



MarinTrust Standard V2

Whole fish Fishery Assessment

Boarfish (Capros aper), FAO 27, ICES 6-8

MarinTrust Programme

Unit C, Printworks

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Table 1 Application details and summary of the assessment outcome

Application details and summary of the assessment outcome			
Name(s): Pelagia (UK and Ireland)			
Country: Ireland			
Email address:		Applicant Code	
Certification Body Details			
Name of Certification Body:		LRQA	
Assessor Name	CB Peer Reviewer	Assessment Days	Initial/Surveillance/ Re-approval
Blanca Gonzalez	Sam Peacock	5	Surveillance
Assessment Period	September 2023 Approval Date: September 2023-October2024 <i>Variation request granted (25/07/2024) to extend approval date to October 2024.</i>		
Scope Details			
Management Authority (Country/State)		EU and UK	
Main Species		Boarfish (<i>Capros aper</i>)	
Fishery Location		ICES subareas 6-8 (Celtic Seas, English Channel, and Bay of Biscay)	
Gear Type(s)		Pelagic trawl	
Outcome of Assessment			
Overall Outcome		Pass	
Clauses Failed		None	
CB Peer Review Evaluation		Agree with Recommendation	
Fishery Assessment Peer Review Group Evaluation			
Recommendation		Approve	

Table 2. Assessment Determination

Assessment Determination
<p>The boarfish fishery assessment for Northeast Atlantic in ICES areas 6-8 includes only two species: boarfish as target and mackerel as bycatch. Both species are categorised as Least Concern by the IUCN and they are not included in the CITES appendices. Boarfish represents up to 95% of the total catch being a Type 1 species, and considering that there are no established reference points for this stock, boarfish was assessed under Category B, as in the last Marin Trust assessment. Mackerel was assessed as Category C since it is managed considering reference points and annual quotas.</p> <p>The reviewed evidence about the North Atlantic boarfish stock management framework (M1) and surveillance, Control and Enforcement measures (M2), indicates that there have been no relevant changes to any aspect covered by Sections M1 and M2 since the time of the initial assessment. However, a summary of the findings of that assessment are presented for convenience supporting the “PASS” rating of the clauses, including updated references.</p> <p>Boarfish was assessed against Table Ba considering the availability of biomass and fishing mortality data. Most recent species stock assessment was carried out in 2031 and biomass is above MSY and fishing mortality is below MSY; hence, the risk matrix indicates that Northeast Atlantic boarfish stock should be recommended for approval.</p> <p>The latest mackerel stock assessment in the Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters was carried out in 2023, where removals of the species were included in the stock assessment process and the mackerel biomass is above the limit reference point. Therefore, Category C clauses are met.</p> <p>The fishery does not generate relevant impacts on ETP species; however, measures are in place to minimise mortality. Since the fishery uses only pelagic trawl, which do not interact with any physical habitat, there is no negative impact on the habitat. Impact of the fishery on the ecosystem is considering during management, and there is no evidence that the fishery has a negative impact on it.</p> <p>The boarfish fishery in the Northeast Atlantic ICES subareas 6-8 passed all the Marin Trust requirements in this assessment, therefore its approval is recommended to be used as a raw material in Marine Trust certified products.</p>
Fishery Assessment Peer Review Comments
<p>The evidence presented in this surveillance assessment report indicates that there have been no significant changes in the boarfish fishery since the time of the previous MT assessment. The peer reviewer agrees with the process and outcomes of the assessment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decision to retain the same species categorisation outcomes, including assessing boarfish under Category B and mackerel under Category C. • The utilisation of Table Ba to assess boarfish, and the Pass rating resulting from this. • The Pass rating for Atlantic mackerel, which was concluded to have a biomass above the target reference point in its most recent stock assessment. <p>As there have been no substantial changes in any aspect of the fishery relating to sections M and F, the peer reviewer agrees that material originating from this fishery remains appropriate for use in the manufacture of MT-certified products.</p>
Notes for On-site Auditor

There are no concerns that requires attention from the on-site auditor.

Table 3 General Results

General Clause	Outcome (Pass/Fail)
M1 - Management Framework	PASS
M2 - Surveillance, Control and Enforcement	PASS
F1 - Impacts on ETP Species	PASS
F2 - Impacts on Habitats	PASS
F3 - Ecosystem Impacts	PASS

Table 4 Species- Specific Results

List all Category A and B species. List approximate total percentage (%) of landings which are Category C and D species; these do not need to be individually named here

Category	Species	% landings	Outcome (Pass/Fail)
Category B	Boarfish	>95%	PASS
Category C	Mackerel	<5%	PASS

Table 5 Species Categorisation Table

Common name	Latin name	Stock	IUCN Redlist Category ¹	% of landings	Management	Category
Boarfish	<i>Capros aper</i>	ICES Subareas 6-8	Least Concern ²	>95%	No	B
Mackerel	<i>Scomber scombrus</i>	ICES Subareas 1-9, 14 and Division 9a	Least Concern ³	<5%	Yes	C

Species categorisation rationale

Species categorization remains unchanged from previous Marin Trust assessment. Boarfish fishery catches are generally free from bycatch from September to February and from March onward a bycatch of mackerel can be found, however bycatch of other species in the boarfish fishery is sparse, though thought to be minimal (ICES 2021).

ICES provides advice for this stock following the precautionary approach, which corresponds to the Pelagic Advisory Council (PelAC) management strategy (ICES 2023), which indicates that the fishery is subject to localised closure if bycatch exceeds 5% of the total catch per day in an ICES statistical rectangle (PelAC 2015). It is therefore reasonable to assume that the mackerel continue to be caught in relatively small quantities.

