

ICES IBPBass2 REPORT 2016

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Report of the second Inter-Benchmark Protocol for sea bass in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea (IBPBass2)

1 December 2015–31 March 2016

by correspondence



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Executive summary

The second Inter-Benchmark Protocol for sea bass in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea (IBPBass2) was conducted via several Skype conferences and by correspondence from December 2015 to March 2016. The main goal of the IBPBass2 was to review quality of a new age composition dataset for French fishery landings that was recently provided by Ifremer (France) as well as evaluate performance of the stock assessment model with the new dataset included. The IBPBass2 also examined overall model structure and input data as well as evaluated the appropriateness of existing reference points.

IBPBass2 slightly deviated from the terms of reference (ToR) and did not address ToR (b) related to including empirical weight-at-age data in the model, ToR (c) related to developing age compositions for the Channel groundfish survey, and ToR (d) related to the evaluation of biological reference points. Empirical weight-at-age data were not included, because in its current configuration the assessment model does not need to rely on this type of data to effectively model fishery fleets and surveys. Instead, IBPBass2 focused on including in the model length and age composition data for those fleets where both types of data were available. The age compositions for Channel groundfish survey were not looked at due to time constraints. During the IBPBass2, the assessment model was updated to include several key improvements. However, not all the suggested changes were incorporated in the model. Therefore, several important recommendations were developed for the next benchmark. The changes made to the assessment for use in subsequent update assessments are: fixing all growth parameters of the von Bertalanffy growth equation; inclusion of both length and age composition data for French and UK fishery landings; using an emphasis factor (λ) of 0.5 each for length and age composition data where both are included in the model; combining the UK Autumn Solent bass survey data for ages 2–4 as a single survey rather than three separate survey series; treating the UK commercial lines fleet separately from trawls and nets for estimation of selectivity; inclusion of the recreational catch at a separate fleet with same selectivity as the UK commercial lines fleet; and revision of input effective sample sizes using the Francis *et al* (2010) method. In combination, these changes improve the model and alter the absolute values of SSB and fishing mortality compared with the WGCSE 2015 assessment, but have relatively little effect on the relative trends.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Interbenchmark protocol for sea bass

The second Inter-Benchmark Protocol for sea bass in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea (IBPBass2) was established to review the quality and use of a new age composition dataset for French fishery landings that was provided by Ifremer (France) at the 2015 meeting of the ICES Working Group on the Celtic Sea Ecoregion (ICES, 2015a). The assessment of this sea bass stock is carried out using the Stock Synthesis integrated modelling framework (Methot and Wetzel, 2013), for which the input data for sea bass include age composition data for UK fishery landings and surveys, but only length compositions for French landings and surveys. The WGCSE 2015 meeting agreed that the new French age data could only be used following a full review through the interbenchmark process. The Terms of Reference established for this interbenchmark were:

2015/2/ACOM32 The Second Inter-Benchmark Protocol for sea bass in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea (IBPBass2) that will serve as in Inter-Benchmark Protocol, chaired by Michel Bertignac, France, and Vladlena Gertseva, USA, will meet by correspondence (01 December 2015–31 March 2016) to:

- a) Review quality and performance of age composition data for French fishery landings in the Stock Synthesis model formulated by IBP-bass;
- b) Develop input data for stock assessment including empirical weights at age;
- c) Develop age compositions for the Channel groundfish survey and test in SS3 model.
- d) Evaluate the appropriateness of existing reference points and estimate new if necessary based on conclusions from WKMSYREF3 and 4.

The Interbenchmark process was conducted via several Skype conferences and by correspondence from December 2015 to March 2016.

1.2 Structure of report

The structure of this report follows the chronological order of the IBPBass2 discussions:

- Section 2 reviews the derivation and quality of the new age composition data for the French fishery (ToR (a)).
- Section 3 discusses the updates to the assessment input data including the derivation of the length frequency data from the UK commercial fleets (Part of ToR(b) and (c)).
- Section 4 describes the developments of the Stock Synthesis model carried out during the IBPBass2 along with description of the final assessment model agreed upon by the group.
- Section 5 addresses biological reference points (ToR (d))
- Sections 6 and 7 are the external reviewers report and recommendations for a future benchmark, respectively.

2 Derivation and quality of new age composition data for French fishery landings.

This section provides a general overview of the sampling in France to provide data on length and age compositions of fishery landings, the sources of age data, and the method used for deriving age compositions from length compositions.

2.1 Issue description

WGCSE 2015 carried out a Stock Synthesis run using French age compositions from 2000–2014 rather than length compositions as done up to that time in the assessment for sea bass. The WG considered that the methods to convert length data to age data needed to be reviewed by an Inter-benchmark workshop before including the data into the assessment.

2.2 Sampling of French fishery landings for length compositions

Fleet-raised numbers at length in French fishery landings are available only from 2000 onwards, based on a programme of sampling at ports. Although the sea bass stock in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea is distributed over eight ICES divisions (Figure 2.2.1), the French fishery is mainly in Divisions 7.e, 7.h and 7.d, and the bulk of sampling is at ports where French vessels fishing in these Divisions land their catches. In the WGCSE assessment up to 2015 (ICES, 2015a), a single French fleet is defined (“French fleet”), and is the combination of several types of sub-fleets using various fishing gears: pelagic trawlers, bottom trawlers, netters, liners, Danish seiners and purse-seiners. The numbers of trips sampled per year, and the total numbers of fish measured, are given for each gear group in Table 2.2.1.

2.3 Raised length compositions for French combined fleets

For the years 2000–2010, numbers at length for sampled trips have been combined and raised to the landings by strata defined by gear group and by subarea (ICES Divisions, or groups of Divisions such as 7.e,h). The raised numbers at length are then summed across the gear and area strata to produce total numbers landed at length for the entire fleet and for the entire area. From 2011 onwards, the raising procedure was changed to remove any area stratification, so that samples for each gear group are combined for all samples taken across the stock area and raised to the total landings by gear for the entire area before summing across gear groups. Raised number at length estimated using these methods are presented in Table 2.3.1. IBPBass2 was not provided with a full time-series of raised length compositions using the combined-area method adopted for 2011 onwards, and was therefore not able to evaluate the impact of the change in raising method on the assessment. This should be evaluated in a future benchmark.

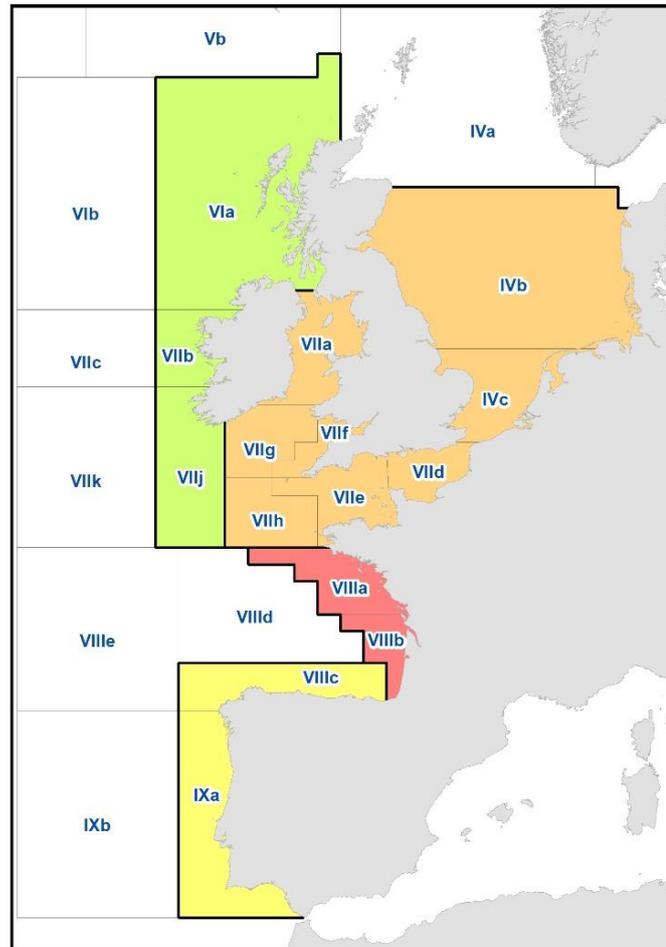


Figure 2.2.1. The four stock areas for sea bass defined by ICES for assessment and fishery management, and the component ICES Divisions. IBPBass-2 covers the stock in ICES Divisions 4.b,c and 7.a, d-h.

Table 2.2.1: Details of sampling for length by gear group for French fleets (2000–2014). From 2000–2010, the samples are further subdivided into area strata.

	FR LINES			FR NETS			FR BOTTOM TRAWL		
	NO TRIPS	NO FISH	LANDINGS	NO TRIPS	NO FISH	LANDINGS	NO TRIPS	NO FISH	LANDINGS
2000	53	1613	305	2	72	108	2	196	692
2001	101	2659	375	1	5	110	0	0	713
2002	79	2075	349	0	0	128	4	710	911
2003	78	1732	438	1	4	152	8	998	1087
2004	78	1748	381	6	84	150	12	887	1236
2005	34	949	439	4	110	148	14	689	1239
2006	73	1719	554	11	291	140	11	1240	1110
2007	69	2235	560	28	641	158	11	588	1187
2008	41	1280	425	25	496	128	18	1927	1145
2009	33	1339	251	25	159	94	93	1468	1052
2010	10	334	278	49	615	160	64	626	819
2011	17	540	359	156	278	129	151	1955	791
2012	10	681	295	60	408	142	87	1204	824
2013	16	309	291	26	512	126	73	2060	737
2014	10	299	285	29	218	163	137	2139	571

	FR PELAGIC TRAWL			FR DANISH SEINE			FR OTHERS		
	NO TRIPS	NO FISH	LANDINGS	NO TRIPS	NO FISH	LANDINGS	NO TRIPS	NO FISH	LANDINGS
2000	2	629	681	0	0	0	0	0	20
2001	0	0	659	0	0	0	0	0	27
2002	3	680	415	0	0	0	0	0	22
2003	4	753	773	0	0	0	0	0	23
2004	6	938	820	0	0	0	0	0	17
2005	11	1239	1319	0	0	0	0	0	17
2006	16	2597	1420	0	0	0	0	0	35
2007	8	1800	841	0	0	0	0	0	24
2008	8	1065	1012	0	0	0	0	0	40
2009	55	899	1098	0	0	27	0	0	127
2010	28	1299	1828	0	0	61	2	2	90
2011	30	2309	1142	2	6	43	36	292	62
2012	9	1649	1143	6	370	112	7	154	91
2013	10	1253	1516	2	28	18	1	1	82
2014	23	455	242	12	23	9	1	1	25

2.4 Sampling for age compositions of French landings

Age composition data for sea bass have been collected in France since 2000. The sampling scheme consists in collecting at least 3 scales per cm and quarter. Samples are available for subdivisions 7.e,h and (from 2008 onwards), 7d. Annual raw data are presented in Appendix 1. As the coverage of the age sampling can lead to very low sample numbers for some years and age groups, Ifremer provided a combination of samples from fishery sampling and from the Ifremer trawl surveys. This is valid only if the age compositions within length classes are the same for the fishery and for the survey in each year. IBPBass2 was not able to carry out statistical tests on the separate fishery and survey data to determine if this assumption is valid, and proposes that this is done for the next benchmark.

2.5 Use of age samples to derive age compositions from length data

Age compositions for French commercial fishery landings of sea bass are derived from annual age-length keys (ALK) constructed as unweighted sums of raw age data collected from all fishery and survey sources for the whole area, by quarter. The proportions by age class in each length class are applied to the fleet-raised, combined-gear numbers at length (from the length sampling) to give raised numbers-at-age which are then summed over length classes. This is analogous to the procedure used for deriving the age compositions for UK fishery landings, with the exception that the UK derives four separate area-based ALKs (7.a,f,g; 7.e; 7.d; 4.b,c), separately for two 6-month periods in each year. The raised annual age compositions are given in Table 2.5.1.

Table 2.5.1. Raised total numbers-at-age for French fleet landings (all gears combined), as used in the IBPBass2 assessment.

Age	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	2611	3	0	3138	0	1208	315	717	0	0	0	0
3	0	2651	8114	10800	4	24195	74600	5307	79917	23355	1962	0	406	60	603
4	9440	55640	73892	364427	80483	77794	131099	73224	175402	119979	39409	6087	14357	569	6846
5	222655	47734	125531	241694	627951	253455	564668	135809	545960	282754	221063	172404	65157	52216	11735
6	273687	298773	90294	318445	438799	735235	361515	460583	401231	473020	515711	252236	262593	96064	123435
7	139562	211740	236147	96562	297961	352182	841651	124606	456312	238022	411737	312186	346334	609903	149938
8	79413	90962	86108	254050	65297	443765	146484	139879	143871	408951	437222	303804	308183	377156	133129
9	47258	44742	31151	114829	131612	39104	253945	79978	147881	100487	200328	314164	264012	367869	143241
10	43924	21074	23025	57883	77533	161572	13655	69214	40719	200417	172430	125800	214803	481247	39242
11	49293	39908	17823	26223	25416	69617	132370	33191	57341	73570	109342	89188	83939	245982	39476
12	20207	36007	14760	19879	14848	26314	84910	65868	17882	37114	75421	34465	50701	158757	12679
13	10767	17787	15912	14232	14254	17996	22068	68599	35092	32657	46461	28352	24784	43008	7347
14	4925	4394	9752	18088	13528	19238	6648	11131	12669	55506	21880	12942	8470	21825	3067
15	4927	6838	3743	6600	7628	17974	6999	9034	5518	33537	4806	5585	3191	14812	198
16+	10901	8034	1553	4028	5270	22718	16069	5486	6091	23529	16480	337	1583	11520	0

2.6 Quality of French age data

Characteristics of ageing error in sea bass were reviewed in a working document to IBPBass-2 (Armstrong and Drogou, 2016). Ages of sea bass sampled in France are obtained primarily from scales, which are considered to be a reliable method for sea bass. The uncertainty (bias and imprecision) in ageing of sea bass has been evaluated during exchanges and workshops conducted in 2011, 2013 and 2015 (ICES, 2015b, Mahé *et al.*, 2012 & 2014). Only relative bias can be evaluated, in the absence of a reference collection with known ages. If the ages recorded from a scale by a group of readers are normally distributed (mean age not significantly different from modal age), it is assumed that age errors are random. If the mean and mode differ widely, due to a skewed distribution of age values for a given scale, especially if evident across many modal ages, this suggests a strong persistent difference between agers. No significant bias was identified in age estimates for sea bass from different labs. The standard deviation of

age readings for individual fish within and between readers increased with fish age, which is common especially for long-lived species. These results provide no indication that new age composition data from French fishery are inferior to age data from UK fleet already used in the assessment. It was agreed that new data are adequate for use in stock assessment.

During the ICES benchmark for sea bass in 2012 (ICES, 2012), a review of the French ALK was carried out by Laurec *et al* (2012). A large dispersion of length-at-age was observed (as for the age length key from UK), leading to substantial overlap in the length distribution at age for older fish (Figure 2.6.1). For example, in 7.e&h, lengths of 8-year-old sea bass varies between 42 cm and 64 cm. Furthermore, some length distributions at age are multimodal which may reflect some errors in ageing. For example, for fish with 5 rings, there is a clear main mode at 39 cm, but a distribution tail also appears on the right side of this main mode with a secondary mode at 48 cm, close to the main mode exhibited by 8-ringed fish. The main conclusion of that review was that, if the French age composition were to be used in an age-based assessment, it should probably be better to consider a plus-group at around 9 or 10. The findings of Laurec *et al* (2012) do not preclude the use of French age data in the assessment, as Stock Synthesis can include an age error matrix which allows for imprecision of age composition data when fitting observed age composition data to the model estimates of age compositions. Based on the results of ICES age exchanges and workshops, IBPBass2 adopted an age error matrix where the precision of age readings was expressed as a CV of 0.1—equating to an age error standard deviation of 0.5 yr for a 5-year-old fish, 1 year for a 10-year-old, and 2 years for a 20-year-old.

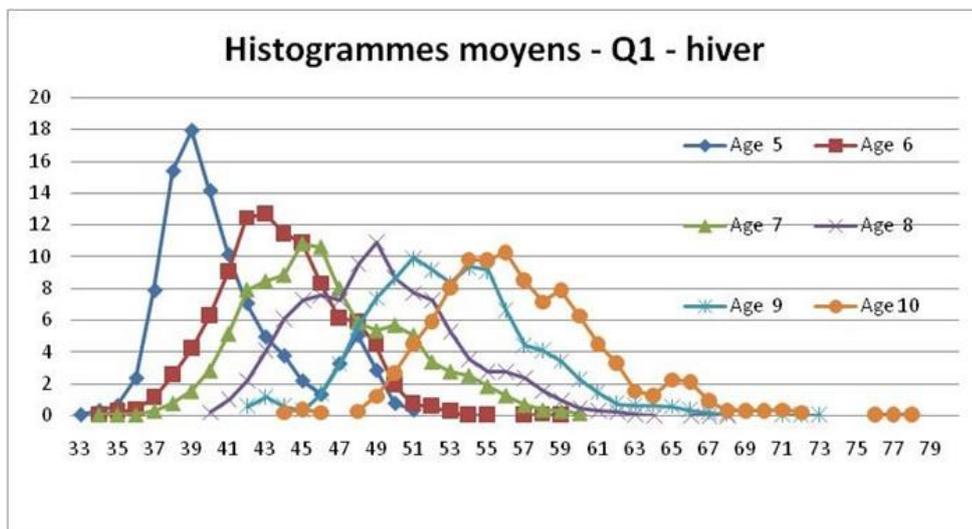


Figure 2.6.1 Relative length frequencies at age for sea bass aged in France, averaged over the period 2000–2010, for ages 5–10, and for the first quarter (Q1: winter) of the year. (Laurec *et al* 2012)

3 Development and update of input data for the stock assessment (ToR (b))

3.1 Issue description

During IBPBass2, it was proposed to include the length frequency distributions together with age distribution for the UK fleets to allow estimation of length-based selectivity and hence estimation of mean weights at age in catches that reflect selectivity (as was done for the French fleets).

The Autumn Solent survey in ICES Subdivision 7.d covers a major nursery area and only the ages 2–4 have previously been used in the assessment. Due to initial problems with trying to fit selectivity for this survey in the first sea bass benchmark (ICES IBP-New), the three age groups were entered in the data file as three independent surveys, therefore losing covariance information due to year-effects affecting each age class similarly. During IBPBass-2, it was proposed to combine the age groups into a single survey with age distribution data and associated age selectivity.

This section provides a brief description of the data compilation which was carried out for these purposes. It addresses only part of Terms of Reference (b); the inclusion of empirical weight-at-age data in the model was not addressed as the configuration of the assessment model using length-based selectivity does not need this type of data.

3.2 UK data: Compiling length frequency distributions by fleets

The length frequency distributions of sea bass landings into England are estimated from the port sampling programme carried out by Cefas. Sampling events are selected from a sampling frame of ports and days of the year for sampling of multiple finfish species from the vessels landing on the day. The samples collected for sea bass are post-stratified into five gear types (otter trawl; nets; lines; midwater trawl and “other”), four areas (7.a,f,g; 7.e; 7.d; 4.b,c) and two periods of the year (Jan–June; July–December). Coverage of these strata is good however it can be variable between years and gears (see WGCSE reports for numbers of trips and fish sampled each year). No samples of midwater trawls are available since 2013 due to very low catches. Sample length compositions are first vessel-raised using ratios of landed live weight to predicted live weight of the length frequency sample calculated from a length–weight relationship:

$$W \text{ (kg)} = 0.00001296 (L+0.5)^{2.969}$$

Raised LFDs are then summed over vessels within a sampling stratum and raised to give total raised fleet LFDs per stratum, then summed over areas and periods of the year for each gear stratum. This procedure ensures sums-of-products ratios of 1.0, but will lead to some bias in numbers-at-length due to discrepancies between true fish weights and calculated fish weights from the length–weight relationship.

3.3 Combine UK Solent survey data into one single survey

This was achieved simply by specifying a single survey with the combined abundance index for ages 2–4 (with associated CV), with a separate entry of age composition data including ages 2–4.

3.4 Compilation of other data for the assessment

IBPBass-2 started with the input data that had been compiled for WGCSE 2015, and adjusted the inputs in stages during the model development. This included (not in order of development):

- Addition of French landings age composition data
- Addition of UK landings length frequencies
- Disaggregation of UK fishery landings and composition data to allow a separate UK lines fleet
- Combination of Solent survey indices into a single survey

4 Assessment model development carried out during IBPBass2 and conclusions

4.1 4.1 Base case WGCSE 2015 assessment—starting point for IBPBass2

WGCSE 2015 conducted an assessment using Stock Synthesis 3 (SS3) (Methot and Wetzel, 2013). The software used was Stock synthesis v3.23b, following the procedures given in the Stock Annex developed by IBPBass1 (ICES 2014) with the inclusion of fishery data for 2014. The assessment requires a modelling framework capable of handling a mixture of age and length data for fisheries and surveys (fleet-based landings; landings age or length compositions, age-based survey indices for young bass) and biological information on growth rates and maturity. Landings-at-age were available for four UK fleets from 1985 onwards (otter trawl; nets; lines; midwater trawl), whereas French fleets had length composition data for all fleets combined, and available only since the 2000s. The assessment developed by IBPBass1 (ICES 2014) combined the UK otter trawl, nets and lines into a single fleet. The Stock Synthesis assessment model was chosen, primarily for its highly flexible statistical model framework allowing the building of simple to complex models using a mix of data compositions available. The model is written in ADMB (www.admb-project.org), is forward simulating and available at the NOAA toolbox: <http://nft.nefsc.noaa.gov/SS3.html>.

The following table summarizes key model assumptions and parameters for the WGCSE 2015 assessment. Other parameter values and input data characteristics are defined in the SS3 start file `Starter.ss`, control file `Bass47.ctl`, forecast file `Forecast.SS` and the data file `BassIVVII.dat` as used by WGCSE 2015.

Key model assumptions and parameters from the WGCSE 2015 final run.

Characteristic	Settings
Starting year	1985
Ending year	2014
Equilibrium catch for starting year	0.82* landings in 1985 by fleet.
Number of areas	1
Number of seasons	1
Number of fishing fleets	4
Number of surveys	two surveys: CGFS; Solent autumn survey (Solent spring and Thames survey removed).
Individual growth	von Bertalanffy, parameters fixed, combined sex
Number of active parameters	68
Population characteristics	
Maximum age	30
Genders	1
Population length bins	4–100, 2 cm bins
Ages for summary total biomass	0–30
Data characteristics	
Data length bins (for length structured fleets)	14–94, 2 cm bins
Data age bins (for age structured fleets)	0–16+
Minimum age for growth model	2
Maximum age for growth model	30
Maturity	Logistic 2-parameter – females; L50 = 40.65 cm
Fishery characteristics	
Fishery timing	-1 (whole year)
Fishing mortality method	Hybrid
Maximum F	2.9
Fleet 1: UK Trawl/nets/lines selectivity	Double normal, age-based
Fleet 2: UK Midwater trawl selectivity	Asymptotic, age-based
Fleet 3: Combined French fleet selectivity	Asymptotic, length-based
Fleet 4: Other fleets/gears selectivity	Asymptotic: mirrors French fleet
Year-invariant recreational fishing mortality vector (F(5-11) = 0.09)	Asymptotic, age-based (fixed, not estimated). Added to M vector
Survey characteristics	
Solent autumn survey timing (yr)	0.83
CGFS survey timing (yr)	0.75
Catchabilities (all surveys)	Analytical solution
Survey selectivities: Solent autumn:	[all survey data entered as single ages; sel = 1]
Survey selectivities: CGFS	Double normal, length based
Fixed biological characteristics	
Natural mortality	0.15
Beverton–Holt steepness	0.999
Recruitment variability (σ_R)	0.9
Weight–length coefficient	0.00001296
Weight–length exponent	2.969

Characteristic	Settings
Maturity inflection (L50%)	40.649 cm
Maturity slope	-0.33349
Length-at-age Amin	19.6 cm at Amin=2
Length-at-Amax	80.26 cm
von Bertalanffy k	0.09699
von Bertalanffy Linf	84.55 cm
von Bertalanffy t0	-0.730 yr
Std. Deviation length-at-age (cm)	SD = 0.1166 * age + 3.5609
Age error matrix	CV 12% at-age
Other model settings	
First year for main recruitment deviations for burn-in period	1965
Last year for recruit deviations	2011 (last year class with survey indices)

4.2 Stages in model development

4.2.1 Initial adjustments to WGCSE model to develop base case model for IBPBass2

Based on recommendations from the external experts, a number of improvements were made incrementally to the SS3 model configuration used by WGCSE 2015, and some minor errors were corrected (which had only small effect on results). At each stage the changes in model diagnostics were tabulated, plotted and evaluated. Results were progressively presented over video conferencing meetings at which agreement was reached on models to take forward to the next stage of development:

- A more recent version of Stock Synthesis was used (V2.24f)
- The input data file was reconfigured to make it easier to handle data records that are to be excluded from the model fit
- Ageing error was entered as standard deviations at each age rather than CVs as done previously
- The standard deviation of length-at-age distributions was specified in the CTL file as a linear function of age rather than length.
- Growth age for L2 (maximum age–Amax) set to 28–oldest age observed in data.
- Length at Amax fixed to 80.26 cm.
- Inclusion of advanced options for recruitment deviations;
- Switching on an option to allow the model to inflate the standard deviation of the abundance indices from the French Channel groundfish and Solent Autumn Bass surveys;

The stock trends from the base case model for IBPBass2 differ from those given by WGCSE mainly in showing a stronger downward trend in SSB and upward trend in F in recent years (See Figure 4.2.1).

The base case including these adjustments was then used to explore the performance of a series of runs that: i) included French age compositions for landings; ii) included UK length and age compositions; iii) represented recreational fishing mortality in a more appropriate way; iv) explored alternative weighting of datasets. The runs are numbered 1, 2,...n.

4.2.2 Exploration of the base case model with changes to input fishery length and age compositions

Runs 1 & 2: Inclusion of French age composition data (Run 1: Age only; Run 2: Length + Age data)

The WGCSE 2015 assessment only used length compositions for the combined French fleet, fitting length based selectivity. IBPBass2 Run 1 replaced the length composition data with the age compositions shown in Table 2.5.1, and fitted a 2-parameter asymptotic (logistic) age-based selection model. Run 2 incorporated both the age and length composition data for French landings, and fitted an asymptotic length based selectivity model.

Run 1 shows that the main effect of adding the age compositions and fitting an asymptotic age selectivity model for the French fleet is an increase in SSB compared with the base case model, particularly in the most recent periods, and a reduction in fishing mortality (Figure 4.2.1). Estimates of recruitment are slightly higher historically.

Run 2, with length based selectivity and both age and length data input for the French fleet, gives similar trends to Run 1 up to around 2000, but the subsequent SSB estimates do not increase to the same extent as in Run 1. SSB remains higher than the WGCSE 2015 assessment for the full time-series (Figure 4.2.1).

The fit to the age compositions (Figure 4.2.2) show similar patterns for both run 1 and 2 showing some cohort effects, however, the residuals are smaller for run 2. When comparing run 2 with the base case, the fits to the length composition is slightly improved with smaller residuals overall.

IBPBass2 concluded that for the French fleet, selectivity should be a function of length with both age and length composition data.

