

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

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, wanted catches should be no more than 9 tonnes in each of the years 2019, 2020, and 2021. ICES cannot quantify the corresponding total catches.

Stock development over time

The available information is insufficient to evaluate the stock trends and exploitation. Recent landings of whiting from Division 6.b are negligible.

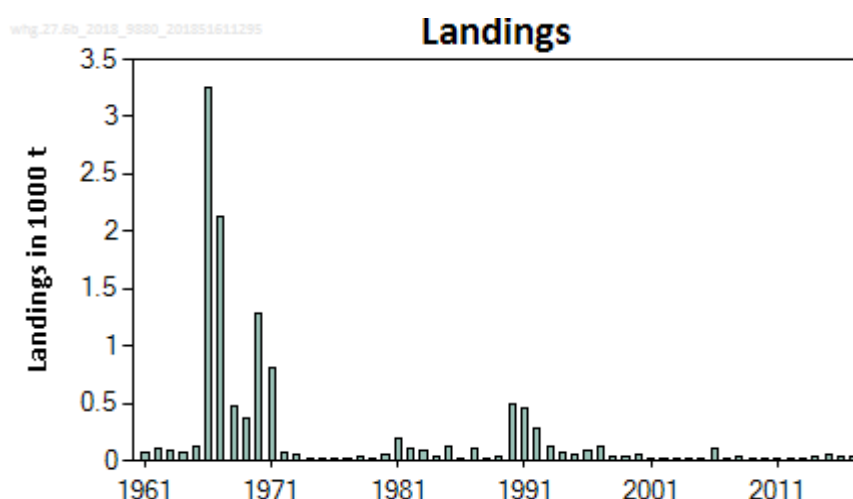


Figure 1 Whiting in Division 6.b. Official landings in thousand tonnes.

Stock and exploitation status

ICES cannot assess the stock and exploitation status relative to MSY and precautionary approach (PA) reference points because the reference points are undefined.

Table 1 Whiting in Division 6.b. State of the stock and fishery, relative to reference points.

Writing in Division 0.0: State of the stock and fishery, relative to reference points.											
		Fishing pressure				Stock size					
		2015	2016	2017			2015	2016	2017		
Maximum sustainable yield	F_{MSY}	?	?	?	Unknown		$MSY B_{trigger}$?	?	?	Unknown
Precautionary approach	F_{pa}, F_{lim}	?	?	?	Unknown		B_{pa}, B_{lim}	?	?	?	Unknown
Management plan	F_{MGT}	—	—	—	Not applicable		B_{MGT}	—	—	—	Not applicable
Qualitative evaluation	-	?	?	?	Unknown		-	?	?	?	Unknown

Catch scenarios

ICES framework for category 6 stocks was applied (ICES, 2012). For stocks without information on abundance or exploitation, ICES considers that a precautionary reduction of catches should be implemented. The precautionary buffer was last applied in 2012.

Although effort in the main fisheries has decreased over the last decade (Figure 2), stock size and fishing pressure are unknown. Therefore, the precautionary buffer is applied.

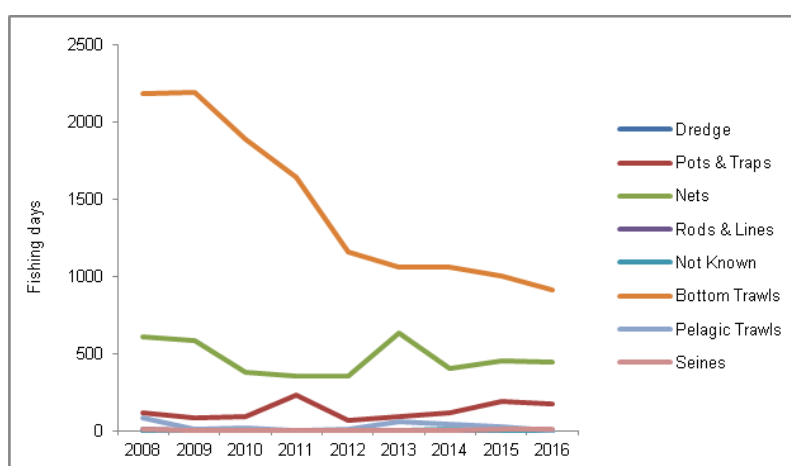


Figure 2 STECF fishing effort (fishing days) in Division 6.b, aggregated by "Gear groups".

Table 2 Whiting in Division 27.6.b. ICES framework for category 6 applied.

Advised catches for 2018 issued in 2015		11 (tonnes)
Discard		Uncertain
Precautionary buffer	Applied	0.8
Wanted catch advice*		9 (tonnes)
% Advice change**		-20%

* Advice for 2016.

