



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

Sea Fisheries Sustainability Impact Assessment Stakeholder Consultation

10 September 2024

Purpose of the Consultation

Stakeholders are invited to comment on the ICES advice for fish stocks and the European Commission's Communication "*Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2025*" and the accompanying Staff Working Document.

The closing date for submissions is close of business 04 October 2024.

All submissions received, subject to legal and editorial considerations, will be published on the FishingNET website.

Documents accompanying this Consultation Paper

- Table prepared by the Marine Institute indicating the Fishing Mortality and Spawning Stock Biomass of fish stocks relative to their reference points (Table 3)
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2025
- Commission staff working document accompanying the document:
Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council - Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2025

Background

Fishing opportunities (Total Allowable Catches or TACs) for most of the commercial fish stocks of interest to Ireland are agreed on annual basis in the EU Fisheries Council of Ministers on the basis of a proposal produced by the European Commission. In order to examine the implications for Ireland, a Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) of the proposal is conducted. The Minister presents the SIA and directly hears the views and advice of members of the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Agriculture, Food and Marine to inform position in EU/UK consultations, Coastal States consultations and at EU Fisheries Council.

The SIA is an important step in Ireland's preparation for the TAC setting process. The SIA draws conclusions from a consultation process with all major stakeholders and expert contributions from the Marine Institute (MI) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM). The objective of the SIA is to look at the overall impacts the proposal could have on the sustainability of the fishing sector from a biological, economic and social perspective.

In the past, the SIA was conducted in October/November after the EU Commission published its proposal for fishing opportunities for the coming year. In previous years, the Commission's proposal would include the proposed TACs and quotas for most stocks, except inshore and shellfish stocks not subject to TACs & Quotas.

In addition, where advice for a stock had not yet been received, or international negotiations for stocks were still ongoing, the fishing opportunities would be presented as *pro memoria* (*pm*) in the proposal. This has been the case for stocks such as Mackerel, Blue Whiting and Atlanto-Scandian Herring. These stocks are jointly managed by the EU and the other Coastal States in whose waters these stocks are present. The TACs for these stocks are set at the Coastal States' negotiations, where the Commission negotiates on behalf of the Member States. The Commission has exclusive competence to negotiate fishery agreements on behalf of the EU Member States.

Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the majority of stocks of relevance to Ireland – which were previously exclusively Union resources – are now shared resources under international law. This means that the Commission, on behalf of the EU, must consult with the UK (and in some cases both the UK and Norway) on the setting of fishing opportunities for these shared stocks. As a result, when the Commission publishes its TAC and Quota proposal, these shared stocks will be listed as *pro memoria* (*pm*).

SIA Format and Process

The new EU-UK consultation process has resulted in changes to the timing and arrangements of the EU's TAC setting process. Consequently, the Minister has adjusted the timing and procedures of the SIA process so that it can continue to provide a meaningful and effective contribution to how Ireland prepares for negotiations on fishing opportunities.

The Minister aims to carry out the SIA process before the consultations with the UK commence, in advance of the Coastal States consultations and before the Commission publishes its proposal for 2025 Fishing Opportunities. Due to this, the advice for some fish stocks has not yet been finalised by ICES. However, carrying out the process at this stage will facilitate input from stakeholders, analysis by BIM and MI and the views of the Oireachtas in time for the start of the TAC setting process.

The scientific analysis of the SIA will be based on the available ICES advice and will also consider relevant reports of the EU Commission's Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF).

The consultation with stakeholders will be based on the ICES advice. The ICES advice forms the basis of the scientific advice used by the Commission in proposing TACs and informs the EU's negotiating position for consultations with Third Countries, such as the UK. Therefore, it is the most suitable option for conducting the SIA, in the absence of a proposal from the Commission.

Table 1 (below) lists the stocks for which ICES has published advice for 2025. This table compares the ICES advice for 2025 and lists Ireland's 2024 quota for these stocks. For clarity, a table showing the stocks for which we do not yet have advice is also included (Table 2). The ICES advice for Mackerel, Horse mackerel, *Nephrops* and Blue Whiting – some of Ireland's most important commercial stocks – is awaited.

A more detailed table, setting down the Fishing Mortality and Spawning Stock Biomass of each stock relative to their reference points is also attached for information (Table 3).

Also attached is the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council "Sustainable fishing in the EU: state of play and orientations for 2025" and the accompanying Commission Staff Working Document which were published on 07 June 2024. This Communication is the Commission's first step in preparing for the TAC setting process and highlights the approach that the Commission will take for setting the TAC and Quota proposal and for consultations on fishing opportunities with

Third Countries. These documents give an insight into the Commission's objectives and guiding principles.

Table 1. ICES advice for 2025 that is currently available.

