peer-reviewed by two independent experts on behalf

of ICES. In 2013 a new assessment was provided, which was based on the previous year's work and the reviewers' comments and formed the basis of a category 1 assessment. Details of the review and the associated changes can be found in the stock annex.

In 2014 the Bayesian state space surplus production model was fit using the catch data, delta-lognormal estimated IBTS survey indices, and the acoustic survey estimates. However, the inclusion of the low 2014 acoustic biomass estimate changed the perception on the stock, which raised concerns over the sensitivity and process error of the model and the stock assessment was moved from ICES category 1 to category 3 with the results of the surplus production model being used to calculate an index for the data limited stock approach.

Since 2014, the procedure used to run the model did not change with only the length of the time series used increasing annually. Details of this exploratory run used to calculate the DLS index are described below.

In the Bayesian state space surplus production model the biomass dynamics are given by a difference form of a Schaefer biomass dynamic model:

$$B_t = B_{t-1} + rB_{t-1} \left(1 - \frac{B_{t-1}}{K}\right) - C_{t-1}$$

where B_t is the biomass at time t , r is the intrinsic rate of population growth, K is the carrying capacity, and C_t is the catch, assumed known exactly. To assist estimation, the biomass is scaled by the carrying capacity, denoting the scaled biomass $P_t = B_t / K$. A lognormal error structure is assumed giving the scaled biomass dynamics (process) model:

$$P_t = (P_{t-1} + rP_{t-1}(1 - P_{t-1}) + \frac{C_{t-1}}{K})e^{u_t}$$

where the logarithm of process deviations are assumed normal $u_t = N(0, \sigma_2^2)$ with σ_2^2 the process error variance.

The starting year biomass is given by aK , where a is the proportion of the carrying capacity in the first year. The biomass dynamics process is related to the observations on the indices through the measurement error equation:

$$I_{j,t} = q_j P_t K e^{\varepsilon_{j,t}}$$

where $I_{j,t}$ is the value of abundance index j in year t , q_j is survey-specific catchability, $B_t = P_t K$, and the measurement errors are assumed log-normally distributed with $u_t = N(0, \varepsilon_{e,j,t}^2)$ where $\varepsilon_{e,j,t}^2$ is the index-specific measurement error variance. $\text{Var}(I_{j,t})$ is obtained from the delta-lognormal survey fits. That is, the variance of the mean annual estimate per survey is inputted directly from the delta-lognormal fits (Figure 3.6.1.2) as opposed to estimating a measurement error within the assessment. The measurement error is obtained from:

$$\sigma_{e,j,t}^2 = \ln\left(1 + \frac{\text{Var}(I_{j,t})}{(I_{j,t})^2}\right)$$

For the acoustic survey, the CV of the survey was transformed into a lognormal variance via

$$\sigma_{\varepsilon,acoustic,t}^2 = \ln(CV_{acoustic,t}^2 + 1)$$

Prior assumptions on the parameter distributions were:

- Intrinsic rate of population growth: $r \sim U(0.001, 2)$
- Natural logarithm of the carrying capacity: $\ln(K) \sim U(\ln(\max(C)), \ln(10.\text{sum}(C))) = U(\ln(144047), \ln(4450407))$
- Proportion of carrying capacity in first year of assessment: $a \sim U[0.001, 1.0]$
- Natural logarithm of the survey-specific catchabilities $\ln(q_i) \sim U(-16, 0)$ (for IBTS only). The acoustic survey prior is discussed below.

- Process error precision $\frac{1}{\sigma_u^2} \sim \text{gamma}(0.001, 0.001)$

Specification

During the 2013 WGWIDE meeting a number of different iterations of the model were run to discern the best parameters for the assessment. After four initial runs and four sensitivity runs the settings for the final run (run 2.2) were chosen. These settings are shown below and were used for the assessment model since 2014. (More details of the trial runs in 2013 can be found in the stock annex).

The specifications for the final boarfish assessment model runs are:

Acoustic survey

Years: 2011–2020

Index value ($I_{\text{acoustic},y}$): ‘total’ in tonnes (i.e. Definitely Boarfish + Probably Boarfish + Boarfish in a Mix)

Catchability (q_{acoustic}): A free, but strong prior (i.e. the acoustic survey is treated as a relative index but is strongly informed, this allows the survey to cover <100% of the stock).

IBTS surveys

6 delta log normal indices (WCSGFS, SPPGFS, IGFS, ECSGFS, SPNGFS, EVHOE)

First 5 and last 7 (since 2017, because of change in survey design) years omitted from WCSGFS

First 9 years omitted from ECSGFS

Following plenary discussion of the sensitivity runs in 2013, it was decided that the final run be based on a run that includes all surveys with the omission of the first 5 years of the WCSGFS and first 9 years of the ECSGFS. The reasons for this decision were: * it is unclear whether boarfish were consistently recorded in the early part of the ECSGFS, * the WCSGFS is thought to be at the northern extreme of the distribution and may not be an appropriate index for the whole stock, * the SPNGFS commences in 1991 such that running the assessment from 1991 onwards includes at least three surveys without relying, solely on the ECSGFS and WCSGFS, * surveys are internally weighted such that highly uncertain values receive lower weight.

Catches

2003–2020 time series

Priors

The final run assumes a strong prior $\ln(q_{\text{acoustic}}) \sim N(1, 1/4)$ (mean 1, standard deviation 0.25), which has 95% of the density between 0.5 and 2. Given the short acoustic series (6 years) it is not possible to estimate this parameter freely (i.e. using an uninformative prior). The prescription of a strong prior removes the assumption of an absolute index from the acoustic survey. This assumption will be continually updated as additional data accrue.

Run convergence

Parameters for the 2020 model run converged with good mixing of the chains and Rhat values lower than 1.1 indicating convergence (Figures 3.6.3.1 & 3.6.3.2). MCMC chain autocorrelation was rather high but was compensated by long MCMC chains providing representative samples of the parameter posteriors (Figure 3.6.3.3).

Diagnostic plots are provided in Figure 3.6.3.4 showing residuals about the model fit. A fairly balanced residual pattern is evident. In some cases, outliers are apparent, for instance in the English survey in the final year (2003). However, these points are down weighted according to the

inverse of their variance and hence do not contribute much to the model fit. The west of Scotland IBTS survey, located at the northern extreme of the stock distribution underestimates the stock in the early period (years) and overestimates it in the recent period from all fits. This could be indicative of stock expansion into this area at higher stock sizes and suggests that this index is not representative of the whole stock. Figure 3.6.3.5 shows the prior and posterior distributions of the parameters of the biomass dynamic model. The estimate of q is less than 1.0, leading to a higher estimate of final stock biomass than the acoustic survey.

Results

Trajectories of observed and expected indices are shown in Figure 3.6.3.6, along with the stock size over time and a harvest ratio (total catch divided by estimated biomass). Parameter estimates from the model run are summarized in Table 3.6.3.1. Biomass in 2020 is estimated to be 435 kt, continuing the relatively stable but low trend since 2014. The extremely low biomass estimate from the 2016 acoustic survey appears considered as an outlier by the model. Retrospective plots of TSB and F , presented in Figure 3.6.3.7, show that the perception of the stock is stable through time with the exception of 2013 prior to the inclusion of the lower biomass estimates of the acoustic surveys since 2014.

3.6.4 Pseudo-cohort analysis

Pseudo-cohort analysis is a procedure where mortality is calculated by means of catch curves derived from catch-at-age from a single year. This is in contrast to cohort analysis, which is the basis of VPA-type assessments. In cohort analysis, mortality is calculated across the ages of a year class, not within a single year. Because only seven years of sampling data were available and owing to the large age range currently in the catches a cohort analysis would only yield information for a very limited age and year range. Therefore, pseudo-cohort analysis was performed to supplement the Bayesian state space model.

Pseudo-cohort Z estimates increased with the rapid expansion of the fishery but decreased in 2011 due to the introduction of the first boarfish TAC (Table 3.6.4.1). By subtracting M ($= 0.16$), an estimate of F was obtained for each year (ages 7-14). This series was revised to represent ages 7-14, rather than 6-14 as in previous years, because in 2013 age 6 boarfish were not fully selected, *i.e.* age 7 had higher abundance at age.

It can be seen from the text table below that $Z=M$ in 2007, the initial year of the expanded fishery, while F is negligible. F increased to a high of 0.29 in 2012 and has gradually reduced down to 0.15 in 2015 and 2016. In 2017, it increased up to 0.17. There was a weak correlation between catches and pseudo-cohort F ($r^2 = 0.48$). Recent F estimated this way is close to $FMSY$ (0.149) and above $F0.1$ (0.13).

Year	Z (7-14)	F (Z-M)	Catch (t)
2007	0.17	0.01	21 576
2008	0.33	0.17	34 751

2009	0.36	0.20	90 370
2010	0.33	0.17	144 047
2011	0.29	0.13	37 096
2012	0.45	0.29	87 355
2013	0.36	0.20	75 409
2014	0.37	0.21	45 231
2015	0.31	0.15	17 766
2016	0.31	0.15	19 315
2017	0.33	0.17	17 388
2018	0.36	0.20	11 286
2019	0.37	0.21	11 312

3.6.5 State of the stock

The most recent year assessment indicates that total stock biomass increased from a low to average level from the early to mid-1990s (Figure 3.6.3.6). The stock fluctuated around this level until 2009, before increasing until 2012. A sharp decline is seen between 2013 and 2014. Since 2014, the abundance has remained low but stable. There was concern in 2014 that this decline was exaggerated by an unusually low acoustic biomass estimate that led to a downward revision in stock trajectory. However, the 2014 survey is considered satisfactory in terms of containment. The comparably low 2014 biomass estimate was supported by results of the 2015 survey. The 2016 biomass estimate, the lowest of the time series is considered an outlier and has little influence on stock abundance estimates. The 95% uncertainty bounds are large and increasing with subsequent assessments. This reflects the uncertainty in the survey indices, and short exploitation history of the stock and the treatment of the acoustic survey as a relative biomass index. As more data accumulates from this survey, it is expected that the prior will become increasingly updated, and potentially less variable.

Catch data are available from 2001, the first year of commercial landings, and reasonably comprehensive discard data are available from 2003. Peak catches were recorded in 2010, when over 140 000 t were taken. Elevated fishing mortality was observed, associated with the highest recorded catch in 2010. Fishing mortality, expressed as a harvest ratio (catch divided by total biomass), was first recorded in 2003. Before that time, it is to be expected that some discarding took place, and there were some commercial landings. Fishing mortality increased measurably from 2006, reaching a peak in 2009-2010. F declined in 2011 as catches became regulated by the precautionary TAC but increased year on year until 2015 when reduced catches resulted in a reduction. The considerable catches in recent years do not appear to have significantly truncated the size or age structure of the stock and 15+ group fish are still abundant (Figure 3.2.1.1).

MSY reference points can be estimated from the assessment parameter values. In 2019, F_{MSY} and $MSY B_{trigger}$ are estimated as respectively equal to 0.168 (parameter $r/2$) and 137 kt (parameter $K/4$). Throughout the history of the fishery, estimates of stock biomass have remained above $MSY B_{trigger}$. Fishing mortality (F) was greater than F_{MSY} in 2009, 2010 and 2014, but has decreased since. In 2019, the stock is in the green area of the Kobe plot (Figure 3.6.6.1).

Estimates of recruitment are not available from the stock assessment. However, an independent index of recruitment is available from groundfish surveys (Section 3.5). Observations from the survey recruitment of 1 year olds show a slight upward trend for 2019 in the Spanish and Irish surveys while the French survey continues to show an upward trend (Figure 3.5.1).

3.7 Short Term Projections

As the assessment is exploratory, no short term projections were conducted.

3.8 Long term simulations

No long term simulations were conducted.

3.9 Candidate precautionary and yield based reference points

3.9.1 Yield per Recruit

A yield per recruit analysis was conducted in 2011 (Minto *et al.* 2011) and $F_{0.1}$ was estimated to be 0.13 whilst F_{MAX} was estimated in the range 0.23 to 0.33 (Figure 3.9.1.1). $F_{0.1}$ was considered to be well estimated (Figure 3.9.1.2). No new yield per recruit analyses were performed in subsequent years.

3.9.2 Precautionary reference points

It does not appear that boarfish is an important prey species in the NE Atlantic (Section 3.13). ICES considered that precautionary F targets (F_{pa}) should be consistent with $F < M$ for prey species, and $F = M$ for non-prey species. B_{lim} may be defined from the stock size estimates available from the stock assessment and set at $0.2 * K$ ($0.2 * 528400 = 105\,680$ t), based on the exploratory assessment in 2019).

3.9.3 Other yield based reference points

Yield per recruit analysis, following the method of Beverton & Holt (1957), found $F_{0.1}$ to be robustly estimated at 0.13 (ICES 2011; Minto *et al.* 2011).

3.10 Quality of the assessment

ICES considers the current basis for the advice on this stock to be an interim measure prior to development of an age-based assessment. The acoustic survey has undergone several developments to improve its suitability with updates to methodology in 2012, a change in direction in 2017 and extension of transects at the boundaries to improve containment. The assessment was downgraded from Category 1 to Category 3 in 2014, and it has remained in this category since. The model is still considered suitable for category 3 advice, because it provides the best means of combining the available survey series. The assessment is sensitive to the acoustic series. In addition, a substantial part of the year to year variations in the stock abundance is linked to the process error. The use of some priors (like ratio to virgin biomass in the first year of the assessment) and survey (WCSGFS for instance) may require revision. Additional work to improve the surplus production model were undertaken in since 2015 and will continue next year.

The bottom trawl survey data are considered to be a good index of abundance given that boarfish aggregate near the bottom at this time of year. The trawl surveys record high abundances of the species, but with many zero hauls. The delta-lognormal error structure used in the analyses is considered to be an appropriate means of dealing with such data. The biomass dynamic model used in the stock assessment is based on the recent benchmarked assessment of megrim in Subdivisions 4 and 6. The model was further developed by including acoustic survey biomass estimates. One drawback of the model is that it does not provide estimates of recruitment. However, an estimate of recruitment strength is available from the Spanish and French trawl surveys.

3.11 Management considerations

As this stock is now placed in category 3, the ICES advice is based on harvest control rules for data limited stocks (ICES 2017). Since the biomass estimate from the Bayesian model is considered reliable for trend based assessment, an index can be calculated according to Method 3.1 of ICES (2012). The advice is based on a comparison of the average of the two most recent index values with the average of the three preceding values multiplied by the most recent catch. Table 3.6.5.1 shows the biomass estimates from the model from which the index was calculated.

Although no longer accepted as the basis for an analytic assessment, the surplus production model still provides the best unified view of this stock (Figure 3.6.3.6).

3.12 Stock structure

A dedicated study on the stock structure of boarfish within the Northeast Atlantic and Mediterranean Sea commenced in October 2013 in order to resolve outstanding questions regarding the stock structure of boarfish and the suitability of assessment data. Results (Farrell *et al.* 2016) indicated strong population structure across the distribution range of boarfish with 7-8 genetic populations identified (Figure 3.12.1).

The eastern Mediterranean (*MED*) samples comprised a single population and were distinct from all other samples. Similarly, the Azorean (*AZA*), Western Saharan (*MOR*) and Alboran (*ALM*) samples were distinct from all others. Of particular relevance to the assessment and management of the boarfish fishery is the identification and delineation of the population structure between southern Portuguese waters (*PTN2B-PTS*) and waters to the geographic north. A distinct and temporally stable mixing zone was evident in the waters around Cabo da Roca. The *PTN2A* sample appeared to be significantly different from all other samples however this sample was relatively small and was considered to represent a mixed sample rather than a true population.

No significant spatial or temporal population structure was found within the samples comprising the NEA population (Figure 3.12.1). A statistically significant but comparatively low level of genetic differentiation was found between this population and the northern Spanish shelf/northern Portuguese samples (*NSA-PTN1*). However, a high level of migration was revealed between these two populations and no barriers to gene flow were detected between them. Therefore, for the purposes of assessment and management these areas can be considered as one unit.

Analyses indicated a lack of significant immigration into this northeast Atlantic boarfish stock from populations to the south or from insular elements and the strong genetic differentiation among these regions indicate that the purported increases in abundance in the northeast Atlantic area are not the result of a recent influx from other regions. The increase in abundance is most likely the result of demographic processes within the northeast Atlantic stock (Blanchard & Vandermeersch 2005; Coad *et al.* 2014).

Whilst the current assessment and management area constitutes the majority of the most northern population it should be extended into Northern Portuguese waters and repeated genetic monitoring of the stock in this region should be conducted to ensure the validity of this delineation. Based on analyses of IBTS data the biomass in this area is suspected to be small relative to the overall biomass in the TAC area.

3.13 Ecosystem considerations

The ecological role and significance of boarfish in the NE Atlantic is largely unknown. However, in the southeast North Atlantic, in Portuguese waters, they are considered to have an important position in the marine food web (Lopes *et al.* 2006). The diet has been investigated in the eastern Mediterranean, Portuguese waters and at Great Meteor Seamount and consists primarily of copepods, specifically *Calanus helgolandicus*, with some mysid shrimp and euphausiids (Macpherson 1979; Fock *et al.* 2002; Lopes *et al.* 2006). This contrasted with the morphologically similar species, the slender snipefish, *Macroramphosus gracilis* and the longspine snipefish, *M. scolopax*, whose diet comprised *Temora spp.*, copepods and mysid shrimps, respectively (Lopes *et al.* 2006). Despite the obvious potential for these species to feed on fish eggs and larvae, there was no evidence to support this conclusion in Portuguese waters and they were not considered predators of commercial fishes and thus their increase in abundance was unlikely to affect recruitment of commercial fish species. If the NE Atlantic population of boarfish is sufficiently large then there exists the possibility of competition for food with other widely distributed planktivorous species.

Both seasonal and diurnal variations were observed in the diet of boarfish in all three regions. In the eastern Mediterranean and Portuguese waters, mysids become an important component of the diet in autumn, which correlates with their increased abundance in these regions at this time (Macpherson 1979; Lopes *et al.* 2006). Fock *et al.* (2002) found that boarfish at Great Meteor Seamount fed mainly on copepods and euphausiids diurnally and on decapods nocturnally, indicating habitat dependent resource utilization.