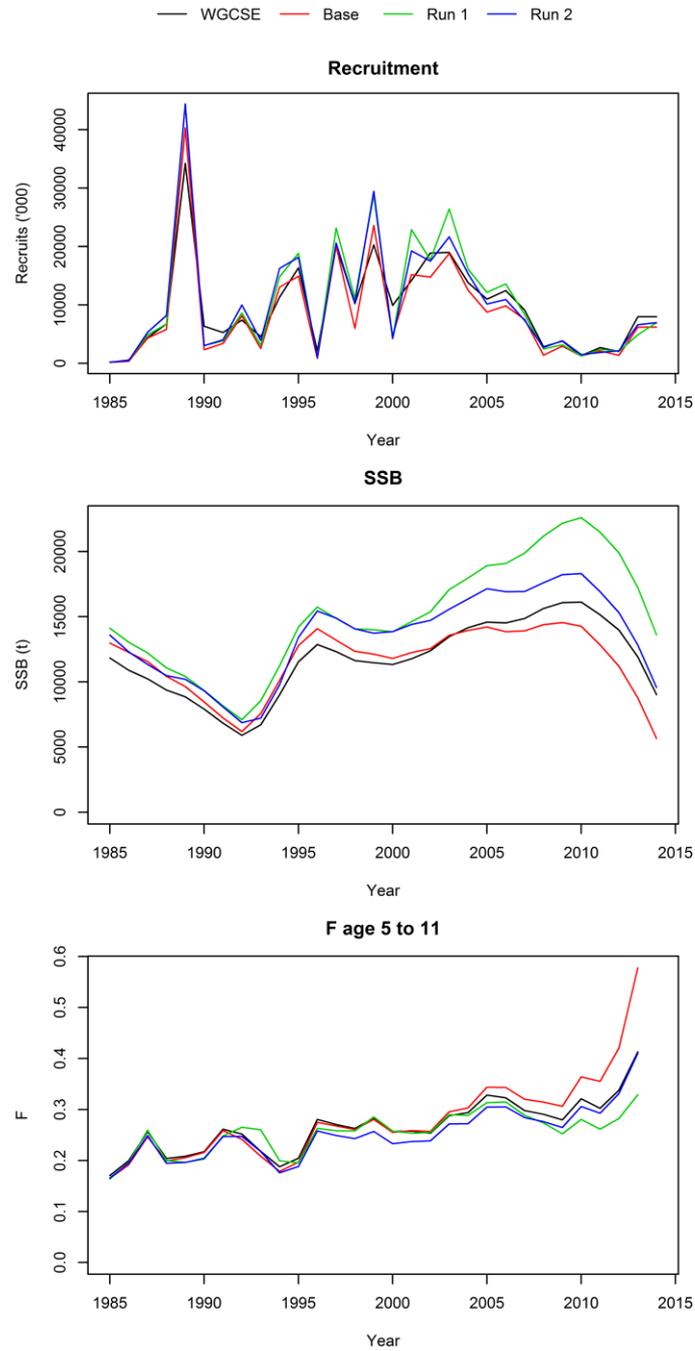


Figure 4.2.1. Stock trends from SS3 runs incorporating French age compositions: Run 1: Addition of French age frequencies with asymptotic age selectivity, and removal of French length frequencies. Run 2: Addition of both age and length frequency distributions and asymptotic length selectivity.

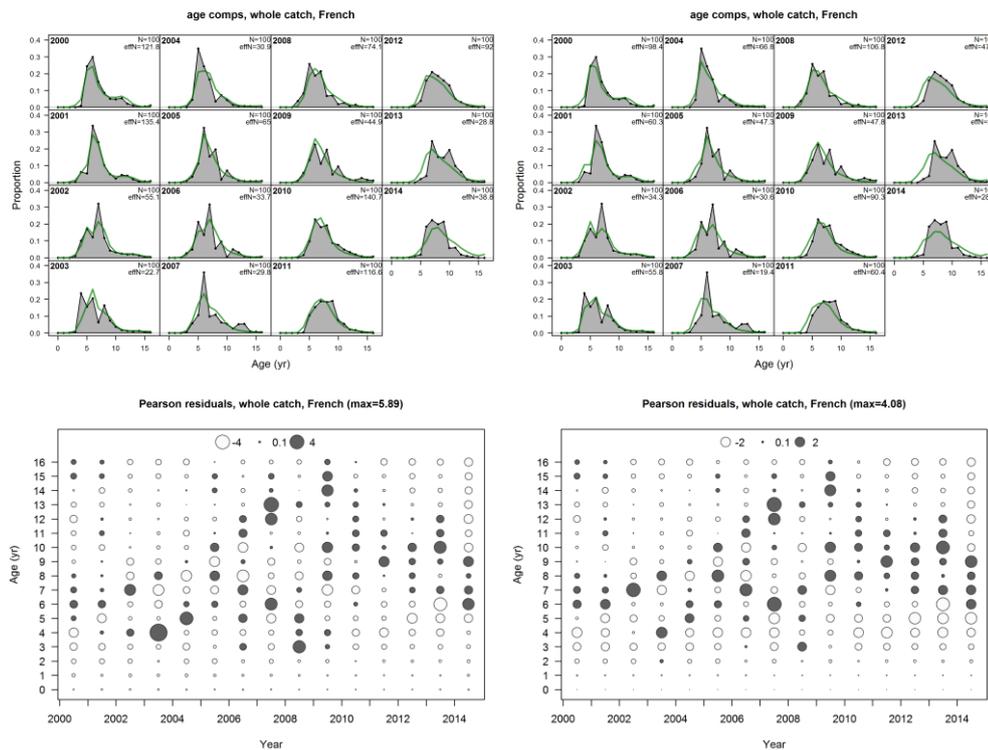


Figure 4.2.2. Top: fit to annual length compositions; bottom: Residuals of length composition fit. Left run 1 and right run 2.

Run 3: addition of UK length distribution data for commercial fleets

Raised length composition data are available for all UK fleets with variable sample sizes by year and fleet. WGCSE 2015 and earlier assessments have used only the total landings at age for UK fleets, although in some cases the midwater trawl length compositions were used rather than age data. Where age data were used, age-based selectivity was fitted. This resulted in stock weights at age being applied as proxies for catch weights at age for those fleets, as the model cannot adjust the catch weights to reflect length-based selection. IBPBass2 explored the addition of length composition data together with the age compositions for the two UK fleets (otter trawls/nets/lines, and midwater trawls). The combined UK otter trawl/nets/lines fleet compositions were fitted assuming a six-parameter double-normal length-based selectivity curve, and the midwater trawl compositions were fitted using an asymptotic length based selectivity. These selection models were of the same form as used for fitting age-based selectivity for these fleets in previous assessments.

The addition of the length composition data and fitting selectivity as a function of length for the two UK fleets have little impact on the relative trends over time (Figure 4.2.3). Residuals of the age compositions however indicate an improved fit to the combined otter trawl/nets/lines fleet age compositions, but similar fit to the midwater trawl age compositions (Figure 4.2.3). IBPBass2 concluded that the inclusion of the length data and selectivity as a function of length improves the fit of the model with little impact on the relative stock trends, and that this change should be retained for further model development.

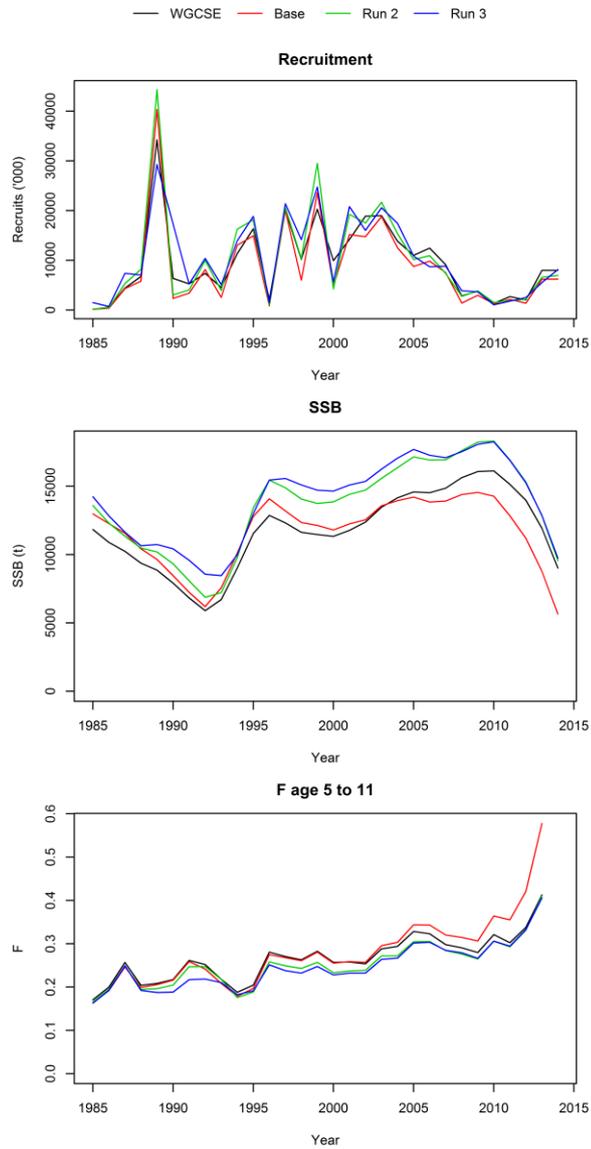


Figure 4.2.3. **Run 3:** Effect on assessment of including both age and length frequency distributions for UK landings, and fitting selectivity as a function of length, compared with Run 2 which used only age compositions and fitted age based selectivity for UK fleets.

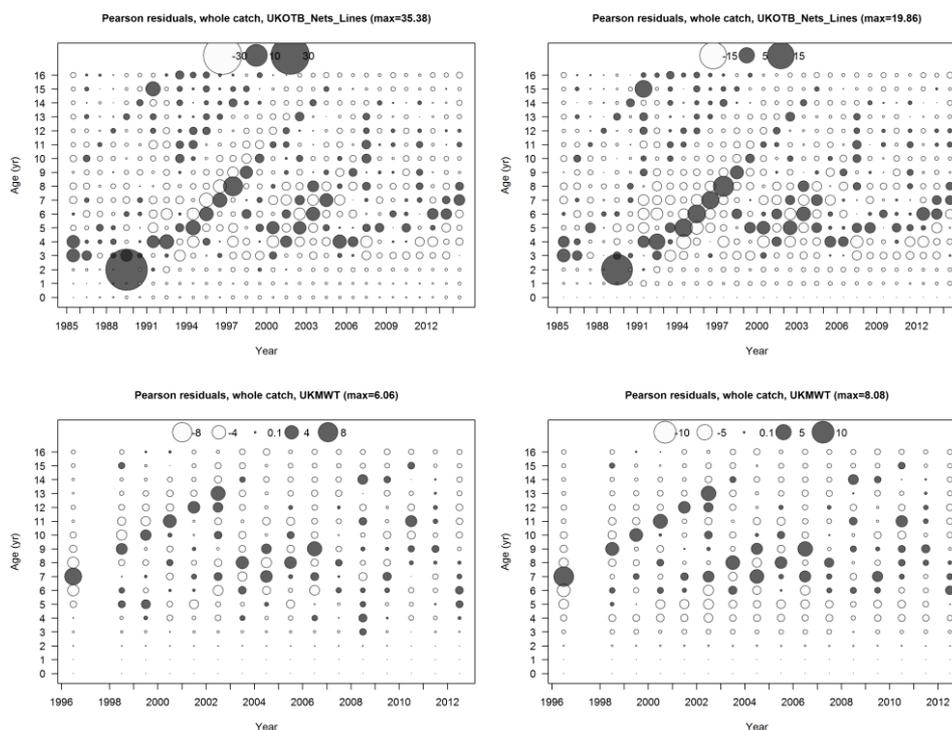


Figure 4.2.4. **Run 3:** Residuals of age composition fit: Top: UK otter trawl/nets/lines; bottom: UK midwater trawl. Left: run 2 and right: run 3.

Run 4: Autumn Solent bass survey: combination of age classes 2–4 into one single survey series.

The Solent survey data have previously been split in to 3 separate indices for ages 2, 3 and 4 to avoid the difficulties encountered in a previous benchmark (ICES IBP-New, 2012) in estimating selectivity parameters. IBPBass2 combined the abundance indices for these age classes and added the annual indices for each age as age composition data for the fleet in order to regain the covariance information provided by year-effects in the survey. Length composition data were not available for this inter-benchmark process. Selection was however fitted as a function of length using a double normal model, with minimum and maximum ages specified as 2 and 4 in the age selection function.

This change to the model had very little effect on the stock trends (Figure 4.2.5), but caused a slight reduction in uncertainty in the recruitment estimates (Figure 4.2.6).

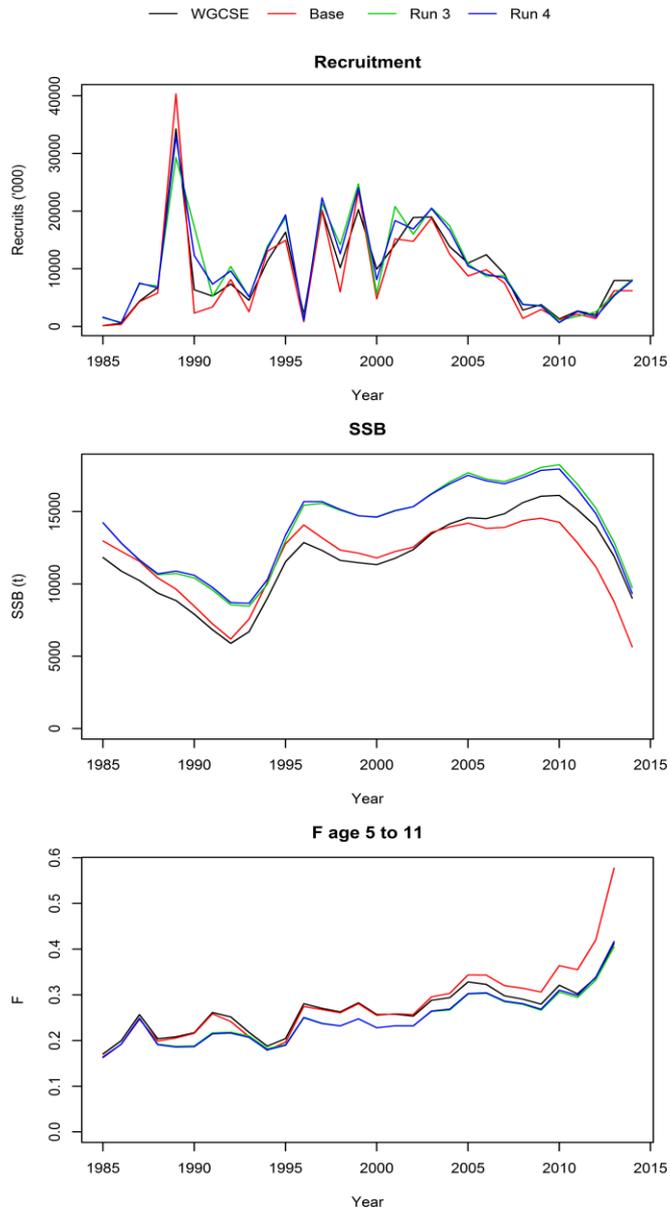


Figure 4.2.5. Run 4: Effect of combining Autumn Solent bass survey into one survey index.

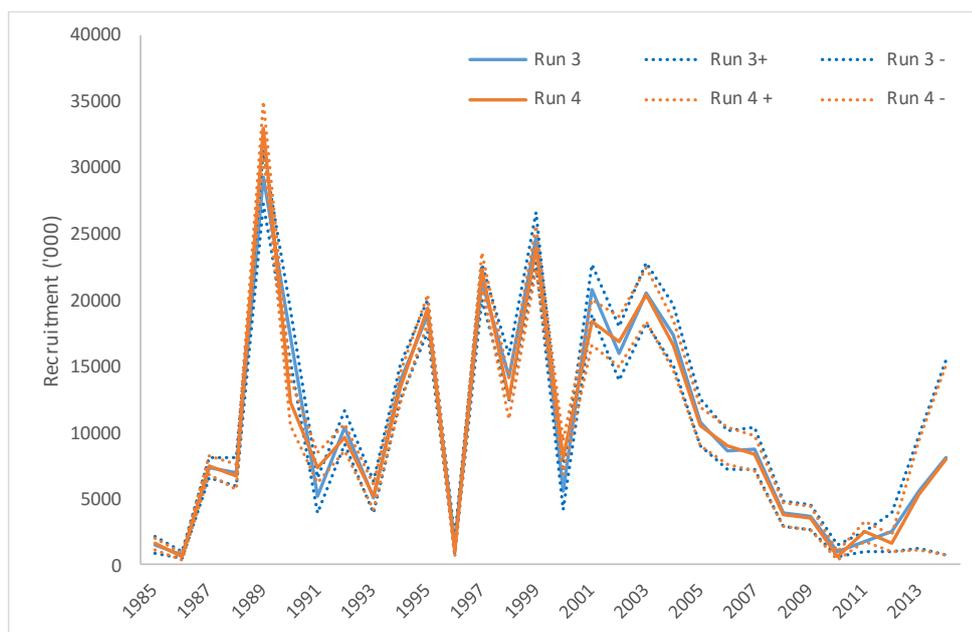


Figure 4.2.6. Run 4: recruitment estimates and their standard deviations using the combined Solent survey index compared with the estimates from Run 3 with separate Solent indices for ages 2 – 4 treated as three separate surveys.

Run 5: Incorporation of recreational catches as separate fleet rather than as a component of M .

Data from recreational fishery surveys in England, France, Netherlands and Belgium between 2009 and 2013, reported in WGCSE 2015 and previous assessments, indicate that the total recreational fishery landings could be around a quarter of the combined commercial and recreational fishery removals. If the recreational catch is not incorporated in the assessment and forecasts, it represents an unaccounted for mortality which is a problem when forecasting stock size. The fishing mortality estimated in the model is largely driven by the commercial fishery length and age compositions, and previous benchmarks have noted that excluding recreational catches does not alter the absolute estimates of F , but these become attributed completely to the commercial fishery. A major problem is that recreational catch estimates are only available for a few recent years, and are poorly aligned temporally between countries. IBPBass1 (ICES, 2012) used the available estimates to infer recreational removals of 1,500t in 2012. In the absence of a time-series of estimates, the same philosophy was adopted as for assuming a constant natural mortality rate in the absence of a time-series of estimates. This was implemented by adding a vector of F at age (with same selectivity as the UK commercial line fishery) to the natural mortality value, and adjusting this iteratively until the calculated recreational landing in 2012 was 1,500t. This has some undesirable consequences - for example the SS3 estimates of unexploited population size are incorrect because the recreational F is included in the M vector.

IBPBass2 developed an alternative (though equivalent) approach in which a recreational fishing fleet is specified in the model, and a time-series of landings for this fleet is reconstructed based on the assumption of a constant recreational fishing mortality over time, and conditional upon the 2012 recreational landings being 1,500t. This approach represents the landings as a fishing fleet and avoids having a fishing mortality component in the natural mortality value. The recreational fishery is predominantly

rod-and-line, and the limited length–frequency data for retained fish from the recreational fishery surveys indicate a rough similarity with the length frequency distribution of retained sea bass in the UK commercial line fishery. It was therefore necessary to separate the UK line fishery catches and length and age composition data from the combined UK otter trawl/nets/lines fleet and estimate selectivity separately for this fleet. Based on analyses in previous benchmarks, selectivity for the UK line fleet was estimated using the 2-parameter asymptotic model as a function of length, and the selectivity of the recreational fishery was mirrored with this fishery.

The estimated time-series of international recreational landings, and the associated time-invariant recreational F , are shown in Figure 4.2.7. As in previous assessments, the recreational F is around 0.1, i.e. around a quarter of the total F in 2012. The stock trends for this run are given in Figure 4.2.8, and show higher SSB and lower F than Run 4 until 2010. Since both runs fit a constant recreational F , the differences must be due to the disaggregation of the UK commercial fishery into an additional lines component with the need to estimate an additional two selectivity parameters.

IBPBass2 proposed the retention of this approach for development of the final SS3 model configuration, as it represents the recreational fishery correctly as a fleet and not a component of M , thereby avoiding confusion and problems with interpreting model outputs such as fishing mortality and unexploited biomass. It must however be seen as a temporary solution, as there continue to be major uncertainties related to the accuracy of the recreational catch estimates and the assumption of constant recreational F , which will become increasingly violated in future due to management measures currently being applied separately to the commercial and recreational fisheries.

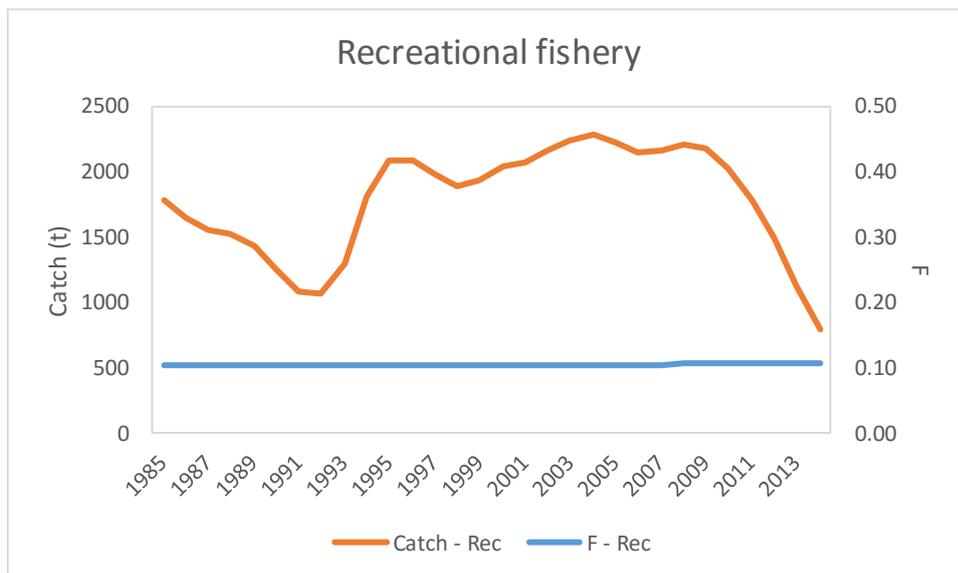


Figure 4.2.7. **Run 5:** Estimated annual recreational landings and associated year-invariant fishing mortality resulting in recreational landings in 2012 of 1,500t, the figure inferred from recreational fishery surveys in years around 2012.

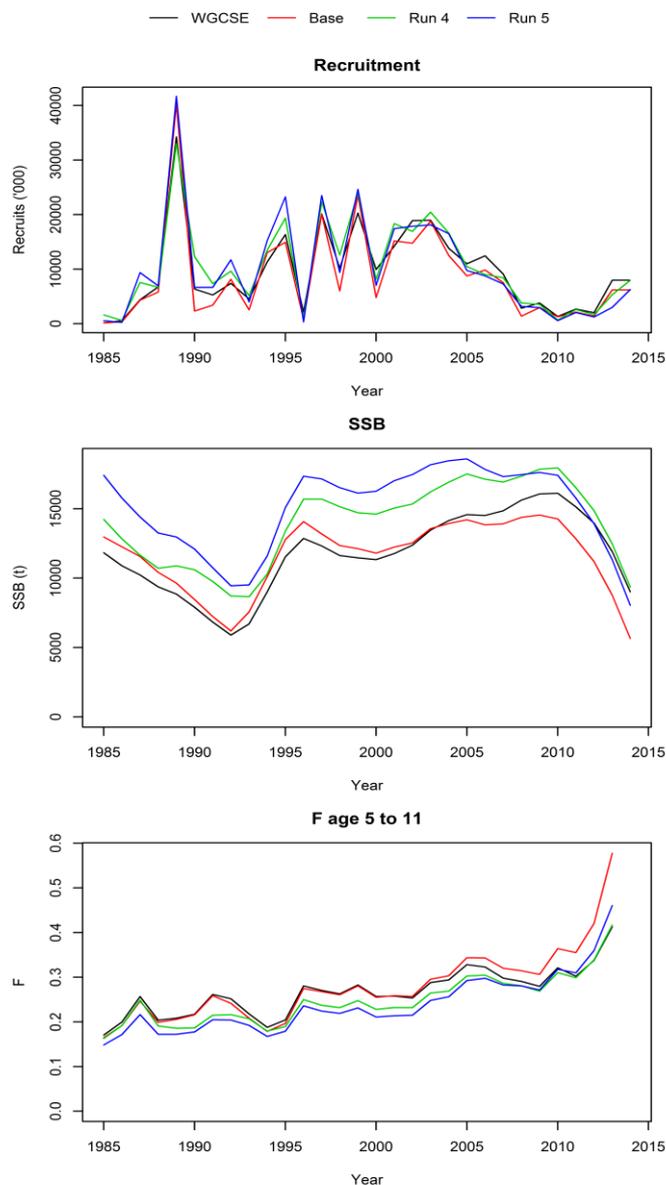


Figure 4.2.8. Run 5. Effect on assessment of including the recreational fishery and UK commercial line fleet as separate fleets, with asymptotic length-based selectivity, compared with Run 4 in which recreational fishing mortality is included in the M vector, and UK commercial lines are included with otter trawl and nets as a single fleet.

Run 6. Effective sample size weighting (Francis method).

Effective sample size for the fleets and survey age and length compositions were adjusted to equal the sample sizes (numbers of fishing trips sampled) as concluded in IBPbass1 (ICES 2014). IPBBass2 revisited the sample sizes and where information was available used the number of trips per year for each of the datasets. Sample sizes were adjusted using the Francis method of weighting. This was carried out using an iterative re-weighting process of compositional data using the input sample sizes and the effective sample sizes based on model fit. This method reduces the disproportionate effect

of the different dataset used. Table 4.2.1 provides the multiplier by fleet for each of the age and length composition data sources.

Table 4.2.1. Effective sample size multiplier for age and length compositions by fleet.

FLEET	DATA TYPE	MULTIPLIER
UK otter trawl/nets	Length compositions	0.2625
	Age compositions	0.2376
UK Lines	Length compositions	0.1539
	Age compositions	0.1591
UK midwater trawl	Length compositions	0.1601
	Age compositions	0.7251
French – all gears	Length compositions	0.2023
	Age compositions	0.3362
Autumn Bass survey	Age compositions	0.8443
French channel groundfish survey (CGFS)	Length compositions	0.3562

Applying the above multipliers to the sample sizes for age and length composition combinations for each of the fleet resulted in a reduction in the residuals for the age and length compositions. SSB is estimated to be higher in recent years and lower in the early part of the time-series (Figure 4.2.9). Consequently, the negative log likelihoods for all components, with the exception of the equilibrium catch, decreased compared with run 5 (Table 4.2.2).

Table 4.2.2. Summary of Likelihood values from SS3 runs 5 and 6

LIKELIHOOD COMPONENT	RUN5	RUN6
TOTAL	3459.55	897.344
Catch	7.4839E-11	3.8935E-12
Equil_catch	0.1054	0.371252
Survey	3.2278	0.43911
Length_comp	1385.95	320.15
Age_comp	2030.4	547.626
Recruitment	39.8395	28.7418
Parm_softbounds	0.0182632	0.0158571
Convergence level	8.1053E-05	2.822E-05
Active parameters	83	83

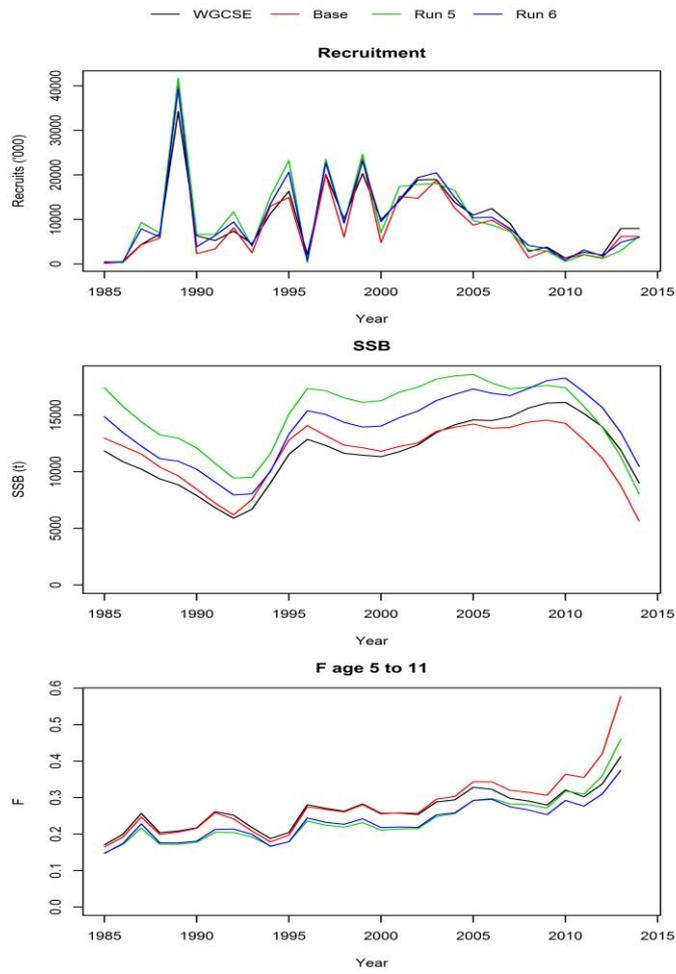


Figure 4.2.9. Run 6: effect on stock trends of applying the Francis (2011) method to adjust the relative weighting of datasets in the assessment, compared with Run 5 where the input sample sizes are based on the actual sample sizes (numbers of trips sampled for length or age).

