Good Fish Guide: October 2026 Ratings Update

This document sets out the final Good Fish Guide ratings for the October 2026 update, with reasons for change, criterion scores, consultation feedback and our responses. It includes new ratings and reviewed ratings that have changed or remained the same.

How the scoring works

The tables below summarise the criteria and scoring used for wild capture and aquaculture ratings. You can find more detail on how our Good Fish Guide ratings work on our website.

Wild capture methodology Version 3

Three criteria carry equal weight, each with a maximum weighted score of 6. Lower scores are better.

CRITERION	HOW IT IS SCORED	WHAT IT ASSESSES
Stock Or Species Status	One score of 0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75 or 1, multiplied by 6.	Stock size and fishing pressure, or available evidence where data are limited.
Management	Three elements scored 0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75 or 1. Add the scores, then multiply by 2.	Management of the target stock, alignment of catches with scientific advice, catch controls, monitoring and enforcement.
Capture Method & Ecological Effects	Four elements scored from 0 to 1. Use the highest score, then multiply by 6.	Impacts on habitats, bycatch, endangered, threatened or protected species, and the wider ecosystem and trophic web.

Wild capture methodology Version 2

Version 2 weighted stock status most heavily, followed by management and capture method. Lower scores are better.

CRITERION	HOW IT WAS SCORED	WHAT IT ASSESSED
Stock Or Species Status	One score of 0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75 or 1, multiplied by 6.	Stock size, fishing pressure and data deficiency.
Management	One overall score of 0, 0.25, 0.5, 0.75 or 1, multiplied by 5.	Alignment with scientific advice, management, monitoring and enforcement.
Capture Method & Ecological Effects	Three impacts assessed. Use the highest score, then multiply by 4.	Impacts on habitats, bycatch and endangered, threatened or protected species.

Aquaculture methodology

Four criteria are scored. Higher scores indicate better performance.

CRITERION	SCORE RANGE	WHAT IT ASSESSES
Feed	+6 to -7	Whether feed is used, its traceability and responsible sourcing, and how much is required.
Ecological Effects	+8 to -17	Pollution, freshwater use, disease and parasites, escapes, juvenile sourcing, and impacts on habitats, other species and predators.
Fish Health & Welfare	+1 to -1	Standards of fish welfare and requirements for humane slaughter.
Management	+6 to -4	Area based planning, regulation and enforcement to minimise environmental impacts, assessed through regulation or third party certification criteria.

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Wild capture ratings

1376 | Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
NEW	2

Location: FAO 27, 37 (Atlantic, Northeast, Mediterranean and Black Sea) | East Atlantic & Mediterranean (All areas, All areas)

Management: UK Waters

Capture method: Hook and line (handline), Hook and line (pole and line)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0

Species summary:

Atlantic bluefin tuna in the East Atlantic and Mediterranean is recovering from historically low levels and has medium resilience to fishing pressure. Concerns remain about biomass levels, but not about fishing pressure. Route 2 scoring has been applied to stock status owing to the lack of reference points in the stock assessment.

The assessment depends on highly uncertain recruitment estimates and assumptions about stock structure and migratory behaviour, which remain poorly understood. Given these uncertainties and the stock's recovery from historically low levels, concerns about biomass remain.

Fishing mortality in 2020 was estimated at 81% of F0.1, a proxy for FMSY set to maintain biomass at B0.1. This represents an increase from the 2015–2017 average of 42.6%, but fishing pressure remains below the reference level, indicating no current concern.

Since 2023, the UK has held a small bluefin tuna quota and operated a strictly monitored, limited line fishery. Tight regulations support continued rebuilding, with a total annual quota of approximately 230 tonnes, including 120 tonnes allocated to the commercial fishery in 2026.

Reason for change:

A new rating has been created to reflect the specific management measures applying to the Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery in UK waters.

Consultation feedback:

Feedback questioned the use of Route 2 and suggested that Route 1 would better reflect the available stock assessment evidence. Although conventional biomass reference points are unavailable, the stock is considered data rich. Relative fishing mortality indicates that overfishing is not occurring (Fcurrent/Freference = 0.81), while the Management Strategy Evaluation and Management Procedure provide indicators of stock status. The feedback therefore argued that applying Route 2 solely because traditional biomass reference points are unavailable may not reflect the methodology's intent.

Our response:

The stock status score is based on the 2022 assessment for East Atlantic and Mediterranean Atlantic bluefin tuna. The available information and reference points were not considered sufficient to apply Route 1.

We use Route 1 wherever the evidence meets its requirements, including where suitable proxy reference points are available. Following the release of a new stock assessment, we will review the ratings for this stock and consider whether Route 1 can be applied. The stock status score therefore remains unchanged at 0.5.

34 | Atlantic cod (V2)

CURRENT: Default red rating | NEW: Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (southern), English Channel (west) (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7j, 7k)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter), Net (demersal seine), Bottom trawl (beam), Hook & line (handline), Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: **Target stock:** n/a **Scientific advice** n/a **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

Celtic Sea cod biomass remains below Blim, and there is no recovery plan in place. The rating therefore remains a default red rating due to stock status.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains a default red rating, Fish to Avoid, because biomass is below Blim and no recovery plan is in place.

33 | Atlantic cod (V3)

CURRENT: 3 | NEW: 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Iceland (5a)

Management: Certified fleets only

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Icelandic cod is abundant and is not subject to overfishing. Spawning stock biomass was estimated at 377,277 tonnes in 2026, approximately 42% above MSY BTrigger of 265,000 tonnes. The harvest rate in 2025 was 0.198, equivalent to 90% of HRMSY. A management plan is in place and has successfully reduced fishing pressure.

All Icelandic cod landed by the Icelandic fleet is MSC certified. Catch limits have consistently followed scientific advice. However, total catches have exceeded both advice and catch limits for the past five years, indicating that catches are not effectively controlled. Monitoring, control and surveillance are comprehensive, with highly effective enforcement and negligible illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity.

Most Icelandic cod is caught using otter trawls, which are likely to cause some damage to the seabed. Bycatch of beaked redfish and spotted wolffish is also a concern. MSC reports indicate that the certified cod trawl fishery caught approximately 3,800 tonnes of beaked redfish during the 2023/24 fishing year, down from approximately 10,000 tonnes annually between 2016 and 2020. However, continued bycatch of this stock, for which zero catch is advised, may still be preventing it from rebuilding.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

31 | Atlantic cod (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Iceland (5a)

Management: Certified fleets only

Capture method: Hook & line (longline)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Icelandic cod is abundant and is not subject to overfishing. Spawning stock biomass was estimated at 377,277 tonnes in 2026, approximately 42% above MSY BTrigger of 265,000 tonnes. The harvest rate in 2025 was 0.198, equivalent to 90% of HRMSY. A management plan is in place and has successfully reduced fishing pressure.

All Icelandic cod landed by the Icelandic fleet is MSC certified. Catch limits have consistently followed scientific advice. However, total catches have exceeded both advice and catch limits for the past five years, indicating that catches are not effectively controlled. Monitoring, control and surveillance are comprehensive, with highly effective enforcement and negligible illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity.

Some Icelandic cod is caught using longlines, which can catch vulnerable species as bycatch. Evidence from the MSC certification indicates that the fishery's impact on seabirds is likely to be lower than previously thought. However, interactions with northern fulmars continue to be observed, and the fishery may still contribute to pressures on their declining populations.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

32 | Atlantic cod (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Iceland (5a)

Management: Certified fleets only

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Icelandic cod is abundant and is not subject to overfishing. Spawning stock biomass was estimated at 377,277 tonnes in 2026, approximately 42% above MSY BTrigger of 265,000 tonnes. The harvest rate in 2025 was 0.198, equivalent to 90% of HRMSY. A management plan is in place and has successfully reduced fishing pressure.

All Icelandic cod landed by the Icelandic fleet is MSC certified. Catch limits have consistently followed scientific advice. However, total catches have exceeded both advice and catch limits for the past five years, indicating that catches are not effectively controlled. Monitoring, control and surveillance are comprehensive, with highly effective enforcement and negligible illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity.

Some Icelandic cod is caught using gillnets, which can catch vulnerable species, including seabirds and cetaceans, as bycatch. Lost nets may also continue catching wildlife through ghost fishing. In most cases, the fishery does not appear to affect seabird or marine mammal populations, although it may contribute to the decline of northern fulmars.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

890 | Atlantic cod (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
5	5

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea) (1, 2)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 1

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Northeast Arctic cod is declining and is subject to overfishing. Biomass in 2026 was estimated at 338,014 tonnes, below MSY BTrigger of 460,000 tonnes and just below the midpoint between MSY BTrigger and Blim of 340,000 tonnes. It remains above Blim of 220,000 tonnes.

Fishing mortality in 2025 was 0.548. The harvest control rule sets the fishing mortality reference level between 0.4 and 0.6, depending on stock size, with a value of 0.4 applying in 2025. Fishing mortality was also above the Fpa proxy of 0.5, although below Flim of 0.74.

A management plan and technical measures are in place, but management has not prevented overexploitation. Although substantial TAC reductions have been made, fishing pressure remains above sustainable levels and the 2026 TAC exceeds scientific advice.

Otter trawling can damage seabed habitats and catch vulnerable species as bycatch. Measures are in place to protect habitats and reduce bycatch, but concerns remain about golden redfish. Updated advice permits catches in 2027, replacing the zero catch advice for 2026. Golden redfish bycatch occurs across several fisheries, so total reported catches cannot be attributed solely to cod trawling. Nevertheless, bycatch in this fishery remains a concern.

The area contains vulnerable marine ecosystems. Protections are in place, but further evidence is needed to establish whether trawling has long term impacts on these habitats.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 5. Following consultation, the target stock management score improved from 0.75 to 0.5 and the capture method score improved from 1 to 0.75. These changes reduced the total weighted score from 15.5 to 13.5, which remains within rating 5.

Consultation feedback:

Management score: Feedback noted that the TAC was reduced by 25% in 2025, exceeding the 20% limit in a precautionary direction, and by 68% overall between 2021 and 2026. Concerns were raised that the 2026 TAC exceeding scientific advice had been counted twice, under both scientific advice and target stock management.

Capture method score: Feedback questioned whether the impact of cod trawling on golden redfish had been overstated. Reported catches cover all trawl fisheries, and increases were mainly attributed to the beaked redfish fishery. Reduced cod quotas and fishing effort, an improving outlook for golden redfish, and ongoing bycatch controls were cited as reasons to reconsider the score.

Our response:

We have updated the scores to reflect the improved status of golden redfish and evidence that bycatch occurs across multiple fisheries. The capture method score has improved from 1 to 0.75, reflecting the updated assessment and the move away from zero catch advice for 2027.

The target stock management score was not based solely on the 20% limit on annual TAC changes. It reflected biomass and fishing mortality relative to the management reference points, SSBmgt and Fmgt. The TAC exceeding scientific advice was assessed separately under the scientific advice score and was not counted twice.

In recognition of the technical and operational measures in place, the target stock management score has improved from 0.75 to 0.5. The overall rating remains 5.

30 | Atlantic cod (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
5	5

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea) (1, 2)

Management: Certified fleets only

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 1

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Northeast Arctic cod is declining and is subject to overfishing. Biomass in 2026 was estimated at 338,014 tonnes, below MSY BTrigger of 460,000 tonnes and just below the midpoint between MSY BTrigger and Blim of 340,000 tonnes. It remains above Blim of 220,000 tonnes.

Fishing mortality in 2025 was 0.548. The harvest control rule sets the fishing mortality reference level between 0.4 and 0.6, depending on stock size, with a value of 0.4 applying in 2025. Fishing mortality was above the Fpa proxy of 0.5, although below Flim of 0.74.

A management plan and technical measures are in place, but management has not prevented overexploitation. Although substantial TAC reductions have been made, fishing pressure remains above sustainable levels and the 2026 TAC exceeds scientific advice.

Otter trawling can damage seabed habitats and catch vulnerable species as bycatch. Measures are in place to protect habitats and reduce bycatch, but concerns remain about golden redfish. Updated advice permits catches in 2027, replacing the zero catch advice for 2026. Golden redfish bycatch occurs across several fisheries, so total reported catches cannot be attributed solely to cod trawling. Nevertheless, bycatch in this fishery remains a concern.

The area contains vulnerable marine ecosystems. Protections are in place, but further evidence is needed to establish whether trawling has long term impacts on these habitats. MSC certification includes conditions requiring evidence that these impacts are being addressed.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 5. Following consultation, the target stock management score improved from 0.75 to 0.5 and the capture method score improved from 1 to 0.75. These changes reduced the total weighted score from 15 to 13, which remains within rating 5.

Consultation feedback:

Management score: Feedback noted that the TAC was reduced by 25% in 2025, exceeding the 20% limit in a precautionary direction, and by 68% overall between 2021 and 2026. Concerns were raised that the 2026 TAC exceeding scientific advice had been counted twice, under both scientific advice and target stock management.

Capture method score: Feedback questioned whether the impact of cod trawling on golden redfish had been overstated. Reported catches cover all trawl fisheries, and increases were mainly attributed to the beaked redfish fishery. Reduced cod quotas and fishing effort, an improving outlook for golden redfish, and ongoing bycatch controls were cited as reasons to reconsider the score.

Our response:

We have updated the scores to reflect the improved status of golden redfish and evidence that bycatch occurs across multiple fisheries. The capture method score has improved from 1 to 0.75. The 2026 golden redfish assessment indicates that the stock is no longer below Blim, and zero catch advice no longer applies for 2027.

The target stock management score was not based solely on the 20% limit on annual TAC changes. It reflected biomass and fishing mortality relative to the management reference points, SSBmgt and Fmgt, alongside the additional management measures in place. The TAC exceeding scientific advice was assessed separately under the scientific advice score and was not counted twice.

In recognition of the technical and operational measures in place, the target stock management score has improved from 0.75 to 0.5. The overall rating remains 5.

