

Plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*) in Division 7.e (western English Channel). Replacing advice provided in June 2024

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

Please note: The present advice replaces the advice provided in June 2024 for catches in 2026

ICES advises that when the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach is applied, catches should be no more than 872 tonnes in each of the years 2026 and 2027.

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

A proportion of the catch of the plaice 7.e stock is caught in Division 7.d. This should be taken into account when defining management actions to avoid exceeding the advice for any of the stocks.

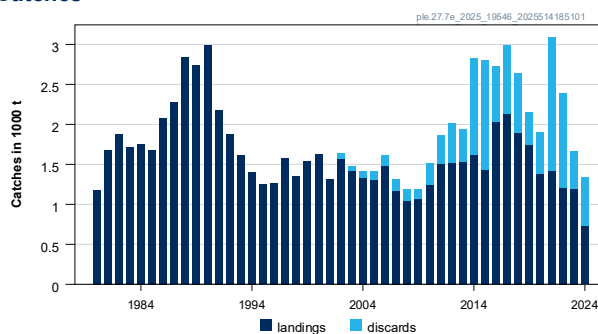
Non-fisheries conservation considerations

Conservation aspects and associated management measures may exist at a national or regional level but were not reviewed by ICES.

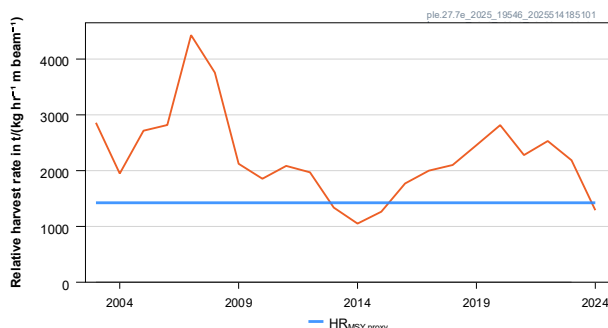
Stock development over time

Fishing pressure proxy on the stock is below the F_{MSY} proxy, and the stock-size index is below $I_{trigger}$.

Catches



Relative harvest rate



Biomass index

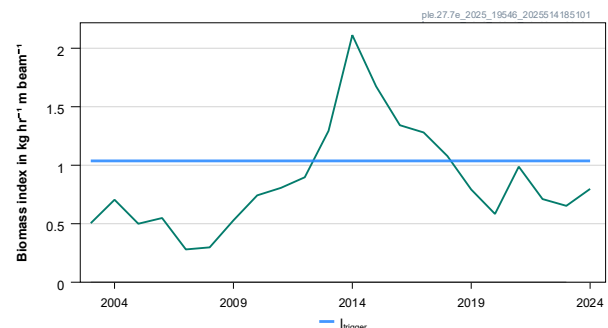


Figure 1 Plaice in Division 7.e. Summary of the stock assessment. ICES landings and discards and stock biomass index from the UK-FSP survey. The relative harvest rate corresponds to the assumed dead part of the catches divided by the biomass index.

Catch scenarios

The ICES framework for category 3 stocks was applied (chr rule, method 2.2; ICES, 2025a). The UK-FSP survey index was used as an indicator of stock development. The advice is based on the most recent biomass index (average of the most recent two years as tested in a management strategy evaluation [MSE]), multiplied by a MSY proxy harvest rate, a biomass safeguard, and a precautionary multiplier. The stability clause was not applied because the recent biomass index was below $I_{trigger}$.

Table 1 Plaice in Division 7.e. The basis for the catch scenarios for the Division 7.e plaice stock. The figures in the table are rounded. Calculations were done with unrounded inputs, and computed values may not match exactly when calculated using the rounded figures in the table.