This boarfish stock is still considered a category 3 and FMSY and BMSY values are estimated from the production model assessment parameter values; however, no reference points are defined for this stock in terms of absolute values. ICES advice on this stock is an interim measure, since estimated values and ratios are used to estimate exploitation status relative to the proxy MSY reference point (ICES 2023b); therefore, boarfish was assessed under Category B, as previously.

Regarding the Northeast Atlantic mackerel stock, it was assessed under Category C given that this stock continues to be managed relative to established reference points and under an annual quota (ICES 2023c)

ICES. 2021. Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE). ICES Scientific Reports. 3:95. 874 pp. <http://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.8298>

ICES 2022. Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks. ICES Scientific Reports. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.21088804.v1>

ICES 2023. Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE). ICES Scientific Reports. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.24025482.v1>

ICES 2023b. Boarfish (*Capros aper*) in subareas 6–8 (Celtic Seas, English Channel, and Bay of Biscay). ICES Advice: Recurrent Advice. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21856461.v1>

ICES 2023c. Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) in subareas 1–8 and 14, and in Division 9.a (Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters). ICES Advice: Recurrent Advice. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21856533.v1>

PelAC 2015. Revised draft management strategy for Northeast Atlantic boarfish. <https://www.pelagic-ac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/1415PAC-151-Revised-management-strategy-boarfish.pdf>

¹ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/>

² <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/198557/21910115>

³ <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/170354/6764313>

MANAGEMENT

The two clauses in this section (M1, M2) relate to the general management regime applied to the fishery under assessment. The clauses should be completed by providing sufficient evidence to justify awarding each of the requirements a pass or fail rating. A fishery must meet all the minimum requirements in every clause before it can be recommended for approval.

M1	Management Framework – Minimum Requirements		
	M1.1	There is an organisation responsible for managing the fishery.	PASS
	M1.2	There is an organisation responsible for collecting data and assessing the fishery.	PASS
	M1.3	Fishery management organisations are publicly committed to sustainability.	PASS
	M1.4	Fishery management organisations are legally empowered to take management actions.	PASS
	M1.5	There is a consultation process through which fishery stakeholders are engaged in decision-making.	PASS
	M1.6	The decision-making process is transparent, with processes and results publicly available.	PASS
Clause outcome:			PASS

The reviewed evidence about the North Atlantic boarfish stock management framework indicates that there have been no relevant changes to any aspect covered by Section M1 since the time of the initial assessment. As the previous Marin Trust assessment report, a summary of the findings of that assessment is presented for convenience.

M1.1 There is an organisation responsible for managing the fishery.

Fishery is shared between different countries; therefore, several organisations are responsible for its management: Within Irish waters, the fishery is primarily managed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), under the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) (DAFM 2023). Fisheries management in the UK is a devolved issue, with responsibility falling to Marine Scotland (under the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Irelands) in Scotland; the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland; the Welsh Government in Wales; the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in England (HoC 2018).

M1.2 There is an organisation responsible for collecting data and assessing the fishery.

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) is the organisation responsible for assessing this fishery. ICES is an intergovernmental marine science organization, meeting societal needs for impartial evidence on the state and sustainable use of our seas and oceans (ICES 2023). They provide independent management advice for fisheries within their area of competence, collating and analysing data collected by its member states, including the UK and Ireland. The ICES Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks conducts an annual stock assessment for boarfish in the Northeast Atlantic and provides fishery management advice including catch recommendations based on the outcomes of the assessment (ICES 2023b).

M1.3 Fishery management organisations are publicly committed to sustainability.

The stated mission of the DAFM in Ireland is “Our mission is to serve the government and people of Ireland by leading, developing and regulating the agri-food sector, protecting public health and optimising social, economic and environmental benefits.” (DAFM 2023)

DAERA mentions in their website that “The Department assists the sustainable development of the agri-food, environmental, fishing and forestry sectors of the Northern Ireland economy, having regard for the needs of the consumers, the protection of human, animal and plant health, the welfare of animals and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.” (DAERA 2023).

DEFRA states that “We are responsible for improving and protecting the environment. We aim to grow a green economy and sustain thriving rural communities. We also support our world-leading food, farming and fishing industries.” (DEFRA 2023).

M1.4 Fishery management organisations are legally empowered to take management actions.

The Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is the set of rules for sustainably managing European fishing fleets and conserving fish stocks. Since 2013 is the first comprehensive legal framework, featuring (CFP 2023):

- Attention to the environmental, economic and social dimensions of fisheries
- Fish stock management at maximum sustainable yield for all managed stocks
- Gradual introduction of a landing obligation by 2019
- Continued application of the so-called multiannual plans (MAPs) to manage fisheries in different sea basins
- Regionalisation to allow EU countries with a management interest to propose detailed measures, which the Commission can then adopt as delegated or implementing act and transpose them into EU law
- Fleet capacity ceilings per EU country in combination with the obligation for EU countries to ensure a stable and enduring balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities over time.

The primary fisheries legislation in Ireland is the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act of 2006. In the UK the over-arching legal framework is provided by the Fisheries Act 2020.

M1.5 There is a consultation process through which fishery stakeholders are engaged in decision-making.

Fishery stakeholders are engaged in the decision-making process through different mechanisms in each country. Full links were provided in the 2021 Marine Trust assessment for this stock (Global Trust Certification 2021).

M1.6 The decision-making process is transparent, with processes and results publicly available.

Stock assessment process, associated data and details of decision-making processes and outcomes are publicly available online through ICES and National fishery management authorities in each jurisdiction websites.