1084 | Atlantic cod (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
5	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea) (1, 2)

Management: Certified fleets only

Capture method: Hook & line (longline)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 1

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Northeast Arctic cod is declining and is subject to overfishing. Biomass in 2026 was estimated at 338,014 tonnes, below MSY BTrigger of 460,000 tonnes and just below the midpoint between MSY BTrigger and Blim of 340,000 tonnes. It remains above Blim of 220,000 tonnes.

Fishing mortality in 2025 was 0.548. The harvest control rule sets the fishing mortality reference level between 0.4 and 0.6, depending on stock size, with a value of 0.4 applying in 2025. Fishing mortality was above the Fpa proxy of 0.5, although below Flim of 0.74.

A management plan and technical measures are in place, but management has not prevented overexploitation. Although substantial TAC reductions have been made, fishing pressure remains above sustainable levels and the 2026 TAC exceeds scientific advice.

This rating covers MSC certified longline fisheries only. Longlining can catch endangered seabirds as bycatch, although the impacts are not fully understood. These fisheries are thought to have low levels of bycatch, but interactions with ivory gulls and northern fulmars have been recorded. There is also a small bycatch of endangered and declining Arctic golden redfish, although this fishery is not considered likely to contribute to its decline.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has improved from 5 to 4 following consultation. The target stock management score improved from 0.75 to 0.5 to recognise the technical and operational measures in place. Stock status and capture method scores remain unchanged. This reduces the total weighted score from 12 to 11.5, giving rating 4.

Consultation feedback:

Feedback noted that the TAC was reduced by 25% in 2025, exceeding the 20% limit in a precautionary direction, and by 68% overall between 2021 and 2026. Concerns were raised that the 2026 TAC exceeding scientific advice had been counted twice, under both scientific advice and target stock management.

Our response:

We have improved the target stock management score from 0.75 to 0.5 to recognise the technical and operational measures in place.

The score was not based solely on the 20% limit on annual TAC changes. It reflected biomass and fishing mortality relative to the management reference points, SSBmgt and Fmgt, alongside additional management measures. The TAC exceeding scientific advice was assessed separately under the scientific advice score and was not counted twice. This change reduces the total weighted score from 12 to 11.5, improving the overall rating from 5 to 4.

1014 | Black-bellied monkfish (V3)

CURRENT 3 NEW 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Black-bellied monkfish in the southern Celtic Seas and Bay of Biscay is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Although there is no formal management plan, several measures are in place to provide partial control of exploitation. There is no minimum landing size, and catch limits are set jointly for black-bellied and white monkfish, limiting the ability to manage each species separately. However, both stocks are increasing, and neither appears to be at risk of overexploitation.

Beam trawling can abrade and flatten seabed features where the gear makes contact. It can also result in high levels of bycatch, including vulnerable species.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

1015 | Black-bellied monkfish (V3)

CURRENT 2 NEW 2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Black-bellied monkfish in the southern Celtic Seas and Bay of Biscay is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Although there is no formal management plan, several measures are in place to provide partial control of exploitation. There is no minimum landing size, and catch limits are set jointly for black-bellied and white monkfish, limiting the ability to manage each species separately. However, both stocks are increasing, and neither appears to be at risk of overexploitation.

Otter trawling interacts with the seabed, changing its topography and damaging or removing structures formed by marine organisms. This can affect vulnerable marine habitats and seabed communities. Bycatch is moderate and may include vulnerable species.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

1016 | Black-bellied monkfish (V3)

CURRENT: 3 NEW: 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 1

Species summary:

Black-bellied monkfish in the southern Celtic Seas and Bay of Biscay is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Although there is no formal management plan, several measures are in place to provide partial control of exploitation. There is no minimum landing size, and catch limits are set jointly for black-bellied and white monkfish, limiting the ability to manage each species separately. However, both stocks are increasing, and neither appears to be at risk of overexploitation.

Gillnets in this area can catch non-target species, including fish, marine mammals and seabirds. These include harbour porpoises, which are considered vulnerable in Europe. Evidence indicates that gillnet fisheries in some regions may exert unsustainable pressure on harbour porpoises and contribute to their decline.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

9 | Blue Skate (V2)

CURRENT: Default red rating NEW: Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea and Skagerrak; Celtic Sea and West of Scotland (6, 7)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed), Bottom trawl (beam), Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: **Target stock:** n/a **Scientific advice** n/a **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

It is prohibited to fish for, land or retain blue and flapper skate in UK or EU waters. Information about their stocks is limited. Both species are assessed as Critically Endangered by IUCN and are included in OSPAR's list of threatened and declining species. They therefore receive a default red rating. The existing GFG assessment also identifies blue skate as a critical fail.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains a default red rating, Fish to Avoid. Blue skate is classified as Critically Endangered, and targeting, retaining or landing the species is prohibited in UK and EU waters.

320 | Brill (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (4, 3a, 7d, 7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Brill in this region has relative exploitable biomass above MSY BTrigger and is harvested sustainably. Relative exploitable biomass in 2026 was 1.49, above MSY BTrigger of 0.5. Relative fishing pressure in 2025 was 0.32, below the FMSY reference level of 1.

Few management measures in the North Sea and English Channel are designed specifically for brill. Nevertheless, the stock is currently abundant and appears to be harvested sustainably. A species-specific TAC was introduced in 2024. Catch limits have followed scientific advice and have effectively controlled fishing mortality. Monitoring, control and surveillance systems are well developed and effective, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity.

Beam trawling has significant seabed impacts, including damage to seabed communities and vulnerable marine habitats. Brill is primarily caught as bycatch in flatfish fisheries. Its contribution to impacts on depleted species, such as North Sea cod, is likely to be limited, although not negligible. These fisheries also catch endangered, threatened and protected species, including prohibited blue skate, potentially hindering their recovery.

The relatively low level of brill removals is unlikely to affect food web dynamics. However, beam trawling may add pressure to an ecosystem already affected by fishing and climate change.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

1201 | Brill (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (4, 3a, 7d, 7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Brill in this region has relative exploitable biomass above MSY BTrigger and is harvested sustainably. Relative exploitable biomass in 2026 was 1.49, above MSY BTrigger of 0.5. Relative fishing pressure in 2025 was 0.32, below the FMSY reference level of 1.

Few management measures in the North Sea and English Channel are designed specifically for brill. Nevertheless, the stock is currently abundant and appears to be harvested sustainably. A species-specific TAC was introduced in 2024. Catch limits have followed scientific advice and have effectively controlled fishing mortality. Monitoring, control and surveillance systems are well developed and effective, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity.

Otter trawling is likely to cause some damage to the seabed. Brill is primarily caught as bycatch in flatfish fisheries. Its contribution to impacts on depleted species, such as North Sea cod, is likely to be limited, although not negligible. These fisheries also catch endangered, threatened and protected species, including prohibited blue skate, potentially hindering their recovery.

The relatively low level of brill removals is unlikely to affect food web dynamics. However, otter trawling may add pressure to an ecosystem already affected by fishing and climate change.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

321 | Brill (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (4, 3a, 7d, 7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Brill in this region has relative exploitable biomass above MSY BTrigger and is harvested sustainably. Relative exploitable biomass in 2026 was 1.49, above MSY BTrigger of 0.5. Relative fishing pressure in 2025 was 0.32, below the FMSY reference level of 1.

Few management measures in the North Sea and English Channel are designed specifically for brill. Nevertheless, the stock is currently abundant and appears to be harvested sustainably. A species-specific TAC was introduced in 2024. Catch limits have followed scientific advice and have effectively controlled fishing mortality. Monitoring, control and surveillance systems are well developed and effective, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity.

Gillnets cause little seabed disturbance and have minimal impacts on seabed habitats. However, they can catch relatively high numbers of non-target species, including endangered, threatened and protected species such as harbour porpoises. In some areas, harbour porpoise bycatch rates are considered unsustainable and are hindering population recovery.

Current levels of brill removal are unlikely to significantly affect food web dynamics. However, bycatch associated with net fisheries may affect ecosystem function and food web structure.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has worsened from 2 to 3. Stock status remains unchanged at 0.

Target stock management scores 0.25 because, although few specific management measures are in place, the stock is healthy and is not overfished. Scientific advice scores 0.25 because catches and TACs have followed advice, but a species-specific TAC was only introduced in 2024. Monitoring, Control & Surveillance scores 0.25.

The capture method score has increased from 0.5 to 0.75, reflecting evidence that bycatch of harbour porpoises is hindering their recovery in parts of the region.

Consultation feedback:

Feedback noted that inshore fishing for brill is very small scale and questioned whether it is likely to cause overfishing or have bycatch impacts on harbour porpoises.

Our response:

We apply the methodology consistently across all Good Fish Guide assessments. This rating covers a wider area than the inshore fishery described, so the scores reflect impacts across that area. The proposed rating of 3 therefore remains unchanged following consultation.

The brill stock is not currently considered overfished, and fishing pressure is well below FMSY. The capture method score reflects bycatch concerns rather than overfishing of brill.

If an assessment specific to a narrower area or fishing method is needed, a new rating can be developed through Good Fish Guide services. https://www.mcsuk.org/what-we-do/choosing-sustainable-seafood/good-fish-guide-services/

57 | Coley (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
1	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Iceland (5a)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0 **Scientific advice** 0 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Icelandic coley, also known as saithe, is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Biomass in 2026 was estimated at 150,803 tonnes, well above MSY BTrigger of 61,000 tonnes. The harvest rate in 2025 was 0.167, below HRMSY of 0.2.

A management plan is in place and has successfully reduced fishing pressure. Catch limits follow scientific advice and are expected to maintain the stock at target levels. All Icelandic saithe landed by the Icelandic fleet is MSC certified.

Most catches are taken using otter trawls, which are likely to cause some damage to the seabed. Bycatch is moderate. Measures are in place to reduce impacts on species and habitats, but further work is needed to ensure they are effective.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has changed from 1 to 2 because of the revised weighting under the V3 wild capture methodology. The underlying section scores remain unchanged, but stock status, management and capture method now carry equal weighting. This gives the capture method score greater influence on the overall rating.

58 | Coley (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
1	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Iceland (5a)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0 **Scientific advice** 0 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Icelandic coley, also known as saithe, is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Biomass in 2026 was estimated at 150,803 tonnes, well above MSY BTrigger of 61,000 tonnes. The harvest rate in 2025 was 0.167, below HRMSY of 0.2.

A management plan is in place and has successfully reduced fishing pressure. Catch limits follow scientific advice and are expected to maintain the stock at target levels. All Icelandic saithe landed by the Icelandic fleet is MSC certified.

Some saithe is caught using gillnets, which can catch vulnerable species, including cetaceans and seabirds, as bycatch. Measures are in place to reduce bycatch, but further work is needed to ensure they are effective.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has changed from 1 to 2 because of the revised weighting under the V3 wild capture methodology. The underlying section scores remain unchanged, but stock status, management and capture method now carry equal weighting. This gives the capture method score greater influence on the overall rating.

53 | Coley (V2)

CURRENT	NEW
4	Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea, West of Scotland and Rockall, Skagerrak (4, 6, 3a)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: **Target stock:** n/a **Scientific advice** n/a **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

Coley, also known as saithe, in the North Sea, west of Scotland, Rockall and Skagerrak has biomass below Blim, and no recovery plan is in place. The fishery therefore receives a default red rating due to stock status.

Reason for change:

Biomass is now below Blim, and no recovery plan is in place. This triggers a critical fail for stock status, changing the overall rating from 4 to a default red rating, equivalent to 5.

Consultation feedback:

Feedback noted that fishing activity in a specific management area is minimal and questioned whether it contributes significantly to overfishing. A query was also raised about whether a fisheries management plan could qualify as a credible stock recovery plan under the methodology once published and supported by updated scientific advice.

Our response:

We recognise the potential impact of the rating change on local small-scale fisheries. We apply the methodology consistently across all Good Fish Guide assessments. This rating covers the wider stock rather than only the inshore area. Biomass remains below Blim, and no credible recovery plan is in place, so the default red rating remains unchanged following consultation.

We will reference relevant fisheries management plans in the full assessment. However, the plans considered here do not currently meet the methodology's requirements for a credible stock recovery plan. Further evidence of their effectiveness in delivering stock recovery is needed before they can be recognised as such.

54 | Coley (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea) (1, 2)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Northeast Arctic coley, also known as saithe, is overfished and is subject to overfishing. Spawning stock biomass declined to 212,224 tonnes in 2026, below MSY BTrigger of 226,430 tonnes but above Bpa of 131,492 tonnes. Fishing mortality in 2025 was 0.40, above FMSY of 0.32 and 1.1FMSY of 0.352, although below Fpa of 0.45.

Appropriate management measures are in place, but declining biomass and fishing pressure above reference levels indicate that the management plan may not be fully effective. Bycatch concerns have also not been adequately addressed.

Otter trawling catches endangered golden redfish as bycatch. The updated golden redfish assessment indicates improved stock status, and zero catch advice no longer applies for 2027. However, concerns remain about fishing pressure and the fishery's bycatch impacts.

Reason for change:

The rating was initially proposed to change from 3 to 5 under the V3 wild capture methodology, which gives equal weighting to stock status, management and capture method.

The stock status score increased from 0 to 0.75 because biomass fell below MSY BTrigger and fishing mortality rose above FMSY and 1.1FMSY. Target stock management scored 0.5, reflecting concerns about the management plan's effectiveness. Scientific advice scored 0.5 because catches exceeded advice in some of the past five years, although not in the most recent year. Monitoring, Control & Surveillance scored 0.25.

The proposed capture method score remained 1 because of golden redfish bycatch concerns. Following consultation, it improved to 0.75, reducing the final rating from the proposed 5 to 4.

Consultation feedback:

Scientific advice: Feedback questioned whether the score fully reflected management of saithe north of 62°N. It highlighted the long term alignment of TACs with scientific advice and suggested that the score was overly precautionary.

Monitoring, Control & Surveillance: Feedback identified an inconsistency between the score presented and the value described in the rationale, and requested clarification.

Capture method: Feedback questioned whether golden redfish concerns had been counted twice, under both scientific advice and capture method. It also noted that redfish bycatch is monitored and subject to management measures.

