

IRISH AND CELTIC SEAS, NORTH SEA, ENGLISH AND BRISTOL CHANNEL SEA BASS



Divisions 4.b-c, 7.a, and 7.d-h

ADVICE FOR 2023

ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, total removals in 2023 should be no more than 2,542 t.

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



KEY POINTS

ICES Assessment Category	I (Quantitative Assessment)	
Management Plan	WWMAP (target)	
Advice Basis:	ICES MSY approach	Catch = 2,542 t
Ranges	F_{MSY} Range Lower	Catch = Not available
	F_{MSY}	Catch = 2,821 t
	F_{MSY} Range Upper	Catch = Not available
Landing Obligation	Does not apply (Not a TAC species)	

MANAGEMENT IN 2022

- There is no TAC for sea bass in divisions 4.b-c, 7.a, and 7.d-h.
- A series of measures have been introduced because of the low stock size. The most recent measures on sea bass fisheries are set out in Article 11 of Regulation (EU) 2022/515 (amending Regulation (EU) 2022/109). Only catch and release recreational fisheries are allowed in January, February and December, a bag limit of two fish per day was put in place between March and November.
- The minimum size of European seabass retained by recreational fisheries is 42 cm.
- A prohibition on landings of sea bass by Irish commercial vessels has been in place in Ireland since 1990 (under Irish statute).
- Nationally, the Sea Fisheries Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 set out fishing restrictions under two statutory instruments:
 - S.I. No. 230 of 2006, prohibits the fishing, landing, transshipping or retaining of sea bass on board an Irish commercial fishing boat; the use of nets; and prescribes an MCRS of 40 cm.
 - S.I. No. 367 of 2007 prohibits sale or offer for sale of sea bass (other than those imported).

KEY STOCK CONSIDERATIONS

- The stock is below $MSY B_{trigger}$ in 2023 and the advised fishing mortality for 2023 is below F_{MSY} due to application of the ICES advice rule (see Definition of fisheries technical terms and acronyms).
- The increase in advice for 2023 of 15% relative to 2022 is mainly due to an increase in spawning-stock biomass and the slightly higher fishing mortality implied by the advice rule.
- The stocks around Ireland and Britain are believed to belong to the same genetic population. Tagging research conducted by the Marine Institute has shown that sea bass may undergo long migrations from Irish coasts into the Celtic Sea and Bristol Channel, returning to the Irish coast.