Boarfish appear an unlikely target of predation given their array of strong dorsal and anal fin spines and covering of ctenoid scales. However, there is evidence to suggest that they may be an important component of some species' diets. Most studies have focused in the Azores and few have mentioned the NE Atlantic, probably due to the relatively low abundance in the region until recent years. In the Azores, boarfish was found to be one of the most important prey items for tope (*Galeorhinus galeus*), thornback ray (*Raja clavata*), conger eel (*Conger conger*), forkbeard (*Phycis phycis*), bigeye tuna (*Thunnus obesus*), yellowmouth barracuda (*Sphyrnaena viridensis*), swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*), blackspot seabream (*Pagellus bogaraveo*), axillary seabream (*Pagellus acarne*) and blacktail comber (*Serranus atricauda*) (Clarke *et al.* 1995; Morato *et al.* 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003; Arrizabalaga *et al.* 2008). Many of these species also occur in the NE Atlantic shelf waters although it is unknown whether boarfish represent a significant component of the diet in this region.

In the NE Atlantic boarfish have not previously been recorded in the diets of tope or thornback ray (Holden & Tucker 1974; Ellis *et al.* 1996). However, this does not prove that they are currently not a prey item. A study of conger eel diet in Irish waters from 1998-1999 failed to find boarfish in the diet (O'Sullivan *et al.* 2004). However, in Portuguese waters a recent study has found boarfish to be the most numerous species in the diet of conger eels (Xavier *et al.* 2010). It has been suggested that boarfish are an important component of the diet of hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), as they are sometimes caught together. However, a recent study of the diet of hake in the Celtic Sea and Bay of Biscay did not report any boarfish in the stomachs of hake caught during the 2001 EVHOE survey (Mahe *et al.* 2007).

The conspicuous presence of boarfish in the diet of so many fish species in the Azores is perhaps more related to the lack of other available food sources than to the palatability of boarfish themselves. Given the large abundance in NE Atlantic shelf waters it is likely that they would have been recorded more frequently if they were a significant and important prey item.

Boarfish are also an important component of the diet a number of sea birds in the Azores, most notably the common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) (Granadeiro *et al.* 2002) and Cory's shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*) (Granadeiro *et al.* 1998). This is surprising given that in the Mediterranean discarded boarfish were rejected by seabirds whereas in the Azores they were actively preyed on (Oro & Ruiz 1997). Cory's shearwaters are capable of diving up to 15 m whilst the common tern is a plunge-diver and may only reach 2-3 m. It is therefore surprising that boarfish are such a significant component of their diet given that it is generally considered a deeper water fish. In the Azores boarfish shoals are sometimes driven to the surface by horse mackerel and barracuda where they are also attacked by diving sea birds (J. Hart, CW Azores, pers. comm.). Anecdotal reports from the Irish fishery indicate that boarfish are rarely found in waters shallower than 40 m. This may suggest that they are outside the range of shearwaters and gannets, the latter having a mean diving depth of 19.7 ± 7.5 m (Brierley & Fernandes 2001). However, the upper depth range of boarfish is within maximum diving depth recorded for auks (50 m) as recorded by Barrett & Furness (1990). Given their frequency in the diets of marine and bird life in the Azores, boarfish appear to be an important component of the marine ecosystem in that region. There is currently insufficient evidence to draw similar conclusions in the NE Atlantic.

The length-frequency distribution of boarfish may be important to consider. IBTS data shows an increase in mean total length with latitude Table 3.3.2.1 and perhaps the smaller boarfish in the southern regions are more easily preyed upon. Length data of boarfish from stomach contents studies of both fish and sea birds in the Azores indicate that the boarfish found are generally < 10 cm (Granadeiro *et al.* 1998, 2002).

3.14 Proposed management plan

In 2015 the Pelagic Advisory Council submitted a revised draft management strategy for North-east Atlantic boarfish. The EU has requested ICES to evaluate the following management plan:

This management strategy aims to achieve sustainable exploitation of boarfish in line with the precautionary approach to fisheries management, FAO guidelines for new and developing fisheries, and the ICES form of advice.

- 1) The TAC shall be set in accordance with the following procedure, depending on the ICES advice
 - a) If category 1 advice (stocks with quantitative assessments) is given based on a benchmarked assessment, the TAC shall be set following that advice.
 - b) If category 1 or 2 (qualitative assessments and forecasts) advice is given based on a non-benchmarked assessment the TAC shall be set following this advice.
 - c) Categories 3-6 are described below as follows:
 - i) Category 3: stocks for which survey-based assessments indicate trends. This category includes stocks with quantitative assessments and forecasts which for a variety of reasons are considered indicative of trends in fishing mortality, recruitment, and biomass.
 - ii) Category 4: stocks for which only reliable catch data are available. This category included stocks for which a time series of catch can be used to approximate MSY.

- iii) Category 5: landings only stocks. This category includes stocks for which only landings data are available.
- iv) Category 6: negligible landings stocks and stocks caught in minor amounts as bycatch.
- 2) Notwithstanding paragraph 1, if, in the opinion of ICES, the stock is at risk of recruitment impairment, a TAC may be set a lower level.
- 3) If the stock, estimated in either of the 2 years before the TAC is to be set, is at or below B_{lim} or any suitable proxy thereof, the TAC shall be set at 0 t.
- 4) The TAC shall not exceed 75,000 t in any year.
- 5) The TAC shall not be allowed to increase by more than 25% per year. However, there shall be no limit on the decrease in TAC.
- 6) Closed seasons, closed areas, and moving on procedures shall apply to all directed boarfish fisheries as follows:
 - i) A closed season shall operate from 31st March to 31st August. This is because it is known that herring and mackerel are present in these areas and may be caught with boarfish.
 - ii) A closed area shall be implemented inside the Irish 12-miles limit south of 52°30' from 12th February to 31st October, in order to prevent catches of Celtic Sea herring, known to form aggregations at these times.
 - iii) If catches of other species covered by a TAC amount to more than 5% of the total catch by day by ICES statistical rectangle, then all fishing must cease in that rectangle for 5 consecutive days.

3.15 References

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3.16 Tables

Table 3.1.2.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Landings, discards and TAC by country by year (t), 2001–2019. (Data provided by Working Group members). These figures may not in all cases correspond to the official statistics and cannot be used for management purposes

	Den- mark	Ger- many	Ire- land	Nether- lands	Eng- land	Scot- land	Spain	Unal- loc	Dis- cards	Total	TAC
2001			120							120	
2002			91							91	
2003			458						10929	11387	
2004			675						4476	5151	
2005			165						5795	5959	
2006			2772						4365	7137	
2007			17615			772			3189	21576	
2008	3098		21585			0.45			10068	34751	
2009	15059		68629						6682	90370	
2010	39805		88457			9241			6544	144047	
2011	7797		20685			2813			5802	37096	33000
2012	19888		55949			4884			6634	87355	82000
2013	13182		52250			4380			5598	75409	82000
2014	8758		34622			38			1813	45231	133957
2015	29	4	16325	375	104				929	17766	53296
2016	337	7	17496	171	21				1283	19315	47637
2017	548		15485	182	0.13				1173	17388	27288
2018	94		9513	172	0.08	0.23	148		1359	11286	21830
2019	757		9910	318	19		2.5		306	11312	21830

Table 3.1.2.2. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Landings by year (t), 2001–2019 (Data provided by Working Group members). These figures may not in all cases correspond to the official statistics and cannot be used for management purposes.

Year	Area	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Netherlands	England	Scotland	Spain	Total
2001	ALL			120					120
2002	ALL			91					91
2003	ALL			458					458
2003	6.a			65					65
2003	7.b			214					214
2003	7.j			179					179
2004	ALL			675					675
2004	6.a			292					292
2004	7.b			224					224
2004	8.d			38					38
2004	7.j			122					122
2005	ALL			165					165
2005	6.a			10					10
2005	7.b			105					105
2005	8.a			38					38
2005	7.j			12					12
2006	ALL			2772					2772
2006	6.a			21					21
2006	7.b			15					15
2006	7.g			375					375
2006	8.a			1					1
2006	7.j			2360					2360
2007	ALL			17615			772		18386
2007	5.b2			6					6
2007	6.a			93					93
2007	7.b			1259					1259
2007	7.g			120					120

Year	Area	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Netherlands	England	Scotland	Spain	Total
2007	8.a			5					5
2007	7.j			16131			772		16903
2008	ALL	3098		21584					24682
2008	6.a			28					28
2008	7.b			3					3
2008	7.g			184					184
2008	7.j			21370					21370
2009	ALL	15059		68629					83688
2009	6.a			45					45
2009	7.b			73					73
2009	7.c			1					1
2009	7.g			4912					4912
2009	7.h			18225					18225
2009	7.j			45372					45372
2010	ALL	39805		88457			9241		137503
2010	6.a			1349			10		1359
2010	6.aS			7					7
2010	7.b			2258					2258
2010	7.c			35			4		39
2010	7.e	2							2
2010	7.g	672		3649					4321
2010	7.h	1465		8453			1712		11629
2010	7.j	37667		72707			7515		117889
2011	ALL	7797		20685			2813		31295
2011	6.a			26					26
2011	7.b			274					274
2011	7.c			9					9
2011	7.g			811					811
2011	7.h	4155		8540			2813		15508

Year	Area	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Netherlands	England	Scotland	Spain	Total
2011	8.a	18							18
2011	7.j	3624		11025					14648
2012	ALL	19888		55949			4884		80720
2012	6.a			125					125
2012	7.b	80		4501			838		5419
2012	7.c			108			907		1015
2012	7.g			616					616
2012	7.h	5837		10579			3139		19554
2012	8.a	1604		93					1697
2012	7.j	12366		39928					52294
2013	ALL	13182		52250			4380		69811
2013	6.a			538			15		553
2013	7.b			10405			100		10505
2013	7.e						883		883
2013	7.g			1808					1808
2013	7.h	955		11355			1728		14038
2013	8.a	1354		870					2224
2013	8.d			270					270
2013	7.j	10873		27003			1653		39529
2014	ALL	8758		34622			38		43418
2014	6.a			182			30		212
2014	7.b	12		3262					3274
2014	7.g			135					135
2014	7.h	4808		18389					23196
2014	8.a			119					119
2014	7.j	3886		12536			8		16429
2014	7.k	53							53
2015	ALL	29	5	16325	375	104			16837
2015	6.a	10		116		9			134

Year	Area	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Netherlands	England	Scotland	Spain	Total
2015	7.b	8	4	2609		85			2706
2015	7.c			220					220
2015	7.g			547					547
2015	7.h	5		8506					8510
2015	8.a	6	1	682					688
2015	7.j			3646		10			3655
2015	6				128				128
2015	7				33				33
2015	8				214				214
2016	ALL	337	7	17496	171	21			18031
2016	6.a			377	45				422
2016	7.b		5	1198	35	0.66			1239
2016	7.c				0.08				0.08
2016	7.e				0.02				0.02
2016	7.h	330		6771					7101
2016	7.j			1852	90	16			1959
2016	8.a	2	1	6173		5			6181
2016	8.b					0.11			0.11
2016	8.d	5		1124					1129
2017	ALL	548		15485	182	0.13			16215
2017	4.a				0.03				0.03
2017	6.a	37		907	34				979
2017	7.b			124	118				242
2017	7.c				20				20
2017	7.d	1							1
2017	7.e				0.08				0.08
2017	7.f					0.02			0.02
2017	7.g			1		0.02			1
2017	7.h	239		2961		0.09			3200

Year	Area	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Netherlands	England	Scotland	Spain	Total
2017	7.j			33	9				43
2017	8.a	271		10543					10814
2017	8.d			915					915
2018	ALL	94		9513	172	0.08	0.23	148	9928
2018	6.a	67		269	78				414
2018	7.b	19		163	9				191
2018	7.c	2			0.51				3
2018	7.f				3				3
2018	7.h	6		2582	46	0.08			2634
2018	7.j			1163	22		0.23		1185
2018	8.a			5182					5182
2018	8.b				14				14
2018	8.c							54	54
2018	8.d			154					154
2018	9.a							94	94
2019	ALL	757		9910	318	19		2	11005
2019	6.a	172		568	79	9			829
2019	7.b			238	150	0.36			388
2019	7.c			3	0.29				3
2019	7.d	1							1
2019	7.e				1	6			7
2019	7.f				6				6
2019	7.g			2	0.24				2
2019	7.h	268		6197	0.19	0.21			6466
2019	7.j			25	80	3		0.03	108
2019	8.a	315		2805					3121
2019	8.b				0.17				0.17
2019	8.c							2	2
2019	8.d			71					71

Year	Area	Denmark	Germany	Ireland	Netherlands	England	Scotland	Spain	Total
ALL	ALL	91195	12	432801	1218	144	22128	150	547644

Table 3.1.2.3. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Discards of boarfish in demersal and non-target pelagic fisheries by year (t), 2003–2019. (Data provided by Working Group members). These figures may not in all cases correspond to the official statistics and cannot be used for management purposes.

Year	Germany	Ireland	Netherlands	Spain	UK	Denmark	Lithuania	Total
2003		119	1998	8812				10929
2004		60	837	3579				4476
2005		55	733	5007				5795
2006		22	411	3933				4366
2007		549	23	2617				3189
2008		920	738	8410				10068
2009		377	1258	5047				6682
2010		85	512	5947				6544
2011	49	107	185	5461				5802
2012		181	88	6365				6634
2013	22	47	11	5518				5598
2014	117	50	477	1119	50			1813
2015		7		921	1			929
2016	869	20	41	348	4		1	1283
2017		640	146			386	1	1173
2018		525	89			744	0.55	1359
2019		57		240	8			306

Table 3.2.1.1.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. General boarfish age length key produced from 2012 commercial samples. Figures highlighted in grey are estimated.

[illegible]

Table 3.2.1.2. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Number of samples collected from the catch per year.

Year	landings	% landings covered by sampling programme	no. samples	no. measured	no. aged
2001	120	0	0	0	0
2002	91	0	0	0	0
2003	458	0	0	0	0
2004	675	0	0	0	0
2005	165	0	0	0	0
2006	2772	0	0	0	0
2007	18387	NA	3	217	0
2008	24683	NA	1	152	0
2009	83688	NA	9	1475	0
2010	137503	NA	95	10675	403*
2011	31295	NA	27	4066	704
2012	80720	NA	80 (68)***	9656 (8565)***	814**
2013	69812	NA	76	9392	0****
2014	43418	NA	54	7008	0****
2015	16837	NA	32	3356	0****
2016	18031	NA	27	3861	0****
2017	16215	NA	18	1140	0****
2018	9927	NA	12	556	0****
2019	11006	NA	18	371	0****

* A common ALK was developed from fish collected from both commercial and survey samples. This comprehensive ALK was used to produce catch numbers at age data for pseudo-cohort analyses.

** A common ALK was developed from fish collected from samples from Danish, Irish and Scottish commercial landings. This comprehensive ALK was used for all métiers to produce catch numbers-at-age for pseudo-cohort analysis. Only aged fish measured to 0.5cm were included in the ALK.

*** Only Irish collected samples were used for length frequency, see stock annex.

****2012 ALK used

Table 3.2.1.3. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 5, 27.6, 7, 8. The allocation of Age length keys to unsampled metiers in 2019

Country	Area	Quarter	landed	ALK
DK	7.d	1	1	IE_8.a_Q1
DK	7.h	1	268	IE_8.a_Q1
DK	8.a	1	315	IE_8.a_Q1
ES	7.j	1	0.03	IE_8.a_Q1
ES	8.c	2	0.25	IE_8.a_Q1
ES	8.c	3	2	IE_8.a_Q4
IE	7.b	1	148	IE_7.h_Q4
IE	7.b	4	15	IE_7.h_Q4
IE	7.g	1	0.86	IE_8.a_Q1
IE	7.g	2	0.51	IE_7.h_Q4
IE	7.g	3	0.33	IE_7.h_Q4
IE	7.g	4	0.36	IE_7.h_Q4
IE	7.h	1	435	IE_8.a_Q1
IE	7.h	4	5762	IE_7.h_Q4
IE	7.j	1	22	IE_8.a_Q1
IE	7.j	2	2	IE_7.h_Q4
IE	7.j	3	0.76	IE_7.h_Q4
IE	7.j	4	0.79	IE_7.h_Q4
IE	8.a	1	1862	IE_8.a_Q1
IE	8.a	3	56	IE_8.a_Q4
IE	8.a	4	888	IE_8.a_Q4
IE	8.d	1	5	IE_8.a_Q1
IE	8.d	4	66	IE_8.a_Q4 IE_7.h_Q4
NL	7.b	3	6	IE_7.h_Q4
NL	7.b	4	2	IE_7.h_Q4
NL	7.c	3	0.29	IE_7.h_Q4
NL	7.e	1	1	IE_8.a_Q1
NL	7.f	2	5	IE_7.h_Q4

NL	7.f	4	1	IE_7.h_Q4
NL	7.g	4	0.24	IE_7.h_Q4
NL	7.h	1	0.19	IE_8.a_Q1
NL	7.j	1	9	IE_8.a_Q1
NL	7.j	2	0.94	IE_7.h_Q4
NL	7.j	3	70	IE_7.h_Q4
NL	7.j	4	0.47	IE_7.h_Q4
NL	8.b	4	0.17	IE_8.a_Q4
UKE	7.e	1	6	IE_8.a_Q1
UKE	7.h	1	0.21	IE_8.a_Q1
UKE	7.j	1	2	IE_8.a_Q1
UKE	7.j	2	0.01	IE_7.h_Q4
UKE	7.j	3	0.86	IE_7.h_Q4

Table 3.2.1.4. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Catch per country and corresponding number of samples collected in 2019.