4.3 Sensitivity and jitter analysis

IBPBass2 concluded that model Run 6 could be taken forward as the agreed approach for use in future update assessments for sea bass. However there are a number of assumptions in the model that introduce additional uncertainty to the model results. These include assumptions that relate to the biology and productivity of the stock (e.g. natural mortality and shape of the stock–recruit relationship), and assumptions related to input data and how the model is fitted. As IBPBass2 was convened primarily to review the quality and utility of French age data, it was not possible (or indeed appropriate) in the time available to comprehensively review the sensitivity of the model to all the assumptions, which should be a task for a full benchmark process. A full evaluation of uncertainty would also include Monte Carlo–Markov Chain (MCMC) or Monte Carlo–bootstrap (MCB) runs to represent uncertainty in all input data and parameters.

Using the model settings of run 6, the following sensitivity analysis were performed:

- Sensitivity to different natural mortality settings;
- Sensitivity to steepness in the stock recruitment relationship;
- Alternative lambda setting for down-weighting age and length composition data for the commercial fleets where both datasets are fitted in the model;
- Sensitivity to different levels of recreational catch.

This approach underestimates sensitivity, as it does not include sensitivity to altering these values in different possible combinations.

Sensitivity to choice of natural mortality M

The value (or vector) of natural mortality used in an analytical assessment is a key parameter determining the estimated productivity, abundance and MSY or other reference points (RPs). The assumed shape of the stock–recruit curve acts with the assumed M to constrain any possible biological reference points (Mangel *et al.*, 2013). There are no direct estimates of natural mortality for sea bass. Armstrong (2012) in a working document to IBP-NEW (ICES 2012) used a range of life-history methods which (with the exception of a method by Beverton (1992)), gave age-invariant estimates in the range 0.15–0.22. The Working Document recommended that the sea bass assessment uses $M=0.18$ as the baseline M , and to examine the sensitivity of the assessment to $M=0.15$ and $M=0.22$. IBP-New concluded that a value of 0.2 was appropriate given the maximum age of 28 years in historical samples, and the relatively delayed age at maturity. IBPBass1 revised the assumed value down to 0.15. Four sensitivity runs were carried out by IBPBass2:

- Allowing the model to estimate natural mortality
- A fixed value of 0.1 for natural mortality across all ages
- A fixed value of 0.2 for natural mortality across all ages
- A vector of mortality following the Gislason *et al* (2010) method identified in IBPBass1 (2014).

Natural mortality estimated by the model was 0.156 with an SD of 0.041, which is close to the fixed value used in Run 6 of 0.15. Apart from the increase in number of estimated parameters, the total likelihood and assessment results closely match the total likelihood and estimates of recruitment, SSB and F_{5-11} of run 6 (Figure 4.3.1). However, the uncertainty given by the standard deviation suggests that natural mortality could be between 0.1 and 0.2.

It is expected that natural mortality will be relatively high at younger ages, and decline with increasing size and age. The Gislason *et al* (2010) method generates a natural mortality vector of this form. As expected, recruitment estimates are much higher using this method (other than compared with $M=0.2$ for all ages), but the relative trends in recruitment are very similar to those from the other M assumptions. Estimates of SSB and F_{5-11} from the Gislason *et al* method are similar to the results from run 6 (with $M=0.15$) and from the sensitivity run when the model is allowed to estimate natural mortality (giving the value of 0.156). This is because the age range for mature fish, and for calculating mean F , corresponds to the age range in which the Gislason method provides estimates declining from just above 0.2 to between 0.1 and 0.2.

Sensitivity to steepness in the stock recruitment relationship

A key parameter defining a stock–recruit curve is its ‘steepness’. This is defined as the ratio of recruitment from an unfished population to its recruitment when the spawning–stock biomass is at 20% of the unfished level. The stock synthesis model currently uses a Beverton–Holt (asymptotic) model with fixed stock–recruit steepness of 0.999 as there are insufficient observations to provide a possible value for steepness. IBPBass2 explored the sensitivity of the model to a steepness value of 0.7, and the results shown in Figure 4.3.2 show very little sensitivity to this value with just a minor revision downward for SSB and upward for F_{5-11} .

Sensitivity to the lambda settings for the age and length composition data of the commercial fleets

The structure of Stock Synthesis allows the input of data closer to its raw form – for example length compositions for individual fleets together with conditional age–length data (sample data giving age compositions within length classes –i.e. age length keys). In this case, the numbers-at-age in the catches can be generated within the model taking into account weightings that relate to the sample sizes for each type of data. The inclusion of length and age data in the model allows the fitting of length-based selectivity to fishing fleets whereas retaining the year-class signals contained within age data and allowing for sample sizes in both sets of data. This approach is widely used outside Europe, whereas within ICES the conventional approach is for numbers-at-age to be estimated external to the model by applying age length keys to fleet-raised length compositions. This method (in principle) correctly accounts for the weighting factors at each stage in stratified, multistage cluster sampling schemes. Given the number of national strata in the sea bass sampling programmes, it was not feasible for IBPBass2 to generate conditional age–length input data and it was decided to look at this in more depth during a full benchmark assessment. An alternative approach used in parts of the USA, is to include fleet raised length compositions as well as the fleet-raised age compositions in the model, but to apply downweighting (emphasis factors– λ) to each type of data to avoid the over-weighting that results from “double counting” through use of both the age and length compositions from the same sources. IBPBass2 decided to set the lambda values for the length and age compositions for fleets with both types of data to minimize overall negative log likelihood and alleviate the “double counting” concern (since lambda values are being multiplied in the model by the corresponding likelihood component).

Three sensitivities runs were carried out in which the lambda values for the length and age data in Run 6 were set as follows: lambda 0.4/0.6, 0.5/0.5 and 0.6/0.4 for the length and age data respectively.

Applying the lambda values had the expected effect of reducing the negative log likelihoods for the age and length composition data (Table 4.3.1), with very little difference

to the SSB, recruitment and $F_{5.11}$ time-series estimated by each of the models (figure 4.3.3).

Sensitivity to the different levels of recreational catch

Very little information is available on the historical catch from the recreational fisheries and where data are available the precision is estimated to be around 20–30 %. With only one combined estimate the uncertainty in the time-series is unknown, IBPBass2 explored the sensitivity to an increase and decrease in the time-series of recreational catch by 20% over the time-series (figure 4.3.4).

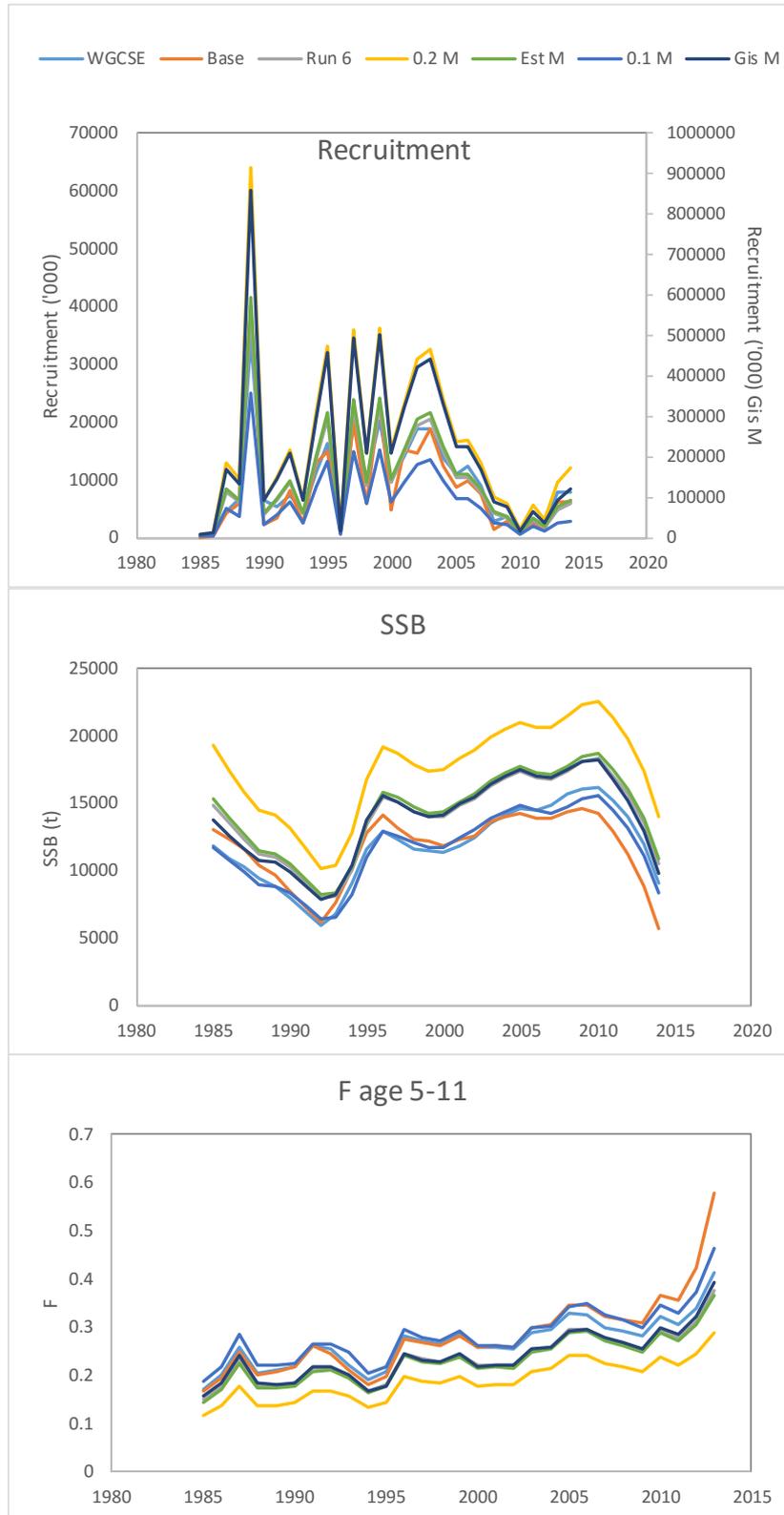


Figure 4.3.1. Sensitivity of Run 6 model to choice of natural mortality (M). Est M = value estimated by Stock Synthesis; Gis M = Gislason method with age-dependent values; Run 6 = run with M=0.15.



Figure 4.3.2. Sensitivity of Run 6 model to choice of stock recruit steepness

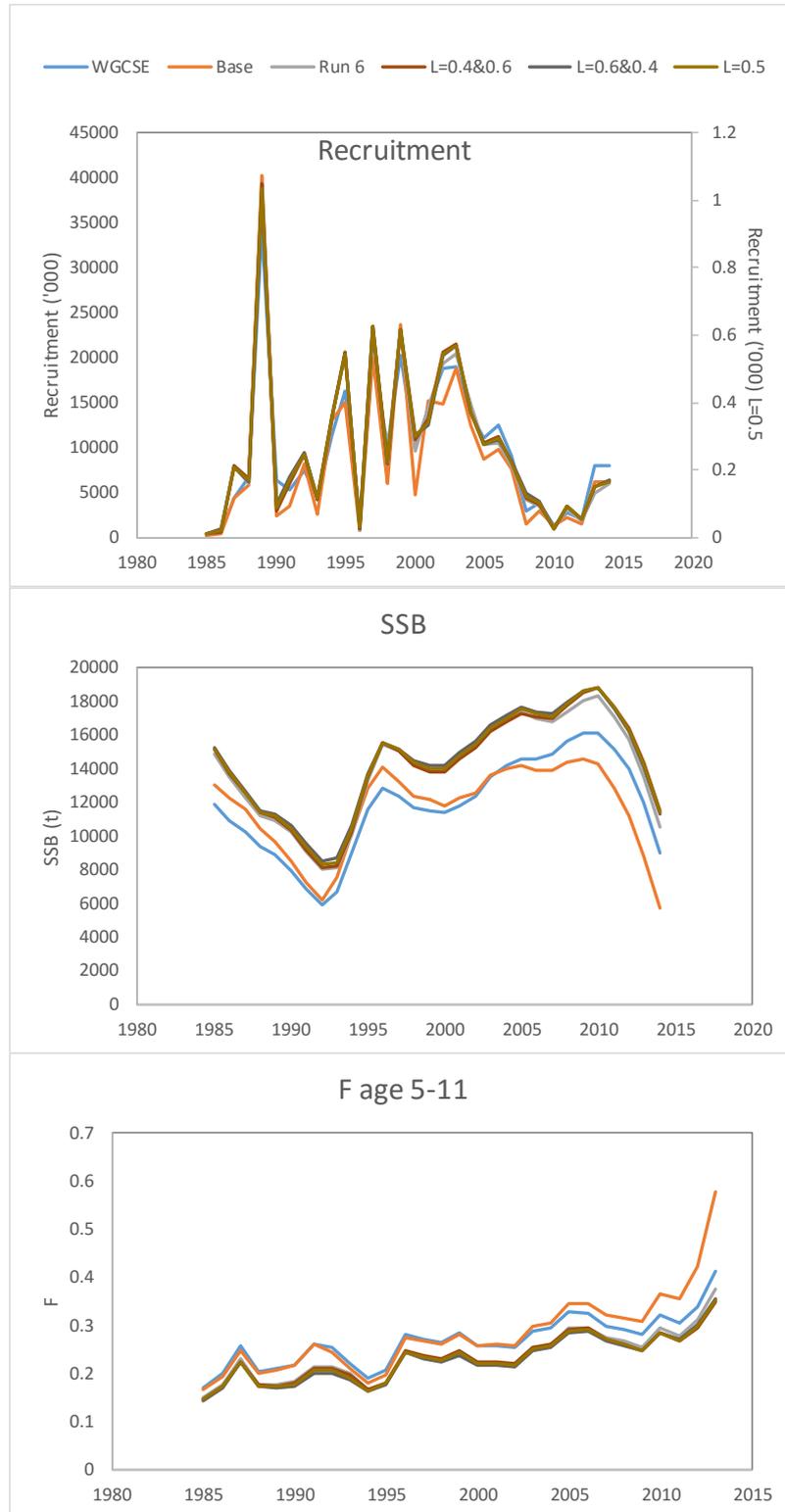


Figure 4.3.3. Sensitivity of stock trends from run 6 to choice of lambda values for the age and length compositions of the commercial fleets. Lambda values e.g. L=0.4&0.6 refer to length then age (i.e. lambda for length data = 0.4, and for age = 0.6).



Figure 4.3.4. Sensitivity of stock trends from run 6 to different levels of recreational catch.

Table 4.3.1 Summary of Likelihood values from SS3 sensitivity runs adjusting natural mortality M, stock–recruit steepness, Lamda values for weighting age and length composition data, and increasing or decreasing the annual recreational catch.

	M=0.2	M=0.1	SS3 EST M	GISLASON M	0.7 SR STEEPNESS
TOTAL	897.928	897.92	897.334	914.236	903.958
Catch	6.21E-13	9.46E-11	2.79E-12	7.10E-12	2.01E-11
Equil_catch	0.0187	1.8447	0.2863	0.8168	0.8211
Survey	0.6929	0.3021	0.4607	0.1803	1.0018
Length_comp	320.9570	319.3770	320.2320	328.5960	320.9090
Age_comp	549.9440	544.9420	547.9310	555.9080	545.8130
Recruitment	26.2996	31.4377	28.4075	28.7199	35.3965
Forecast_Recruitment	0	0	0	0	0
Parm_priors	0	0	0	0	0
Parm_softbounds	0.0160	0.0158	0.0159	0.0156	0.0160
Parm_devs	0	0	0	0	0
Crash_Pen	0	0	0	0	0
Convergence level	3.73E-05	9.2E-05	3.67E-05	8.96E-05	7.28E-05
Active parameters	83	83	84	83	83
	LAMDA= 0.4&0.6	LAMDA= 0.6&0.4	LAMDA= 0.5&0.5	RECCATCH *1.2	RECCATCH *0.8
TOTAL	538.574	487.373	514.574	896.682	898.34
Catch	1.94E-12	2.00E-12	2.20E-12	2.41E-12	7.16E-12
Equil_catch	0.2886	0.3688	0.2803	0.2478	0.5230
Survey	0.1979	-0.0297	-0.0553	0.5333	0.3458
Length_comp	168.1220	208.7110	189.0840	319.989	320.368
Age_comp	342.6960	254.0320	298.9560	547.950	547.285
Recruitment	27.2557	24.2768	26.2950	27.9463	29.8027
Forecast_Recruitment	0	0	0	0	0
Parm_priors	0	0	0	0	0
Parm_softbounds	0.0134	0.0139	0.0136	0.0159	0.0159
Parm_devs	0	0	0	0	0
Crash_Pen	0	0	0	0	0
Convergence level	6.16E-05	4.59E-05	3.27E-05	7.9E-05	1E-05
Active parameters	83	83	83	83	83

4.4 Jitter analysis

An analysis was run using the jitter function within SS3 which added 10% variation on the 83 parameters to be estimated. This was to check whether the model would be able to converge and provide similar results for each run with similar negative log likelihood values. 25 runs were carried out on Run 6 with a lambda value of 0.5 for both the age and length composition data for the commercial fleets. Of the 25 runs, 9 were unable to converge. All other model runs converged at the same point giving the same negative log likelihood values for each of the input datasets.

4.5 Conclusion from model development process

The model considered by IBPBass2 as suitable for future update assessments by ICES differs in several important respects from the model presented by ICES WGCSE in 2015. Key changes include:

- Fixing all growth parameters of the von Bertalanffy growth equation
- Inclusion of French age data (run1 and 2)
- Inclusion of UK length data (run 3)
- Combining the UK Autumn Solent bass survey into one index (run 4)
- Separation of the UK trawls/Nets and lines in to two fleets and Inclusion of the recreational catch at a separate fleet (run 5)
- Revision of input effective sample sizes using the Francis method (run 6)
- Using an emphasis factor (lamda) of 0.5 each for length and age composition data (sensitivity run)

In combination, these changes improve the model and alter the absolute values of SSB and fishing mortality compared with the WGCSE 2015 assessment, but have little effect on the relative trends (Figure 4.3.3—comparing the run with Lambda=0.5 with the WGCSE 2015 run).

4.6 Final assessment and diagnostics

The data incorporated in the assessment and fleet landings are shown graphically in Figure 4.6.1. and the input files are given in Annex 1, Appendix 1–4. A range of model outputs are shown in Figures 4.6.2–4.6.20. Standard summary tables, and tables of output stock numbers and commercial fishery F are given in Tables 4.6.1–4.6.3.

Good correspondence was found between the observed and fitted length compositions for each fleet (figure 4.6.2-9), particularly for the period after 1990. However, the observed and fitted age compositions (figures 4.6.10–15) for each fleet were less well fitted with some diagonal residual patterns indicating some problems in fitting extreme variations in recruitment.

Both the UK Solent Autumn bass and the channel groundfish abundance indices given in figures 4.6.16–17, fit reasonably well with good fits to both the age and length compositions, respectively.

With the additional of advanced options for recruitment deviation the model gives reasonable precision back to the 1976-year class (figure 4.6.18). This allows a longer term perception of recruitment dynamic. Recruitment is highly variable with no evidence of a reduction in average recruitment at the lower SSB values (figure 4.6.19) mainly affected by the imposition of a steepness value of 0.999 for the fitted Beverton–

Holt stock–recruit curve. As in IBP-Bass the likelihoods progressively worsened as the steepness value reduced.

The Retrospective analysis was carried out, for runs with data up to 2012 and 2013, it was necessary to re-estimate the recreational landings to give constant recreational F corresponding to landings of 1 500 t in 2012. For runs with final data year 2011 or earlier, the recreational landings for the run ending 2012 was adopted. There is evidence of a retrospective bias (Figure 4.6.20) given by a Mohn’s Rho value of 0.265 for fishing mortality and -0.15 for SSB from a 7-year peel. A Mohn’s Rho value of greater than 0.2 for fishing mortality is above the reference criteria identified by ICES in relation to the frequency of assessment.

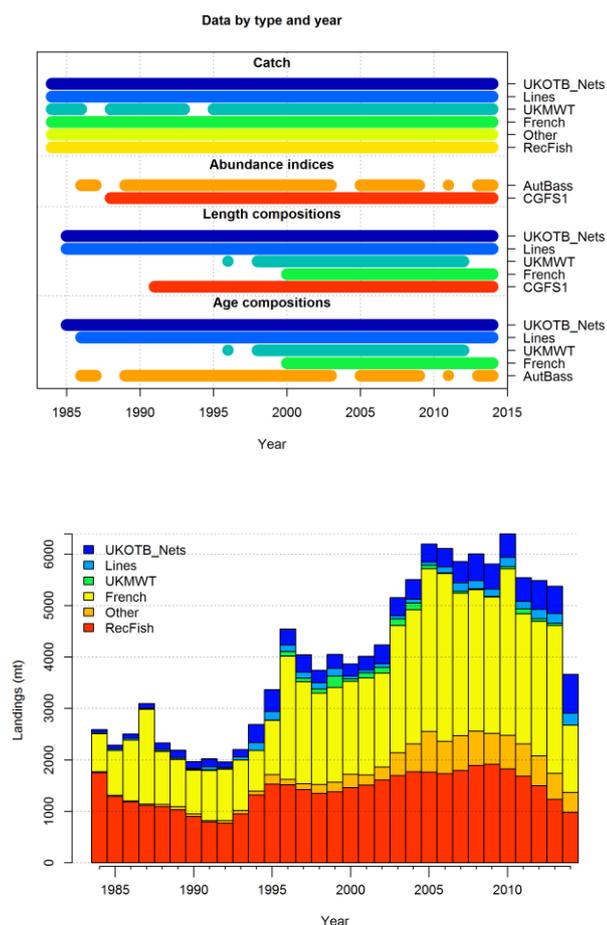
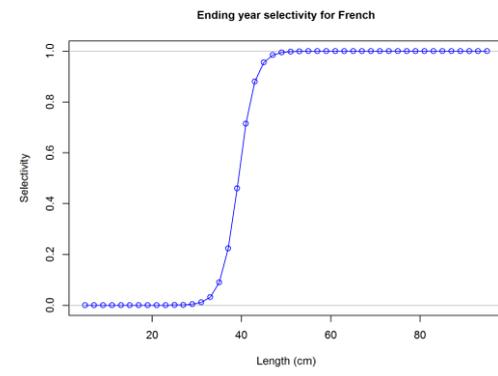
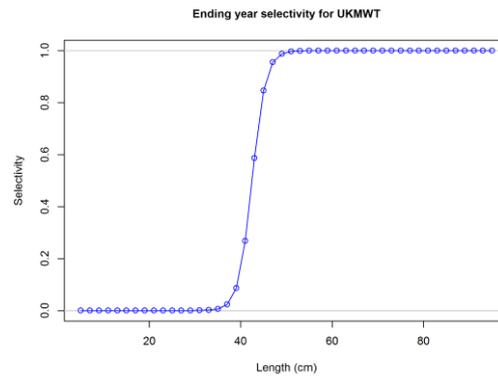
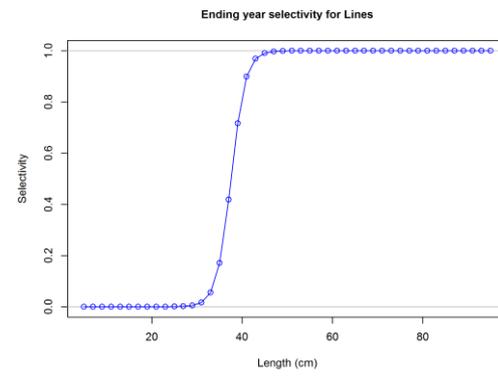
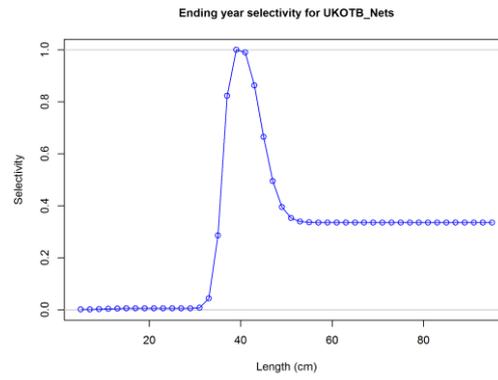


Figure 4.6.1. Left: Datasets used in the final assessment. Right: Landings series for the six fleets.



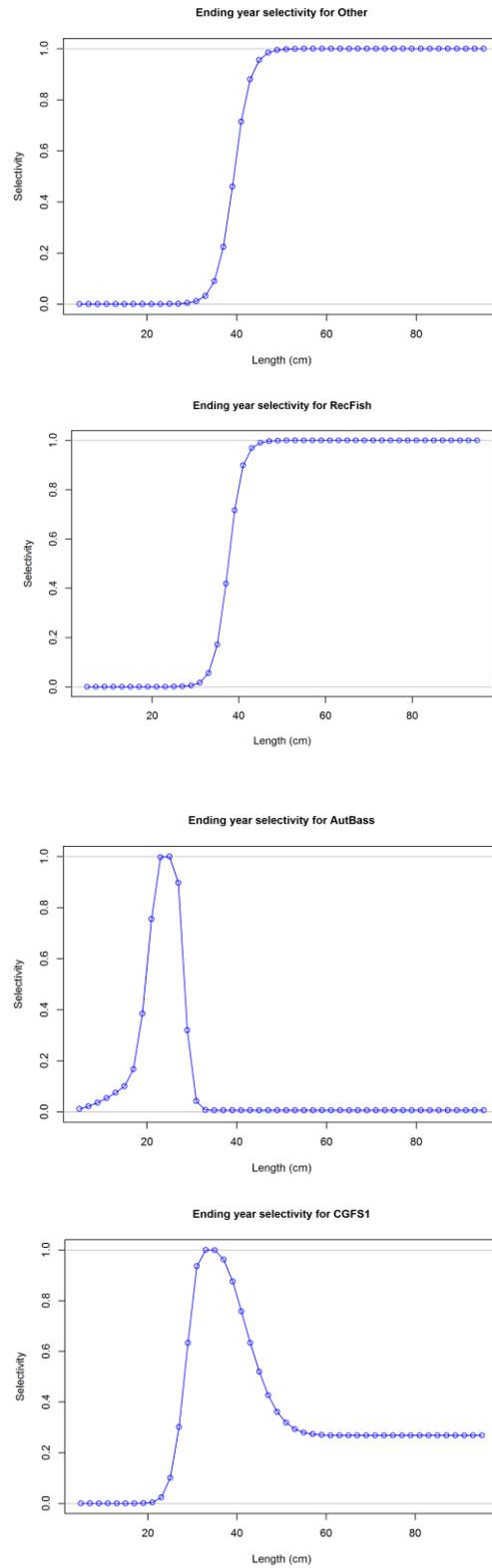


Figure 4.6.2. Final sea bass assessment: fitted length-based selectivity curves.

