

## Stock Annex: Blue ling (*Molva dypterygia*) in subareas 1, 2, 8, 9, and 12, and in divisions 3.a and 4.a (other areas)

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Stock specific documentation of standard assessment procedures used by ICES.

**Stock:** Blue ling

**Working Group:** Working Group on Biology and Assessment of Deep-sea Fisheries (WGDEEP)

**Created:**

**Authors:**

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### A. General

#### A.1. Stock definition

Biological investigations in the early 1980s suggested that at least two adult stock components were found within the Area, a northern stock in Subarea 14 and Division 5.a with a small component in 5.b, and a southern stock in Subarea 6 and adjacent waters in Division 5.b. However, the observations of spawning aggregations in each of these areas and elsewhere suggest further stock separation. This is supported by differences in length and age structures between areas as well as in growth and maturity. Egg and larval data from early studies also suggest the existence of many spawning grounds. The conclusion is that stock structure is uncertain within the areas under consideration.

However, as in previous years, on the basis of similar trends in the cpue series from Division 5.b and Subareas 6 and 7, blue ling from these areas has been treated for assessment purposes as a single southern stock. Blue ling in 5.a and 14 has been treated as a single northern stock. All remaining areas are grouped together as “other areas.

#### A.2. Fishery

Blue ling has been an important bycatch in trawl fisheries for mixed deep-water species on Hatton Bank (Division 12.b) although historically there have been directed fisheries on spawning aggregations in that area. Historically there was a directed fishery on spawning aggregations in Subarea 2 but now this species is now only taken as bycatch in Norwegian longline fisheries in this area. In other areas blue ling is taken

in small quantities. Small reported landings in Subareas 8, 9 and 10 probably refer to *Molva macrophthalma*.

### **A.3. Ecosystem aspects**

## **B. Data**

### **B.1. Commercial catch**

Full landings data are available from 1988 to present but it is thought that fisheries in some of these areas pre-date the time series. Incomplete landings data are available from Norwegian longline fisheries from 1889 onwards. Additional landings data from other areas may be available from 1950 onwards.

There is limited data on discarding from Spanish observers in subarea 12. Discard data for other areas is unavailable but it is thought tht discarding of this species is insignificant.

### **B.2. Biological**

Considerabl general information is available on the life history characteristics of this species.

### **B.3. Surveys**

### **B.4. Commercial CPUE**

### **B.5. Other relevant data**

## **C. Assessment: data and method**

## **D. Short-Term Projection**

## **E. Medium-Term Projections**

## **F. Long-Term Projections**

## **G. Biological Reference Points**

## **H. Other Issues**

### **H.1. Historical overview of previous assessment methods**

## **I. References**