** [Advised catch for 2018] × [precautionary buffer].

The change in the advice is due to the application of the precautionary buffer.

Basis of the advice

Table 3 Whiting in Division 27.6.b. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Precautionary approach
Management plan	The EU has proposed a multiannual management plan for the Western Waters, which is not yet finalized (EU, 2018).

Quality of the assessment

Only landings data are available. There is uncertainty on the accuracy of the reported landings. Some discard data are available, but they are based on a low number of samples, so the estimates are too uncertain to quantify total discards.

Issues relevant for the advice

It is unlikely that there is a self-sustaining population of whiting at Rockall.

Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

Basis of the assessment

Table 4 Whiting in Division 6.b. The basis of the assessment.

ICES stock data category	6 (ICES, 2016).
Assessment type	No assessment.
Input data	Official landings statistics.
Discards and bycatch	Not included and considered uncertain.
Indicators	Bottom trawl effort.
Other information	None.
Working group	Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion (WGCSE).

Information from stakeholders

There is no additional available information.

History of the advice, catch, and management

Table 5 Whiting in Division 6.b. History of ICES advice, the agreed TAC, and official landings. Weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to advice	Wanted catch corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC *	Official landings
2001	No advice	-		4000	14
2002	No advice	-		3500	7
2003	No advice	-		2000	13
2004	No advice	-		1600	4
2005	No advice	-		1600	4
2006	No advice	-		1360	105
2007	No advice	-		1020	17
2008	No advice	-		765	31
2009	No advice	-		547	16
2010	No advice	-		431	18
2011	No advice	-		323	9
2012	No increase in catch	-		307	1
2013	20% reduction in catches (last 3-year average)	11		292	3
2014	Same advice as for 2013	11		292	29
2015	Same advice as for 2013	11		263	52
2016	Precautionary approach (same advised catch value as provided for 2015)	≤ 11		213	33**
2017	Precautionary approach (same advised catch value as provided for 2015)	≤ 11		213	40**
2018	Precautionary approach (same advised catch value as provided for 2015)	≤ 11		213	
2019	Precautionary approach		≤ 9		
2020	Precautionary approach		≤ 9		
2021	Precautionary approach		≤ 9		

* Subarea 6; EC waters of Division 5.b; EC and international waters of subareas 12 and 14.

** Preliminary.

History of the catch and landings

Table 6 Whiting in Division 6.b. Catch distribution in 2017 as estimated by ICES

Catch	Landings	Discards
Unknown	40 t	Unknown

Table 7 Whiting in Division 6.b. History of official landings by country. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	Faroe Islands	France	Ireland	Norway	Spain	UK (E.& W, NI)	UK (Scotland)	UK (all)	Total
1989	-	-	-	-	-	16	18		34
1990	-	-	-	-	-	6	482		488
1991	-	-	-	-	-	1	459		460
1992	-	-	-	-	-	5	283		288
1993	-	-	32	-	-	10	86		128
1994	-	-	10	-	-	2	68		80
1995	-	-	4	-	-	5	53		62
1996	-	-	23	-	-	26	36		85
1997	-	-	3	-	-	49	65		117
1998	-	-	1	-	-	20	23		44
1999	-	-	-	-	≤ 0.5	≤ 0.5	44		44
2000	-	-	-	-	-	≤ 0.5	58		58
2001	-	-	10	-	-	-	4		14
2002	-	-	-	-	-	-	7		7
2003	-	-	2	-	-	-	11		13
2004	≤ 0.5	-	3	-	-	-	1		4
2005	-	-	3	-	-	-	1		4
2006	-	-	104	-	-	-	1		105
2007	-	-	16	-	-	-	1		17
2008	-	-	23	-	-	-	8		31
2009	-	-	4	-	-	-	12		16
2010	-	-	2	-	-	-	16		18
2011	-	-	3	-	-	-	6		9
2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	1		1
2013	-	-	+	-	-	-	3		3
2014	-	-	6	-	-			23	29
2015	-	-	6	-	-			46	52
2016*	-	-	9	1	-			20	33
2017*	-	-	7	-	-			32	40

*Preliminary.

Summary of the assessment

There is no assessment for this stock.

Sources and references

EU. 2018. Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing a multiannual plan for fish stocks in the Western Waters and adjacent waters, and for fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Regulation (EU) 2016/1139 establishing a multiannual plan for the Baltic Sea, and repealing Regulations (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) 509/2007 and (EC) 1300/2008. COM/2018/0149 final. 30 pp. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018PC0149&from=EN>.

ICES. 2012. ICES Implementation of Advice for Data-limited Stocks in 2012 in its 2012 Advice. ICES CM 2012/ACOM:68. 42 pp.

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