

The Irish Sea Sole-stock A “sole” Belgian problem?

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Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research

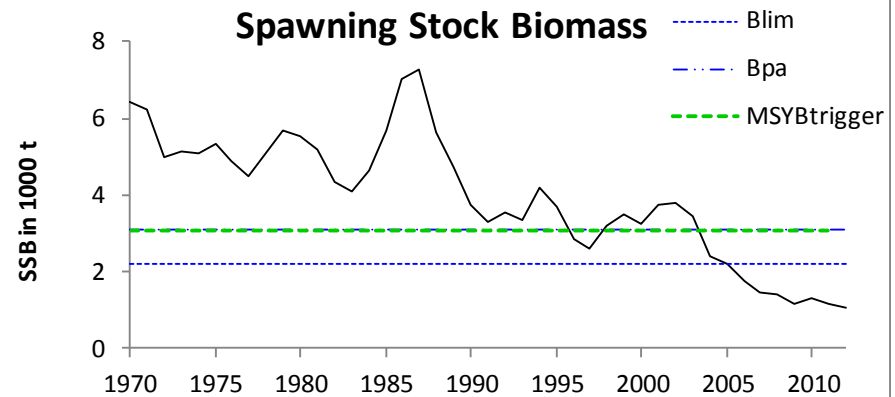
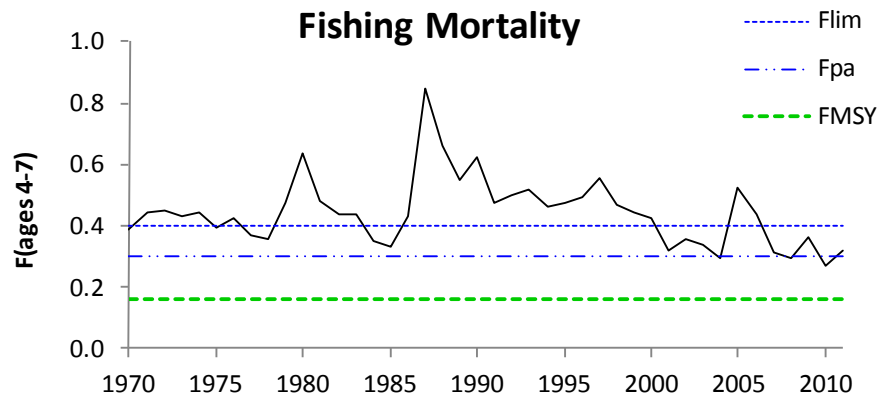
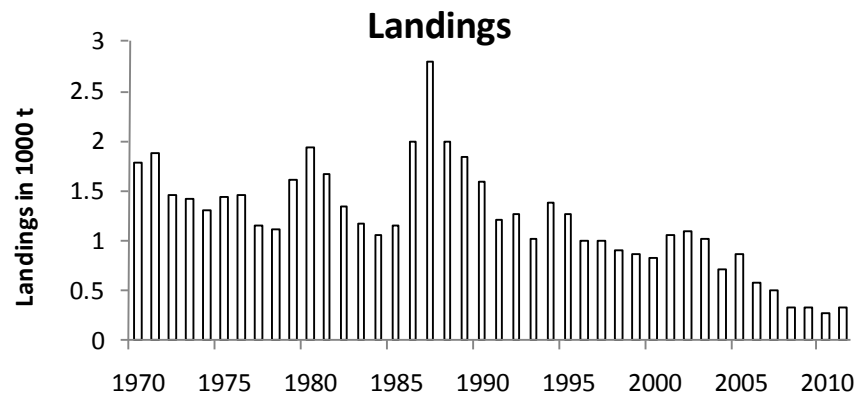
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Agriculture and Fisheries Policy Area

PROBLEM OF SOLE IN THE IRISH SEA

ICES ADVICE FOR 2013 AND 2014: NO DIRECTED FISHERIES



ADVICE CONFLICTS WITH PERCEPTION OF FISHERMEN

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE IRISH SEA?

- In 10 years, TAC's for sole, cod and whiting decreased with more than 80 %
- TAC haddock decreased with 21 % between 2004 and 2013
- Nephrops VII increased
- Plaice stock is stable

ICES-advice for 2013 mentions:

Total beam trawl effort has declined by 75 % between 2003 and 2011.