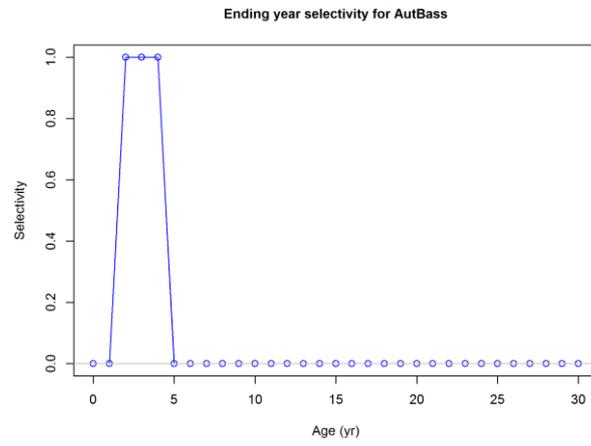


Figure 4.6.3. Final sea bass assessment: fitted age-based selectivity curves.

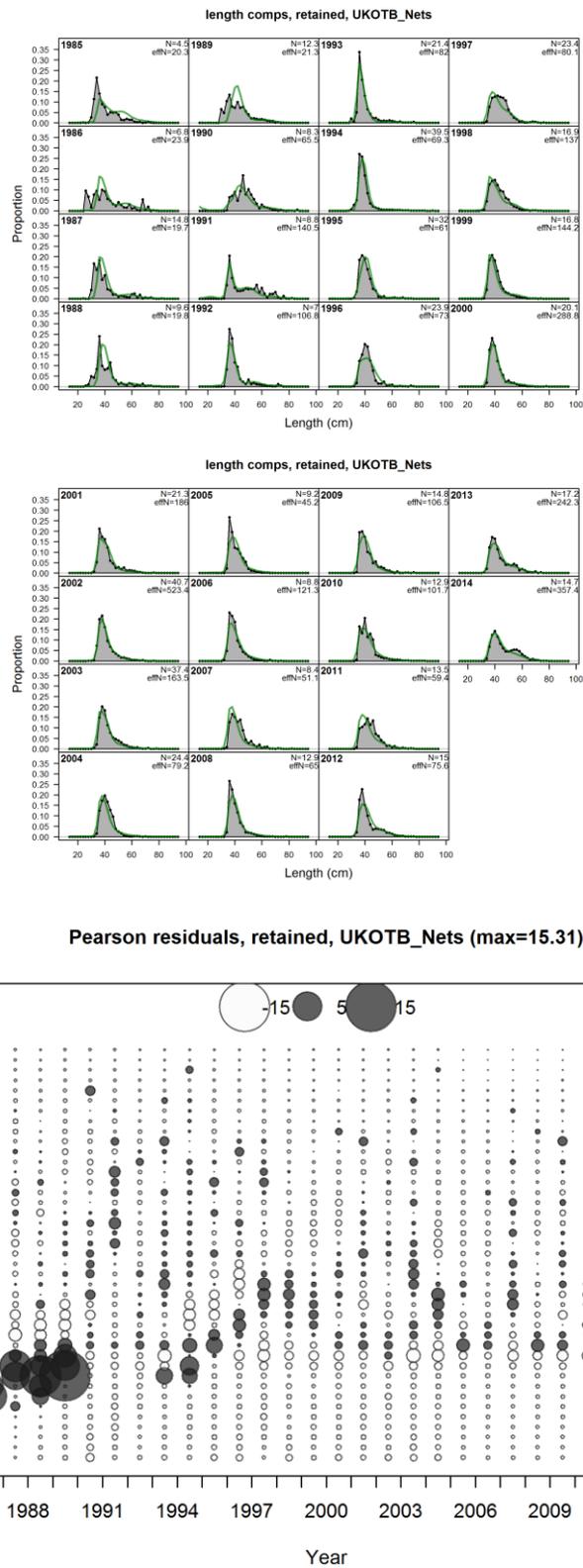
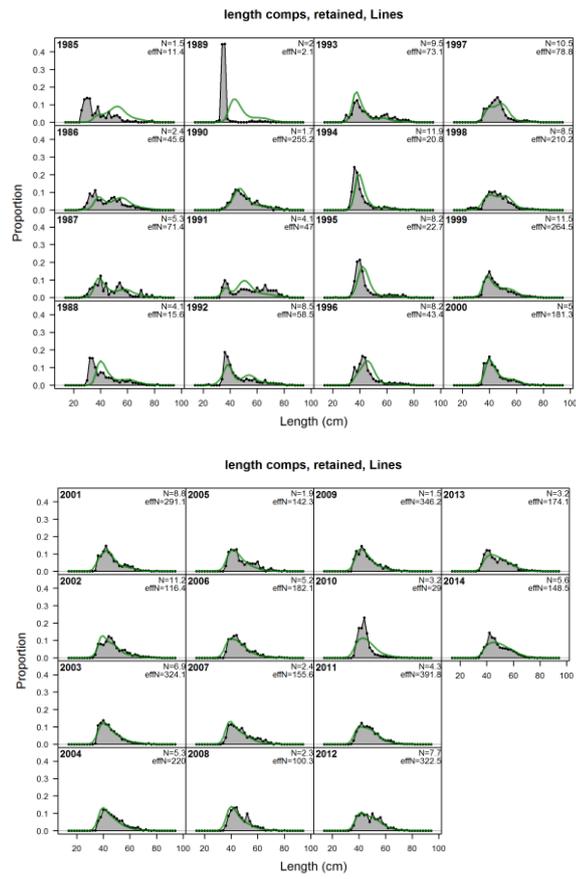


Figure 4.6.4. Final sea bass assessment: fit to UK trawls and nets fishery length composition data.



Pearson residuals, retained, Lines (max=9.54)

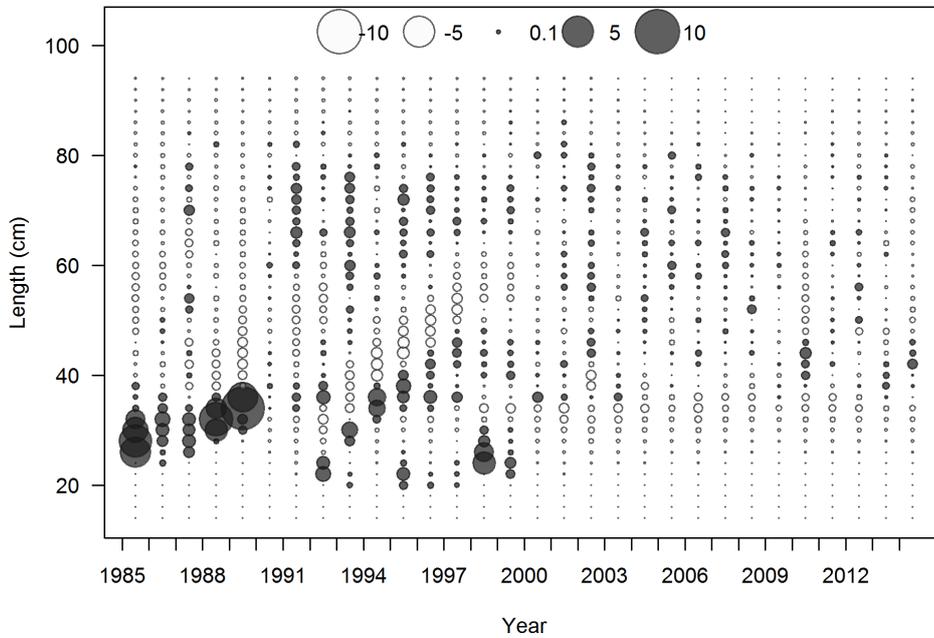


Figure 4.6.5. Final sea bass assessment: fit to UK Lines fishery length composition data.

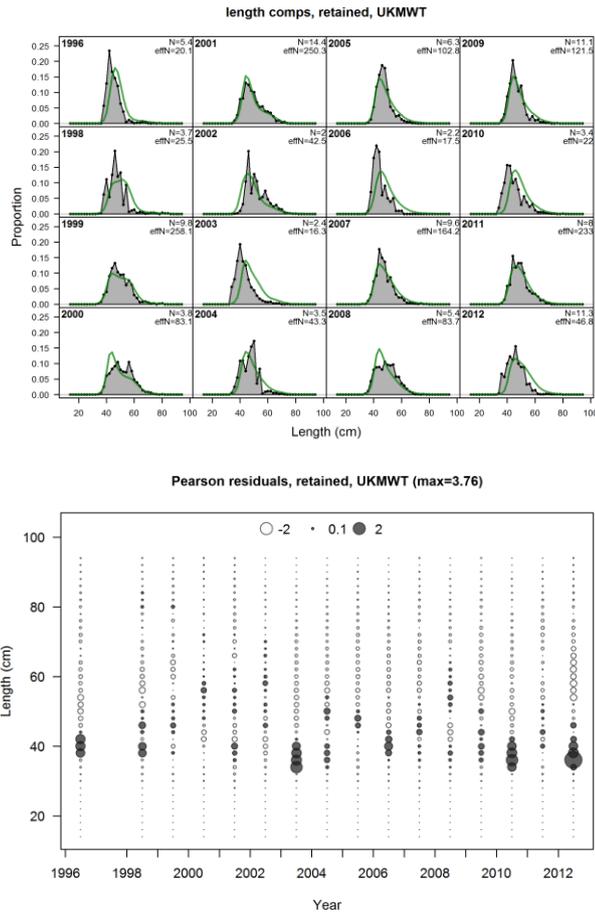


Figure 4.6.6. Final sea bass assessment: fit to UK midwater trawl fishery length composition data.

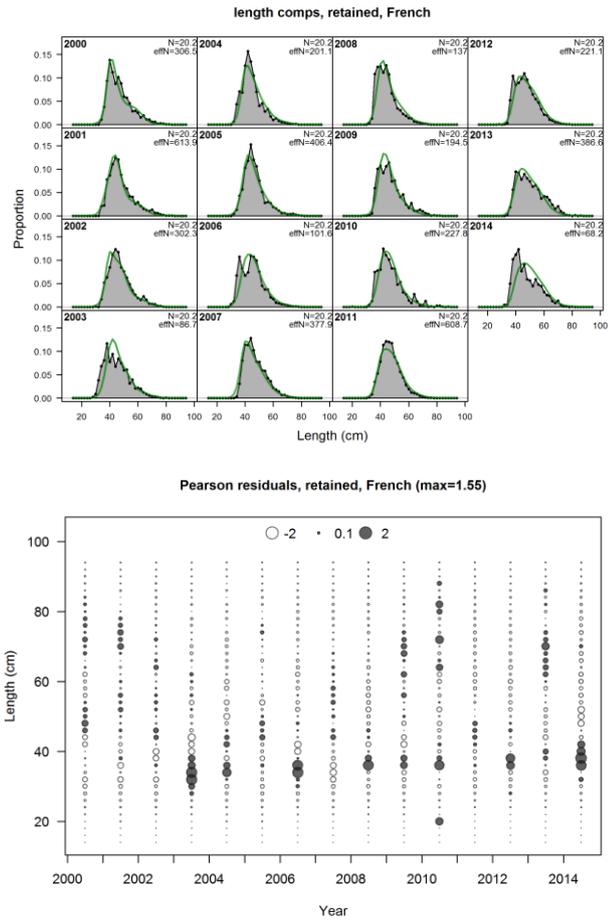
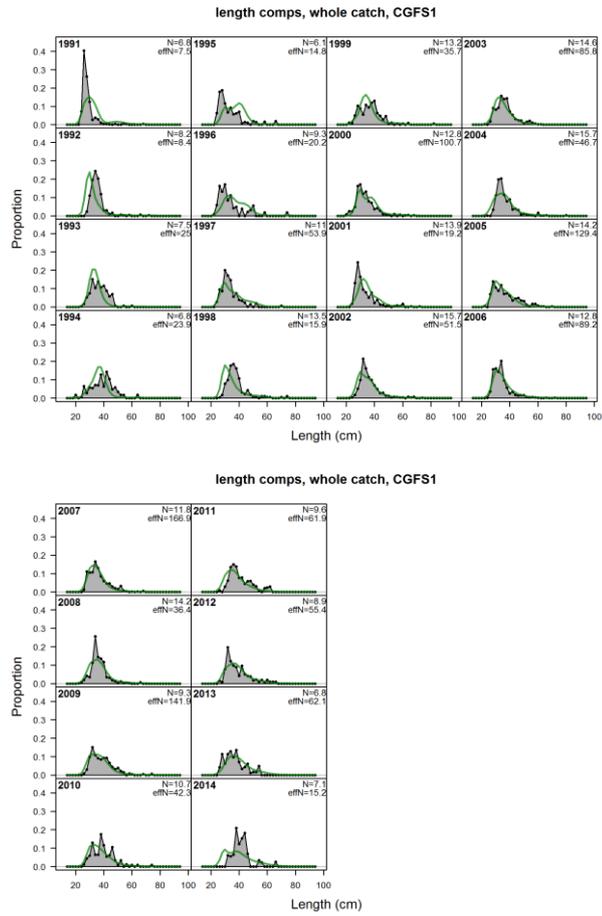


Figure 4.6.7. Final sea bass assessment: fit to french fishery length composition data.



Pearson residuals, whole catch, CGFS1 (max=2.34)

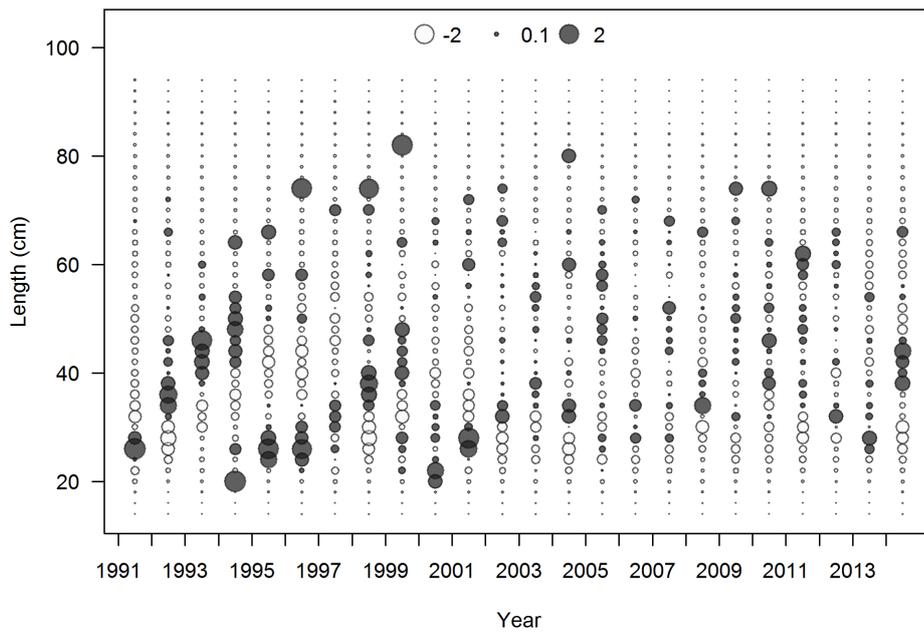


Figure 4.6.8. Final sea bass assessment: fit to French Channel groundfish survey length composition data.

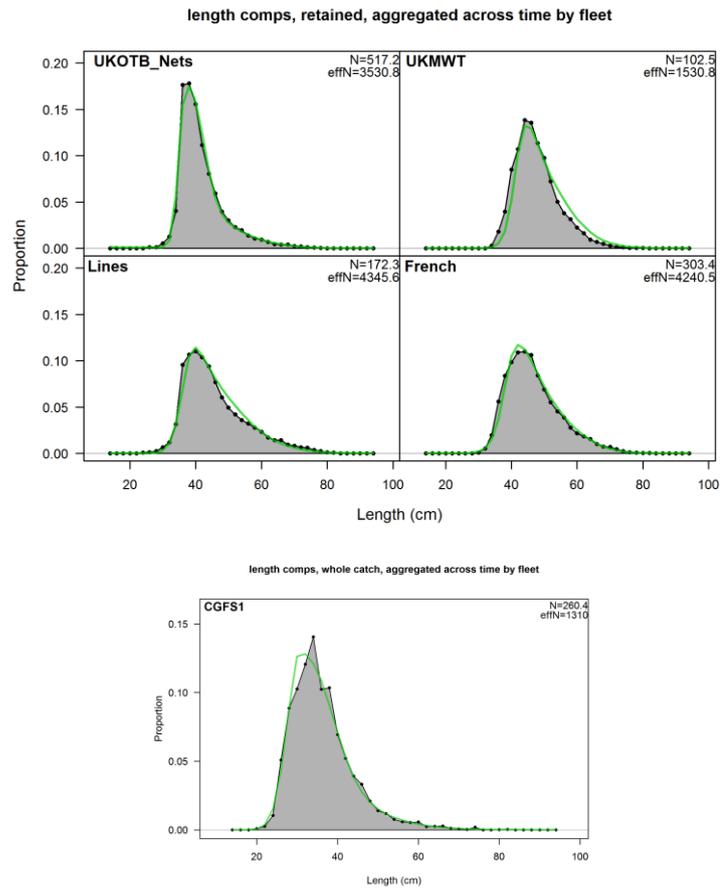
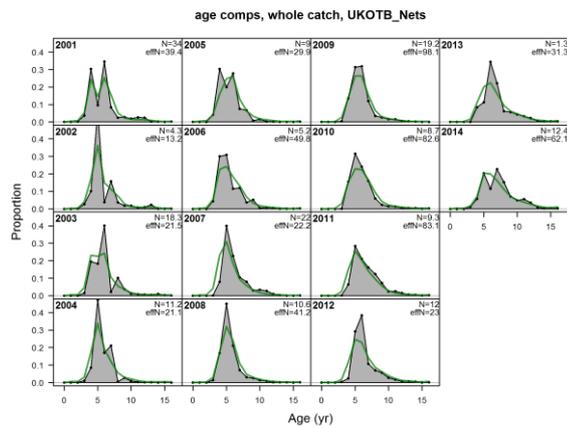
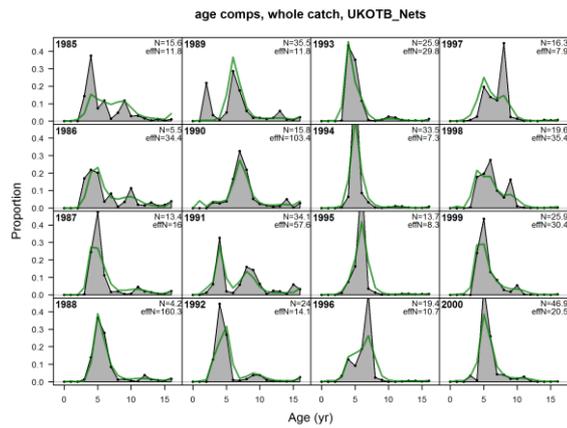


Figure 4.6.9. Final sea bass assessment: fit to length composition data by fishery and survey, aggregated across time.



Pearson residuals, whole catch, UKOTB_Nets (max=17.26)

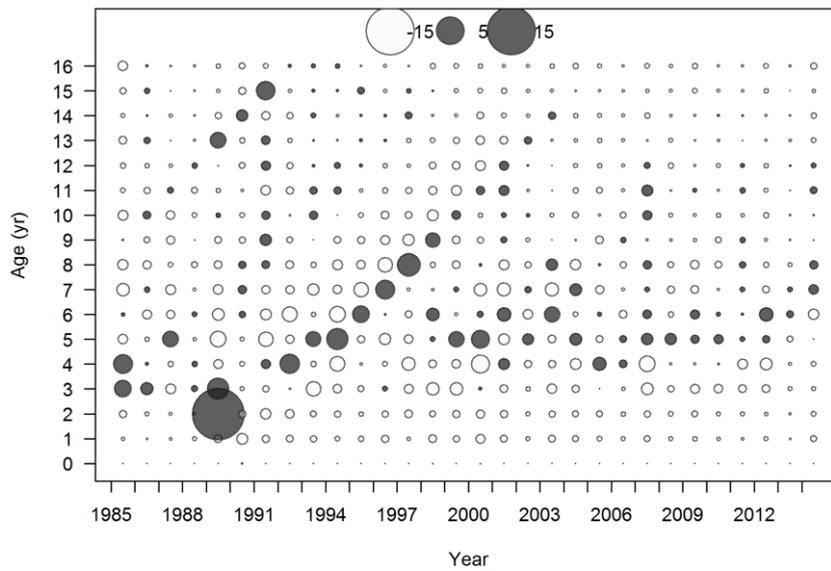


Figure 4.6.10. Final sea bass assessment: fit to UK trawls and nets age composition data.

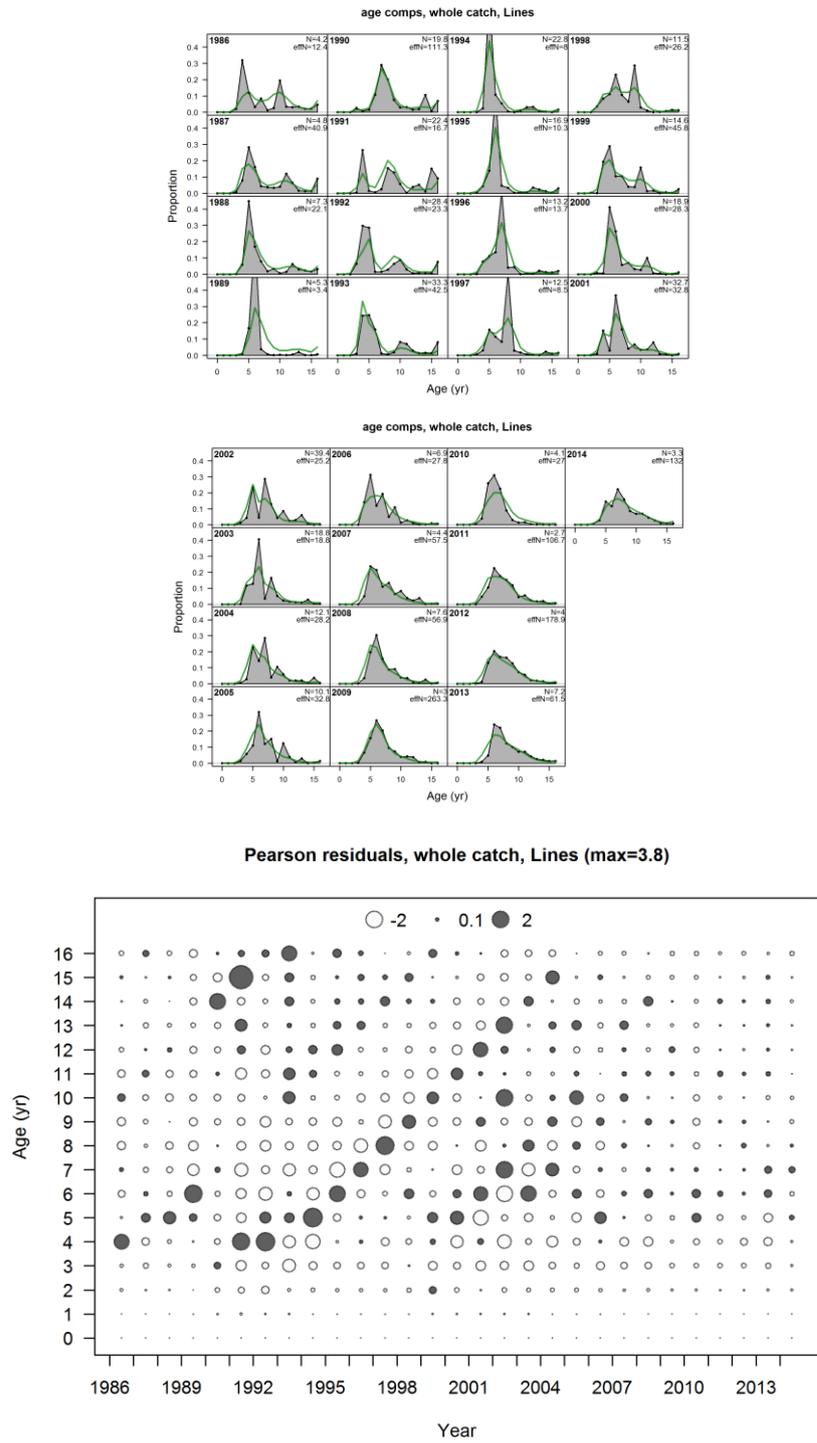


Figure 4.6.11. Final sea bass assessment: fit to UK lines age composition data.

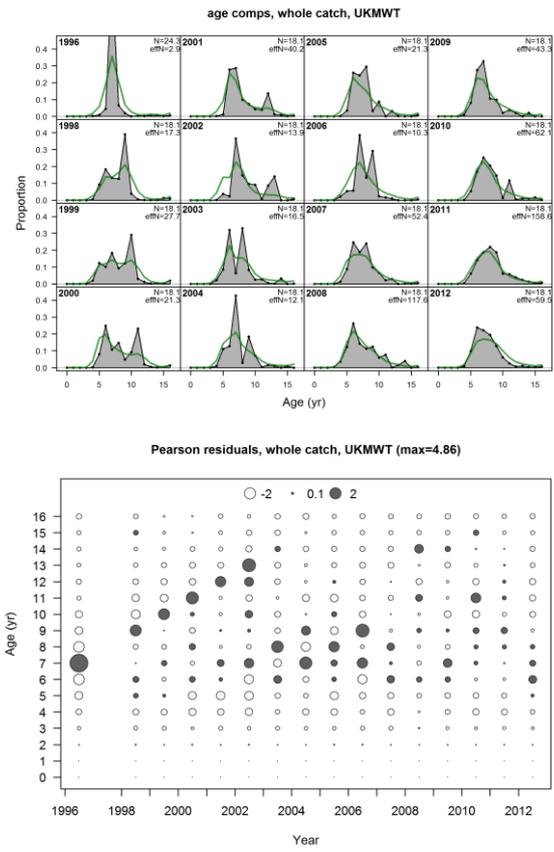


Figure 4.6.12. Final sea bass assessment: fit to UK midwater trawl age composition data.

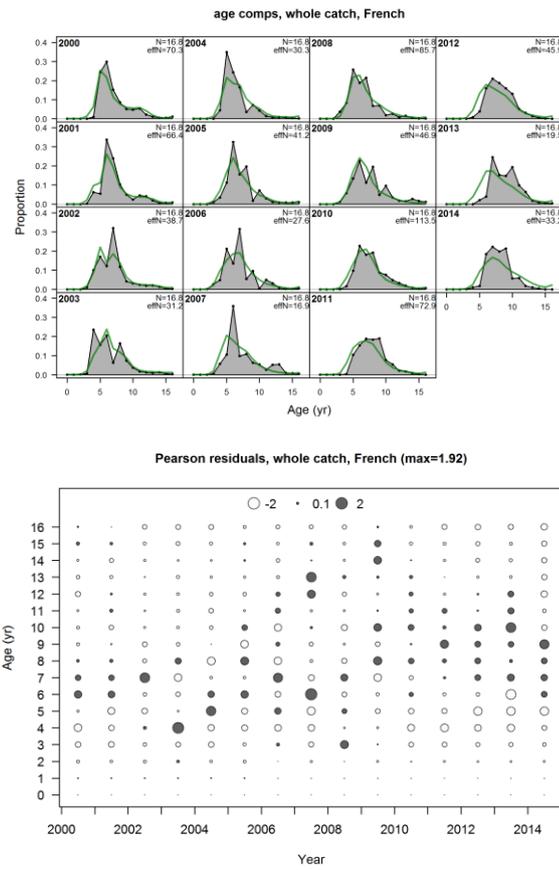


Figure 4.6.13. Final sea bass assessment: fit to french fishery age composition data.

