

EU standing request on catch scenarios for zero-TAC stocks 2023: pollack (*Pollachius pollachius*) in subareas 6–7 (Celtic Seas and the English Channel)

Service summary

ICES has provided forecasts on the development of pollack (*Pollachius pollachius*) in subareas 6–7 (Celtic Seas and the English Channel). There are no catch scenarios that will rebuild the stock above B_{lim} by 2025. ICES, therefore, advises zero catch in 2024.

Pollack is caught in demersal mixed fisheries although there are some fisheries targeting pollack in certain areas. Due to the large geographic range of this stock, regional differences in fishing practices, and the diverse range of species that are caught together with this stock, it is not possible to produce mixed-fisheries scenarios for 2024.

For pollack in subareas 6–7:

- If catches are such that stock biomass is stable between 2024 and 2025, it would result in a catch of 1363 tonnes in 2024;
- If catches are such that stock biomass increases by +10% between 2024 and 2025, it would result in a catch of 1145 tonnes in 2024;
- If catches are such that stock biomass increases by +20% between 2024 and 2025, it would result in a catch of 925 tonnes in 2024;
- If catches are such that stock biomass increases by +30% between 2024 and 2025, it would result in a catch of 705 tonnes in 2024.

Pollack in subareas 6–7 is subject to a multiannual management plan (MAP), but F_{MSY} ranges are not available. Options are provided to increase the stock biomass.

Since pollack are taken as bycatch in mixed fisheries, a specific monitoring TAC is not required for this stock.

Request

EU DGMARE has requested that ICES evaluate the following[†]:

For by-catch and for target stocks (except data-limited deep sea stocks) where ICES is advising zero catch but the stock is caught in mixed fisheries with other species where non-zero catches are advised, and where sufficient data and understanding of processes exist, ICES will provide estimates of the likely catches of stocks for which there is zero catch advice, under the assumption that TACs for the target stocks are set in line with ICES advice, respectively in line with FMSY point and with FMSY lower, where available. In doing so, for the stocks for which there is zero catch advice, ICES will for the likely catches quantify corresponding changes in biomass and the probability of the biomass being above B_{lim} at the end of the projection year.

For stocks where ICES is advising zero catches, ICES will identify stocks for which a sentinel fishery is required to monitor stock development. For such stocks, where possible, ICES will provide the minimum level of catches needed to provide sufficient data for ICES to continue providing scientific advice on the state of the stock. In doing so, ICES should in particular consider the following stocks for which there was advice for zero catches in 2022 and for which a sentinel fishery was conducted in 2023 or was being considered for 2023.

[†] Version 2: request text updated

Basis of the advice

Pollack landings come from a variety of gears and fisheries targeting a diverse range of species, with gillnets and static nets making up the majority (Table 1). Landings are from both métiers and areas where pollack are targeted and those where pollack is more of a bycatch species.

Nearly half of pollack landings since 2009 have come from métiers where less than 10% of their catch is pollack (Table 2), and Figure 1 shows the diversity of species caught alongside pollack. The métiers that target pollack (pollack comprising > 30% of catch) make up less than 10% of the total pollack catches since 2009. The localized nature and small scale of the targeted pollack fisheries are highlighted further when looking by country, subdivision, and mesh size.

Table 1 Pollack in subareas 6–7. Catch distribution by fleet in 2022 as estimated by ICES.

Total catch	Commercial landings			Commercial discards	Recreational catch
Unknown	Otter trawlers 16.2%	Static nets (incl. gillnets) 52%	Others 31%	< 1%	Estimated to be substantial
	1558 tonnes				

Table 2 Pollack landings in subareas 6–7 (Total 2009–2022) for the fleets which have 10% or more pollack in their landings.

Fleet	Pollack landings	Proportion of total pollack landings	Total landings	Proportion of pollack in the landings
UKE Gillnets	14902	32%	106747	14%
IE Gillnets	5701	12%	29432	19%
FRA Lines	3353	7%	5866	57%
IE <10 (Gillnets)	1176	3%	3150	37%
IE Lines	121	0%	219	55%
Others	21756	46%	12755746	< 10%
Total	47009	100%		

