

Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*) in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8 (central North Sea, Firth of Forth)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

Please note: The present advice replaces the advice given in June 2019 for catches in 2020.

ICES advises that when the EU multiannual plan (MAP) for the North Sea is applied, catches in 2020 that correspond to the F ranges in the plan are between 2045 tonnes and 3143 tonnes. The entire range is considered precautionary when applying the ICES advice rule.

To ensure that the stock in Functional Unit 8 is exploited sustainably, management should be implemented at the functional unit level.

Stock development over time

The stock size has been above $MSY B_{trigger}$ for the entire time-series. The harvest rate is varying, and is now below F_{MSY} .



Figure 1 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. Summary of the stock assessment. Long-term trends in catches, harvest rate, and underwater TV survey (UWTV) abundance (for animals greater than 17 mm carapace length); used as F and SSB proxies. Orange lines show proxies for $MSY B_{trigger}$ and F_{MSY} . Shaded areas are 95% confidence intervals. Harvest rates prior to 2006 may be unreliable because of the underreporting of landings.

Stock and exploitation status

ICES assesses that fishing pressure on the stock is below F_{MSY} , and that stock size is above $MSY B_{trigger}$.

Table 1 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. State of the stock and fishery relative to reference points.

		Fishing pressure				Stock size		
		2016	2017	2018		2017	2018	2019
Maximum sustainable yield	F_{MSY}	✓	✗	✓	Below	$MSY B_{trigger}$	✓	✓
Precautionary approach	F_{pa}, F_{lim}	✓	?	✓	Below possible reference points	B_{pa}, B_{lim}	✓	✓
Management plan	F_{MGT}	✓	✗	✓	Within range	B_{MGT}	✓	✓
								Above trigger
								Above possible reference points
								Above

Catch scenarios

Table 2 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. The basis for the catch scenarios.

Variable	Value	Notes
Stock abundance	865 million individuals	UWTV 2019
Mean weight in wanted catch	23.66 g	Average 2016–2018
Mean weight in unwanted catch	10.45 g	Average 2016–2018
Unwanted catch ratio (total)	17.9%	Average 2016–2018 (proportion by number)
Discard survival ratio	25%	Proportion by number
Dead unwanted catch ratio (total)	14.1%	Average 2016–2018 (proportion by number)

Table 3 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. Annual catch scenarios. Discarding is assumed to continue at the recent average. All weights are in tonnes.

Catch scenarios assuming recent discard rates

Basis	Total catch	Dead removals	Wanted catch	Dead unwanted catch	Surviving unwanted catch	Harvest rate *	% advice change **
	WC + DUC + SUC	WC+DUC	WC	DUC	SUC	for WC + DUC	
ICES advice basis							
EU MAP \wedge : F_{MSY}	3143	3074	2867	207	69	16.3	-11.9%
F= MAP F_{MSY} lower	2045	2000	1865	135	45	10.6	-43%
F = MAP F_{MSY} upper ***	3143	3074	2867	207	69	16.3	-11.9%
Other scenarios							
MSY approach	3143	3074	2867	207	69	16.3	-11.9%
$F_{0.1}$	1812	1772	1653	119	40	9.4	-49%
F_{35SpR}	2449	2395	2234	161	54	12.7	-31%
F_{2018}	2488	2433	2269	164	55	12.9	-30%
$F_{2016-2018}$	2893	2829	2638	191	64	15	-18.9%

Catch scenarios assuming zero discards

Basis	Total catch	Wanted catch	Unwanted catch	Harvest rate *	% advice change **
	WC + UC	WC	UC	for WC + UC	
EU MAP [^] : F _{MSY}	3003	2739	264	16.3	-15.9%
F = MAP F _{MSY lower}	1953	1781	172	10.6	-45%
F = MAP F _{MSY upper} ***	3003	2739	264	16.3	-15.9%
Other scenarios					
MSY approach	3003	2739	264	16.3	-15.9%
F _{0.1}	1731	1579	152	9.4	-51%
F _{35SpR}	2339	2134	205	12.7	-34%
F ₂₀₁₈	2377	2168	209	12.9	-33%
F _{2016–2018}	2763	2520	243	15	-23%

[^] EU multiannual plan (MAP) for the North Sea (EU, 2018).

* Calculated for dead removals.