References

CFP 2023. Common Fisheries Policy. What is the CFP?. https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/policy/common-fisheries-policy-cfp_en

DAERA 2023. Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. About DAERA. <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/about-daera>

DAFM 2023. the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Our Mission. <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/ffeb5-about-us/#our-mission>

DEFRA 2023. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. What we do. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>

Fisheries Act 2020: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/22/contents/enacted>

Global Trust Certification (2021). Whole fish fishery assessment, Boarfish, ICES Areas 6-8. September 2021. https://www.marin-trust.com/sites/marintrust/files/approved-raw-materials/WF%2015%20Boardfish%20Ireland%20ICES%204%20North%20East%20Atlantic_SURV2_2021_Final%20version.pdf

HoC 2018. House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper: “Fisheries Management in the UK”. No. 8457, 5 December 2018. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8457/CBP-8457.pdf>

ICES 2023. Who we are? <https://www.ices.dk/about-ICES/who-we-are/Pages/Who-we-are.aspx>

ICES 2023b. Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE). ICES Scientific Reports. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.24025482.v1>

Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2006/act/8/enacted/en/html>

Global Trust Certification 2021. Whole fish fishery assessment, Boarfish, ICES Areas 6-8. September 2021. https://www.marin-trust.com/sites/marintrust/files/approved-raw-materials/WF%2015%20Boardfish%20Ireland%20ICES%204%20North%20East%20Atlantic_SURV2_2021_Final%20version.pdf

Links

MarinTrust Standard clause	1.3.1.1, 1.3.1.2
FAO CCRF	7.2, 7.3.1, 7.4.4, 12.3
GSSI	D.1.01, D.4.01, D2.01, D1.07, D1.04,

M2	Surveillance, Control and Enforcement - Minimum Requirements		
	M2.1	There is an organisation responsible for monitoring compliance with fishery laws and regulations.	PASS
	M2.2	There is a framework of sanctions which are applied when laws and regulations are discovered to have been broken.	PASS
	M2.3	There is no substantial evidence of widespread non-compliance in the fishery, and no substantial evidence of IUU fishing.	PASS
	M2.4	Compliance with laws and regulations is actively monitored, through a regime which may include at-sea and portside inspections, observer programmes, and VMS.	PASS
Clause outcome:			PASS

The reviewed evidence about the North Atlantic boarfish stock surveillance, control and enforcement measures indicates that there have been no relevant changes to any aspect covered by Section M2 since the time of the initial assessment. As the previous Marin Trust assessment report, a summary of the findings of that assessment is presented for convenience.

M2.1 There is an organisation responsible for monitoring compliance with fishery laws and regulations.

The European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) coordinates the implementation of the specific control and inspection programme (SCIP) established for certain demersal and pelagic fisheries in the Union waters in the Western Waters of the North-East Atlantic. The encompassing objective of EFCA’s assistance to the Member States concerned is to ensure the uniform and effective implementation of conservation and control measures applicable to demersal and pelagic stocks in the Western Waters region, including boarfish and mackerel (EFCA 2023).

Within Ireland, the relevant authority is the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), with support from the Irish Naval Service and the Air Corps (SFPA 2023). While in the UK responsibility for control and enforcement is similarly devolved, with the responsible bodies being the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Marine Scotland, and the Fisheries and Environment Division (HoC 2018).

M2.2 There is a framework of sanctions which are applied when laws and regulations are discovered to have been broken.

A framework of sanctions is set out in each of the two main fisheries legislations: the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 in Ireland and the Fisheries Act 2020 in the UK, covering all four administrations.

M2.3 There is no substantial evidence of widespread non-compliance in the fishery, and no substantial evidence of IUU fishing.

No evidence was encountered suggesting widespread non-compliance in the fishery. Boarfish removals have been and continue to be below the TAC (ICES 2023) since 2015, meaning the fishery is not TAC restrained and therefore reducing the incentive for illegal fishing activity.

M2.4 Compliance with laws and regulations is actively monitored, through a regime which may include at-sea and portside inspections, observer programmes, and VMS.

Compliance is monitored by the agencies set out in M2.1. The monitoring regime includes at-sea and portside inspections and VMS.

References

EFCA 2023. European Fisheries Control Agency. Western waters. <https://www.efca.europa.eu/en/content/western-waters>

Fisheries Act 2020: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/22/contents/enacted>

HoC 2018. House of Commons Library, Briefing Paper: “Fisheries Management in the UK”. No. 8457, 5 December 2018. <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8457/CBP-8457.pdf>

ICES 2023. Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE). ICES Scientific Reports. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.24025482.v1>

Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2006/act/8/enacted/en/html>

SFPA 2023. Sea Fisheries Protection Authority. About us. <https://www.sfpa.ie/Who-We-Are/About-Us>

Global Trust Certification 2021. Whole fish fishery assessment, Boarfish, ICES Areas 6-8. September 2021. https://www.marin-trust.com/sites/marintrust/files/approved-raw-materials/WF%2015%20Boardfish%20Ireland%20ICES%204%20North%20East%20Atlantic_SURV2_2021_Final%20version.pdf

Links

MarinTrust Standard clause	1.3.1.3
FAO CCRF	7.7.2
GSSI	D1.09

CATEGORY B SPECIES

Category B species are those which make up greater than 5% of landings in the applicant raw material, but which are not subject to a species-specific research and management regime sufficient to pass all Category A clauses. If there are no Category B species in the fishery under assessment, this section can be deleted.

Category B species are assessed using a risk-based approach. The following process should be completed once for each Category B species.

If there are estimates of biomass (B), fishing mortality (F), and reference points

It is possible for a Category B species to have some biomass and fishing mortality data available. When sufficient information is present, the assessment team should use the following risk matrix to determine whether the species should be recommended for approval.

