

**American plaice in Division 3M**

**Advice June 2017 for 2018 – 2020**

**Recommendation for 2018 – 2020**

There should be no directed fishery on American plaice in Div. 3M in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Bycatch should be kept at the lowest possible level.

**Management objectives**

No explicit management plan or management objectives defined by Fisheries Commission. General convention objectives (GC Doc. 08/3) are applied.

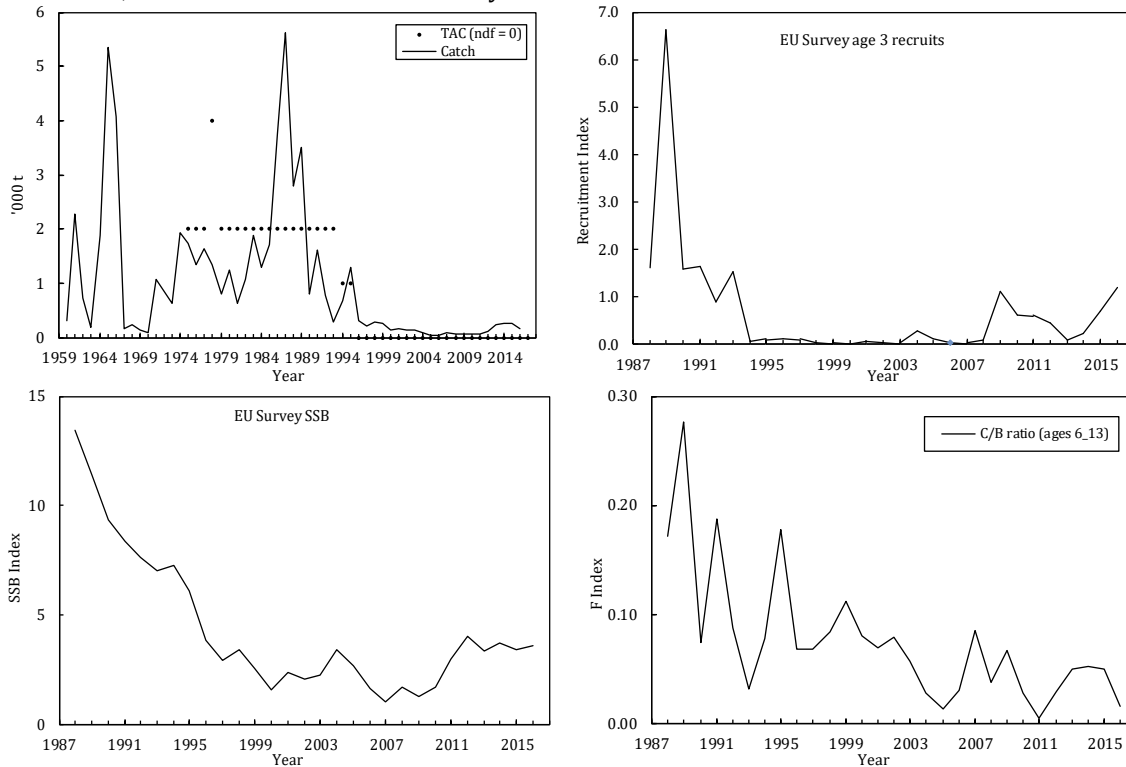
Convention objectives	Status	Comment/consideration	
Restore to or maintain at $B_{msy}$	●	$B_{msy}$ unknown, stock at a low level	● OK
Eliminate overfishing	●	No directed fishing. Fishing mortality thought to be low	● Intermediate
Apply Precautionary Approach	●	Reference points not defined, No HCRs	● Not accomplished
Minimise harmful impacts on living marine resources and ecosystems	●	VME closures in effect, no specific measures.	○ Unknown
Preserve marine biodiversity	○	Cannot be evaluated	

**Management unit**

The American plaice stock in Flemish Cap (Div. 3M) is considered to be a distinct population.

**Stock status**

The stock has increased slightly in recent years due to improved recruitment. Although the catches since 1996 have been low, this stock remains at a relatively low level.



### Reference points

Scientific Council is not in a position to provide proxies for biomass or fishing mortality reference points at this time.

### Projections

Quantitative assessment of risk at various catch options is not possible at this time.

### Assessment

This assessment is based upon a qualitative evaluation of research vessel survey series and bycatch data from commercial fisheries.

The next full assessment is planned for 2020.

#### *Human impact*

Mainly fishery related mortality. Other sources (e.g. pollution, shipping, oil-industry) are undocumented.

#### *Biological and environmental interactions*

The stock occurs mainly at depths shallower than 600 m on Flemish Cap. Main stomach contents are echinoderms, shrimp and hyperiids.

### Fishery

American plaice is caught as bycatch in otter trawl fisheries, mainly the cod and redfish fisheries. 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.

Recent catch estimates and TACs ('000 tonnes) are as follows:

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
TAC	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf
STATLANT 21	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
STACFIS	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	

ndf - no directed fishing.

### Effects of the fishery on the ecosystem

No directed fishery. General impacts of fishing gear on the ecosystem should be considered.

### Special comments

No special comments

### Sources of information

SCR Doc. 05/29; 17/24, 43; SCS Doc. 15/4, 5, 6, 7; 16/9; 17/4, 5, 6, 11