Division 7.e plaice stock	
Biomass index	
I: most recent biomass index ($I_{2023-2024}$)	0.73 kg hr ⁻¹ m beam ⁻¹
MSY proxy harvest rate	
HR _{MSY proxy} : MSY proxy harvest rate (derived from stock-specific simulations)	1 424 tonnes/(kg hr ⁻¹ m beam ⁻¹)
Biomass safeguard	
Index trigger value ($I_{trigger}$, derived from stock-specific simulations)	1.04 kg hr ⁻¹ m beam ⁻¹
b: multiplier for index relative to trigger value, $\min\{I_{2023-2024}/I_{trigger}, 1\}$	0.70
Precautionary multiplier to maintain biomass above B_{lim} with 95% probability	
m: multiplier (derived from stock-specific simulations)	1
Catch advice calculations	
chr calculation# ($I \times HR_{MSY proxy} \times b \times m$)*	722 tonnes
A _y : dead catch corresponding to previous catch advice**	804 tonnes
Stability clause (+20%/-30%, chr calculation compared to A _y , only applied if b = 1)***	Not applied
Discard rate (average 2012–2024)	34%
Discard survival	50%
Catch advice for 2026 and 2027 ($[(chr\ calculation)]/[1 - discard\ rate \times discard\ survival]$) [^]	872 tonnes
Landings corresponding to advice ($[(advised\ catch) \times [1 - discard\ rate]]$)	572 tonnes
% advice change ^{^^}	-5.9%

* Dead catch, accounts for discard survival

** Total catch advice for 2025 was 927 tonnes

*** The stability clause applies to the chr calculation for the dead catch

[^] Total catch, including surviving discards

^{^^} Advice value for 2026 relative to the advice value for 2025 (927 tonnes)

Formula for chr calculation ($I \times HR_{MSY proxy} \times b \times m$)

Table 2 Plaice in Division 7.e. The basis for the catch scenarios for Division 7.e. The figures in the table are rounded. Calculations were done with unrounded inputs, and computed values may not match exactly when calculated using the rounded figures in the table.

Plaice in Division 7.e	
Catch of the stock in Division 7.d in 2026	54 tonnes
Catch in Division 7.e corresponding to the advice for the stock*	819 tonnes
Division 7.e discard rate (average 2012-2024)	30%
Discard survival	50%
Landings in Division 7.e corresponding to the advice	573 tonnes
Total discards in Division 7.e corresponding to the advice	246 tonnes

* Total catch, including surviving discards

The current advice has decreased compared to last year’s advice because of a change in the advice method after a benchmark workshop and because the biomass index is below the $I_{trigger}$ value.

Basis of the advice

Table 3 Plaice in Division 7.e. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach
Management plan	ICES is aware of the multiannual management plan (MAP) which has been adopted by the EU for this stock (EU, 2019) and which ICES considers to be precautionary. There is no agreed shared management plan between the EU and the UK for this stock, and ICES provides advice according to ICES MSY approach.

Quality of the assessment

This stock was benchmarked in 2024 (ICES, 2025b). Due to uncertainties in the stock structure, migration, catches, and natural mortality, it is infeasible to model the stock dynamics appropriately with an analytical stock assessment. Instead, a stock-specific MSE was conducted. A category 3 empirical harvest control rule, the chr rule (a constant harvest rate approach; Fischer *et al.*, 2022) was tuned to meet objectives of both the ICES MSY and precautionary approaches. This chr rule was shown to provide robust management performance under a wide range of scenarios.

The new assessment assumes a discard survival of 50%. The chr rule calculations are based on the dead catch (landings plus dead discards). The total catch advice is derived by adding the surviving discards to the dead catch.

In 2025, catch data for 2021–2023 and index data for 2022–2023 were revised. Additionally, the migration catch correction was revised after a benchmark of plaice in Division 7.d (ICES, 2025c). The impact of these changes on the performance of the chr rule was negligible.

