

ECOREGION **Widely distributed and migratory stocks**
STOCK **Alfonsinos/Golden eye perch (*Beryx* spp.) in the Northeast Atlantic**

Advice for 2015 and 2016

Based on ICES approach to data-limited stocks, ICES advises that annual catches should be no more than 280 tonnes. All catches are assumed to be landed.

Stock status

Fishing pressure		
	2011–2013	
MSY (F_{MSY})	?	Unknown
Precautionary approach (F_{pa}, F_{lim})	?	Unknown
Qualitative evaluation	?	Unknown
Stock size		
	2011–2013	
MSY ($B_{trigger}$)	?	Unknown
Precautionary approach (B_{pa}, B_{lim})	?	Unknown
Qualitative evaluation	?	Unknown

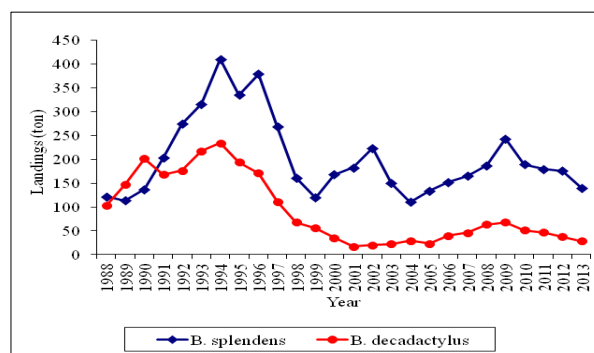
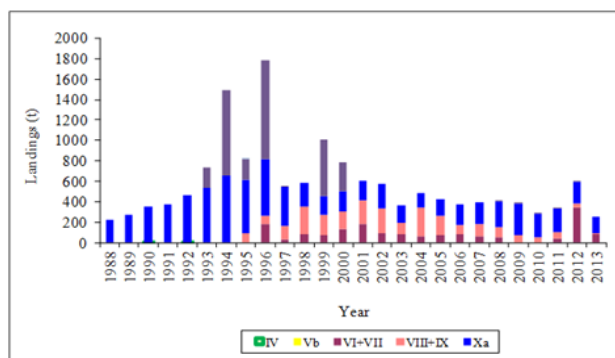


Figure 9.3.1.1 Alfonsinos in the Northeast Atlantic. Catches (tonnes) from the main fishing areas for species combined (left) and from the Azores (ICES Subarea X) longline fishery by species (right).

Two species are landed in this stock (*Beryx splendens* and *Beryx decadactylus*). Total catches (species combined) declined in the late 1990s and have since stabilized at about 400 tonnes (for the two species combined). Species-specific catch trends in the Azores fishery showed similar trends for both species. As these are aggregative species overall catches depend on the commercial targeting and aggregated catches may not reflect stock abundance.

Management plans

No specific management objectives are known to ICES.

Biology

This advice section deals with two species, *Beryx splendens* and *B. decadactylus*. They are distributed over a wide area which may be composed of several populations. Alfonsinos are oceanic demersal species occurring at the top of seamounts and along slopes. They are widespread in the northeast Atlantic from Iceland to the Azores and along the continental slope, in particular to the west of Iberia and Bay of Biscay. Alfonsinos are aggregative. Population dynamics are uncertain with recent estimates suggesting high longevity (>50 years), while other estimates suggest a longevity of ~15 years.

The fisheries

Most (50%) of the catches of *Beryx* spp. are taken by handlines and longlines within the Azorean EEZ of Subarea X and by trawl outside the EEZ on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.

Catch distribution Total catch (2013) is 254 t, all of which is landings.

Quality considerations

The general absence of data on species composition of the catches and biological parameters are important limiting factors for the knowledge of these fish stocks.

For the *B. decadactylus* the survey abundance indices from the Azores may be not reliable as they are not adjusted for species behaviour (highly mobile and aggregative species). The low number of individuals caught annually may be not enough to map the abundance of the species. The survey is considered to give a more reliable abundance index for *B. splendens*.

The advice is based on a precautionary reduction of catches because of missing or non-representative data. The methods applied to derive quantitative advice for data-limited stocks are expected to evolve as they are further developed and validated.

Scientific basis

Stock data category	5.2 (ICES, 2014a)
Assessment type	Catch-based.
Input data	Catches, Azorean longline survey abundance indices.
Discards and bycatch	Not included, considered negligible.
Indicators	None.
Other information	Survey data are available from the Azores. The survey abundance index for <i>Beryx splendens</i> declined significantly between 1995 and 1999, remaining at very low levels during 2000 and 2008 and has since increasing significantly (Figure 9.3.1.2).
Working group	Working Group on the Biology and Assessment of Deep-Sea Fisheries Resources (WGDEEP).

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Reference points

No reference points have been defined for these stocks.

Outlook for 2015 and 2016

No reliable assessment can be presented for this assessment unit and fishing possibilities cannot be projected.

ICES approach to data-limited stocks

For data-limited stocks without information on abundance or exploitation ICES considers that a precautionary reduction of catches should be implemented, unless there is ancillary information clearly indicating that the current exploitation is appropriate for the stock.

In 2012 ICES advised a 20% reduction in catches, equivalent to a TAC of 280 tonnes. New data do not change the perception of the stock; therefore, ICES maintains the same advice for 2015 and 2016, i.e. catches should be no more than 280 tonnes.

Additional considerations

Advice considerations

As a consequence of alfonsinos' spatial distribution associated with seamounts, their life-history, and their aggregation behaviour, these species are easily overexploited and can only sustain low rates of exploitation. To prevent depleting localized aggregations that have not yet been mapped and assessed, the exploitation of new seamounts should not be allowed.

