
Stock Annex: Whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*) in Division 6.b (Rockall)

Stock specific documentation of standard assessment procedures used by ICES.

Stock: Whiting

Working Group: Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion (WGCSE)

Created:

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A. General

A.1. Stock definition

There is an absence of information on whiting stock structure in this region and whiting caught at Rockall may potentially be part of the adjacent 6.a stock.

A.2. Fishery

No specific information is available for 2011. Whiting at Rockall are taken as a bycatch in fisheries for other species such as haddock and anglerfish.

A.3. Ecosystem aspects

B. Data

B.1. Commercial catch

Only official landings data are available for whiting in 6.b. There are no discard data. Reported landings are currently negligible (9 tonnes in 2011). In the past official landings have shown very high interannual variation and it is not known whether these are a true reflection of removals. There are doubts on the accuracy of the reported landings as these are reported by vessels operating in both Divisions 6.a and 6.b.

B.2. Biological

None.

B.3. Surveys

Survey catch rates of whiting at Rockall are extremely low and are therefore unlikely to provide a reliable index of abundance.

B.4. Commercial cpue**B.5. Other relevant data****C. Assessment: data and method**

No assessment was conducted.

Advice for 2013 was provided (in 2012) according to the data-limited approach for stocks with negligible landings and no information on abundance or exploitation. This consists of a precautionary reduction in catches.

This corresponds to a decrease in catch by 20% in relation to the last three years average landings (14 t), corresponding to catches of no more than 11 t. In cases where this approach has been used, the expectation (according to ICES data-limited approach) is for multianual constant catch advice.

D. Short-term projection

Model used: **None.**

E. Medium-term projections**F. Long-term projections**

Procedures used for splitting projected catches:

G. Biological reference points**H. Other issues****H.1. Historical overview of previous assessment methods**

No assessments have ever been conducted for whiting at Rockall. Advice was first provided for this stock in 2013 (?).

I. References