TABLE B(A) - F, B AND REFERENCE POINTS ARE AVAILABLE

Biomass is above MSY / target reference point	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail	Fail
Biomass is below MSY / target reference point, but above limit reference point	Pass, but re-assess when fishery removals resume	Pass	Fail	Fail	Fail
Biomass is below limit reference point (stock is overfished)	Pass, but re-assess when fishery removals resume	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail
Biomass is significantly below limit reference point (Recruitment impaired)	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail
	Fishery removals are prohibited	Fishing mortality is below MSY or target reference point	Fishing mortality is around MSY or target reference point, or below the long-term average	Fishing mortality is above the MSY or target reference point, or around the long-term average	Fishing mortality is above the limit reference point or above the long-term average (Stock is subject to overfishing)

If the biomass / fishing pressure risk assessment is not possible

Initially, the resilience of each Category B species to fishing pressure should be estimated using the American Fisheries Society procedure described in Musick, J.A. (1999). This approach is used as the resilience values for many species and stocks have been estimated by FishBase and are already available online. For details of the approach, please refer to Appendix A. Determining the resilience provides a basis for estimating the risk that fishing may pose to the long-term sustainability of the stock. Table B(b) should be used to determine whether the species should be recommended for approval.

TABLE B(B) - NO REFERENCE POINTS AVAILABLE. B = CURRENT BIOMASS; B_{AV} = LONG-TERM AVERAGE BIOMASS; F = CURRENT FISHING MORTALITY; F_{AV} = LONG-TERM AVERAGE FISHING MORTALITY.

B > B_{av} and F < F_{av}	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail
B > B_{av} and F or F_{av} unknown	Pass	Pass	Fail	Fail
B = B_{av} and F < F_{av}	Pass	Pass	Fail	Fail
B = B_{av} and F or F_{av} unknown	Pass	Fail	Fail	Fail
B > B_{av} and F > F_{av}	Pass	Fail	Fail	Fail
B < B_{av}	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail
B unknown	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail
Resilience	High	Medium	Low	Very Low

Assessment Results

Species Name		Boarfish (<i>Capros aper</i>)
B1	Species Name	Boarfish (<i>Capros aper</i>)
	Table used (Ba, Bb)	Ba
	Outcome	PASS

Table Ba was used for the stock assessment considering the availability of biomass and fishing mortality data. The ICES working group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE) carried out the stock assessment using a Relative abundance based on a Bayesian Schaefer surplus production model, and MSY reference points are estimated from the production model assessment parameter values (ICES 2023).

In 2023 F_{MSY} ($r/2$) is estimated to be 0.16 and $MSY_{B_{trigger}}$ ($K/4$) 173kt. Biomass has remained above the MSY trough time (figure 1), while fishing mortality had some years where it was above the MSY, but since 2015 trend had been decreasing below the MSY (figure 2). The stock is currently in the green area of the Kobe plot indicating that fishing mortality is below F_{MSY} and the spawning biomass is above SB_{MSY} (figure 3). (ICES 2023).

Considering that in 2023 biomass is above MSY and fishing mortality is below MSY, the risk matrix indicates that Northeast Atlantic boarfish stock should be recommended for approval.

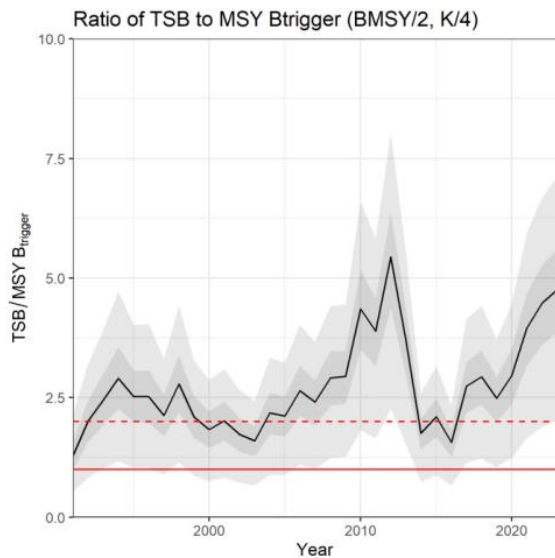


Figure 1. Ration 'B / $MSY_{B_{trigger}}$ ' for Northeast Atlantic boarfish through time. Confidence intervals of 50% (dark grey) and 95% (light grey) are given (ICES 2023).

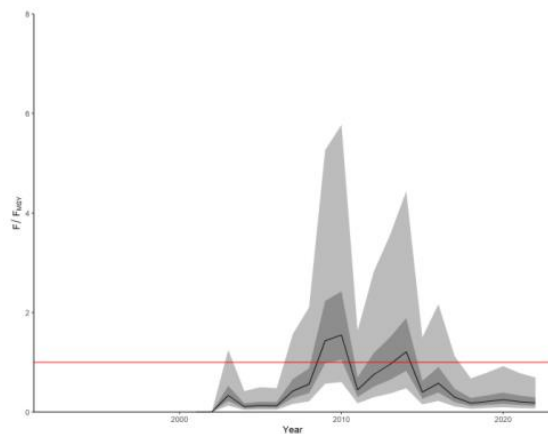


Figure 2. Ration 'F / F_{MSY}' for Northeast Atlantic boarfish through time. Confidence intervals of 50% (dark grey) and 95% (light grey) are given (ICES 2023).

