

Greater-spotted dogfish (*Scyliorhinus stellaris*) in subareas 6 and 7 (West of Scotland, southern Celtic Sea, and the English Channel)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES advises that when the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach is applied, landings should be no more than 758 tonnes in each of the years 2026 and 2027. ICES cannot quantify the corresponding catches.

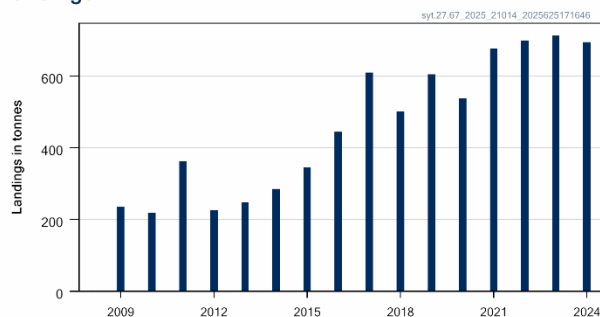
Non-fisheries conservation considerations

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

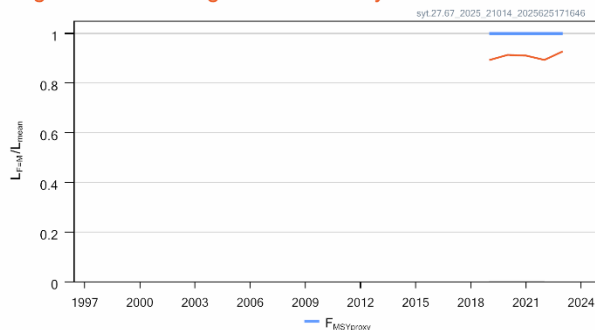
Stock development over time

Fishing pressure on the stock is below $F_{MSY\ proxy}$, and the stock size indicator is above $I_{trigger}$.

Landings



Length-based Fishing Pressure Proxy



Stock size indicator

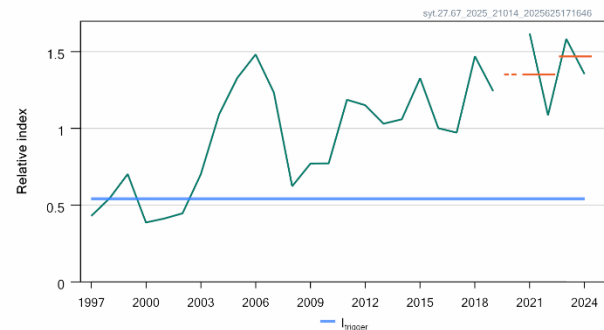


Figure 1 Greater-spotted dogfish in subareas 6 and 7. Summary of the stock assessment. Landings over time. The length-based fishing pressure proxy $L_{F=M}/L_{mean}$ (inverse of the indicator ratio, f) is used for the evaluation of the exploitation status. Stock-size indicator is the mean normalized exploitable biomass index (individuals of ≥ 50 cm total length) from the average of the UK(E&W)-BTS-Q3 [B6596] in divisions 7.a, 7.f–g and FR-CGFS [G3425] in Division 7.d. The horizontal orange lines indicate the average of the stock-size indicator for 2023 to 2024 and for 2021 to 2022.

Catch scenarios

The ICES framework for category 3 stocks was applied (rfb rule, method 2.1, ICES, 2025a). A combined survey biomass index was used as an indicator of stock size. The advice is based on the recent advised landings (2025), multiplied by the ratio of the mean of the last two index values (index A) and the mean of the two preceding values (index B), a ratio of observed mean length in the landings relative to the target mean length, a biomass safeguard, and a precautionary multiplier. The stability clause was not applied since the change from the previous advice was between +20% and –30%. The discard rate is unquantified.

Table 1 Greater-spotted dogfish in subareas 6 and 7. The basis for the catch scenarios*.

