

### Fishery

Whiting to the South West of the British Isles are taken mainly in demersal whitefish fisheries using otter trawls and seines, and also in the *Nephrops* trawl fisheries. In 2007, Ireland reported 56% of the total landings of whiting from ICES Divisions VIIe-k, whilst France reported about 35%, the UK (England and Wales) 7%, and Belgium the remainder. Landings increased to around 20,000 t during the 1990s following a series of above-average year classes, but have declined to under 10 000 t by 2007.



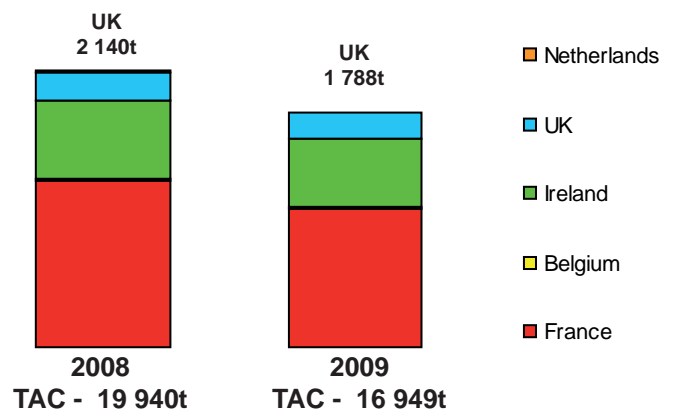
*Merlangius merlangus*

The main Irish and French fisheries for whiting take place offshore in Division VIIg. The UK fishery is mainly inshore in the western Channel and off north Cornwall during November to March. There can be considerable discarding of under-sized whiting in some national fisheries.

### Biology

Spawning by whiting has been recorded during February to May off the north and south coasts of Cornwall and off south-east Ireland. Juveniles are found mainly in coastal and estuarine areas and show relatively limited seasonal movements until they start spawning. Tagging studies by Cefas during 1957 – 1961 indicated a predominantly westward dispersal of adult whiting from tagging sites off south Cornwall towards the Celtic Sea, and a predominantly southward and westward dispersal of fish tagged off Wales towards the spawning grounds off north Cornwall and south-east Ireland. There was no evidence of migration out of the Celtic Sea. Some whiting tagged in the western Irish Sea in the late 1950s were recaptured off south-east Ireland and north Cornwall, although the proportion of the stock moving between the Irish Sea and Celtic Sea is not known.

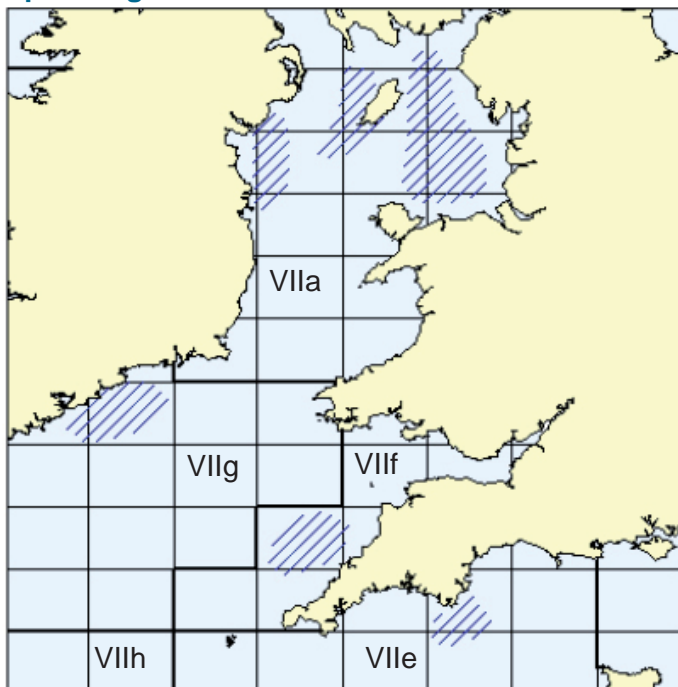
### UK quota and other member states' share of the TAC as decided by the EU Council - Whiting in ICES Division VIIb-k.