Our response:

We recognise that TACs followed scientific advice during the assessment period and that catches exceeded advice in 2022 because of quota flexibility. However, the scientific advice score considers both TACs and actual catches. The score therefore remains 0.5. At the next review, 2022 may fall outside the five-year assessment period, potentially allowing the score to improve to 0.25, depending on the other years assessed.

The capture method score has improved from 1 to 0.75. The 2026 golden redfish assessment indicates that the stock is no longer below Blim, and zero catch advice no longer applies for 2027. The revised score recognises this improvement while retaining concern about fishing pressure and bycatch impacts.

The consultation rationale contained an error in the Monitoring, Control & Surveillance score. The correct value is 0.25 for uncertified saithe fisheries and 0 for MSC certified fisheries, reflecting the additional auditing and surveillance provided through certification. The capture method change reduces the total weighted score from 13 to 11.5, changing the proposed rating from 5 to a final rating of 4.

56 | Coley (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea) (1, 2)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Northeast Arctic coley, also known as saithe, is overfished and is subject to overfishing. Spawning stock biomass declined to 212,224 tonnes in 2026, below MSY BTrigger of 226,430 tonnes but above Bpa of 131,492 tonnes. Fishing mortality in 2025 was 0.40, above FMSY of 0.32 and 1.1FMSY of 0.352, although below Fpa of 0.45.

Appropriate management measures are in place, but declining biomass and fishing pressure above reference levels indicate that the management plan may not be fully effective. Bycatch concerns have also not been adequately addressed.

Some catches are taken using gillnets, which may catch endangered golden redfish as bycatch. The updated golden redfish assessment indicates improved stock status, and zero catch advice no longer applies for 2027. However, bycatch remains a concern.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has changed from 2 to 4, reflecting deteriorating stock status and the revised weighting under the V3 wild capture methodology.

The stock status score increased from 0 to 0.75 because biomass fell below MSY BTrigger and fishing mortality rose above FMSY and 1.1FMSY. Target stock management scores 0.5, reflecting concerns about the management plan's effectiveness. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because catches exceeded advice in some of the past five years, although not in the most recent year. Monitoring, Control & Surveillance scores 0.25.

The capture method score was initially proposed to remain at 0.75 because of golden redfish bycatch concerns. Following consultation, it improved to 0.5, reducing the total weighted score from 11.5 to 10. Both totals fall within rating 4.

Consultation feedback:

Scientific advice: Feedback questioned whether the score fully reflected management of saithe north of 62°N. It highlighted the long term alignment of TACs with scientific advice and suggested that the score was overly precautionary.

Monitoring, Control & Surveillance: Feedback identified an inconsistency between the score presented and the value described in the rationale, and requested clarification.

Capture method: Feedback questioned whether golden redfish concerns had been counted twice, under both scientific advice and capture method. It also noted that redfish bycatch is monitored and subject to management measures.

Our response:

We recognise that TACs followed scientific advice during the assessment period and that catches exceeded advice in 2022 because of quota flexibility. However, the scientific advice score considers both TACs and actual catches. The score therefore remains 0.5. At the next review, 2022 may fall outside the five-year assessment period, potentially allowing the score to improve to 0.25, depending on the other years assessed.

The capture method score has improved from 0.75 to 0.5. The 2026 golden redfish assessment indicates that the stock is no longer below Blim, and zero catch advice no longer applies for 2027.

The consultation rationale contained an error in the Monitoring, Control & Surveillance score. The correct value is 0.25 for uncertified saithe fisheries and 0 for MSC certified fisheries, reflecting the additional auditing and surveillance provided through certification.

The capture method change reduces the total weighted score from 11.5 to 10. The final rating remains 4.

1004 | Coley (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
1	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea) (1, 2)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (purse seine or ring)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.25

Species summary:

Northeast Arctic coley, also known as saithe, is overfished and is subject to overfishing. Spawning stock biomass declined to 212,224 tonnes in 2026, below MSY BTrigger of 226,430 tonnes but above Bpa of 131,492 tonnes. Fishing mortality in 2025 was 0.40, above FMSY of 0.32 and 1.1FMSY of 0.352, although below Fpa of 0.45.

Appropriate management measures are in place, but declining biomass and fishing pressure above reference levels indicate that the management plan may not be fully effective. Bycatch concerns have also not been adequately addressed across the wider fishery.

Some catches are taken using purse seine nets. This method has low levels of bycatch and is unlikely to affect seabed habitats.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has changed from 1 to 3, reflecting deteriorating stock status and the revised weighting under the V3 wild capture methodology.

The stock status score increased from 0 to 0.75 because biomass fell below MSY BTrigger and fishing mortality rose above FMSY and 1.1FMSY. Target stock management scores 0.5, reflecting concerns about the management plan's effectiveness. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because catches exceeded advice in some of the past five years, although not in the most recent year.

Monitoring, Control & Surveillance scores 0.25. The consultation rationale incorrectly stated 0, which has been corrected. The capture method score remains 0.25, reflecting the method's low impacts. The final total weighted score is 8.5, giving rating 3.

Consultation feedback:

Scientific advice: Feedback questioned whether the score fully reflected management of saithe north of 62°N. It highlighted the long term alignment of TACs with scientific advice and suggested that the score was overly precautionary.

Monitoring, Control & Surveillance: Feedback identified an inconsistency between the score presented and the value described in the rationale, and requested clarification.

Capture method: Feedback questioned whether golden redfish concerns had been counted twice, under both scientific advice and capture method. It also noted that redfish bycatch is monitored and subject to management measures.

Our response:

We recognise that TACs followed scientific advice during the assessment period and that catches exceeded advice in 2022 because of quota flexibility. However, the scientific advice score considers both TACs and actual catches. The score therefore remains 0.5. At the next review, 2022 may fall outside the five-year assessment period, potentially allowing the score to improve to 0.25, depending on the other years assessed.

The consultation rationale contained an error in the Monitoring, Control & Surveillance score. The correct value for this uncertified fishery is 0.25. MSC certified saithe fisheries score 0, reflecting the additional auditing and surveillance provided through certification.

The purse seine capture method score remains 0.25. The final total weighted score is 8.5, and the rating remains 3 following consultation.

1083 | Coley (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northeast Arctic (Barents and Norwegian Sea) (1, 2)

Management: Certified fleets only

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Northeast Arctic coley, also known as saithe, is overfished and is subject to overfishing. Spawning stock biomass declined to 212,224 tonnes in 2026, below MSY BTrigger of 226,430 tonnes but above Bpa of 131,492 tonnes. Fishing mortality in 2025 was 0.40, above FMSY of 0.32 and 1.1FMSY of 0.352, although below Fpa of 0.45.

This rating covers MSC certified otter trawl fisheries only. Appropriate management measures are in place, but declining biomass and fishing pressure above reference levels indicate that the management plan may not be fully effective. Bycatch concerns have also not been adequately addressed.

Otter trawling catches endangered golden redfish as bycatch. The updated golden redfish assessment indicates improved stock status, and zero catch advice no longer applies for 2027. However, concerns remain about fishing pressure and the fishery's bycatch impacts.

Reason for change:

The rating was initially proposed to change from 3 to 5 under the V3 wild capture methodology, which gives equal weighting to stock status, management and capture method. The stock status score increased from 0 to 0.75 because biomass fell below MSY BTrigger and fishing mortality rose above FMSY and 1.1FMSY. Target stock management scores 0.5, reflecting concerns about the management plan's effectiveness. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because catches exceeded advice in some of the past five years, although not in the most recent year. Monitoring, Control & Surveillance scores 0, reflecting well developed monitoring systems, strong enforcement and the additional auditing and surveillance provided through MSC certification. The proposed capture method score remained 1 because of golden redfish bycatch concerns. Following consultation, it improved to 0.75, reducing the total weighted score from 12.5 to 11 and changing the proposed rating from 5 to a final rating of 4.

Consultation feedback:

Scientific advice: Feedback highlighted that TACs had followed ICES advice over the past ten years and that catches had frequently remained below both TACs and advice. It questioned whether the score adequately reflected this record and noted uncertainties in the assessment models.

Target stock management: Feedback questioned whether improvements in golden redfish status had been adequately reflected. It noted that the stock was now estimated to be above Blim and that ICES had replaced zero catch advice with a limited catch recommendation, suggesting that management measures may be having a positive effect.

Capture method: Feedback questioned whether golden redfish concerns had been counted twice, under both scientific advice and capture method. It also highlighted monitoring and management measures for redfish bycatch and suggested that improving stock status may indicate these measures are supporting recovery.

Our response:

We recognise that TACs followed scientific advice during the assessment period and that catches exceeded advice in 2022 because of quota flexibility. However, the scientific advice score considers both TACs and actual catches. The score therefore remains 0.5. At the next review, 2022 may fall outside the five-year assessment period, potentially allowing the score to improve to 0.25, depending on the other years assessed.

The capture method score has improved from 1 to 0.75. The 2026 golden redfish assessment indicates that the stock is no longer below Blim, and zero catch advice no longer applies for 2027. The revised score recognises this improvement while retaining concern about fishing pressure and bycatch impacts. This change reduces the total weighted score from 12.5 to 11, changing the proposed rating from 5 to a final rating of 4.

1058 | Common octopus (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
5	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | UK (4, 6, 7)

Management: UK EEZ (except Cornwall)

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.75 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

There are concerns about common octopus biomass in UK waters outside Cornwall because no biomass reference points are available. There is no concern about fishing pressure. Although landings increased during the octopus bloom, this increase is considered exceptional, and UK landings remain small compared with fisheries in ICES areas 8 and 9.

Management measures are very limited, with only a minimum landing weight in place. There are no catch limits, and the limited scientific advice available is not well integrated into management. Monitoring, control and surveillance systems are well developed and effective, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity.

Beam trawling has significant seabed impacts. Octopus is primarily caught as bycatch, and the fishery's impacts on non-target species are considered low. It is unlikely to contribute to declines in vulnerable, endangered, threatened or protected species.

At typical population levels and fishing pressure, octopus removals are unlikely to significantly affect ecosystem function or food web dynamics. However, bottom trawling can have broader ecosystem impacts.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has improved from 5 to 4 following reassessment under the V3 methodology. Stock status and capture method scores remain unchanged. The revised management assessment gives scores of 0.75 for target stock management, 0.75 for scientific advice and 0.25 for Monitoring, Control & Surveillance. The total weighted score is 11, giving rating 4.

1059 | Common octopus (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
5	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | UK (4, 6, 7)

Management: UK EEZ (except Cornwall)

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.75 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

There are concerns about common octopus biomass in UK waters outside Cornwall because no biomass reference points are available. There is no concern about fishing pressure. Although landings increased during the octopus bloom, this increase is considered exceptional, and UK landings remain small compared with fisheries in ICES areas 8 and 9.

Management measures are very limited, with only a minimum landing weight in place. There are no catch limits, and the limited scientific advice available is not well integrated into management. Monitoring, control and surveillance systems are well developed and effective, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity.

Otter trawling has some impacts on the seabed. Octopus is primarily caught as bycatch, and the fishery's impacts on non-target species are considered low. It is unlikely to contribute to declines in vulnerable, endangered, threatened or protected species.

At typical population levels and fishing pressure, octopus removals are unlikely to significantly affect ecosystem function or food web dynamics. However, bottom trawling can have broader ecosystem impacts.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has improved from 5 to 4 following reassessment under the V3 methodology. The stock status score remains 0.5 and the capture method score remains 0.5.

Target stock management scores 0.75 because measures are limited to a minimum landing weight, with limited information about the stock to inform additional measures. Scientific advice scores 0.75 because there are no catch limits and concerns relate to biomass rather than fishing pressure. Monitoring, Control & Surveillance scores 0.25, reflecting effective systems, reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activity.

The total weighted score is 9.5, giving rating 4.

129 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Sea, Bristol Channel (7f, 7g)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Sole in the Celtic Sea and Bristol Channel is abundant. Spawning stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 4,580 tonnes, above both MSY Btrigger (3,057 tonnes) and the BMSY proxy (4,280 tonnes). However, fishing pressure in 2025 (0.29) remains above FMSY (0.251). Several management measures are in place, but these have not yet reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Catches have exceeded scientific advice for the past four years, despite total allowable catches (TACs) being set in line with advice.

The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Beam trawls have significant impacts on the seabed. Plaice bycatch may be affecting that stock's recovery, and this gear can also interact with endangered, threatened and protected species, including the common skate complex. Beam trawling may place additional pressure on an ecosystem already affected by historical fishing and climate change.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 3 to 4. The stock status score remains at 0.25 and the capture method score remains at 0.75.

Within the management section, target stock management scores 0.5 because current measures have not reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Scientific advice scores 0.75 because catches have exceeded advice for the past four years, despite TACs being set in line with advice. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems and strong enforcement.

128 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT: 2 | NEW: 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Sea, Bristol Channel (7f, 7g)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Sole in the Celtic Sea and Bristol Channel is abundant. Spawning stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 4,580 tonnes, above both MSY Btrigger (3,057 tonnes) and the BMSY proxy (4,280 tonnes). However, fishing pressure in 2025 (0.29) remains above FMSY (0.251). Several management measures are in place, but these have not yet reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Catches have exceeded scientific advice for the past four years, despite total allowable catches (TACs) being set in line with advice.

The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Otter trawls are likely to cause some damage to the seabed. Plaice bycatch may be affecting that stock's recovery, and this gear can also interact with endangered, threatened and protected species, including common dolphins. Otter trawling may place additional pressure on an ecosystem already affected by historical fishing.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 2 to 3. The stock status score remains at 0.25 and the capture method score remains at 0.5.

Within the management section, target stock management scores 0.5 because current measures have not reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Scientific advice scores 0.75 because catches have exceeded advice for the past four years, despite TACs being set in line with advice. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems and strong enforcement.

965 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT: Default red rating | NEW: Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | English Channel (East) (7d)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: **Target stock:** n/a **Scientific advice** n/a **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

Dover sole in the eastern English Channel receives a default red rating because stock biomass remains below safe biological levels and there is no precautionary recovery plan in place. Spawning stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 9,587 tonnes, below Blim (11,181 tonnes).

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains a default red rating, Fish to Avoid, because biomass is below Blim and no precautionary recovery plan is in place.

