

Seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) in divisions 8.c and 9.a (southern Bay of Biscay and Atlantic Iberian waters)

ICES stock advice

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, commercial catches in each of the years 2018 and 2019 should be no more than 478 tonnes. All commercial catches are assumed to be landed. Recreational catches cannot be quantified; therefore, total catches cannot be calculated.

Stock development over time

The commercial landings in the last two decades have been variable. Recreational catch is unknown but may be significant.

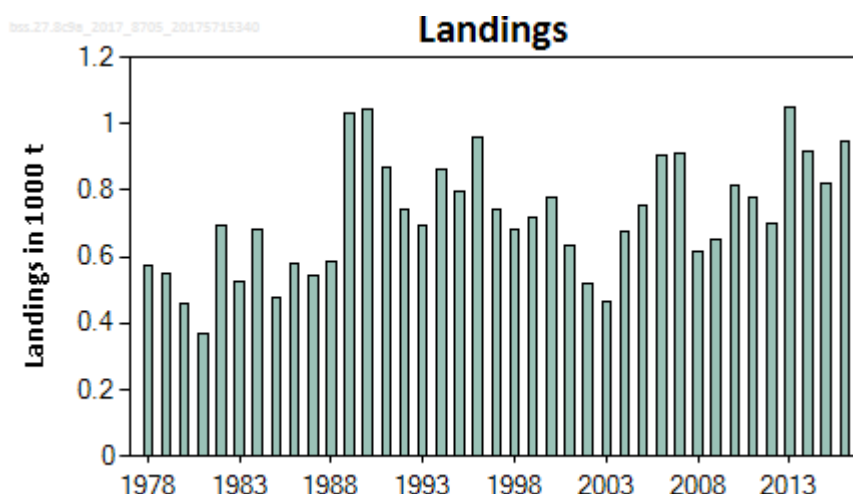


Figure 1 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. ICES estimated commercial landings (in thousand tonnes); the value for 2016 is preliminary.

Stock and exploitation status

Table 1 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. State of the stock and fishery relative to reference points.

		Fishing pressure				Stock size			
		2014	2015	2016		2014	2015	2016	
Maximum sustainable yield	F_{MSY}	?	?	?	Undefined	$MSY B_{escapement}$?	?	?
Precautionary approach	F_{pa}, F_{lim}	?	?	?	Undefined	B_{pa}, B_{lim}	?	?	?
Management plan	F_{MGT}	—	—	—	Not applicable	SSB_{MGT}	—	—	—
Qualitative evaluation	-	?	?	?	Unknown	-	?	?	?

Catch options

The ICES framework for category 5 stocks was applied (ICES, 2012a). For stocks without information on abundance or exploitation, ICES considers that a precautionary reduction of catches should be implemented unless there is ancillary information clearly indicating that the current level of exploitation is appropriate for the stock. The precautionary buffer was applied in 2013 (for the 2014 advice). The stock status relative to reference points remains unknown, therefore, the precautionary buffer is applied this year. Discarding is assumed to be negligible and recreational catches are unknown.

Table 2 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. The basis for the catch options.

Recent advised commercial catch (for 2017)	598 tonnes	
Discard rate	Negligible	
Precautionary buffer	Applied	0.8
Commercial catch advice*	478 tonnes	

* [Recent advised commercial catch for 2017] × [precautionary buffer].

Basis of the advice

Table 3 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Precautionary approach.
Management plan	There is no management plan for sea bass in this area.

Quality of the assessment

Recreational fisheries are likely to contribute to fishery removals in some areas. Time-series of catches, releases, and size/age composition are needed from this component of the fishery to improve the assessment and advice. Stock structure is poorly understood and further studies (including tagging, genetics, or other types of markers) are needed. Historical sampling of the commercial catches is of variable quality and data sampling should cover all fleets involved in this fishery. Time-series of relative abundance indices are needed for both the adult and the pre-recruit components of the stock.

Issues relevant for the advice

There is no information to present for this stock.

Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

Basis of the assessment

Table 4 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. Basis of the assessment and advice.

ICES stock data category	5 (ICES, 2016).
Assessment type	No assessment (ICES, 2017).
Input data	Commercial landings.
Discards and bycatch	Commercial discards are unknown, but considered to be negligible.
Indicators	None.
Other information	This stock was benchmarked in IBPNew 2012 (ICES, 2012b).
Working group	Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Waters Ecoregion (WGBIE)

Information from stakeholders

No information available.

