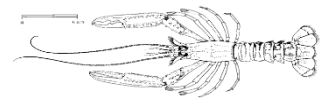


NEPHROPS FU16 (PORCUPINE BANK)

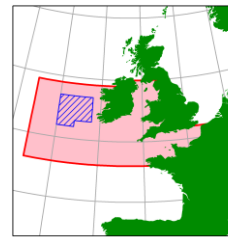
Division 7.b, 7.c, 7.j and 7.k



ADVICE FOR 2024

ICES advises that when the EU multiannual plan (MAP) for Western Waters and adjacent waters is applied, and assuming zero discards, catches in 2024 that correspond to the F ranges in the MAP are between 3,677 t and 4,560 t. The entire range is considered precautionary when applying the ICES advice rule.

To ensure that the stock in Functional Unit 16 is exploited sustainably, management should be continued at the Functional Unit level.



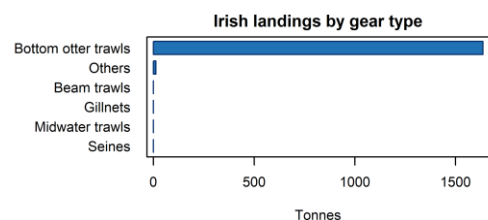
■ TAC/Management area
■ Assessment area

KEY POINTS

ICES assessment Category	I (Quantitative Assessment)	
Management Plan	WWMAP (target)	
Advice Basis	Management Plan	Catch=4,560 t
Ranges	F _{MSY} Range Lower	Catch=3,677 t
	F _{MSY}	Catch=4,560 t
	F _{MSY} Range Upper**	Catch=4,560 t
Landing Obligation	From 2016	Gear specific high survivability exemption*
MSY B _{trigger}	Not defined	

* Described below under Key Stock Considerations, details in (EU 2020/2015).

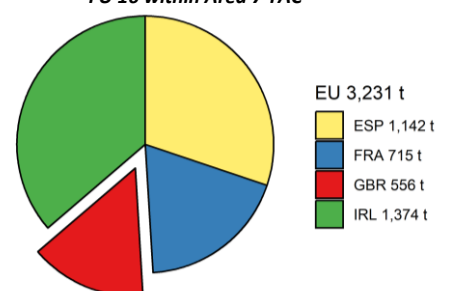
** FMSY upper = FMSY for this stock.



MANAGEMENT IN 2023

- A separate catch limit for FU16 within the wider TAC for Sub-area 7 has been in place since 2011. This has resulted in very restrictive quotas for some vessels and increases the risk of discarding.
- The Irish fishery was closed from May 2023, when 42% of the Irish quota was exhausted, and reopened in October.
- A spatio-temporal closure of the Porcupine bank for EU fisheries was in place between 1 May – 31 July 2010-2012. The period of the EU regulatory closure was reduced to only one month (May) after 2013 and is now included in the technical measures regulation EU 2019/1241.
- Area misreporting was a problem in the past. Since March 2018 Irish vessels targeting *Nephrops* in Sub-areas 6 and 7 may only fish in either of (1) Sub-area 6 and Sub-area 7, excluding FU16, or (2) FU16 of Sub-area 7 (Fisheries Management Notice No. 20 of 2018).
- In September 2022 the EU introduced an implementing regulation to protect VMEs between 400-600m as part of the deep sea access regulation (EU 2016/2336). This closes an area in the south of the Porcupine *Nephrops* grounds to all mobile bottom contacting gears (EU 2022/1614). The area closed accounts for approximately 14% of the total *Nephrops* grounds.

2023 "of which" Quota Allocation Limits for FU 16 within Area 7 TAC



KEY STOCK CONSIDERATIONS

- The mean weight for this stock has been fluctuating strongly since 2000 due to changes in recruitment patterns. For this reason, a three-year average (2020–2022) weight in the landings was considered the most appropriate basis in the calculation of catch scenarios.
- Since 2020, industry self-sampling has been used to derive mean weights and this is considered the best available estimate of mean weight currently.
- The UWTV abundance estimate increased by 47% in 2023. No MSY $B_{trigger}$ has been defined for this stock due to the short time series. The lowest abundance observed of 722 million individuals in 2014 could be used as a MSY $B_{trigger}$ proxy.
- *Nephrops* on the Porcupine Bank are fished in deep waters and the grounds occur over a fairly wide area at relatively low burrow abundance (compared to the inshore *Nephrops* grounds). Productivity of deep water *Nephrops* stocks are lower than those on the shelf although the individual *Nephrops* grow to relatively larger size and attain higher market prices.
- Nearly 90% of the Irish landings of Porcupine Bank *Nephrops* come from trips where *Nephrops* was the dominant species, the main bycatch species is anglerfish.
- Historic Irish sampling data shows that female *Nephrops* constitute a higher proportion of the catch between late May (week 22) and early July (week 27) on the Porcupine Bank. If a spatiotemporal closure is maintained, in order to protect mature females, the optimum month for closure would be June followed by May and then July.
- Highly variable discarding practices have been observed on individual trips since 2016. The ICES advice assumes that all catches are landed.
- Under the Landing Obligation *Nephrops* fisheries in Sub-area 7 have a high survivability exemption, based on studies which showed a survivability of about 64% (BIM, 2017). This exemption applies to bottom trawls (OTT, OTB, TBS, TBN, TB, PTB, OT, PT, TX) with a mesh size ≥ 100 mm or with a mesh size 70-99 mm in combination with highly selective gear options such as: square mesh panels, seltra panel, sorting grid or separation panel.
- A high survivability exemption also applies to creel caught *Nephrops* in Sub-area 7.



Published 31 October 2023

Norway lobster (*Nephrops norvegicus*) in divisions 7.b–c and 7.j–k, Functional Unit 16 (west and southwest of Ireland, Porcupine Bank)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES advises that when the EU multiannual plan (MAP) for Western Waters and adjacent waters is applied, and assuming zero discards, catches in 2024 that correspond to the F ranges in the MAP are between 3 677 and 4 560 tonnes. The entire range is considered precautionary when applying ICES advice rule.

To ensure that the stock in Functional Unit (FU) 16 is exploited sustainably, management should be continued at the FU level.

ICES advice on conservation aspects

ICES has not identified any conservation aspects.