Importance of the Irish Sea for the Belgian fleet

BELGIAN QUOTA SHARE IN VIIa AND VII

TAC	Sole VIIa	Plaice VIIa	Haddock VIIa	Cod VIIa	Rays VIa,b, VIIa-c, e-k	Anglerfish VII	Megrim VII
Belgian quota %	49,34	5,71	1,60	1,40	11,28	9,89	2,70

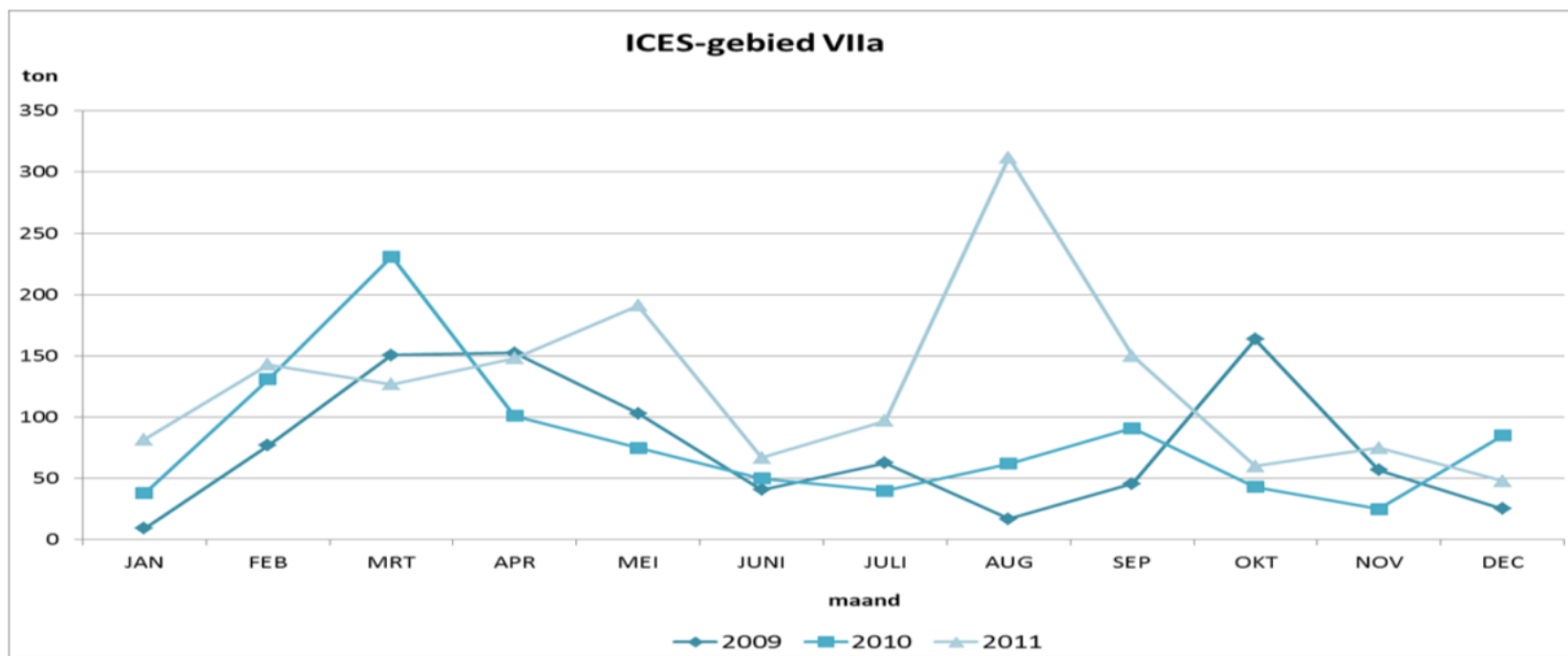
In 2011, **7,5 % of total landings** by the Belgian fleet were realized in the Irish Sea representing **7 % of the total value** of our fleet.