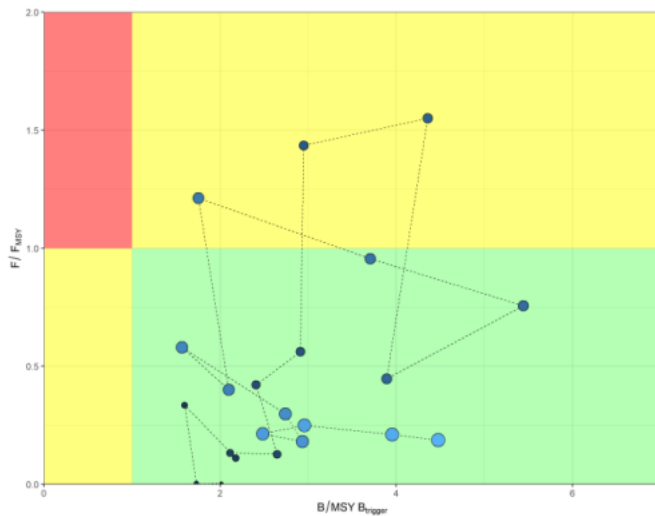


Figure 3. Northeast Atlantic boarfish Kobe plot displaying median estimates only, the small dark blue point represents the first point of the time series and the large light blue point the last one (ICES 2023).

References

ICES 2023. Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE). ICES Scientific Reports. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.24025482.v1>

Links

MarinTrust Standard clause	1.3.2.2, 4.1.4
FAO CCRF	7.5.1
GSSI	D.5.01

CATEGORY C SPECIES

In a whole fish assessment, Category C species are those which make up less than 5% of landings, but which are subject to a species-specific management regime. In most cases this will be because they are a commercial target in a fishery other than the one under assessment.

Clause C1 should be completed for **each** Category C species. If there are no Category C species in the fishery under assessment, this section can be deleted. Where a species fails this Clause, it may be assessed as a Category D species instead, EXCEPT if there is evidence that it is currently below the limit reference point.

Species Name		Mackerel (<i>Scomber scombrus</i>)	
C1	Category C Stock Status - Minimum Requirements		
	C1.1	Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process, OR are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.	PASS
	C1.2	The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy), OR removals by the fishery under assessment are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.	PASS
Clause outcome:			PASS

C1.1 Fishery removals of the species in the fishery under assessment are included in the stock assessment process, OR are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.

Clause is met, considering that:

The latest mackerel stock assessment in the Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters was published in 2023 by The International Council for exploration of the Sea (ICES) working group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE). Assessment used an Age-based analytical model (SAM) that uses catches in the model and in the forecast; thus, removals of the species are included in the stock assessment process (ICES 2023) (figure 1).

Catches

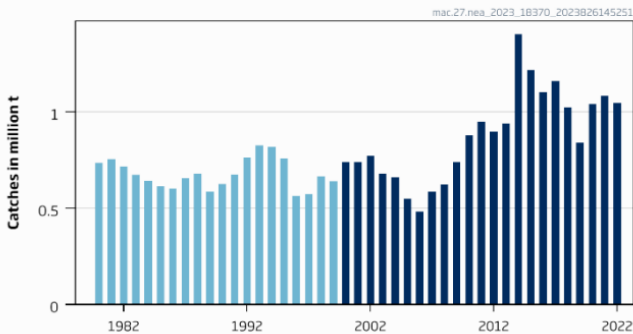


Figure 1. Mackerel catches in the Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters. Catches prior to 2000 have been down-weighted in the assessment because of the considerable underreporting suspected to have taken place in this period. (ICES 2023).

C1.2 The species is considered, in its most recent stock assessment, to have a biomass above the limit reference point (or proxy), OR removals by the fishery under assessment are considered by scientific authorities to be negligible.

Clause is met, considering that:

According to the latest mackerel stock assessment in the Northeast and adjacent waters published in 2023 by The International Council for exploration of the Sea (ICES) working group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE) spawning-stock size (3,681,064t) is above MSY Btrigger (2,580,000t), Bpa (2,580,000t), and Blim (2,000,000t) reference points (ICES 2023) (figure 2).

SSB

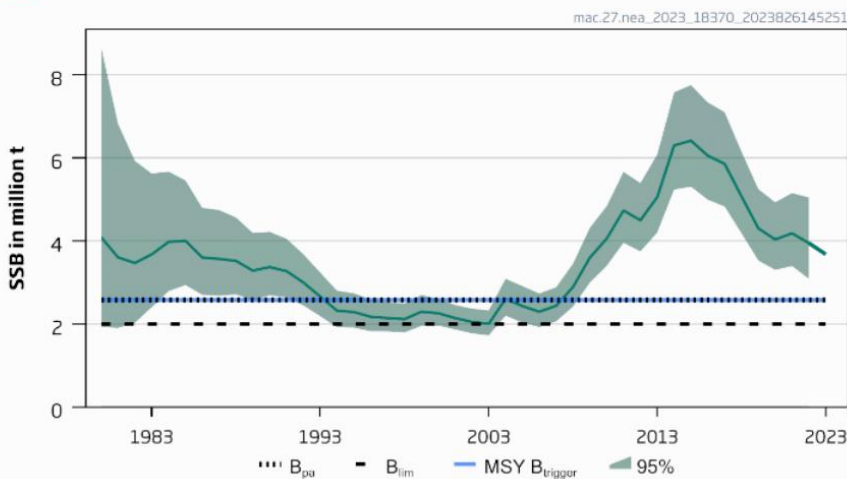


Figure 2. Spawning stock biomass for mackerel in Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters (ICES 2023).

References

ICES 2023. Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*) in subareas 1–8 and 14, and in Division 9.a (Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters). ICES Advice: Recurrent Advice. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21856533.v1>

Links	
MarinTrust Standard clause	1.3.2.2
FAO CCRF	7.5.3
GSSI	D.3.04, D5.01

FURTHER IMPACTS

The three clauses in this section relate to impacts the fishery may have in other areas. A fishery must meet the minimum requirements of all three clauses before it can be recommended for approval.