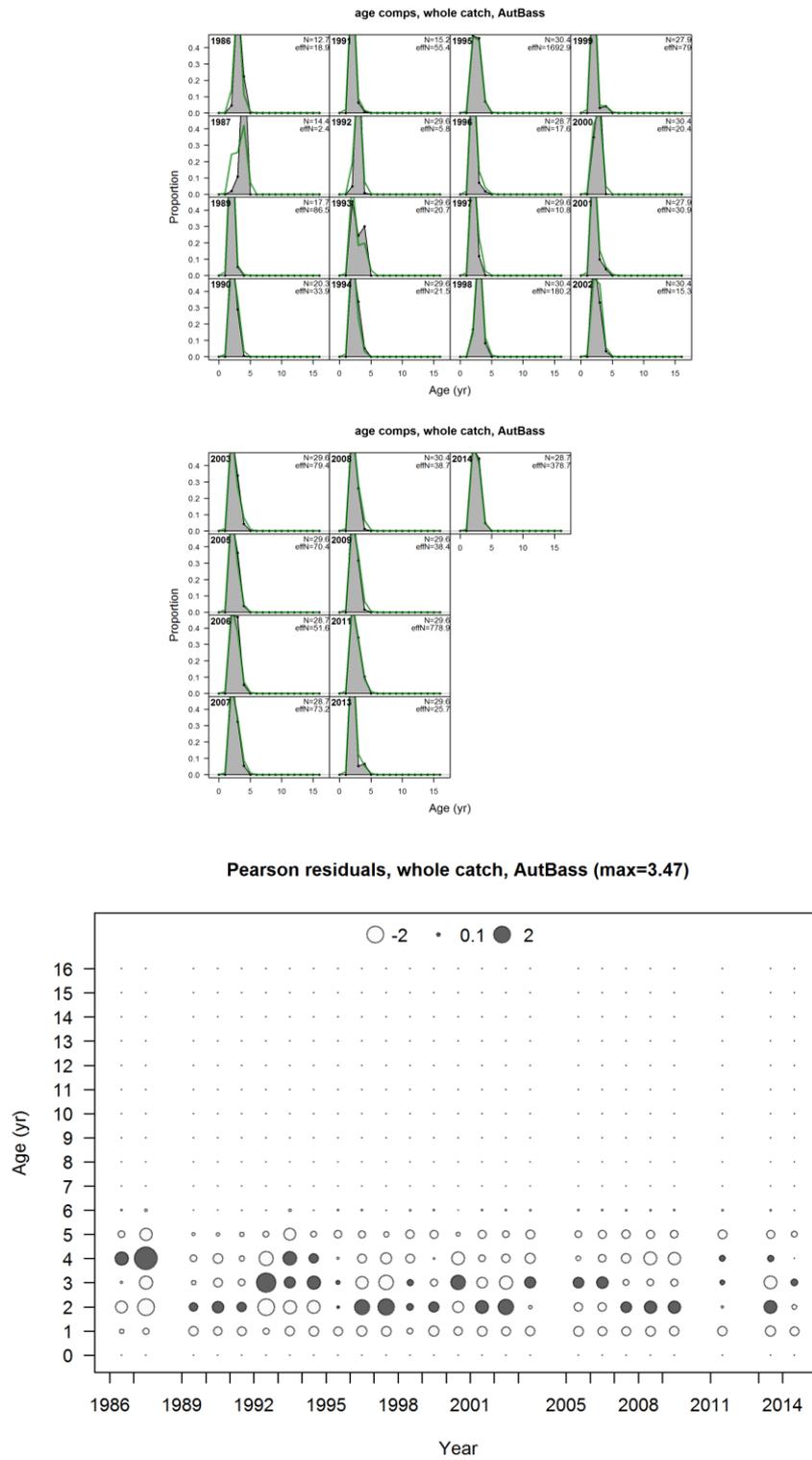


Figure 4.6.14. Final sea bass assessment: fit to UK Solent Autumn bass survey age composition data.

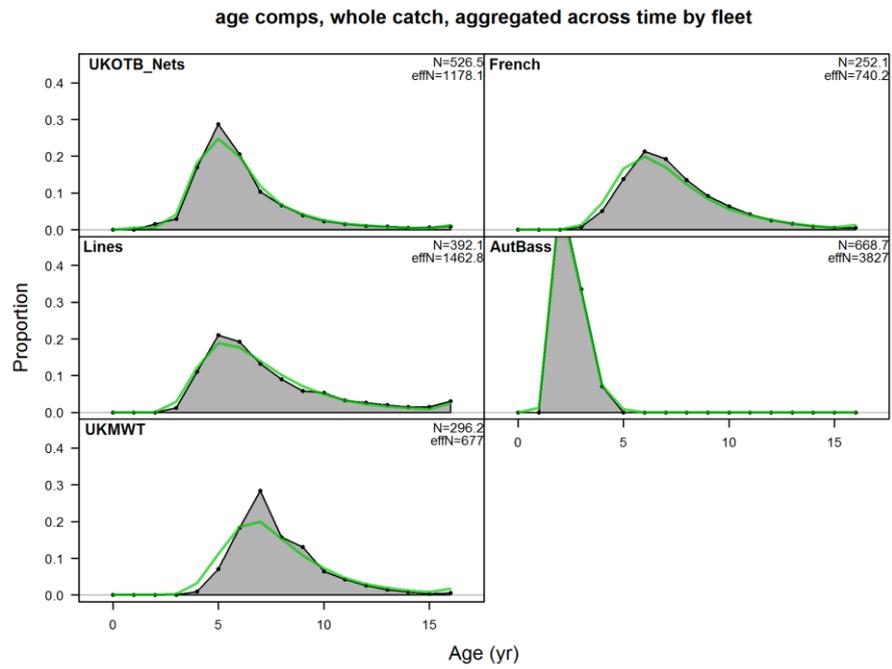


Figure 4.6.15. Final sea bass assessment: fit to age composition data by fishery and survey, aggregated across time.

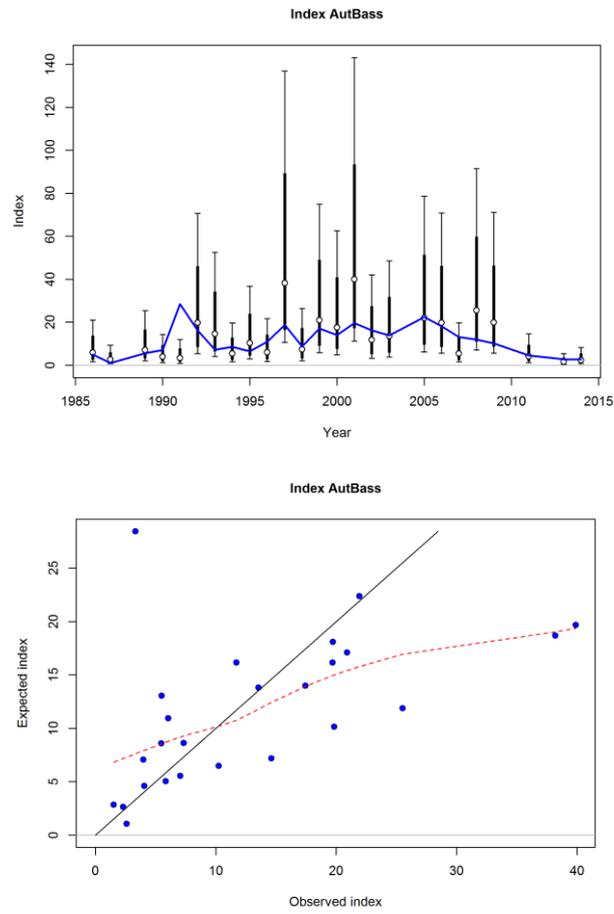


Figure 4.6.16. Final sea bass assessment: fit to UK Solent Autumn bass survey, according to length and age based selectivity.

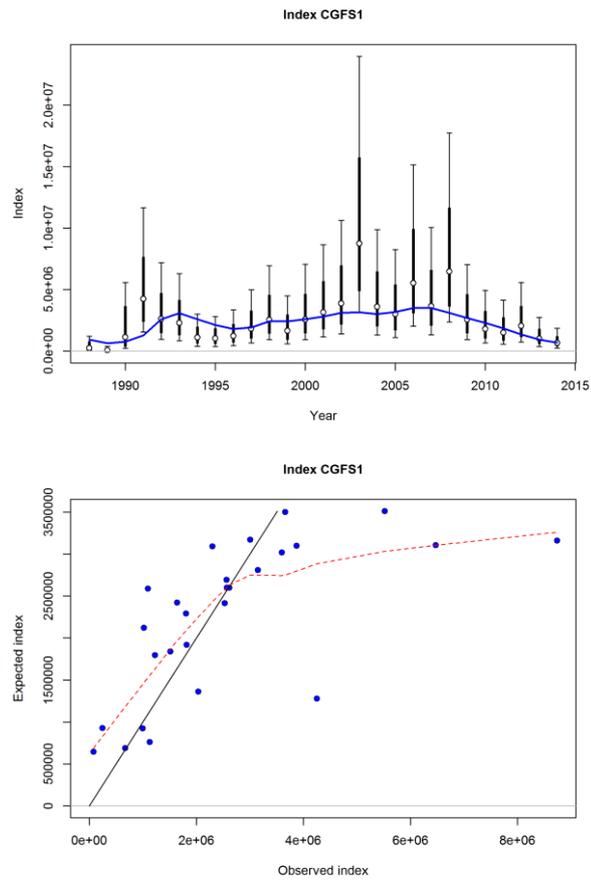


Figure 4.6.17. Final sea bass assessment: fit to French channel groundfish survey, according to length based selectivity.

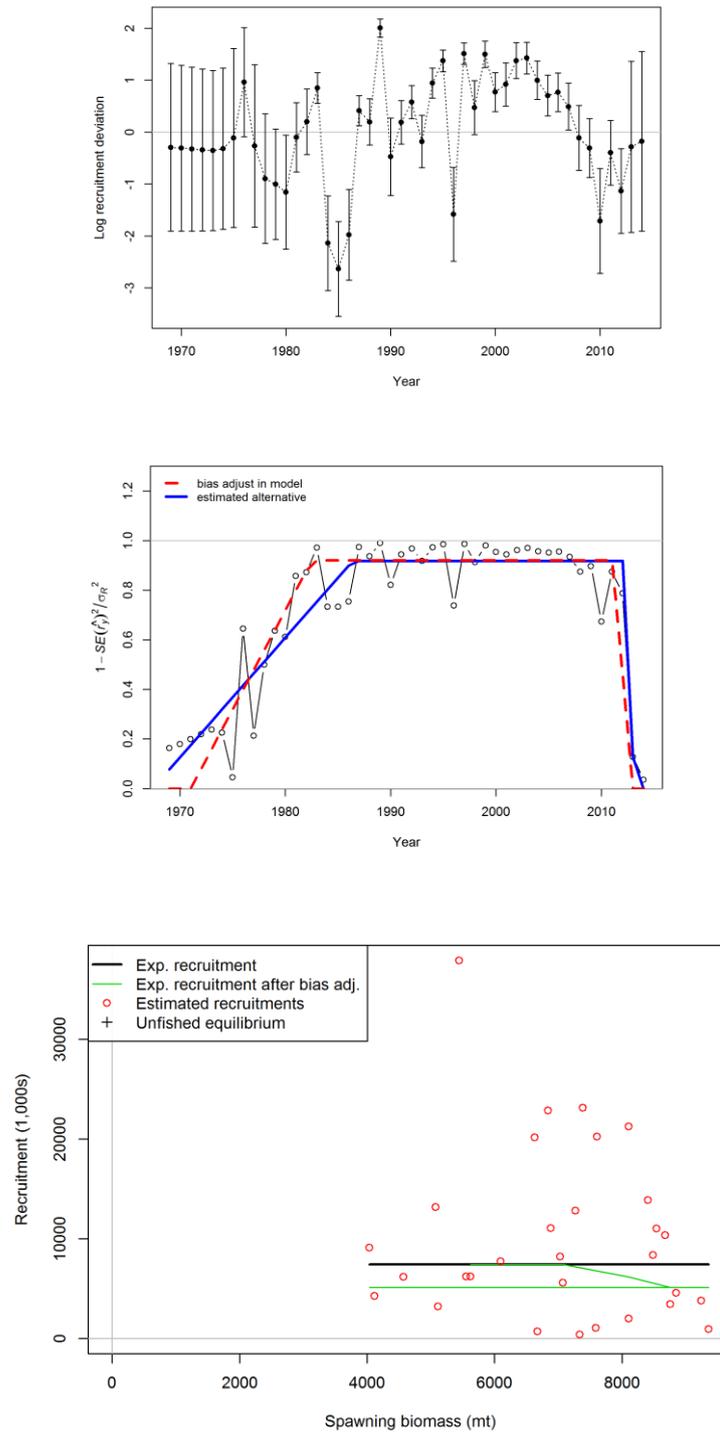


Figure 4.6.18. Final sea bass assessment: Top left: time-series of log recruitment deviations (deviations for 1969–1984 precede the period of input catch data). Top right: Adjustment for bias due to variability of estimated recruitments in fishery. Red line shows current settings for bias adjustment. Blue line shows least squares estimate of alternative bias adjustment relationship for recruitment deviations. Bottom: Stock–recruitment scatter (model is fitted assuming Beverton–Holt stock–recruitment model and steepness = 0.999).

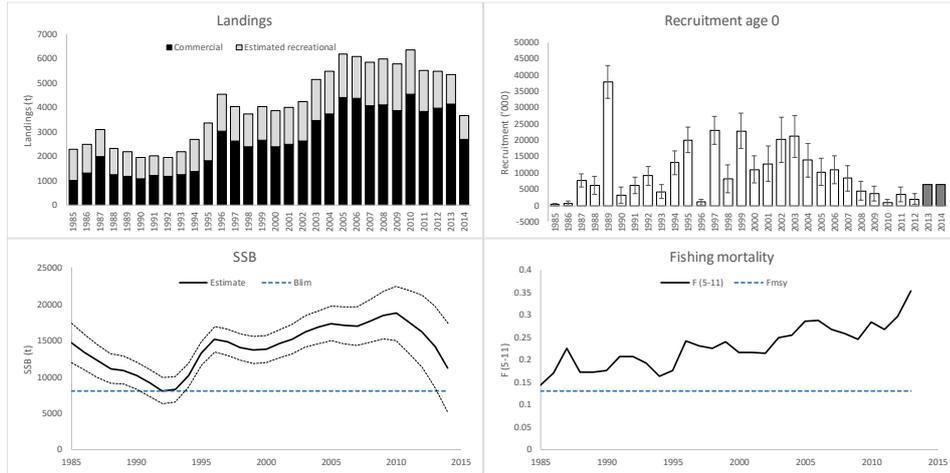


Figure 4.6.19. Stock trends from the final assessment, based on Stock Synthesis. Recruitment in 2013 and 2014 is the long-term geometric mean. The F_{MSY} proxy is $F_{35\%SPR} = 0.13$. Error bars on Recruitment plot and dotted lines on SSB plot are ± 2 standard errors.

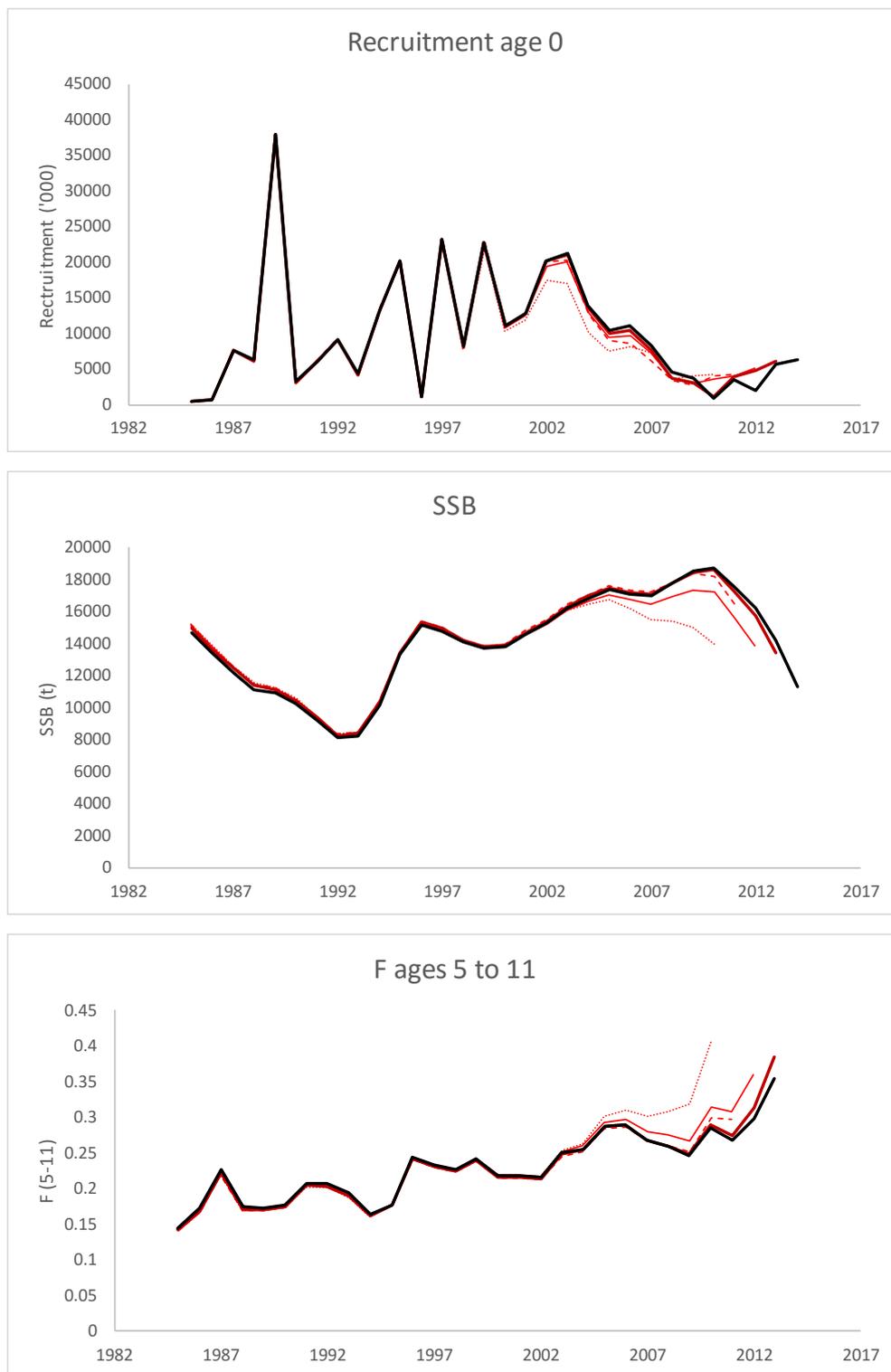


Figure 4.6.20. Retrospective analysis of stock trends from final proposed assessment, based on Stock Synthesis run final year set to 2014 and peeling back five years.

Table 4.6.1. Estimated numbers-at-age in the population, at the start of the year.

YEAR	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16+
1985	367	519	8 847	4 045	2 659	824	854	844	1 412	4 267	1 302	941	804	725	656	574	4 663
1986	708	316	447	7 615	3 482	2 289	709	735	726	1 215	3 672	1 121	810	692	624	565	4 507
1987	7 714	609	272	384	6 554	2 997	1 970	610	633	625	1 046	3 161	965	697	596	537	4 365
1988	6 211	6 639	524	234	331	5 641	2 579	1 696	525	545	538	900	2 721	830	600	513	4 219
1989	37 912	5 346	5 715	451	201	285	4 856	2 220	1 460	452	469	463	775	2 342	715	516	4 073
1990	3 184	32 631	4 601	4 919	388	173	245	4 179	1 911	1 256	389	403	399	667	2 015	615	3 950
1991	6 168	2 740	28 086	3 961	4 234	334	149	211	3 597	1 645	1 081	335	347	343	574	1 735	3 929
1992	9 104	5 309	2 359	24 174	3 409	3 644	288	128	182	3 096	1 416	931	288	299	295	494	4 875
1993	4 259	7 836	4 570	2 030	20 806	2 934	3 136	248	110	156	2 665	1 218	801	248	257	254	4 621
1994	13 164	3 666	6 744	3 933	1 747	17 908	2 525	2 699	213	95	135	2 294	1 049	689	214	221	4 196
1995	20 145	11 331	3 155	5 805	3 385	1 504	15 414	2 174	2 323	183	82	116	1 974	903	593	184	3 802
1996	1 052	17 339	9 752	2 716	4 996	2 914	1 294	13 267	1 871	2 000	158	70	100	1 699	777	511	3 431
1997	23 124	905	14 924	8 394	2 337	4 300	2 508	1 114	11 419	1 610	1 721	136	61	86	1 462	669	3 393
1998	8 202	19 903	779	12 845	7 225	2 012	3 701	2 158	959	9 828	1 386	1 481	117	52	74	1 259	3 496
1999	22 876	7 060	17 131	671	11 056	6 218	1 732	3 186	1 858	825	8 459	1 193	1 275	101	45	64	4 092
2000	11 038	19 690	6 077	14 744	577	9 516	5 352	1 490	2 742	1 599	710	7 281	1 027	1 097	87	39	3 577
2001	12 807	9 501	16 947	5 230	12 691	497	8 190	4 607	1 283	2 360	1 376	611	6 267	884	945	75	3 112
2002	20 237	11 023	8 177	14 587	4 502	10 923	428	7 050	3 965	1 104	2 031	1 185	526	5 394	761	813	2 743
2003	21 249	17 418	9 488	7 038	12 555	3 875	9 401	368	6 068	3 413	950	1 748	1 020	453	4 643	655	3 060
2004	13 884	18 289	14 992	8 166	6 058	10 806	3 335	8 092	317	5 222	2 937	818	1 505	878	390	3 996	3 198
2005	10 329	11 950	15 742	12 904	7 029	5 214	9 301	2 870	6 965	273	4 495	2 528	704	1 295	755	336	6 191
2006	11 005	8 891	10 285	13 549	11 106	6 050	4 488	8 005	2 471	5 995	235	3 869	2 176	606	1 115	650	5 618

YEAR	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16+
2007	8 357	9 472	7 652	8 853	11 662	9 559	5 207	3 863	6 890	2 126	5 160	202	3 330	1 873	522	960	5 395
2008	4 563	7 193	8 153	6 586	7 619	10 037	8 228	4 482	3 325	5 930	1 830	4 441	174	2 866	1 612	449	5 469
2009	3 764	3 927	6 191	7 017	5 669	6 558	8 639	7 082	3 857	2 862	5 104	1 575	3 822	150	2 467	1 388	5 094
2010	921	3 240	3 380	5 329	6 040	4 879	5 645	7 436	6 095	3 320	2 463	4 393	1 356	3 290	129	2 123	5 579
2011	3 432	793	2 788	2 909	4 586	5 198	4 200	4 858	6 400	5 246	2 858	2 120	3 781	1 167	2 832	111	6 629
2012	1 980	2 954	682	2 400	2 504	3 947	4 474	3 615	4 182	5 509	4 515	2 460	1 825	3 255	1 004	2 437	5 801
2013	5 578	1 704	2 543	587	2 066	2 155	3 398	3 851	3 111	3 599	4 741	3 886	2 117	1 570	2 801	865	7 091
2014	6 211	4 801	1 467	2 189	506	1 778	1 855	2 924	3 315	2 678	3 098	4 081	3 345	1 822	1 352	2 411	6 847

Table 4.6.2. Fishing mortality-at-age.

YEAR	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16+
1985	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.030	0.090	0.135	0.152	0.155	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156
1986	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.034	0.105	0.160	0.181	0.186	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.187	0.187
1987	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.042	0.133	0.208	0.238	0.247	0.249	0.249	0.249	0.249	0.249	0.249	0.249	0.249
1988	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.036	0.108	0.163	0.183	0.188	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.189	0.189
1989	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.037	0.110	0.164	0.183	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.186
1990	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.038	0.115	0.169	0.188	0.191	0.191	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190
1991	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.045	0.135	0.199	0.220	0.224	0.224	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.223
1992	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.041	0.127	0.194	0.220	0.226	0.227	0.227	0.227	0.227	0.227	0.227	0.227	0.227
1993	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.039	0.118	0.181	0.204	0.210	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.211	0.211
1994	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.037	0.109	0.159	0.173	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.174
1995	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.041	0.120	0.173	0.188	0.189	0.189	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188
1996	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.049	0.150	0.228	0.258	0.265	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.266
1997	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.049	0.148	0.221	0.246	0.251	0.251	0.251	0.251	0.251	0.251	0.251	0.251	0.251
1998	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.046	0.140	0.212	0.240	0.246	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.247	0.247
1999	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.047	0.145	0.224	0.256	0.264	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265	0.265
2000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.043	0.132	0.203	0.230	0.237	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238
2001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.043	0.132	0.203	0.230	0.237	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238	0.238
2002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.044	0.134	0.203	0.228	0.233	0.234	0.234	0.234	0.234	0.234	0.234	0.234	0.234
2003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.048	0.150	0.232	0.264	0.272	0.274	0.274	0.274	0.274	0.274	0.274	0.274	0.274
2004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.049	0.153	0.237	0.270	0.278	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280
2005	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.054	0.170	0.266	0.305	0.315	0.317	0.317	0.317	0.317	0.317	0.317	0.317	0.317
2006	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.055	0.173	0.269	0.307	0.316	0.318	0.318	0.319	0.319	0.319	0.319	0.319	0.319

Table 4.6.3. Assessment summary. Recruitment, SSB, total-stock biomass (TSB), F age 5-11 and Landings.

YEAR	RECRUITMENT			F (5-11)	LANDINGS	
	(AGE 0)	SSB	TSB		COMMERCIAL	RECREATIONAL ¹
1985	367	14 671	18 307	0.143	994	1 291
1986	707	13 351	17 567	0.170	1 318	1 186
1987	7 708	12 192	16 490	0.225	1 979	1 117
1988	6 206	11 105	14 738	0.173	1 239	1 092
1989	37 878	10 895	13 838	0.172	1 161	1 028
1990	3 181	10 220	13 571	0.176	1 064	904
1991	6 161	9 149	14 683	0.207	1 226	794
1992	9 092	8 075	16 255	0.207	1 186	772
1993	4 254	8 229	18 347	0.192	1 256	948
1994	13 152	10 149	20 399	0.163	1 370	1 318
1995	20 132	13 260	21 830	0.176	1 835	1 532
1996	1 051	15 177	22 525	0.243	3 022	1 519
1997	23 110	14 769	22 131	0.231	2 620	1 422
1998	8 197	14 058	22 156	0.225	2 390	1 353
1999	22 860	13 684	22 932	0.241	2 670	1 380
2000	11 030	13 767	23 704	0.216	2 407	1 460
2001	12 798	14 544	25 103	0.216	2 500	1 511
2002	20 224	15 211	26 516	0.214	2 622	1 610
2003	21 236	16 214	27 953	0.249	3 459	1 696
2004	13 876	16 816	28 845	0.254	3 731	1 771
2005	10 324	17 350	29 646	0.287	4 430	1 766
2006	10 999	17 086	29 732	0.288	4 377	1 732
2007	8 352	16 978	29 697	0.268	4 064	1 794
2008	4 560	17 701	29 566	0.258	4 107	1 894
2009	3 762	18 482	28 676	0.246	3 889	1 919
2010	921	18 723	27 145	0.284	4 562	1 828
2011	3 430	17 520	24 206	0.267	3 858	1 682
2012	1 978	16 218	21 275	0.297	3 987	1 500
2013	5 574	14 147	17 749	0.354	4 137	1 236
2014	6 204	11 242	13 860		2 682	979

¹ Estimated

5 Evaluation of existing reference points and estimate new if necessary based on conclusions from WKMSYREF3 and 4

During IBPBass2, it was not possible to update the reference points. There is currently no tool available to carry out, from the results of the SS model output, a reference point analysis based on the framework suggested by WKMSYREF4, and time constraints did not allow the development of such a tool.