Belgium swaps sole and takes 60 - 80 % of landings, UK: 20 %, Ireland: 10 %

Belgian vessels cannot fish economically in the Irish Sea without catching sole

BELGIAN ACTIVITY IN IRISH SEA

Belgian landings per month



2011: 19 beamtrawls + 4 ottertrawls

2012: 19 beamtrawls + 2 ottertrawls

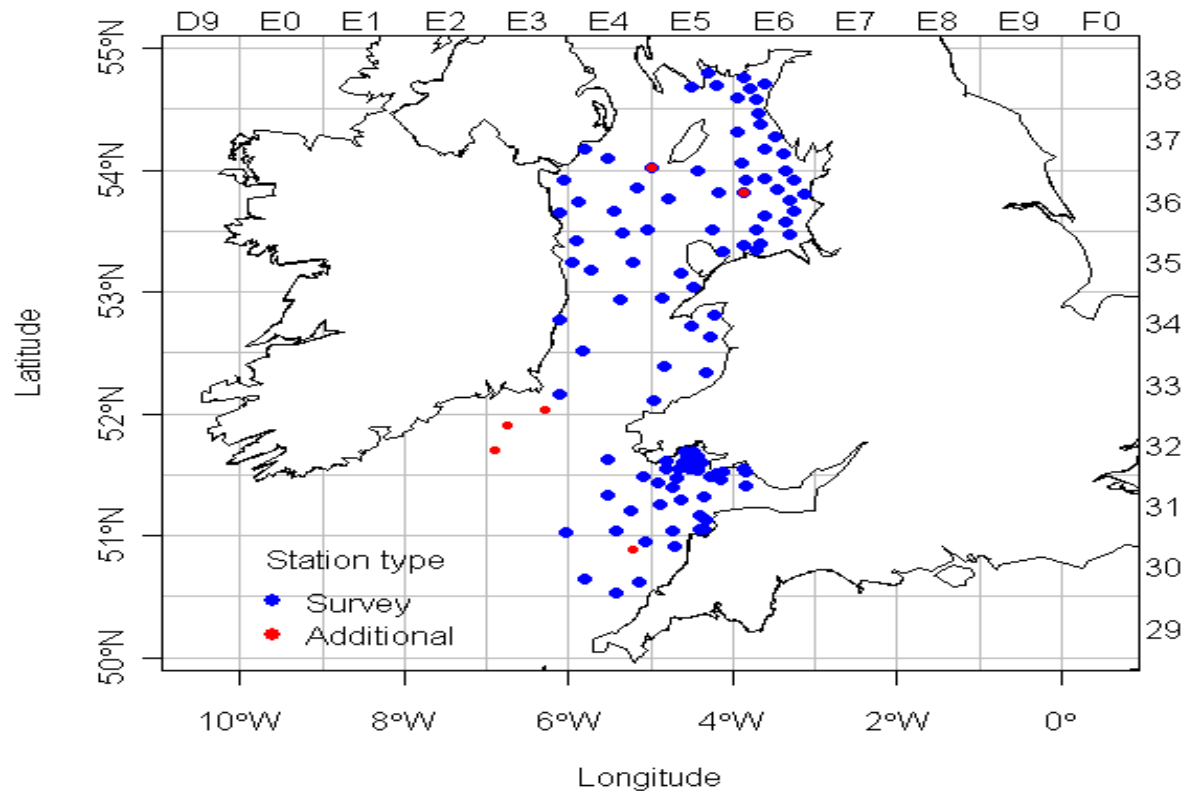
2013: limited to 12 vessels for sole (11 beamtrawls)

2013??

