

Summary of the ICES advice for the Greater North Sea stocks for 2018 July 2017

Main points

- ICES released its **advice on fishing opportunities** for 2018 on June 30, 2017. The advice is available on the ICES website at: <http://www.ices.dk/community/advisory-process/Pages/Latest-Advice.aspx> and clicking on North Sea in the Ecoregion list.
- For a number of stocks (e.g. **pollack** (4 and 3.a), **grey gurnard** (4, 3.a and 7.d), several **Norway lobster** (*Nephrops*) stocks), catch advice for 2018 had been provided in 2016 and did not require to be updated.
- Because more work was required, advice could not be provided for **seabass** (4.bc,7.ad–h) and **turbot** (Subarea 4). Advice for seabass will be provided on 24th October 2017. For turbot, an inter-benchmark process has been organized and advice on this stock for 2018 will be provided on November 14, 2017; at the same time that ICES will provide updated advice for stocks where warranted based on survey indicators from 2017.
- A **comparison** of the advice for 2018 with the advice for 2017 (see Table 1) indicates reductions in the advised catch for demersal fish species including **saithe**, **plaice** (North Sea and Eastern Channel stocks), **sole** (North Sea and subdivisions 20–24 stocks), **Northern hake**, **megrim**, **striped red mullet** and **lemon sole** in the North Sea, Skagerrak and the eastern Channel and a few others.
- Advised catch for the **cod** stock in the North Sea for 2018 is increased. North Sea **cod** spawning stock biomass is continuing to increase and has surpassed MSY $B_{trigger}$.
- **Cod in Kattegat** remains high compared to estimates over the last 10 years.
- There are also increases in the advised catches for **haddock**, **whiting** in the North Sea and **sole** in the eastern Channel.
- Advice for **saithe** is reduced as perception of the stock has been revised downwards with the new assessment.
- Benchmarks were held on **sole** in the eastern Channel and **plaice** in the North Sea in early 2017 and the assessment methodology has been updated. This has led to revised estimates of spawning biomass, recruitment, fishing mortality and reference points.
- For **sole in the eastern Channel**, these revised estimates result in the advice for 2018 being significantly higher. ICES provides advice on the basis of the MSY approach but catch options implied by the management strategy proposed by the North Western Waters Advisory Council are also provided. ICES has not evaluated the management strategy.
- Both **plaice stocks** (North Sea and Eastern English Channel), remain at their highest in terms of spawning stock biomass. However, the advice consistent with MSY for both these stocks is being reduced because of the lower revised estimates of spawning stock and recruitment and increased estimates of fishing mortality.
- For 2017, **Norway lobster advice** for the North Sea was provided assuming that animals below the minimal landing size would be discarded. However, for 2018, advice is provided based on observed discard rates as discarding above the minimum size has continued. Catch options are also provided assuming discarding below the minimum size for comparison with previous advice.
- Except for **Norway lobster** in FU 3 and 4 (see Figure 2), advised catches for other *Nephrops* stocks for 2018 are higher compared to the advised catches for 2017.
- Advice is provided for **dab** and **flounder** but ICES also advised earlier in 2017 that there is a low risk to these stocks of having no catch limits and that this is not inconsistent with the objectives of CFP as long as these stocks remain largely bycatch species and the effort on the target stocks (plaice and sole) are within F_{MSY} ranges.
- Advice is provided for **two years** (2018 and 2019) for several stocks.

Table 1 – Summary of ICES advice for 2018 for Greater North Sea stocks compared to the advice provided for 2017 and catches (landings where indicated) for 2016. Red highlight indicates that 2018 advice is lower than the value in the cell and green indicates that advice for 2018 is higher.

