

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

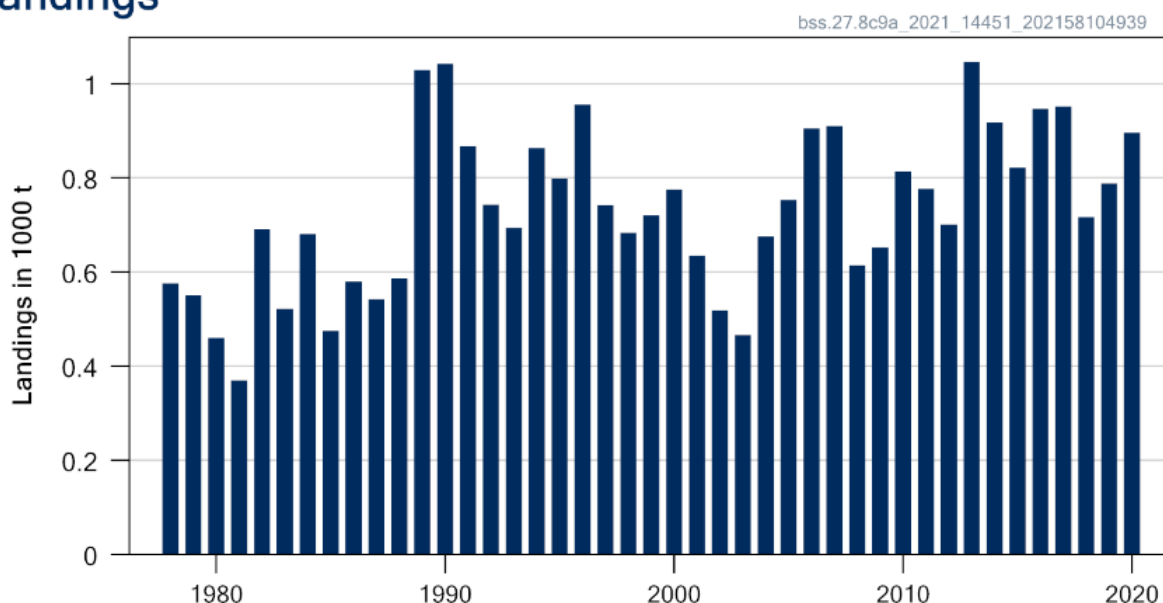
### ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, commercial catches in each of the years 2022 and 2023 should be no more than 382 tonnes. All commercial catches are assumed to be landed. Recreational removals cannot be quantified and therefore total catches cannot be calculated.

### Stock development over time

ICES cannot assess the stock and exploitation status relative to MSY and precautionary approach (PA) reference points because the information to define reference points is not available.

### Landings



**Figure 1** Sea bass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. ICES estimated commercial landings (in thousand tonnes).

### Catch scenarios

The ICES framework for category 5 stocks (ICES, 2012a) was applied. For stocks without information on abundance or exploitation, ICES considers that a precautionary reduction of catches should be implemented where there is no ancillary information clearly indicating that the current level of exploitation is appropriate for the stock. The precautionary buffer was last applied in 2017 and has therefore been considered this year. The stock status relative to candidate reference points is unknown; therefore, the precautionary buffer was applied in the advice.

Discarding is assumed to be negligible and recreational removals may be substantial, but are unknown, therefore ICES cannot quantify the corresponding total catch.

**Table 1** Sea bass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. The basis for the catch scenarios.

Advised commercial catch (for 2020 and 2021)	478 tonnes	
Discard rate	Negligible	
Precautionary buffer	Applied	0.80
Commercial catch advice	382 tonnes	
% advice change <sup>^</sup>	-20%	

<sup>^</sup> recent advised commercial catch x [1-PA buffer]

## Basis of the advice

**Table 2** Sea bass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Precautionary approach
Management plan	The EU multiannual plan (MAP; EU, 2019) for stocks in the Western Waters and adjacent waters applies to this stock. The MAP stipulates that when the $F_{MSY}$ ranges are not available, fishing opportunities should be based on the best available scientific advice.