Country	Official Catch	Num Samples	Num Measured	Num Aged
DK	757			
ES	243			
IE	9967	18	371	
NL	318			
UKE	37			
UKS	1			

Table 3.2.1.5. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Catch per area and corresponding number of samples collected in 2019

Area	Official Catch	Num Samples	Num Measured	Num Measured per 1000t
27.6.a	830			
27.6.b	42			
27.7.b	390			
27.7.c	13			
27.7.d	1			
27.7.e	14			

Area	Official Catch	Num Samples	Num Measured	Num Measured per 1000t
27.7.f	8			
27.7.g	7			
27.7.h	6529	6	66	10
27.8.a	3121	12	305	98
27.8.b	12			
27.8.c	137			
27.8.d	71			
27.7.j	189			
27.7.k	0.04			

Table 3.2.1.6. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Proxy catch numbers-at-age of the international catches (raised numbers in '000s) for the years 2007-2019

Age	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1			1575	2415		28	301		5556	218	1862	314	17427
2	352	5488	15043	11229	2894	893	7148	695	116135	2385	4387	1736	37620
3	2114	21140	65744	72709	41913	5467	156680	49503	32248	10737	8830	2628	9737
4	40851	105575	338931	294382	28148	41278	58522	127520	16588	25114	34448	13610	9944
5	48915	141300	475619	567689	30116	110272	59797	93705	24564	20263	27266	15570	12682
6	62713	195339	543707	878363	175696	146582	68949	67275	26566	18025	21103	14731	12716
7	26132	104031	307333	522703	143967	492078	302967	193061	74115	61229	55189	38686	29513
8	29766	66570	172783	293719	107126	365840	250341	139124	52052	47573	38229	26821	18819
9	56075	53159	155477	276672	77861	271916	212318	121042	44615	42478	32258	23670	15875
10	44875	46893	130148	232122	60022	173486	160137	94225	34264	35150	25716	19395	11359
11	14019	15289	42521	78588	46079	69396	63025	36078	12999	13297	9560	7148	4272
12	32359	21178	61350	114600	40468	40968	41490	24895	9114	9132	7564	5846	2937
13	4848	11854	39609	59932	24352	58888	59380	36309	13362	13774	10922	8183	4256
14	16837	13570	31569	59060	19724	30277	30355	19064	7152	6682	5924	4554	2156
15+	109481	112947	196967	349320	157707	217260	239366	150688	59139	49589	40797	32130	14864

Table 3.2.2.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Length-frequency distributions of the international catches (raised numbers in '000s) for the years 2007-2019.

Length	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
0									14					14
1									878					878
2									515					515
3				156					810		765		15868	17599
4				439					14		4607	203	70362	75625
5				1090	522	56	52		513	417	5250	405	80160	88465
6			1354	1574			551		10598	1684	12616	2635	85420	116432
7			677	375	1345	185	1419		80716	8685	11473	4703	115154	224732
8				1082		555	3592	1064	49508	6412	10115	3559	67471	143358
9			677	5382	851	555	7263	327	10219	7104	3874	6554	16504	59310
10		7473	17367	7883	7012	641	47509	4916	213	23065	14047	6196	3147	139469
11	9609	11209	54130	29410	33243	2791	94702	31649	1211	46010	32346	5559	9173	361042
12		52308	174796	130889	15848	6132	59833	71344	3865	39071	36242	4450	10144	604922
13	84555	63517	343283	361774	70615	24571	18359	108261	12226	14181	32445	17658	5796	1157241
14		59781	321637	655875	93487	81928	20938	82470	28142	18249	31589	22826	22722	1439644
15	44199	119561	297737	739025	189434	264888	98564	84288	41613	30975	33618	24070	22353	1990325
16		70990	207739	564347	114904	398772	204868	112826	42461	51110	41650	24514	17521	1851702
17	82633	52308	147965	353484	133539	419060	315063	172416	59990	57000	46495	30665	28815	1899433

Length	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
18		29890	149314	246146	51235	307533	285688	153742	52625	58696	43121	38698	16688	1433376
19	117224	22418	105782	224611	50857	176710	210137	138549	50139	76872	45353	34080	20053	1272785
20		14945	71273	127711	25309	89726	105571	74059	28771	37755	39524	29908	13809	658361
21	65338	33627	47816	125463	25569	52791	62175	43347	16087	23137	21854	15561	5710	538475
22		11209	13082	81386	5473	25065	31122	22629	8572	7841	4932	5778	1513	218602
23	13452	11209	19397	24256	4181	13149	14990	7672	4331	625	1020	1948	143	116373
24		3736	4061	6209	2280	2738	4918	2134	2081	128		54	143	28482
25		3736	677	1913	456	827	1109	1361	289					10368
26							407		23					430
27				283			296							579
28									592					592

Table 3.3.1.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Acoustic survey abundance and biomass estimates from 2011-2020

Age	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1083.9
1	5	21.5	-	-	198.5	4.6	110.9	76.7	782.3	896.5
2	11.6	10.8	78	-	319.2	35.7	126.7	31.2	389.1	1156.7
3	57.8	174.1	1842.9	15	16.6	45.5	344.6	115	96.8	966.7
4	187.4	64.8	696.4	98.2	34.3	43.6	367.3	68.3	93.1	112.6
5	436.7	95	381.6	102.3	80	6	156	106.7	88.2	157.3
6	1165.9	736.1	253.8	104.9	112	10	209	165.9	105.9	183.3
7	1184.2	973.8	1056.6	414.6	437.4	169	493.1	320.7	445.7	912.9
8	703.6	758.9	879.4	343.8	362.9	112.6	468.3	197.7	182.6	884.5
9	1094.5	848.6	800.9	341.9	353.5	117.6	397.2	293.4	288.	720.7
10	1031.5	955.9	703.8	332.3	360	96.6	285.8	624.7	290.1	330.9
11	332.9	650.9	263.7	129.9	131.7	17	120.9	339.2	49.6	80.6
12	653.3	1099.7	202.9	104.9	113	32	82.1	264.1	192.2	194.9
13	336	857.2	296.6	166.4	174	48.7	74.4	198.4	79.1	298.7
14	385	655.8	169.8	88.5	108	18.3	220.4	116.5	57.2	266.7
15+	3519	6353.7	1464.3	855.1	1195	400.1	931	302.4	758.9	1641.0
TSN ('000)	11104	14257	9091	3098	3996	1157	4387	3221	3899	9888
TSB (t)	670176	863446	439890	187779	232634	69690	230062	186252	179156	399872
SSB (t)	669392	861544	423158	187654	226659	69103	218810	184624	169213	357871
CV	21.2	10.6	17.5	15.1	17	19	21.9	19.9	25.4	34.8

Table 3.3.2.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. IBTS length-frequency data

EVHOE

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1997		5	11	7	17	197	2659	5020	3719	3598	4429	12065	16651	7198	3455	501	18	1		
1998		1	4	26	76	2093	18283	8631	6125	5966	7095	11730	14078	9260	5076	934	8			1
1999			13	52	33	245	11177	26610	23947	6684	2899	4709	7868	6160	1353	267	7			
2000		17	79	120	8	1504	26894	17674	9836	21967	16382	29585	36853	16522	5397	989	75			
2001		1	45	687	489	913	21297	37171	13276	28355	31514	18309	12232	6471	3186	1270	81	4		
2002		2	18	23	11	547	9631	29874	17777	13290	9470	9697	9751	6268	2484	641	37	1	1	
2003			17	47	17	57	426	1655	7142	20018	24842	20989	21263	14494	7086	1550	36			
2004			33	512	378	123	1248	1419	1307	1083	3102	7308	7224	6353	7866	3630	241	5		
2005		2	93	975	1285	146	1100	2326	1229	1553	3183	13398	15758	9834	6010	1658	117	70		
2006	1	26	112	79	75	15510	37566	10750	3622	2127	1521	1955	4131	3955	2535	921	94	2	12	
2007		8	187	467	234	1503	22689	126065	64536	6341	6731	5431	6004	5911	4238	1409	118	11		
2008		3	434	2807	827	5341	53189	247296	165392	163200	69382	38434	18390	17258	9178	3490	745	6	1	
2009		6	128	194	72	1496	19769	35819	5264	3913	9556	12269	9402	10831	6720	775	38	1		
2010		21	529	116	154	5755	46438	74986	27175	11952	37420	58313	34737	33774	14626	1561	249	8	1	
2011		60	95	215	5	541	2247	8368	15256	33221	30237	50384	56559	36673	11867	3082	573	159	47	
2012		9	145	584	137	2922	28865	26816	6124	11739	13606	22369	37135	44082	19963	4893	127	1		

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
2013		3	48	91	10	306	2185	2165	2542	13649	9932	14987	37755	40524	20107	6918	666		2	
2014		2	693	1386	508	84	1440	885	3074	8732	28586	39397	74122	69736	26871	3908	59	433		
2015		5	183	5898	4143	607	19075	179269	119004	15765	18014	61575	62024	59904	21525	5487	541	429	8	
2016	5	31	379	846	115	733	10284	14280	17251	42132	25304	68583	130633	131220	48538	11611	1358	26		
2017		2	103	129	3	27	269	198	5											
2018		7	1846	64840	57946	102	5424	38028	23510	13486	18312	35122	54264	63350	21702	6292	275	9		
2019	2	997	6467	589	10688	531908	561517	329850	59733	4505	3418	8451	32547	61582	30031	7468	962	204		

IGFS

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
2003		1	32	22	7	22	129	172	879	2942	2322	1326	3822	4628	2898	896	163	38		
2004		23	63	34	8	96	532	1431	369	344	410	2253	4320	4698	3966	1017	87	2	1	
2005		8	59	52	20	203	1024	585	288	636	341	3463	11457	11348	7955	1744	382	2	1	
2006	5	60	68	48	35	212	969	621	2046	4190	8044	7946	24208	42119	32168	12296	2454	532		
2007	1	6	44	18	31	501	923	1251	1638	1166	2510	3581	8275	10740	7093	1934	92			
2008			26	18	23	127	672	531	2095	13780	17664	19268	16980	19484	15953	8789	1747	76	1	
2009		3	80	76	25	94	228	486	1000	1139	9081	7749	5138	6921	5592	1084	68	1		
2010		6	42	3	18	199	272	463	920	393	7914	34236	28611	16063	8161	1974	433			
2011		6	14	5	4	189	772	586	555	670	2578	20171	22082	10829	5298	2207	266	9	6	

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
2012		7	36	20	10	131	271	378	702	2144	1183	11105	34010	22742	10906	3903	525	4		
2013	1	3	9	9	20	127	352	340	1320	2833	3971	15572	51637	52868	20485	6560	492	20		
2014		10	68	54	4	18	13	25	60	130	1127	3251	19125	23016	10355	2988	284	18		
2015		3	11	16	24	193	1008	3708	848	105	713	6314	29727	48221	33024	17350	1885	531		
2016	4	31	121	63	7	67	186	1515	4057	2891	1349	4110	32753	57753	40907	15527	3670	86		
2017		6	53	10169	689915	6406	1751	715	11818	21886	10164	11841	25588	42311	35049	17110	3299	369		
2018	4	51	247	140	32	45	286	585	1195	6107	17006	15167	48895	61832	36519	10722	2030	63		
2019	4	19	117	47	53	266	583	173	106	487	2677	4967	6864	12080	10480	5125	772	71	4	2

SPNGFS

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1991		1			31	690	1311	313	49	9	6	7	7	4				6		
1992		57	38	9	178	3290	2743	282	48	10	8	69	162	390	779	246	95			
1993		57	1206	488	97	3730	3753	421	105	54	7	4	8	3	2					
1994	1	40	33		342	4789	10162	8920	3195	53	106	20	9	12	1					
1995		84	108	4	342	3063	2157	220	84	65	58	105	105	90	20	4				
1996		218	537	143	245	4457	4449	267	820	722	82	145	126	219	96	39	2			
1997	2	102	809	441	235	3458	6824	2189	1923	534	156	353	161	88	3					
1998	3	2	7	4	49	1920	4685	1815	337	153	125	88	147	135	86	13	2	3		

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1999		6	59	13	134	2736	3010	193	106	83	109	143	390	645	402	69				
2000		7	3729	2046	17	554	1947	489	277	486	756	1252	999	1021	199	34	13			
2001		68	4	1	153	3241	5085	659	225	206	205	236	692	407	120	22	9			
2002		4	20		133	2333	2013	284	50	58	54	60	231	314	72	9				
2003		4	950	567	4	77	221	57	39	28	16	22	17	23	16	5	1			
2004		6	22	4	43	2289	3808	443	110	83	58	219	931	776	303	2	1			
2005		16	451	25	9	754	1007	207	85	102	30	54	257	218	90	44	2			
2006		14	156	160	50	2238	8913	4507	175	94	9	36	229	419	169	9	2			
2007		49	40	1	111	3025	6620	1099	129	260	81	7	93	215	89	21	3			
2008	7	4	92	247	1	936	1561	1326	234	1483	304	537	11	833	201	186	11			
2009	1	17	53	125	9	2582	3816	4105	119	250	45	142	59	819	120	17	1	1		
2010		55	102	5	232	13090	22032	3169	1160	1056	89	82	179	1007	1981	518	9			
2011		29	260	105	46	2805	5511	1278	148	340	145	100	144	591	724	134	3	1		
2012		29	132	35	556	7550	7844	1364	88	53	59	170	1051	2394	1553	432	21			
2013			2	11	126	2163	4664	854	302	609	251	61	110	123	140	64	7			
2014		75	117	6	12	263	465	79	1083	1175	1174	1266	998	2444	3623	817	31	1		
2015		13	67	3	58	1889	4248	534	75	465	750	970	695	1173	1473	453	70	1		
2016		0.16	0.85	0.04	0.39	9	24	4	9	7	3	6	5	6	2	0.25	0.03			

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
2017	0.01	0.2	0.18	0.01	0.14	6	18	7	1	2	3	4	6	10	9	2	0.11	0.03		
2018			0.02		0.43	7	15	2	0.61	0.91	2	4	9	20	26	6	0.04	0.02		0.02
2019		0.1			2	33	38	4	0.2	0.8	2	2	4	23	46	13	1			

SPPGFS

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
2001		2		2	2	4		88	10	104	266	323	1334	2259	460	81				
2002									1	4	90	212	791	843	313	60				
2003						1		3	15	22	21	62	268	426	249	51	2	1		
2004		1				5	2		4	5	18	100	312	483	319	43	1			
2005		1		1	6	1	18	10	9	14	7	101	530	935	705	226	18			
2006			1	1	6	91	89	21	34	75	27	45	335	670	555	197	10	1		
2007					3	4	9	15	12	9	27	25	72	151	144	26	4			
2008		1				1	13	7	16	13	55	106	237	457	302	78	5			
2009		6	5		2	7	8	1		1	154	318	924	1201	1172	324	7			
2010	1			1	5	14	3	1	5	2	31	284	521	717	459	123	10			
2011								3	16	18	5	147	671	792	429	122	13		2	
2012				1	1			2	2	1	8	70	369	468	218	66	3			
2013				1		7	22	6	9		1	42	435	889	480	141	12	1		

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
2014		10	9		1		3	17	62	11	6	85	2453	6703	3168	2115	162	82		
2015				2	1			1	1			32	300	471	316	151	43			
2016			0.04				0.02		0.16	0.06		0.1	2	4	3	1	0.25			
2017		1	0.35				0.2			0.02	0.35	0.52	3	10	10	5	0.33			
2018		0.04	0.02	0.02								0.68	21	66	45	21	3			
2019	0.09	0.69	0.08						0.06	0.08		0.29	8	19	16	4	0.29			

WCSGFS

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1986								0.5												
1987								0.5	0.5	2	0.5									
1988				0.5																
1989							0.5													
1990			1		0.5	1	2	24	54	50	43	12	1							
1991					1	0.5	8	38	183	266	316	48	16							
1992					1		10	38	468	1145	4001	1626	486							
1993						4		2	9	60	155	72	16			0.5				
1994								0.5	0.5	0.5				0.5						
1995								8	36	194	294	398	199	22						

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1996				2		4	3				1	55	610	1574	304					
1997			4			0.5	6	9	4	6	25	108	203	157	40	4				
1998				1		1	5	2		1	2		3							
1999			1			2	5	1	1		1	2	1							
2000							2	2	39	110	216	288	182	92	46	6				
2001		1						1	4	15	28	59	134	240	103	10	4			
2002						1	8	2	1	82	742	3211	5601	5772	1497	167	1			
2003			1				3	52		53	281	1473	3066	4895	3083	309	28			
2004				1			2	2	43	82	743	4569	8600	9514	5692	948	84			
2005		2					24	3	23	25	110	435	1085	1708	792	130	6			
2006		1	2	1		1	4		10	218	232	452	1396	2852	2051	434	72			
2007			2	2		2	1	3	21	159	780	2923	5194	6888	5283	1523	116			
2008		1	1			16	37	36	187	468	1395	3213	9893	22758	18399	6288	575	71		
2009			1			1		4	52	2442	2093	440	331	287	246	129	10			
2010											530	1443	1384	1357	828	149	29			
2011		1	4	1		1	5	254	1015	2034	7613	18918	14478	6445	2006	236	23			
2012			1			1	2		103	9	1267	6545	26337	29361	27333	15857	1505	496		
2013				1			1			1	143	3201	15282	11288	3934	858	6	1		

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
2014		48	457	386	48	3	7	63	21	98	876	11668	30267	39236	10933	1363	111	1		
2015			4	18	14	115	102	18	5			30	262	345	220	86	10	1		1
2016				1	2	49	1413	2439	2065	342	436	4088	24632	33254	14568	3484	508	102		
2017																				
2018																				
2019																				

Table 3.6.1.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. IBTS length-frequency data converted to age-structured index by application of the 2010 common ALK rounded down to 1cm length classes.