1063 | Dover sole

CURRENT: Default red rating
NEW: DELETED

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | English Channel (East) (7d)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (demersal seine)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: n/a

Management: **Target stock:** n/a **Scientific advice** n/a **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** n/a

Capture method: n/a

Reason for change:

This rating is being deleted due to low landings. Seine landings are included in the 'other gear' category, which accounted for only 4% of total landings in 2025, equivalent to 40 tonnes.

131 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT: Default red rating
NEW: Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | English Channel (East) (7d)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: **Target stock:** n/a **Scientific advice** n/a **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

Dover sole in the eastern English Channel receives a default red rating because stock biomass remains below safe biological levels and there is no precautionary recovery plan in place. Spawning stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 9,587 tonnes, below Blim (11,181 tonnes).

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains a default red rating, Fish to Avoid, because biomass is below Blim and no precautionary recovery plan is in place.

142 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | English Channel (West) (7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Dover sole in the western English Channel is fully fished. Stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 3,762 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (2,900 tonnes) but below the BMSY proxy (4,060 tonnes). Fishing pressure in 2025 is estimated at 0.28, just below FMSY (0.29), indicating sustainable fishing pressure.

The stock is well managed through a combination of the Landing Obligation, minimum conservation reference sizes and technical measures. Catches exceeded scientific advice in one of the past five years, reaching 111% of the advised limit in 2024, but remained below advice in the most recent year. There is also limited consideration of choke species and declining plaice stocks in the area. The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Beam trawls have significant impacts on the seabed. Plaice bycatch may be affecting that stock's recovery, and this gear can interact with endangered, threatened and protected species, including the common skate complex and the declining short-snouted seahorse. Beam trawling may place additional pressure on an ecosystem already affected by historical fishing.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 2 to 3. The stock status score remains at 0, but its weighting has decreased, and management is now assessed through three separate elements.

Target stock management scores 0, reflecting several appropriate and effective measures and good stock status. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because catches exceeded advice by 11% in 2024 and there is limited consideration of choke species and declining plaice stocks in the area. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems and strong enforcement.

The capture method score remains at 0.75 because of seabed impacts and concerns about bycatch of endangered, threatened and protected species, including the common skate complex and the declining short-snouted seahorse.

141 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | English Channel (West) (7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Dover sole in the western English Channel is fully fished. Stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 3,762 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (2,900 tonnes) but below the BMSY proxy (4,060 tonnes). Fishing pressure in 2025 is estimated at 0.28, just below FMSY (0.29), indicating sustainable fishing pressure.

The stock is well managed through a combination of the Landing Obligation, minimum conservation reference sizes and technical measures. Catches exceeded scientific advice in one of the past five years but remained below advice in the most recent year. The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Otter trawls are likely to cause some damage to the seabed. Plaice bycatch may be affecting that stock's recovery, and this gear can also interact with endangered, threatened and protected species. Otter trawling may place additional pressure on an ecosystem already affected by historical fishing.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

414 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | English Channel (West) (7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Dover sole in the western English Channel is fully fished. Stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 3,762 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (2,900 tonnes) but below the BMSY proxy (4,060 tonnes). Fishing pressure in 2025 is estimated at 0.28, just below FMSY (0.29), indicating sustainable fishing pressure.

The stock is well managed through a combination of the Landing Obligation, minimum conservation reference sizes and technical measures. Catches exceeded scientific advice in one of the past five years but remained below advice in the most recent year. The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Fixed nets have relatively low impacts on seabed habitats but can generate high levels of bycatch. Within this mixed demersal fishery, there is a small risk of catching cod and related species subject to zero catch advice. Harbour porpoises, an endangered, threatened and protected species, are also caught as bycatch, and their populations are declining in the region. Bycatch of predators higher in the food chain may contribute to wider changes in food webs and the ecosystem.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 2 to 3. The stock status score remains at 0, but its weighting has decreased, and management is now assessed through three separate elements.

Target stock management scores 0, reflecting several appropriate and effective measures and good stock status. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because catches exceeded advice by 11% in 2024 and there is limited consideration of choke species and declining plaice stocks in the area. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems and strong enforcement.

The capture method score remains at 0.75 because of concerns about harbour porpoise bycatch.

140 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Irish Sea (7a)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Dover sole in the Irish Sea is considered fully fished. Spawning stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 4,231 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (3,129 tonnes) but below the BMSY proxy (4,381 tonnes). There are concerns about fishing pressure, which was estimated at 0.197 in 2025, above both FMSY (0.164) and Fpa (0.183), but below the Flim proxy (0.230).

Several management measures are in place, but these have not yet reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Catches and total allowable catches (TACs) have remained in line with scientific advice over the past five years. However, there is limited consideration of plaice, which is caught in this mixed fishery and is subject to zero catch advice. The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Beam trawls have significant impacts on the seabed. Plaice bycatch may be affecting that stock's recovery, and this gear can also interact with endangered, threatened and protected species, including the common skate complex. Beam trawling may place additional pressure on an ecosystem already affected by historical fishing and climate change.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 3 to 4. The stock status score increases from 0 to 0.75 because fishing pressure (0.197) exceeds Fpa (0.183). Biomass remains above MSY Btrigger but below the BMSY proxy.

Target stock management scores 0.5 because current measures have not reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because, although catches and TACs have remained in line with advice, there is limited consideration of plaice, which is subject to zero catch advice. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems and strong enforcement.

The capture method score remains at 0.75 because of seabed impacts and concerns about bycatch.

139 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Irish Sea (7a)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Dover sole in the Irish Sea is considered fully fished. Spawning stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 4,231 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (3,129 tonnes) but below the BMSY proxy (4,381 tonnes). There are concerns about fishing pressure, which was estimated at 0.197 in 2025, above both FMSY (0.164) and Fpa (0.183), but below the Flim proxy (0.230).

Several management measures are in place, but these have not yet reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Catches and total allowable catches (TACs) have remained in line with scientific advice over the past five years. However, there is limited consideration of plaice, which is caught in this mixed fishery and is subject to zero catch advice. The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Otter trawls are likely to cause some damage to the seabed. Plaice bycatch may be affecting that stock's recovery, and this gear can also interact with endangered, threatened and protected species, including the common skate complex and common dolphins. Otter trawling may place additional pressure on an ecosystem already affected by historical fishing and climate change.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 3 to 4. The stock status score increases from 0 to 0.75 because fishing pressure (0.197) exceeds Fpa (0.183). Biomass remains above MSY Btrigger but below the BMSY proxy.

Target stock management scores 0.5 because current measures have not reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because, although catches and TACs have remained in line with advice, there is limited consideration of plaice, which is subject to zero catch advice. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems and strong enforcement.

The capture method score remains at 0.5, reflecting likely seabed damage and concerns about bycatch.

126 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea (4)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Dover sole in the North Sea is fully fished. Spawning stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 61,225 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (50,849 tonnes) but below the BMSY proxy (71,189 tonnes). Fishing pressure in 2025 is estimated at 0.052, below FMSY (0.22), indicating sustainable fishing pressure.

The stock is well managed through a combination of the Landing Obligation, minimum conservation reference sizes and technical measures. Catches exceeded scientific advice in one of the past five years but remained below advice in the most recent year. The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Beam trawls have significant impacts on the seabed. There is bycatch of depleted North Sea cod. Although interactions with cod in the sole fishery are thought to be limited, they are not negligible. There is also bycatch of endangered, threatened and protected species, including blue skate, which is prohibited from being retained or landed. Beam trawling may place additional pressure on an ecosystem already affected by historical fishing and climate change.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 2 to 3. The stock status score remains at 0, but its weighting has decreased, and management is now assessed through three separate elements.

Target stock management scores 0, reflecting several appropriate and effective measures and good stock status. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because catches exceeded advice by 19% in 2024 and there is limited consideration of choke species. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems and strong enforcement.

The capture method score remains at 0.75 because of seabed impacts and concerns about bycatch of endangered, threatened and protected species, including blue skate.

Consultation feedback:

Concerns were raised about the proposed downgrade and its potential impact on local small-scale fisheries. Information was provided on fishing methods, vessel numbers and fishing locations within the inshore area.

Our response:

We recognise the concerns about the potential impact on local small-scale fisheries and have considered the information provided on inshore fishing activity. The Good Fish Guide methodology is applied consistently across assessments, and this rating covers the wider North Sea fishery, so its scores reflect activity across that area.

The proposed rating of 3 remains unchanged following consultation. A more specific assessment covering a particular area or fishing method can be developed through our services. https://www.mcsuk.org/what-we-do/choosing-sustainable-seafood/good-fish-guide-services/

1251 | European hake (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northern stock (North Sea, Celtic Seas, Bay of Biscay (north)) (4, 6, 7, 3a, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Bay of Biscay

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed), Net (pelagic trawl)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 1

Species summary:

Northern hake is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Stock biomass has declined to an estimated 98,611 tonnes in 2026, above MSY Btrigger (78,405 tonnes) but below the Good Fish Guide BMSY proxy (109,767 tonnes). Fishing pressure decreased significantly between 2005 and 2012 and has fluctuated at or below FMSY since 2009. In 2025, it was 0.24, equal to FMSY.

Current management measures appear to be controlling fishing pressure. However, the stock extends beyond the corresponding total allowable catch (TAC) area, so management does not fully align with the biological stock. Discarding remains an issue in some areas, and catch limits do not cover all countries fishing the stock.

In the Bay of Biscay, concerns remain about the illegal landing and sale of undersized hake. Management has also failed to prevent and monitor the fishery's impacts on protected seabirds. Gillnetting and pair trawling for hake are among the fisheries contributing to unsustainable bycatch of common dolphins and harbour porpoises in the area.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 3 to 4. The stock status score increases from 0 to 0.25 because biomass has declined below the BMSY proxy and fishing pressure has risen to FMSY.

Target stock management scores 0.5 because management does not fully align with the biological stock area. Scientific advice scores 0.25 because catches remain below advice, although TACs have been set above advice in recent years and compliance with the Landing Obligation varies. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.5 because of concerns about illegal catches of undersized hake in the Bay of Biscay.

The capture method score remains at 1 because of unsustainable bycatch of common dolphins and harbour porpoises. The revised stock score, separate management components and equal weighting of the three main sections result in an overall rating of 4.

Consultation feedback:

Concerns were raised about the proposed downgrade. Feedback indicated that inshore netting activity is very limited and therefore unlikely to contribute significantly to overfishing of European hake.

Our response:

We recognise the concerns about the proposed downgrade and the information provided on limited inshore netting activity. The assessment does not indicate that northern hake is subject to overfishing. However, the overall rating also reflects management concerns and unsustainable bycatch of common dolphins and harbour porpoises in the Bay of Biscay.

This rating covers a wider area than the inshore fishery described, so the scores reflect activity across its assessed scope. The proposed rating of 4 remains unchanged following consultation.

A more specific assessment covering a particular area or fishing method can be developed through our services: https://www.mcsuk.org/what-we-do/choosing-sustainable-seafood/good-fish-guide-services/

75 | European hake (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northern stock (North Sea, Celtic Seas, Bay of Biscay (north)) (4, 6, 7, 3a, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: North Sea and Celtic Seas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Northern hake is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Stock biomass has declined to an estimated 98,611 tonnes in 2026, above MSY Btrigger (78,405 tonnes) but below the Good Fish Guide BMSY proxy (109,767 tonnes). Fishing pressure decreased significantly between 2005 and 2012 and has fluctuated at or below FMSY since 2009. In 2025, it was 0.24, equal to FMSY.

Current management measures appear to be controlling fishing pressure. However, the stock extends beyond the corresponding total allowable catch (TAC) area, so management does not fully align with the biological stock. Discarding remains an issue in some areas, and catch limits do not cover all countries fishing the stock.

Otter trawls can damage seabed habitats. Bycatch is moderate and may include vulnerable species such as North Sea cod, blue skate and flapper skate.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 2 to 3. The stock status score increases from 0 to 0.25 because biomass has declined below the BMSY proxy and fishing pressure has risen to FMSY.

Target stock management scores 0.5 because management does not fully align with the biological stock area. Scientific advice scores 0.25 because catches remain below advice, although TACs have been set above advice in recent years and compliance with the Landing Obligation varies. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems.

Together with the capture method score of 0.5, these scores give an overall rating of 3 under the revised weighting.

Consultation feedback:

Concerns were raised about the proposed downgrade. Feedback indicated that inshore trawling activity is very limited and therefore unlikely to contribute significantly to overfishing of European hake. There was also a request to add a separate rating for MSC-certified European hake.

Our response:

We have considered the information provided on limited inshore trawling activity. The assessment does not indicate that northern hake is subject to overfishing. However, the overall rating also reflects management concerns, seabed impacts and bycatch.

The Good Fish Guide methodology is applied consistently across assessments. This rating covers a wider area than the inshore fishery described, so its scores reflect activity across that scope. The proposed rating of 3 remains unchanged following consultation.

A more specific assessment covering a particular area or fishing method may be developed through our services: https://www.mcsuk.org/what-we-do/choosing-sustainable-seafood/good-fish-guide-services/

76 | European hake (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northern stock (North Sea, Celtic Seas, Bay of Biscay (north)) (4, 6, 7, 3a, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: North Sea and Celtic Seas

Capture method: Hook & line (longline)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Northern hake is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Stock biomass has declined to an estimated 98,611 tonnes in 2026, above MSY Btrigger (78,405 tonnes) but below the Good Fish Guide BMSY proxy (109,767 tonnes). Fishing pressure decreased significantly between 2005 and 2012 and has fluctuated at or below FMSY since 2009. In 2025, it was 0.24, equal to FMSY.

Current management measures appear to be controlling fishing pressure. However, the stock extends beyond the corresponding total allowable catch (TAC) area, so management does not fully align with the biological stock. Discarding remains an issue in some areas, and catch limits do not cover all countries fishing the stock.

Longlining can catch vulnerable species, including sharks and seabirds, and may be contributing to declines in fulmar populations.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 2 to 3. The stock status score increases from 0 to 0.25 because biomass has declined below the BMSY proxy and fishing pressure has risen to FMSY.