** Total catch 2020 relative to F_{MSY} advice value 2019 (3569 tonnes).

*** F_{MSY upper} = F_{MSY} for this stock.

The change in advice (-11.9% for the EU MAP F_{MSY} scenario, assuming recent discard rates) from November 2018 is mainly a result of the decrease in the abundance observed in the 2019 UWTV survey.

Basis of the advice

Table 4 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	EU multiannual plan (MAP) for the North Sea (EU, 2018).
Management plan	The EU multiannual plan (MAP) for stocks in the North Sea and adjacent waters applies to this stock. The plan specifies conditions for setting fishing opportunities depending on stock status and making use of the F_{MSY} range for the stock. ICES considers that the F_{MSY} range for this stock used in the MAP is precautionary.

Quality of the assessment

The length and sex composition of the landings is considered to be well sampled. Catch sampling has been conducted on a quarterly basis for Scottish Norway lobster trawlers in this fishery since 1990, and is considered to represent the fishery adequately. The underwater TV (UWTV) surveys have been conducted for this stock since 1993, with a continuous annual series available since 1998.

Issues relevant for the advice

ICES was requested by the EC to provide advice based on the agreed EU MAP.

The results of the 2019 UWTV became available in August 2019, and showed a significant decrease from the 2018 level. The advice for 2020 has, therefore, been updated to reflect the more recent data.

The EU landing obligation was phased in to all catches of Norway lobster fisheries in ICES Subarea 4 since 2016, with several exemptions still in place. Observations from the 2016–2018 fishery indicate that discarding above the minimum conservation reference size (MCRS) continues, and has not changed markedly (Figure 3). ICES is, as a consequence, providing advice for 2020 assuming average discard rates observed over the last three years; this is considered to be a more realistic assumption.

Scottish discard survival experiments indicate that the trawling discard survival rate may be around 75% (Fox and Albalat, 2018). As a result, an exemption from the landing obligation based on high survivability has been granted by the European Commission. ICES continues to use the survival rate of 25% (ICES, 2019), because the survival rates estimated by Fox and Albalat (2018) have not been evaluated by ICES.

In 2016–2018, only negligible amounts of Norway lobsters were recorded as being below MCRS (BMS category) in FU 8, despite catches having been observed below the MCRS (Figure 3).

Catches increased to levels above ICES advice in 2018, highlighting the issue that current management arrangements are not sufficient to contain the fishery within the sustainable limits determined by ICES. A single total allowable catch (TAC) covers all of ICES Subarea 4, except the Norwegian Deep. Management should ensure that fishing opportunities are in line with the scale of the resources in each of the stocks.

