

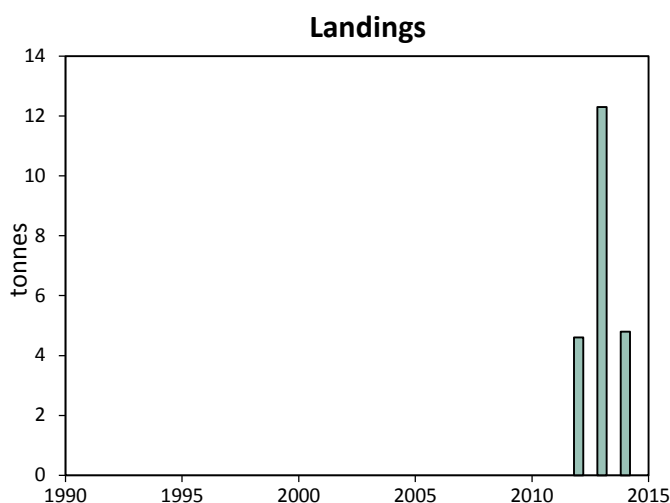
### 5.3.6 Blonde ray (*Raja brachyura*) in Subarea VI and Division IVa (northern North Sea and west of Scotland)

#### ICES stock advice

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, landings should be no more than 6 tonnes in each of the years 2016 and 2017. Discarding is known to occur, but is variable and quantities of dead discards have not been estimated.

#### Stock development over time

There is insufficient information to present historical trends in species-specific landings for this stock, and the quality of landings data are uncertain. Survey data are not considered informative.



**Figure 5.3.6.1** Blonde ray in Subarea VI and Division IVa. ICES estimates of species-specific landings available since 2012.

#### Stock and exploitation status

**Table 5.3.6.1** Blonde ray in Subarea VI and Division IVa. State of the stock and fishery relative to reference points.

		Fishing pressure				Stock size			
		2012	2013	2014		2013	2014	2015	
Maximum sustainable yield	$F_{MSY}$	?	?	?	Undefined	MSY	?	?	?
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, 2012). 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. Therefore, the precautionary buffer is applied. Discarding is known to occur but it has not been quantified and discard survival has not been estimated.

**Table 5.3.6.2** Blonde ray in Subarea VI and Division IVa. For stocks in ICES data categories 3–6, one landings option is possible.

Average landings (2012, 2013, 2014)	7.2 tonnes	
Discard rate	Unknown	
Precautionary buffer	Applied	0.8
Landings advice*	5.76 tonnes	

\* (Average landings) × buffer.

### Basis of the advice

**Table 5.3.6.3** Blonde ray in Subarea VI and Division IVa. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Precautionary approach
Management plan	There is no species-specific management plan for this stock.

### Quality of the assessment

There is insufficient information to present historical trends in species-specific landings for this stock. Since legal obligations to declare most demersal elasmobranchs to species level were introduced, a greater proportion of data have been reported to this level, but data remain incomplete. Landings data for blonde ray and spotted ray are mixed and improved estimates of discard rates and discard survival are also required. Species identification issues may exist also for some surveys and observer programmes.

The species has a patchy distribution and existing surveys cover only a fraction of the habitat where the species is distributed. Furthermore, data from surveys west of Scotland need to be evaluated. Hence, current survey data are not considered informative of stock status.

As blonde ray is a larger-bodied coastal species, recreational catch is thought to be substantial, but the quantities of retained catch are unknown.

### Issues relevant to 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 5.3.6.4** Blonde ray in Subarea VI and Division IVa. The basis of the assessment.

ICES stock data category	5.20 ( <a href="#">ICES, 2015a</a> ).
Assessment type	No assessment (ICES, 2015b).
Input data	Annual landings since 2012.
Discards and bycatch	Unknown.
Indicators	None.
Other information	IBTS Q1 in Division IVa; life history.
Working group	Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes ( <a href="#">WGEF</a> ).

### Information from stakeholders

No information has been provided.

### History of advice, catch, and management

**Table 5.3.6.5** Blonde ray in Subarea VI and Division IVa. History of ICES advice and ICES estimates of landings. Weights in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice	Predicted landings corresp. to advice	ICES species-specific landings:– minimum estimate based on reported landings
2012			4.6
2013		-	12.3
2014		-	4.8
2015		-	
2016	Precautionary approach	6	
2017	Biennial advice	6	

### History of catch and landings

This is a bycatch species in bottom trawl fisheries.

**Table 5.3.6.6** Blonde ray in Subarea VI and Division IVa. Catch distribution by fleet in 2014 as estimated by ICES.

Total catch (2014)	Commercial landings	Commercial discards
Unknown	4.8 tonnes Proportion by fleet is unquantified	Unknown

**Table 5.3.6.7** Blonde ray in Subarea VI and Division IVa. History of commercial landings (estimated by ICES) is presented by country participating in the fishery. Weights in tonnes.

Year	Ireland	UK (excl. Scotland)	UK (Scotland)	Total
2012	0.69	2.067	1.86	4.6
2013	11.79	0.439	0	12.3
2014	4.07	0.116	0.59	4.8

### Summary of the assessment

There is no assessment for this stock.

### Sources and references

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

ICES. 2015a. Advice basis. *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2015. ICES Advice 2015, Book 1, Section 1.2.

ICES. 2015b. Report of the Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEF), 17–23 June 2015, Lisbon, Portugal. ICES CM 2015/ACOM:19.