F1	Impacts on ETP Species - Minimum Requirements		
	F1.1	Interactions with ETP species are recorded.	PASS
	F1.2	There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative effect on ETP species.	PASS
	F1.3	If the fishery is known to interact with ETP species, measures are in place to minimise mortality.	PASS
Clause outcome:			PASS
<p>The reviewed evidence about the North Atlantic boarfish fishery impact on ETP species indicates that there have been no relevant changes to any aspect covered by Section F1 since the time of the initial assessment. As the previous Marin Trust assessment report, a summary of the findings of that assessment is presented for convenience, including updated data from the most recent ICES Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC).</p> <p>F1.1 Interactions with ETP species are recorded.</p> <p>ICES obtains data on protected, endangered, and threatened species (PETS) bycatch through an annual data call. These data are most commonly linked to at-sea observations carried out for the purposes of fisheries monitoring in accordance with the EU Data Collection Framework Regulation 2017/1004 (DCF). (ICES 2022a). The most recent WGBYC report was published in December 2022 and contains detailed information on the data sources used to inform the activities of the group. The data are used to estimate bycatch rates and overall impacts of fisheries on ETP species in the waters covered by ICES. The interactions with PETS species occurring specifically in the Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters can be found in the “Bycatch of protected, endangered, and/or threatened species of marine mammals, seabirds and marine turtles, and selected fish species of bycatch relevance” report for this region (ICES 2022b).</p> <p>F1.2 There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative effect on ETP species.</p> <p>The most recent evidence of ETP interactions with pelagic trawls in the Northeast Atlantic indicates that in 2021 there was only 1 interaction with an ETP species (according to Marin Trust ETP species definition) in the Celtic Seas (ICES 2022b). This species was a basking shark (<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>), which is considered an Endangered species by the IUCN (Rigby et al. 2019).</p> <p>Interactions of pelagic trawls with marine mammals, seabirds and sea turtles are rare within the Northeast Atlantic ICES Subareas 6-8; however, ICES recognises that current bycatch monitoring activities and sampling design in most cases do not yet allow for robust and unbiased estimations of numbers of rare and low or declining abundance species caught incidentally in fishing activities (ICES 2022b).</p> <p>F1.3 If the fishery is known to interact with ETP species, measures are in place to minimise mortality.</p> <p>No evidence was found during this assessment nor the previous ones about this fishery interacting with ETP species. However, EU-wide technical measures to protect ETP species are in place.</p> <p>References</p> <p>Global Trust Certification 2021. Whole fish fishery assessment, Boarfish, ICES Areas 6-8. September 2021. https://www.marin-trust.com/sites/marintrust/files/approved-raw-materials/WF%2015%20Boarfish%20Ireland%20ICES%204%20North%20East%20Atlantic_SURV2_2021_Final%20version.pdf</p> <p>ICES 2022a. Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC). ICES Scientific Reports. Report. https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.21602322.v1</p>			

ICES. 2022b. Bycatch of protected, endangered, and/or threatened species of marine mammals, seabirds and marine turtles, and selected fish species of bycatch relevance. In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2022. ICES Advice 2022, byc.eu. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21695375>

Rigby, C.L., Barreto, R., Carlson, J., Fernando, D., Fordham, S., Francis, M.P., Herman, K., Jabado, R.W., Liu, K.M., Marshall, A., Romanov, E. & Kyne, P.M. 2021. Cetorhinus maximus (amended version of 2019 assessment). The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2021: e.T4292A194720078. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2021-1.RLTS.T4292A194720078.en>. Accessed on 20 September 2023.

Links

MarinTrust Standard clause	1.3.3.1
FAO CCRF	7.2.2 (d)
GSSI	D4.04, D.3.08

F2	Impacts on Habitats - Minimum Requirements		
	F2.1	Potential habitat interactions are considered in the management decision-making process.	PASS
	F2.2	There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on physical habitats.	PASS
	F2.3	If the fishery is known to interact with physical habitats, there are measures in place to minimise and mitigate negative impacts.	PASS
Clause outcome:			PASS

F2.1 Potential habitat interactions are considered in the management decision-making process.

Boarfish fishery uses pelagic trawls which are designed to target fish in the mid- and surface water; therefore, they do not come into contact with the seabed and it is consider a fishing gear that do not generate any impact in the habitat (Seafish 2023). Taking into account the lack of interaction of the pelagic trawl with any kind of habitat, boarfish fishery using this gear does not pose a risk of serious or irreversible harm to any habitat types, and a management strategy is not required.

F2.2 There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on physical habitats.

Pelagic trawls do not interact with any physical habitats; therefore, no evidence was found during the assessment about any kind of negative impact on physical habitats by the boarfish fishery activity.

F2.3 If the fishery is known to interact with physical habitats, there are measures in place to minimise and mitigate negative impacts.

Pelagic trawl does not interact with any physical habitats; hence there is no need of measures to be in place to minimise and mitigate negative impacts related to interaction of the fishery with physical habitats.

References

Seafish 2023. Pelagic trawl. <https://www.seafish.org/responsible-sourcing/fishing-gear-database/gear/pelagic-trawl/>

Links

MarinTrust Standard clause	1.3.3.2
FAO CCRF	6.8
GSSI	D.2.07, D.6.07, D3.09

F3	Ecosystem Impacts - Minimum Requirements		
	F3.1	The broader ecosystem within which the fishery occurs is considered during the management decision-making process.	PASS
	F3.2	There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the marine ecosystem.	PASS
	F3.3	If one or more of the species identified during species categorisation plays a key role in the marine ecosystem, additional precaution is included in recommendations relating to the total permissible fishery removals.	PASS
		Clause outcome:	PASS

The reviewed evidence about the North Atlantic boarfish fishery ecosystem impacts indicates that there have been no relevant changes to any aspect covered by Section F3 since the time of the initial assessment. As the previous Marin Trust assessment report, a summary of the findings of that assessment is presented for convenience.

