

23 | Harvest Strategy in development

Blue Whiting



Management Authority:

North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission/ North-East Atlantic Coastal States

Expected Adoption Year:

2023

Management Objectives:

Aiming at ensuring harvest rates within safe biological limits, and consistent with the precautionary approach* and the maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach.

*ensure with a high probability (95%) that the size of the stock is maintained above B_{lim}

Reference Points:

- **Interim Target Fishing Mortality Reference Point:** $F_{MSY}(0.32F)$
- **Interim Biomass Trigger Reference Point:** B_{pa}/MSY $B_{trigger}(2,250,000$ tonnes)
- **Interim Biomass Limit Reference Point:** $B_{lim}(1,500,000$ tonnes)

* B_{pa} = A stock size above which the stock is considered to have full reproductive capacity. P_a stands for precautionary approach.

Candidate Harvest Strategies:

An interim harvest control rule (HCR) has previously been explored by ICES that sets a total allowable catch (TAC) when biomass is above/below biological reference points (B_{pa}, B_{lim} , etc.)

- If $SSB \geq B_{pa}$, the TAC shall be fixed to a fishing mortality of F_{MSY}
- Maximum TAC change: +/- 20%
- If $B_{lim} < SSB < B_{pa}$, the TAC shall be fixed that is consistent with a fishing mortality given by the following formula: Target $F = 0.05 + [(SSB - B_{lim}) * (F_{MSY} - 0.05) / (B_{pa} - B_{lim})]$
- If $SSB < B_{lim}$, the TAC will be fixed corresponding to a fishing mortality $F=0.05$

Noted Constraints:

- There are mechanisms for banking up to 10% of unutilized quota and borrowing up to 10% beyond the quota allocated subject to stock status.
- The HCR since 2017 has an annual TAC change rule different from the one evaluated: Maximum TAC change: +25%, -20%
- Development of only an HCR, as opposed to a full harvest strategy.

Progress Update & Workplan:

- **2021:** The HCR based on ICES evaluation (2016) has been in place since 2017 and should have been reviewed after 5 years (no later than December 2021).
- **2021:** The interim long-term management strategy may no longer be precautionary in the long term. There have been consistent deviations from the HCR (overshooting catch advice) due to an allocation dispute. During the evaluation of the management strategy, the implementation error in the form of a consistent overshoot of the TAC was not included.
- **2022:** Refine and further develop management strategy evaluation (MSE) and candidate harvest control rules in collaboration with ICES.
- **2023:** Adopt a full harvest strategy or updated harvest control rule.

Link to relevant policy document or update:

- [Agreed record of conclusions of fisheries consultations between the European Union, the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Norway on the management of blue whiting in the north-east Atlantic in 2017](https://d3bldqw2kzexi.cloudfront.net/media/8742/agreed-record-blue-whiting-2017.pdf) (<https://d3bldqw2kzexi.cloudfront.net/media/8742/agreed-record-blue-whiting-2017.pdf>): Long-Term Management Strategy (2016)
- [Report of the Workshop on Blue Whiting Long Term Management Strategy Evaluation \(WKBWMS\)](https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2016/WKBWMS/WKBWMS%20report%202016.pdf) (<https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2016/WKBWMS/WKBWMS%20report%202016.pdf>): Long-Term Management Strategy Evaluation – ICES (2016)
- [NEAFC request to ICES to evaluate a long-term management strategy for the fisheries on the blue whiting stock](https://ices-library.figshare.com/ndownloader/files/34132779) (<https://ices-library.figshare.com/ndownloader/files/34132779>): Long-Term Management Strategy Evaluation Summary Advice – ICES (2016):