



European
Commission

Seabass Management

Timeline:

- **ICES advice in 2011:** First advice since 2004, stock structure unknown, increase of effort with decreased catches per effort identified for some metiers.
- **COM non-paper February 2012:** exploring potential for a TAC for seabass- discussed at June Management Committee. Further discussion in September and November committees.
- **ICES** further advice in June 2012; benchmark in Oct 2012, improved stock definition

- **MS Expert Meeting March 2013.** Highlighted need to focus on spawning areas, cap effort and increase selectivity. No agreement possible on allocation for a TAC, need for short and long term responses noted. MS invited to suggest possible options and discuss possible measures.
- **ICES advice in June 2013:** improved definition of stock components- identified high mortality in Celtic/Irish sea / channel component recommended 36% reduction in catch
- **MS expert Meeting July 2013:** No agreement on use of a TAC, nor use of technical measures or closures.
 - MS again asked to consider short and long term options, and return in September with position on implementing such measures.

- **Management Committee November 2013:**
COM announced intent to ask for STECF
evaluation of information received from the MS.

ICES stock areas and assessments

- Divisions VIa, VIIb and VIIj (WoS and Ireland)
- Divisions VIIIa,b (Bay of Biscay)
- Divisions VIIIc and IXa (Atlantic Iberian waters)
- Divisions IVbc, VIIa, VIIId-h (Irish Sea, Celtic sea, Channel, and Southern North Sea)

STECF request 2014

- STECF requested to assess and comment on the national management measures of the MS, to determine their impact on the current stock distribution.
- In particular STECF were asked to
 - Identify the contribution to mortality from the direct and indirect fisheries on a MS basis.
 - Identify for direct fisheries potential limits and management indicators and possible avoidance/technical measures for indirect fisheries
 - Identify management measures that would be precautionary or meet MSY

- An adhoc contract was initiated to support this work.
- This report formed the basis of the Plenary discussion and additional advice from STECF sought on;
 - The effectiveness of national measures in;
 - Controlling catches;
 - Maintaining the stock at a MSY level (under various scenarios); and
 - To recommend any measures that should be applied

STECF response

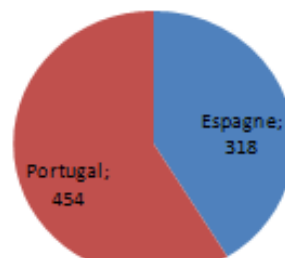
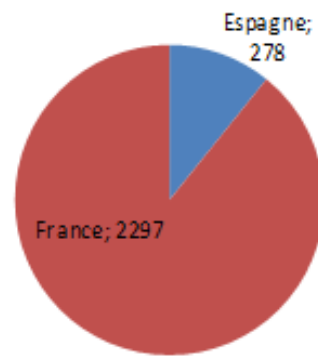
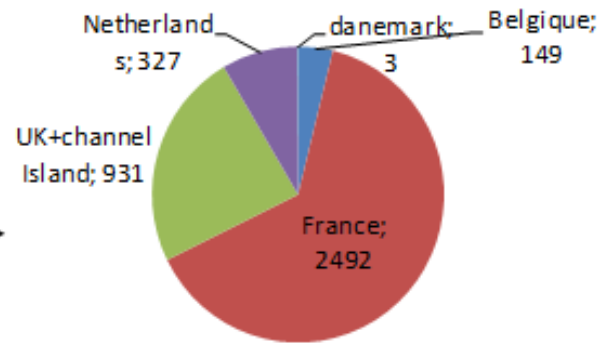
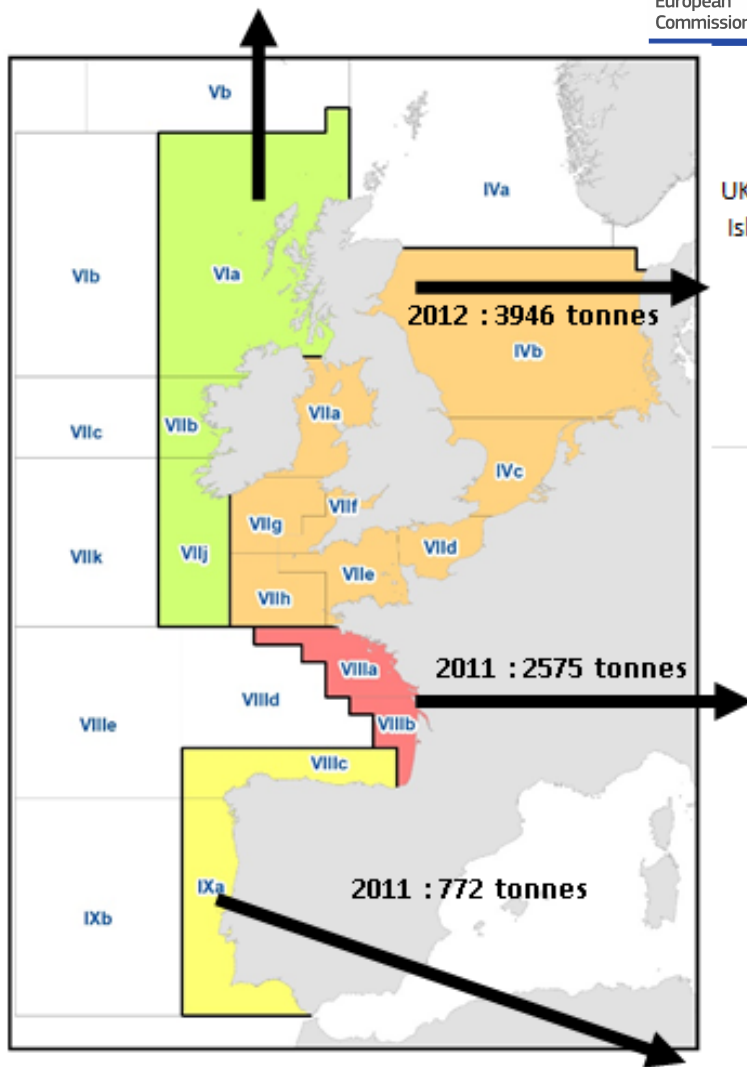
- STECF estimate recreational fisheries accounts for 25% of total fishery removals- historical trend unknown.
- To achieve F_{MSY} a combination of national measures (reducing effort in directed fisheries) with management of offshore international fisheries on spawning seabass is urgently needed in the North Sea, Channel Celtic Sea and Irish Sea.

