

ECOREGION **Widely distributed and migratory stocks**
STOCK **Greater forkbeard (*Phycis blennoides*) in the Northeast Atlantic**

Advice for 2011

Fishery should not be allowed to expand, and a reduction in catches should be considered, in light of survey data indicating a recent decline.

Stock status

Fishing mortality	2007	2008	2009
F_{MSY}	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
F_{PA}/F_{lim}	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Spawning Stock Biomass (SSB)	2008	2009	2010
$MSY B_{trigger}$	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
B_{PA}/B_{lim}	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

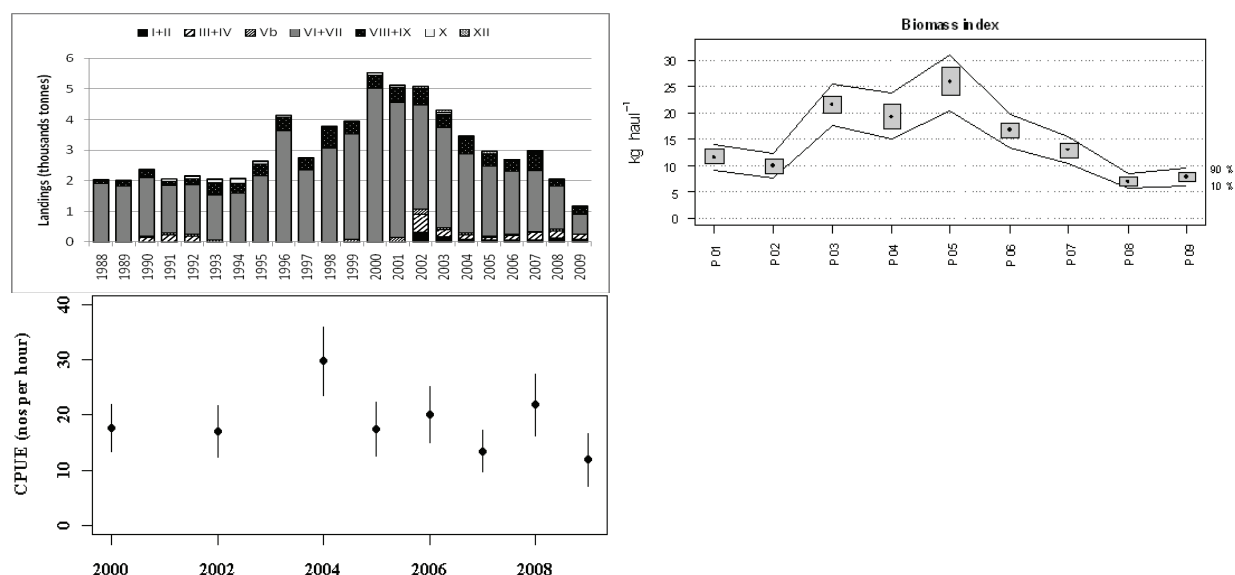


Figure 9.4.17.1 Greater forkbeard in the Northeast Atlantic. Top left: Landings by Subarea. Top right: Biomass indices from Spanish Porcupine survey (2001-2009). Boxes mark parametric standard error of the stratified abundance index. Lines mark bootstrap confidence intervals ($\alpha = 0.80$, bootstrap iterations = 1000). Bottom: Cpue (n°/hour) from the Scottish IBTS survey in Division VIa since 2000.

The biomass index for Division VIa has fluctuated without any consistent trend since 2000 however the Spanish survey on Porcupine Bank indicates a decline from 2005 onwards. It is unclear whether the current level of exploitation is having a detrimental effect on the stock. The time series are short and recent levels are not known relative to historic values.

Management plans

No specific management objectives are known to ICES.

According to the EU policy paper on fisheries management (17 May 2010, [COM\(2010\) 241](#)) this stock is classified under category 11.

The fisheries

The landings of greater forkbeard are mainly bycatch from demersal trawl and longline fisheries targeting species such as hake, megrim, monkfish, ling, and blue ling. Considering the mixed-fishery characteristic of greater forkbeard fisheries, this species should not be managed in a single-species context and any advice should take into account advice on other species/fisheries.

Since 1988, around 80% of landings came from Subareas VI and VII, and (12%), from Subareas VIII and IX (mainly from VIII). Fluctuations in landings may not necessarily be linked with changes in forkbeard abundance.

Effects of the fisheries on the ecosystem

Deepwater trawls impact ocean floor, which includes potential damage to deepwater coral communities. As this fishery is part of mixed fisheries, any effort on greater forkbeard also impacts other commercial and non commercial deepwater species.

Quality considerations

In some Subareas landings do not make a clear distinction between the species *Phycis blennoides*, *Phycis phycis*, and *Phycis* spp., and also with Morids in landings.