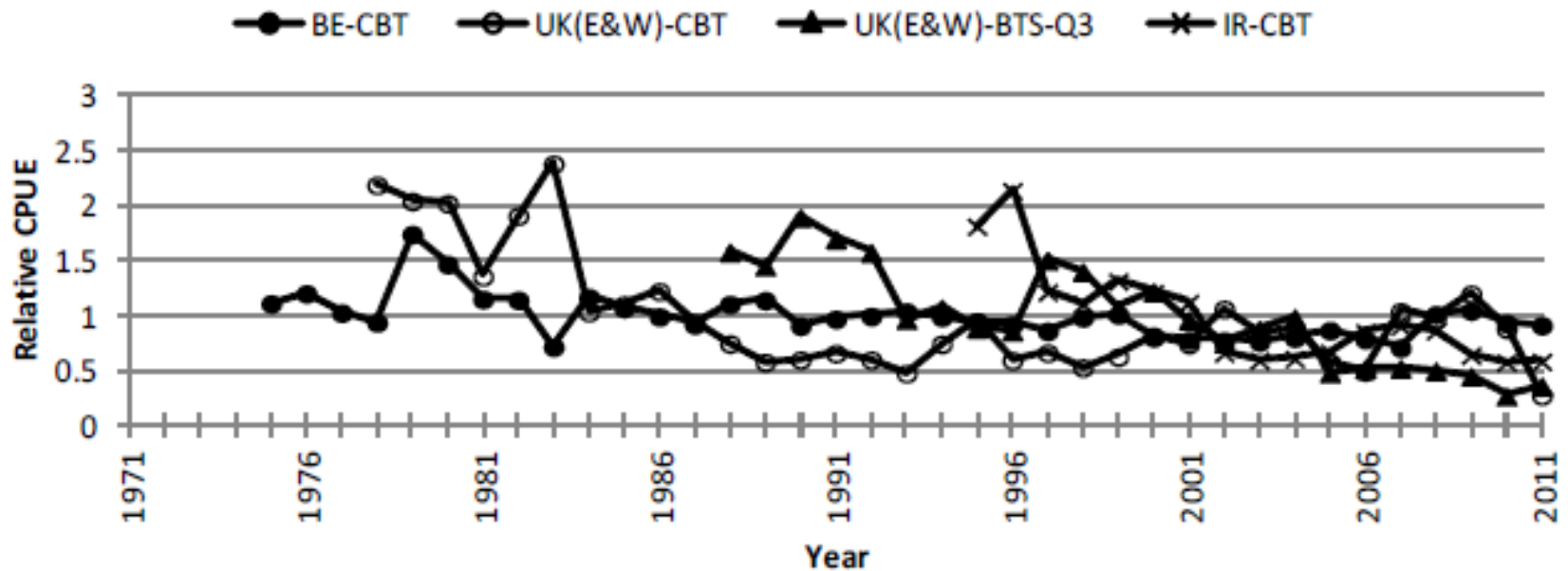
- Initial Belgian quotum decreased with 73 % to 36 tonnes. Transfer from 2012 and swaps can increase Belgian quotum
- National closure of fisheries in VIIa in January 2013
- For February – end of August 2013: 12 vessels admitted
- Two conditions: no sole in VIIe and **obligation to take scientific observers on board.**

UK BEAM TRAWL SURVEY IRISH SEA

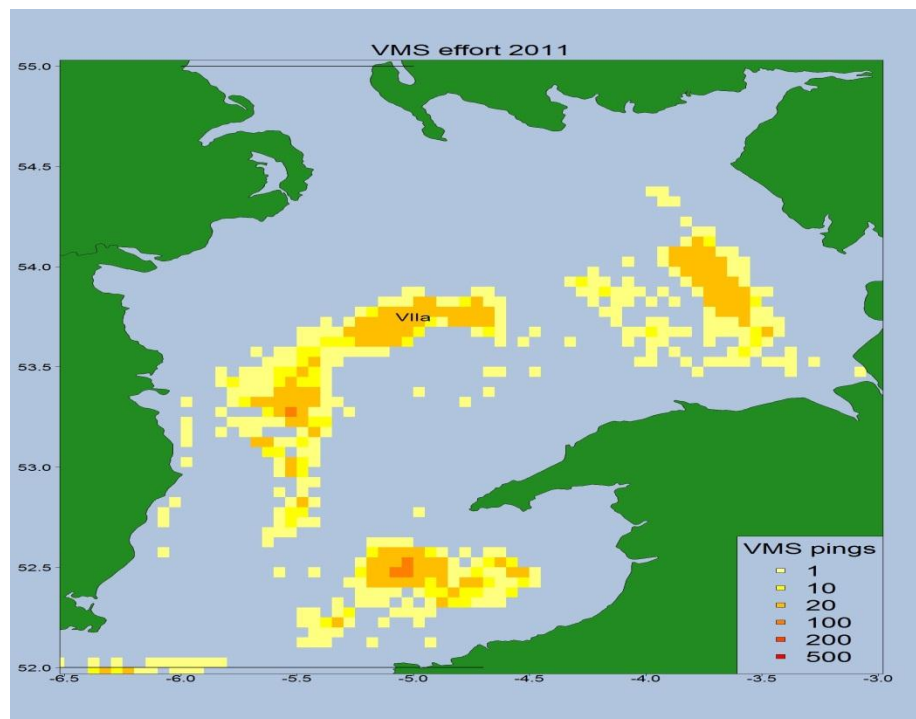
UK(E&W)-BTS-Q3



Sole VIIa - Relative LPUE series



- Survey abundance index is lower than all three commercial indices since 2005. Belgian CBT index is the highest of all. This explains Belgian fisherman's perception of wrong survey.
- Belgian beam trawlers don't spread their fishing effort uniformly over Irish Sea.