Issues relevant for the advice

Mature individuals from the plaice stock in Division 7.e (ple.27.7e) and stock in Subarea 4 and Subdivision 20 (ple.27.420) migrate to Division 7.d in the first quarter. Thus, a proportion of the catch of these two stocks occurs in Division 7.d. For the ple.27.7e, ple.27.7d, and ple.27.420 stocks, the catch advice is given at stock level but the catch corresponding to each area is provided in the catch scenario table. Of the plaice caught in Division 7.d, 12.86% is assumed to originate from the North Sea and 3.86% from the western English Channel (average ratio calculated over the years 2003–2024); both of these predicted catches are added to the predicted values for the ple.27.7d stock and applied to projected catch, projected landings, and projected discards. Following ICES advice basis, catches in Division 7.d will consist of 1 151 tonnes from the ple.27.7d stock, plus 178 tonnes from the ple.27.420 stock and 53 tonnes from the ple.27.7e stock. All catch scenarios for ple.27.7e and ple.27.420 stocks assume that fishing opportunities for ple.27.7d stock in 2026 correspond to the “ICES basis for the advice” scenario; for the ple.27.7d stock, however, this amount depends on the scenario.

Reference points

Table 4 Plaice in Division 7.e. Reference points, relative values, and their technical basis.

Framework	Reference point	Value	Technical basis	Source
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach	I_{trigger}	1.04	Biomass index trigger value, defined as $I_{\text{trigger}} = I_{\text{loss}} \times 3.7$, derived from stock-specific simulations. I_{loss} is the lowest observed historical biomass index value from 2007; in $\text{kg hr}^{-1} \text{m beam}^{-1}$	ICES (2025a)
	$HR_{\text{MSY proxy}}$	1424	MSY proxy harvest rate derived from stock-specific simulations; in $\text{tonnes}/(\text{kg hr}^{-1} \text{m beam}^{-1})$	ICES (2025a)
Precautionary approach	B_{lim}	Not defined		
	B_{PA}	Not defined		
	F_{PA}	Not defined		
Management plan	SSB_{mgt}	Not applicable		
	F_{mgt}	Not applicable		

Basis of the assessment

Table 5 Plaice in Division 7.e. Basis of the assessment and advice.

ICES stock data category	3 (ICES, 2023)
Assessment type	Survey biomass applying the chr rule for advice* (ICES, 2025d)
Input data	Commercial catch (international landings and discards); one survey index: UK-FSP [B4381]
Discards and bycatch	Discards are included in the assessment. A discard survival of 50% is assumed (ICES, 2025b)
Indicators	Survey index (UK-Q1SWBeam [B2732])
Other information	The stock was benchmarked in 2024 (WKBPLAICE; ICES, 2025b)
Working group	Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion (WGCSE)

* [View assessment in Transparent Assessment Framework \(TAF\)](#)

History of the advice, catch, and management

Table 6 Plaice in Division 7.e. ICES advice, the agreed TAC, official landings, and ICES estimates of landings and discards. Weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to advice 7.e stock	Landings corresponding to advice 7.e stock	Catch corresponding to advice 7.e area	Landings corresponding to advice 7.e area	Agreed TAC 7.e	Official landings in 7.e	ICES discards in 7.e*	ICES landings in 7.e*
1987	Precautionary TAC		6800				1922	-	1958
1988	Precautionary TAC		6900				2328	-	2458
1989	No increase in effort; TAC		11700				1801	-	2358
1990	No increase in F; TAC		10700				1975	-	2593
1991	50% reduction in F in Division 7.e		8800				1383	-	1848
1992	Status quo F (F_{sq}) gives over mean SSB		2000				1568	-	1624
1993	Not outside safe biological limits		-				1444	-	1417
1994	Within safe biological limits		-				1285	-	1156
1995	No increase in F		1400				1158	-	1031
1996	60% reduction in F		600				1138	-	1044
1997	60% reduction in F		510				1374	-	1323
1998	60% reduction in F		500				1242	-	1131
1999	Reduce F below F_{pa}		1100				959	-	1299
2000	Reduce F below F_{pa}		< 1080				1290	-	1281
2001	Reduce F below F_{pa}		< 930				1112	-	1106
2002	Reduce F below F_{pa}		< 890				1247	70	1257
2003	At least 50% reduction in F		< 530				1241	63	1277
2004	A 55% reduction in F		< 660				1142	81	1212
2005	A 64% reduction in F		< 580				1133	115	1203
2006	Substantial reduction in catch		-				1239	106	1313
2007	Substantial reduction in catch		-				966	108	1003
2008	Substantial reduction in catch		-				893	142	976
2009	Same advice as last year		-				977	74	923
2010	Substantial reduction in catch		-				1123	186	1092
2011	See scenarios		-				1354	228	1334

Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to advice 7.e stock	Landings corresponding to advice 7.e stock	Catch corresponding to advice 7.e area	Landings corresponding to advice 7.e area	Agreed TAC 7.e	Official landings in 7.e	ICES discards in 7.e*	ICES landings in 7.e*
2012	Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) framework (F _{MSY})		< 1440				1364	380	1366
2013	MSY framework (F _{MSY})		-		< 2100		1360	291	1351
2014	MSY transition		-		< 1397		1340	1006	1341
2015	MSY framework (F _{MSY})	< 1885	< 1546		< 1318		1249	1172	1246
2016	Precautionary approach (increase recent advised catch by no more than 20%)	≤ 2262	≤ 1697	≤ 1944	≤ 1458		1780	500	1777
2017	Precautionary approach (increase recent advised catch by no more than 20%)	≤ 2714	≤ 1391	≤ 2454	≤ 1258		1911	593	1915
2018	Precautionary approach (increase recent advised catch by no more than 20%)	≤ 3257	≤ 2239	≤ 2946	≤ 2025		1644	499	1644
2019	Precautionary approach	≤ 3648		≤ 3283			1523	169	1520
2020	Precautionary approach	≤ 2721		≤ 2456			1278	447	1275
2021	Precautionary approach	≤ 2177		≤ 1961			1330	1484	1338
2022	Precautionary approach	≤ 1742		≤ 1572			1106	864	1114
2023	MSY approach	≤ 1219		≤ 1104			1103**	274	1142
2024	MSY approach	≤ 1219		≤ 1104		1083	683**	439	682
2025	MSY approach	≤ 927		≤ 809		806			
2026	MSY approach	≤ 872***		≤ 819***					
2027	MSY approach	≤ 872		≤ 819					

* The values correspond to the amount taken in Division 7.e and do not include the catch taken in Division 7.d.

** Preliminary.

*** The advice for 2026 was revised in 2025 following a benchmark.

History of the catch and landings

Table 7 Plaice in Division 7.e. Catch distribution of plaice in 7.e by fleet in 2024 as estimated by ICES.* The values correspond to the amount taken in Division 7.e and do not include the catch taken in Division 7.d.

Total catch	Landings				Discards			
	Beam trawl	Otter trawl	Fixed nets	Other gear	Beam trawl	Otter trawl	Fixed nets	Other gear
1 122 tonnes	71%	19%	3%	7%	76%	16%	< 1%	8%
	682 tonnes				439 tonnes			

* The figures in the table are rounded. Calculations were done with unrounded inputs, and computed values may not match exactly when calculated using the rounded figures in the table.

Table 8 Plaice in Division 7.e. History of commercial landings by country and ICES estimates of landings and discards. Weights are in tonnes.