EVHOE (0–15)

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1997	23	1877	6003	3741	3911	3938	7066	5867	4218	4832	4259	1461	2428	1699	1214	623
1998	31	12978	15997	6247	6247	5591	7435	5732	3777	4806	4386	1463	2843	1635	1619	676
1999	65	7577	31224	19915	8732	3499	3308	2715	1905	2720	2357	744	1540	975	893	285
2000	216	17676	27730	12586	17986	15525	18740	14297	9737	11041	9490	3208	5160	3797	2556	1266
2001	733	14389	41313	20357	25467	21921	16211	9247	4525	4543	3951	1332	2057	1322	1099	578
2002	43	6720	31728	18455	12784	8389	7115	4767	2851	3429	3018	994	1806	1123	1009	421
2003	64	509	3993	7348	18371	17276	16113	10798	6270	7620	6852	2267	4294	2501	2456	1009
2004	545	1265	1975	1261	1722	2227	4124	3228	2061	2871	3058	1066	2426	939	1509	901

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2005	1070	2101	2603	1497	2099	3015	7160	5992	4177	5301	4873	1642	3144	1796	1776	833
2006	217	35834	26593	4803	2199	1386	1489	1332	947	1521	1484	485	1170	557	725	311
2007	662	16817	122140	65369	16986	4919	4316	2967	1715	2452	2392	788	1802	820	1124	484
2008	3244	41612	258758	168378	134062	77106	37738	18750	8277	9132	8183	2660	4868	2458	2992	1226
2009	328	13338	36829	12194	5626	5982	7788	5443	3054	4443	4230	1364	3079	1382	1965	618
2010	666	33602	83903	35048	21677	23503	34210	23037	12643	16303	14519	4647	9008	4716	5551	1689
2011	370	2212	12471	14982	28729	26114	31844	23915	15535	19473	16964	5542	10176	6534	5663	2262
2012	738	20090	34348	11535	11098	10795	14979	13308	9004	15662	14714	4598	11467	5540	7325	2325
2013	142	1647	3695	3805	10388	9207	11385	11271	8299	14485	13797	4374	10961	5364	6893	2550
2014	2081	1524	2365	3805	12988	17314	27692	24954	17460	27410	25016	7911	18267	9918	11160	3465
2015	6086	19233	175572	108367	35891	17618	33197	26770	17433	25562	22840	7208	15396	8396	9445	3078
2016	1256	7360	21027	18355	32937	28679	43627	41581	30274	49797	45444	14238	33654	17999	20815	6633
2017	234	187	263	50	0.92											
2018	66693	61905	37678	23753	16636	14374	22348	19805	13380	22885	20805	6396	15571	8029	9892	2972
2019	8053	799246	572542	111704	14384	3449	6655	9040	6614	17118	16938	5089	15345	6290	10428	2925

EVHOE (16–29)

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1997	1215	159	659	623	848	768	214	325	543	100	158	51	314	416

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1998	1224	232	904	676	965	1042	327	476	752	187	231	93	461	353
1999	647	62	474	285	477	509	91	246	317	53	62	27	123	197
2000	2604	253	1384	1266	1782	1538	374	714	1022	198	245	99	491	921
2001	959	153	684	578	780	710	304	456	508	254	147	129	290	306
2002	796	117	572	421	617	625	192	324	429	128	113	65	227	244
2003	1838	326	1387	1009	1462	1557	491	763	1104	310	322	155	644	532
2004	917	382	1142	901	1100	1160	817	925	962	726	360	366	715	181
2005	1368	285	1065	833	1140	1184	486	639	877	332	308	201	546	394
2006	445	125	464	311	434	496	245	308	373	184	116	93	242	103
2007	678	204	715	484	668	778	381	467	594	282	198	146	385	150
2008	1876	492	1919	1226	1765	2062	1064	1237	1523	698	420	352	835	460
2009	1114	309	1064	618	956	1295	398	493	957	155	306	78	611	235
2010	3457	690	2957	1689	2745	3490	921	1368	2435	312	669	160	1331	868
2011	4513	597	3197	2262	3408	3485	1077	1762	2339	616	619	388	1126	1414
2012	4142	920	4165	2325	3703	4595	1448	2356	3218	979	908	490	1815	928
2013	4068	981	4205	2550	3816	4494	1872	2650	3227	1384	914	692	1830	944
2014	7107	1227	5977	3465	5645	6813	1636	2961	4634	782	1438	607	2443	1853
2015	5952	1033	5325	3078	4950	5809	1744	2969	3937	1097	1193	763	1965	1551

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
2016	12839	2342	11704	6633	10734	12885	3911	6423	8785	2322	2219	1174	4413	3266
2017														
2018	5679	1014	5603	2972	4952	5987	1726	3238	4008	1258	991	634	1973	1357
2019	4917	1461	6057	2925	4850	6771	2496	3418	4847	1494	1467	849	2730	814

IGFS (0–15)

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2003	55	126	517	929	2306	1859	1433	1244	842	1549	1546	495	1309	576	842	317
2004	120	418	1422	594	396	484	1303	1341	993	1713	1773	589	1491	618	948	390
2005	119	814	982	379	542	665	2302	2884	2364	4129	4140	1360	3431	1569	2142	822
2006	176	850	1572	1988	4719	5051	6885	7522	5179	12177	13018	4151	12178	4448	8189	3297
2007	68	1052	1866	1385	1605	1648	2625	2628	1855	3547	3577	1145	3059	1292	1987	723
2008	44	589	1710	3445	12363	12597	13266	9219	5227	7773	7797	2576	6069	2491	3886	2029
2009	159	268	776	1076	3174	4543	5513	3620	1839	2701	2706	886	2101	818	1373	491
2010	51	374	746	902	3021	6591	17251	13258	8630	10098	8924	3002	5053	3150	2750	1284
2011	25	642	951	598	1500	3223	10092	8432	5965	6989	6169	2095	3519	2333	1835	1014
2012	63	302	673	754	1773	2197	7201	8422	7104	10272	9476	3134	6741	3972	3834	1736
2013	21	373	862	1243	3026	3903	10918	13284	10691	18929	17531	5483	13636	7177	8471	2878
2014	132	29	47	90	423	794	2958	4429	3697	7450	7127	2213	5965	2873	3818	1248

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2015	30	814	3473	1377	516	943	4845	7454	5858	14016	14639	4623	13524	5243	9030	3979
2016	215	282	2400	2888	2682	1761	4458	7773	6173	16077	17088	5386	16240	6066	10938	4231
2017	10228	696697	6080	9322	16417	11347	9585	8818	5853	12738	13721	4436	12670	4564	8475	3944
2018	438	273	1086	2052	7920	9719	13658	14344	10383	20166	20022	6346	17086	7532	11049	3955
2019	183	631	450	243	1035	1656	3072	2785	1752	3700	4002	1298	3660	1270	2463	1160

IGFS (16–29)

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
2003	467	148	527	317	462	585	287	324	441	179	151	109	263	96
2004	543	189	584	390	537	672	317	350	525	203	181	103	362	108
2005	1289	400	1283	822	1177	1509	689	703	1154	349	363	175	724	286
2006	3989	1708	5570	3297	4613	6048	3673	3775	4731	2459	1728	1496	2924	605
2007	1072	332	1196	723	1058	1334	553	722	999	387	322	193	645	207
2008	2183	900	2996	2029	2637	3017	2303	2367	2409	1758	763	917	1451	424
2009	727	261	802	491	707	955	390	433	738	217	255	109	508	128
2010	2303	414	1616	1284	1786	1832	742	897	1330	395	371	197	742	715
2011	1683	267	1165	1014	1352	1212	568	780	873	441	245	225	488	552
2012	2907	548	2360	1736	2447	2518	1096	1491	1807	781	498	392	991	850
2013	5165	980	4941	2878	4530	5265	1784	2964	3613	1312	941	666	1862	1291

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
2014	2146	499	2236	1248	1967	2437	883	1317	1717	598	480	308	941	478
2015	4494	1690	6438	3979	5486	6393	3990	4977	4886	3470	1767	2000	3002	743
2016	5302	2226	7389	4231	6036	8062	4880	4910	6258	3105	1902	1596	3719	819
2017	4195	1923	6278	3944	5266	6491	4624	4744	5168	3422	1778	1896	3186	640
2018	6037	1863	6800	3955	5887	7590	3544	4077	5658	2144	1691	1104	3320	1222
2019	1197	554	1821	1160	1538	1862	1298	1402	1485	1025	512	548	956	174

SPNGFS (0–15)

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1991	1	1403	881	103	15	6	5	3	2	2	2	0.62	0.98	0.78	0.5	0.18
1992	104	4609	1830	95	17	13	41	53	36	103	156	57	175	37	120	64
1993	1751	5508	2424	164	50	19	6	3	2	2	2	0.67	1	0.79	0.56	0.29
1994	73	10576	12411	3844	643	57	35	17	5	5	4	1	2	1	2	0.27
1995	196	4230	1525	107	66	51	64	48	30	41	35	11	22	14	13	4
1996	898	6707	2908	584	554	254	109	66	38	72	68	20	54	23	36	11
1997	1352	7306	5446	1609	680	249	203	121	67	69	56	18	22	18	11	4
1998	13	4493	3640	638	175	100	79	58	37	55	53	17	40	19	25	9
1999	78	4258	1802	116	93	80	113	121	85	191	195	61	175	70	117	35
2000	5782	1661	1324	346	518	553	750	537	315	443	379	116	237	139	146	37

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2001	73	5952	3099	309	205	161	197	190	149	199	175	58	115	77	62	25
2002	24	3316	1395	104	54	43	55	63	47	98	88	26	70	37	46	10
2003	1521	203	155	38	26	16	14	10	5	9	9	3	7	3	4	2
2004	32	4268	2243	177	83	68	171	219	186	303	279	89	209	118	125	37
2005	492	1253	702	108	78	46	51	60	51	84	78	25	59	33	35	15
2006	330	7296	7378	1191	85	34	36	56	44	116	112	33	100	43	68	14
2007	90	6646	3990	367	180	106	37	30	18	55	54	16	50	20	35	8
2008	343	1736	1886	629	908	597	329	178	62	202	183	47	158	53	122	28
2009	195	4487	5078	1085	167	103	78	71	26	174	155	37	147	56	113	9
2010	162	24558	13572	1504	792	346	101	85	41	222	365	132	436	76	306	146
2011	394	5730	3656	431	244	163	94	77	38	141	182	61	198	48	140	50
2012	196	11653	5359	384	62	55	160	276	202	620	657	201	638	228	440	140
2013	13	4763	2946	446	439	276	110	59	30	45	49	17	44	16	28	16
2014	198	542	611	767	1131	910	875	626	323	711	913	317	926	228	635	271
2015	83	4207	2430	248	462	516	616	432	233	403	463	158	419	125	281	130
2016	1	23	17	7	6	4	4	3	2	2	2	0.65	1	0.75	0.93	0.24
2017	0.39	16	14	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	1	3	1	2	0.76
2018	0.02	15	9	1	1	1	3	3	2	5	7	2	7	2	5	2

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2019	0.1	53	23	1	0.98	1	2	2	1	5	8	3	10	2	7	3

SPNGFS (16–29)

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1991	0.48		0.25	0.18	0.3	0.25		0.12	0.12		3	3		0.18
1992	56	45	94	64	76	114	98	61	102	49	35	25	71	4
1993	0.58	0.09	0.28	0.29	0.38	0.37	0.09	0.09	0.28		0.09		0.18	0.2
1994	0.87	0.05	0.8	0.27	0.65	0.84	0.05	0.38	0.47		0.05		0.09	0.22
1995	9	0.91	7	4	7	7	1	4	5	0.8	0.91	0.4	2	3
1996	18	5	22	11	18	23	9	15	16	8	4	4	9	3
1997	11	0.14	6	4	7	6	0.14	3	3		0.14		0.27	4
1998	15	4	14	9	13	17	6	7	12	3	5	3	8	4
1999	58	18	65	35	55	77	25	34	57	14	18	7	37	10
2000	91	10	78	37	69	85	18	39	53	7	9	3	18	25
2001	53	6	34	25	38	38	11	17	25	4	5	2	11	17
2002	25	3	24	10	20	26	4	12	16	2	3	0.9	7	6
2003	2	0.83	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	0.73	0.5	1	0.42
2004	85	14	63	37	61	76	14	25	52	0.4	14	0.2	28	23
2005	24	4	22	15	22	22	9	16	15	9	4	4	8	6

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
2006	32	8	35	14	27	42	9	15	29	2	8	0.9	15	6
2007	15	4	20	8	15	22	7	11	15	4	4	2	8	2
2008	36	10	81	28	54	73	32	63	47	37	9	19	18	0.28
2009	34	6	58	9	34	62	8	29	37	3	6	2	11	1
2010	130	91	206	146	178	245	145	135	213	104	90	52	180	4
2011	59	33	84	50	68	103	48	45	85	27	33	14	66	4
2012	198	73	266	140	215	295	122	161	220	86	71	43	141	26
2013	16	7	21	16	19	22	16	17	18	13	6	6	13	3
2014	291	168	402	271	348	488	259	240	412	163	165	82	329	25
2015	138	74	193	130	166	221	140	127	185	91	67	46	134	17
2016	0.53	0.09	0.49	0.24	0.43	0.56	0.13	0.24	0.38	0.05	0.09	0.02	0.18	0.12
2017	1	0.42	1	0.76	1	1	0.65	0.71	1	0.4	0.42	0.22	0.82	0.15
2018	2	1	3	2	3	4	2	2	3	1	1	0.61	2	0.24
2019	3	2	5	3	4	6	4	3	5	3	2	1	4	0.11

SPPGFS (0–15)

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2001	4	6	74	48	128	163	290	369	271	650	581	165	482	241	324	62
2002		0.03	0.4	4	29	57	162	201	162	294	272	84	214	112	134	40
2003		1	7	12	21	21	50	69	54	125	126	39	114	47	76	23
2004	1	6	3	3	10	18	66	86	65	146	150	47	135	54	89	27
2005	2	18	18	9	13	17	81	132	103	263	283	90	269	98	181	68
2006	2	137	77	33	53	36	51	84	64	180	200	64	197	67	134	53
2007		12	19	12	14	15	22	24	16	41	47	15	47	15	32	11
2008	1	9	15	13	25	35	72	79	53	130	135	42	124	46	85	27
2009	11	13	5	5	45	91	228	263	197	390	429	143	394	144	257	109
2010	1	19	5	4	15	41	156	167	121	236	236	75	201	84	131	46
2011		0.42	7	11	17	22	109	159	133	261	256	81	216	100	138	48
2012	1	1	2	2	4	10	57	86	72	149	143	44	121	57	78	26
2013	1	19	17	6	3	5	49	103	80	235	239	72	226	88	155	47
2014	19	4	31	38	20	14	219	597	438	1632	1647	478	1602	603	1126	417
2015	2	1	1	0.77	0.84	3	35	67	56	136	142	45	132	52	88	37
2016	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.09	0.06	0.03	0.19	0.45	0.36	1	1	0.36	1	0.4	0.77	0.29
2017	1	0.12	0.08	0.01	0.11	0.19	0.51	0.91	0.58	2	3	0.93	3	0.85	2	1
2018	0.08				0.01	0.07	2	5	4	16	17	5	17	6	12	5

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2019	0.77		0.02	0.04	0.06	0.05	0.74									

SPPGFS (16–29)

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
2001	158	21	170	62	133	183	29	87	112	16	21	8	42	33
2002	80	14	73	40	66	81	20	38	55	12	14	6	28	20
2003	38	12	43	23	36	50	17	24	36	10	12	6	23	7
2004	45	15	49	27	42	59	19	24	44	9	14	4	29	8
2005	88	34	115	68	97	126	62	74	97	45	32	23	64	13
2006	63	26	88	53	74	94	49	60	73	39	26	20	50	8
2007	15	7	19	11	16	23	11	10	19	5	7	3	13	2
2008	40	14	51	27	42	57	24	30	43	16	14	8	27	6
2009	137	54	161	109	146	183	88	102	145	65	53	32	107	23
2010	69	22	79	46	69	89	37	47	66	25	21	12	42	13
2011	78	21	82	48	73	91	37	49	66	24	20	12	41	17
2012	43	10	46	26	40	50	18	28	35	13	10	7	20	9
2013	71	23	93	47	75	102	41	56	74	28	22	15	44	11
2014	476	160	791	417	626	739	420	632	530	423	185	252	288	61
2015	44	19	63	37	52	67	47	45	52	30	14	15	29	8

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
2016	0.36	0.16	0.51	0.29	0.41	0.57	0.34	0.32	0.45	0.2	0.14	0.1	0.27	0.05
2017	0.92	0.49	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0.45	0.5	0.91	0.08
2018	5	2	9	5	7	9	5	6	7	4	2	2	4	0.53
2019		0.73								0.75	0.7	0.37	1	0.21

WCSGFS (0–15)

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1986			0.38	0.12												
1987		0.01	0.58	0.64	1	0.76	0.18	0.05	0.01							
1988	0.5															
1989		0.3	0.2													
1990	1	2	10	21	46	39	31	16	7	5	4	2	0.76	0.96	0.12	0.3
1991		2	23	52	175	185	193	105	45	36	28	9	5	5	2	1
1992		2	34	115	616	975	1952	1270	712	662	524	178	157	152	61	41
1993		2	2	4	23	41	80	52	29	26	21	7	6	6	2	2
1994		0.01	0.15	0.34	0.48	0.33	0.13	0.06	0.01	0.09	0.08	0.02	0.08	0.03	0.06	
1995		0.21	3	15	74	114	190	151	103	121	101	33	54	42	27	11
1996	2	5	2	0.03	1	6	67	153	112	391	353	95	318	144	224	29
1997	4	4	11	6	12	22	63	62	47	69	60	19	40	25	23	7

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1998	1	4	4	0.67	1	1	0.72	0.65	0.56	0.45	0.38	0.15	0.15	0.22		0.08
1999	1	5	3	0.8	0.47	0.58	1	0.7	0.4	0.31	0.25	0.09	0.05	0.08		0.02
2000		2	16	41	124	143	179	116	65	68	59	20	30	19	16	7
2001	1	0.11	2	5	17	21	40	44	30	70	67	20	58	25	39	9
2002		6	8	35	291	631	1838	1814	1320	2185	1935	594	1386	781	858	225
2003	1	2	42	28	127	272	867	971	691	1498	1519	476	1339	536	892	248
2004	1	2	16	57	327	770	2590	2686	1983	3447	3359	1079	2693	1240	1707	569
2005	2	15	19	19	53	93	276	325	236	519	501	153	429	188	286	76
2006	4	4	12	39	183	196	341	423	294	781	834	261	795	283	543	172
2007	4	3	14	56	339	638	1707	1727	1220	2309	2385	775	2056	820	1341	522
2008	2	41	110	208	689	989	2324	3054	2082	6013	6662	2108	6560	2164	4517	1712
2009	1	2	100	387	1816	1538	759	363	137	139	136	46	95	43	58	32
2010				17	160	347	785	626	398	580	549	179	394	189	245	87
2011	6	31	531	1086	3514	5387	10238	7369	4589	4924	4157	1403	2004	1489	988	477
2012	1	5	28	97	469	1148	4804	6462	5298	9990	10765	3610	9632	3810	6155	3487
2013	1	0.6	0.43	5	101	381	2420	3378	3003	4670	4228	1361	3064	1852	1769	647
2014	891	55	60	67	509	1549	6999	8472	6502	12849	11622	3475	9135	4722	5898	1390
2015	22	173	73	7	2	3	31	57	49	106	108	34	97	41	63	25

Year	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2016	1	946	2978	1730	751	680	3544	5695	4735	10264	9850	3016	8414	3926	5481	1626
2017																
2018																
2019																

WCSGFS (16–29)

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1986														
1987														
1988														
1989														
1990	0.63		0.06	0.3	0.33	0.06		0.03	0.03					0.3
1991	3		1	1	2	1		0.5	0.5					1
1992	96		30	41	56	30		15	15					41
1993	4		1	2	2	1	0.05	0.6	0.5	0.1		0.05		2
1994	0.02		0.03		0.02	0.03		0.02	0.02					
1995	27	1	13	11	17	14	1	6	8		1		2	10
1996	94	14	112	29	78	126	14	49	77		14		28	15
1997	17	2	12	7	12	13	2	6	9	0.8	2	0.4	4	5

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
1998	0.15			0.08	0.08									0.08
1999	0.05			0.02	0.02									0.02
2000	14	2	8	7	10	10	3	4	7	1	2	0.6	4	5
2001	19	5	21	9	17	25	7	10	18	2	5	1	9	3
2002	528	68	446	225	405	497	85	214	317	33	68	17	136	140
2003	446	143	480	248	401	592	182	215	439	62	140	31	280	77
2004	986	267	957	569	866	1129	387	487	832	190	259	95	517	215
2005	144	37	156	76	130	180	51	79	127	26	36	13	72	27
2006	252	100	322	172	261	379	165	176	290	87	93	43	186	35
2007	715	252	835	522	738	934	439	520	719	305	240	152	480	130
2008	2042	894	2945	1712	2424	3210	1695	1969	2499	1258	872	664	1673	247
2009	37	12	43	32	41	42	28	35	33	26	11	13	22	8
2010	149	41	140	87	130	166	64	72	123	30	38	15	75	35
2011	1016	93	520	477	678	590	124	249	388	47	91	24	182	362
2012	3477	1393	4814	3487	4404	4621	3430	4089	3703	3171	1490	1834	2485	658
2013	1296	179	971	647	999	1064	267	524	712	172	179	86	358	382
2014	3236	508	3097	1390	2616	3468	678	1499	2242	273	497	137	994	757
2015	34	11	41	25	36	44	23	28	33	17	10	9	20	8

Year	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
2016	2933	713	3140	1626	2666	3504	1214	1736	2465	697	713	399	1324	616
2017														
2018														
2019														

Table 3.6.3.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Key parameter estimates from the exploratory Schaeffer state space surplus production model. Posterior parameter distributions are provided in Figure 3.6.3.5.