Target stock management scores 0.5 because management does not fully align with the biological stock area. Scientific advice scores 0.25 because catches remain below advice, although TACs have been set above advice in recent years and compliance with the Landing Obligation varies. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems.

Together with the capture method score of 0.75, these scores give an overall rating of 3 under the revised weighting.

Consultation feedback:

Concerns were raised about the proposed downgrade. Feedback indicated that inshore hook and line activity is very limited and therefore unlikely to contribute significantly to overfishing of European hake.

Our response:

We have considered the information provided on limited inshore hook and line activity. The assessment does not indicate that northern hake is subject to overfishing. However, the overall rating also reflects management concerns and bycatch of vulnerable species, including sharks and seabirds.

The Good Fish Guide methodology is applied consistently across assessments. This rating covers longline fishing across a wider area than the inshore fishery described, so its scores reflect activity across that scope. The proposed rating of 3 remains unchanged following consultation.

A more specific assessment covering a particular area or fishing method may be developed through our services: https://www.mcsuk.org/what-we-do/choosing-sustainable-seafood/good-fish-guide-services/

77 | European hake (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northern stock (North Sea, Celtic Seas, Bay of Biscay (north)) (4, 6, 7, 3a, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: North Sea and Celtic Seas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Northern hake is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Stock biomass has declined to an estimated 98,611 tonnes in 2026, above MSY Btrigger (78,405 tonnes) but below the Good Fish Guide BMSY proxy (109,767 tonnes). Fishing pressure decreased significantly between 2005 and 2012 and has fluctuated at or below FMSY since 2009. In 2025, it was 0.24, equal to FMSY.

Current management measures appear to be controlling fishing pressure. However, the stock extends beyond the corresponding total allowable catch (TAC) area, so management does not fully align with the biological stock. Discarding remains an issue in some areas, and catch limits do not cover all countries fishing the stock.

Gillnets in this area can catch non-target fish, marine mammals and seabirds. These include harbour porpoises, which are classified as vulnerable in Europe.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 2 to 3. The stock status score increases from 0 to 0.25 because biomass has declined below the BMSY proxy and fishing pressure has risen to FMSY.

Target stock management scores 0.5 because management does not fully align with the biological stock area. Scientific advice scores 0.25 because catches remain below advice, although TACs have been set above advice in recent years and compliance with the Landing Obligation varies. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems.

Together with the capture method score of 0.75, these scores give an overall rating of 3 under the revised weighting.

Consultation feedback:

Concerns were raised about the proposed downgrade. Feedback indicated that inshore netting activity is very limited and therefore unlikely to contribute significantly to overfishing of European hake.

Our response:

We have considered the information provided on limited inshore netting activity. The assessment does not indicate that northern hake is subject to overfishing. However, the overall rating also reflects management concerns and bycatch of non-target fish, marine mammals and seabirds, including harbour porpoises.

The Good Fish Guide methodology is applied consistently across assessments. This rating covers a wider area than the inshore fishery described, so its scores reflect activity across that scope. The proposed rating of 3 remains unchanged following consultation.

A more specific assessment covering a particular area or fishing method may be developed through our services: https://www.mcsuk.org/what-we-do/choosing-sustainable-seafood/good-fish-guide-services/

459 | European lobster (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Jersey (7e)

Management: Granville Bay Treaty Area

Capture method: Pot, trap or creel

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.25

Species summary:

European lobster in this MSC-certified fishery is harvested sustainably, with fishing pressure below FMSY. The stock is fully fished, with biomass below BMSY (IAS). However, landings per unit effort (LPUE) in 2024 were 8.4 kg per 100 pots, above MSY Btrigger (LRP) of 6 kg per 100 pots.

A range of appropriate management measures is in place. Stock indicators nevertheless show a decline in abundance, and there is not yet evidence of sustained recovery to BMSY. Although the fishery has no catch limits, there is no current concern about fishing pressure or biomass under the assessment criteria. The fishery has a well-developed monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) framework, with effective enforcement and little evidence of illegal, unreported or unregulated fishing.

Crab and lobster pots have low seabed impacts when deployed and retrieved correctly. This is a mixed crustacean fishery, and the selective nature of potting helps minimise impacts on juveniles and non-target species. However, continued catches of brown crab may be limiting recovery of that declining stock. There is no evidence of significant impacts on endangered, threatened and protected species. Food web and wider ecosystem impacts are also considered low.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following consultation. Additional evidence on stock status, management measures and the harvest strategy supported improvements in target stock management from 0.5 to 0.25 and scientific advice from 0.75 to 0.5. These changes reduced the proposed rating from 3 to 2, retaining the existing rating.

Consultation feedback:

Concerns were raised about the proposed downgrade. The stakeholder provided further information and evidence on Jersey lobster stock status, management measures and the harvest strategy, including harvest control rules.

Our response:

We reviewed the additional information and evidence provided. Following this review, the target stock management score improved from 0.5 to 0.25, and the scientific advice score improved from 0.75 to 0.5.

These changes reduce the proposed overall rating from 3 to 2, retaining the fishery's current rating.

1090 | European squid (V3)

CURRENT 5 NEW 4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (6, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7j, 7k)

Management: All areas (except Cornwall)

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 1 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

There are concerns about European squid biomass in the Celtic Seas because there is no formal biomass assessment and catch per unit effort (CPUE) is declining. Fishing pressure is not currently considered a concern, with landings of 774 tonnes in 2023 below the long-term average.

There are no appropriate management measures in place specifically for European squid in this area. There are no catch limits or minimum sizes, and the limited scientific advice available is not being effectively incorporated into management. However, the fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Otter trawls are likely to cause some damage to the seabed. The squid fishery is likely to overlap with vulnerable cod and related species subject to zero catch advice, and this gear can also interact with endangered, threatened and protected species. Although squid landings have declined in the area, otter trawling may continue to place pressure on an ecosystem already affected by historical fishing and climate change.

Reason for change:

The overall rating improves from 5 to 4 under the new methodology (V3). The stock status score improves from 0.75 to 0.5 because fishing pressure is no longer considered a concern, although concerns about biomass remain.

Target stock management scores 1 because there are no appropriate management measures in place. Scientific advice scores 0.75 because there are no catch limits and biomass remains a concern, although fishing pressure does not. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting a well-developed and effective system.

The capture method score remains at 0.5.

1088 | European squid (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
5	5

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | English Channel (7d, 7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 1 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

There are concerns about European squid biomass in the English Channel because there are no formal biomass assessments and catch per unit effort (CPUE) is declining. Fishing pressure is also a concern, with landings of 4,257 tonnes in 2023 above the long-term average of 3,595 tonnes.

There are no appropriate management measures in place specifically for European squid in this area. There are no catch limits or minimum sizes, and the limited scientific advice available is not being effectively incorporated into management. However, the fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Otter trawls are likely to cause some damage to the seabed. The squid fishery is likely to overlap with vulnerable cod and related species subject to zero catch advice, and this gear can also interact with endangered, threatened and protected species.

Although squid landings have increased in recent years, current removals are unlikely to significantly affect ecosystem functioning or food webs. However, bottom trawling can have broader ecosystem impacts.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains at 5 under the new methodology (V3).

1087 | European squid (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
5	5

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea (4)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 1 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

There are concerns about fishing pressure on European squid in the North Sea, with landings of 4,748 tonnes in 2023 above the long-term average of 2,026 tonnes. Biomass is also a concern because there is no formal stock assessment and catch per unit effort (CPUE) is declining.

There are no appropriate management measures in place specifically for European squid in this area. There are no catch limits or minimum sizes, and the limited scientific advice available is not being effectively incorporated into management. However, the fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Otter trawls are likely to cause some damage to the seabed. The squid fishery is likely to overlap with vulnerable cod and related species subject to zero catch advice, and this gear can also interact with endangered, threatened and protected species.

Increasing squid removals, combined with a relatively high-impact fishing method in an ecosystem already altered and potentially less resilient, may affect food webs and wider ecosystem functioning.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains at 5 under the new methodology (V3).

1150 | Flapper Skate (V2)

CURRENT	NEW
Default red rating	Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea and Skagerrak; Celtic Sea and West of Scotland (6, 7)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed), Bottom trawl (beam), Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

Flapper skate is prohibited from being targeted, retained or landed in UK or EU waters. Information on the stock is limited, but the species is classified as Critically Endangered by IUCN and listed by OSPAR as threatened and declining. It therefore receives a default red rating.

The capture methods listed relate to potential bycatch, rather than a targeted fishery.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains a default red rating, Fish to Avoid. Flapper skate is classified as Critically Endangered, and targeting, retaining or landing the species is prohibited in UK and EU waters.

Consultation feedback:

The stakeholder suggested deleting the rating to avoid implying that a targeted fishery exists for this prohibited species.

Our response:

We agree that the rating should not imply that a targeted fishery for flapper skate exists. We will clarify that targeting, retention and landing are prohibited, and that the listed capture methods relate to potential bycatch.

The rating will be retained to highlight the significant conservation concerns associated with the species. Bycatch impacts are assessed within the relevant fishery ratings, while this separate entry provides information for people seeking advice on skates, including recreational fishing enquiries, and supports wider conservation messaging.

65 | Haddock (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Iceland (5a)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Icelandic haddock is not overfished, but fishing pressure is above sustainable levels. A management plan is in place, and catch limits are generally set in line with scientific advice. However, catches regularly exceed those limits and have exceeded scientific advice in each of the past five years.

All Icelandic haddock landed by the Icelandic fleet is MSC-certified. Most catches are taken by otter trawl, which is likely to cause some damage to the seabed. Bycatch is moderate. Measures are in place to reduce impacts on species and habitats, but more needs to be done to ensure they are effective.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 2 to 3. Stock status, management and capture method now carry equal weight in the overall assessment.

The stock status score remains at 0.25 because fishing pressure is above sustainable levels. Target stock management scores 0.5 because management measures are in place but have not reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Scientific advice scores 1 because catches have exceeded advice in each of the past five years. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0, reflecting strong monitoring.

The capture method score remains at 0.5, reflecting the impacts of otter trawling on seabed habitats.

67 | Haddock (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Iceland (5a)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Hook & line (longline)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Icelandic haddock is not overfished, but fishing pressure is above sustainable levels. A management plan is in place, and catch limits are generally set in line with scientific advice. However, catches regularly exceed those limits and have exceeded scientific advice in each of the past five years.

All Icelandic haddock landed by the Icelandic fleet is MSC-certified. Some haddock is caught by longline, which can catch vulnerable species, including sharks and seabirds. Measures are in place to reduce bycatch, but more needs to be done to ensure they are effective.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 2 to 3. Stock status, management and capture method now carry equal weight in the overall assessment.

The stock status score remains at 0.25 because fishing pressure is above sustainable levels. Target stock management scores 0.5 because management measures are in place but have not reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Scientific advice scores 1 because catches have exceeded advice in each of the past five years. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0, reflecting strong monitoring.

The capture method score remains at 0.5 because of bycatch of vulnerable species, including sharks and seabirds.

66 | Haddock (V3)

CURRENT: 2 NEW: 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Iceland (5a)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (demersal seine)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.25

Species summary:

Icelandic haddock is not overfished, but fishing pressure is above sustainable levels. A management plan is in place, and catch limits are generally set in line with scientific advice. However, catches regularly exceed those limits and have exceeded scientific advice in each of the past five years.

All Icelandic haddock landed by the Icelandic fleet is MSC-certified. Some catches are taken by demersal seine, which is unlikely to have significant bycatch or cause damage to the seabed.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 2 to 3. Stock status, management and capture method now carry equal weight in the overall assessment.

The stock status score remains at 0.25 because fishing pressure is above sustainable levels. Target stock management scores 0.5 because management measures are in place but have not reduced fishing pressure to sustainable levels. Scientific advice scores 1 because catches have exceeded advice in each of the past five years. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0, reflecting strong monitoring.

The capture method score remains at 0.25, reflecting the relatively low impacts and bycatch associated with demersal seine fishing.

187 | Herring (V2)

CURRENT: Default red rating NEW: Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Irish Sea (South), Celtic Sea and southwest of Ireland (7g, 7h, 7j, 7k, 7aS)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (pelagic trawl)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

Herring biomass in the southern Irish Sea, Celtic Sea and southwest of Ireland remains below Blim, and there is no recovery plan in place. The stock therefore triggers a critical fail and retains its default red rating.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains a default red rating, Fish to Avoid, because biomass is below Blim and no recovery plan is in place.

960 | Herring (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea Autumn Spawners: North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (East) (4, 7d, 3a)

Management: Certified fleets only

Capture method: Net (pelagic trawl)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

North Sea autumn-spawning herring is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Predicted spawning stock biomass in 2026 is 1,505,176 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (1,100,000 tonnes) but below the Good Fish Guide BMSY proxy (1,540,000 tonnes). Fishing pressure decreased to 0.191 in 2025, below FMSY (0.23).

Some appropriate management measures are in place, including a long-term management strategy. However, the strategy has not been in place long enough to assess its effectiveness, and recent catches have exceeded scientific advice.

This rating covers MSC-certified fleets. Midwater trawling for herring may be limiting the recovery of North Sea cod by removing herring, which cod feed on.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating improves from 3 to 2. The stock status score improves from 0.5 to 0 because fishing pressure has decreased below FMSY.

Target stock management scores 0.5, reflecting measures including a long-term management strategy whose effectiveness cannot yet be evaluated. Scientific advice scores 0.75 because catches have exceeded advice in some, but not all, of the past five years, including the most recent year. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0, reflecting well-established monitoring systems.

Together with the capture method score of 0.5, these scores give an overall rating of 2.

178 | Herring (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea Autumn Spawners: North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (East) (4, 7d, 3a)

Management: North Sea and eastern English Channel

Capture method: Net (drift)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.25

Species summary:

North Sea autumn-spawning herring is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Predicted spawning stock biomass in 2026 is 1,505,176 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (1,100,000 tonnes) but below the Good Fish Guide BMSY proxy (1,540,000 tonnes). Fishing pressure decreased to 0.191 in 2025, below FMSY (0.23).

Some appropriate management measures are in place for North Sea and eastern English Channel herring, including a long-term management strategy. However, the strategy has not been in place long enough to assess its effectiveness, and recent catches have exceeded scientific advice.