VMS effort Belgian fleet 2011

Needs to be investigated

- Have only survey results of the “Eastern Irish Sea” been used for abundance calculations, while Belgian commercial index uses mainly data from the Western part?

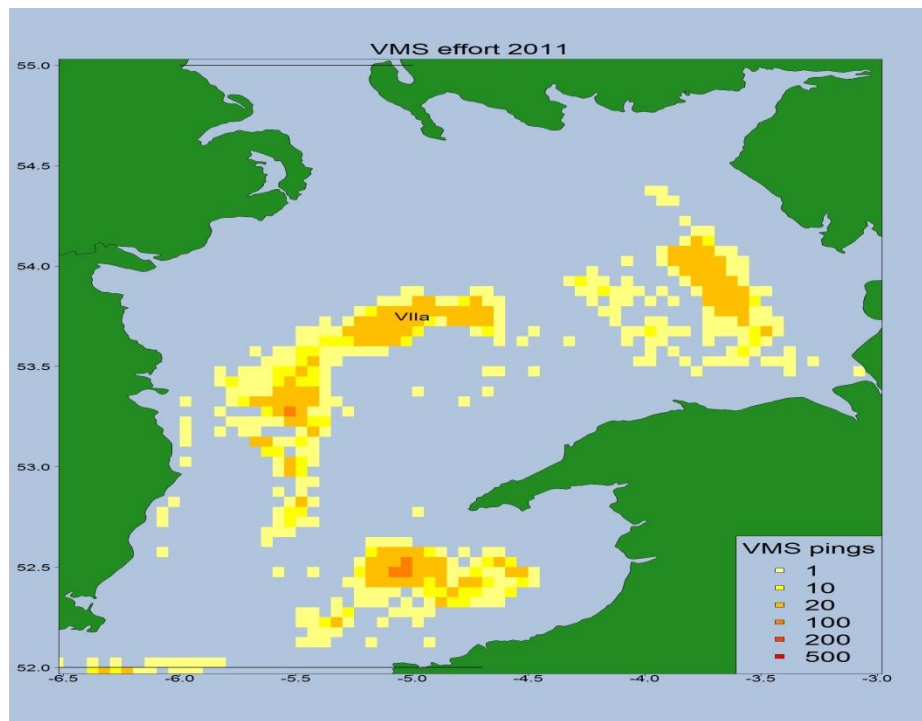
Needs to be investigated!

- A suggestion is to calculate separate indices (by age class and combined) for the eastern and western Irish Sea, or even by ICES statistical rectangle.

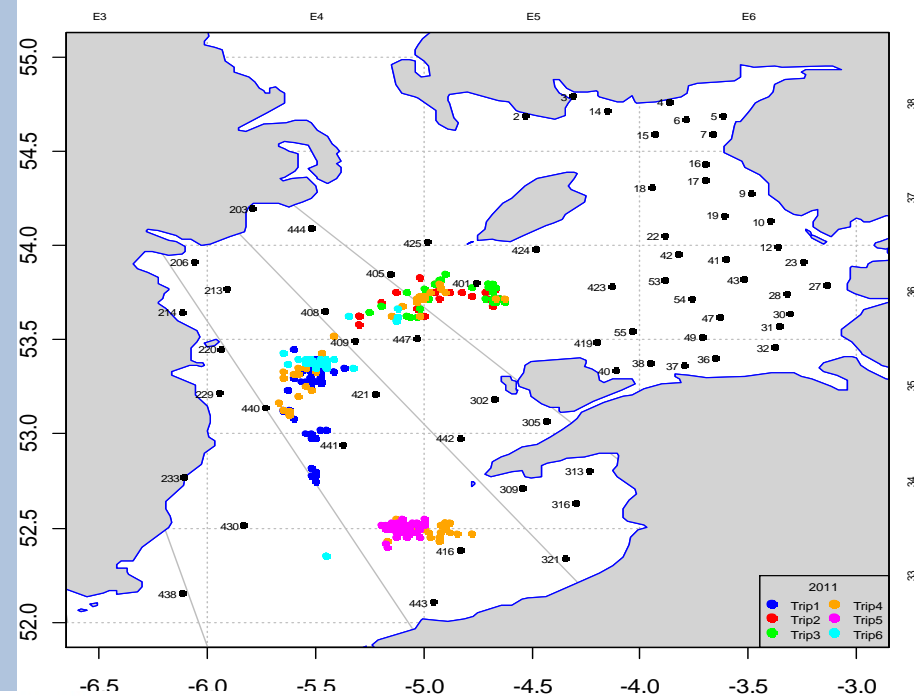
Needs to be investigated!