	Mean	SD	2.5	25	50	75	97.5
r	0.34	0.17	0.05	0.21	0.33	0.46	0.72
K	628454	393579	305500	429025	528400	683100	1659925
F _{MSY}	0.17	0.09	0.03	0.11	0.17	0.23	0.36
B _{MSY}	157000	98400	76400	107000	132000	171000	415000
TSB	480000	202000	222000	345000	436000	567000	992000

Table 3.6.4.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Pseudo-cohort derived estimates of fishing mortality (F) and total mortality (Z), in comparison with total catch per year. Pearson correlation coefficient of F vs. catch (tonnes) indicated.

Age	Raised Numbers												
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1	0	0	1575	2415	0	28	301	0	5556	218	1862	314	17427
2	352	5488	15043	11229	2894	893	7148	695	116135	2385	4387	1736	37620
3	2114	21140	65744	72709	41913	5467	156680	49503	32248	10737	8830	2628	9737
4	40851	105575	338931	294382	28148	41278	58522	127520	16588	25114	34448	13610	9944
5	48915	141300	475619	567689	30116	110272	59797	93705	24564	20263	27266	15570	12682
6	62713	195339	543707	878363	175696	146582	68949	67275	26566	18025	21103	14731	12716
7	26132	104031	307333	522703	143967	492078	302967	193061	74115	61229	55189	38686	29513
8	29766	66570	172783	293719	107126	365840	250341	139124	52052	47573	38229	26821	18819
9	56075	53159	155477	276672	77861	271916	212318	121042	44615	42478	32258	23670	15875
10	44875	46893	130148	232122	60022	173486	160137	94225	34264	35150	25716	19395	11359
11	14019	15289	42521	78588	46079	69396	63025	36078	12999	13297	9560	7148	4272
12	32359	21178	61350	114600	40468	40968	41490	24895	9114	9132	7564	5846	2937
13	4848	11854	39609	59932	24352	58888	59380	36309	13362	13774	10922	8183	4256
14	16837	13570	31569	59060	19724	30277	30355	19064	7152	6682	5924	4554	2164
15+	109481	112947	196967	349320	157707	217260	239366	150688	59139	49589	40797	32130	14864

Age	ln(Raised Numbers)												
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1	0	0	7	8	0	3	6	0	9	5	8	6	10
2	6	9	10	9	8	7	9	7	12	8	8	7	11
3	8	10	11	11	11	9	12	11	10	9	9	8	9
4	11	12	13	13	10	11	11	12	10	10	10	10	9
5	11	12	13	13	10	12	11	11	10	10	10	10	9
6	11	12	13	14	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	10	9
7	10	12	13	13	12	13	13	12	11	11	11	11	10
8	10	11	12	13	12	13	12	12	11	11	11	10	10
9	11	11	12	13	11	13	12	12	11	11	10	10	10
10	11	11	12	12	11	12	12	11	10	10	10	10	9
11	10	10	11	11	11	11	11	10	9	9	9	9	8
12	10	10	11	12	11	11	11	10	9	9	9	9	8
13	8	9	11	11	10	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	8
14	10	10	10	11	10	10	10	10	9	9	9	8	8
15+	12	12	12	13	12	12	12	12	11	11	11	10	10
Z (7-14)	0.17	0.33	0.36	0.33	0.29	0.45	0.36	0.37	0.31	0.31	0.33	0.36	0.37
F (M=0.16)	0.01	0.17	0.2	0.17	0.13	0.29	0.2	0.21	0.15	0.15	0.17	0.2	0.21

[illegible]

Table 3.6.5.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Estimates of total stock biomass and F.

Year	TSB.2.5	TSB.50	TSB.97.5	F.2.5	F.50	F.97.5
1991	99831	187300	417490			
1992	164100	291500	625690			
1993	198500	353600	755587			
1994	233002	418600	908197			
1995	201200	360400	771095			
1996	204500	362400	787985			
1997	174702	305750	654895			
1998	235505	410750	880680			
1999	175702	308150	658430			
2000	149902	264100	563787			
2001	163705	282200	597055			
2002	142000	243400	510680			
2003	127000	216600	463282	0.02	0.05	0.09
2004	180905	311700	662297	0.01	0.02	0.03
2005	176100	301700	638880	0.01	0.02	0.03
2006	223500	376800	795895	0.01	0.02	0.03
2007	195202	331650	699292	0.03	0.07	0.11
2008	246300	410450	850965	0.04	0.08	0.14
2009	252702	419300	866795	0.01	0.22	0.36
2010	368712	607300	1270000	0.11	0.24	0.39
2011	326705	544700	1150925	0.03	0.07	0.11
2012	464902	745200	1538900	0.06	0.12	0.19
2013	318805	523300	1094975	0.07	0.14	0.24
2014	147702	240800	507200	0.09	0.19	0.31
2015	174700	290500	613395	0.03	0.06	0.1
2016	125300	210000	438187	0.04	0.09	0.15
2017	224202	369900	778192	0.02	0.05	0.08
2018	226405	374700	786990	0.01	0.03	0.05

Year	TSB.2.5	TSB.50	TSB.97.5	F.2.5	F.50	F.97.5
2019	206502	347350	730597	0.02	0.03	0.05
202	222000	435900	992500			

3.17 Figures

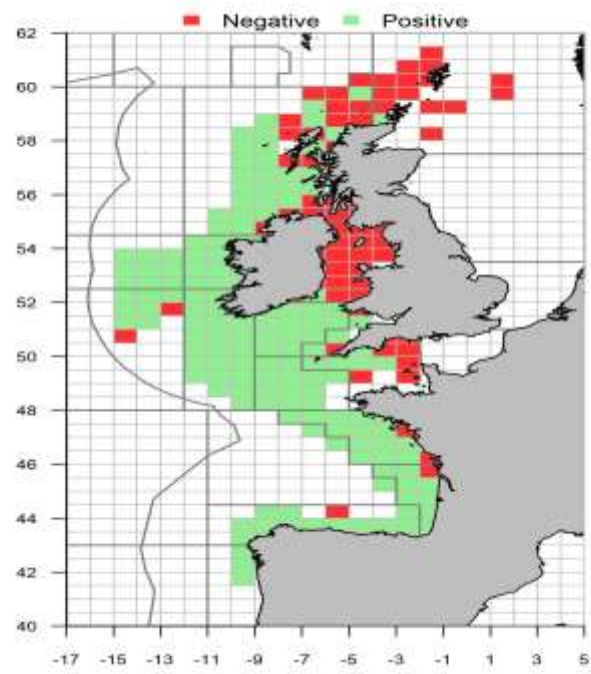


Figure 3.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 4, 27.6, 7, 8 and 9. Distribution of boarfish in the NE Atlantic area based on presence and absence in IBTS surveys (all years).

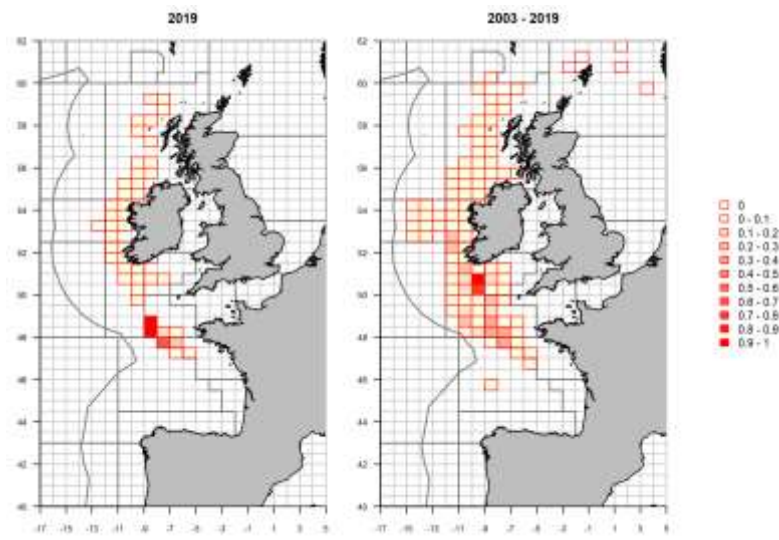


Figure 3.1.2.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Combined Irish boarfish landings 2003-2019 by ICES rectangle (Right). Irish boarfish landings 2019 by ICES rectangle (Left).

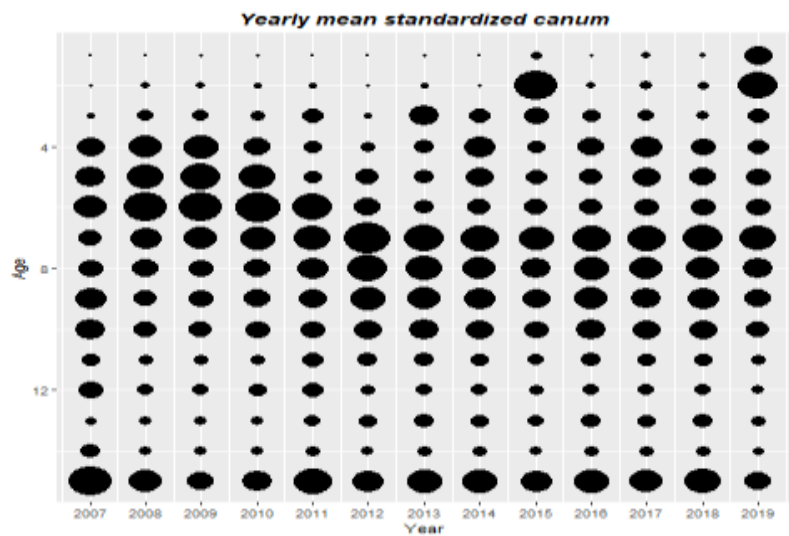


Figure 3.2.1.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Catch numbers-at-age standardised by yearly mean. 15+ is the plus group.

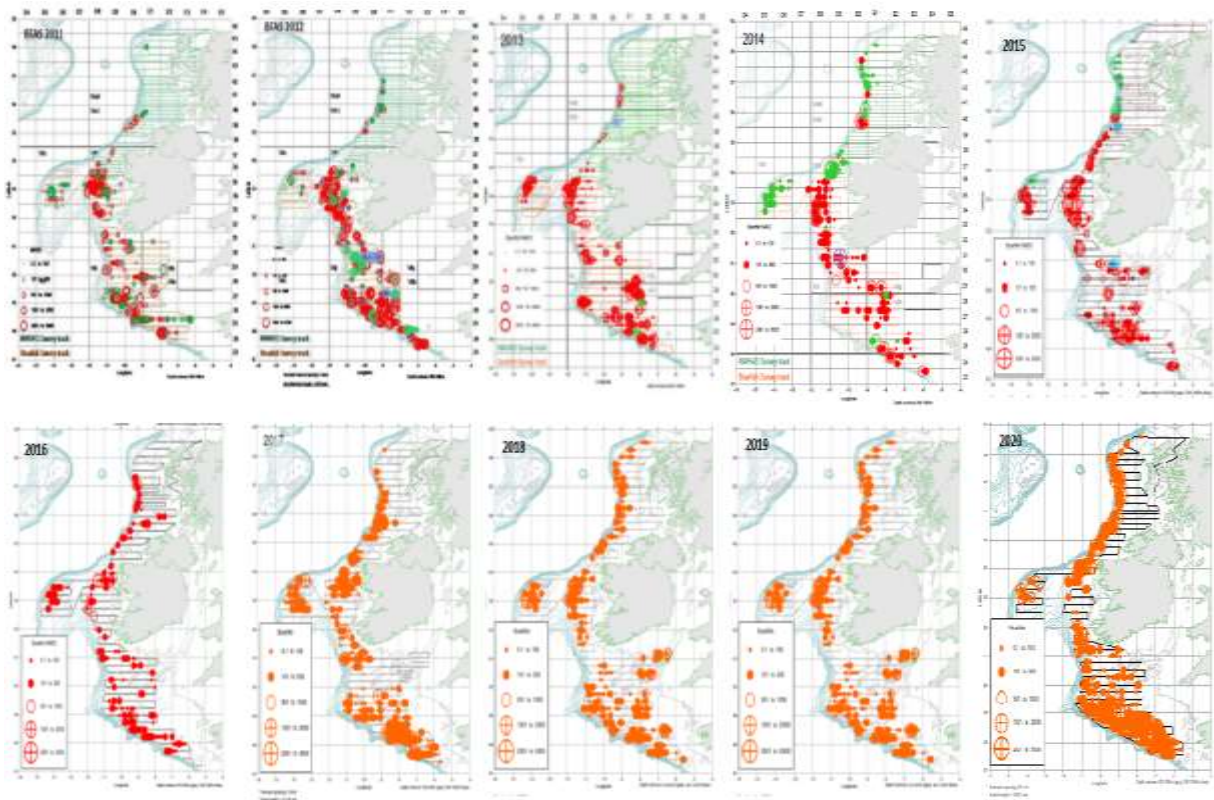


Figure 3.3.1.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Boarfish acoustic survey track and haul positions from acoustic survey 2011-2020.

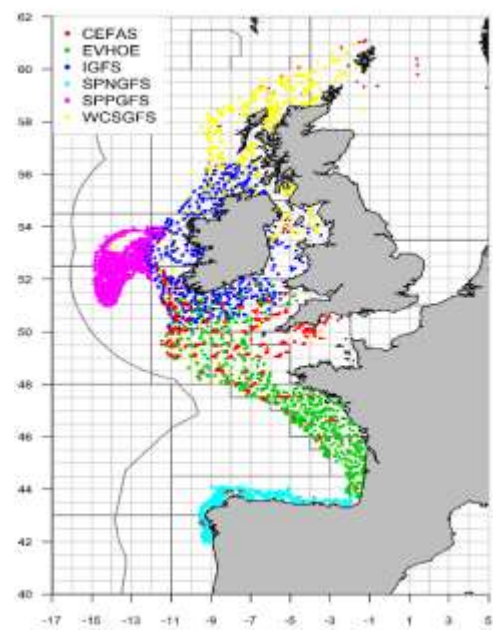


Figure 3.3.2.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. The haul positions of bottom trawl surveys analysed as an index for boarfish abundance. Note the Portuguese Groundfish survey included here was not included in the 2016 assessment.

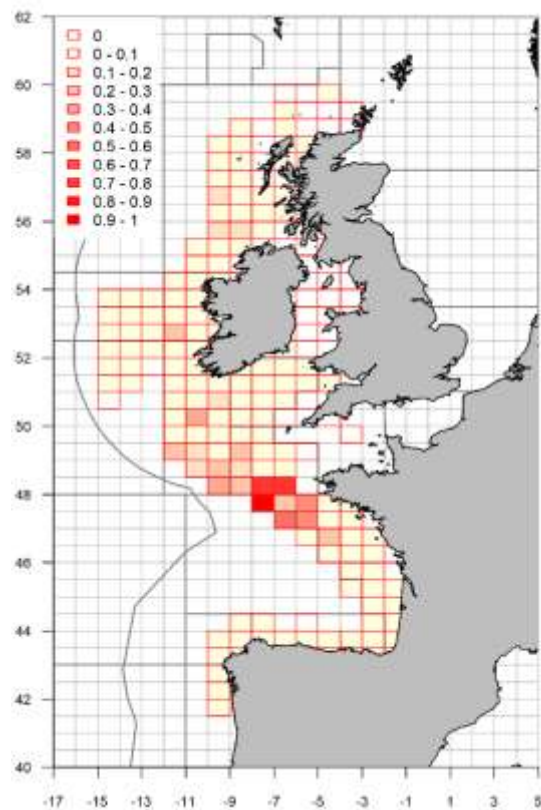


Figure 3.3.2.2. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Distribution of boarfish in the NE Atlantic showing proposed management area.

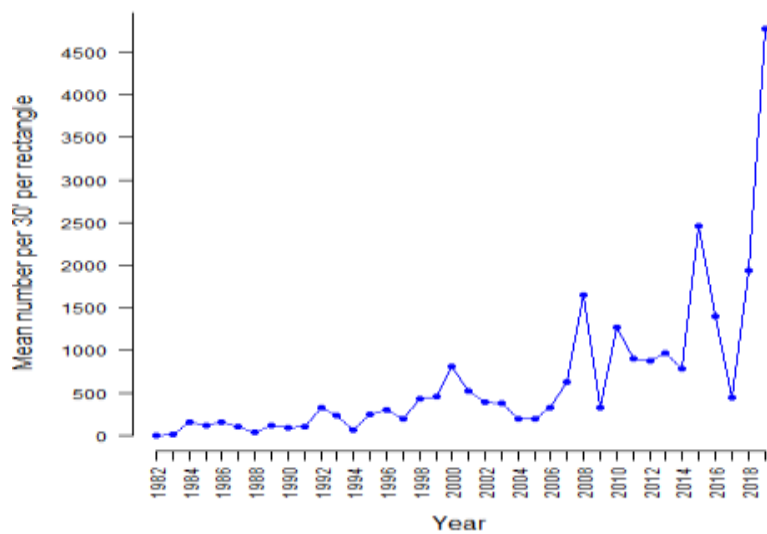


Figure 3.3.2.3. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. CPUE in number per 30-minute haul of boarfish per rectangle in the western IBTS survey 1982 to 2019.

