

CELTIC SEA AND WESTERN CHANNEL WHITING



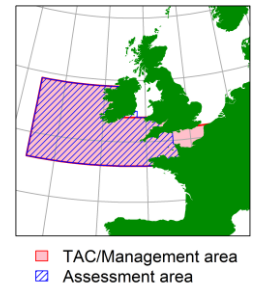
Divisions 7.b-ce-k

ADVICE FOR 2024

ICES advises that when the MSY approach and precautionary considerations are applied, there should be zero catch in 2024.

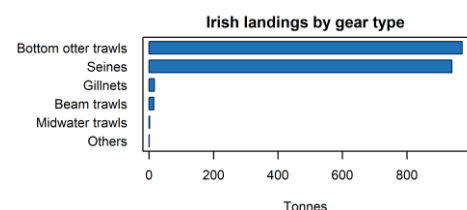
ICES notes the existence of a precautionary management plan, developed and adopted by one of the relevant management authorities for this stock. Management should be implemented at the stock level.

FEAS notes that the TAC includes Division 7.d, which is not part of the Celtic sea whiting assessment. The catch advice for 7.d is included as part of the North Sea whiting stock for which 128,290 t is advised for 2024. Based on the EU–Norway–UK agreement in 2022, 19.77% of the overall TAC will be allocated to 7.d. This implies a TAC of 25,363 t.



KEY POINTS

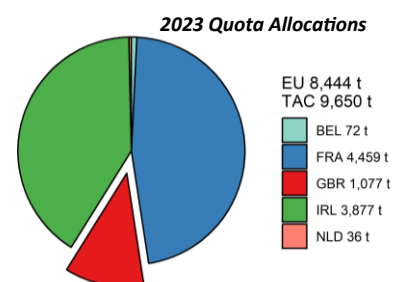
ICES assessment Category	I (Quantitative assessment)	
Management Plan	WWMAP (target)	
Advice Basis	ICES MSY Approach	Catch = 0 t
Ranges	F _{MSY} Range Lower	Catch = 4,368 t
	F _{MSY}	Catch = 5,063 t
	F _{MSY} Range Upper	Catch = 5,063 t
Landing Obligation	From 2019	De minimis up to 5%*



* The *de minimis* exemption, caught using bottom trawls and seines with mesh ≥ 80 mm, pelagic trawls and beam trawls with mesh 80-119 mm and requiring reporting to STECF (EU 2020\2015).

MANAGEMENT IN 2023

- The stock area consists of Divisions 7.b-ce-k and two ICES rectangles in the south of Division 7.a (33E2 and 33E3) which are reallocated to Division 7.g. This differs to the TAC area, 7.b-k, 8, 9 and 10.
- ICES division 7.d is not included in the stock assessment area for the whiting 7.b-k stock.
- Whiting in 7.d are assessed with North Sea whiting area 4 and included in the North Sea MAP (EU regulation 2018/973).



KEY STOCK CONSIDERATIONS

- The stock assessment indicates that the whiting stock is currently below B_{lim} and that incoming recruitment is low. Even with zero catch in 2024, the probability of being above B_{lim} in 2025 is 33%.
- The advice also indicates that there is a retrospective tendency to overestimate stock size and underestimate fishing mortality. If this pattern continues the forecast will be overly optimistic in terms of SSB and the probabilities of the stock remaining below B_{lim} will be higher.
- Ireland accounts for around 45% of the whiting landings and is the only country with a directed whiting fishery in the Celtic sea. The majority of Irish landings are from trips where whiting was the dominant species. The remainder are taken in a more mixed fishery and are landed with haddock, hake, megrim, anglerfish and *Nephrops*.

- Mixed-fisheries advice will be provided in the Celtic Seas fisheries overview later in the year.
- Discards are estimated to be 32% (2,462 t) in 2022 which is an increase from 17% (1,224 t) in 2021. The majority of discards occur above the minimum landing size.

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Whiting (*Merlangius merlangus*) in divisions 7.b–c, and 7.e–k (southern Celtic seas and western English Channel)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES advises that when the MSY approach and precautionary considerations are applied, there should be zero catch in 2024.

ICES notes the existence of a precautionary management plan, developed and adopted by one of the relevant management authorities for this stock.

Management should be implemented at the stock level.

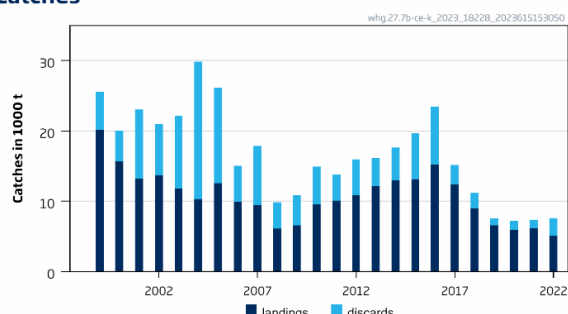
ICES advice on conservation aspects

ICES has not identified any conservation aspects.

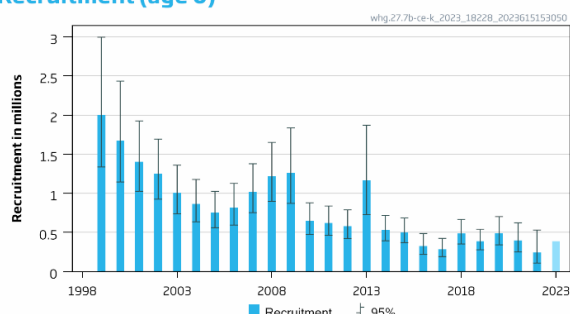
Stock development over time

Fishing pressure on the stock is above F_{MSY} , F_{pa} and F_{lim} , and spawning-stock size is below MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{pa} , and B_{lim} .

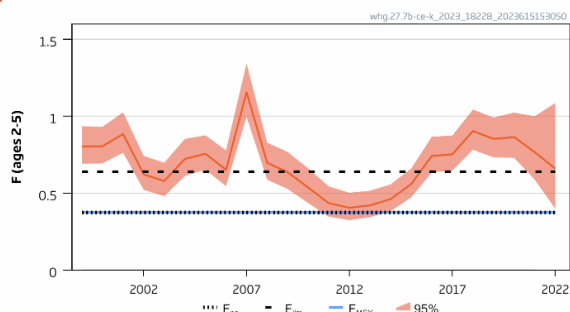
Catches



Recruitment (age 0)



F



SSB

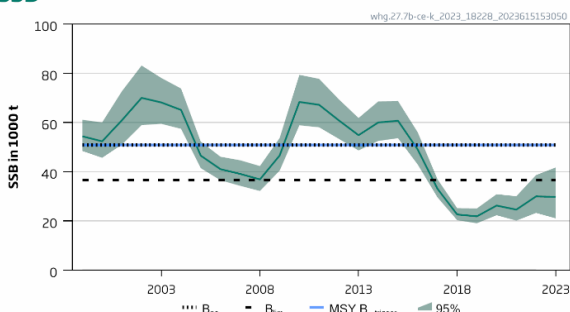


Figure 1 Whiting in divisions 27.7b–ce–k. Summary of the stock assessment. The assumed recruitment value for 2023 is shaded in a lighter colour.