Scientific basis

Assessment type	Survey trends based assessment
Input data	3 surveys (Spanish Porcupine survey; Scottish IBTS survey; EVOHE-IBTS)
Discards and bycatch	-
Indicators	-
Other information	This stock was benchmarked in 2010 (WKDEEP 2010)
Working group report	WGDEEP

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Reference points

No reference points have been set for this stock.

Outlook for 2011

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

The 2008-2009 data (landings, surveys and cpue) give no reason to change the advice from that given in 2008: *“Fisheries on greater forkbeard should be accompanied by programmes to collect data. The fishery should not be allowed to expand unless it can be shown that it is sustainable”*, and a reduction in catches should be considered, in light of survey data indicating a recent decline.

Additional considerations

Since 1988, around 80% of the total landings of forkbeard in ICES area came from Subareas VI and VII. Since 2001 landings from Subareas I, II, III and IV increased considerably. In the case of Subareas I and II the increase of the landings is dependent on market prices.

In 2008 and 2009, landings in Subareas VIII and IX were reduced due to the decrease of Spanish landings. The Spanish landings in these Subareas come historically from trawler and longline fleet (63% and 32%, respectively).

There are difficulties in the species-specific identification of landings in some Subareas. Landing data could include significant landings of *Phycis* spp, *Urophycis* spp species.

Assessment and management area

ICES considered greater forkbeard as a single stock unit for all the Northeast Atlantic. Management unit are divided into four subgroups under EU TAC Regulation: i) Subareas I, II, III, IV; ii) Subareas V, VI, VII; iii) Subareas VIII, IX; and iv) Subareas X, XII.