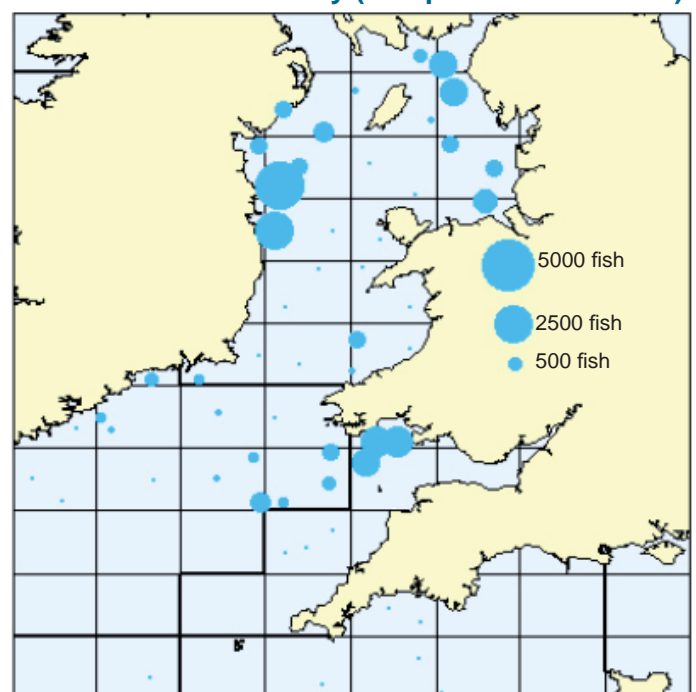
### Surveys

Trends in abundance of whiting in VIIe-k are available from trawl surveys carried out by Cefas, Ifremer (France) and the Marine Institute (Ireland). A new Cefas trawl survey series covering the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea and Western Channel has been developed since 2003. It uses a high-headline otter trawl and is carried out each year in November. The largest catches of whiting in the Celtic Sea part of the survey have been recorded around South Wales.

### Spawning areas



### 2008 Cefas trawl survey (fish per 30 minute tow)



## Classification of Stock Status

Spawning biomass in relation to precautionary limits	Fishing mortality in relation to precautionary limits	Fishing mortality in relation to highest yield	Fishing mortality in relation to agreed target
Unknown	Undefined	Unknown	NA

### State of stock/exploitation:

The new exploratory assessment available for this stock does not change the perception of the stock and does not give reason to change the advice from 2007. The advice on this stock for the fishery in 2009 is therefore the same as the advice given in 2007 for the 2008 fishery.

In addition, ICES offers the following consideration: surveys do indicate that the 2007 year class may be strong. Management measures should be introduced in the Celtic Sea to reduce discarding of this year class in order to maximize its contribution to future yield and SSB.

