

Fishery

In the western English Channel plaice are taken mainly as a by-catch in beam-trawls directed at sole and anglerfish. The main plaice fishery is concentrated to the south and west of Start Point. Although plaice are taken throughout the year, landings are heaviest during February /March and October /November.

The fisheries taking plaice in the western English Channel mainly involve vessels from the bordering countries: In 2007, UK vessels reported 77%, France 14% and Belgium the remainder of total plaice landings from ICES Division VIIe. Landings reached a peak of more than 2 500 tonnes in 1990, then declined rapidly before stabilising in the last eight years.



Pleuronectes platessa

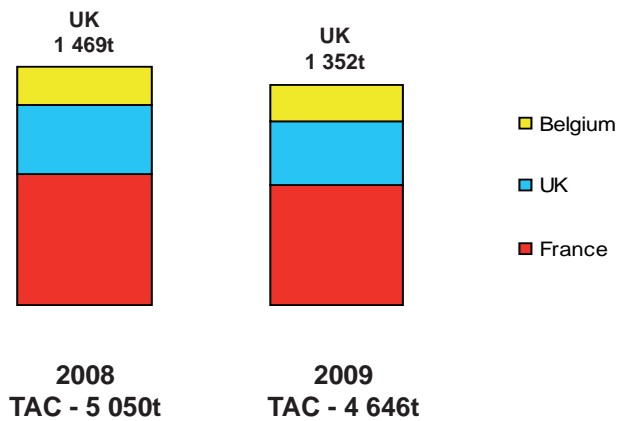
Surveys

Cefas carries out an annual research vessel survey in October to provide indices of abundance for demersal species (which are independent of commercial fisheries) in the Western English Channel grounds for an ICES Working Group (Southern Shelf).

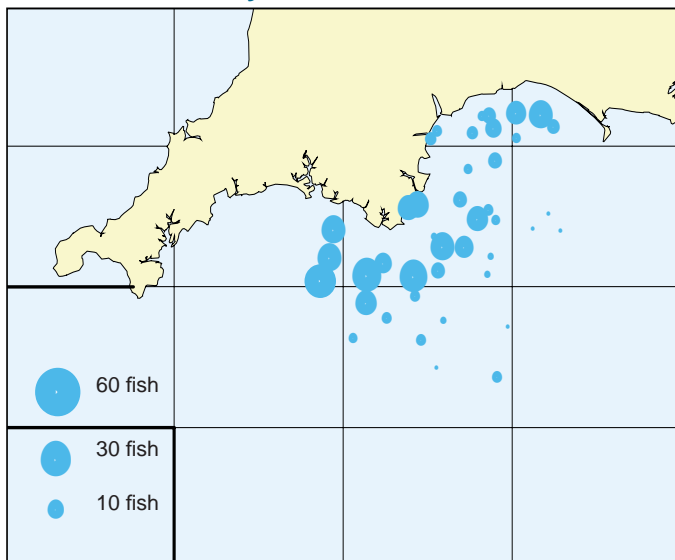
Abundance of plaice in 2008 (fish per 30 minutes trawling) was lower than the survey series average.

Over the last four years Fisheries Science Partnership (FSP) survey has also taken place in the Western English Channel, results of which can be found on the cefas website. <http://www.cefas.co.uk/FSP/default.htm>

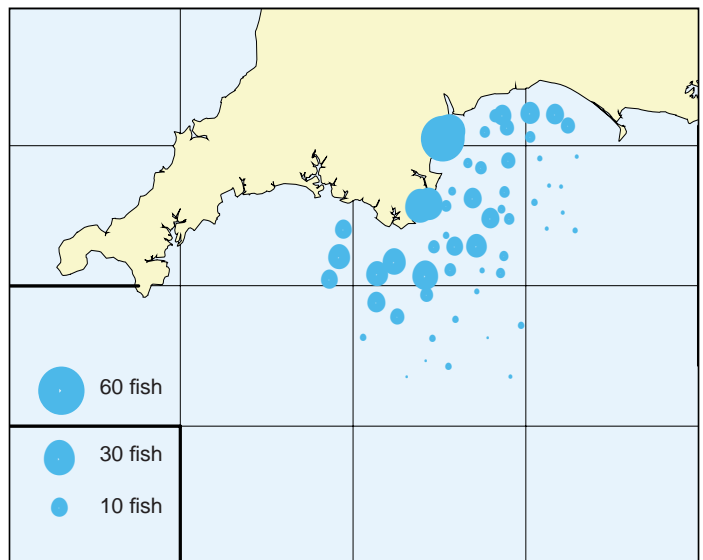
UK quota and other member states' share of the TAC as decided by the EU Council - Plaice in Division VIIId&e - Western and Eastern English Channel.



2008 Stock survey



Average 1998-2007



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
Increased risk	Increased risk	Overexploited	No agreed target

State of stock/exploitation:

The new 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 stock remains below B_{pa} . The advice for the fishery in 2009 is therefore the same as the advice given in 2007 for the 2008 fishery.