6 External Reviewers Report

The second Inter-Benchmark Protocol for sea bass in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea (IBPBass2) was conducted via several Skype conferences and by correspondence between December 2015 and March 2016. The main goal of the IBPBass2 was to review quality of a new age composition dataset for French fishery landings that was recently provided by Ifremer (France) as well as evaluate performance of the stock assessment model with the new dataset included. The IBPBass2 was also intended to examine overall model structure, including various input data configurations, fleet definition and other features. It was also needed to evaluate the appropriateness of existing reference points.

6.1 Issues addressed at the benchmark

Review of age composition data of the French fishery landings

Age estimates for the French fleet fishery have been generated from sea bass scales and otoliths. Age estimates from scales are considered to be more reliable for this species. The uncertainty (bias and imprecision) in age estimates provided was evaluated via exchange workshops conducted in 2011, 2013 and 2015, when agreement among sea bass multiple age reads, produced by age readers from different labs/countries, were examined. The evaluation of uncertainty in age estimates was primarily focused on estimates derived from scales although estimates from otolith were also included in the 2011 workshop. No significant bias was identified in age estimates from different labs, standard deviation of age readings increase with age (which is common especially long lived species). There was no indication that new data from French fishery are inferior to age data from UK fleet already used in the assessment. It was agreed that new data are adequate for use in stock assessment.

Numbers-at-age from the new age data were calculated using the French annual age-length key applied to the length distributions of the French fleet. This fleet includes pelagic trawlers, bottom trawlers, netters, liners, Danish seiners and purse-seiners. French fleet length distributions are available from 2000 onwards. However, raising procedure used to generate these distributions changed in 2011. Between 2000–2010 raw length data by sub-fleet (gear type) have been first raised to the landings in subareas (division 4.b,c, 7.e,h, 7.d). Then numbers at length in different subareas have been summed to produce numbers at length for the entire fleet and the entire area. From 2011 forward, raw data by sub-fleet have been raised directly to the entire area (and not to subarea first as done prior to 2011). During IBPBass2 it was discussed whether the comparison can be done between the length distributions produced using old and new raising procedures, to explore whether raising to the entire area (bypassing subareas) has an effect on resultant length distributions, since sea bass size classes are not evenly distributed among subareas. However, at present, there is no overlap in time for length distributions produced from old and new raising procedures; therefore, such a comparison is not possible. It was agreed to use the numbers-at-age produced by two different raising procedures for different time periods, but recommended to pursue a comparison between length distributions produced by different raising procedures in the future.

It was also noted that primarily fish caught by liners and pelagic trawlers in subdivision 7.e,h and 7.d have been sampled for age. At present, it is not clear how representative these samples are of the entire fleet, given that substantial catches come from other gear types, including bottom trawl. This issue should also be explored in the future.

Development/update of input data for the stock assessment

The sea bass stock assessment model was developed using Stock Synthesis (Methot and Wetzel 2013), a flexible modelling platform that allows incorporating wide range of data and includes variety of modelling options. During the IBPBass2 several updates have been done to the assessment model that included changes to data inputs in SS data file and model settings in SS control file. The changes are described in detail below.

Treatment of composition data in the model

Prior to IBPBass2 the assessment model included either age or length compositional data associated with each individual fleet, even in cases when two types of compositional data were available. It is common to avoid mixing length and age compositional data because age structures are generally collected as a subset of the fish that have been measured, and if the marginal age compositions are used in the assessment along with the length compositions, the information content on sex ratio and year-class strength is largely double-counted as the same fish are contributing to likelihood components that are assumed to be independent.

It is now a common practice in SS to use conditional age-at-length approach to incorporate age data along with length compositions. In the conditional age-at-length approach individual length and age observations can be thought of as entries in an age-length key (matrix), with age across the columns and length down the rows. The approach consists of tabulating the sums within rows as the standard length frequency distribution, but instead of also tabulating the sums to the age margin, the distribution of ages in each row of the age-length key is treated as a separate observation, conditioned on the row (length) from which it came. Using conditional age distributions for each length bin allows only the additional information from age data to be captured, without creating a “double-counting” of the data in the total likelihood.

However, the development of conditional age-at-length distributions require significant amount of effort, and due to time constraints could not be accomplished during this inter-benchmark. It was, therefore, agreed for the time being, to include in the model marginal length and age compositional data for fleets when both types of data are available (including new age compositions for French fleet), but set the emphasis factors (λ) for the length and age compositions for fleets with both types of data to 0.5 (instead of 1) to minimize overall negative log likelihood and alleviate a “double counting” concern (since λ values are being multiplied in the model by the corresponding likelihood component). However, in the next sea bass assessment model, it is strongly recommended to include all compositional data available for each fleet and employ conditional age-at-length approach to input age compositional data.

Input sample sizes for length and age compositions have been updated to the number of fishing trips sampled. Input sample sizes for compositional data have an influence on assessment results and it has also become generally accepted practice to use the number of sampled fishing trips, rather than the number of fish measured, for input sample sizes.

Finally, it was recommended to follow the Francis method in the iterative re-weighting of compositional data. The iterative re-weighting approach attempts to develop consistency between the input sample sizes and the effective sample sizes based on model fit, and reduce the potential for particular data sources to have a disproportionate effect of total model fit. Relative data weighting in stock assessments for composition data has been the subject of recent research in the US West Coast, and the subject of a Center

for the Advancement of Population Assessment Methodology (CAPAM) workshop in La Jolla, CA in October of 2015 (<http://www.capamresearch.org/data-weighting/workshop>). It has been recognized that it is not currently possible to recommend default procedures for composition and conditional age-at-length data. However, there is agreement that the Francis weighting approach is more appropriate in cases where the model might be miss-specified as it takes into account autocorrelation among compositional data. It is also agreed that for a correctly specified model, the McAllister-Ianelli harmonic mean weighting method works well.

Treatment of growth parameters

Prior to the IBPBass2, all but L_{at_Amax} growth parameters were fixed in the model. Current model settings do not allow reliable estimation of growth parameters (note that CV of length at young and old ages are currently estimated); therefore, it was recommended to fix L_{at_Amax} as well at the value calculated outside the assessment model. For the future, it was recommended to fully estimate growth parameters in the model and do so for females and males separately since it was shown that sea bass exhibits sexual dimorphism in growth (the model is currently specified as one sex model, although L_{∞} female ~70cm male ~60cm, maturity female ~40cm male ~35cm).

For the model to reliably estimate growth parameters, it is again strongly recommended to input age data as conditional age-at-length compositions. This approach normally allows estimation of all growth parameters within the stock assessment model, including the CV of length at young age and the CV at old age (which is only possible to do based on marginal age-composition observations when very strong and well-separated cohorts exist). Estimation of growth within the model allows for uncertainty associated with growth parameters estimates to be propagated to the assessment results.

Treatment of recreational catches

The IBPBass2 also addressed an issue of how to best include recreational catch into the assessment model. Prior to the IBPBass2, the approach to incorporate recreational catch in the model was to derive an age-based selectivity pattern and weights-at-age based on commercial line fishery data as a proxy for recreational catches, and add a vector of "additional recreational F at age" to the input natural mortality (M) across all ages. The recreational F vector was re-scaled in a series of SS runs until the calculated recreational landings were 1500t in 2012 (the only reliable recreational catch estimate currently available). The same recreational F was applied to all years.

This approach is ad hoc, not transparent and, thus, difficult to reproduce. Non-transparency here refers mainly to the fact that the actual recreational catch series used by the model is not explicitly provided by standard model output, and is therefore less available for scrutiny. Also, integration of recreational F with natural mortality, prevents exploration of uncertainty in M itself (which is one of the most uncertain parameters in an assessment model), by conducting sensitivity and profile analyses on M. It was, therefore, recommended to incorporate recreational catch time-series as a separate fleet, assuming the same selectivity as of commercial line fishery (for this reason, commercial line fishery was separated from the combined UK fleet). Recreational catch time-series were generated using similar iteration procedure as the one used to derive recreational F at age. Although the recreational catch stream is highly uncertain, assumptions regarding specific catch estimates are very transparent. It is also easy to explore model sensitivity to alternative assumptions about year specific values of rec-

recreation catch, via series of sensitivity runs. Also, the sensitivity of model output to alternative assumptions regarding M can also be easily explored, when M and recreational F are separated.

In future assessment, it is recommended to further explore time-series of recreational catch and conduct a thorough sensitivity analysis to evaluate impact of assumptions regarding recreational catch stream to model output. It is also recommended to include existing length compositional data for the recreational fleet in the assessment model, to more accurately describe selectivity of this fleet (instead of “mirroring” it to the selectivity of commercial line fishery).

An additional alternative approach to modelling recreational catch was also investigated during IBPBass2 that allows the recreational fleet catch to be estimated by the model, given a recreational fleet selectivity pattern, a vector of assumed annual F values, and the absolute recreational catch value for 2012. This was somewhat successful, but the resulting model had some problems with convergence that may be resolved on investigation of the estimated parameters leading to those problems (e.g. via alternative phasing of highly correlated or poorly estimated parameters). It is recommended that this form of approach also be investigated further for future assessments as it avoids the manual iteration necessary to produce the recreational catch series, and works directly from initial assumptions about recreational fishery F .

Other model specifications

During the IBPBass2 recruitment deviations settings were updated to include advanced options for recruitment bias adjustment. Recruitment bias adjustment settings were selected based on Methot and Taylor (2011).

Age reading was investigated during IBPBass2, allowing an improved vector of age reading imprecision to be included in the model.

Juvenile survey from Solent nursery area was originally included into the model as three separate indices (one for each age class), mostly because a suitable selectivity pattern could not be found to operate very specifically on those three age classes. During inter-benchmark it was found that a combination of age (age selectivity pattern 11 to select ages 2–4 only) and double-normal length selectivity provided a good fit to combined Solent survey age composition data, so it was recommended to re-combine the three separate indices back to one. This removed the necessity for special treatment of the Solent survey compared with others in the model. For the future it was recommended to include length composition data from Solent survey in the model, to estimate length-based selectivity using survey data (currently length data are not included in the assessment and length-based selectivity are estimated via conversion of the age compositions into length compositions via growth parameters).

The extra standard deviations for survey indices were also added to the model during the IBPBass2, and are now being estimated internally for each survey index. Use of this option has become accepted practice, and is used in many recent SS assessments to account for sources of variability of survey that are not captured in abundance index estimate.

Evaluation of existing reference points

Reference points were revised during WKMSYREF4 based on yield-per-recruit analysis. During the IBPBass2, it was not possible to update reference points since SS model output does not include quantities necessary for the analysis within the framework suggested by the WKMSYREF4.

According to WKMSYREF4 the default B_{lim} is the lowest observed spawning-stock biomass, B_{pa} is $B_{lim} \times \exp(1.645 \times \sigma)$, F_{MSY} is a proxy based on F35%SPR and the $MSY_{trigger}$ is B_{pa} . At face value, these reference points seem sensible, and do take into account the uncertainty of the assessment for this stock, assuming that reference points would also be calculated for sensitivity assessments that bound the uncertainty of the base case. The majority of the assessment uncertainty is likely to be encompassed by alternative plausible values for M , steepness, and the historical magnitude of the recreational catch.

6.2 Use of final stock annex as basis for providing advice

Output for a version of the final model was examined using *r4ss* (Taylor *et al.* 2012) that did not reveal any major outstanding concerns regarding the model fit to all available data.

Retrospective patterns for a final model were also examined, and Mohn's q was calculated. Recently there has been some research on a "rule of thumb" for values for Mohn's q that require further investigation (Hurtado-Ferro *et al.* 2014) that says that "values of Mohn's q higher than 0.20 or lower than -0.15 for longer-lived species (upper and lower bounds of the 90% simulation intervals for the flatfish base case), or higher than 0.30 or lower than -0.22 for shorter-lived species (upper and lower bounds of the 90% simulation intervals for the sardine base case) should be cause for concern and taken as indicators of retrospective patterns." The biomass Mohn's q for the most recent base model examined at was -0.25, so outside the "rule of thumb" range. We have some advice on how corrections might be made to projections in those circumstances, but those procedures are by no means generally agreed. Means for correction or adjustment according to retrospective bias were beyond the scope of this inter-benchmark assessment and should be more fully explored during the next full benchmark.

Additional evidence of model convergence and stability is provided by so-called "jitter" analysis, where the starting values for estimated model parameters are varied according to the pre-set parameter bounds and a chosen random normal deviation, and the model re-run a number of times using the new starting values. Jitter analysis for a version of the final model did not reveal any convergence at total likelihood greater than the tested model, but did result in a considerable portion of runs that failed to converge at all. This does indicate an issue within the current model configuration that should be addressed – through investigation of which estimated parameters are causing the problem.

6.3 Suggestions for future work and next benchmark

During the IBPBass2 the model has been updated to include several important improvements. However, not all the suggested changes were included in the model due to time constraints. The following features are recommended for the next sea bass assessment.

Suggestion regarding data used in the assessment:

- Explore potential differences in length compositions used for calculate numbers-at-age (via age-length key) for French fishery using old and new raising procedures;
- Evaluate how representative ages sampled from liners and pelagic trawlers in subdivision 7.e,h and 7.d are of the entire French fishery.

- Evaluate if ages sampled from the French Channel Groundfish survey, currently included in the ALK applied to fishery length compositions, are representative of the French fishery
- Suggestion regarding the model structure:
- Include all available compositional data in the model;
- Incorporate age data as conditional age-at-length compositions;
- Specify model as two-sex model and estimate growth parameters for females and males separately;
- Further explore recreational catch time-series and evaluate model sensitivity to alternative assumptions about catch time-series;
- Include available length composition data for the recreational fishery to estimate length-based selectivity parameters for recreational fleet;
- Include available length composition data for juvenile survey from Solent nursery area to estimate length-based selectivity parameters for the survey;
- Explicitly incorporate discard data in the assessment model. Currently, discard is not included in the model. It is estimated to be around 5% of the total catch for commercial fleets.

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YEAR 2010																					
AREA																					
7EH7D	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
34	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
36	0	0	2	1	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
38	0	0	1	9	3	7	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
40	0	0	0	7	15	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
42	0	0	0	8	21	8	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
44	0	0	0	0	22	17	14	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
46	0	0	0	1	7	18	18	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
48	0	0	0	0	5	18	24	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
50	0	0	0	0	1	7	23	16	13	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
52	0	0	0	0	0	11	12	11	12	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
54	0	0	0	0	2	0	6	10	11	12	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
56	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	5	8	8	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	5	7	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
68	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5	4	7	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
72	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
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78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
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84	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
86	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
88	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

YEAR 2012 AREA	7EH7D	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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24	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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28	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	7	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
68	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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72	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
82	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
84	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
86	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

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Annex 2: Terms of Reference

IBPBass2 – Inter-Benchmark Protocol for sea bass in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea

2015/2/ACOM32 **The second Inter-Benchmark Protocol for sea bass in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, English Channel, and southern North Sea (IBPBass2)** that will serve as in Inter-Benchmark Protocol, chaired by Michel Bertignac, France, and Vladlena Gertseva, USA (external chair), will meet by correspondence (1 December 2015–31 March 2016) to:

- a) Review quality and performance of age composition data for French fishery landings in the Stock Synthesis model formulated by IBP-bass;
- b) Develop input data are for stock assessment including empirical weights at age;
- c) Develop age compositions for the Channel groundfish survey and test in SS3 model.
- d) Evaluate the appropriateness of existing reference points and estimate new if necessary based on conclusions form WKMSYREF3 and 4.

STOCK	STOCK LEADER
Sea bass in IVbc and VIIa,d-h	Mike Armstrong mike.armstrong@cefas.co.uk

The Inter-Benchmark Workshop will report by 1 April 2016 for the attention of ACOM.

Annex 3: Stock Annex for Sea bass in 4.b,c and 7.a, d-h

Stock-specific documentation of standard assessment procedures used by ICES.

Stock	European sea bass (<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>) in Subarea 4b,c and 7a, d-h (BSS-47)
Working Group	WGCSE
Date	April 2016
Revised by	IBPBass2, April 2016

A. General

A.1. Stock definition

Bass *Dicentrarchus labrax* is a widely distributed species in Northeast Atlantic shelf waters with a range from southern Norway, through the North Sea, the Irish Sea, the Bay of Biscay, the Mediterranean and the Black Sea to Northwest Africa. The species is at the northern limits of its range around the British Isles and southern Scandinavia.

Stock structure of sea bass in the Northeast Atlantic has been reviewed by WGNEW 2012 and IBP-NEW 2012 based on evidence from genetics studies, tagging studies, distribution of commercial catches and similarities in stock trends between areas, drawing also on extensive information contained in previous WGNEW and ICES SGBASS reports.

IBP-NEW and WGCSE considers that stock structure remains uncertain, and recommends further studies on sea bass stock identity, using conventional and electronic tagging, genetics and other individual and population markers (e.g. otolith micro-chemistry and shape), together with data on spawning distribution, larval transport and VMS data for vessels tracking migrating bass shoals, to confirm and quantify the exchange rate of sea bass between sea areas that could form management units for this stock. Such information is critical to support development of models to describe the spatial dynamic of the species under environmental drivers (e.g. temperature and food). Such a modelling work is being carried out in France in the framework of a PhD study (R. Lopez), and in the UK.

The pragmatic view of IBP-NEW 2012 was to structure the baseline stock assessments into four units:

- Assessment area 1. Sea bass in ICES Areas 4.b,c, 7.d, 7e,h and 7.a,f,g (lack of clear genetic evidence; concentration of Area 4 bass fisheries in the southern North Sea; seasonal movements of bass across ICES divisions). Relatively data-rich area with data on fishery landings and length/age composition; discards estimates and lengths; growth and maturity parameters; juvenile surveys, fishery lpue trends. [Bass-47].
- Assessment area 2. Sea bass in Biscay (ICES Subarea 8a,b). Available data are fishery landings, with length compositions from 2000; discards from 2009; some fishery lpue.
- Assessment area 3. Sea bass in 8.c and 9.a (landings, effort).

- Assessment area 4. Sea bass in Irish coastal waters (6.a, 7.b, 7.j). Available data: Recreational fishery catch rates; no commercial fishery operating. [Bass-wosi].

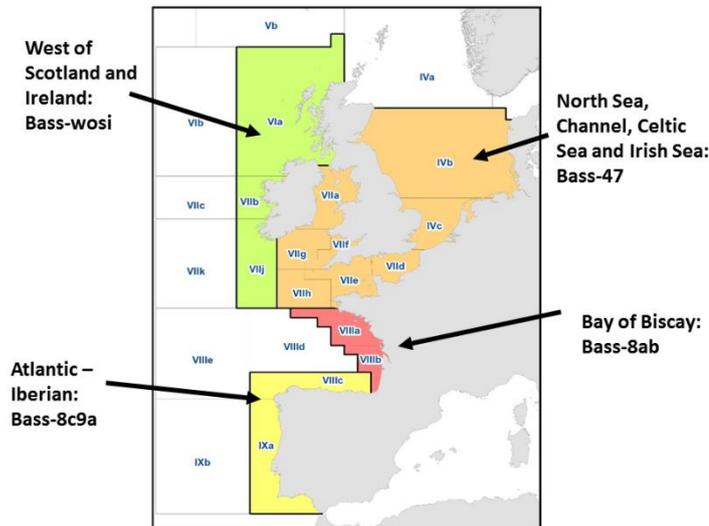


Figure A1.1. Current stock definitions for sea bass.

Fishery landings of sea bass are extremely small in Irish coastal waters of 7.a and 7.g and the stock assessment for assessment area 1 will not reflect the sea bass populations around the Irish coast, which may be more strongly affiliated to the population in area 4 off southern, western and Northern Ireland.

At IBP-New (ICES, 2012a), it was agreed that sea bass in the North Sea (4b&c) and in the Irish Sea, Channel and Celtic Sea (7.a,d,e,f,g&h) would be treated as a functional stock unit as there is no clear basis from fishery data, tagging and genetics studies to subdivide the populations in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, Channel and North Sea into independent stock units. Supporting information can be found in the IBP-New report. The other stock units defined for sea bass are: west of Scotland and Ireland (6.a and 7.b,j; Bay Of Biscay (8.a,b); and the more southerly population in 8.c and 9.a.

In the absence of new information the pragmatic view of WGCSE 2015 is to continue to assume the presence of discrete sea bass stocks off southern Ireland and in the Bay of Biscay (8.a,b) and Iberian waters (8.c, 9.a).

A.2. Fishery

General description

The commercial sea bass fisheries in Areas 4 and 7 have two distinct components: an offshore fishery on pre-spawning and spawning bass during November to April, predominantly by pelagic trawlers from France and the UK, and small-scale fisheries catching mature fish returning to coastal areas following spawning and in some cases immature sea bass. The inshore fisheries include many small (10 m and under) vessels using a variety of fishing methods (e.g. trawl, handline, longline, nets, rod and line). The fishery may be either targeting sea bass or taking sea bass as a bycatch with other species. Historical landings data for the small-scale fisheries have often been poorly recorded. Although sea bass can occur as target or bycatch of many vessels, the bulk

of the catch can be taken by relatively few vessels. For example in the UK in 2010, sea bass landings were reported by 1480 vessels (including 1207 of 10 m and under), 10% of which were responsible for over 70% of the total landings of 719 t (Walmsley and Armstrong, 2012). For France, in 2009 sea bass landings were reported by 2226 vessels including 976 of 10 m and under. Three main métiers were responsible for over 83% of the total landings. Pelagic trawlers (31.5% of total landings, for 58 vessels and 276 seamen) and "liners+handliners" (21.7% of total landings for 416 vessels and 634 seamen) are very economically dependent of this species (Drogou *et al.*, 2011). French bottom trawlers often do not target sea bass, but this gear does represent 30.1% of the total landings (for 832 vessels and 2769 seamen). (Drogou *et al.*, 2011).

In 2014 a large decrease in French midwater landings has been observed due to the very bad weather conditions, and the vessels switched effort to hake. Seabass landings have also moved from 1591 tons in 2013 to 242 tons in 2014, and this métier accounted in 2014 for only 9% of the total international landings. A decrease was also observed in French bottom trawlers for the same reason to a lesser extent.

According to the CHARM 3 Atlas of the Channel Fisheries, sea bass production in value represented €31 937 in 2008. It's the third most valuable species caught in the Channel (source: Agrimer) in 2008 behind sole and monkfish (tuna is not included in statistics). The market value sea bass depends greatly on how it's caught, giving added value to certain métiers: in 2013 according to the database SACROIS (Ifremer-DPMA), mean price of sea bass sold in France by liners was €17 per Kg compared with €7 per Kg for pelagic trawl, reflecting differences in volume and fish condition.

Sea bass are a popular target for recreational fishing in Europe, particularly for angling in the UK, Ireland and France, and increasingly in parts of southern Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium. Relatively little historical data are available on recreational fisheries although several European countries are now carrying out surveys to meet the requirements of the EU Data Collection Framework and for other purposes (ICES 2009; 2010; 2011, 2012c; Herfault *et al.*, 2010; Rocklin *et al.*, 2014; Van der Hammen and De Graaf, 2012,205; Armstrong *et al.*, 2013.).

More detailed descriptions of national fisheries can be found in ICES WGCSE 2015 (ICES 2015) and in Armstrong and Drogou (2014).

Fishery management regulations

Sea bass are not subject to EU TACs and quotas. Commercial vessels catching bass within cod recovery zones are subject to days-at-sea limits according to gear, mesh and species composition. Under EU regulation, the MLS of bass in the Northeast Atlantic is 36 cm total length, and there is effectively a banned range for enmeshing nets of 70–89 mm stretched mesh in Regions 1 and 2 of Community waters¹. Emergency measures were introduced by the EU banning pelagic / midwater trawling for bass from January

¹ Region 1: All waters which lie to the north and west of a line running from a point at latitude 48°N, longitude 18°W; thence due north to latitude 60°N; thence due east to longitude 5°W; thence due north to latitude 60°30'N; thence due east to longitude 4°W; thence due north to latitude 64°N; thence due east to the coast of Norway.

Region 2: All waters situated north of latitude 48°N, but excluding the waters in Region 1 and ICES Divisions IIIb, IIIc and III d.

to end of April 2015. A bag limit of 3 fish per day was introduced in 2015 for recreational fishing (EU Regulation 2015/523 of 25 March 2015).

A variety of national restrictions on commercial bass fishing are also in place. These include:

- a landings limit of 5 t/boat/week for all French and UK trawlers landing bass;
- closure of 37 bass nursery areas in England and Wales to specified fishing methods;
- UK regional byelaws in Cornwall and South Wales stipulating a 37.5 cm MLS;
- a minimum gillnet mesh size of 100 mm in South Wales;
- a variety of control measures in Ireland that effectively ban commercial fishing for bass in Irish waters; plus MLS of 40cm;
- a licensing system from 2012 in France for commercial gears targeting sea bass.
- voluntary closed season from February to mid-March for longline and handline bass fisheries in Brittany.

Depending on country, measures affecting recreational fisheries include minimum landing sizes, restrictions on sale of catch, bag limits (Ireland), and gear restrictions (France; Netherlands).

Management applicable to 2015

In 4.b,c and 7.a,d–h (North Sea, Channel, Celtic Sea and Irish Sea) the European Council has adopted emergency measures to help sea bass recover (Recent scientific analyses have reinforced previous concerns about the state of the stock and advised urgently to reduce fishing by 80%). Effective emergency measures in January 2015 placed a ban on targeting the fish stock by pair-trawling while it is reproducing, during the spawning season, which runs until the end of April 2015. Bag limit of 3 fish per day was introduced for recreational fishing in 2015. The European Commission is consulting with Member States and stakeholders during 2013–2015 to establish a broader, balanced package of measures to control fishing mortality and rebuild the stock.

A.3. Ecosystem aspects

Temperature appears to be a major driver for bass production and distribution (Pawson, 1992). Reynolds *et al.* (2003) observed a positive relationship between annual seawater temperature during the development phases of eggs and larvae of sea bass and the timing and (possibly) abundance of post-larval recruitment to nursery areas. In addition, early growth is related to summer temperature and survival of 0-groups through the first winter is affected by body size (and fat reserves) and water temperature (Lancaster, 1991; Pawson, 1992). Prolonged periods of temperatures below 5–6°C may lead to high levels of mortality in 0-groups in estuaries during cold winters. As a result, any SSB–recruit relationships may be obscured by temperature effects (Pawson *et al.*, 2007a). WGCSE 2014 presented time series of UK inshore coastal temperatures during January to March and examined correlations with bass recruitment (Figure A.3.1).