- Fishing possibilities in Eastern part of Irish Sea are heavily influenced by e.g. windmillfarms over last decade.

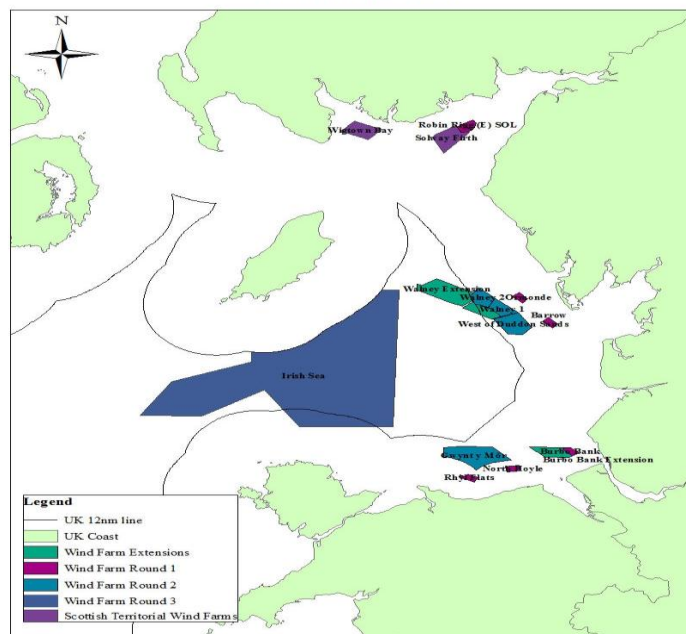
Needs to be investigated!



UK survey (Irish Sea prime station positions)