Stock name	Advice for 2025	TAC code	2024 TAC	2024 IE quota
Cod 4,6a,7d,20*	19,321	COD/03AN.	3,559	0
		COD/07D.	1,450	0
		COD/5BE6A	1,392	185
		COD/2A3AX4	24,900	0
Cod 6b	11	COD/5W6-14	74	12
Haddock 3a,4,6a*	112,435	HAD/03A.	6,233	0
		HAD/5BC6A.	11,301	1,329
		HAD/2AC4.	101,421	0
Haddock 6b	31,565	HAD/6B1214	4,078	255
Whiting 6a	4,962	WHG/56-14	3,163	935
Anglerfish 3a,4,6	30,726	ANF/04-N.	900	0
		ANF/2AC4-C	7,211	0
		ANF/56-14	4,082	334
Megrin 4,6a + Megrin 6b ‡	7,550 + NA	LEZ/56-14	6,029	645
		LEZ/2AC4-C	2,986	0
Saithe 4,6,3a*	79,071	POK/56-14	6,939	365
		POK/2C3A4	66,876	0
Cod 7a	0	COD/07A.	165	82
Haddock 7a	1,893	HAD/07A.	2,263	839
Whiting 7a	0	WHG/07A.	721	262
Plaice 7a	1,504	PLE/07A.	1,902	570
Sole 7a	609	SOL/07A.	625	95
Cod 7e-k	0	COD/7XAD34	644	335
Haddock 7b-k	4,644	HAD/7X7A34	8,252	1,516
Whiting 7bk	0	(WHG/7BCE-K) †	4,810	1,301
Whiting 7d	46,856	(WHG/7D) †	18,528	5,110
Plaice 7bc	15	PLE/7BC.	15	13
Plaice 7fg	114	PLE/7FG.	402	142
Plaice 7hjk	130	PLE/7HJK.	132	54
Sole 7bc	15	SOL/7BC.	15	14
Sole 7fg	1,149	SOL/7FG.	1,267	37
Sole 7hjk	170	SOL/7HJK.	170	77
Hake Northern*	52,466	HKE/04-N.	1,870	0
		HKE/03A.	2,182	0
		HKE/571214	40,599	2,169
		HKE/2AC4-C	2,526	0
		HKE/8ABDE.	27,532	0
Anglerfish (black) 7,8 + Anglerfish (white) 7,8	25317 + 34983 = 60300	ANF/07.	48,175	3,430
		ANF/8ABDE.	12,906	0

Stock name	Advice for 2025	TAC code	2024 TAC	2024 IE quota
Megrin 7b-k,8abde + Megrin (4-spot) 7,8	21144 + 867 = 22011	LEZ/07.	21,995	3,360
		LEZ/8ABDE.	2,175	0
Pollack 6,7*	0	POL/07.	832	58
		POL/56-14	93	13
Bluefin tuna	40,570	BFT/AE45WM	40,570	0
Boarfish 6,7,8	27,349	BOR/678-	27,349	18,899
Herring 7aS,7g-k	0	HER/7G-K.	869	750
Ling NEA*	13,317	LIN/03A-C.	144	0
		LIN/04-N.	500	0
		LIN/04-C.	2,266	0
		LIN/6X14.	10,907	756

Notes:

*In cases where the ICES stock advice covers multiple TAC areas, the ICES advice for 2025 is presented, along with the proportions of the TAC and IE quota for 2024 per TAC area.

† The parts of the WHG/7X7A-C TAC that can be fished in 7b,c,e-k and 7d respectively.

‡ Catch advice for megrim in 6b will be published in autumn; it has been in the order of 1000t in recent years.

Table 2. Stocks of relevance to Ireland for which catch advice for 2025 has not yet been published. Note that Albacore tuna advice is not provided by ICES; this is ICCAT advice and has not yet been published.

Stock name		Advice for 2025	TAC code	2024 TAC	2024 IE quota
Nephrops 6 no FU	Area 6*	167‡	NEP/5BC6.	13,141	177
Nephrops FU11		NA			
Nephrops FU12		NA			
Nephrops FU13		NA			
Nephrops 7 no FU	Area 7*	120‡	NEP/07.	18,903	6,095
Nephrops FU14		NA			
Nephrops FU15		NA			
Nephrops FU16		NA			
Nephrops FU17		NA			
Nephrops FU19		NA			
Nephrops FU20-21		NA			
Nephrops FU22		NA			
Small-eyed ray 7fg		NA	RJE/7FG.	86	7
Undulate ray 7de		NA	RJU/7DE.	3,974	405
Undulate ray 7bj		NA		0	0
Blonde ray 4a,6	Skates and rays in areas 6 and 7, excluding 7d†	7‡	SRX/67AKXD	9,756	1,191
Blonde ray 7afg		NA			
Blonde ray 7e		NA			
Cuckoo ray 6,7,8abd		NA			
Sandy ray 6,7		NA			
Shagreen ray 6,7		NA			
Spotted ray 6,7bj		NA			
Spotted ray 7ae-h		NA			
Thornback ray 6		NA			
Thornback ray 7afg		NA			
Thornback ray 7e		NA			
Other rays 6,7		NA			
Albacore tuna NEA		NA			
Blue whiting NEA		NA	(WHB) §	1,529,754	59,933
Herring 1,2		NA	HER/1/2-	390,010	2,019
Herring 6aN		NA	HER/5B6ANB	1,454	189
Herring 6aS,7bc		NA	HER/6AS7BC	2,270	2,064
Herring 7aN		NA	HER/07A/MM	7,279	218
Horse mackerel NS		NA	JAX/4BC7D	9,730	198
Horse mackerel W		NA	JAX/08C.	2,097	0
			JAX/2A-14	13,250	3,182

Stock name	Advice for 2025	TAC code	2024 TAC	2024 IE quota
Mackerel NEA	NA	(MAC) §	739,386	47,560
Spurdog NEA	NA	DGS/15X14	11,204	1,887
		DGS/2AC4-C	3,533	0
		DGS/03A-C.	1,163	0

Notes:

* For Nephrops, ICES provides advice at the Functional Unit level, whereas the TAC is set at Sub-area level (6 or 7).

† For rays and skates, ICES provides advice at the stock level but most skates and rays in areas 6 and 7 (excl 7d) are managed under a single TAC.

‡ Catch advice is available for 2025 for these stocks but not for the other stocks that are managed in the same TAC.

§ For blue whiting and mackerel, the EU publishes a TAC for these species (Council Regulation EU 2024/257) but the sum of the coastal states' quota does not necessarily add up to this value