

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

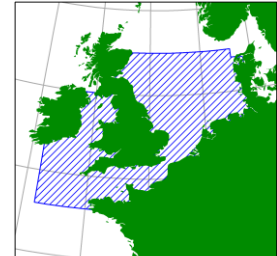


Divisions 4.b-c, 7.a, and 7.d-h

## ADVICE FOR 2024

ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, total removals in 2024 should be no more than 2,432 tonnes.

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



□ TAC/Management area  
▨ Assessment area

## KEY POINTS

ICES Assessment Category	I (Quantitative Assessment)	
Management Plan	WWMAP (target)	
Advice Basis:	ICES MSY approach	Catch = 2,432 t
Ranges	F <sub>MSY</sub> Range Lower	Catch = 2,256 t
	F <sub>MSY</sub>	Catch = 2,683 t
	F <sub>MSY</sub> Range Upper	Catch = 2,683 t
Landing Obligation	Does not apply (Not a TAC species)	

## MANAGEMENT IN 2023

- 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) 2023/194. Only catch and release recreational fisheries are allowed from February 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. A bag limit of two fish per day was put in place for January and between April 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 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<sub>trigger</sub> in 2024 and the advised target fishing mortality for 2024 is below F<sub>MSY</sub> due to application of the ICES advice rule.
- The decrease in advice for 2024 of 4.3% relative to 2023 is mainly due to an estimated decrease spawning-stock biomass predicted for 2025.
- ICES advice is based on “total removals” this includes both commercial and recreational catches (taking mortality of released fish into account estimated at approximately 5%).
- 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.