

American plaice in Division 3M

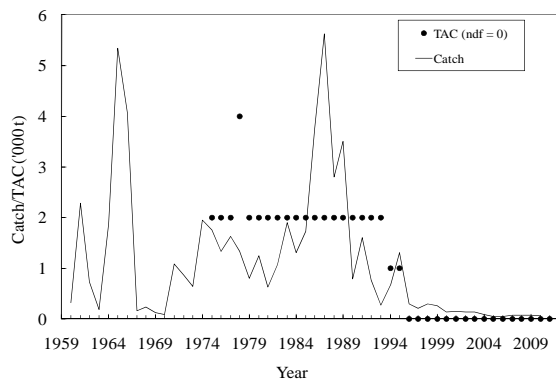
Background: The stock occurs mainly at depths shallower than 600 m on Flemish Cap. Catches are taken mainly by otter trawl, primarily in a bycatch fishery of the Contracting Parties since 1992.

Fishery and Catches: Nominal catches increased during the mid-1960s, reaching a peak of about 5 341 tons in 1965, followed by a sharp decline to values less than 1 100 t until 1973. Since 1974, when catches of this stock became regulated, catches ranged from 600 t (1981) to 5 600 t (1987). After that catches declined to 275 t in 1993, caused partly by a reduction in directed effort by the Spanish fleet in 1992. Catch for 2010 was estimated to be 63 t.

From 1979 to 1993 a TAC of 2 000 t was in effect for this stock. A reduction to 1 000 t was agreed for 1994 and 1995 and a moratorium was agreed to thereafter.

Year	Catch ('000 t)		TAC ('000 t)	
	STACFIS	21	Recommended	Agreed
2008	0.1	0.1	ndf	ndf
2009	0.1	0.1	ndf	ndf
2010	0.1	0.1	ndf	ndf
2011			ndf	ndf

ndf No directed fishing.

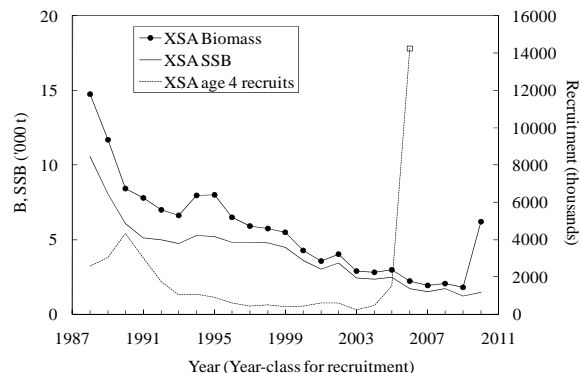


Data: Length compositions were available from the 1988 to 2010 fisheries. Abundance and biomass from surveys were available from USSR/Russia (1972-2002), EU (1988-2010) and Canada (1978-1986). Age-length keys were available from EU surveys (1988-2010).

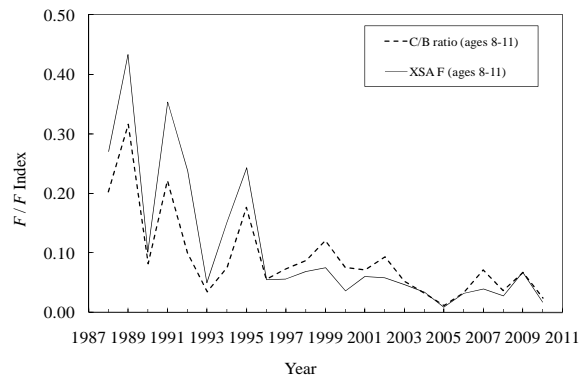
Assessment: An analytical assessment (XSA) was presented, the analyses was not accepted as a basis to estimate stock size but was accepted as illustrating the trends in the stock.

Biomass: SSB is at a very low level, due to consistent year-to-year recruitment failure from the 1991 to 2005 year classes. Stock biomass increased

in recent years due to the improved recruitment since 2006 (mainly due to the 2006 year class).



Fishing Mortality: Both fishing mortality index (C/B) and XSA fishing mortality declined from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s and since 2000 fluctuated below 0.1. Recent F is at a very low level.



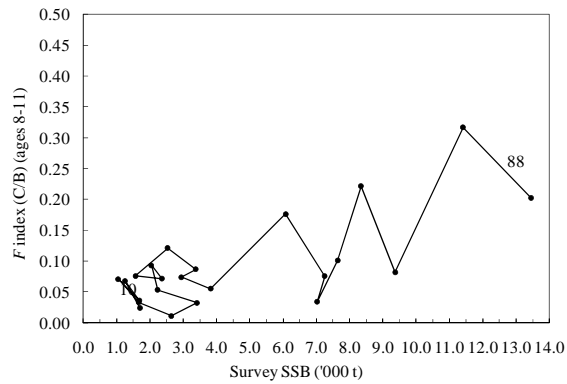
Recruitment: 1991 to 2005 year classes are estimated to be weak. Since 2006 the recruitment improved, particularly the 2006 year class.

State of the Stock: This stock continues to be in a very poor condition. Recruitment improved recently and these year classes will be recruiting to SSB over the next few years. Although the level of catches since 1996 is low, all the analysis indicates that this stock is kept at a very low level.

Recommendation: There should be no directed fishery on American plaice in Div. 3M in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Bycatch should be kept at the lowest possible level.

Reference Points: STACFIS is not in position to provide proxies for biomass reference points at this time.

Both fishing mortality index (C/B) and XSA estimates of fishing mortality are quite low, despite this spawning stock biomass remains at a very poor level.



The yield-per-recruit analysis gave $F_{0.1} = 0.175$ and $F_{max} = 0.425$.

Special Comments: The next Scientific Council full assessment of this stock will be in 2014.

Sources of Information: SCR Doc. 08/26; 11/21, 41; SCS Doc. 08/5, 6; 09/12, 14; 10/7; 11/4, 5