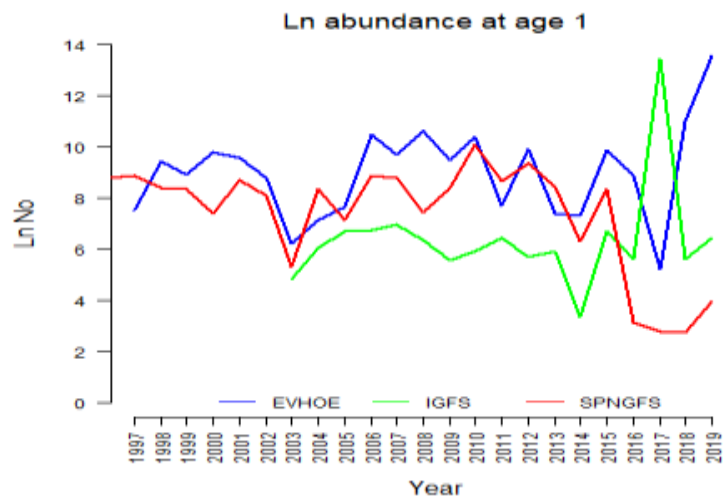


Figure 3.5.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Recruitment-at-age 1, from various IBTS.

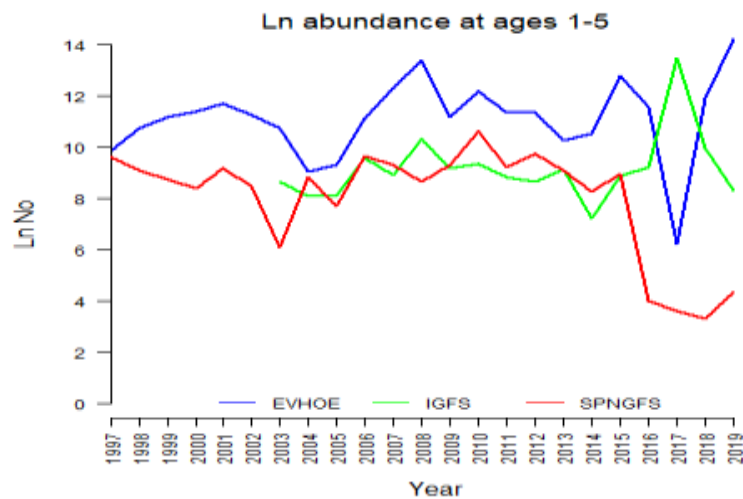


Figure 3.5.2. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Recruitment-at-ages 1-5, from various IBTS.

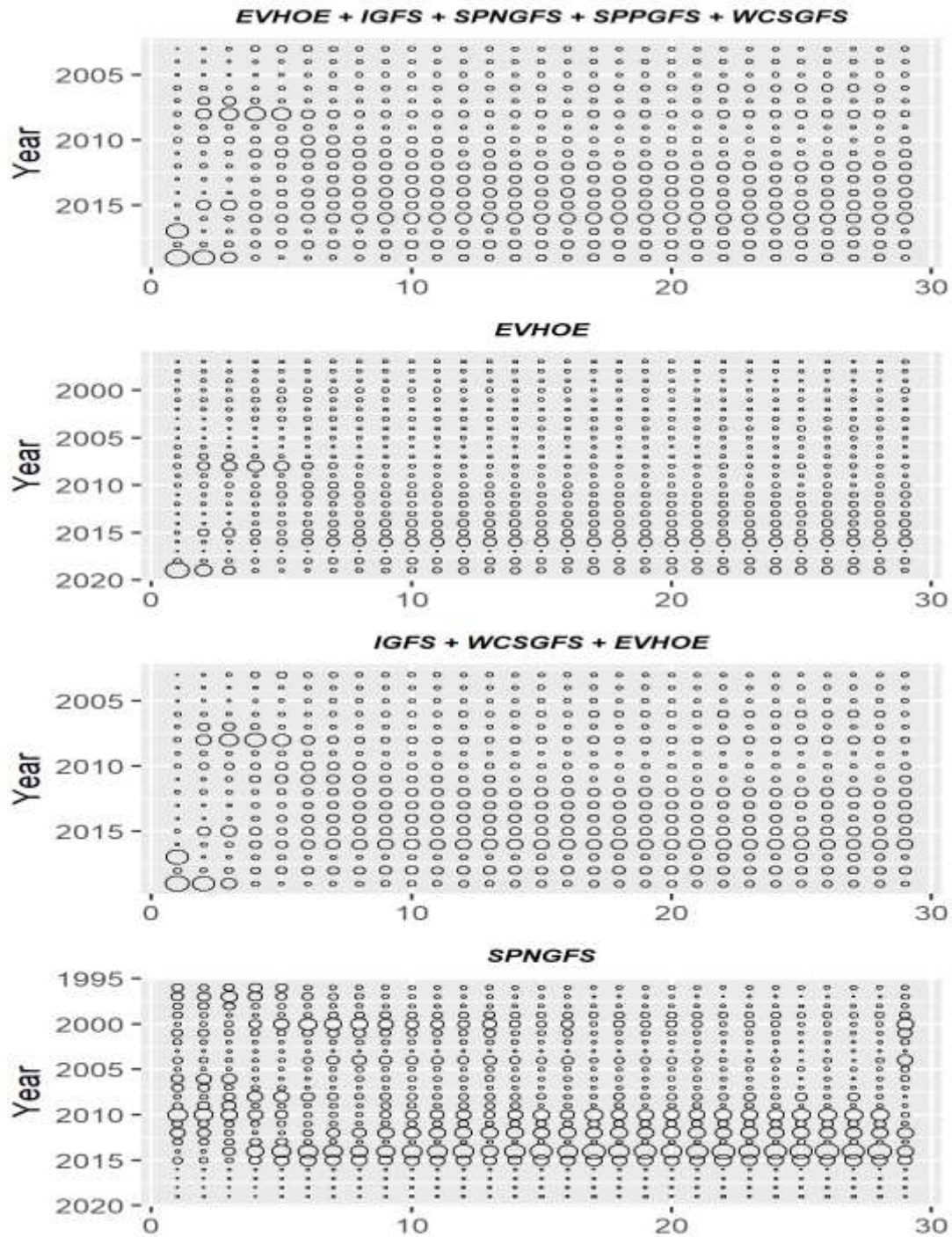


Figure 3.6.1.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Abundance-at-age in constituent western IBTS. Yearly mean standardised abundance-at-age.

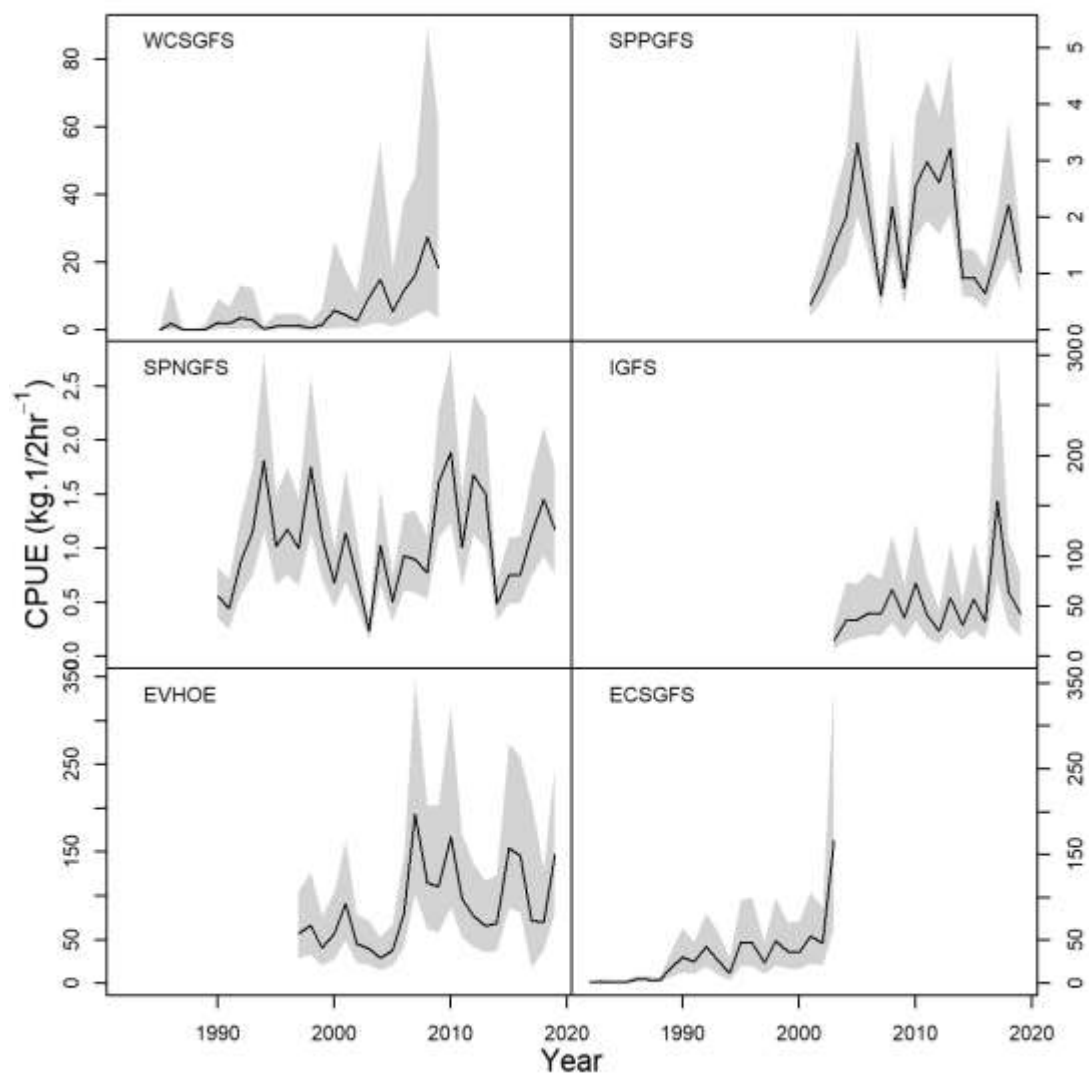


Figure 3.6.1.2. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Boarfish IBTS survey CPUE fitted delta-lognormal mean (solid line) and 95% credible intervals (grey region).

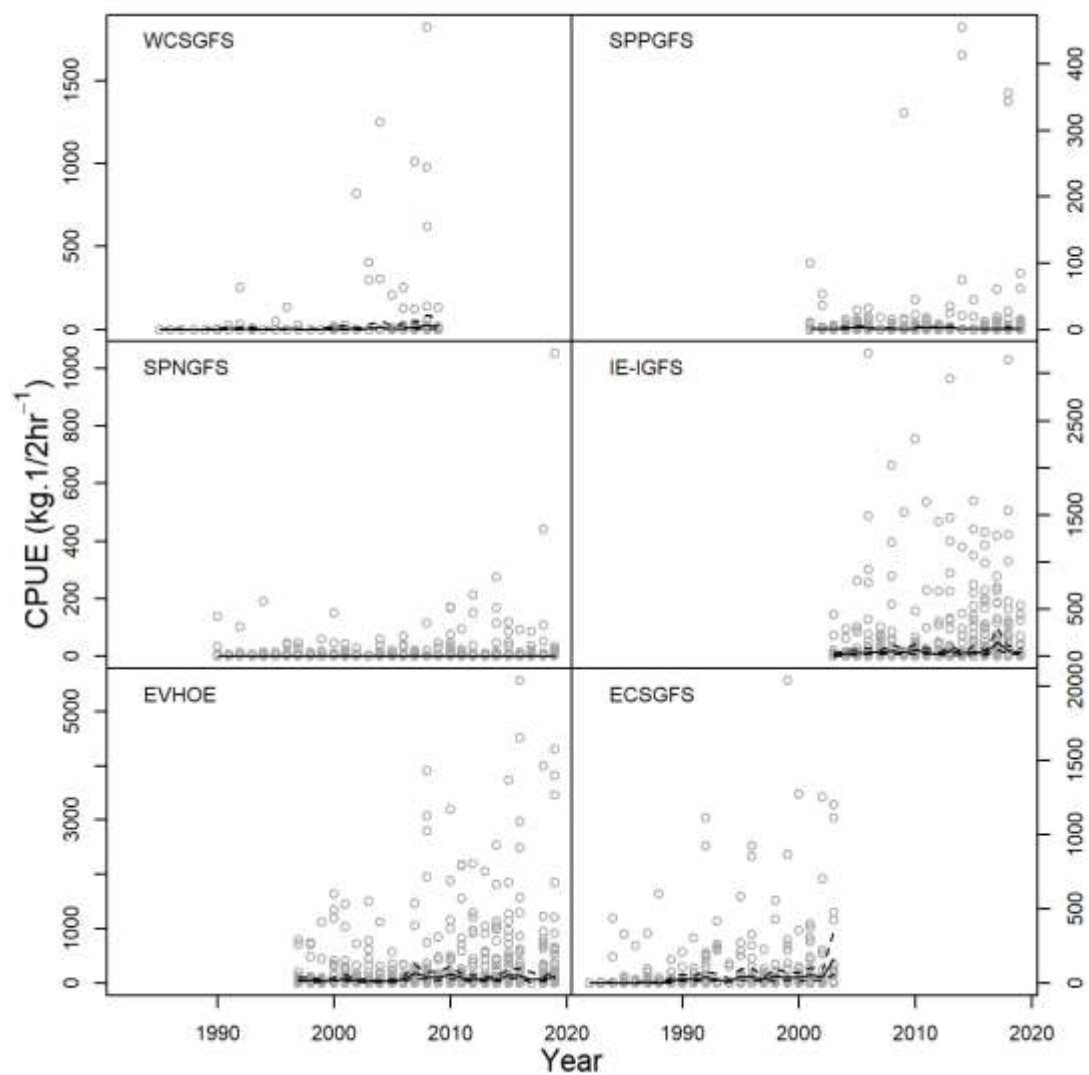


Figure 3.6.1.3. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Boarfish IBTS survey CPUE data (grey points) and fitted delta-lognormal mean (solid line) and 95% credible intervals (dashed lines).

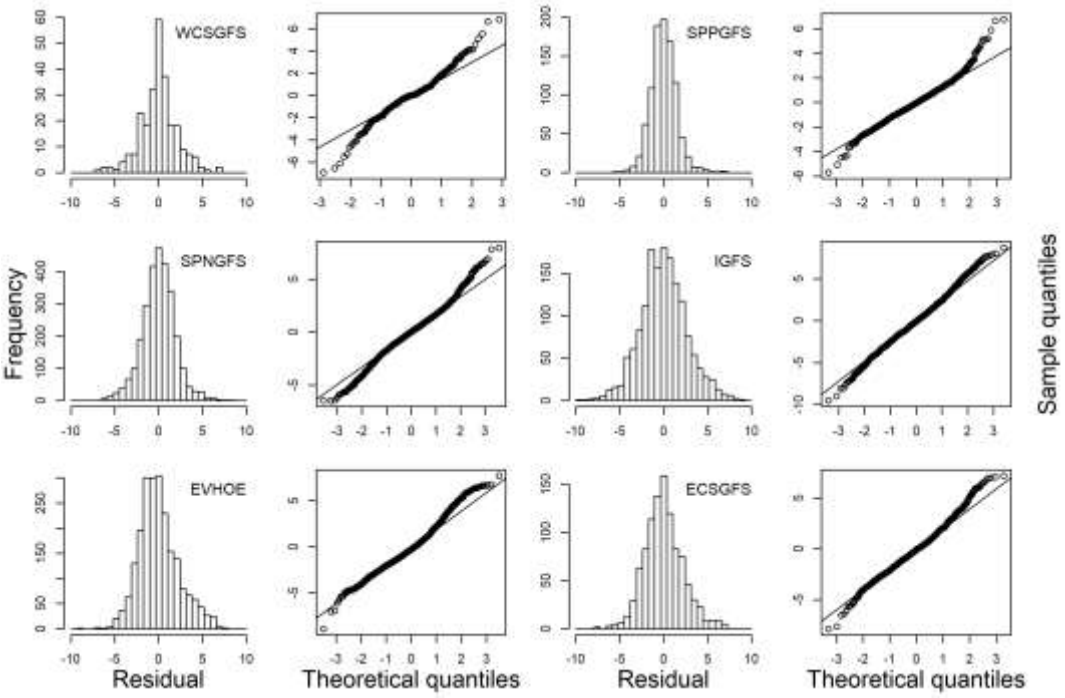


Figure 3.6.1.4. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Diagnostics from the positive component of the delta-lognormal fits

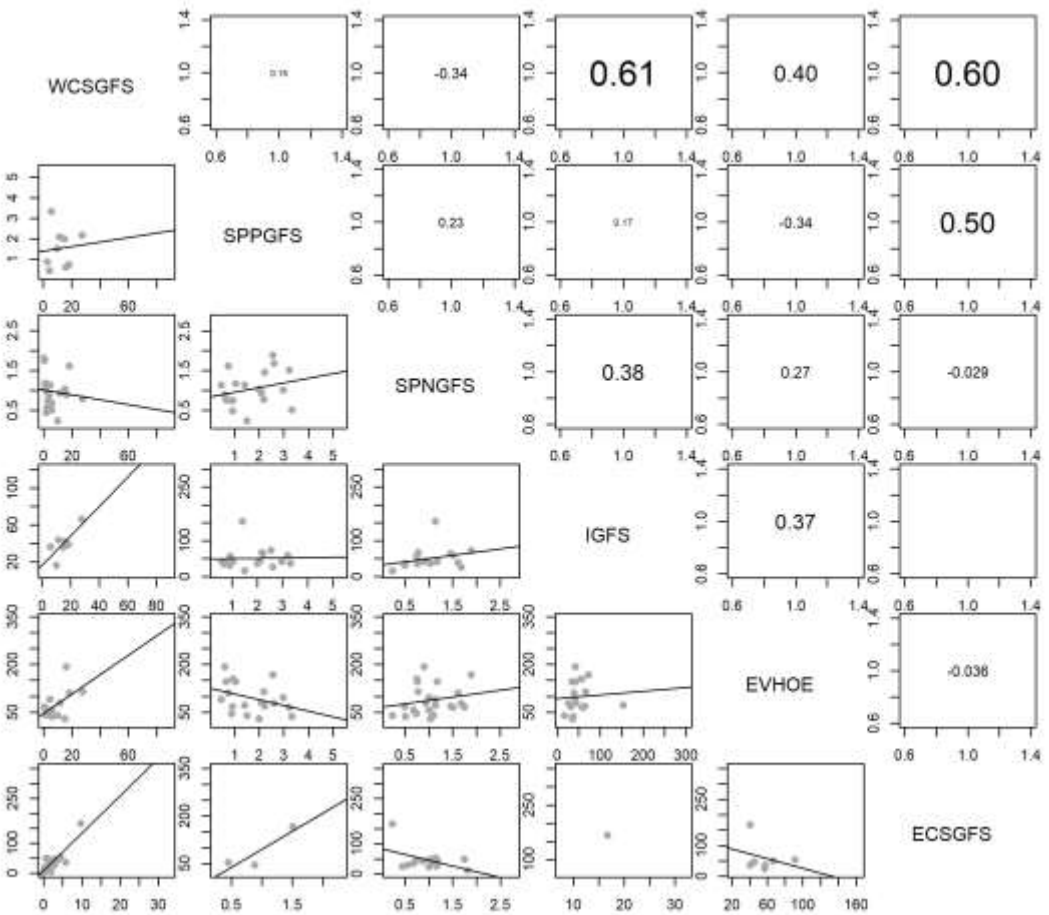


Figure 3.6.1.5. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Pair-wise correlation between the annual mean survey indices.

