

American plaice in Division 3M










Advice June 2020 for 2021 – 2023

Recommendation for 2021 - 2023

The stock has recovered to the levels of the mid 1990s, when the fishery was closed. SC considers that there is not sufficient evidence that the stock would be able to sustain a fishery at this time and recommends that there be no directed fishing in 2021, 2022 and 2023. Bycatch should be kept at the lowest possible level.

Management objectives

No explicit management plan or management objectives defined by the Commission. Convention general principles are applied.

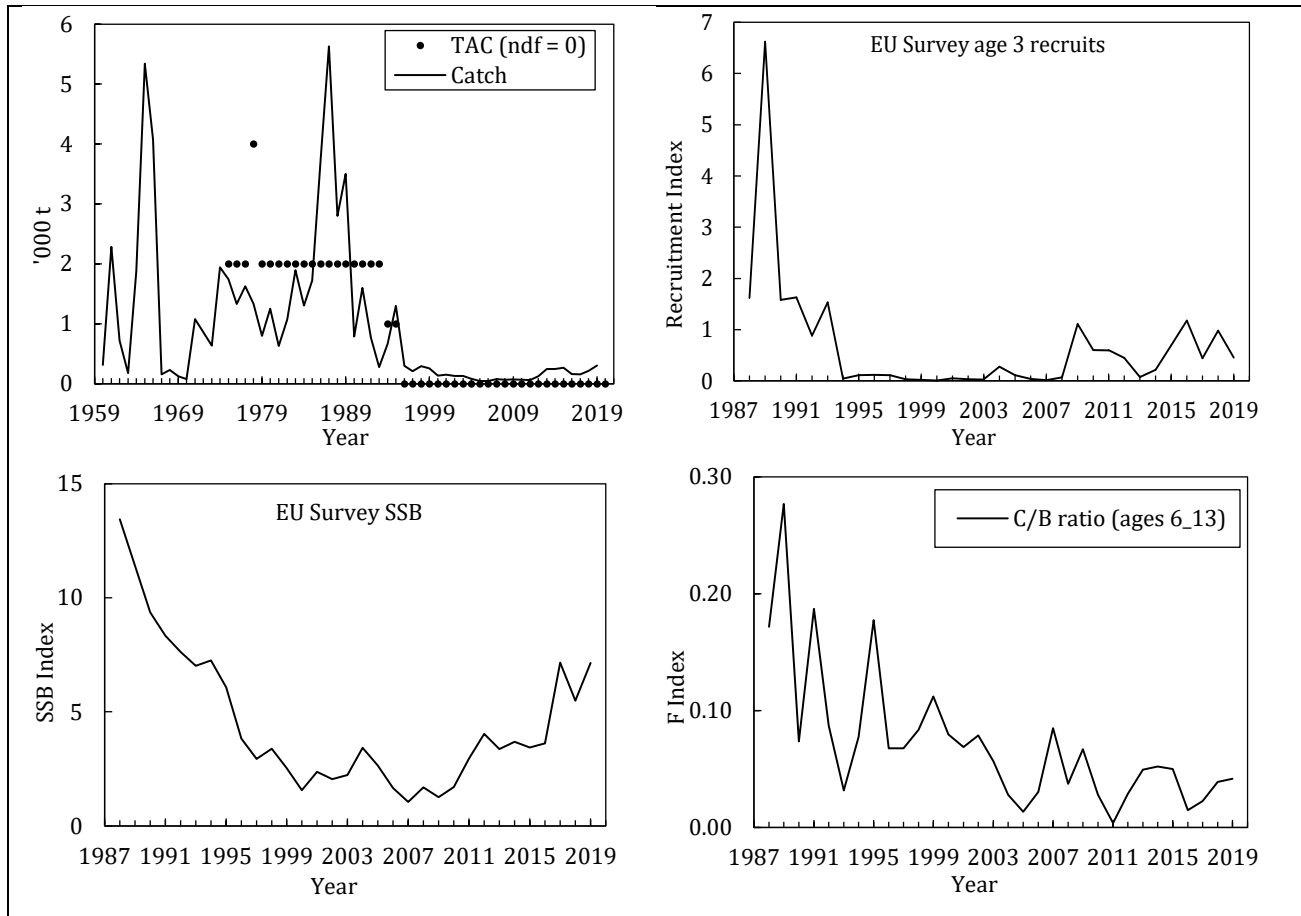
<i>Convention objectives</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Comment/consideration</i>	
Restore to or maintain at B_{msy}		B_{msy} unknown, stock at a low level	 OK
Eliminate overfishing		No directed fishing. Fishing mortality thought to be low	 Intermediate
Apply Precautionary Approach		Reference points not defined. 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 in recent years due to improved recruitment (at age 3) since 2009, and recovered to the levels of the mid 1990s, when the fishery was closed. Both catches and F remain low, although slightly higher catches are observed since 2013.



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 2023.

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 tonnes was in effect for this stock. A reduction to 1 000 tonnes was agreed for 1994 and 1995 and a moratorium was agreed to thereafter.

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

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
TAC	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf	ndf
STATLANT 21	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	
STACFIS	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	

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; 20/11, 39; SCS Doc. 18/8, 13; 19/9; 20/7, 9, 13