Drift net fisheries targeting herring are selective and have little bycatch.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating improves from 3 to 2. The stock status score improves from 0.5 to 0 because fishing pressure has decreased below FMSY.

Target stock management scores 0.5, reflecting measures including a long-term management strategy whose effectiveness cannot yet be evaluated. Scientific advice scores 0.75 because catches have exceeded advice in some, but not all, of the past five years, including the most recent year. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-established monitoring systems.

Together with the capture method score of 0.25, these scores give an overall rating of 2.

176 | Herring (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
4	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea Autumn Spawners: North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (East) (4, 7d, 3a)

Management: North Sea and eastern English Channel

Capture method: Net (pelagic trawl)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

North Sea autumn-spawning herring is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Predicted spawning stock biomass in 2026 is 1,505,176 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (1,100,000 tonnes) but below the Good Fish Guide BMSY proxy (1,540,000 tonnes). Fishing pressure decreased to 0.191 in 2025, below FMSY (0.23).

Some appropriate management measures are in place for North Sea and eastern English Channel herring, including a long-term management strategy. However, the strategy has not been in place long enough to assess its effectiveness, and recent catches have exceeded scientific advice.

Midwater trawling is unlikely to affect the seabed. However, bycatch of depleted western Baltic herring is affecting that stock's recovery.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating improves from 4 to 3. The stock status score improves from 0.5 to 0 because fishing pressure has decreased below FMSY.

Target stock management scores 0.5, reflecting measures including a long-term management strategy whose effectiveness cannot yet be evaluated. Scientific advice scores 0.75 because catches have exceeded advice in some, but not all, of the past five years, including the most recent year. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-established monitoring systems.

Together with the capture method score of 0.75, which reflects concerns about bycatch of depleted western Baltic herring, these scores give an overall rating of 3.

177 | Herring (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
4	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea Autumn Spawners: North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (East) (4, 7d, 3a)

Management: North Sea and eastern English Channel

Capture method: Net (purse seine or ring)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

North Sea autumn-spawning herring is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing. Predicted spawning stock biomass in 2026 is 1,505,176 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (1,100,000 tonnes) but below the Good Fish Guide BMSY proxy (1,540,000 tonnes). Fishing pressure decreased to 0.191 in 2025, below FMSY (0.23).

Some appropriate management measures are in place for North Sea and eastern English Channel herring, including a long-term management strategy. However, the strategy has not been in place long enough to assess its effectiveness, and recent catches have exceeded scientific advice.

Purse seine fisheries in this area are unlikely to affect habitats. However, bycatch of depleted western Baltic herring is affecting that stock's recovery.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating improves from 4 to 3. The stock status score improves from 0.5 to 0 because fishing pressure has decreased below FMSY.

Target stock management scores 0.5, reflecting measures including a long-term management strategy whose effectiveness cannot yet be evaluated. Scientific advice scores 0.75 because catches have exceeded advice in some, but not all, of the past five years, including the most recent year. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting well-established monitoring systems.

Together with the capture method score of 0.75, which reflects concerns about bycatch of depleted western Baltic herring, these scores give an overall rating of 3.

959 | Herring (V3)

CURRENT: Default red rating | NEW: Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea Autumn Spawners: North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (East) (4, 7d, 3a)

Management: Skagerrak and Kattegat

Capture method: Net (purse seine or ring), Net (pelagic trawl)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: n/a

Management: **Target stock:** n/a **Scientific advice** n/a **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** n/a

Capture method: Critical fail

Species summary:

Fishing for North Sea herring in the Skagerrak and Kattegat may result in high bycatch of critically depleted western Baltic herring. It is therefore recommended that no herring fishing takes place in this area. This triggers a capture method critical fail, resulting in a default red rating.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains a default red rating, Fish to Avoid. Bycatch of critically depleted western Baltic herring continues to trigger a critical fail for capture method.

1377 | King scallop (V3)

CURRENT: NEW | NEW: 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | England (English Channel - Lyme Bay: 7e.L)

Management: Inshore (0-6 nm)

Capture method: Pot, trap or creel (Disco pots)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0

Species summary:

The most recent UK scallop assessment could not estimate fishing pressure or biomass for Lyme Bay. Both remain a concern because of uncertainty associated with landings originating outside the surveyed area.

Some management measures are in place for this emerging fishery. However, there are no catch or effort limits, and concerns about stock biomass and fishing pressure remain. The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Scallop pots can have low seabed impacts when deployed and retrieved correctly. Few vessels currently operate in the fishery, so bycatch and interactions with endangered, threatened and protected species are low. Increased scallop removals are unlikely to significantly affect local food webs. However, uncertainties remain about the use of artificial light attractants and expansion into areas that may previously have acted as refuges for scallops.

Reason for change:

New rating for emergent scallop potting fishery, rating specific to SW UK currently.

832 | King scallop (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
4	5

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northern Ireland (7a)

Management: Northern Ireland

Capture method: Dredge

Certification: Fishery Improvement Project (FIP)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.75 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

There are concerns about king scallop biomass in Northern Ireland because biomass indices indicate declining abundance. Fishing pressure is also a concern, as landings frequently exceed advised limits. Landings in 2024 were 729 tonnes, above the long-term average of 603 tonnes.

Management measures appear to have limited effectiveness. There is no effort limit, and advised catch limits are not incorporated into management, leaving the stock vulnerable to overexploitation. The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Scallop dredges have high impacts on the seabed, and there are concerns about bycatch mortality that is not accounted for. Dredging previously overlapped with vulnerable habitats and endangered, threatened and protected species. Ongoing impacts in those areas are now considered unlikely because they are closed to mobile fishing gear towed along the seabed. Scallop dredging may also place additional pressure on ecosystems and food webs already altered by other activities.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating worsens from 4 to 5. The stock status score increases from 0.5 to 0.75 because biomass indices indicate declining abundance, alongside existing concerns about fishing pressure.

Target stock management scores 0.75 because measures have limited effectiveness in addressing concerns about biomass and fishing pressure. Scientific advice scores 1 because advice is not incorporated into management or followed, and measures are not responsive to stock status. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting effective monitoring, reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

The capture method score remains at 0.75.

929 | King scallop (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Scotland (Shetland) (4a)

Management: Certified fleets only (0-6 nm)

Capture method: Dredge

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

King scallop abundance in Shetland appears to be increasing, with rising landings per unit effort (LPUE) and stable fishing effort. The stock has remained above its target reference point since 2014, and there are no concerns about biomass or fishing pressure.

Several management measures are in place. Although there are no catch limits, management responds to changes in LPUE and stock status is good. The fishery has a well-developed monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, although there have been recent instances of non-compliance involving undersized scallops.

Scallop dredges have high impacts on the seabed, and there are concerns about bycatch mortality that is not accounted for. Certification documents highlight the need for a better understanding of interactions with endangered, threatened and protected species. Dredging may place additional pressure on ecosystems and food webs that are already altered.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

930 | King scallop (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
4	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Scotland (Shetland) (4a)

Management: Shetland (6-12nm)

Capture method: Dredge

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.75 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

There is no dedicated stock assessment for the Shetland scallop fishery between 6 and 12 nautical miles from the coast. Instead, the Scottish Marine Directorate periodically assesses the combined stock across the inshore and offshore zones.

The latest assessment indicates some concern about fishing pressure, estimated at 0.136 in 2022, above FMSY (0.13). Biomass is not considered a concern.

Few management measures are in place for scallops in this area. Limited stock-specific information restricts management decisions and the ability to respond to changes in stock status. However, the fishery operates within a comprehensive monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) framework, with mandatory remote electronic monitoring (REM).

Scallop dredges have high impacts on the seabed, and there are concerns about bycatch mortality that is not accounted for. A better understanding of interactions with endangered, threatened and protected species is needed. Dredging may place additional pressure on ecosystems and food webs that are already altered.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 4 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

17 | Sandy Ray (V2)

CURRENT	NEW
5	5

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Sea and West of Scotland (6, 7)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 1

Management: 0.75

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Information on sandy ray in the Celtic Sea and west of Scotland is limited, and the species has low resilience to fishing pressure. Biomass is a concern because of insufficient data. Fishing pressure is also a concern, with landings of 56 tonnes in 2023 above the five-year average of 51.6 tonnes.

Sandy ray is vulnerable to fishing, and management needs to be more precautionary. The joint total allowable catch (TAC) is not a suitable management measure for this species.

Otter trawling is likely to cause some damage to the seabed. Bycatch is moderate and may include vulnerable species.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 5, Fish to Avoid. Concerns remain about biomass and fishing pressure, alongside limited stock information and management measures that are insufficiently precautionary.

877 | Seabass (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea (Central and South), Irish Sea, English Channel, Bristol Channel, Celtic Sea (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Seabass in this region is harvested sustainably. Fishing pressure in 2025 is estimated at 0.116, below FMSY (0.17). The stock is considered fully fished, with spawning stock biomass in 2026 estimated at 26,630 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (19,339 tonnes) but below the BMSY proxy (27,075 tonnes).

Several management measures are in place, although evidence suggests that some, including the closed season, could be more effective. There is no formal total allowable catch (TAC), reflecting the large proportion of recreational catches, and total removals often exceed scientific advice.

There are also concerns about bycatch controls in some fisheries, particularly those using gillnets and trawls. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) is considered adequate overall, but gaps remain in compliance and the effectiveness of management measures.

Otter trawls are likely to damage the seabed, including seabed communities and vulnerable marine habitats. Seabass is caught incidentally in these fisheries, so fishing for seabass is considered to make a limited, but not negligible, contribution to their wider bycatch impacts. Otter trawls can also catch endangered, threatened and protected species, including the common skate complex, potentially hindering their recovery.

Current seabass removals are unlikely to significantly affect food webs. However, otter trawling may place additional pressure on ecosystems already altered by historical fishing and climate change.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

398 | Seabass (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	1

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea (Central and South), Irish Sea, English Channel, Bristol Channel, Celtic Sea (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Hook & line (handline)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0

Species summary:

Seabass in this region is harvested sustainably. Fishing pressure in 2025 is estimated at 0.116, below FMSY (0.17). The stock is considered fully fished, with spawning stock biomass in 2026 estimated at 26,630 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (19,339 tonnes) but below the BMSY proxy (27,075 tonnes).

Several management measures are in place, although evidence suggests that some, including the closed season, could be more effective. There is no formal total allowable catch (TAC), reflecting the large proportion of recreational catches, and total removals often exceed scientific advice. The line fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Handline fishing has negligible impacts on seabed habitats and very low bycatch of non-target and endangered, threatened and protected species. Some concerns remain about fishing pressure on bait species and uncertainty over the scale of recreational catches. Overall, the fishery has a low impact on ecosystem functioning and is unlikely to significantly alter food webs.

Reason for change:

Under the new methodology (V3), the overall rating improves from 2 to 1, largely because of the revised weighting. Stock status and capture method both remain at 0.

Target stock management scores 0.25 because several measures are in place, although evidence suggests that some could be more appropriate or effective. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because there is no formal TAC and total catches exceed advice, despite there being no concerns about stock biomass or fishing pressure under the assessment criteria. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) scores 0.25, reflecting effective monitoring, reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

878 | Seabass (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea (Central and South), Irish Sea, English Channel, Bristol Channel, Celtic Sea (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (demersal seine)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.25

Species summary:

Seabass in this region is harvested sustainably. Fishing pressure in 2025 is estimated at 0.116, below FMSY (0.17). The stock is considered fully fished, with spawning stock biomass in 2026 estimated at 26,630 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger (19,339 tonnes) but below the BMSY proxy (27,075 tonnes).

Several management measures are in place, although evidence suggests that some, including the closed season, could be more effective. There is no formal total allowable catch (TAC), reflecting the large proportion of recreational catches, and total removals often exceed scientific advice.

There are also concerns about bycatch controls in some fisheries, particularly those using gillnets and trawls. Monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) is considered adequate overall, but gaps remain in compliance and the effectiveness of management measures.

Demersal seines account for a small proportion of seabass landings and have minimal impacts on seabed habitats. Seabass is caught incidentally, and its contribution to the fishery's wider bycatch impacts is considered negligible. There are no reported interactions with endangered, threatened and protected species associated with this gear in the region. Overall, the fishery has a low impact on ecosystem functioning and is unlikely to significantly alter food webs.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

169 | Seabass (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea (Central and South), Irish Sea, English Channel, Bristol Channel, Celtic Sea (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7e)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Fishing pressure on seabass in this region is within sustainable limits. Fishing mortality in 2025 is estimated at 0.116, below FMSY of 0.17. The stock is considered fully fished, with spawning stock biomass in 2026 estimated at 26,630 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger of 19,339 tonnes but below the BMSY proxy of 27,075 tonnes.

Several management measures are in place, although evidence suggests that some, including the closed season, could be more effective. Seabass is not managed through a formal total allowable catch, and total commercial and recreational removals often exceed scientific advice. Concerns also remain over bycatch controls in some fisheries. Monitoring, control and surveillance are considered adequate overall, but gaps remain in compliance and the effectiveness of management measures.

Gillnets cause little disturbance to the seabed, so habitat impacts are minimal. However, they can catch non-target species, including endangered, threatened or protected species such as harbour porpoise. In some areas, harbour porpoise bycatch rates are considered unsustainable and are hindering population recovery. Current seabass removals are unlikely to significantly affect food web dynamics, but bycatch in net fisheries could affect ecosystem function and trophic structure.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3. Fishing pressure is within sustainable limits and biomass is above MSY Btrigger. However, concerns remain over catches exceeding scientific advice, the effectiveness of some management measures and bycatch of vulnerable species in net fisheries.

777 | Seabass (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
5	5

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | West of Scotland, West of Ireland, eastern part of southwest of Ireland (6a, 7b, 7j)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (demersal seine), Hook & line (pole & line), Net (gill or fixed), Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 1

Management: **Target stock:** 0.75 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

There are concerns about both stock biomass and fishing pressure on seabass in this region, owing to uncertainty over stock abundance, exploitation rates and total fishing removals.