Precautionary approach reference points (established in 1998):

B_{lim} is 1300 t, the lowest observed SSB in 1998.

B_{pa} is 2500 t. This is the previously proposed MBAL (minimum biological acceptable level).

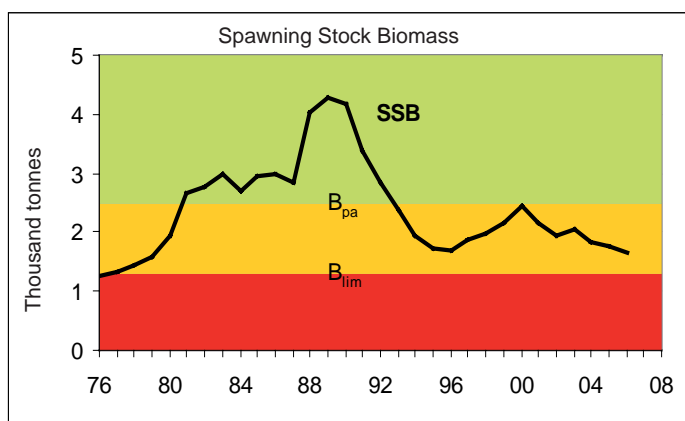
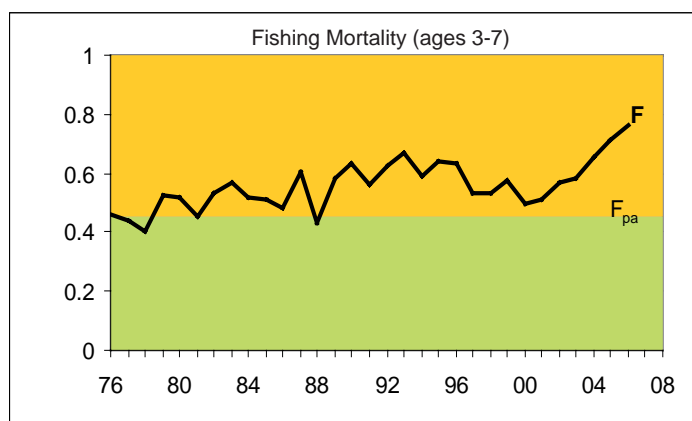
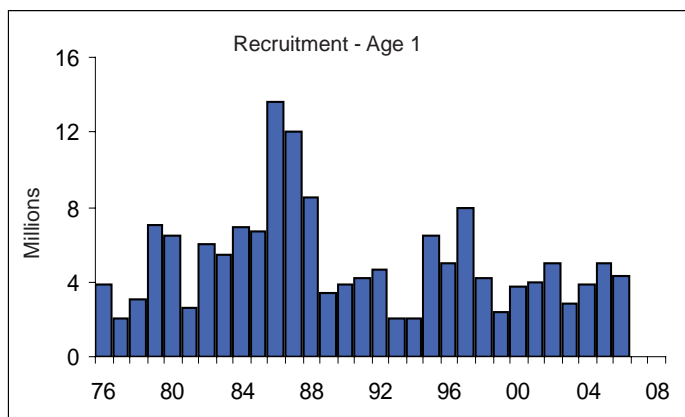
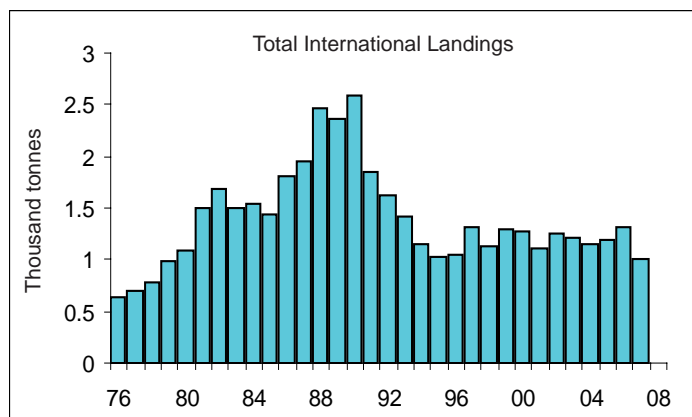
Biomass above this affords a high probability of maintaining SSB above B_{lim} , taking into account the uncertainty in assessments.

F_{lim} is not defined.

F_{pa} is 0.45.

PLAICE in the Western English Channel (ICES Division VIIe)

Stock trends below are taken from the 2006 assessment



Exploitation boundaries in relation to precautionary limits

Given the low stock size, recent poor recruitment, high fishing mortality, the uncertainty in the assessment, and the inability to reliably forecast catch, ICES recommends a substantial reduction in catch until the estimate of SSB is above B_{pa} or other strong evidence of rebuilding is observed.

The VIIId and VIIe TAC agreed for 2008 is 4646 tonnes.