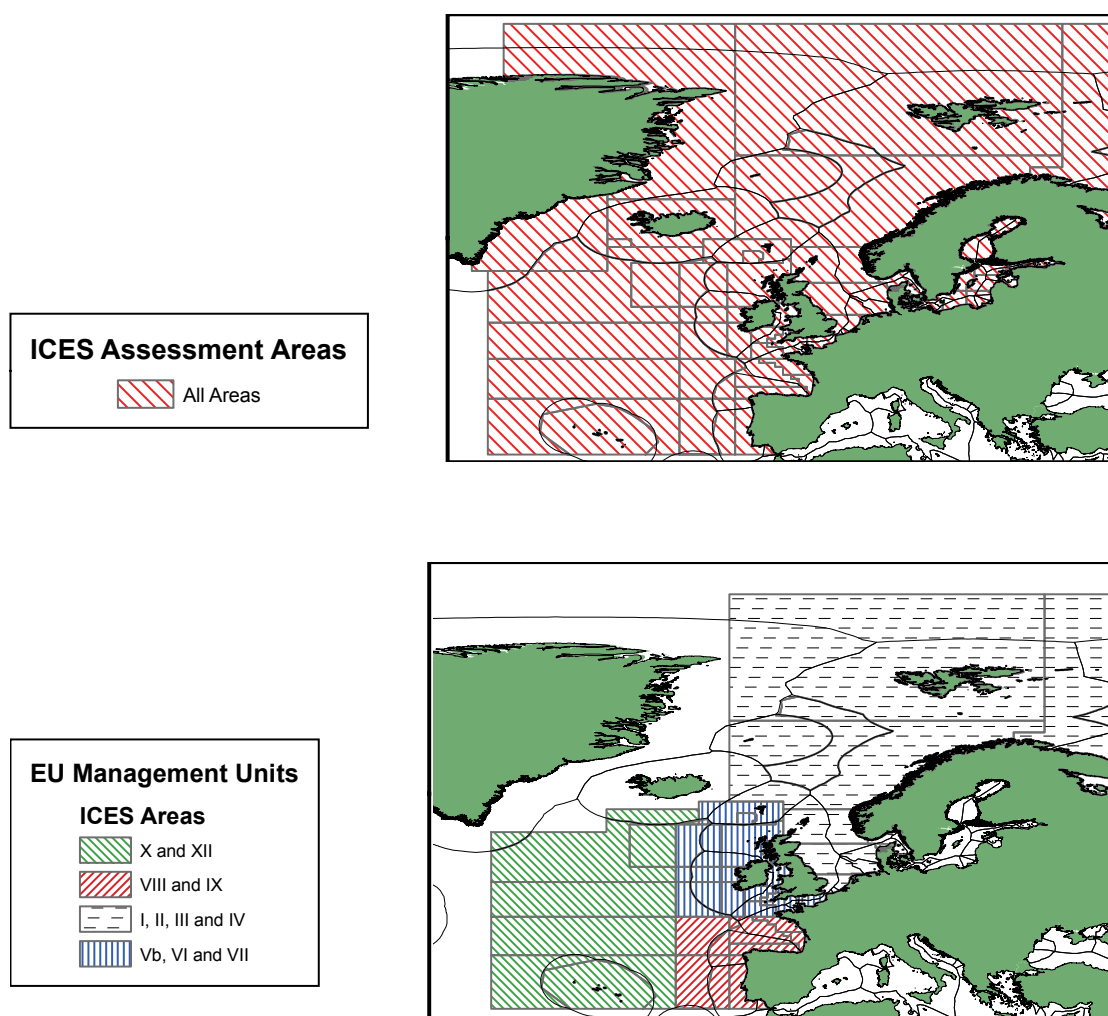


Figure 9.4.17.2 Greater forkbeard in the Northeast Atlantic. ICES assessment area (top) and EU TAC Regulation area (bottom) in the in the Northeast Atlantic.

Sources

ICES. 2010. Report of the Working Group on the Biology and Assessment of Deep-Sea Fisheries Resources, 7–13 April 2010, ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen. ICES CM 2010/ACOM:17.

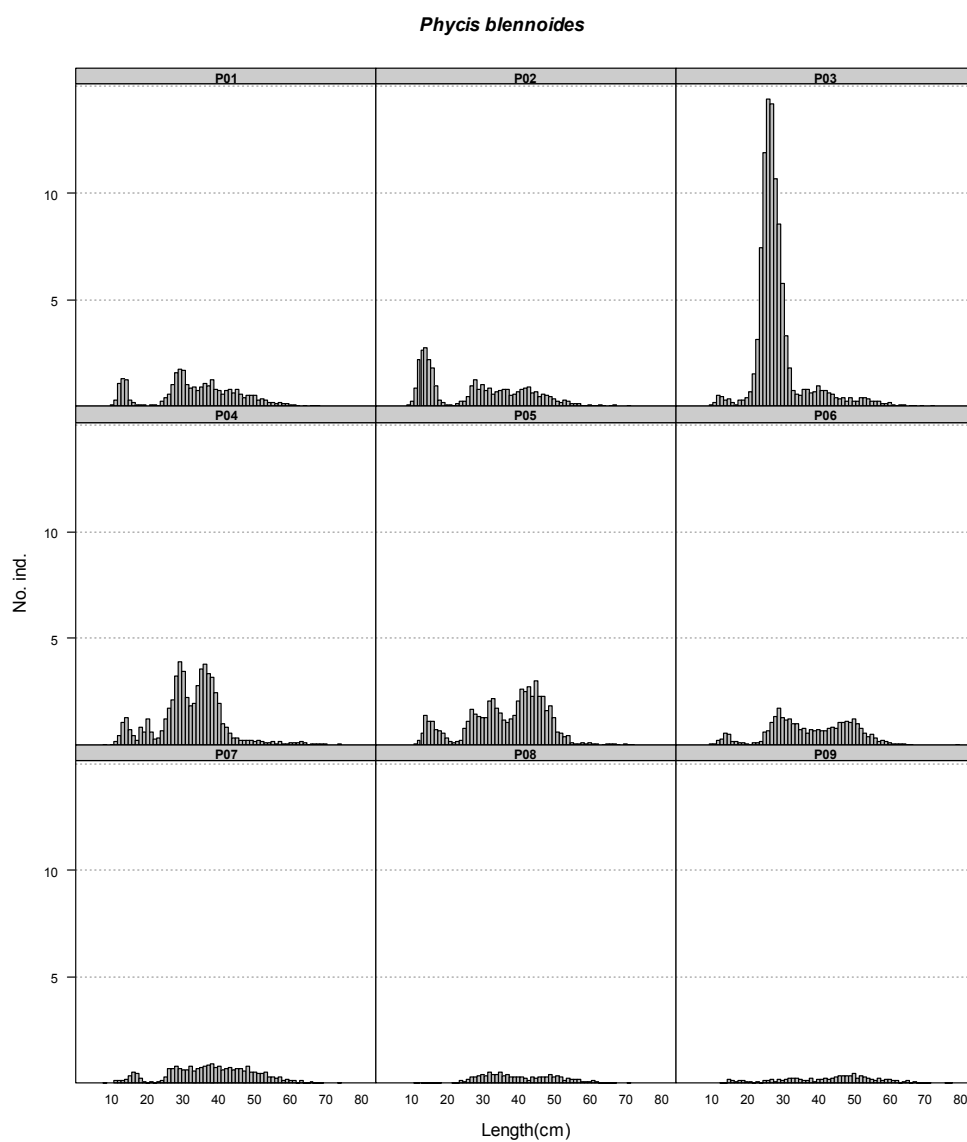


Figure 9.4.17.3 Greater forkbeard in the Northeast Atlantic. Mean stratified length distributions of *Phycis blennoides* in Spanish Porcupine groundfish survey (2001-2009).

