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Sea Bass Fishing Opportunities for 2020

- EAA & EFTTA position paper

Sea bass fishing opportunities for 2020 will be agreed at the Council of Ministers meeting on 16-17 December. This position paper sets out the EAA and EFTTA requests for recreational angling (fishing with rod and line or handline).

Bag limit and months of fishing season

EAA and EFTTA recommend a 2020 recreational bag limit of **3 fish per day** for the same **7 months** as this year (1 April to 1 November). This year the bag limit was only 1 fish per day during that period.

ICES advises that the total bass removals in 2020 should be within the range of 1,634 tonnes to 1,946 tonnes.¹ We suggest, that the Council and the Commission agree the lowest total removal advised by ICES: **1,634 tonnes**.

Using the new **ICES catch allocation tool**,² the recreational bag limit we suggest (3 bass/7 months) would result in **358 tonnes** of recreational mortality, or **as little as 22% share** of the total catch.

The Western Waters Multiannual Plan requires that the recreational catch restriction shall be '**non-discriminatory**'³. Our proposal of 3 fish per day during the open season (1 April to 1 Nov) is not only **fair** to recreational anglers but will **reduce the harm** being done past and present to **businesses and jobs** dependant on recreational bass fishing.

The Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) in south is discriminatory

We note that the EU Commission's proposal includes a 42cm MCRS for areas 8a and 8b that will only apply to recreational fishermen. We are of the view that this would be a discriminatory measure and would like you to instead propose a 42cm MCRS for all fishing in areas 8a and 8b.

The North Western Waters Advisory Council's (NWWAC) bass advice of 27 November

Read also an extensive EAA minority position in the NWWAC advice (the section 6).⁴

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¹ ICES Advice on fishing opportunities, catch, and effort Celtic Seas and Greater North Sea ecoregions (28 June 2019) www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2019/2019/bss.27.4bc7ad-h.pdf

² <https://ices-taf.shinyapps.io/seabass-management-tool-AGE/>

³ "When scientific advice indicates that recreational fishing is having a significant impact on the fishing mortality of a stock referred to in Article 1(1), the Council may set *non-discriminatory limits* for recreational fishermen."

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019R0472>

⁴ NWWAC advice on management measures for seabass in 2020: **EN:** www.nwwac.org/publications.26.html

FR: www.nwwac.org/avis-et-publications.174.html **ES:** www.nwwac.org/publicaciones-y-dict%C3%A1menes.185.html