### Precautionary approach reference points (established in 1998):

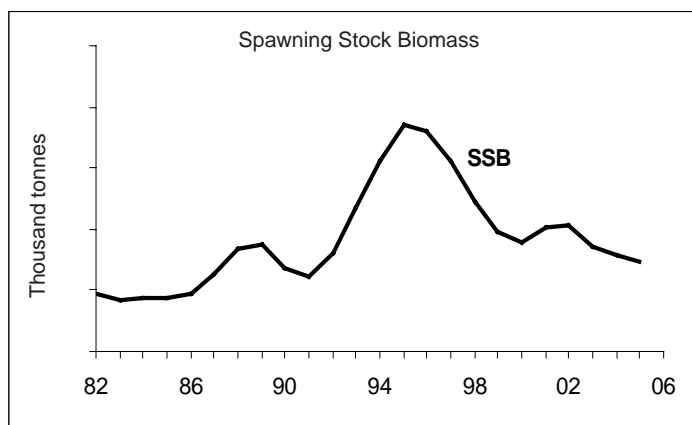
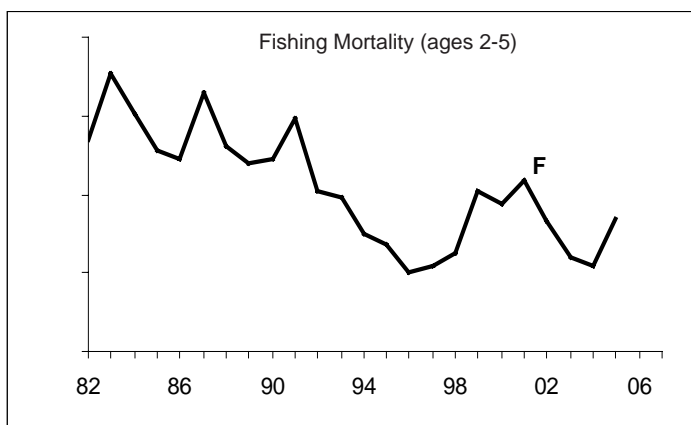
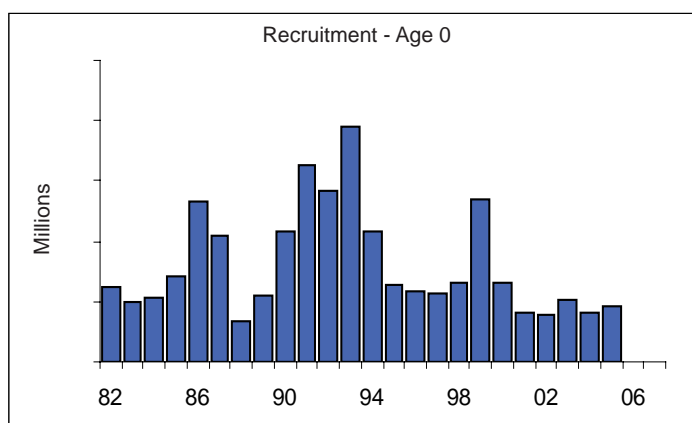
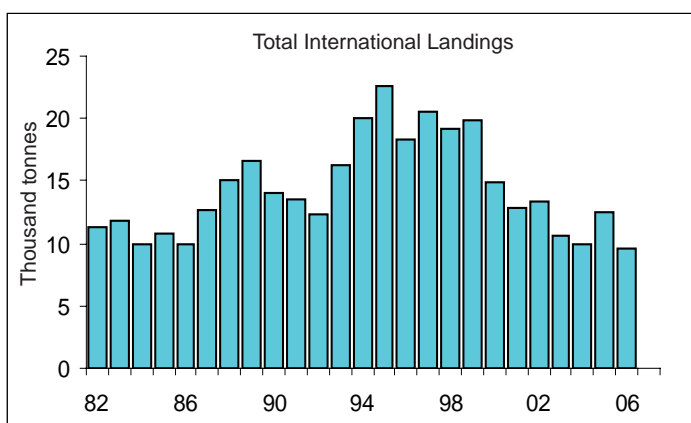
$B_{lim}$  is 15 000 t, the lowest observed SSB in the 1998 assessment.

$B_{pa}$  is 21 000 t. Biomass above this level affords a high probability of maintaining SSB above  $B_{lim}$ , taking into account the uncertainty of the assessment.

$F_{lim}$  is not defined.

$F_{pa}$  is not defined.

## WHITING in the South West of the British Isles (ICES Division VIIe-k). Trends only taken from the 2007 assessment



### Exploitation boundaries in relation to precautionary considerations

The current estimates of fishing mortality and SSB are uncertain, but SSB shows a decreasing trend while recruitment is low. In order to reverse this trend, ICES considers that fishing mortality should be reduced. However, ICES cannot quantify the required reduction in fishing mortality.

The TAC agreed for 2009 for ICES Divisions VIIb-k is 16 949 t.