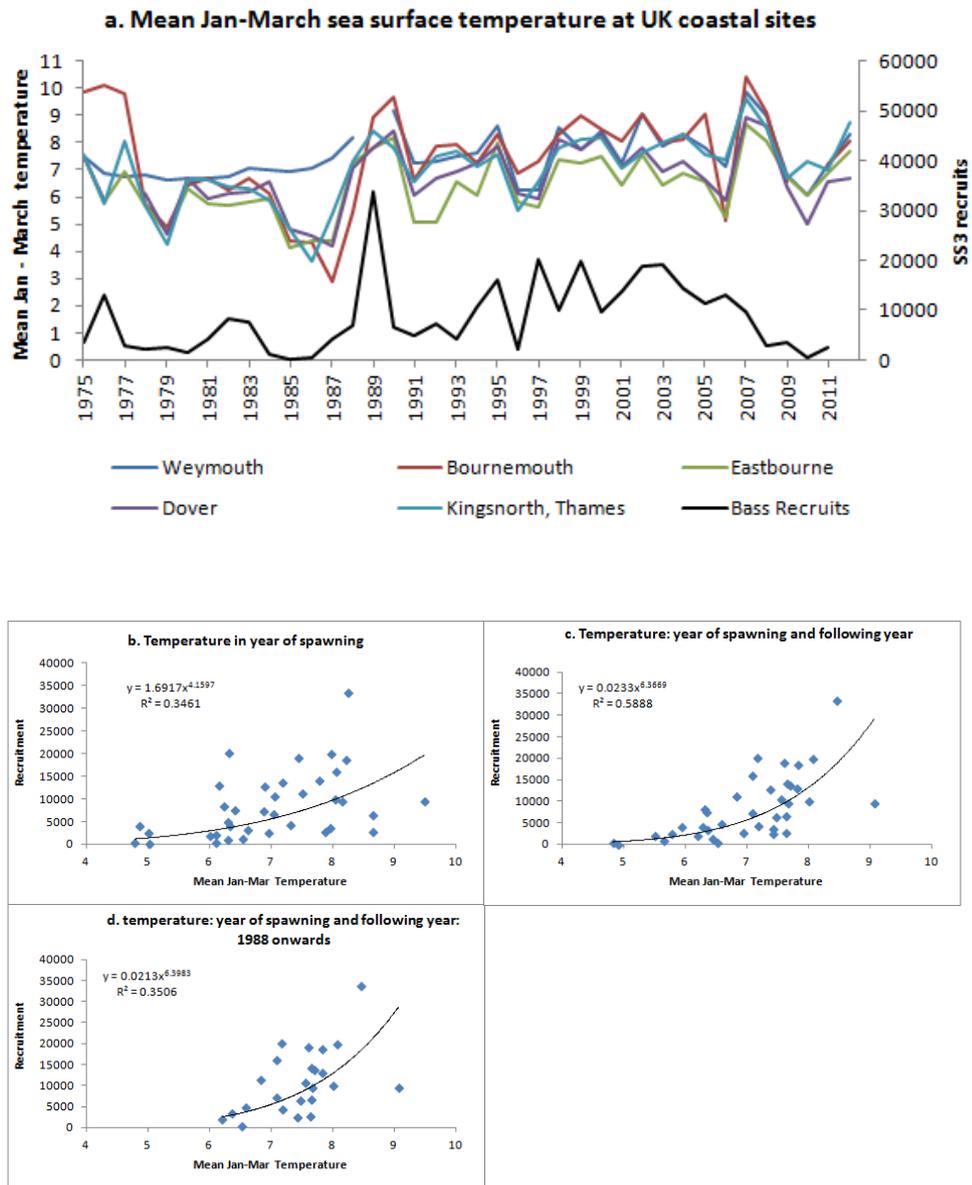


Figure A.3.1. (a) Mean January–March coastal sea temperatures at five sites along the south coast of England, compared with the time-series of sea bass recruitment estimates from the update WGCE assessment, including pre-1985 values from estimated recruit deviations back to 1975. (b)–(d): correlation between sea bass recruitment and (b) mean temperature for the five sites in the year of spawning; (c) mean temperature in the year of spawning and the following spring; and (d) the same as (c) but restricting the series to 1988 onwards (From ICES WGCE 2014).

B. Data

B.1. Commercial catch

B1.1 Landings data

Data available

Landings series for use in the assessment are available from three sources:

- i) Official statistics recorded in the ICES FishStat database since around the mid-1970s.
- ii) French landings for 1999–2014 from a separate analysis by Ifremer of logbook, auction and VMS data, with earlier official data adjusted as described below.
- iii) Survey estimates of landings from the UK fleet of 10 m and under vessels (which are not obliged to provide EU logbooks), carried out by Cefas.

Total international landings of sea bass in European waters from sources (i) and (ii) combined increased from around 2000 t in the late 1970s to over 8000 t by 2006, the bulk coming from Areas 4.b,c, 7.e and 8. An important driver of the increase in landings since the 1990s was the increased landings in Divisions 4.b,c, 7.d and 7.e,h, coinciding with the large 1989 year class and a northward expansion of the sea bass population in the North Sea during a period of increasing sea temperatures.

Quality of official landings data

The official landings data for sea bass available to WGCSE 2015 are subject to several uncertainties that can affect the accuracy of assessments:

- Incomplete reporting of landings in the 1970s and early 1980s when the fisheries were developing (the assessment uses only data from 1985 onwards);
- Reporting of official French data by port rather than fishing ground before 2000. (The best landings estimates are from auctions for this period. During WGCSE, no fishing grounds could be identified for these landings).
- Poor reporting accuracy for small vessels that do not supply EU logbooks.

From 2000 onwards, Ifremer has provided revised French landings from a separate analysis of logbook and auction data which allocates landings correctly by fishing ground. To generate a consistent series of French landings from 1985 onwards for the Area 4&7 assessment, IBP-New 2012 adjusted pre-2000 official landings from the ICES database by the average of the Ifremer correction factors by area from 2000–2010:

- 4.bc+7.d: 1.04; 7.e,h: 1.6; 7.a,f,g: 0.62.

The accuracy of UK landings statistics is expected to have improved since the introduction of the Registration of Buyers and Sellers scheme in 2005/2006, particularly for recording of marketed landings of small vessels that do not have to supply EU logbooks. However, the official reported landings of sea bass in the UK are known to underestimate the true total landings, particularly for small-scale inshore fisheries where there has been no requirement to submit EC logbooks. Prior to the introduction of Buyers and Sellers requiring sales documentation, local fishery inspectors estimated landings of the under-10 m fleet using whatever information they had available from

auctions, and frequently entered aggregated estimates for multiple vessels into the fishery landings database. Unfortunately, the Buyers and Sellers regulations do not cover all landings. The EU Control Regulation allows landings of less than 30 kg to be disposed of for personal consumption without providing sales slips or other documents. This is ostensibly to reduce the administrative burden for a skipper disposing of small quantities for personal use. However, for small-scale fisheries where there are very large numbers of small vessels often catching small quantities, the cumulative catch of unrecorded small landings can be relatively high. This is likely to be an issue over the full time-series.

The UK (England) has previously carried out independent surveys to estimate historical landings data for sea bass, particularly for smaller vessels not supplying EU logbooks. A voluntary logbook scheme was carried out in conjunction with a biennial census of vessels catching sea bass. The census covers different segments of coast in different years (Pickett, 1990). The scheme was stratified by area, gear and vessel characteristics. Selected vessels from the strata kept logbooks for periods ranging from one to 25 years, and comprised what could be described as a “reference” fleet as opposed to a randomised selection of vessels each year. The scheme was terminated in 2007 and 2008, and reinstated for a further two years (2009 and 2010) before being terminated again. The scheme has now been suspended permanently. The landings tables in some earlier ACOM advice included “unallocated” landings which were the difference between the voluntary logbook estimates and the official UK statistics in each ICES area.

A review of the Cefas logbook scheme in 2012 (Armstrong and Walmsley, 2012a) showed that the previous estimates included recreational charter boats. After removal of these landings, the Cefas logbook estimates for nets and lines still showed substantial differences with official estimates (Figure B1.1). For fixed/driftnets, the landings including the Cefas logbook estimates for under 10 m vessels results in a landings series that is on average around three times higher than the official statistics. For lines, the ratio fluctuates around 3.0 for a large part of the series but was larger from 2000–2005. Insufficient logbooks were available for trawls to allow estimation of fleet-wide landings.

The Armstrong and Walmsley (2012a) review concluded that the survey is sensibly spread over a range of vessel types and gears, but is over-stratified and has insufficient (and declining) coverage of the many survey strata while using *ad hoc*, judgment-based vessel selection schemes rather than randomized selection. Despite the potential biases, the survey results for commercial vessels confirm that the historical official reported landings of sea bass are likely to be underestimates. Neither data source for UK 10m and under vessels is considered accurate over the historical time series but ICES WGNEW (ICES, 2008) and IBPBass (ICES, 2014) found that the stock trends from a statistical assessment model were relatively insensitive to the choice of these two catch histories. The main effect of including the additional landings is to scale biomass estimates up without altering the trend. Total fishing mortality estimates are not affected, as the age profiles of the catches remains more-or-less the same, but the proportion of total F attributable to recreational fisheries in the final stock assessment is reduced slightly by the additional commercial landings. Given the small contribution of UK reported landings of under-10m fleets to total international landings of bass, the uncertainties concerning the level of bias in the Cefas logbook estimates, and the lack of such estimates after 2011, the official statistics have been retained in the current assessment. Of more concern would be any change in reporting accuracy over time, as this would lead to biased assessment trends using reported landings figures.

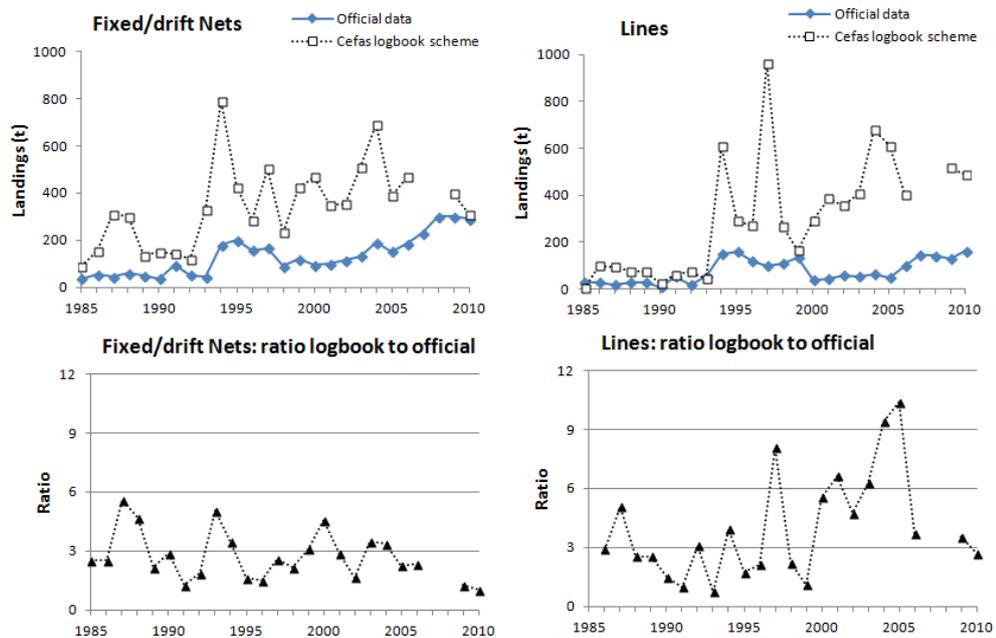


Figure B1.1. Top: estimates of sea bass landings for under-10 m UK netters and liners based on the Cefas logbook and port survey scheme. Bottom: ratio of landings of these gears including the Cefas logbook estimates for <10 m commercial vessels, and the total official reported landings of all UK vessels using these gears.

Dutch landings

Landings and effort data from the commercial fleet are available from the EU logbooks; market category composition of landings is available from the auction data (sale slips); and size and age data are available through market sampling. The fisheries were described in detail in van der Hammen *et al.* (2013).

EU logbook data

Official EU logbook data of the entire Dutch fleet are maintained by the NVWA (formerly known as the General Inspection Service, AID). IMARES has access to these logbooks and stores the data in a database (VISSTAT). EU logbook data contain information on:

- landings (kg): by vessel, trip, ICES statistical rectangle and species;
- effort (days absent from port): by vessel, trip and ICES statistical rectangle;
- vessel information: length, engine power and gear used.

Logbook data are available from the entire Dutch fishing fleet and from foreign vessels landing their catches in the Netherlands.

Auction data: landings by market category

Auction data cover both the total Dutch fishing fleet and foreign vessels landing their catches on Dutch auctions. These data are also stored in VISSTAT and contain information on:

- landings by market category (kg): by vessel, trip (landing date) and species.

Further information on availability and quality of landings data by country is provided by IBPBass (ICES, 2014).

B1.2 Discards estimates

UK data

Survey design and analysis

Estimation of bass discards is problematic because the observer scheme covers all vessel trips in a stratum without reference to target species, and overall it samples less than 1% of all fishing trips. As bass are absent or at very low numbers in a large fraction of fishing trips throughout the year, particularly in winter, the amount of sample data on bass is very low and the estimates are likely to have poor precision and variable biases related to inclusion of under 10 m vessels. Vessels under 10 m, that are responsible for a large fraction of bass catches, were excluded until recent years on health and safety and other logistical grounds, and although under 10 m vessels are now included since 2007, the fleet of vessels under 7 m remains excluded.

Raising of UK discards data to the fleet level is currently performed using a ratio estimator using the ratio of reported landings in a stratum to the computed retained weight of sea bass in sampled trips. This assumes that the retention curve for sampled vessels is representative of all vessels in the stratum.

Data coverage and quality

UK discards data are available for métiers associated with trawls and fixed/driftnets only. Discards from commercial line boats are expected to be relatively low and have high survival, so this fleet sector is excluded from the scheme for sea bass. As sampling is targeted at all species, annual coverage of the bass fisheries is relatively limited.

Numerically, the largest numbers of bass discarded from UK fisheries are from the bottom trawl fleet, with much smaller numbers from nets and even less from beam trawls. Only eleven midwater pair trawl trips were observed up to 2013, and discarding of bass was negligible as the fishery targets mainly adult bass. No bass discards were observed in the eight longline trips observed. The raised length frequencies of discarded and retained bass, aggregated overall years, are available along with the retention ogives. It is clear that discarding is driven primarily by the minimum landing size of 36 cm (see IBPBass 2014 report).

Sampling levels for UK and French discard sampling, and discards estimates, are given in the WGCSE report and updated annually.

French data

Survey design and analysis

The French sampling schemes also utilise vessel-list sampling frames and random selection of vessels within strata defined by area and fleet sector. From the activity calendars of French vessels for year $n-1$, vessels are grouped by the métiers practiced. Thus, a vessel may belong to multiple groups if practicing several métiers in the period. If the métier has to be sampled in priority No. 1, the vessel to be boarded is chosen randomly within this group of vessels. The observer then chooses to go on board for a trip. During the trip, the fishing operations corresponding to métier No. 1 are sampled. Optionally, if the vessel practices several métier during the trip, fishing operation of the métier No 2 will also be sampled if the métier No.2 is included in the annual sampling plan. If the métier is not part of the plan, it is requested to sample at least one fishing operation of this métier in the trip. (complete document on sampling protocol

in French :http://sih.ifremer.fr/content/download/5587/40495/file/Manuel_OB-SMER_V2_2_2012.pdf)

Data coverage and quality

Discards data are only available for French fleets from 2009 onwards. For 2012, results are described in the annual French report on: "<http://archimer.ifremer.fr/doc/00167/27787/25978.pdf>" for 2012. Discards estimates for France are from vessel selections that for some areas and gears include relatively limited numbers of observed trips where sea bass is caught and discarded. Precision is therefore very low at current sampling rates. In France the low sampling rate observed can be explain by the low discarding rate. Length frequencies were not available at IBPbass for 2013.

Spain

No bass discards were observed for any métier in the 2003-2013 period. Number of sampled hauls per métier and area were presented to IBP-NEW 2012 (see assessment report).

Discards data from other European countries

Discards data for Dutch beam trawlers were presented to ICES IBP-NEW 2012, as annual mean numbers discarded per hour in 2004–2010. No commercial fisheries for sea bass exist in Ireland.

B1.3 Recreational catches

Recreational marine fishery surveys covering different parts of the sea bass stock in the North Sea, Channel, Celtic Sea and Irish Sea have been developed in France, Netherlands, England and Belgium (ICES, 2012c). Survey design and methods of recreational catch estimation are described in IBPBass 2014.

Data from France

A survey of recreational fishers, focusing mainly on bass, was conducted between 2009 and 2011. Estimates of sea bass recreational catches were obtained from a panel of 121 recreational fishermen recruited during a random digit dialling screening survey of 15 000 households in the targeted districts. The estimated recreational catch of bass in the Bay of Biscay and in the Channel was 3170 t of which 2350 t was kept and 830 t released. The estimates for Subarea 4 and 7 were 940 t kept and 332 t released.

The precision of the combined Biscay and Channel estimate was relatively low (CV=26%; note that the figure of 51% given in IBPNEW 2012 (ICES, 2012a) was incorrect). This gives an average and 95% confidence intervals of 3170 t [1554 t; 4786 t] for the whole Subareas 4, 7 and 8. Increasing the panel from 121 to 210 fishermen would be expected to improve precision to 20% and increasing this panel to 500 would improve precision to 13%.

The main gears used, in order of total catch, were fishing rod with artificial lure, fishing rod with bait, handline, longline, net and spear fishing. Approximately 80% of the recreational catch was taken by sea angling (rod and line or handline).

A new survey was conducted from July 2011 to December 2012, based on a similar methodology to the previous study (not only on sea bass this time, but also on other marine species including crustaceans and cephalopods). A random digit dialling

screening survey of 16 130 households led to the recruitment of a panel of 183 fishermen to keep logbooks. In parallel, 151 fishermen were recruited on site by the Promopêche association, and 30 more via the sea bass fishermen panel set up in 2009. This resulted in 364 panel members keeping logbooks describing their catches (species, weight, size, etc.) The focus of the survey on sea bass shows that in Atlantic (Bay of Biscay and Channel), the estimated recreational catch of bass in 2012 was 3922 t of which 3146 t was kept and 776 t released. At this time results have to be considered as provisional, (results split between Bay and Biscay and Channel are not available yet with relative standard error).

UK (E&W)

A new survey programme *Sea Angling 2012*, based on a statistically sound survey design started in 2012 to estimate fishing effort, catches (kept and released) and fish sizes for shore based and boat angling in England. The survey does not cover other forms of recreational fishing. Results are available in Armstrong *et al.*, 2013.

The surveys adopted, where possible, statistically-sound, probability-based survey designs, building on knowledge gained through participation in the ICES Working Group on Recreational Fishery Surveys (WGRFS). Two survey approaches were adopted: firstly a stratified random survey of charter boats from a list frame covering ports in England, and secondly an on-site stratified random survey of shore anglers and private boat anglers to estimate mean catch per day, combined with annual effort estimates derived from questions added to a monthly Office of National Statistics household survey covering Great Britain.

A list of almost 400 charter boats was compiled for the charter boat survey, and 166 skippers agreed to participate. Each month over a twelve month period in 2012 and 2013, 34 randomly-selected skippers completed a diary documenting their activities, catches and sizes of fish. A diary was completed whether or not any fishing took place. Data from 5300 anglers were collected. Total annual catches were estimated by raising the monthly catches per vessel from the diaries to all vessel-month combinations in the frame, and raising this to all vessels including refusals. The estimated total annual catch of sea bass for the entire coast of England was 44 t (RSE 31%) of which 31 t was kept. The release rate by number was 37%. The charter boat survey has potential bias due to the large non-response rate, if non-respondents have different catch rates to respondents.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) household survey covered 12 000 households during 2012, and from this it was estimated that 2.2% of adults over 16 years old went sea angling at least once in the previous year. The surveys estimated there are 884 000 sea anglers in England. Estimation of fishing effort by shore and private boat anglers proved very difficult due to the overall low number of households with sea anglers in the survey. A range of methods was explored to estimate annual and seasonal effort using the ONS data alone, and combining it with observations from on-site and on-line surveys. It has not been possible yet to agree on a best estimate of effort, and for that reason the estimates of total catch (cpue \times effort) for shore and private boat angling are given as a range of plausible values.

The survey of anglers fishing from the shore and private boats to estimate cpue was carried out throughout 2012 using on-site interviews. A stratified random design was adopted to select shore sites and boat landing sites on a weekly basis from site lists stratified into low-activity and high-activity sites. The shore survey used roving-creel

methods (collecting data from partial angling trips), and the private boat survey a roving access-point survey (data from completed trips). Visits were made to 1475 shore sites and 425 private boat sites, and 2440 anglers were interviewed. The mean daily catch rate of kept and released fish of each species was estimated based on the survey design, and sizes of caught fish were recorded. Cpue for shore angling was estimated using catches for the observed trip duration and estimates of expected total trip duration for that day. A length-of-stay bias correction was applied based on expected total trip duration. The catch-per-day estimates were combined with estimates of total annual fishing effort (days fished) obtained from the ONS survey to estimate total annual catches. Release rates, by number, were 82% for shore angling and 57% for private boats. Non-response rates were very low (<10%) in this survey. The range of point estimates for shore-caught bass was 98–143 t (total) and 38–56 t (kept), and for private and rented boats was 194–546 t (total) and 142–367 t (kept). The relative standard errors for the individual shore and private boat estimates were relatively high at 40–50%.

Combining the catch estimates for charter boats, private boats and shore angling, the point estimates of annual kept weights of sea bass ranged from 230 t–440 t (Table 2.4.1c), compared with total UK commercial landings of almost 900 t in 2012. The combined estimates of bass catches had precision (relative standard error) estimates of 26%–38% for the different effort estimation methods. The relatively large standard errors combined with the range of plausible methods of estimating effort for shore and private boats.

Netherlands

Sea bass are taken by recreational sea anglers in the Netherlands. A recent survey investigated the amount of sea bass caught by recreational fishers (van der Hammen and de Graaf, 2012, 2015; ICES, 2012c) from March 2010 to February 2011 and from March 2013 to February 2013. Estimates of recreational sea bass were obtained from a panel of 1043 recreational fishermen (in the first survey) recruited during a telephone survey of 109 293 people. Revised estimates were provided to WGCSE 2013 (ICES, 2013a). The catch weights are estimated with a limited amount of length–frequency data, and are therefore less reliable than the estimates in numbers (and may also be adjusted if more data are available). For the same reason, there are no ‘returned’ estimates by weight (yet).

The estimated total recreational catch of sea bass was 366 000 fish (RSE 30%), of which 234 000 were retained, equivalent to 138 t. These results are mainly applicable to Sub-area 4.

Belgium

A recreational fishing survey was conducted in 2013 in Belgium by the Belgian Fisheries Institute, using a questionnaire approach, in order to meet DCF requirements. The estimated retained catch of sea bass was 60 t.

Hooking mortality rates

The US National Marine Fisheries Service has in the past used an average hooking mortality of 9% for striped bass, estimated by Diodati and Richards (1996). Striped bass are very similar to European sea bass in terms of morphology, habitats and angling methods. A literature review of hooking mortality for a range of species compiled by the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries included a total of 40 different experiments by 16 different authors where striped bass hooking mortality was estimated over

two or more days (Gary A. Nelson, Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, pers. comm.) The mean hooking mortality rate was 0.19 (standard deviation 0.19). Direct experiments are needed on European seabass to estimate hooking mortality for conditions and angling methods typical of European fisheries.

Total recreational catch

Total catches are given in the WGCSE report and updated when new estimates become available. They are also documented in the annual reports of the ICES Working Group on recreational fisheries (WGRFS).

B.2. Biological sampling

B2.1 Length and age compositions of landed and discarded fish in commercial fisheries

Length and age compositions of sea bass landings were available to WGCSE 2015 from sampling in the UK and France.

UK

Sampling methods and analysis

The UK (E&W) sampling programme for length compositions of sea bass covers sampling at sea and on shore. The sampling design for at-sea sampling is described above. The on-shore sampling programme uses an area list frame comprising port days, currently stratified by quarter, ICES Division and an index of "port size". "Large" ports are sampled more intensively than "small ports". Separate list frames of ports are established for pelagic trawlers, beam trawlers and demersal trawl, nets and lines. Sampling targets are set to achieve a specified number of port visits by stratum, taking account the need for fleet based as well as stock based data specified by the EU Data Collection Framework, although other diagnostics are monitored such as numbers of fish measures and otoliths/scales collected by species. This scheme has only been in development and operation since around 2010 when Cefas took over the sampling from the Marine and Fisheries Agency. Prior to then, the sampling targets were mainly set as numbers of fish of each species to measure or age by quarter, district, and gear groupings, with minimum numbers of sampling trips also specified to spread the sampling out.

Length compositions are first vessel-raised using ratios of landed live weight to predicted live weight of the length frequency calculated from a length–weight relationship:

$$W \text{ (kg)} = 0.00001296 (L+0.5)^{2.969}$$

Raised LFDs are then summed over vessels within a sampling stratum and raised to give total raised fleet LFDs per stratum, which are then combined. This procedure ensures sums-of-products ratios of 1.0, but will lead to some bias in numbers-at-length due to discrepancies between true fish weights and calculated fish weights from the length–weight relationship.

Data coverage and quality

Age compositions for UK commercial fishery landings of sea bass are derived from biennial (January–June and July–December) age–length keys (ALK) constructed for four areas: 4.b,c; 7.d, 7.e,h and 7.a,f,g. These are applied to fleet-raised landings length

frequencies for each of four gear groups (bottom trawls; midwater trawls; fixed/drift-nets and lines) in each area. Further details are given in the ICES IBP-NEW (ICES, 2012a) and WGCSE (ICES, 2013a) reports and in the stock annex along with tables giving numbers of trips sampled for length and age and numbers of fish measured and aged.

A recommendation of WGCSE 2013 was to expand the UK age frequencies to the full recorded age range and to re-evaluate the plus-group definition (previously at 12+). Sea bass have been recorded to almost 30 years of age, and it was thought that having more true ages in the Stock Synthesis input data could allow better estimates of early recruit deviations. The necessary extractions were done for IBPBass, and the data were examined in detail by Armstrong and Readdy (IBPBass Working Document_01). Bubble plots and catch curves showed that coherent information on year classes was present well beyond the last true age (11) previously adopted. The exploratory SS3 runs show that the different choices of plus-group (12+; 16+; 18+; 20+) have relatively little impact on the results, other than (as hoped) a slightly better estimation of early recruit deviations. Expanding the age compositions may help fit domed selection curves for fleets where this is appropriate, but risks an increasing number of zero catch entries for older ages as recent weak year classes feed into future catches and become depleted. A plus-gp of 16+ was recommended for further model development and agreed by IBPBass. Sampling of midwater trawls prior to 1996, and in 1997, was considered too poor to develop age compositions. All datasets show a very strong 1989 year class and very weak 1985–1987 year classes.

France

Sampling methods and analysis

The French sampling programme for length compositions of sea bass covers sampling at sea and on shore. Since 2009, both sampling types are first based on métiers composition and their relative importance per fishing harbours and month. Both are also designed to sample the whole catch following a concurrent sampling of species, potentially leading to low sea bass sample size. In order to complement this effort, specific sampling for sea bass at the market is added at times and harbours when higher landings are occurring, especially from métiers targeting sea bass. The sampling frame is based on the main harbours, gear types (or grouping of métiers) and month and is available to all samplers on a dedicated website. Real time follow-up of the plan, refusal rates and their reasons, time taken to sample, all this information is also available from the website, together with sampling protocol (in French:

http://sih.ifremer.fr/content/download/5587/40495/file/Manuel_OB-SMER_V2_2_2012.pdf).

Before 2009, only market specific sampling was in place, and the sampling plan was designed and followed by the stock coordinator. The French sampling programme for age compositions of sea bass is based on age–length keys with fixed allocation. For the 7.e,h area, quarterly French landings at auctions are sampled in order to collect five scales (from 2000 to 2008) or three scales (from 2009) by length class (cm). For the 8.a,b area the information is available only from 2010. For other areas the information is not available. All length samples are populated in a central database (Harmonie) and regular extracts are available in the COST format. Raising the data to the population is done using COST tools and a special forum for discussing the outcomes of the analysis is held every year in March, in order to gather all stock coordinators and prepare the datasets for the assessment working groups.

Data coverage and quality

Length compositions of French sea bass commercial landings are constructed from 2014 for the area including 4.b,c; 7.d, 7.e,h and 7.a,f,g, for all métier. The input data for French fleets in Stock Synthesis are the fleet-aggregated length compositions in 2 cm classes (20–21.9, 22–23.9, etc.) for each year from 2000 onwards.

