

Common skate complex (Blue skate [*Dipturus batis*] and flapper skate [*Dipturus intermedius*]) in Subarea 4 and Division 3.a (North Sea, Skagerrak, and Kattegat)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES has not been requested to provide advice on fishing opportunities for this stock.

Stock development over time

The available information does not change the previous perception that the common skate complex is depleted in the North Sea. Available information suggests that flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) occurs in the northern parts of the stock area, where it likely merges with the neighbouring population in subareas 6 and 2.

Stock and exploitation status

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

Table 1 Blue skate (*Dipturus batis*) and flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) in Subarea 4 and Division 3.a. State of the stock and fishery relative to reference points.

		Fishing pressure			Stock size					
		2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018			
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	-	⊗	⊗	⊗	Depleted

Catch scenarios

ICES has not been requested to provide advice on fishing opportunities for this stock.

Basis of the advice

ICES has not been requested to provide advice on fishing opportunities for this stock.

Table 2 Blue skate (*Dipturus batis*) and flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) in Subarea 4 and Division 3.a. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	ICES has not been requested to provide advice on fishing opportunities for this stock.
Management plan	ICES is not aware of any agreed precautionary management plan for common skate in this area.

Quality of the assessment

There is insufficient information to present historical trends in species-specific landings for this stock.

Issues relevant for the advice

Fishery-independent trawl surveys provide the longest time-series of species-specific information. Whilst catch rates in the surveys are too low to provide a stock size indicator, the consistent occurrence of this species in surveys (NS-IBTS-Q1 and NS-IBTS-Q3) in recent years, 0.054 n h^{-1} (2011–2018) compared to the 1990s, 0.005 n h^{-1} (1991–1998) could be indicative of a gradually improving stock status.

No landings of these species have been allowed from EU waters since 2009.

Discarding is known to take place, but ICES cannot quantify the corresponding catch. In addition, discard survival, which is likely to occur, has not been estimated.

The common skate complex is now known to comprise two species, the common blue skate (*Dipturus batis* [FAO code RJB]) and the flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius* [FAO code DRJ]).

Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

Basis of the assessment

Table 3 Blue skate (*Dipturus batis*) and flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) in Subarea 4 and Division 3.a. The basis of the assessment.

ICES stock data category	6 (ICES, 2018).
Assessment type	No assessment (ICES, 2019).
Input data	None.
Discards and bycatch	Unknown.
Indicators	None.
Other information	Survey indices (NS-IBTS-Q1, NS-IBTS-Q3).
Working group	Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEF).

Information from stakeholders

There is no additional available information.

History of advice, catch, and management

Table 4 Blue skate (*Dipturus batis*) and flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) in Subarea 4 and Division 3.a. History of ICES advice and ICES estimates of landings. Weights are in tonnes.

Year*	ICES advice	Catch corresp. to advice	ICES landings
2006	No targeted fishery		
2007	No targeted fishery		
2008	No new advice, same as 2007		
2009	No targeted fishery	0	
2010	No new advice, same as 2009	0	
2011	No targeted fishery	0	
2012	No new advice, same as 2011	0	4
2013	No targeted fisheries, minimize bycatch	0	3
2014	No new advice, same as 2013	0	0
2015	No new advice, same as 2014	0	1
2016	Precautionary approach, no landings and minimize bycatch	0	2
2017	Quadrennial advice	0	1
2018	Quadrennial advice	0	1
2019	Quadrennial advice	0	
2020	No catch advice requested	-	
2021	No catch advice requested	-	
2022	No catch advice requested	-	
2023	No catch advice requested	-	

* Until 2013 ICES advice was given for Subarea 4 and divisions 3.a and 7.d.

History of catch and landings

The distribution of this stock does not extend into the NEAFC Regulatory Area.

Table 5 Blue skate (*Dipturus batis*) and flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) in Subarea 4 and Division 3.a. Catch distribution by fleet in 2018 as estimated by ICES.

Total catch (2018)	Landings	Discards
Unknown	1 tonne Proportion by fleet is unquantified	Unknown

Table 6 Blue skate (*Dipturus batis*) and flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) in Subarea 4 and Division 3.a. Historical commercial landings (ICES estimates) are presented for each country participating in the fishery. Weights are in tonnes.*

Year	Belgium	Denmark	Netherlands	Sweden	UK (incl. Scotland)	France	Total
2012			(0)**	1	2		4
2013				2	1	0	3
2014					0	0	0
2015		1			0		1
2016		2	0	0	0		2
2017			0	0	1	0	1
2018	0		1		0	0	1

* The figures in the table are rounded. Calculations were done with unrounded inputs and computed values may not match exactly when calculated using the rounded figures in the table.

** Due to the quantities and location of the catch data, a reporting error is likely for this entry.

Summary of the assessment

There was no assessment for this stock.

Sources and references

ICES. 2018. Advice basis. *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2018. ICES Advice 2018, Book 1, Section 1.2. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.4503>.

ICES. 2019. Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEF). ICES Scientific Reports. 1:25. <http://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5594>

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