



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

ATLANTIC, OUTERMOST REGIONS AND ARCTIC

Brussels,  
MARE C/BF

Mr Bertie Armstrong  
NWWAC Chairman  
Bord Iascaigh Mhara  
Crofton Road, Dun Laoghaire  
Dublin  
Ireland

nwwac@bim.ie

**Subject: Seabass Management Workshop 18<sup>th</sup> September**

Dear Mr Armstrong,

I would like to take the opportunity to highlight recent developments relating to the management of this species which will inform your discussions in September.

The ICES advice for seabass for 2015 expresses increasing concern for the in- the Celtic Sea/Irish Sea/English Channel (ICES areas IVb,c & VIIa,d-h).<sup>1</sup> For this component there is an analytical assessment, for others a trends only assessment is possible, even though significant fisheries occur there. In their advice ICES recommends strong reductions in fishing mortality and the development of a management plan.

In the July Plenary<sup>2</sup> STECF has further commented on the state of the seabass stock and highlighted the need for management measures to reduce mortality across both commercial (both directed fisheries and fisheries where seabass is caught as a bycatch) as well as recreational fisheries. STECF noted that to reach Fmsy would require a reduction in F of around 60%. STECF also recommended that the social and economic impacts be considered in the implementation of any management measures. The Commission would like to improve the availability of the social and economic information on the stock and will explore with STECF how this can be developed.

Other than a minimum landing size at EU level, seabass (as a non-quota species) is currently managed under a variety of national measures, covering both commercial and recreational fisheries. However, it is evident that a common approach on management would be beneficial and indeed necessary to help the stock recover. Any management decision must consider the relative importance of each of the fisheries (commercial and recreational), the fleets involved and the practicalities of management.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2014/2014/bss-47.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/812327/2014-07\\_STECF+PLEN+14-02\\_Final+Report\\_JRCxxx.pdf](http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/812327/2014-07_STECF+PLEN+14-02_Final+Report_JRCxxx.pdf)

I would therefore invite the NWWAC to consider possible management options in light of the ICES and STECF advice. In this context it would be useful if you could address the management measures identified by STECF as follows:

- Catch limits on a fishery or vessel level.
- Improvements in selectivity
- Bag limits for recreational fisheries or equivalent measures
- Spatial and temporal closures
- Effort restrictions and licensing
- Catch and release

A representative of the Commission will participate in your discussions.

I would be very grateful for the Advisory Council's opinion on these issues within 12 weeks from the receipt of this letter. We look forward to your views.

Yours sincerely,



Bernhard FRIESS  
Director