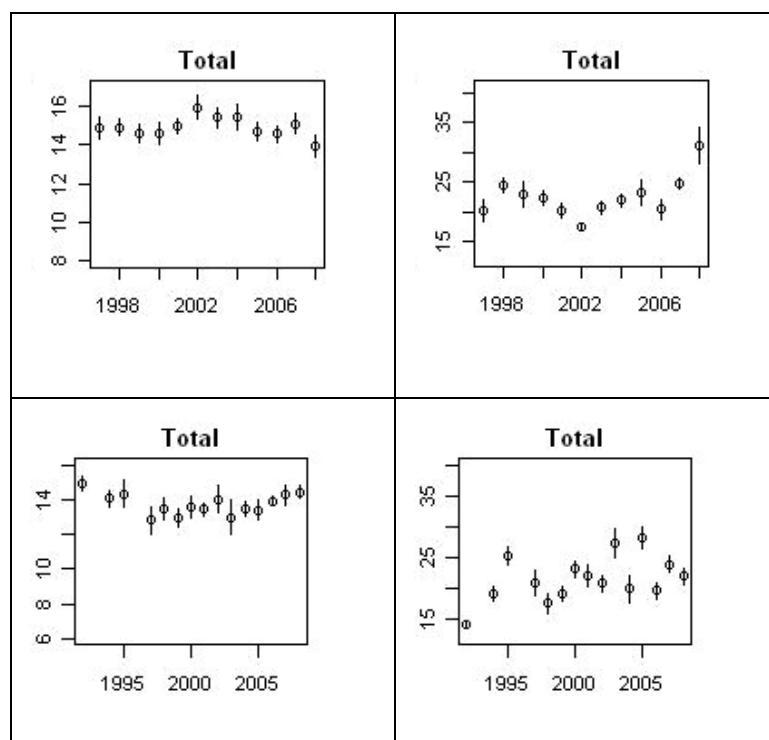


Figure 9.4.17.4 Greater forkbeard in the Northeast Atlantic. Raised abundance (swept area method, Log scale) and mean length in the Celtic Sea (top) and Bay of Biscay (bottom) from the French western IBTS of greater forkbeard (*Phycis blennoides*).

Table 9.4.17.1 Greater forkbeard in the Northeast Atlantic. ICES advice, management, and landings.

Year	ICES Advice	Predicted catch corresp. to advice	TAC EC Subareas I, II, III and IV	TAC EC Subareas V, VI and VII	TAC EC Subareas VIII and IX	TAC EC Subareas X and XII	Total TAC	ICES Landings Northeast Atlantic
2003	Fisheries accompanied by programmes to collect data, and expand very slowly unless proven to be sustainable	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.3
2004	Biennial	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.5
2005	Fisheries accompanied by programmes to collect data	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.0
2006	Biennial	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.7
2007	Fishery should not be allowed to expand, unless proven to be sustainable	-	0.036	2.028	0.267	0.063	2.394	2.9
2008	Biennial	-	0.036	2.028	0.267	0.063	2.394	2.0
2009	Fishery should not be allowed to expand, unless proven to be sustainable	-	0.031	2.028	0.267	0.054	2.38	1.2
2010	Biennial	-	0.031	2.028	0.267	0.054	2.38	
2011	Fishery should not be allowed to expand, and a reduction in catches should be considered	-						

Weights in '000 t.

Table 9.4.17.2 Greater forkbeard in the Northeast Atlantic. Landings (tonnes) by Subarea (Working group estimates).

Year	I+II	III+IV	Vb	VI+VII	VIII+IX	X	XII	TOTAL
1988	0	15	2	1898	81	29	0	2025
1989	0	12	1	1815	145	42	0	2015
1990	23	115	38	1921	234	50	0	2381
1991	39	181	53	1574	130	68	0	2045
1992	33	145	49	1640	179	91	1	2138
1993	1	34	27	1462	395	115	1	2035
1994	0	12	4	1571	320	136	3	2046
1995	0	3	9	2138	384	71	4	2609
1996	0	18	7	3590	456	45	2	4118
1997	0	7	7	2335	361	30	2	2742
1998	0	12	8	3040	665	38	1	3764
1999	0	31	34	3455	379	41	0	3940
2000	0	11	32	4967	417	91	6	5524
2001	8	27	102	4405	497	83	8	5131
2002	318	585	149	3417	493	57	81	5099
2003	155	233	73	3287	427	45	82	4302
2004	75	143	50	2606	500	37	54	3464
2005	51	83	46	2290	384	22	77	2952
2006	49	139	39	2081	321	15	42	2686
2007	47	239	56	1995	586	17	37	2978
2008	117	245	45	1418	178	18	17	2038
2009	81	146	18	654	203	13	44	1160