F3.1 The broader ecosystem within which the fishery occurs is considered during the management decision-making process.

As previously, the most recent annual report from the ICES Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks (WGWIDE) includes the section “Ecosystem Considerations” demonstrating that the broader ecosystem is considered during the decision-making process (ICES 2022a). Also, ICES regularly publishes ecoregion overviews which set out the main ecosystem considerations for each of the ecoregion conditions, including the state of the ecosystems. Last Celtic Seas ecoregion overview was published in December 2022 (ICES 2022b), which covers the area where the large majority of boarfish are caught (ICES 2022a).

F3.2 There is no substantial evidence that the fishery has a significant negative impact on the marine ecosystem.

The ecological role and importance of boarfish continues to be poorly understood. They have been shown to be an important predator species in some regions. There is also some evidence that they may be an important component in the diets of species such as tope, thornback ray, conger eel, forkbeard, bigeye tuna and swordfish, among others. There is currently insufficient evidence to indicate whether boarfish are an important component of the Celtic Seas ecosystem, or more widely in the Northeast Atlantic. As at the time of previous assessments, no evidence was encountered to suggest that the fishery has a significant negative impact on marine ecosystems. (ICES 2022a, Global Trust Certification 2021, LRQA 2022).

F3.3 If one or more of the species identified during species categorisation plays a key role in the marine ecosystem, additional precaution is included in recommendations relating to the total permissible fishery removals.

Mackerel plays a key role in the marine ecosystem; however, catches of the species in the boarfish fishery are small relative to the directed fishery for mackerel, and the important role of the species in the ecosystem is considered in the setting of mackerel TACs. The boarfish management plan proposal states that closed seasons shall operate from 31st March to 31st August given that herring and mackerel are present in these areas and may be caught with boarfish. In addition, boarfish TAC has been relatively consistent since 2018 fluctuating around 20,000t, and actual catch has fallen short of the TAC every year since 2015. (ICES 2022a)

References

Global Trust Certification 2021. Whole fish fishery assessment, Boarfish, ICES Areas 6-8. September 2021.
https://www.marin-trust.com/sites/marintrust/files/approved-raw-materials/WF%2015%20Boarfish%20Ireland%20ICES%204%20North%20East%20Atlantic_SURV2_2021_Final%20version.pdf

ICES 2022a. Working Group on Widely Distributed Stocks. ICES Scientific Reports. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.21088804.v1>

ICES 2022b. Celtic Seas ecoregion – Ecosystem Overview. ICES Advice: Ecosystem Overviews. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21731615.v1>

LRQA 2022. Whole fish fishery assessment, Boarfish, ICES Areas 6-8. September 2022. https://www.marin-trust.com/sites/marintrust/files/approved-raw-materials/WF15%20Boarfish%20Northeast%20Atlantic%20whole%20fish%20Initial%20Dec%202022_Post%20PRGE.pdf

Links	
MarinTrust Standard clause	1.3.3.3
FAO CCRF	7.2.2 (d)
GSSI	D.2.09, D3.10, D.6.09

SOCIAL CRITERION

In addition to the scored criteria listed above, applicants must commit to ensuring that vessels operating in the fishery adhere to internationally recognised guidance on human rights. They must also commit to ensuring there is no use of enforced or unpaid labour in the fleet(s) operating upon the resource.

Appendix A - Determining Resilience Ratings

The assessment of Category B species described in this assessment report template utilises a resilience rating system suggested by the American Fisheries Society. This approach was chosen because it is also used by FishBase, and so the resilience ratings for many thousands of species are freely available online. As described by FishBase, the following is the process used to arrive at the resilience ratings:

“The American Fisheries Society (AFS) has suggested values for several biological parameters that allow classification of a fish population or species into categories of high, medium, low and very low resilience or productivity (Musick 1999). If no reliable estimate of r_m (see below) is available, the assignment is to the lowest category for which any of the available parameters fits. For each of these categories, AFS has suggested thresholds for decline over the longer of 10 years or three generations. If an observed decline measured in biomass or numbers of mature individuals exceeds the indicated threshold value, the population or species is considered vulnerable to extinction unless explicitly shown otherwise. If one sex strongly limits the reproductive capacity of the species or population, then only the decline in the limiting sex should be considered. We decided to restrict the automatic assignment of resilience categories in the Key Facts page to values of K , t_m and t_{max} and those records of fecundity estimates that referred to minimum number of eggs or pups per female per year, assuming that these were equivalent to average fecundity at first maturity (Musick 1999). Note that many small fishes may spawn several times per year (we exclude these for the time being) and large live bearers such as the coelacanth may have gestation periods of more than one year (we corrected fecundity estimates for those cases reported in the literature). Also, we excluded resilience estimates based on r_m (see below) as we are not yet confident with the reliability of the current method for estimating r_m . If users have independent r_m or fecundity estimates, they can refer to Table 1 for using this information.”