For the Celtic Sea, Irish Sea, Channel and North Sea stock;

- Targeted FR and UK midwater pair trawl is the largest contribution to commercial landings (25% of total mortality)
- Member State mortality contributions
 - FR 65%, UK 21%, NL 9%, BE 4% others 1%



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Bay of Biscay (VIIb)

- Member State landings are:
 - FR 91%, ES 9%

Recreational landings significant (FR landings are 38% of the total recreational and commercial fishery)

Iberian Coast VIIIx, IXa

- MS landings
 - PT 61%, ES 36%, FR 3% of commercial catches

STECF Response- continued

- STECF identifies a number of Management indicators and limits for directed fisheries and possible avoidance/technical measures for indirect fisheries. Ultimately the use depends on the management objective.
- These are grouped by management measure.

Range of possible management measures.

Management measures	Fisheries		
	Target Fisheries	By-catch fisheries	Recreational Fisheries
Catch limits	X		X
Improvements in selectivity	X	X	X
Bag limits for recreational fisheries			X
Spatial and temporal closures	X	X	X
Effort restrictions and licensing	X	X	X
Catch and release			X
Spatiotemporal tariff management	X	X	X

Range of potential management measures applicable to the different fisheries catching seabass.
(STECF PLEN 14-02)

Measure 1: Catch Limits

- Un-certainty over stock distribution-Any catch limit needs to match the stock distribution and the spatial scales of any sub population.
- Landing statistics open to un-certainty (likely under-reporting of small catches)

Measure2: Selectivity improvements

- Improvements to allow for better yield per recruit at first capture.
- Increase in mesh size, or avoidance of juvenile areas would be required.
- By-catch issue remains for other fisheries.
- Post release mortality is uncertain.

Measure 3: Bag limits for recreational fisheries

- Recreational fisheries data needs to be further examined to determine impact of different bag limits.
- Compliance and enforcement need to be assessed.
- Post release mortality uncertain (as above)

Measure 4: Closure of targeted fisheries.

- Would achieve a substantial reduction of mortality
- Effort displacement needs to be considered.
- Spawning grounds well known but some variance in time and location – sufficient coverage needed.
- Would require effective enforcement and compliance.

Measure 5: Control of fishing effort

- Limiting number of vessels (by way of days at sea; restrictive licencing; capacity limits- gear restrictions- etc)
- Link between effort and mortality unknown.
- Would need ongoing monitoring and assessment to demonstrate that management objectives are met.

Measure 6: Use of spatiotemporal tariffs

- System uses effort credit points system, and higher rates are associated with particular areas and times.
- Fishermen 'pay' from their allocation to access areas at particular times.
- Similar to real time closures - requires monitoring of catches to identify areas with juvenile/or adult seabass.

Effectiveness of current national measures

- STECF conclude that the combined current national measures have not been effective in controlling catches and preventing an increase in fishing mortality and/or a decline in the biomass for the North Sea, Channel, Celtic Sea and Irish Sea stock.
- For other stocks STECF cannot determine the effectiveness of national measures as there is no assessment of stock status and trends are not available.

Effectiveness of existing measures in maintaining MSY levels

- For the North Sea, Celtic, Channel and Irish Sea the stock will continue to decline. Current levels of fishing will not allow recovery in the medium term.

Recommended measures to apply now to maintain the stock within MSY levels

- To meet ICES 2014 advice requires a 60% reduction in mortality- a package of measures is required.
- **Additional comments**
 - Any given management measure may have highly inequitable economic and social impacts.
 - Choice of actions will impact different sectors.
 - Any economic assessment should also consider enforcement/ control costs and compliance levels.

Outcome of MS discussion: Management objectives

- Reduce fishing mortality from commercial and recreational fishing

In the immediate consider:

- **Protect spawning areas**
- **Manage catches by targeted commercial fishery**
- **Manage catches by recreational fishing**
- Need social and economic impacts before developing further
- No consensus.

Next steps

- Consideration of social and economic impacts from any management measure is fundamental.
 - A further STECF contract to evaluate these impacts.
 - Additional fleet specific and recreational information will be required
 - potential management scenarios need to be identified.
- Options to deliver a reduction in fishing mortality in the short term need to be developed now.

Possible EU recovery measures:

- Long-medium term:
 - **CFP, fish stock recovery areas (Article 8), all subject to co decision.**
- Short term:
 - **Total allowable catches?**
 - **Closed areas and/or effort limits for vessels?**
 - **Catch limits for vessels?**
 - **Catch limits for recreational fishing areas**

Possible EU delivery (short term)

- Fishing opportunities
- Emergency measures (Article 12):
Urgency and serious threat to the stock -
immediate, 6 months renewable
- Emergency technical measures (Article 45
of regulation no 850/98): need for
immediate action