Management is considered ineffective, with ongoing concerns about stock biomass and fishing pressure. Seabass is not managed through a formal total allowable catch, and total commercial and recreational removals are likely to exceed scientific advice. Concerns also remain over bycatch controls, particularly in gillnet and trawl fisheries. Monitoring, control and surveillance are considered adequate overall, although gaps remain in compliance and the effectiveness of management measures.

Seabass is caught using pole and line, gillnets or fixed nets, otter trawls and demersal seines. Some of these capture methods can damage seabed habitats and catch non-target species, including endangered, threatened or protected species. Current seabass removals are unlikely to significantly affect food web dynamics. However, some capture methods may place additional pressure on ecosystems already affected by historical fishing activity and climate change.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 5, Fish to Avoid. Concerns remain about stock biomass and fishing pressure, ineffective management and catches likely to exceed scientific advice. Some capture methods also present risks to seabed habitats and non-target species.

770 | Sprat (V3)

CURRENT 4 NEW 4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | West of Scotland, Celtic Seas (South) (6, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7j, 7k)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (pelagic trawl)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.75 **Scientific advice** 1 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Sprat in the Celtic Seas is data limited. There are concerns about fishing pressure, as catches have exceeded scientific advice every year since 2013. There is no concern about biomass because, despite substantial data limitations and some conflicting trends, survey biomass estimates typically exceed average catches by several orders of magnitude.

Few appropriate management measures are in place. Scientific catch advice is available but has consistently been exceeded since it was introduced in 2013. The fishery benefits from a well-developed monitoring, control and surveillance system, with effective enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

All recent sprat landings have been taken using pelagic trawls, which have negligible impacts on seabed habitats. However, the fishery overlaps with Irish Sea herring, for which zero-catch advice applies, creating concerns about herring bycatch. Bycatch of endangered, threatened or protected species is minimal. Sprat is an important prey species for fish, seabirds and cetaceans, so its removal could affect food webs in the region.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 4. The capture method score has increased from 0.25 to 0.5, reflecting concerns about bycatch of Irish Sea herring, for which zero-catch advice applies, and the potential effects of removing sprat, an important prey species, on regional food webs.

327 | Turbot (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea (4)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Turbot in the North Sea is considered fully fished. Spawning stock biomass in 2026 is estimated at 6,500 tonnes, above MSY Btrigger of 5,046 tonnes but below the BMSY proxy of 7,064 tonnes. Fishing pressure is within sustainable limits, with fishing mortality in 2025 estimated at 0.22, below FMSY of 0.386.

Few management measures in the North Sea are specifically designed for turbot. However, the stock is currently being harvested within sustainable limits. A species-specific total allowable catch was introduced in 2024. Catch limits have been set in line with scientific advice and have effectively controlled fishing mortality. The fishery has a well-developed and effective monitoring, control and surveillance system, with reliable enforcement and low levels of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Beam trawls have significant impacts on seabed habitats. Bycatch can include depleted North Sea cod and endangered, threatened or protected species such as blue skate. Beam trawling may also place additional pressure on an ecosystem already affected by fishing and climate change.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3. Fishing pressure is within sustainable limits and stock biomass is above MSY Btrigger, although below the BMSY proxy. Concerns remain about the impacts of beam trawling on seabed habitats and bycatch of depleted or vulnerable species, including North Sea cod and blue skate.

328 | Turbot (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea (4)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Turbot in the North Sea is fully fished, with the 2026 SSB estimated at 6,500 tonnes, which is above MSY Btrigger (5,046 tonnes), but below the BMSY proxy (7,064 tonnes). The stock is harvested sustainable, with F at 0.22 in 2025, which is below FMSY (0.386). Few management measures in the North Sea are specifically designed for turbot. Nevertheless, the stock is currently abundant and appears to be harvested sustainably. Although a species-specific TAC was only introduced in 2024, catch limits have been set in line with scientific advice and have effectively controlled fishing mortality. The fishery has a well-developed and effective Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance (MCS) system with reliable enforcement and low levels of IUU activity. Otter trawls have some impacts on the seabed. Bycatch can include depleted North Sea cod. There is also bycatch of ETP species – blue skate. Otter trawling may add additional pressure to an ecosystem altered by fishing and climate change.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

388 | Tusk (V2)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northeast Atlantic (4, 7, 8, 9, 12b, 3a, 5b, 6a)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Hook & line (longline)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Tusk in the Northeast Atlantic is a data limited stock. There is currently no concern about biomass or fishing pressure, and the species has medium resilience to exploitation. However, management measures cover only parts of its wide distribution.

In 2025, total allowable catches amounted to 7,588 tonnes, compared with scientific advice recommending catches below 6,924 tonnes. Norway and the UK also agreed a quota of 400 tonnes, replacing the previous additional demersal allowance of 30,000 tonnes for Norwegian vessels in Subarea 4.

Minimum landing sizes vary between areas. There is no minimum landing size in Norwegian waters, while the Faroese limit is 40 cm, below the estimated size at maturity of 50 cm.

Longliners account for 87% of the catch. This capture method is associated with bycatch of vulnerable seabirds and sharks, although the full extent of these impacts remains poorly understood.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 under the V2 methodology. There is no current concern about stock biomass or fishing pressure, but management measures cover only part of the stock's distribution, catch limits exceed scientific advice, and concerns remain about bycatch of vulnerable species in longline fisheries.

161 | White monkfish (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

White monkfish in the southern Celtic Seas and Bay of Biscay is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing.

There is no formal management plan, although several measures are in place to provide partial control of exploitation. Uncertainty about the appropriateness of the stock assessment area and the absence of a minimum landing size limit the effectiveness of management. Catch limits are set jointly for white and black-bellied monkfish, making it difficult to control exploitation of each species separately. However, stock size is increasing for both species, and neither appears to be at risk of overexploitation. Monitoring, control and surveillance systems are well developed, with strong enforcement.

Beam trawling can abrade and flatten seabed habitats where the gear makes contact. It can also result in high levels of bycatch, including vulnerable species.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 under the revised V3 methodology. Stock status and capture method scores are unchanged. Target stock management scores 0.5, reflecting uncertainty about the appropriateness of the stock assessment area and the absence of a minimum landing size. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because the combined catch limit for white and black-bellied monkfish limits control of exploitation for each species separately. Monitoring, control and surveillance score 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems and strong enforcement.

162 | White monkfish (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

White monkfish in the southern Celtic Seas and Bay of Biscay is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing.

There is no formal management plan, although several measures are in place to provide partial control of exploitation. Uncertainty about the appropriateness of the stock assessment area and the absence of a minimum landing size limit the effectiveness of management. Catch limits are set jointly for white and black-bellied monkfish, making it difficult to control exploitation of each species separately. However, stock size is increasing for both species, and neither appears to be at risk of overexploitation. Monitoring, control and surveillance systems are well developed, with strong enforcement.

Otter trawls interact with the seabed, altering its physical structure and damaging or removing habitats formed by marine organisms. These impacts can affect vulnerable marine habitats and seabed communities. Bycatch is moderate and may include vulnerable species.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 under the revised V3 methodology. Stock status and capture method scores are unchanged. Target stock management scores 0.5, reflecting uncertainty about the appropriateness of the stock assessment area and the absence of a minimum landing size. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because the combined catch limit for white and black-bellied monkfish limits control of exploitation for each species separately. Monitoring, control and surveillance score 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems and strong enforcement.

163 | White monkfish (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 1

Species summary:

White monkfish in the southern Celtic Seas and Bay of Biscay is not overfished and is not subject to overfishing.

There is no formal management plan, although several measures are in place to provide partial control of exploitation. Uncertainty about the appropriateness of the stock assessment area and the absence of a minimum landing size limit the effectiveness of management. Catch limits are set jointly for white and black-bellied monkfish, making it difficult to control exploitation of each species separately. However, stock size is increasing for both species, and neither appears to be at risk of overexploitation. Monitoring, control and surveillance systems are well developed, with strong enforcement.

Gillnets in this area can catch non-target fish, marine mammals and seabirds. These include harbour porpoise, which is considered vulnerable in Europe. Evidence indicates that gillnet fisheries in some regions may be placing unsustainable pressure on harbour porpoise populations and contributing to their decline.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 under the revised V3 methodology. Stock status and capture method scores are unchanged. Target stock management scores 0.5, reflecting uncertainty about the appropriateness of the stock assessment area and the absence of a minimum landing size. Scientific advice scores 0.5 because the combined catch limit for white and black-bellied monkfish limits control of exploitation for each species separately. Monitoring, control and surveillance score 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring systems and strong enforcement.

Aquaculture ratings

764 | King prawn (Aquaculture methodology)

CURRENT	NEW
1	1

Location:	Europe | UK
Management:	All Areas, UK, Scotland
Farming method:	Closed system, RAS
Certification:	None

Section scores:

Feed:	2
Ecological effects:	8
Fish health and welfare:	1
Management:	3

Species summary:

King prawns farmed in UK recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) are a Best Choice. They have relatively low requirements for fishmeal and fish oil. These closed systems limit environmental impacts and reduce the risks of escapes, disease and interactions with predators. Production volumes are currently low, but the sector is well regulated and managed. No certification is listed for this rating.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 1, Best Choice. This reflects relatively low requirements for fishmeal and fish oil, limited environmental impacts associated with closed recirculating systems, and effective regulation and management.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust ratings

1325 | Atlantic bluefin tuna (V3)

CURRENT: 3 | NEW: 2

Location: FAO 27, 37 (Atlantic, Northeast, Mediterranean and Black Sea) | East Atlantic & Mediterranean (All areas, All areas)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Hook and line (handline), Hook and line (pole and line)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0

Capture method: 0

Species summary:

This rating covers Atlantic bluefin tuna caught using handlines or pole and line in the UK fishery off Cornwall. A limited number of licences, traceability across the supply chain and integration of scientific advice contribute to effective management. The fishery demonstrates good compliance, with no concerns identified about illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Reason for change:

The rating improves from 3 to 2 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology. Limited licensing, supply chain traceability and integration of scientific advice support effective management. Monitoring, control and surveillance score 0, reflecting good compliance and no identified concerns about illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

625 | Atlantic cod (V2)

CURRENT: Default red rating | NEW: Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (southern), English Channel (west) (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7j, 7k)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Hook & line (handline), Net (gill or fixed), Bottom trawl (beam), Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: **Target stock:** n/a **Scientific advice** n/a **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

Atlantic cod in the southern Celtic Seas and western English Channel has biomass below Blim, the limit below which reproductive capacity is considered impaired. There is no recovery plan in place. The rating therefore remains a default red rating, Fish to Avoid, due to stock status.

Reason for change:

The rating remains a default red rating because stock biomass is below Blim and no recovery plan is in place.

1017 | Black-bellied monkfish (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Both white and black-bellied monkfish stocks are doing well according to ICES, and fishing pressure is within sustainable limits. This rating covers black-bellied monkfish caught by beam trawl off Cornwall.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology.

1018 | Black-bellied monkfish (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Both white and black-bellied monkfish stocks are doing well according to ICES, and fishing pressure is within sustainable limits. This rating covers black-bellied monkfish caught by otter trawl off Cornwall.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology.

1019 | Black-bellied monkfish (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Both white and black-bellied monkfish stocks are doing well according to ICES, and fishing pressure is within sustainable limits. This rating covers black-bellied monkfish caught using gillnets or fixed nets off Cornwall.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology.

1210 | Brill (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
4	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Sea, Bristol Channel (7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

There is no stock assessment for brill in the Celtic Sea and Bristol Channel. Landings are stable, and overall fishing effort for the species across the wider area is low and declining. The stock is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach. Brill has medium resilience to fishing pressure, with no current concern identified for biomass or fishing pressure.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 4 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology.

1211 | Brill (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Sea, Bristol Channel (7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

There is no stock assessment for brill in the Celtic Sea and Bristol Channel. Landings are stable, and overall fishing effort for the species across the wider area is low and declining. The stock is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach. Brill has medium resilience to fishing pressure, with no current concern identified for biomass or fishing pressure.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology.

1212 | Brill (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
4	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Sea, Bristol Channel (7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

There is no stock assessment for brill in the Celtic Sea and Bristol Channel. Landings are stable, and overall fishing effort for the species across the wider area is low and declining. The stock is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach. Brill has medium resilience to fishing pressure, with no current concern identified for biomass or fishing pressure.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 4 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology.

628 | Brill (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (4, 3a, 7d, 7e)

Management: Cornwall IFCA District (0-6nm)

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

The ICES stock assessment indicates that fishing pressure is well below the level associated with maximum sustainable yield, while biomass remains well above the corresponding biomass reference level and is not declining. The stock is assessed using Route 1 and receives a stock status score of 0.

Catch limits are set in line with scientific advice, and management takes account of the mixed fishery with turbot.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology.

630 | Brill (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (4, 3a, 7d, 7e)

Management: Cornwall IFCA District (0-6nm)

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

The ICES stock assessment indicates that fishing pressure is well below the maximum sustainable yield reference level, while biomass remains well above its corresponding reference level and is not declining. The stock is assessed using Route 1 and scores 0 for stock status.

Catch limits are set in line with scientific advice, and management takes account of the mixed fishery with turbot.

Reason for change:

The rating improves from 3 to 2 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology. The revised assessment gives a combined weighted score of 5.5, corresponding to rating 2. Management takes account of scientific advice and the mixed fishery with turbot.

629 | Brill (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | North Sea, Skagerrak and Kattegat, English Channel (4, 3a, 7d, 7e)

Management: Cornwall IFCA District (0-6nm)

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

The ICES stock assessment indicates that fishing pressure is well below the maximum sustainable yield reference level, while biomass remains well above its corresponding reference level and is not declining. The stock is assessed using Route 1 and scores 0 for stock status.

Catch limits are set in line with scientific advice, and management takes account of the mixed fishery with turbot.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology. Management takes account of scientific advice and the mixed fishery with turbot.

1332 | Coley (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
4	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Cornwall (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

ICES advice for coley in other areas with cooler sea temperatures recommends a 19% reduction in catches following a recalculation of reference points.