Year	Belgium	Netherlands	France	UK (E & W) incl. CIs	Others	Official total	ICES landings in 7.e	7.e stock caught in 7.d*	ICES landings for the stock**	ICES discards for the stock**
1980	23	-	325	609	9	966	1079	99	1178	
1981	27	-	537	953	-	1517	1501	175	1676	
1982	81	-	363	1109	-	1553	1688	190	1878	
1983	20	-	371	1195	-	1586	1495	219	1714	
1984	24	-	278	1144	-	1446	1547	211	1758	
1985	39	-	197	1122	-	1358	1441	236	1677	
1986	26	-	276	1389	-	1691	1810	268	2078	
1987	68	-	435	1419	-	1922	1958	314	2272	
1988	90	-	584	1654	-	2328	2458	377	2835	
1989	89	-	-	1712	< 1	1801	2358	384	2742	
1990	82	-	-	1891	2	1975	2593	392	2985	
1991	57	-	-	1326	-	1383	1848	335	2183	
1992	25	-	419	1110	14	1568	1624	258	1882	
1993	56	-	284	1080	24	1444	1417	197	1614	
1994	10	-	277	998	-	1285	1156	248	1404	
1995	13	-	288	857	-	1158	1031	216	1247	
1996	4	-	279	855	-	1138	1044	222	1266	
1997	6	-	329	1038	1	1374	1323	260	1583	
1998	22	-	327	892	1	1242	1131	215	1346	
1999	12	-	-	947	-	959	1299	244	1543	
2000	4	-	360	926	< 1	1290	1281	345	1625	
2001	12	-	303	797	-	1112	1106	204	1310	
2002	27	-	242	978	-	1247	1257	311	1568	70
2003	39	-	216	985	1	1241	1277	134	1411	63
2004	46	-	184	912	-	1142	1212	121	1332	81
2005	48	-	198	887	-	1133	1203	98	1300	115
2006	52	-	223	965	-	1239	1313	160	1474	145
2007	84	-	202	680	-	966	1003	164	1167	150
2008	66	-	148	679	-	893	976	67	1043	152
2009	53	2	191	731	-	977	923	137	1061	124
2010	51	2	227	843	-	1123	1092	152	1243	268
2011	141	3	274	936	-	1354	1334	169	1503	358
2012	134	2	224	1004	-	1364	1366	153	1519	495
2013	97	1	221	1041	-	1360	1351	174	1525	414
2014	41	-	323	976	-	1340	1341	269	1609	1219
2015	111	1	224	912	1	1249	1246	187	1433	1367
2016	145	< 1	204	1430	-	1780	1777	247	2025	700
2017	151	< 1	153	1605	1	1911	1915	216	2131	858
2018	143	3	118	1377	3	1644	1644	248	1892	749
2019	73	2	97	1351	< 1	1523	1520	215	1736	421
2020	73	1	79	1124	-	1278	1275	107	1382	523
2021	107	1	91	1130	-	1330	1338	75	1413	1677
2022	105	< 1	83	916	-	1106	1114	89	1203	1191
2023***	108	< 1	74	921	-	1103	1142	53	1194	466
2024***	18	< 1	64	601	-	683	682	41	724	613

* Migration correction (15% of the mature population caught in quarter 1 in Division 7.d) added to stock.

** Includes the migration correction.

*** Preliminary landings.

Summary of the assessment

Table 9 Plaice in Division 7.e. Assessment summary. Catch weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES landings*	ICES discards*	ICES catch*	ICES catch (dead)**	Biomass index (kg hr ⁻¹ m beam ⁻¹)	Relative harvest rate (tonnes/[kg hr ⁻¹ m beam ⁻¹])
2003	1411	63	1474	1442	0.50	2858
2004	1332	81	1414	1373	0.71	1948
2005	1300	115	1415	1358	0.50	2716
2006	1474	145	1619	1546	0.55	2818
2007	1167	150	1316	1242	0.28	4429
2008	1043	152	1195	1119	0.30	3757
2009	1061	124	1184	1122	0.53	2123
2010	1243	268	1511	1377	0.74	1855
2011	1503	358	1860	1682	0.81	2085
2012	1519	495	2014	1767	0.90	1970
2013	1525	414	1939	1732	1.29	1338
2014	1609	1219	2828	2219	2.1	1051
2015	1433	1367	2800	2116	1.67	1264
2016	2025	700	2725	2375	1.34	1770
2017	2131	858	2989	2560	1.28	2000
2018	1892	749	2641	2266	1.08	2101
2019	1736	421	2157	1946	0.79	2456
2020	1382	523	1906	1644	0.58	2816
2021	1413	1677	3090	2251	0.99	2279
2022	1203	1191	2394	1799	0.71	2531
2023	1194	466	1660	1427	0.65	2186
2024	724	613	1336	1030	0.80	1291

* Including the migration correction.

** Assumed dead catch after considering discard survival, including the migration correction.

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