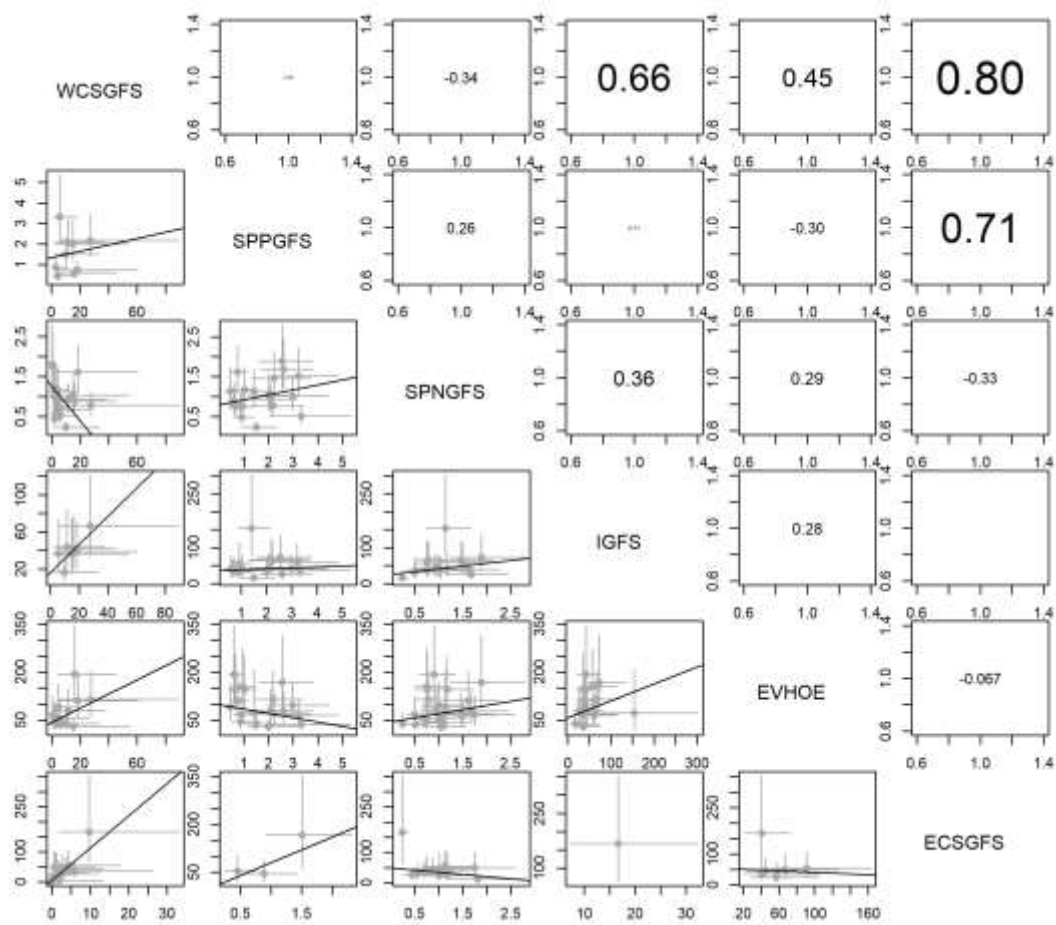


Figure 3.6.1.6. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Weighted correlation between the annual mean survey indices. Correlations are weighted by the sum of the pair-wise variances.

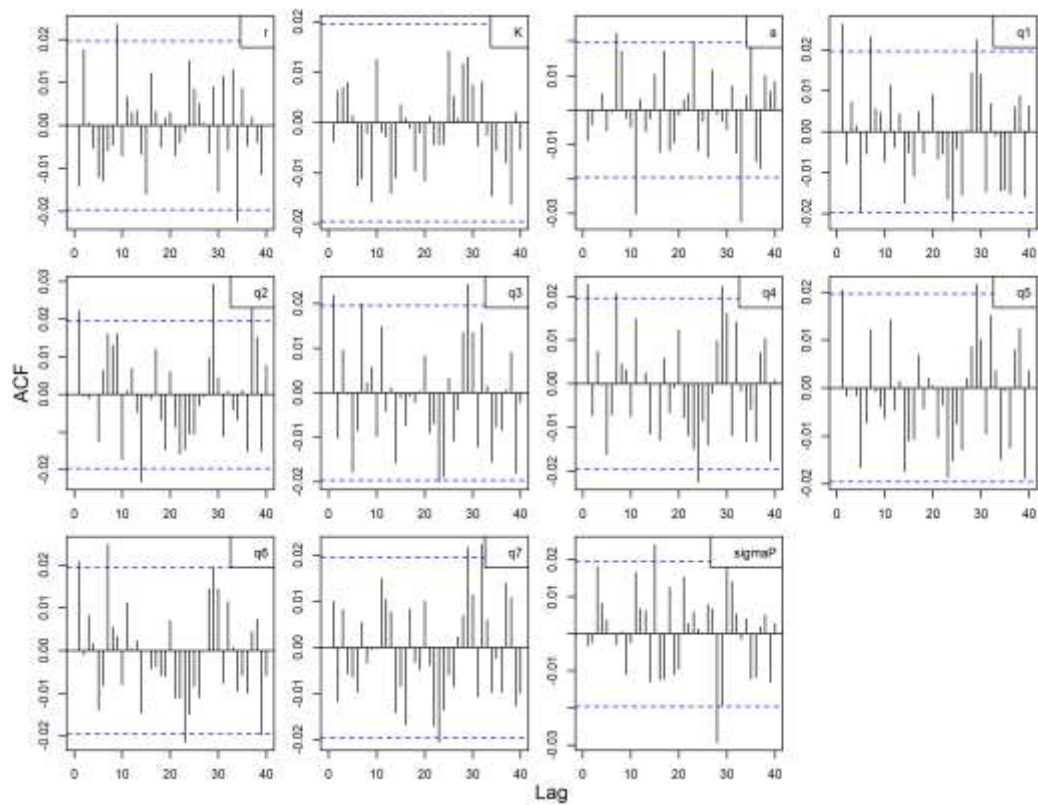


Figure 3.6.3.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Parameters for final run converged with good mixing of the chains.

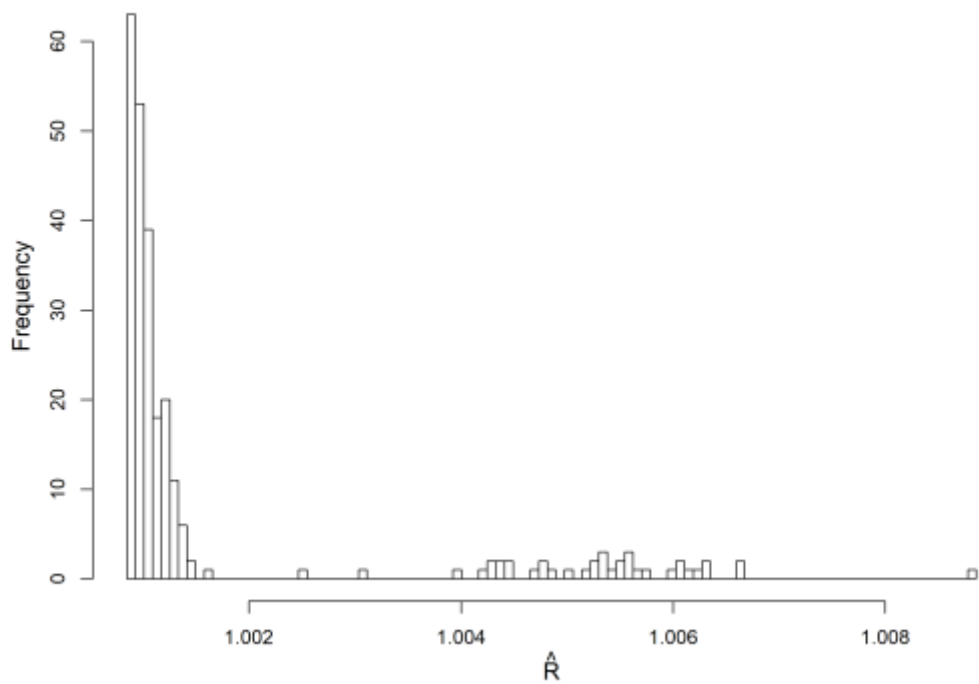


Figure 3.6.3.2. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Rhat values lower than 1.1 indicating convergence.

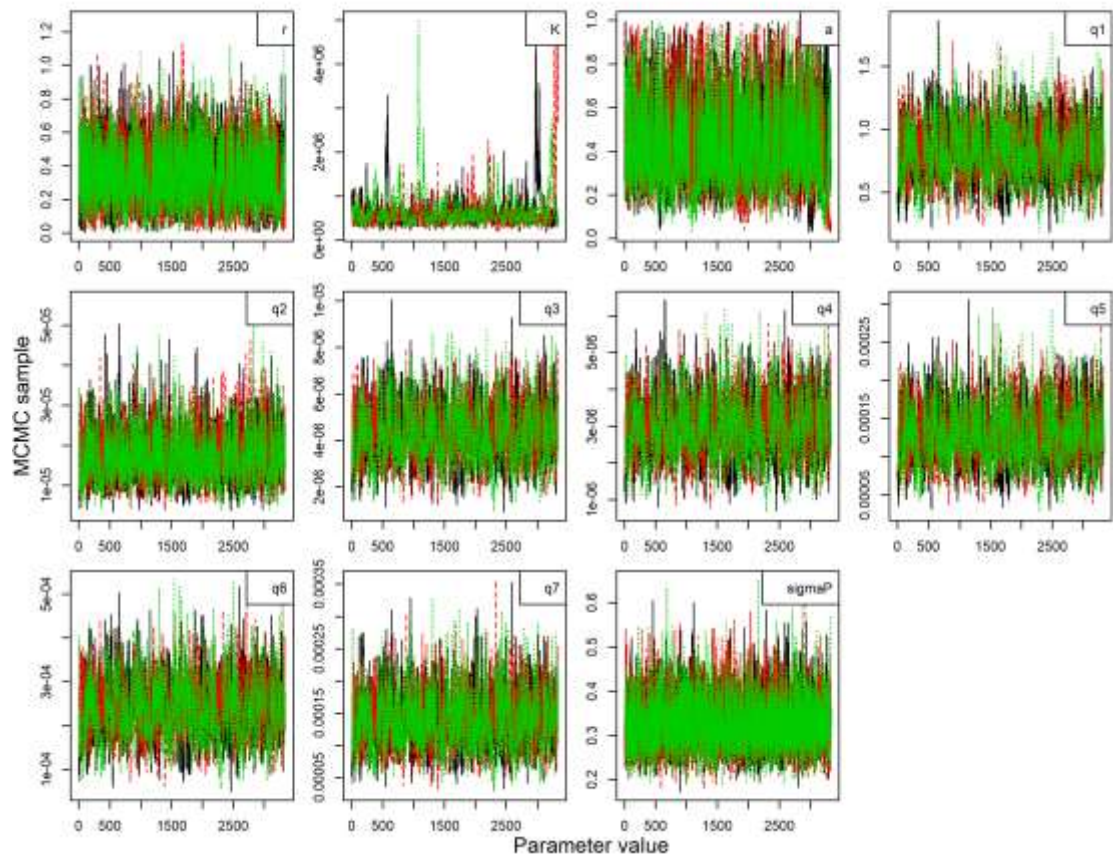


Figure 3.6.3.3. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. MCMC chain autocorrelation for final run.

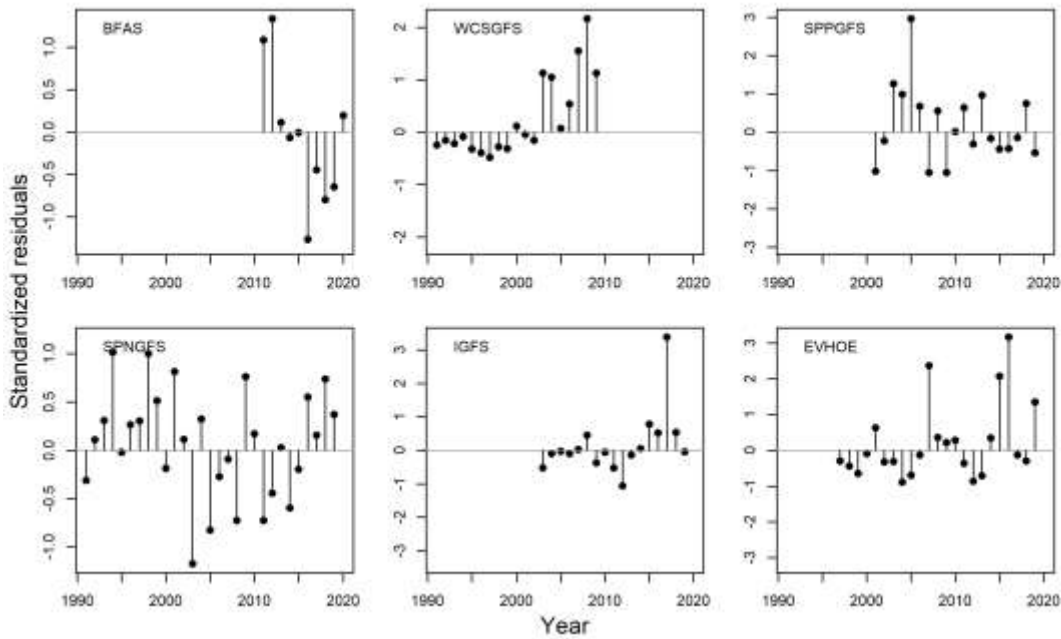


Figure 3.6.3.4. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Residuals around the model fit for the final assessment run.

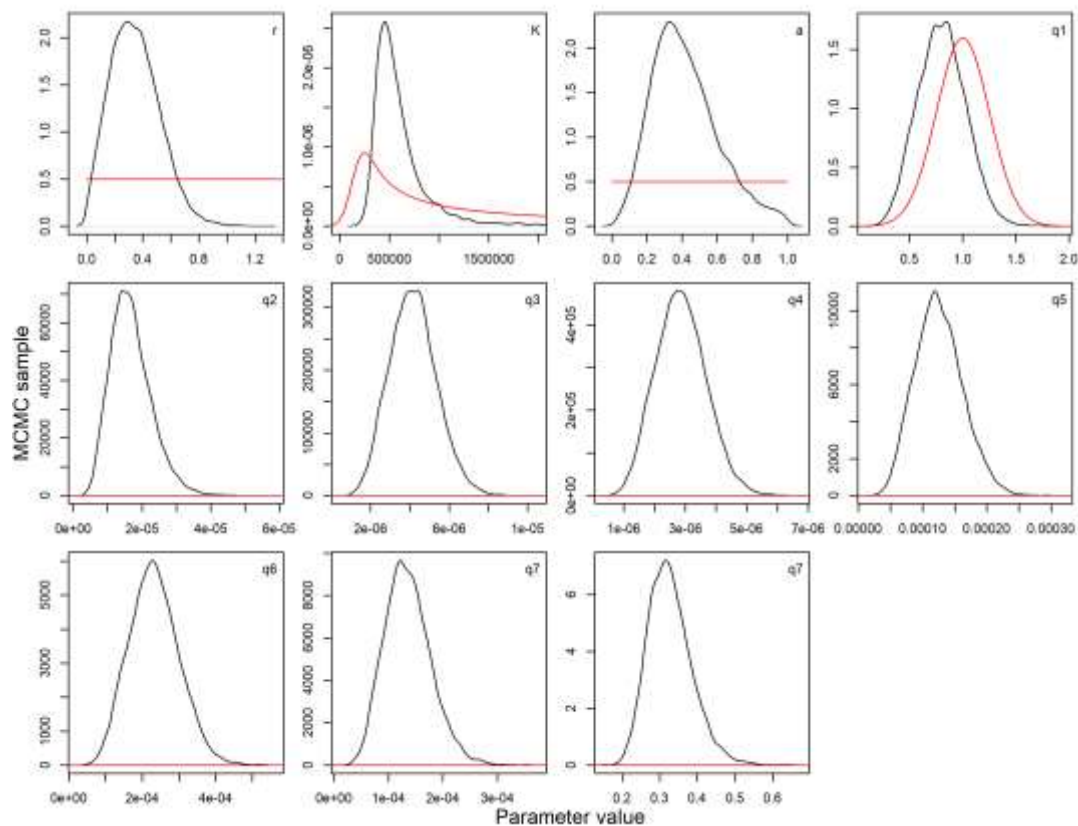


Figure 3.6.3.5. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Prior (red) and posterior (black) distributions of the parameters of the biomass dynamic model.