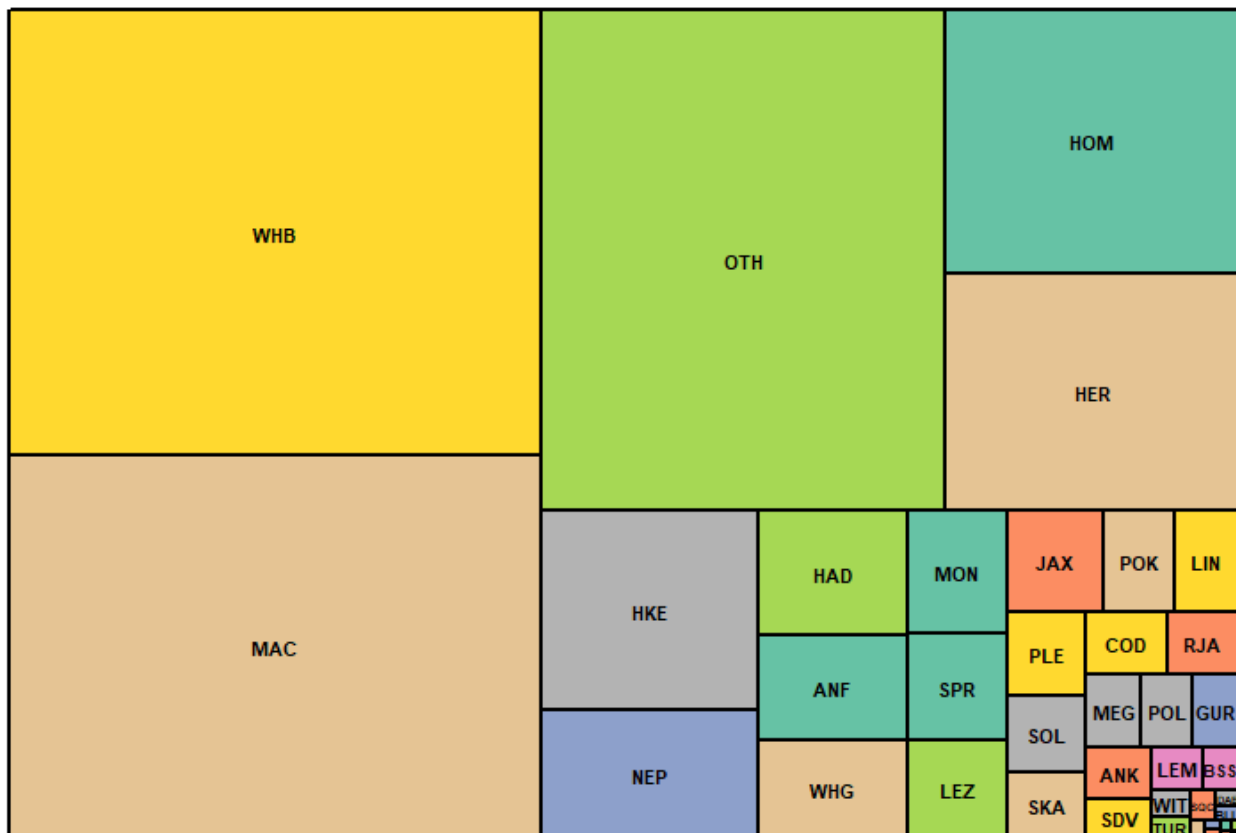


Figure 1 Species landed alongside pollack (POL) in subareas 6–7. Area of rectangles indicates magnitude of landings of species caught in the same areas and métiers as pollock (Total 2009–2022).

There are substantial recreational catches of the stock that might exceed the commercial landings; these landings are difficult to accurately quantify. For this reason, as well as the diverse range of species caught alongside pollack, mixed-fisheries scenarios that are representative of pollack landings are difficult to produce.

The advice is based on additional forecast scenarios from the single-species stock assessment and based on the interim assumptions shown in Table 3 (ICES, 2023).

Table 3 Pollack in subareas 6–7. Assumptions made for the interim year and in the forecast.

Variable	Value	Notes
F (2023)/F _{MSY}	2.34	F corresponding to <i>status quo</i> catch.
B (2024)/B _{MSY}	0.115	Short-term forecast (STF) with <i>status quo</i> catch.
Catch (2023)	1967	<i>Status quo</i> catch (average 2020–2022); in tonnes.

Results

The catch options from the ICES advice are shown in Table 4, with additional scenarios included below. Options are provided that are estimated to increase the stock biomass in 2025 compared to 2024 by 0, 10, 20, or 30%.

Table 4 Pollack in subareas 6–7. Annual catch scenarios. Weights are in tonnes

Basis	Total commercial catch (2024)	Fishing mortality F ₂₀₂₄ /F _{MSY}	Stock size B ₂₀₂₅ /B _{MSY}	% B change [^]	% advice change ^{^^}	% commercial catch change ^{^^^}
ICES advice basis						
MSY approach (F = 0)	0	0.00	0.185	61	-100	-100
Other scenarios						
F _{MSY}	204	0.23	0.175	52	-94	-87
F _{SQ}	1600	2.34	0.102	-11.3	-52	-3
F = 0	0	0.00	0.185	61	-100	-100
Technical service scenarios						
Biomass = stable 2025	1363	1.89	0.115	0	-59	-13
Biomass = biomass ₂₀₂₅ + 10%	1145	1.51	0.126	10	-66	-27
Biomass = biomass ₂₀₂₅ + 20%	925	1.17	0.137	20	-72	-41
Biomass = biomass ₂₀₂₅ + 30%	705	0.86	0.149	30	-79	-55

[^] Biomass 2025 relative to biomass 2024.

^{^^} Advice value for 2024 relative to the advice value for 2023 (3360 tonnes).

^{^^^} Advice value for 2024 relative to the commercial catch in 2022 (landings of 1558 tonnes and negligible discards).

Quality considerations

Recreational catch is likely to be a large component of the total catch. Due to a lack of data, such catch is not included in the assessment. The current assessment, however, has been shown to be robust to a range of assumptions of recreational catch levels.

Sources and references

ICES. 2023. Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion (WGCSE). ICES Scientific Reports. 5:32. 958 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.22268980>

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