Parameter	High	Medium	Low	Very low
Threshold	0.99	0.95	0.85	0.70
r_{max} (1/year)	> 0.5	0.16 - 0.50	0.05 - 0.15	< 0.05
K (1/year)	> 0.3	0.16 - 0.30	0.05 - 0.15	< 0.05
Fecundity (1/year)	> 10,000	100 - 1000	10 - 100	< 10
t_m (years)	< 1	2 - 4	5 - 10	> 10
t_{max} (years)	1 - 3	4 - 10	11 - 30	> 30

[Taken from the FishBase manual, “Estimation of Life-History Key Facts”, <http://www.fishbase.us/manual/English/key%20facts.htm#resilience>]

Glossary

Non-target: Species for which the gear is not specifically set, although they may have immediate commercial value and be a desirable component of the catch. OECD (1996), Synthesis report for the study on the economic aspects of the management of marine living resources. AGR/FI(96)12

Target: In the context of fishery certification, the target catch is the catch of stock under consideration by the unit of certification – i.e. the fish that are being assessed for certification and ecolabelling. (GSSI)

MarinTrust Fishery Assessment Peer Review Template

This section comprises a summary of the fishery being assessed against version 2 of the MarinTrust Standard.

Fishery under assessment	Boarfish (<i>Capros aper</i>), FAO 27, ICES 6-8
Management authority (Country/State)	EU and UK
Main species	Boarfish (<i>Capros aper</i>)
Fishery location	ICES subareas 6-8 (Celtic Seas, English Channel, and Bay of Biscay)
Gear type(s)	Pelagic trawl
Overall recommendation. (Approve/ Fail)	Approve

Summary: in this section, provide any additional information about the fishery that the reviewers feel is significant to their decision.

In despite of rather wide confidence limits of the estimation of the ratio $TSB/MSYB_{trigger}$, the calculated values are well above the target and limit values, being fishing mortality actually low (which is also demonstrated in the Kobe plot). In the case of mackerel, the levels of spawning biomass are well above the reference values, but the trend is negative since 2014, and probably will continue unless additional restrictive actions are taken in this fishery.

General Comments on the Draft Report provided to the peer reviewer

In clause F1.2 it is stated that: "Interactions of pelagic trawls with marine mammals, seabirds and sea turtles are rare within the Northeast Atlantic ICES Subareas 6-8 (ICES 2022b); thus, there is no evidence that this fishery has a significant negative effect on ETP species". However, in any type of fishery, there are interactions, including trawling as in this case. The lack of evidence is originated in the fact that there is no sufficient coverage in the fleet to report any possible interactions that might occur, it does not mean that there are no interactions.

Summary of Peer Review Outcomes

Peer reviewers should review the fishery assessment report with the primary objective of answering the key questions listed in the table below. Where the situation is more complicated, reviewers may instead answer “See Notes”.

	YES	NO	See Notes
A – Fishery Assessment			
1. Has the fishery assessment been fully completed, using the recognised MarinTrust fishery assessment methodology and associated guidance?	X		
2. Does the Species Categorisation section of the report reflect the best current understanding of the catch composition of the fishery?	X		
3. Are the scores in the following sections accurate (i.e. do the scores reflect the evidence provided)?			
Section M - Management	X		
Category A Species			
Category B Species	X		
Category C Species	X		
Category D Species			
Section F – Further Impacts	X		X

Detailed Peer Review Justification

Peer reviewers should provide support for their answers in the boxes provided, by referring to specific scoring issues and any relevant documentation as appropriate.

Detailed justifications are only required where answers given are one of the ‘No’ options. In other (Yes) cases, either confirm ‘scoring agreed’ or identify any places where weak rationales could be strengthened (without any implications for the scores).

Boxes may be extended if more space is required.

1. Is the scoring of the fishery consistent with the MarinTrust standard, and clearly based on the evidence presented in the assessment report?
Scoring agreed
Certification body response
No comments

2. Has the fishery assessment been fully completed, using the recognised MARINTRUST fishery assessment methodology and associated guidance?
Scoring agreed
Certification body response
No comments

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3. Does the Species Categorisation section of the report reflect the best current understanding of the catch composition of the fishery?

Scoring agreed

Certification body response

No comments

3M. Are the scores in “Section M – Management” clearly justified?

M1.1 There is an organisation responsible for managing the fishery.	
There is an organisation responsible for collecting data and assessing the fishery.	Yes
Fishery management organisations are publicly committed to sustainability.	Yes
Fishery management organisations are legally empowered to take management actions.	Yes
There is a consultation process through which fishery stakeholders are engaged in decision-making.	Yes
The decision-making process is transparent, with processes and results publicly available.	Yes

Certification body response

No comments

3A. Are the “Category A Species” scores clearly justified?

n.a.

Certification body response

No comments

3B. Are the “Category B Species” scores clearly justified?

Scoring agreed

Certification body response

No comments

3C. Are the “Category C Species” scores clearly justified?

Scoring agreed

Certification body response

No comments

3D. Are the “Category D Species” scores clearly justified?

n.a.

Certification body response

No comments

3F. Are the scores in “Section F – Further Impacts” clearly justified?

Scoring agreed, but see my notes in page 1 (general comments)

Certification body response

Taking in consideration the observation made by the reviewer, the statement “thus, there is no evidence that this fishery has a significant negative effect on ETP species” in clause F1.2 was changed to “ICES recognises that current bycatch monitoring activities and sampling design in most cases do not yet allow for robust and unbiased estimations of numbers of rare and low or declining abundance species caught incidentally in fishing activities”.

This new argument includes the reviewer observation about “The lack of evidence is originated in the fact that there is no sufficient coverage in the fleet to report any possible interactions that might occur, it does not mean that there are no interactions.” into the assessment, suggesting that information may be bias.

Optional: General comments on the Peer Review Draft Report

Under ICES advice, most of fisheries are well managed. Along its long life the organization has developed solid assessment methods. However, also in most of cases there is lack of specific information on the spatial distribution of interactions, including top predators. Here the organization is not performing the necessary actions to acquire a real view of interactions that any fishery has with other species. Even much harder is to establish the ecological role of the species, as it has been admitted in this case for boarfish (page 7).

Certification body response

No comments