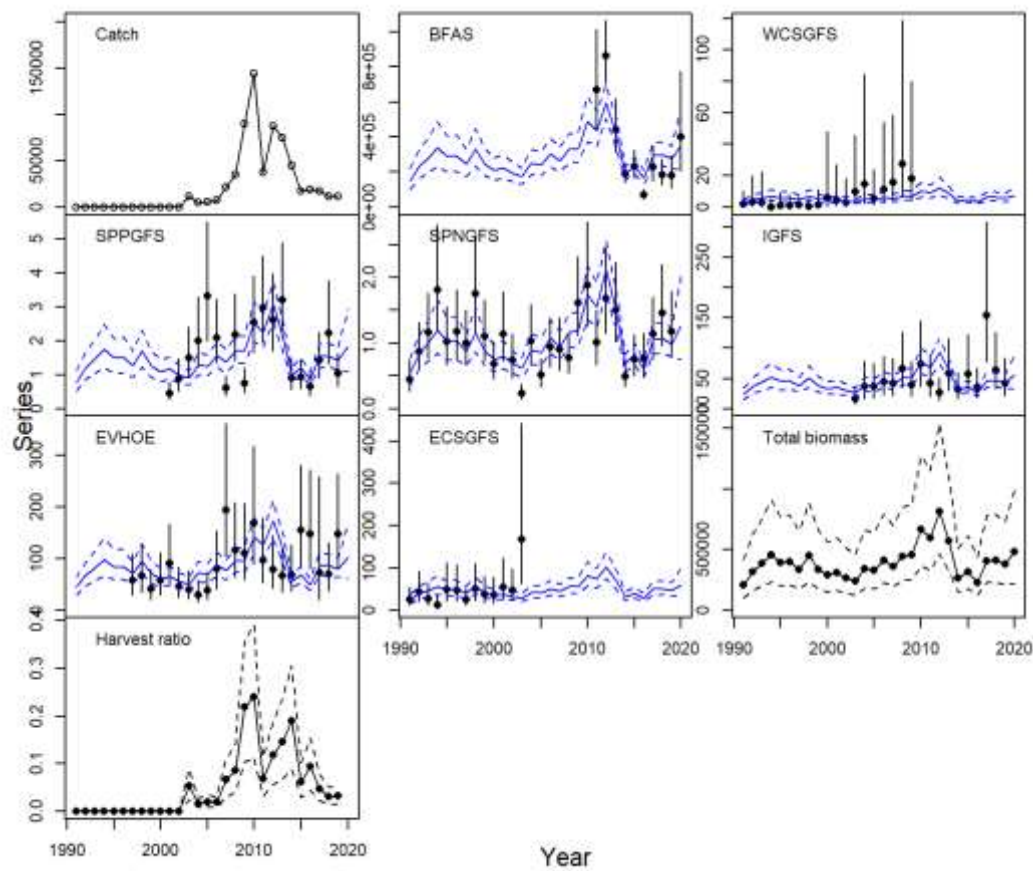


Figure 3.6.3.6. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Trajectories of observed and expected indices for the final assessment run. The stock size over time and a harvest ratio (total catch divided by estimated biomass) are also shown.

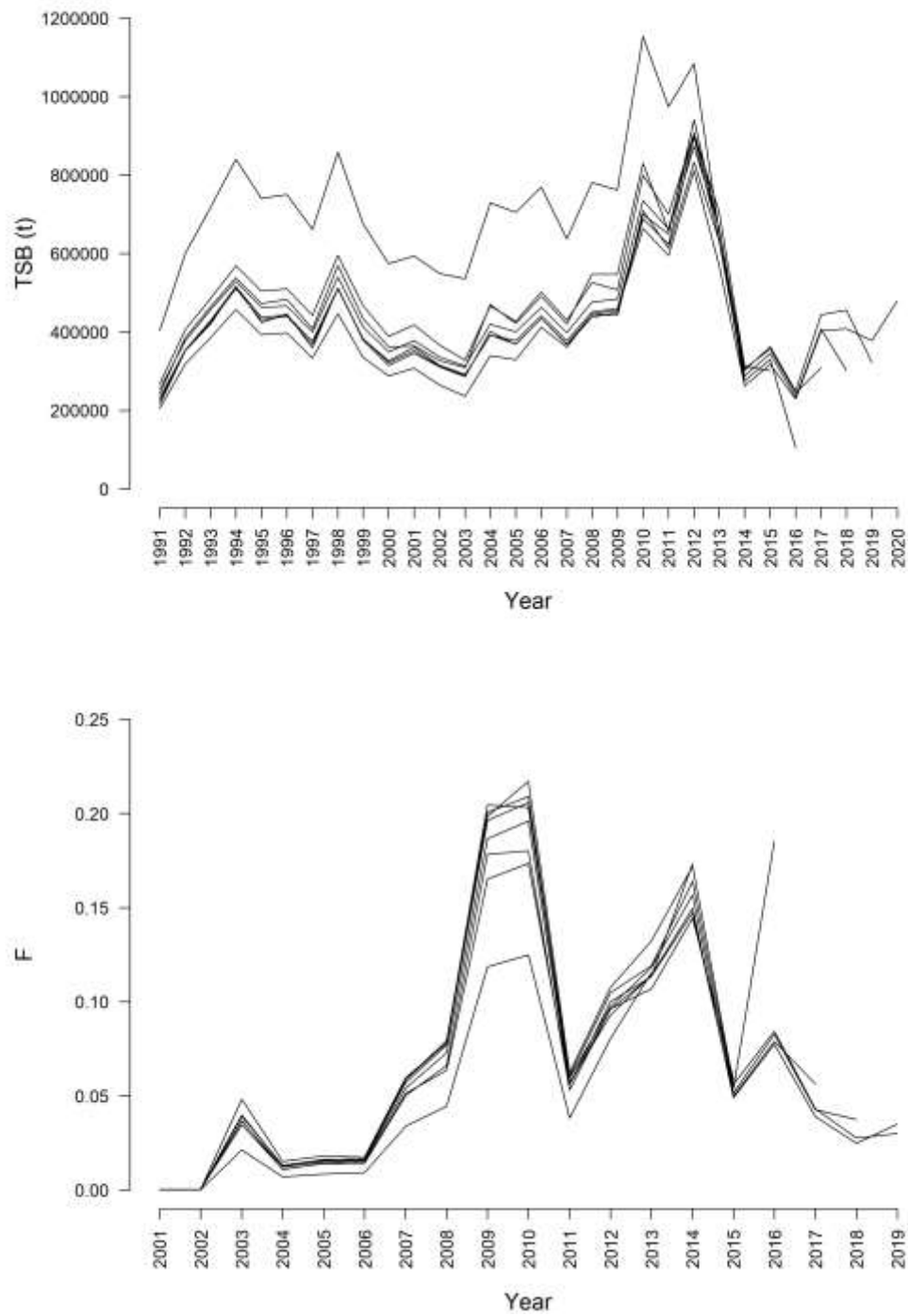


Figure 3.6.3.7. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Retrospective plot of total stock biomass (above) and fishing mortality (below) from the surplus production model in 2013-2019.

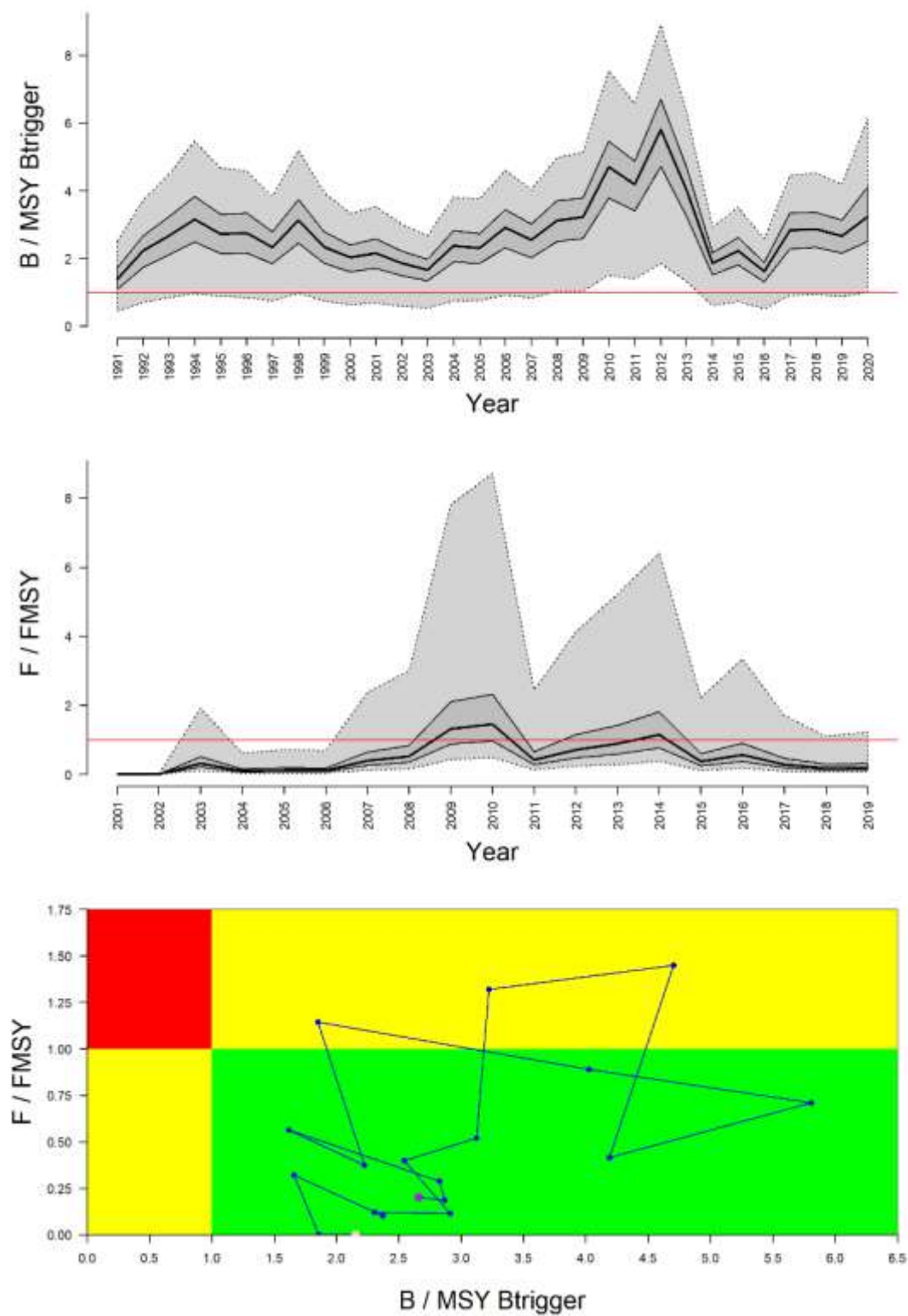


Figure 3.6.6.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Ratios ‘ $B / MSY B_{trigger}$ ’ and ‘ F / F_{MSY} ’ through time and corresponding Kobe plot. Confidence intervals (50 and 95%) are given for the first two panels, the third displays median estimates only with the pink point representing the first point of the time series and the purple point the last.

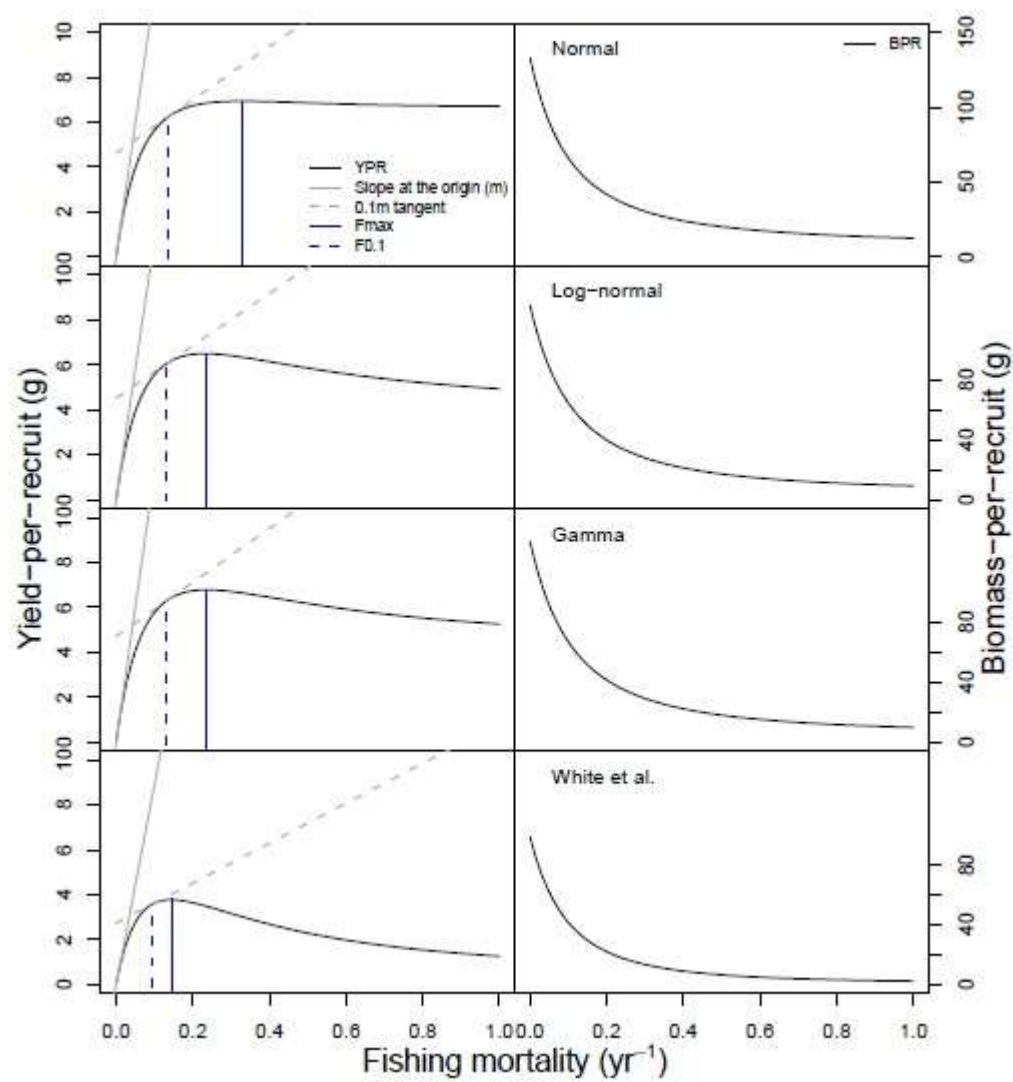


Figure 3.9.1.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Results of exploratory yield per recruit analysis. Beverton and Holt model applied to various fits of the VBGF and for comparison with the VBGF parameters provided by White *et al.* 2011.

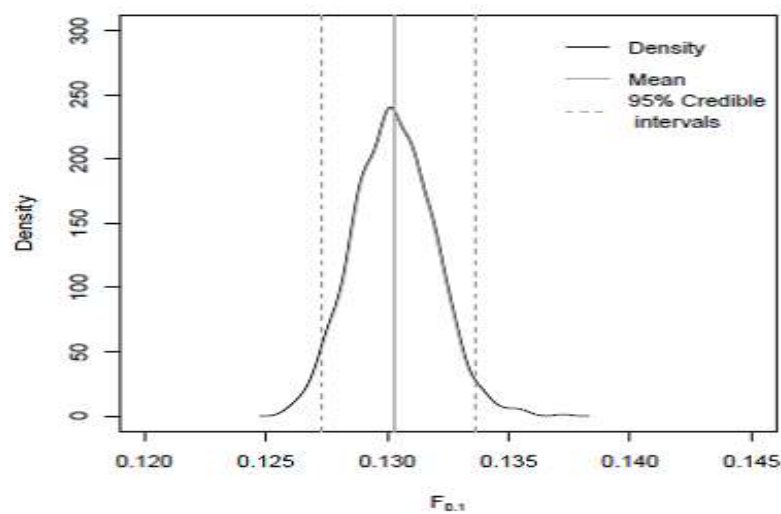


Figure 3.9.1.2. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Sensitivity of estimation of $F_{0.1}$.

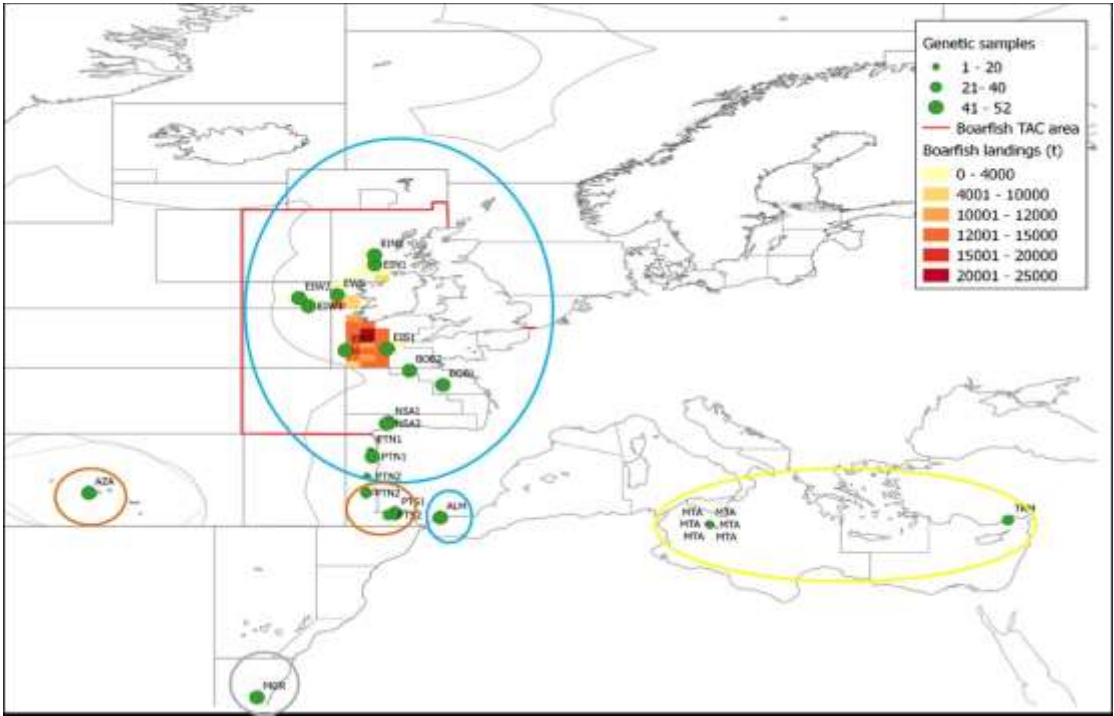


Figure 3.12.1. Boarfish in ICES Subareas 27.6, 7, 8. Boarfish samples included in the genetic stock identification study are indicated in green. Population clusters identified by the STRUCTURE analyses are indicated by colour coded circles.