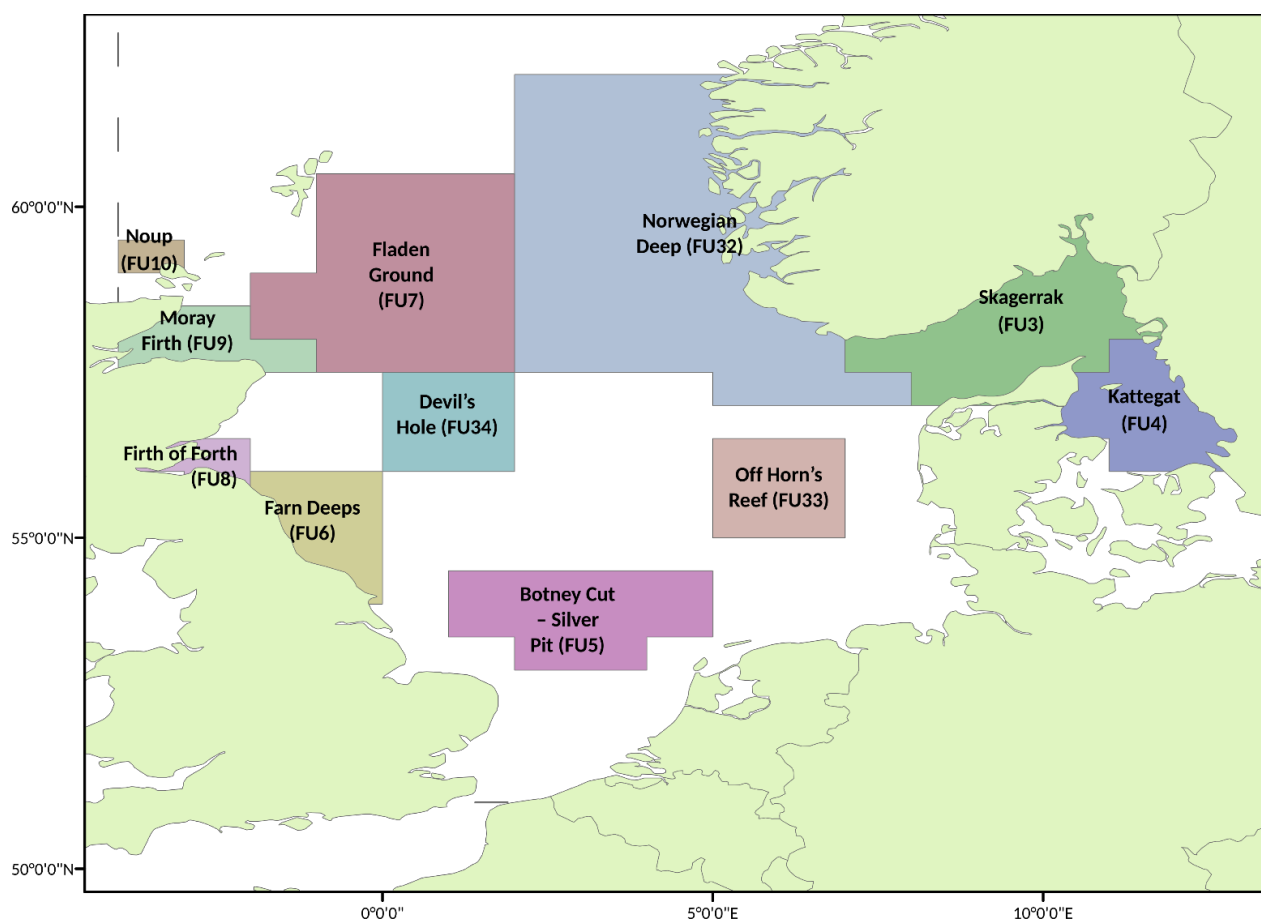


Figure 2 Norway lobster functional units in the North Sea and Skagerrak/Kattegat region.

Reference points

Table 5 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. Reference points, values, and their technical basis.

Framework	Reference point	Value	Technical basis	Source
MSY approach	MSY $B_{trigger}$	292 million individuals	Lowest observed UWTV survey estimate of abundance (1993–2010).	ICES (2010)
	F_{MSY}	Harvest rate 16.3%	Proxy, equivalent to F_{max} for combined sexes.	ICES (2012)
Precautionary approach	B_{lim}	Not defined		
	B_{pa}	Not defined		
	F_{lim}	Not defined		
	F_{pa}	Not defined		
EU Management plan (MAP) *	MAP MSY $B_{trigger}$	292 million	MSY $B_{trigger}$	ICES (2010)
	MAP B_{lim}	Not defined		
	MAP F_{MSY}	Harvest rate 16.3%	F_{MSY}	ICES (2012)
	MAP range F_{lower}	Harvest rate 10.6–16.3%	Consistent with ranges resulting in no more than 5% reduction in long-term yield compared with MSY.	ICES (2015)
	MAP range F_{upper} **	Harvest rate 16.3–16.3%	Consistent with ranges resulting in no more than 5% reduction in long-term yield compared with MSY.	ICES (2015)

* EU multiannual plan (MAP) for the North Sea (EU, 2018). The values for the reference points will be based on ICES advice.

** For this stock, $F_{MSY upper} = F_{MSY}$.

Basis of the assessment

Table 6 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. Basis of the assessment and advice.