Stock	Advice 2018	Advice 2017	Catch 2016	Notes
Cod in 4, 7.d and 3.a West	59888	47359	50544	
Haddock in 4, 6.a and Subdiv. 20	51037	39461	42745	
Whiting in 4 and 7.d	26804	23527	33759	TAC includes 7.e
Saithe in 3.a and 4 and 6	118460	140653	78715	
Plaice in 4 and 3.a	134238	158201	135950	
Plaice in 7.d	10592	12805	6708	Advice is for 12378 t in 2018 for plaice in the 7.d area
Sole in 4	14900	15251	15350	
Sole in 7.d	3866	2487	2882	
Hake in 3.a, 4, 6, 7, 8.abd	115335	123777	118644	
Megim in 4.a and 6.a	7800	8567	2959	
Brill in 4, 3.a, 7.de	3170	2756	2621	Advice for 2018 and 2019
Witch in 4, 3.a, 7.d	2390	2212	3187	Advice for 2018 and 2019
Dab in 4, 3.a	64452	76075	49896	Advice for 2018 and 2019
Flounder in 4, 3.a	6274	5228	2436	Advice for 2018 and 2019
Striped red mullet 4, 3.a, 7.d	465	552	2579	Advice for 2018 and 2019
Lemon sole in 4, 3.a, 7.d	5484	5655	5012	Advice for 2018 and 2019
Nephrops FU 6	1178	1143	2126	Assumed recent discard rates for 2018 advice
Nephrops FU 7	13264	12699	2399	Assumed recent discard rates for 2018 advice
Nephrops FU 8	2826	2548	2102	Assumed recent discard rates for 2018 advice
Nephrops FU 9	1219	1070	1241	Assumed recent discard rates for 2018 advice
Nephrops - outside FUs in area 4	376	376	1518	
Ling in Northeast Atlantic inc. 3.a and 4.a	17695	14746	20867	Advice for 2018 and 2019
Tusk in in Northeast Atlantic including 4	8984	8415	4973	Advice for 2018 and 2019
Cod in 3.a.21	772	643	521	
Sole in 20-24	453	555	365	
Turbot 3.a	84	88	204	Advice for 2018 and 2019
Whiting 3.a	400	500	1660	Advice for 2018 and 2019
Nephrops in FU 3-4	12431	13099	5145	Advice for 2018, 2019 and 2020

Figure 1: Map of ICES Subareas for the greater North Sea.

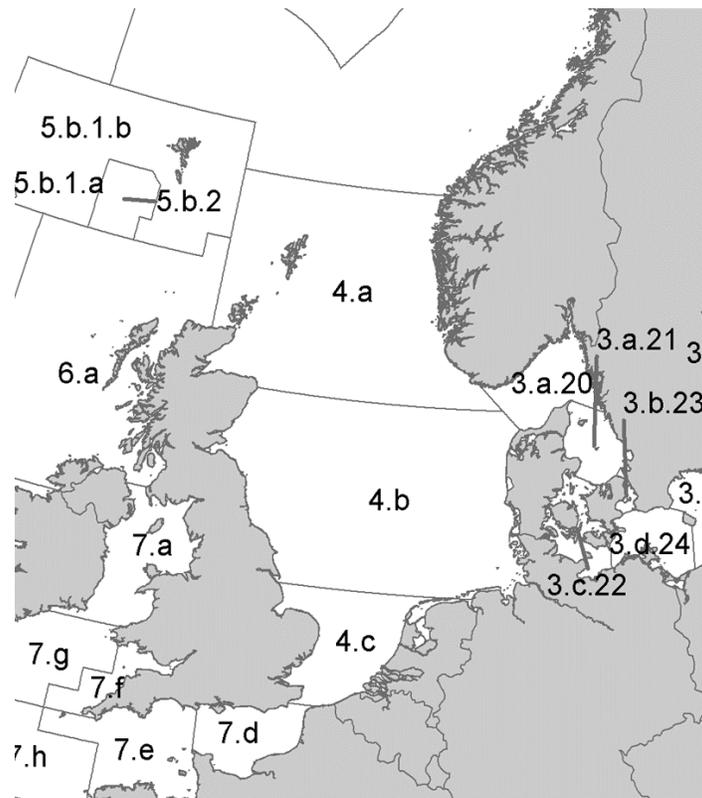


Figure 2: Map of Norway lobster fishing units (FU) in the greater North Sea.