Previous landings advice A_y (2025)	682 tonnes	
Stock biomass trend		
Index A (2023, 2024)	1.47	
Index B (2021, 2022)	1.35	
r: Index ratio (A/B)	1.09	
Fishing pressure		
Mean catch length ($L_{\text{mean}} = L_{2023}$)	82.8 cm	
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) proxy length ($L_{F=M}$)	76.8 cm	
Fishing pressure proxy ($L_{F=M}/L_{\text{mean}}$)	0.93	
f: multiplier for relative mean length in catches ($L_{\text{mean}}/L_{F=M}$)	1.08	
Biomass safeguard		
Last index value (I_{2024})	1.35	
Index trigger value ($I_{\text{trigger}} = I_{\text{loss}} \times 1.4$)	0.54	
b: multiplier for index relative to trigger min $\{I_{2024}/I_{\text{trigger}}, 1\}$	1	
Precautionary multiplier to maintain biomass above B_{lim} with 95% probability		
m: multiplier (generic multiplier based on life history)	0.95	
RFB calculation**	758 tonnes	
Stability clause (+20%/-30% compared to A_y , only applied if $b = 1$)	Not applied	-
Discard rate	Unquantified	
Landings advice for 2026 and 2027 ($A_y \times$ stability clause)	758 tonnes	
% advice change***	+11%	

* The figures on 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. Catches are in tonnes.

** Formula $[A_{y+1} = A_y \times r \times f \times b \times m]$

*** Advice value for 2026 and 2027 relative to the advice value for 2024 and 2025 (682 tonnes).

The advice has increased (11%) because of an increase in the stock-size indicator.

Basis of the advice

Table 2 Greater-spotted dogfish in subareas 6 and 7. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach
Management plan	ICES is not aware of any agreed precautionary management plan for greater-spotted-dogfish in this area

Quality of the assessment

The advice is based on a combined survey index from UK(E&W)-BTSQ-3 in divisions 7.a, 7.f-g, and FR-CGFS in Division 7.d which cover important habitats of the species distribution. As for the 2023 assessment, the 2020 biomass indices values of these surveys are not considered reliable because in 2020 the area coverage of the UK(E&W)-BTS-Q3 survey was reduced as a result of COVID-19 restrictions (Division 7.a was not surveyed), and UK waters of Division 7.d were not sampled during the FR-CGFS survey. Therefore the 2020 combined index value was not used in this advice. As a result, only 2021 and 2022 were used to calculate index B.

The landings length composition data from commercial fisheries available for 2024 were considered not representative of the main fishery since the length-composition of the French landings were incomplete (ICES, 2025b). Therefore, the 2024 length data were not included in the application of the rfb rule, and L_{mean} was defined with the 2023 data.

Some landings of this species may be included in generic “dogfish” or “catshark” categories, and some landings may be combined with the more common lesser-spotted dogfish (*Scylliorhinus canicula*).

Issues relevant for the advice

Discarding is variable between fishing fleets and has not been fully quantified for all the time-series. The length distribution of discards is also considered not fully representative of the fishery. Discard survival, which is likely to occur, is expected

to be high, as per *S. canicula* (Rodríguez-Cabello *et al.*, 2005) but has not been estimated. In addition, some catch is also known to be used as pot bait and may not be recorded. ICES cannot quantify the total dead catch.

Reference points

Table 3 Greater-spotted dogfish in subareas 6 and 7. Reference points, values, and their technical basis.

Framework	Reference point	Value	Technical basis	Source
Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach	I_{trigger}	0.54	$I_{\text{loss}} \times 1.4$, where I_{loss} is the lowest observed historical biomass index value (2000), the value of which may vary each year.	ICES (2025b)
	$F_{\text{MSY proxy}}$	$\frac{L_{\text{mean}}}{L_{F=M}} = 1^*$	The value of M/k was fixed at 1.5. $L_{F=M}$ is based on L_c (length at 50% of modal abundance), which was defined in 2023 from pooled data (2019-2022).	ICES (2023a)
Precautionary approach	B_{lim}	Not defined		
	B_{PA}	Not defined		
	F_{PA}	Not relevant		
Management plan	SSB_{mgt}	Not applicable		
	F_{mgt}	Not applicable		

* No reference point is defined for this stock in terms of absolute values. The LBI-estimated values of the ratio $L_{\text{mean}}/L_{F=M}$ are used to estimate exploitation status relative to the proxy MSY reference point.

Basis of the assessment

Table 4 Greater-spotted dogfish in subareas 6 and 7. Basis of the assessment and advice.