Comparison of the basis of previous assessment and advice

The basis for the advice this year is the same as in 2012: ICES approach to data-limited stocks.

Sources

ICES. 2014a. Advice basis. *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2014. ICES Advice 2014, Book 1, Section 1.2.
ICES. 2014b. Report of the Working Group on the Biology and Assessment of Deep-Sea Fisheries Resources (WGDEEP), 4–11 April 2014, ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen, Denmark. ICES CM 2014/ACOM:17.

Table 9.3.1.1 Alfonsinos in the Northeast Atlantic. ICES advice, management, and landings.

Year	ICES Advice	Predicted catch corresp. to advice	TAC EU ¹	ICES landings
2003	Fishery should not be allowed to expand, unless proven to be sustainable and accompanied by programmes to collect data on by(catch)			0.37
2004	Biennial			0.49
2005	Fisheries accompanied by programmes to collect data on by(catch)	-	0.328	0.42
2006	Biennial	-	0.328	0.37
2007	Fishery should not be allowed to expand, unless proven to be sustainable	-	0.328	0.40
2008	Biennial	-	0.328	0.40
2009	Fishery should not be allowed to expand, unless proven to be sustainable	-	0.328	0.38
2010	Biennial	-	0.328	0.29
2011	Fisheries should not be allowed to expand, and a reduction in catches should be considered	-	0.328	0.34
2012	No new advice, same as 2011	-	0.328	0.61
2013	20% Reduction in catches (last 3 years' average)	0.28	0.312	0.25
2014	No new advice, same as 2013	0.28	0.296	
2015	Same catch advice as 2013	0.28		
2016	Same advice as 2015	0.28		

Weights in thousand tonnes.

¹ Subareas III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XII, and XIV.

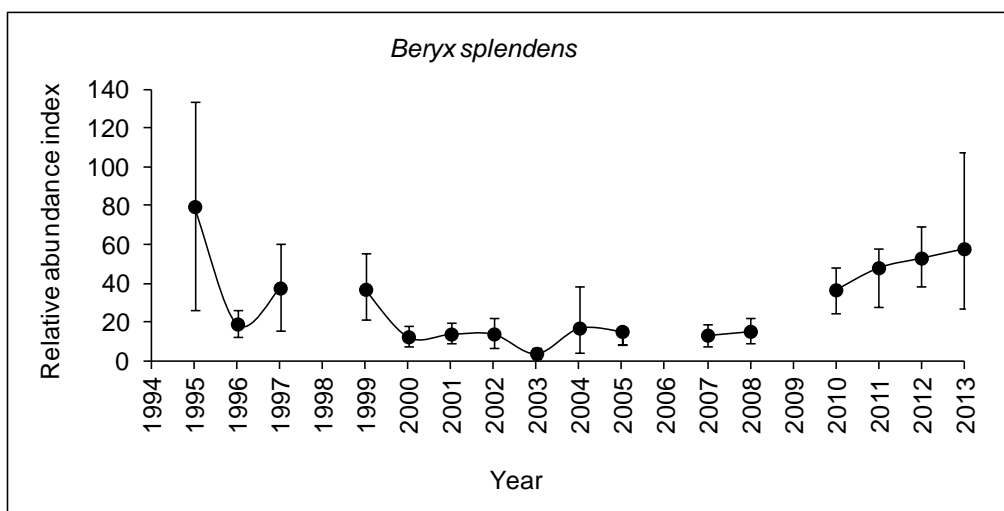


Figure 9.3.1.2 Alfonsinos in the Northeast Atlantic. Survey abundance index of *B. splendens*.

Table 9.3.1.2

Alfonsinos in the Northeast Atlantic. ICES estimates of catches (tonnes) by subarea.

Year	IV	Vb	VI+VII	VIII+IX	Xa	Xb	XII	TOTAL
1988			0	0	225	0		225
1989			12	0	260	0		272
1990	1	5	8	1	338	0		353
1991			0	0	371	0		371
1992	2	4	3	1	450	0		460
1993			1	0	533	195		729
1994			5	2	644	837		1488
1995		1	3	82	529	200	2	817
1996			178	88	550	960	0	1776
1997			26	135	379	5	0	545
1998			81	268	229	0	0	579
1999			75	201	175	550	0	1001
2000			133	168	203	281	0	785
2001			180	228	199	0	0	607
2002			95	238	243	0	0	577
2003			84	105	172	0	0	361
2004			64	283	139	0	0	485
2005			70	195	157	0	0	422
2006			78	97	192	0	0	367
2007			65	120	211	0	0	396
2008	0	0	54	101	250	2	0	407
2009			10	61	311	1	0	383
2010	0	0	5	41	240	5	0	291
2011	0	0	40	65	226	9	2	342
2012	0	0	341	42	213	10	0	605
2013*	0	0	77	9	168	0	0	254

*Preliminary.

Table 9.3.1.3 Alfonsinos in the Northeast Atlantic. Reported landings (tonnes) of *Beryx splendens* and *B. decadactylus* in the Azores (ICES Division Xa).

YEAR	<i>B. SPLENDENS</i>	<i>B. DECADACTYLUS</i>	TOTAL
1988	122	103	225
1989	113	147	260
1990	137	201	338
1991	203	168	371
1992	274	176	450
1993	316	217	533
1994	410	234	644
1995	335	194	529
1996	379	171	550
1997	268	111	379
1998	161	68	229
1999	119	56	175
2000	168	35	203
2001	182	17	199
2002	223	20	243
2003	150	22	172
2004	110	29	139
2005	134	23	157
2006	152	40	192
2007	165	46	211
2008	187	63	250
2009	243	68	311
2010	189	51	240
2011	179	47	226
2012	175	37	213
2013*	140	28	168

* Preliminary.