ICES stock data category	1 (ICES, 2018).
Assessment type	Underwater TV survey (UWTV) linked to yield-per-recruit analysis from length data (ICES, 2019).
Input data	Commercial catches (international landings, length frequencies from Scottish catch sampling), one survey index (FU 8 UWTV). Maturity data from commercial catch sampling. Natural mortalities from Morizur (1982): 0.3 for males and immature females, 0.2 for mature females for all years.
Discards, BMS landings, and bycatch	Included in the assessment, data from the majority of the main fleets (covering 96% of the landings in 2018). 97% of the discards were obtained from sampling (3% raised discards). BMS landings, where reported, are included as dead removals in the assessment since 2016.
Indicators	Sex ratio, length frequencies, mean size, LPUE.
Other information	The latest benchmark (on the use of UWTV surveys) was performed in 2009 (ICES, 2009).
Working groups	Working Group on the Assessment of Demersal Stocks in the North Sea and Skagerrak (WGNSSK)

Information from stakeholders

Since 2017, observer sampling from the Scottish Industry–Science observer sampling scheme was extended to include sampling of Norway lobster catches in FU 8. In 2018, approximately 50% of the samples used in the discard estimation for this stock were collected by industry observers.

History of the advice, catch, and management

Table 7 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. ICES advice and ICES catches. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice	Landings advice	Catch advice	ICES landings	ICES total discards *
1993				2368	567
1994				1850	1584
1995				1762	620
1996				1687	930
1997				2193	494
1998				2144	578
1999				2207	938
2000				1785	1032
2001				1527	436
2002				1340	421
2003				1127	546
2004				1657	406
2005				1989	602
2006	No increase in effort			2458	1510
2007	No increase in effort, harvest rate < 15%	1500		2651	614
2008	No new advice, same as for 2007	1500		2450	796
2009	No increase in effort and recent average landings	< 2500		2663	573
2010	Harvest rate no greater than that equivalent to fishing at F_{max}	< 1600		1950	407
2011	MSY transition	< 2000		1889	231
2012	MSY transition	< 1700		2129	379
2013	MSY transition	< 1400		1503	301
2014	MSY transition	< 1417		2384	353
2015	MSY approach	< 1769		1897	311
2016	MSY approach	< 1866	≤ 2040 **	1935	167 ^^^
2017	MSY approach		≤ 2548 ***	2493	280 ^^^

Year	ICES advice	Landings advice	Catch advice	ICES landings	ICES total discards *
2018	MSY approach		≤ 2376 ^	2690	275 ^^^
2019	MAP ^^ F ranges (Harvest rate = 10.6–16.3%)		2321–3569 ^		
2020	Management Plan		2045–3143 ^		

* Dead + surviving discards.

** Assuming all catches are landed and selection patterns do not change.

*** Assuming discarding includes Norway lobster below MCRS only.

^ Assuming discard ratio average for the last three years.

^^ EU multiannual plan (MAP) for the North Sea (EU, 2018).

^^^ Since 2016, discards refer to unwanted catches (including BMS landings).

History of the catch and landings

Table 8 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. Catch distribution by fleet in 2018 as estimated by ICES.

Catch (2018)		Wanted catches			Unwanted catches	
98% dead	2% surviving	Directed <i>Nephrops</i> fishery 86% TR2	Mixed <i>Nephrops</i> /demersal fishery 14% TR1	< 0.5% creel	75% dead	25% surviving
2965 tonnes		2690 tonnes			275 tonnes	

Table 9 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. ICES estimates of landings by gear for UK (Scotland), total landings for UK (E, W & NI), and total discards. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	UK (Scotland)				UK (E, W & NI)	Total landings *	Total discards ***
	<i>Nephrops</i> trawl	Other trawl	Creel	Subtotal			
1981	947	60	0	1007	0	1007	
1982	1138	57	0	1195	0	1195	
1983	1681	43	0	1724	0	1724	
1984	2078	56	0	2134	0	2134	
1985	1907	61	0	1968	0	1968	
1986	2204	59	0	2263	0	2263	
1987	1583	90	2	1675	0	1675	
1988	2455	74	0	2529	0	2529	
1989	1834	53	0	1887	1	1888	
1990	1900	30	0	1930	1	1931	
1991	1362	43	0	1405	0	1405	
1992	1715	41	0	1756	0	1756	
1993	2349	17	0	2366	2	2368	567
1994	1827	17	0	1844	6	1850	1584
1995	1707	53	0	1760	2	1762	620
1996	1621	66	0	1687	0	1687	930
1997	2136	55	0	2191	2	2193	494
1998	2105	37	0	2142	2	2144	578
1999	2193	10	1	2204	3	2207	938
2000	1775	9	0	1784	1	1785	1032
2001	1484	34	0	1518	9	1527	436
2002	1302	31	1	1334	6	1340	421
2003	1116	8	0	1124	3	1127	546
2004	1650	4	0	1654	3	1657	406
2005	1974	0	4	1978	11	1989	602
2006	2438	3	12	2453	5	2458	1510
2007	2627	10	7	2644	7	2651	614
2008	2435	2	8	2445	5	2450	796
2009	2620	8	26	2654	9	2663	573
2010	1923	5	13	1941	9	1950	407
2011	1789	6	89	1884	5	1889	231