West Coast Windfarms

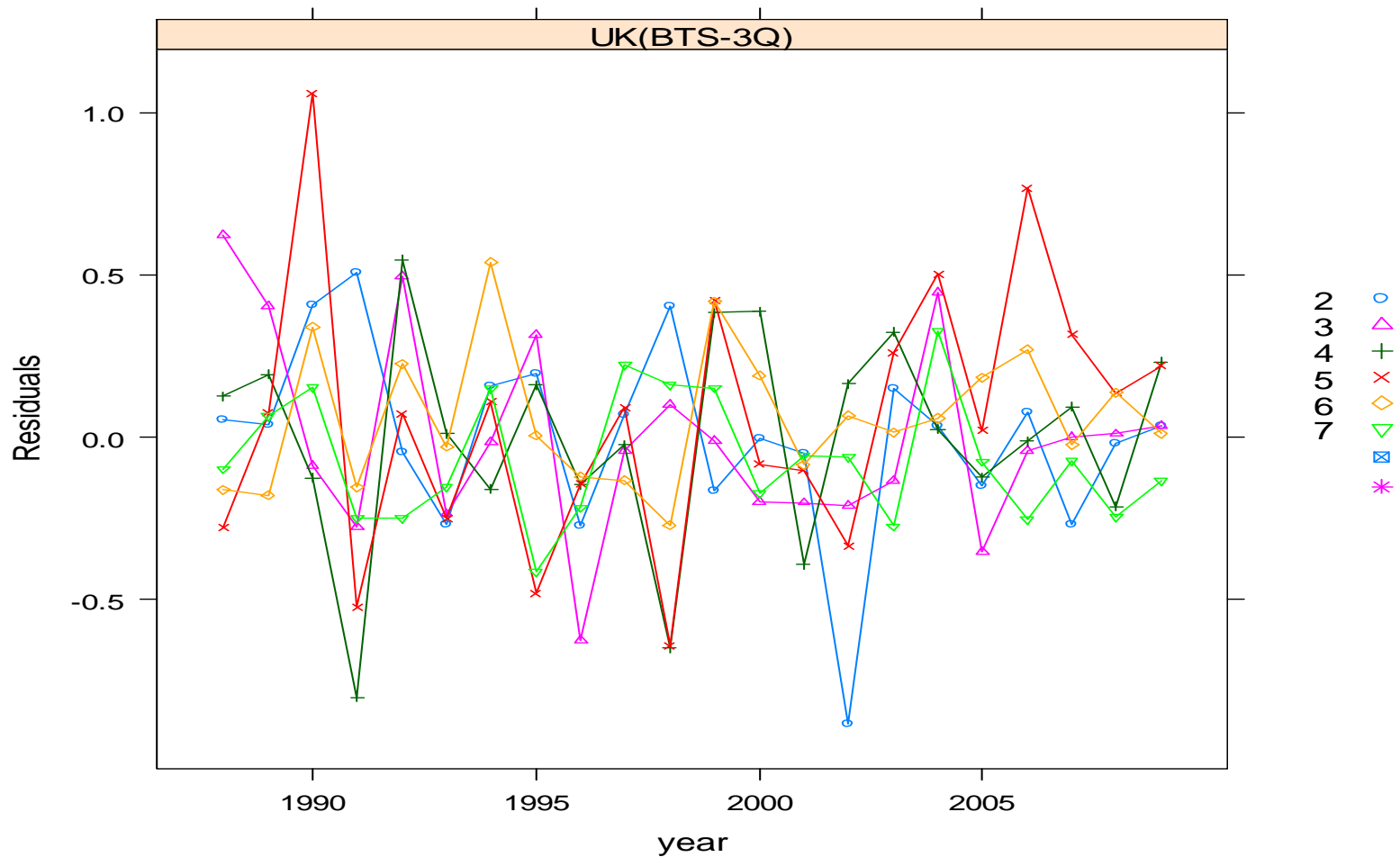


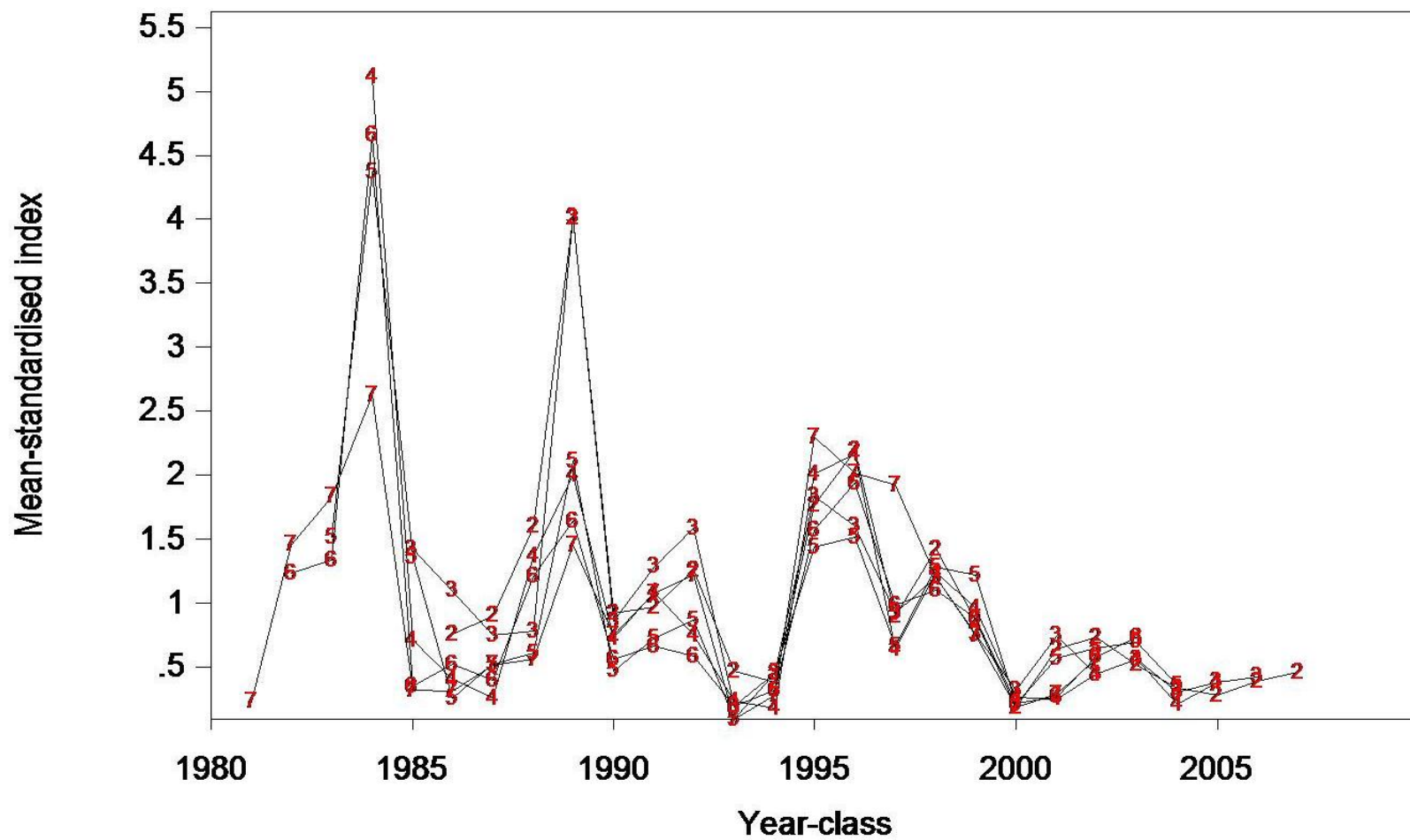
Sole Irish Sea – assessment

Results benchmark at WKFLAT 2011

- **1 tuning file** (UK(E&W)BTS-Q3-survey)
- Discards are low and not included in the assessment
- From 2005 on: Belgian CBT tuning file was omitted from the assessment – not reintroduced in 2011
- Assessment: very strong consistency in
 - SSB
 - recruitment
 - fishing mortality

Residuals Irish Sea Sol (Vlla) - 2011 WKFLAT

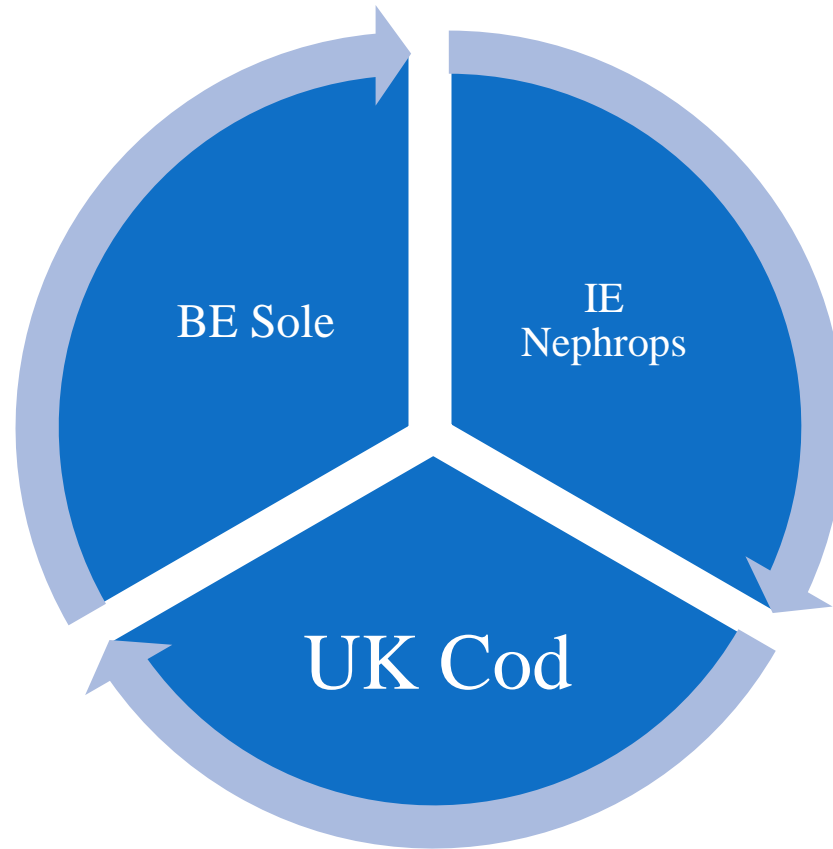




OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Restore and secure the sole stock
- ✓ Achieve sustainable fisheries in the Irish Sea

Integration of three concerns



Ultimate Aim

Fisheries Science Partnership between
scientists, NWWRAC, (Other?)

*to develop a management plan
preferable on mixed fisheries basis
within an ecosystem approach*

THIS WOULD LEAD TO A “REGIONAL APPROACH” TO A “BELGIAN PROBLEM”

**At this point the experience of - and
the collaboration within this working
group would be very welcome!**

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Thank you!

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