ICES stock data category	3 (ICES, 2023b)
Assessment type	Trends from combined biomass index and length-based indicator* (ICES, 2025b)
Input data	Commercial landings. Survey: combined standardized exploitable biomass (individuals of ≥ 50 cm total length) index from UK(E&W)BTSQ3 [B6596] and FR-CGFS [G3425]. Growth parameters: $L_{\text{inf}} = 127.4$ cm; $k < 0.2 \text{ year}^{-1}$ (ICES, 2023a). Length data from commercial landings 2019–2023.
Discards and bycatch	Discarding is known to take place but cannot be quantified
Indicators	Length-based indicator
Other information	None
Working group	Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEF)

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

History of the advice, catch, and management

Table 5 Greater-spotted dogfish in subareas 6 and 7. ICES advice and ICES estimated landings. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	ICES advice	Landings corresp. to advice	ICES estimated landings*
2009	Status quo catch		235
2010	-		218
2011	No advice	-	363
2012	No advice	-	225
2013	-	-	248
2014	-	-	285
2015	-	-	345
2016	Decrease by 6% compared to the average catches in 2012–2014	-	444
2017	Same catch value advised for 2016	-	609
2018	Precautionary approach: decrease by 36% compared to the average catches in 2014–2016	-	502
2019	Precautionary approach (same advice as for 2018)	-	605
2020	No advice	-	538
2021	No advice	-	677
2022	Precautionary approach	Decrease by 18% compared to the average catches in 2018–2020	699
2023	Precautionary approach	Decrease by 18% compared to the average catches in 2018–2020	712
2024	Maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach	≤ 682	694
2025	MSY approach	≤ 682	
2026	MSY approach	≤ 758	
2027	MSY approach	≤ 758	

* The increase in landings in 2009–2017 is considered to be the result of improved reporting rather than an actual increase.

History of the catch and landings

The distribution of this stock does not extend into the NEAFC regulatory areas (RAs).

Table 6 Greater-spotted dogfish in subareas 6 and 7. Catch distribution by fleet in 2024 as estimated by ICES.

Catch (2024)	Landings				Discards
	All other bottom trawls	Hooks and lines	Beam trawl	Other gears	
Unquantified	78%	6%	5%	11%	Unquantified
	694 tonnes				

Table 7 Greater-spotted dogfish in subareas 6 and 7. ICES estimates of landings by country (in tonnes). Blank cell = no reported landings; 0 =< 0.5 t

Year	Belgium	France	UK	Ireland	Netherlands	Spain	Total
2009		235					235
2010		218					218
2011		363					363
2012		217		8			225
2013	18	214		16			248
2014	27	245		13			285
2015	37	282		27			345
2016	39	402		3			444
2017	49	561					609
2018	41	460		1			502
2019	61	517	7	20			605

Year	Belgium	France	UK	Ireland	Netherlands	Spain	Total
2020	51	477	0	10			538
2021	34	634		9			677
2022	45	652		0		2	699
2023	39	671		0		1	712
2024	33	656	2	0	0	2	694

Summary of the assessment

Table 8 Greater-spotted dogfish in subareas 6 and 7. Assessment summary. All weights are in tonnes.

Year	Stock-size indicator	Fishing pressure proxy ($L_{F=M}/L_{mean}$)	ICES landings
1997	0.43		
1998	0.54		
1999	0.70		
2000	0.39		
2001	0.41		
2002	0.45		
2003	0.70		
2004	1.09		
2005	1.33		
2006	1.48		
2007	1.23		
2008	0.62		
2009	0.77		235
2010	0.77		218
2011	1.19		363
2012	1.15		225
2013	1.03		248
2014	1.06		285
2015	1.33		345
2016	1.00		444
2017	0.97		609
2018	1.47		502
2019	1.24	0.89	605
2020	-	0.91	538
2021	1.62	0.91	677
2022	1.09	0.89	699
2023	1.58	0.93	712
2024	1.35	-	694

Sources and references

ICES. 2023a. Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEF). ICES Scientific Reports. 05:92. 837 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.24190332>

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Rodríguez-Cabello, C., Fernández, A., Olaso, I. and Sánchez, F. 2005. Survival of small-spotted catshark (*Scyliorhinus canicula*, L.) discarded by trawlers in the Cantabrian Sea. Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom, 85: 1145–1150. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S002531540501221X>

[Download the stock assessment data and figures](#)

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