Year	UK (Scotland)				UK (E, W & NI)	Total landings *	Total discards ***
	<i>Nephrops</i> trawl	Other trawl	Creel	Subtotal			
2012	1944	17	126	2087	42	2129	379
2013	1409	24	58	1491	12	1503	301
2014	2344	4	14	2362	22	2384	353
2015	1784	2	43	1829	68	1897	311
2016	1786	1	116	1903	32	1935	167 ^
2017	2406	16	10	2432	61	2493	280 ^
2018**	2638	7	4	2649	41	2690	275 ^

* There are no landings by other countries from this FU.

** Provisional.

*** Dead + surviving discards.

^ Since 2016, discards refer to unwanted catches (including BMS landings).

Summary of the assessment

Table 10 Norway lobster in Division 4.b, Functional Unit 8. Assessment summary.

Year	UWTV abundance * (millions)	2 standard deviations	Harvest rate (% by number)	Landings numbers (millions)	Discards numbers (millions)	Removals numbers (millions)	Landings (tonnes)	Discards (tonnes)	Dead discards (tonnes)	Discard ratio (% by number)	Mean weight in landings (grammes)	Mean weight in discards (grammes)	Dead discard ratio (% by number)
1993	555	142	24.1	97	49	134	2368	567	426	33.3	24.3	11.64	27.3
1994	448	78	51.3	95	180	230	1850	1584	1188	65.5	19.51	8.79	58.8
1995	NA	NA	NA	90	59	134	1762	620	465	39.5	19.55	10.54	32.9
1996	375	88	37.3	81	78	140	1687	930	697	49.2	20.81	11.85	42.1
1997	NA	0	NA	116	56	158	2193	494	371	32.6	18.87	8.79	26.6
1998	292	81	55.7	118	60	163	2144	578	434	33.9	18.23	9.6	27.8
1999	463	78	39.6	110	97	183	2207	938	704	47	20.05	9.63	39.9
2000	443	70	33.7	82	90	150	1785	1032	774	52.5	21.83	11.42	45.3
2001	419	79	25.3	72	45	106	1527	436	327	38.7	21.22	9.59	32.1
2002	508	119	21.1	68	52	107	1340	421	316	43.1	19.62	8.16	36.2
2003	767	138	12.4	51	59	95	1127	546	410	53.9	22.31	9.25	46.7
2004	630	140	16.4	74	40	103	1657	406	304	34.9	22.45	10.25	28.7
2005	710	143	19.4	89	65	138	1989	602	452	42.1	22.33	9.28	35.3
2006	827	126	26.7	115	142	221	2458	1510	1133	55.2	21.43	10.67	48.1
2007	692	132	22.9	126	43	159	2651	614	461	25.3	20.97	14.34	20.3
2008	881	297	21.1	142	58	186	2450	796	597	29.1	17.23	13.65	23.5
2009	732	142	26	137	71	190	2663	573	430	34.1	19.41	8.09	27.9
2010	682	147	19.2	99	43	131	1950	407	305	30.2	19.76	9.55	24.5
2011	533	87	22.1	100	24	118	1889	231	173	19.5	19.75	9.56	15.3
2012	522	64	24.6	100	38	129	2129	379	284	27.2	21.66	10.10	21.9
2013	668	126	15.6	81	31	104	1503	301	226	27.4	19.30	9.82	22.0
2014	428	80	29.1	102	30	124	2384	353	265	22.9	24.30	11.66	18.3
2015	664	127	16.8	90	29	112	1897	311	234	24.4	21.84	10.74	19.5
2016	797	146	12.3	85	17 **	98	1935	167 **	123	16.4	23.62	9.86	12.8
2017	670	133	19.7	111	28 **	132	2493	280 **	210	20	23.07	10.07	15.8
2018	1025	190	12.9	114	24 **	132	2690	275 **	206	17.4	24.29	11.42	13.6
2019	865	135											

* For Norway lobster greater than 17 mm carapace length.