## Quality of the assessment

The COVID-19 pandemic did not have an impact on data provided for an assessment or advice.

## Issues relevant for the advice

Recreational removals of sea bass are unquantified, but not negligible.

## Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

## Basis of the assessment

**Table 3** Sea bass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. Basis of the assessment and advice.

ICES stock data category	5 ( <a href="#">ICES, 2021a</a> ).
Assessment type	No assessment (ICES, 2021b).
Input data	Commercial landings.
Discards and bycatch	Commercial discards are unknown, but considered to be negligible.
Indicators	None.
Other information	Last benchmarked in 2012 (ICES, 2012b).
Working group	Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Waters Ecoregion ( <a href="#">WGBIE</a> ).

## History of the advice, catch, and management

**Table 4** Sea bass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. ICES advice and official landings. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice *	Landings 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	686	701
2013	20% reduction in catches (last 3-year average)	< 6000	none	1001	1046
2014	20% reduction in catches (last 3-year average)	< 598	none	1026	917
2015	Same advice as last year	< 598	none	818	821

Year	ICES advice *	Landings corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC	Official landings	ICES landings
2016	Precautionary approach	< 598	none	923	947
2017	Precautionary approach	≤ 598	none	757	952
2018	Precautionary approach	≤ 478	none	832	716
2019	Precautionary approach	≤ 478	none	966	788
2020	Precautionary approach	≤ 478	none	1100 **	896 **
2021	Precautionary approach	≤ 478	none		
2022	Precautionary approach	≤ 382	none		
2023	Precautionary approach	≤ 382	none		

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

\*\* Preliminary.

## History of catch and landings

**Table 5** Sea bass in divisions 8.c and 9.a. Catch distribution by fleet in 2020 as estimated by ICES.

Table 5 Sea bass in divisions 8.C and 9.A: Catch distribution by fleet in 2020 as estimated by ICES					
Total catch (2020)	Commercial landings			Commercial discards	Recreational catch
Unknown	94.9% Artisanal	4.9% Purse seine	0.2% Trawl	Unknown, but considered to be negligible	Known to be substantial but cannot be quantified
	896 tonnes				

**Table 6** Sea bass 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

Year	France official landings **	Portugal official landings **	Spain official landings **	Total official landings **	Total ICES estimates
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	368	316	686	701
2013	4	502	495	1001	1046
2014	3	661	365	1026	917
2015	0	437	381	818	821
2016	0	546	377	923	947
2017	2	596	159	757	952
2018	0	500	332	832	716
2019	0	573	393	966	788
2020*	0	654	446	1100	896

\* 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).

### Summary of the assessment

There is no assessment for sea bass in this area.

### Sources and references

EU. 2019. Regulation (EU) 2019/472 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 establishing a multiannual plan for stocks fished in the Western Waters and adjacent waters, and for fisheries exploiting those stocks, amending Regulations (EU) 2016/1139 and (EU) 2018/973, and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 811/2004, (EC) No 2166/2005, (EC) No 388/2006, (EC) No 509/2007 and (EC) No 1300/2008. Official Journal of the European Union, L 83: 1–17. <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/472/oj>.

ICES. 2012a. Report of the Working Group on Assessment of New MoU Species (WGNEW), 5–9 March 2012, ICES CM 2012/ACOM:20. 258 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.8202>.

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ICES. 2021b. Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Waters Ecoregion (WGBIE). ICES Scientific Reports. 3:48. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.8212>.

[Download the stock assessment data and figures.](#)

*Recommended citation:* ICES. 2021. Sea bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) in divisions 8.c and 9.a (southern Bay of Biscay and Atlantic Iberian waters). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2021. ICES Advice 2021, bss.27.8c9a, <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.7735>.