History of the advice, catch, and management

Table 5 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. ICES advice and official landings. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice *	Predicted catch corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC	Official landings ***	ICES landings
2000	-	-	none	380	775
2001	-	-	none	277	635
2002	No increase in effort or F	-	none	172	518
2003	No increase in effort or F	-	none	161	466
2004	No increase in effort or F	-	none	362	676
2005	-	-	none	453	753
2006	-	-	none	731	905
2007	-	-	none	888	910
2008	-	-	none	655	614
2009	-	-	none	634	652
2010	-	-	none	777	814
2011	-	-	none	759	777
2012	No increase in catch	-	none	273	701
2013	20% reduction in catches (last 3-year average)	< 6000	none	1046	1046
2014	20% reduction in catches (last 3-year average)	< 598	none	917	917
2015	Same advice as last year	< 598	none	821	821
2016	Precautionary approach	< 598	none	**947	**947
2017	Precautionary approach	≤ 598	none		
2018	Precautionary approach	≤ 478			
2019	Precautionary approach	≤ 478			

* 2014 is the first time that ICES provides specific advice for sea bass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. Prior to the 2014 advice, ICES advice was provided for European sea bass in the Northeast Atlantic.

** Preliminary.

***Official landings were extracted from the ICES Official Statistics webpage for BSS and Divisions VIIIc and IXa. The difference between ICES statistics and the official statistics are mainly due to the fact that prior to 2006 most of the sea bass catches in the Portuguese statistics were registered under the code BSE, i.e. *Dicentrarchus* spp. After the implementation of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) there was a progressive increase in the correct identification of species in the official statistics (BSS increase, BSE decrease) that consider *Dicentrarchus* spp. landings minus 2.3% of *Dicentrarchus punctatus* based on DCF market and on-board sampling between 2008 and 2012.

History of the catch and landings

Table 6 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. Catch distribution by fleet in 2016 as estimated by ICES.

Total catch (2016)	Commercial landings	Commercial discards	Recreational catch
Unknown	All gears 100%	Unknown, but considered to be negligible	Known to be significant but can not be quantified
	947 tonnes		

Table 7 Seabass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. History of commercial catch and landings; both the official and ICES estimated values are presented by area for each country participating in the fishery. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	France** official landings	Portugal** official landings	Spain** official landings	Total official** landings	Total ICES estimates***
1978	0	576	0	576	576
1979	0	550	0	550	550
1980	0	460	0	460	460
1981	0	370	0	370	370
1982	0	556	135	691	691
1983	0	408	114	522	522
1984	0	431	250	681	681
1985	0	311	164	475	475
1986	0	219	182	401	580
1987	0	216	194	410	542
1988	14	115	93	222	586
1989	0	105	417	522	1029
1990	1	90	541	632	1042
1991	2	77	411	490	867
1992	0	53	348	401	743
1993	0	57	351	408	694
1994	0	57	440	497	863
1995	0	42	446	488	798
1996	0	48	534	582	956
1997	0	39	474	513	742
1998	0	38	373	411	683
1999	0	37	355	392	720
2000	2	49	329	380	775
2001	0	42	235	277	635
2002	8	43	121	172	518
2003	1	47	113	161	466
2004	39	67	256	362	676
2005	57	177	219	453	753
2006	2	461	268	731	905
2007	1	545	342	888	910
2008	0	403	252	655	614
2009	8	414	212	634	652
2010	2	489	286	777	814
2011	5	441	313	759	777
2012	2	271		273	701
2013	4	529	513	1046	1046
2014	3	536	378	917	917
2015	0	436	385	821	821
2016*	1	565	381	947	947

* Preliminary.

** Official catch statistics for “BSS” in divisions 8.c and 9.a and Subarea 9 (Subarea 9 has been retained for Portuguese statistics because it was reported as Division 9.a prior to 2007).

***The difference between ICES statistics and the official statistics are mainly due to the fact that prior to 2006 most of the sea bass catches in the Portuguese statistics were registered under the code BSE, i.e. (*Dicentrarchus* spp.). After the DCF implementation there was a progressive increase in the correct identification of species in the official statistics (BSS increase, BSE decrease) that consider *Dicentrarchus* spp. landings minus 2.3% of *Dicentrarchus punctatus* based on DCF market and on-board sampling between 2008 and 2012.

Summary of the assessment

There is no assessment for seabass in this area.

Sources and references

- ICES. 2012a. ICES Implementation of Advice for Data-limited Stocks in 2012 in its 2012 Advice. ICES CM 2012/ACOM:68. 42 pp.
- ICES. 2012b. Report of the Inter-Benchmark Protocol on New Species (Turbot and Sea bass; IBPNEW 2012), 1–5 October 2012, Copenhagen, Denmark. ICES CM 2012/ACOM:45. 239 pp.
- ICES. 2016. Advice basis. *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2016. ICES Advice 2016, Book 1, Section 1.2.
- ICES. 2017. Report of the Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and the Iberian waters Ecoregion (WGBIE), 4–9 May 2017, Cadiz, Spain. ICES CM 2017/ACOM:12.