In Cornwall, coley is mainly caught as bycatch in the pollack fishery. Landings remain low and declined in 2024, likely because of the pollack fishery closure. Reduced fishing activity may also have benefited coley. However, concerns remain about biomass because of poor recruitment associated with warmer sea temperatures. There is no current concern about fishing pressure.

The stock is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach. Coley has medium resilience to fishing pressure and receives a stock status score of 0.5.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 4 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology.

1331 | Coley (V3)

CURRENT 3 NEW 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Cornwall (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Hook & line (handline)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0

Species summary:

ICES advice for coley in other areas with cooler sea temperatures recommends a 19% reduction in catches following a recalculation of reference points.

In Cornwall, coley is mainly caught as bycatch in the pollack fishery. Landings remain low and declined in 2024, likely because of the pollack fishery closure. Reduced fishing activity may also have benefited coley. However, concerns remain about biomass because of poor recruitment associated with warmer sea temperatures. There is no current concern about fishing pressure.

The stock is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach. Coley has medium resilience to fishing pressure and receives a stock status score of 0.5.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology.

1333 | Coley (V3)

CURRENT 4 NEW 4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Cornwall (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

ICES advice for coley in other areas with cooler sea temperatures recommends a 19% reduction in catches following a recalculation of reference points.

In Cornwall, coley is mainly caught as bycatch in the pollack fishery. Landings remain low and declined in 2024, likely because of the pollack fishery closure. Reduced fishing activity may also have benefited coley. However, concerns remain about biomass because of poor recruitment associated with warmer sea temperatures. There is no current concern about fishing pressure.

The stock is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach. Coley has medium resilience to fishing pressure and receives a stock status score of 0.5.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 4 following assessment under the revised V3 methodology.

725 | Conger eel (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
5	5

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northeast Atlantic (All areas)

Management: Cornwall IFCA District (0-6nm)

Capture method: Hook & line (longline), Hook & line (pole & line), Pot, trap or creel

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 1

Management: **Target stock:** 0.75 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

No new data are available for conger eel. The species is very data poor and has very low resilience to fishing pressure. It is often used as bait in pot fisheries, but the scale of this use is unknown.

The assessment identifies no specific concern about biomass, but there are concerns about fishing pressure. Stock status is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach and receives a score of 1.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 5, Fish to Avoid. No new data are available. Very low resilience, limited stock information and concerns about fishing pressure continue to result in a stock status score of 1 under Route 2.

692 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Sea, Bristol Channel (7f, 7g)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Dover sole is managed through catch quotas and a sole recovery plan. ICES advises a reduction in landings for 2026. Biomass is well above the level associated with maximum sustainable yield, but fishing pressure is above the level associated with maximum sustainable yield.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has changed from 3 to 4 because of the revised weighting under the V3 wild capture methodology. Stock status, management and capture method now carry equal weight, giving the capture method score greater influence on the overall rating.

608 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT 2 NEW 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Sea, Bristol Channel (7f, 7g)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Dover sole is managed through catch quotas and a sole recovery plan. ICES advises a reduction in landings for 2026. Biomass is well above the level associated with maximum sustainable yield, but fishing pressure is above the level associated with maximum sustainable yield.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has changed from 2 to 3 because of the revised weighting under the V3 wild capture methodology. Stock status, management and capture method now carry equal weight, giving the capture method score greater influence on the overall rating.

693 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT 2 NEW 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | English Channel (West) (7e)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Dover sole in the western English Channel is managed through catch quotas and a sole recovery plan. ICES advises a reduction in landings for 2026. Biomass is well above the level associated with maximum sustainable yield, and fishing pressure is just below the level associated with maximum sustainable yield.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has changed from 2 to 3 because of the revised weighting under the V3 wild capture methodology. Stock status, management and capture method now carry equal weight, giving the capture method score greater influence on the overall rating.

691 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT 2 NEW 2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | English Channel (West) (7e)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Dover sole in the western English Channel is managed through catch quotas and a sole recovery plan. ICES advises a reduction in landings for 2026. Biomass is well above the level associated with maximum sustainable yield, and fishing pressure is just below the level associated with maximum sustainable yield.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

694 | Dover sole (V3)

CURRENT 2 NEW 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | English Channel (West) (7e)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Dover sole in the western English Channel is managed through catch quotas and a sole recovery plan. ICES advises a reduction in landings for 2026. Biomass is well above the level associated with maximum sustainable yield, and fishing pressure is just below the level associated with maximum sustainable yield.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has changed from 2 to 3 because of the revised weighting under the V3 wild capture methodology. Stock status, management and capture method now carry equal weight, giving the capture method score greater influence on the overall rating.

708 | European hake (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northern stock (North Sea, Celtic Seas, Bay of Biscay (north)) (4, 6, 7, 3a, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Certified fleets only (Cornwall)

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0.25

Species summary:

Fishing pressure is increasing towards the level associated with maximum sustainable yield, while biomass continues to decline towards the corresponding biomass level.

Total allowable catches are set in line with scientific advice, and catches remain within these limits. However, the continuing decline in biomass and increase in fishing pressure raise concerns about the effectiveness of these measures.

The SMRU observer programme resumed in 2024, with 10 trips observed across 2024 and 2025. However, the most recent published observer report dates from 2020. Limited published monitoring evidence and the absence of CCTV warrant a precautionary approach and a monitoring, control and surveillance score of 0.25, reflecting well-developed monitoring and enforcement systems.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology. The stock status score has increased from 0 to 0.25 because fishing pressure is increasing and biomass is declining towards the levels associated with maximum sustainable yield. Limited published observer evidence does not support an improved monitoring, control and surveillance score.

707 | European hake (V3)

CURRENT: 2 NEW: 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Northern stock (North Sea, Celtic Seas, Bay of Biscay (north)) (4, 6, 7, 3a, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.25

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Fishing pressure is increasing towards the level associated with maximum sustainable yield, while biomass continues to decline towards the corresponding biomass level.

Total allowable catches are set in line with scientific advice, and catches remain within these limits. However, the continuing decline in biomass and increase in fishing pressure raise concerns about the effectiveness of these measures.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has changed from 2 to 3 following an increase in the stock status score and assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology. The stock status score has increased from 0 to 0.25 because fishing pressure is increasing and biomass is declining towards the levels associated with maximum sustainable yield. The revised methodology gives stock status, management and capture method equal weight.

1108 | Herring (V2)

CURRENT: Default red rating NEW: Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Irish Sea (South), Celtic Sea and southwest of Ireland (7g, 7h, 7j, 7k, 7aS)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Hook & line (handline)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

Southern Irish Sea herring biomass is below Blim, the limit below which the stock's reproductive capacity may be impaired. No recovery plan is in place.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 5, Fish to Avoid, because biomass is below Blim and no recovery plan is in place. This triggers a default red rating under the stock status criterion.

757 | Herring (V2)

CURRENT: Default red rating
NEW: Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Irish Sea (South), Celtic Sea and southwest of Ireland (7g, 7h, 7j, 7k, 7aS)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Net (drift)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

Southern Irish Sea herring biomass is below Blim, the limit below which the stock's reproductive capacity may be impaired. No recovery plan is in place.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 5, Fish to Avoid, because biomass is below Blim and no recovery plan is in place. This triggers a default red rating under the stock status criterion.

679 | Herring (V2)

CURRENT: Default red rating
NEW: Default red rating

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Irish Sea (South), Celtic Sea and southwest of Ireland (7g, 7h, 7j, 7k, 7aS)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Net (purse seine or ring)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: Critical fail

Management: n/a

Capture method: n/a

Species summary:

Southern Irish Sea herring biomass is below Blim, the limit below which the stock's reproductive capacity may be impaired. No recovery plan is in place.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 5, Fish to Avoid, because biomass is below Blim and no recovery plan is in place. This triggers a default red rating under the stock status criterion.

610 | Lemon sole (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
4	5

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Cornwall (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

No new data are available. There is no stock assessment for lemon sole in Cornwall, and no ICES advice is available for divisions 7e, 7f and 7g. Landings into Cornwall are declining slightly, raising concerns about biomass, although fishing pressure is not currently considered a concern. Stock status is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach.

Assessment information for the North Sea and eastern English Channel indicates declining spawning stock biomass towards the level associated with maximum sustainable yield, despite fishing pressure remaining below the corresponding sustainable level. This information relates to other areas and does not directly establish the status of lemon sole around Cornwall.

There is no total allowable catch for lemon sole in divisions 7e, 7f, 7g and 7h, limiting safeguards for the stock. No evidence of recovery is available for division 7e.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has changed from 4 to 5 because of the revised weighting under the V3 wild capture methodology. Stock status, management and capture method now carry equal weight. The combined score falls within the rating 5 range.

609 | Lemon sole (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
4	4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Cornwall (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.75

Management: **Target stock:** 0.5 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

No new data are available. There is no stock assessment for lemon sole in Cornwall, and no ICES advice is available for divisions 7e, 7f and 7g. Landings into Cornwall are declining slightly, raising concerns about biomass, although fishing pressure is not currently considered a concern. Stock status is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach.

Assessment information for the North Sea and eastern English Channel indicates declining spawning stock biomass towards the level associated with maximum sustainable yield, despite fishing pressure remaining below the corresponding sustainable level. This information relates to other areas and does not directly establish the status of lemon sole around Cornwall.

There is no total allowable catch for lemon sole in divisions 7e, 7f, 7g and 7h, limiting safeguards for the stock. No evidence of recovery is available for division 7e.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 4 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

686 | Megrim (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Sea, west and southwest of Ireland, Bay of Biscay (7b, 7c, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7j, 7k, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

No new stock assessment has been published by ICES.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

605 | Megrim (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Sea, west and southwest of Ireland, Bay of Biscay (7b, 7c, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7g, 7h, 7j, 7k, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.25 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

No new stock assessment has been published by ICES.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

865 | Seabass (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | VIIe,f,g and h

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

The seabass stock is recovering, with biomass now well above the level associated with maximum sustainable yield. Fishing pressure is below the corresponding sustainable level. The fisheries management plan and catch controls have contributed to the stock's recovery.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

714 | Seabass (V3)

CURRENT 2 NEW 1

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | VIIe,f,g and h

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Hook & line (handline)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.25

Capture method: 0

Species summary:

The seabass stock is recovering, with biomass now well above the level associated with maximum sustainable yield. Fishing pressure is below the corresponding sustainable level. The fisheries management plan and catch controls have contributed to the stock's recovery.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has improved from 2 to 1, Best Choice, following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology. The assessment records an improved management score, alongside favourable stock status and a capture method score of 0 for handlining.

712 | Seabass (V3)

CURRENT 4 NEW 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | VIIe,f,g and h

Management: Cornwall (gillnetting)

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.75

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

The seabass stock is recovering, with biomass now well above the level associated with maximum sustainable yield. Fishing pressure is below the corresponding sustainable level. The fisheries management plan and catch controls have contributed to the stock's recovery.

Reason for change:

The overall rating has improved from 4 to 3 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

619 | Turbot (V3)

CURRENT 4 NEW 4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Cornwall (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.75 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Turbot is a data poor species, with limited information available on stock status. Landings have continued to decline slightly over the past five years and have remained below the average for approximately the preceding ten years, raising concerns about biomass.

Fishing pressure on brill, which is caught in the same mixed fishery, is well below the level associated with maximum sustainable yield. This is used in the assessment to support a judgement of no concern about fishing pressure on turbot.

Stock status is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach. Concern about biomass, no concern about fishing pressure and medium resilience give a stock status score of 0.5.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 4 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

620 | Turbot (V3)

CURRENT 4 NEW 4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Cornwall (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.75 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

Turbot is a data poor species, with limited information available on stock status. Landings have continued to decline slightly over the past five years and have remained below the average for approximately the preceding ten years, raising concerns about biomass.

Fishing pressure on brill, which is caught in the same mixed fishery, is well below the level associated with maximum sustainable yield. This is used in the assessment to support a judgement of no concern about fishing pressure on turbot.

Stock status is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach. Concern about biomass, no concern about fishing pressure and medium resilience give a stock status score of 0.5.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 4 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

617 | Turbot (V3)

CURRENT 4 NEW 4

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Cornwall (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h)

Management: All areas

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0.5

Management: **Target stock:** 0.75 **Scientific advice** 0.75 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

Turbot is a data poor species, with limited information available on stock status. Landings have continued to decline slightly over the past five years and have remained below the average for approximately the preceding ten years, raising concerns about biomass.

Fishing pressure on brill, which is caught in the same mixed fishery, is well below the level associated with maximum sustainable yield. This is used in the assessment to support a judgement of no concern about fishing pressure on turbot.

Stock status is assessed using the data limited Route 2 approach. Concern about biomass, no concern about fishing pressure and medium resilience give a stock status score of 0.5.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 4 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

606 | White monkfish (V3)

CURRENT 3 NEW 3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (beam)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

ICES assessments indicate favourable stock status for both monkfish species, with fishing pressure at sustainable levels. Monkfish are mainly caught using gillnets, otter trawls and beam trawls.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

688 | White monkfish (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
2	2

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Bottom trawl (otter)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.5

Species summary:

ICES assessments indicate favourable stock status for both monkfish species, with fishing pressure at sustainable levels. Monkfish are mainly caught using gillnets and demersal trawls, including beam trawls.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 2 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.

689 | White monkfish (V3)

CURRENT	NEW
3	3

Location: FAO 27 (Atlantic, Northeast) | Celtic Seas (South), Bay of Biscay (7, 8a, 8b, 8d)

Management: Cornwall

Capture method: Net (gill or fixed)

Certification: None

Section scores:

Stock status: 0

Management: **Target stock:** 0.25 **Scientific advice** 0.5 **Monitoring, Control & Surveillance (MCS)** 0.5

Capture method: 0.75

Species summary:

ICES assessments indicate favourable stock status for both monkfish species, with fishing pressure at sustainable levels. Both species are managed under a combined total allowable catch, reflected in a target stock management score of 0.25. Monkfish are mainly caught using gillnets and demersal trawls, including beam trawls.

Reason for change:

The overall rating remains 3 following assessment under the revised V3 wild capture methodology.