** Since 2016, discards refer to unwanted catches (including BMS landings).

NA = not available.

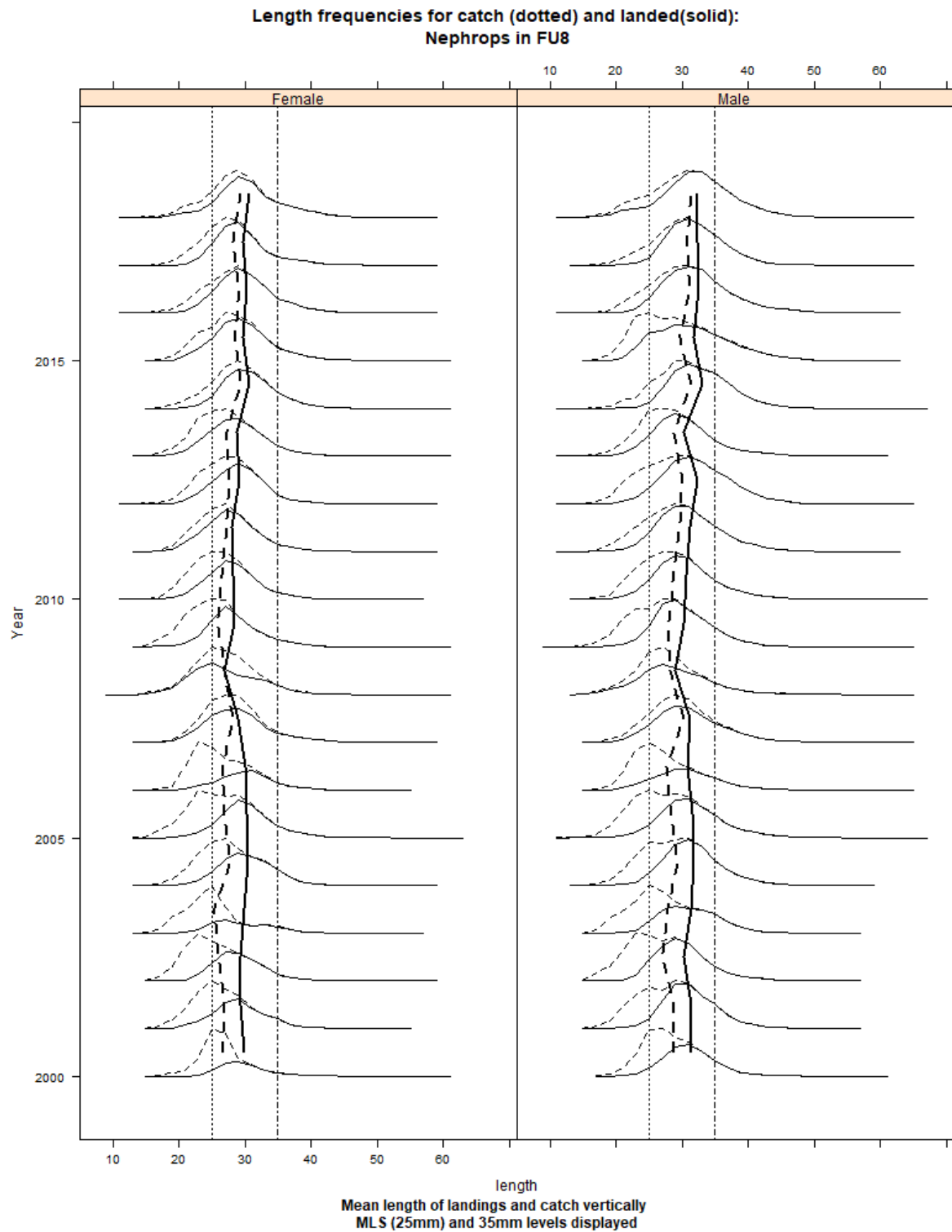


Figure 3 Norway lobster in Firth of Forth (FU 8). Catch length–frequency distribution and mean size in catches (broken vertical line) and landings (solid vertical line). Vertical straight lines are minimum landing size (25 mm) and 35 mm.

Sources and references

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