

CELTIC SEA AND WESTERN CHANNEL WHITING



Divisions 7.b-ce-k

ADVICE FOR 2023

ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, catches in 2023 should be no more than 1,715 t.

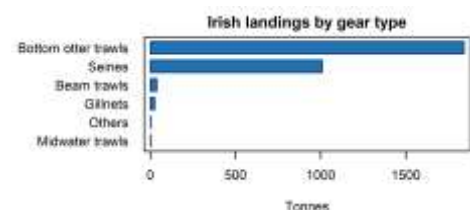
ICES notes the existence of a precautionary management plan, developed and adopted by one of the relevant management authorities for this stock. Management should be implemented at the stock level.

FEAS notes that the TAC includes Division 7.d, which is not part of the Celtic sea whiting assessment. The human consumption catch advice for 7.d (23,953 t) is given as part of the North Sea whiting stock. This implies that the advice for the TAC area is 25,668 t.



KEY POINTS

ICES assessment Category	I (Quantitative assessment)	
Management Plan	WWMAP (target)	
Advice Basis	ICES MSY approach where $SSB_{2024} = B_{lim}$ with 50% probability, catch = 1,715 t	
Ranges	F_{MSY} Range Lower	Not appropriate
	F_{MSY}	Catch = 6,322 t
	F_{MSY} Range Upper	Not appropriate
Landing Obligation	From 2019	De minimis up to 5%*

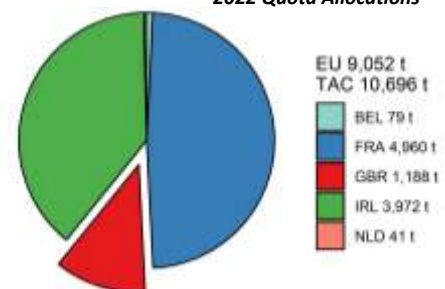


* The *de minimis* exemption, caught using bottom trawls and seines with mesh ≥ 80 mm, pelagic trawls and beam trawls with mesh 80-119 mm and requiring reporting to STECF (EU 2020/2015).

MANAGEMENT IN 2022

- 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).

2022 Quota Allocations



KEY STOCK CONSIDERATIONS

- The stock assessment indicates that the whiting stock is currently below B_{lim} . The ICES advice is based on bringing the stock above B_{lim} by 2024 with 50% probability. This implies a significant reduction in catch and fishing mortality compared to recent levels.
- 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 have declined in recent years from 35% in 2016 (8,259 t) to 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 is applied, catches in 2023 should be no more than 1715 tonnes.

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.

Stock development over time

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



Figure 1 Whiting in divisions 7.b–c and 7.e–k. Summary of the stock assessment. The assumed recruitment value for 2022 is shaded in a lighter colour.