The statistical design of fishery sampling schemes has undergone change in recent years in the UK and France, following recommendations from ICES workshops on sampling survey design, with a move towards more representative sampling across trips within fleet segments. This can result in sampling more trips that have small catches of bass, and is one reason for the increase in numbers of sampled trips with bass since 2009 in France which does not imply an increase of the proportion in numbers of fish measured per trip.

Other countries

Fishery landings length or age compositions from other countries catching bass were not available to IBPBass2 2016. The Netherlands did collect age samples of sea bass every year from 2005 to 2008. From 2010 onwards, age samples are collected only once every three years. In the IMARES market sampling data on length, age, sex and weight are collected for several commercially important species. For sea bass this is done on an irregular basis and data are only available for some years. Market sampling is done since 2005. The age sampling frequency is now set triennially (2010, 2013, etc.) Every three years four samples of 15 fish (60 fish in total) are aged, and every year the lengths of 24 samples of 15 fish (360 fish in total) are taken. Otoliths and scales that are retrieved from the fish are sent to Cefas in the UK for age reading. Length samples are collected every year. All samples are collected in the auctions where most sea bass is landed, in the south of the Netherlands. The quality of the data is good enough to use them in assessments. However, both the length and age data need processing before they can be inserted in an assessment.

Effective sample sizes for length and age compositions

The effective sample size for annual estimates of length or age composition lie between the number of trips sampled and the number of fish measured or aged, due to cluster sampling effects. Effective sample sizes have now been computed for UK and French sampling data for sea bass. Initial sample sizes for the length compositions are first computed for the UK trawls/nets and lines fleet based using the number of trips sampled for length and the age compositions on the number of trips sampled for age. The UK midwater trawl length frequencies use the number of trips sampled for length, similar to the Other UK fleets, however the age frequency distribution uses a sample size set at 50 for each year. For the French combined-fleet LFDs, the sample size is set at 200 for each year and the age frequency distribution sample size set at 100 for each year.

Sample sizes were adjusted using the Francis method of weighting. This was carried out using an iterative re-weighting process of compositional data using the input sample sizes and the effective sample sizes based on model fit. This method reduces the disproportionate effect of the different dataset used. Table B.2.1.1 provides the multiplier by fleet for each of the age and length composition data sources.

Table B.2.1.1 Effective sample size multiply for age and length compositions by fleet.

FLEET	DATA TYPE	MULTIPLIER
UK otter trawl/nets	Length compositions	0.2625
	Age compositions	0.2376
Lines	Length compositions	0.1539
	Age compositions	0.1591
UK midwater trawl	Length compositions	0.1601
	Age compositions	0.7251
French	Length compositions	0.2023
	Age compositions	0.3362
Autumn Bass survey	Age compositions	0.8443
French channel ground fish survey (CGFS)	Length compositions	0.3562

Accuracy and validation of age estimates

Age-reading consistency

Consistency in age reading of sea bass between four operators in Cefas and Ifremer was examined during a limited exchange of otolith and scale images between laboratories in 2011, organised by the ICES Planning Group on Commercial Catches, Discards and Biological Sampling (Mahé *et al.*, 2012). A total of 155 fish of 17–74 cm was sampled on board French research vessels during two international surveys. The precision of ageing was similar for scales and otoliths. The coefficient of variation of age readings for individual fish was around 12% implying a standard deviation of +/- 1 year for a ten year-old fish, with relatively few fish having identical readings by all four operators. However it was noted by the operators that photographic images were more difficult to evaluate than original age material, which was likely to have a negative effect on the consistency of ageing. These results provide no indication of the validity of ages, only the consistency between operators, and cannot indicate data quality in earlier years when different operators provided the age data. A more extensive age exchange is to be carried out in 2015.

Age validation

WGCSE and IBPBass were not aware of specific studies to validate absolute ages of sea bass derived from otolith or scale readings. Strong and weak year classes can be followed clearly to over 20 years of age in UK sample data although it is not known to what extent the elevated numbers of sampled fish in immediately adjacent year classes is a true reflection of year-class strength or a consequence of age errors discussed in the previous section. Year-class tracking is less clear in the younger ages 3–5 although this will be affected by gear selectivity and changes in fish behaviour.

Sea bass show relatively broad length-at-age distributions, and it has been noted in French data (Laurec *et al.*, 2012 WD to IBP-NEW) that the length-at-age distributions can have unusual patterns including some multiple modes that could indicate age errors. This will result in some smoothing of age data across neighbouring year classes. In the UK data, unusual patterns in length-at-age distributions for some younger ages appear related more to effects of minimum landing size on data from the fishery.

Inclusion of age error parameters in Stock Synthesis model

CVs for ageing error by age class can be input to Stock Synthesis. Based on the ICES sea bass scale exchange in 2002, the CVs of ~12% can be specified as increasing values per age class to give a standard error of ~1 year per age class.

B2.2 Growth parameters

Pickett and Pawson (1994) provide plots of growth curves for female and male bass based on samples collected in the 1980s in Areas 4 and 7. The samples used by Pickett and Pawson (1994) for growth and maturity analysis were obtained from a range of fishery and other sources.

A re-analysis of UK historical age-length data including more recent samples was conducted in 2012, using data for the full UK sampling series from 1985 to 2010 (Armstrong and Walmsley, 2012b). The data are derived from sampling of UK fishery catches around England and Wales as well as from trawls surveys of young bass in the Solent and Thames estuary. More than 90 000 sea bass have been aged since 1985. The inshore surveys are mainly young sea bass up to 3–5 years of age, whereas the fishery samples include fish up to 28 years of age.

All ageing is done from scales, excluding scales considered to be re-grown. On surveys, scales are collected in a length-stratified manner from individual hauls with a view to building age-length keys. A similar approach has historically been adopted for catch sampling. This may lead to non-random sampling of individual age groups when the catch numbers are well in excess of numbers sampled from an individual catch. It will also lead to some overestimation of the standard deviation of lengths-at-age.

All ages for fitting growth curves are referred to a nominal January 1 birthdate, according to month of capture. Parameters of the von Bertalanffy growth curve were fitted in Excel Solver using non-linear minimisation of $\sum(\text{obs-exp})^2$ for lengths-at-age of individual fish, by area and for all data combined.

Von Bertalanffy model parameters were as follows:

Area	4.b,c	7.d	7.e	7.a,f,g	All areas
Linf (cm)	82.98	87.22	92.27	81.87	84.55
K	0.1104	0.09298	0.07697	0.09246	0.09699
t0 (years)	-0.608	-0.592	-1.693	-1.066	-0.730

Standard deviation of length-at-age distributions increases linearly with age according to:

$$SD(\text{age}) = 0.1166 * \text{age} + 3.5609$$

The sampled sea bass show some sexual dimorphism of growth from about seven years of age onwards. It is currently not possible to implement a sex-disaggregated Stock Synthesis assessment, therefore a combined-sex growth curve is adopted. Mean length-at-age has not shown any trend over time, and length-at-age is also very similar in strong and weak year classes (Armstrong and Walmsley, 2012b). Hence data have been combined over the full series to estimate growth parameters.

B2.3 Maturity

Spawning grounds and season

Ripe adult bass have been caught by pelagic trawling in the south of Division 8.a and in the north of Division 8.b in the Bay of Biscay during January–March (Morizur, unpublished data), and planktonic egg surveys (Thompson and Harrop, 1987; Jennings and Pawson, 1992) have shown that bass spawn offshore in the English Channel and eastern Celtic Sea from February to May. Spawning started in the Midwestern Channel when the temperature range associated with bass egg distributions was 8.5–11°C, and appeared to spread east through the Channel as the surface water temperature exceeded 9°C. Seasonal patterns of occurrence of advanced maturity stages in UK samples also indicate spawning mainly January to May in ICES Areas 4 and 7 (Armstrong and Walmsley, 2012c). Spawning and ripe bass are also found in the southern North Sea (information from commercial fisheries and angler reports in Netherlands supplied to IBP-NEW 2012 by F. Quirijns).

Previous estimates of maturity at length/age, and data available for re-analysis

SGBASS (ICES 2004) reported that around Britain and Ireland, male bass mature at a length of 31–35 cm, aged 4–7 years, and females at 40–45 cm, aged 5–8 years, (Kennedy and Fitzmaurice, 1972; Pawson and Pickett, 1996), and data from the southern part of the Bay of Biscay (Lam Hoai, 1970; Stequert, 1972) indicate that male matures at a length of 35 cm (age 4) and females at 42 cm (age 6). Data provided by Masski (1998) from samples taken from 7.e bottom trawlers (41 females) indicate that 40% and 82% of females were mature at-age 6 and 7 respectively, with a very small percentage mature at-age 5.

Collection of maturity data are difficult as few adult bass are caught in surveys and bass are typically landed whole and are extremely expensive to purchase. Samples collected by the UK (Cefas) during 1982–2003 and 2009 in ICES Areas 4 and 7 were re-analysed for ICES IBP-NEW 2012 (Armstrong and Walmsley, 2012c). Samples have

come from all around the coast of England and Wales, though few fish have been sampled in the Irish Sea (7.a).

Defining a maturity marker for sea bass

Sea bass are multiple batch spawners, as indicated by size distributions of oocytes (eggs) in ovaries (Mayer *et al.*, 1990). This means that the ovary will start to mature oocytes through to vitellogenic stages during the months immediately prior to the spawning season. Historical maturity staging of sea bass by the UK has used the maturity key given in Pawson and Pickett (1996; Table B2-1). In their analyses, they treated stage 2 as mature, and stage 3 as immature. Their reasoning was that stage 3 ovaries (early maturing) were found in smaller bass than later stages (4+) indicating that many of these fish may not proceed to spawning. Sea bass migrate offshore to spawning grounds, and it is likely that early maturing fish could be over-represented, and advanced maturing fish under-represented in inshore catches sampled during the period of spawning migrations. An additional spent stage (8) has been occasionally recorded.

The identification of a suitable marker to identify maturity has to take into account the probability of finding a fish at any maturity stage in different months, the duration of a stage, and the availability/catchability of fish at that stage of maturity. When the majority of mature sea bass have entered the batch spawning cycle in spring, all stages represented in batch spawning (III to 7) will be evident and should be distinct from immature fish. Hence, the best markers for maturity are the maturity stages representing different stages in the batch spawning cycle, sampled at a time when spawning is taking place (or immediately before), provided fish in all stages are equally catchable. This is the conclusion of recent ICES workshops on maturity staging of gadoids and flatfish, which recommends sampling within a month or so of the beginning and end of the spawning season. Experience with other roundfish and flatfish stocks is that it can be very difficult to distinguish between virgin females and fish that have spawned previously, when sampled in the non-spawning period. The UK data were therefore re-analysed using samples from December to April, treating all fish of maturity stages 3 to 7 as mature.

Re-estimation of maturity ogives from UK data

Maturity was modelled using a binomial error structure and logit link function, fitted in R to individual observations. The logistic model describing proportion mature by 1 cm length class L was formulated as:

$$Pmat(L) = 1/(1+e^{-(a+bL)})$$

defined by the parameters slope b and length intercept a . These parameters were estimated separately for females and males. This can also be expressed as:

$$Pmat(L) = 1/(1+e^{-b(L+c)}) \text{ where } c = a/b$$

Stock Synthesis uses the second formulation, and the parameters required are the slope ($b = 0.3335$: entered as a negative value) and the length inflection, which is the estimated length at 50% maturity ($L^{50\%} = 40.65$ cm).

The 2009 data come from a large sample of sea bass taken in spring from a few trips specifically to revisit bass maturity, but this sample dominates the time-series of sampling which is spread over very many more trips and months than in 2009 and therefore has better coverage. Maturity ogives were therefore fitted including and excluding 2009 data. The inclusion of 2009 data, which were for a relatively restricted length range of fish around 40 cm, has the effect of improving the fit of the model near the top

of the ascending limb of the maturity ogive for females (Figure B2-1). However the very high weighting for these lengths compared to the data for lengths <35 cm results in the model fitting very poorly to the smaller length classes. Excluding the 2009 data allow the length classes <35 cm to carry more weight, and the ogive appears to fit the data for 30–40 cm sea bass more closely, although the fit for lengths >40 cm is poorer. Addition of the 2009 data effectively shifts the L50% from around 41 cm to 35 cm. In contrast, inclusion or exclusion of the 2009 data has less effect on the model fit for males (Figure B2-1). On balance, it was considered undesirable for a few large hauls in a recent year to have excessive leverage in the model fit, and the model excluding 2009 was considered preferable as a long-term maturity ogive for use in assessments.

Table B2-1. Macroscopic characteristics of the maturity stages of the gonads of bass. (Pawson and Pickett, 1996)

MATURITY STAGE		OVARY	TESTIS
I	Immature	Small thread-like ovary, reddish-pink	Small, colourless, thread-like; testis not practical to differentiate macroscopically <TL 20 cm
II	Recovering spent	Ovaries one-third length of ventral cavity, opaque, pink with thickened walls and may have atretic eggs	Testis one-third length of ventral cavity, often bloodshot with parts dark grey
III	Developing (early)	Ovaries up to one-half length of ventral cavity, orange-red, slight granular appearance, thin, translucent walls	Testes thickness 10–20% of length, dirty white, tinged grey or pink
4	Developing (late)	Ovaries greater than one-third length of ventral cavity, orange-red; eggs clearly visible, but none hyaline	Testes flat-oval in cross-section and thickness >20% of length, half to two-thirds of ventral cavity. White colour and milt expressed from vent if pressure applied to abdomen
V	Gravid (ripe)	Swollen ovaries two-thirds length of ventral cavity, pale yellow-orange; opaque eggs clearly visible with some hyaline	Testes bright white and more rounded-oval in cross-section. Only light pressure required to cause milt to flow from vent
6	Running	Ovaries very swollen; both opaque and larger hyaline eggs clearly visible beneath thin almost transparent ovary wall, and expressed freely with light pressure	Testes becoming grey-white and less turgid. Milt extruded spontaneously
7	Spent	Ovary flaccid but not empty, deep red; very thick ovary wall; dense yellow atretic eggs may be visible	Testes flattened and grey, flushed with red or pink, larger than those at stage II or III

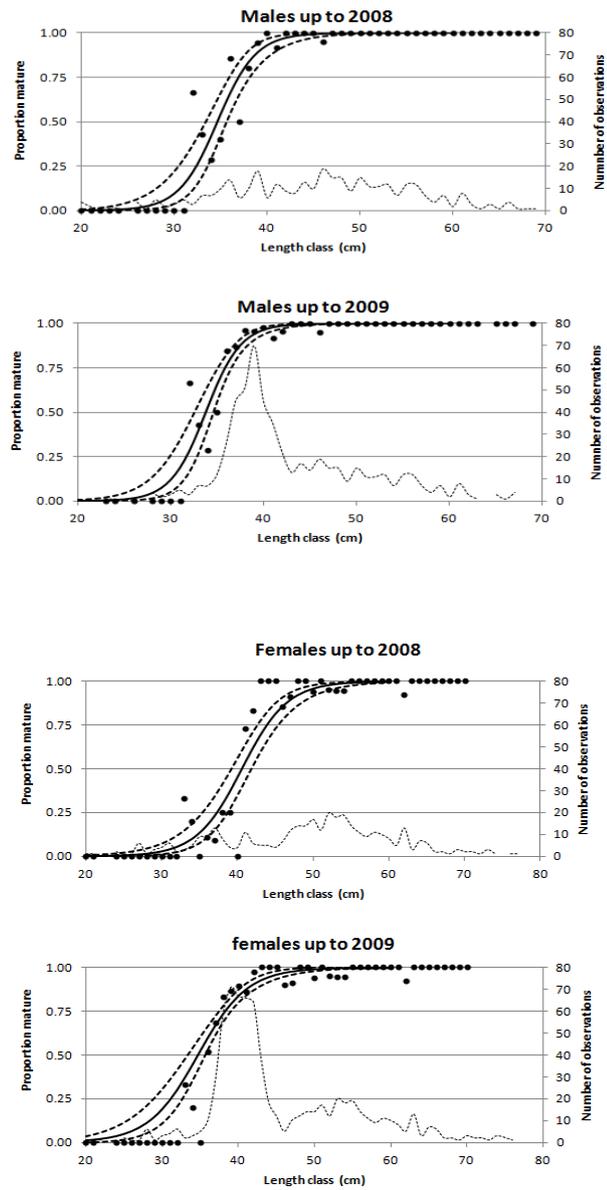


Figure B2.1. Logistic maturity ogives (with 95% confidence intervals) fitted to individual maturity records for sea bass during December–April. Top plot: excluding 2009 data (top); bottom plot: including 2009 data. Points are proportion mature in the raw data. Dotted line is the number of observations per length class.

The parameters of the model $P_{mat}(L) = 1/(1+e^{-b(L+c)})$ are given below:

	FEMALES	MALES
Intercept (a)	-13.556	-16.851
Slope (b)	0.3335	0.4861
c = a/b	-40.6488	-34.6652
L _{25%}	37.35	32.41
L _{50%}	40.65	34.67
L _{75%}	43.95	36.93

The logistic model for females and males is:

$$P_{\text{mat}}(L) = 1/(1+e^{-0.3335(L-40.6488)}) \quad (\text{females})$$

$$P_{\text{mat}}(L) = 1/(1+e^{-0.4861(L-34.6652)}) \quad (\text{males})$$

The maturation range for females occurs at-ages 4 to 7, and for males at ages 3–6, as shown by the proportion mature at-age in the same samples used for estimation of length-based maturity ogives (Table B2-2).

Table B2-2. Raw proportion mature at-age in 1982–2003 UK samples from all areas.

	FEMALES	MALES
age 2	0.00	0.00
age 3	0.00	0.27
age 4	0.17	0.54
age 5	0.21	0.61
age 6	0.55	0.91
age 7	0.95	0.98
age 8	1.00	1.00
age 9	0.95	0.98
age 10+	1.00	1.00

Data on sea bass maturity have also been collected in the Netherlands since 2005. Methods and data are described by Quirijns and Bierman (2012). For male fish, too few specimens were measured to estimate maturity. Maturity-at-age and length are plotted in Figure B2-2. Note that only few fish were measured in the lowest age and length groups. At age 4, 50% of the females are mature. This is substantially lower than the age at 50% maturity in the Cefas 1982–2003 samples (Table B2-2), and closer to the ogive from Cefas data including the large 2009 sample (Figure B2-1), for which L50 was around 35 cm (~4 years old). This may confirm that sea bass could now be maturing earlier than in the 1980s–early 2000s, at least for the North Sea. The plot showing maturity-at-length for Netherlands samples is not based on enough measurements to show a reliable maturity ogive.

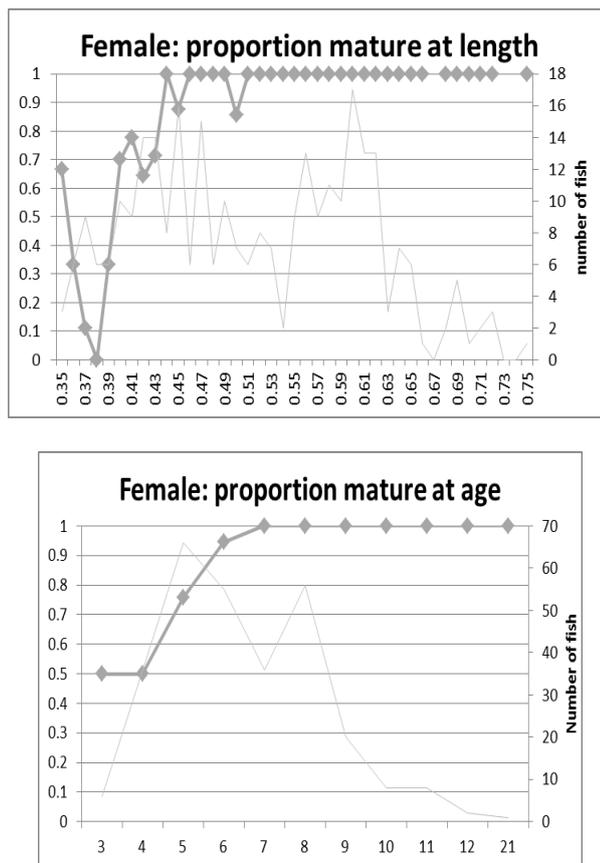


Figure B2-2. Proportion of mature at-age and length (length in m) for female sea bass sampled in the southern North Sea by the Netherlands during 2005 (thick line). The thin line shows the number of fish measured on which the proportion of maturity is based.

B2.4 Larval dispersal, nursery grounds and recruitment

Bass larvae resulting from offshore spawning move steadily inshore towards the coast as they grow and, when they reach a specific developmental stage at around 11–15 mm in length (at 30–50 days old), it is thought that they respond to an environmental cue and actively swim into estuarine nursery habitats (Jennings and Pawson, 1992). From June onwards, 0-group bass in excess of 15 mm long are found almost exclusively in creeks, estuaries, backwaters, and shallow bays all along the southeast, south, and west coasts of England and Wales, where they remain through their first and second years, after which they migrate to over-wintering areas in deeper water, returning to the larger estuaries in summer. Several studies indicate the existence of similar bass nursery areas in bays and estuaries on the French coasts of the Channel and Bay of Biscay and southern Ireland.

During the winter, juvenile bass move into deeper channels or into open water, and return in spring to the larger estuaries and shallow bays on the open coast, where they remain for the next 2–3 years.

On the south and west coasts of the UK, juvenile bass emigrate from these nursery areas at around 36 cm TL (age 3–6 years, depending on growth rate), often dispersing well outside the 'home' range, and not necessarily recruiting to their specific parent spawning stock (Pawson *et al.*, 1987; Pickett and Pawson, 2004). It appears that there is substantial mixing of bass at this stage throughout large parts of the populations' distribution range. When they reach four or five years of age their movements become

more wide-ranging and they eventually adopt the adult feeding/spawning migration patterns (Pawson *et al.*, 1994).

Sea temperature has a strong influence on sea bass dynamics, affecting spatial distributions, and also the growth and survival of young bass in nursery areas during the first years of life (Pawson, 1992; WGCSE, 2014).

B2.5 Natural mortality M

There are no direct estimates of natural mortality available for Northeast Atlantic sea bass. Predation up to around age 4 will be in and near estuaries and bays. As with other fish species it is expected that M will be relatively high at the youngest ages, particularly given the slow growth rate in bass. A variety of methods are given in the literature relating natural mortality rate M to life history parameters such as von Bertalanffy growth parameters k and L_{inf} (asymptotic length), length or age at 50% maturity and apparent longevity particularly in an unexploited or very lightly exploited population. The probability of encountering very old bass is partly a function of the interaction of year class strength and sampling rates, as well as mortality, however the occurrence of sea bass to almost 30 years of age suggests low rates of mortality. The observed maximum age of 28 years in sea bass samples in the UK was recorded in the early 1980s, following a period of relatively low fishery landings. Age compositions of recreational fishery caught bass in southern Ireland, presented by stakeholders at IBP-NEW 2012, also show ages up to 26 years (Figure B2-3). This stock has been subject to a commercial fishery ban for many years.

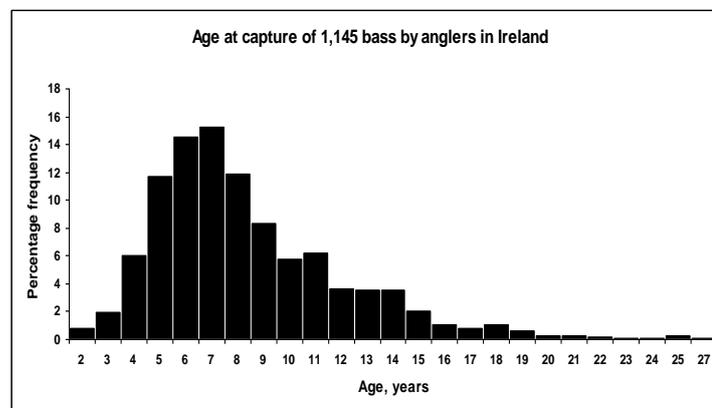


Figure B2-3. Age composition of bass from samples collected from recreational catches in southern Ireland (data courtesy Ed Fahy, IBP-NEW 2012 meeting).

Inferences on sea bass natural mortality based on some life-history models in the literature are given in IBP-NEW 2012 benchmark assessment section. The inferred values of M, with the exception of the Beverton method, are in the range 0.15–0.22 (Armstrong, 2012).

A variety of methods are given in the literature relating natural mortality rate M to life-history parameters such as von Bertalanffy growth parameters k and L_{inf} (asymptotic length), length or age at 50% maturity and apparent longevity particularly in an unexploited or very lightly exploited population. The method of Gislason *et al.* (2010) generates age-varying M values. These methods were applied to the following sea bass life-history parameters by Armstrong (2012):

LIFE-HISTORY PARAMETERS	
VBGF K (combined sex)	0.097
VBGF Linf (combined sex)	84.55
VBGF to (combined sex)	-0.73
Age at 50% maturity females (L50% converted to age)	6
Age at 50% maturity males (L50% converted to age)	4
Max age (combined sex)	28
Length at 50% mat females	40.65
Length at 50% mat males	34.67

The probability of encountering very old bass is partly a function of the interaction of year-class strength and sampling rates, as well as mortality, however the occurrence of seabass to almost 30 years of age suggests low rates of mortality. The observed maximum age of 28 years in sea bass samples in the UK was recorded in the early 1980s, following a period of relatively low fishery landings although recreational fishing was occurring throughout this period. Age compositions of recreational fishery caught bass in southern Ireland, presented by stakeholders at IBPNew 2012, show ages up to 26 years. This stock has been subject to a commercial fishery ban for many years.

Inferences on natural mortality rates are given below:

Source	Formulation	Combined sex M
Hoernig 1983	variety of taxa $\ln(M) = 1.44 - 0.982 * \ln(tmax);$ teleosts $\ln(M) = 1.46 - 1.01 * \ln(tmax)$	0.160 0.149
Alverson and Carney 1975	$M = 3k / (\exp(0.38 * tmax * k) - 1)$	0.161
Pauly 1980	$M = \exp(-0.0152 + 0.6543 * \ln(k) - 0.279 * \ln(Linf, cm) + 0.4634 * \ln(T(oC)))$	0.196 temperature C 12 0.211 14 0.224 16
Ralston 1987	$M = 0.0189 + 2.06 * k$	0.219
Beverton 1992	$M = 3k / (\exp(am * k) - 1)$ am = age at 50% maturity	0.369 female am ; comb sex k 0.614 male am , comb sex k
Jensen (1997)	$M = 1.5K$	0.146
Gislason 2010	$M = \exp(0.55 - 1.61 * \ln(L) + 1.44 * \ln(Linf) + \ln(K))$	Age class Length M

Gislason 2010 method

1	13.1	1.599
2	19.7	0.827
3	25.7	0.539
4	31.1	0.395
5	36.1	0.312
6	40.5	0.258
7	44.6	0.221
8	48.3	0.195
9	51.6	0.175
10	54.7	0.159
11	57.5	0.147
12	60.0	0.138
13	62.2	0.130
14	64.3	0.123
15	66.2	0.117
16	67.9	0.113
17	69.4	0.109
18	70.8	0.105
19	72.1	0.102
20	73.2	0.100

The inferred values of M, with the exception of the Beverton method, are in the range 0.15–0.22. The average of the Gislason estimates for ages 3–20 is 0.19, and the estimates fall below 0.15 by age 11. The value M=0.2 was adopted by WGCSE 2013

B.3 Surveys

B3.1 UK Solent and Thames pre-recruit surveys

The UK has conducted pre-recruit trawl surveys in the Solent and the Thames Estuary since 1981 and 1997 respectively. These surveys all ended in 2009 although the Solent survey was repeated as a one-off survey in autumn 2011 to help provide recruitment indices for the bass benchmark assessment. The location of the surveys and the tow positions are shown in Figure B3-1. Both surveys use a high headline bass trawl, although in the Thames it is deployed as a twin rig and in the Solent as a single rig.

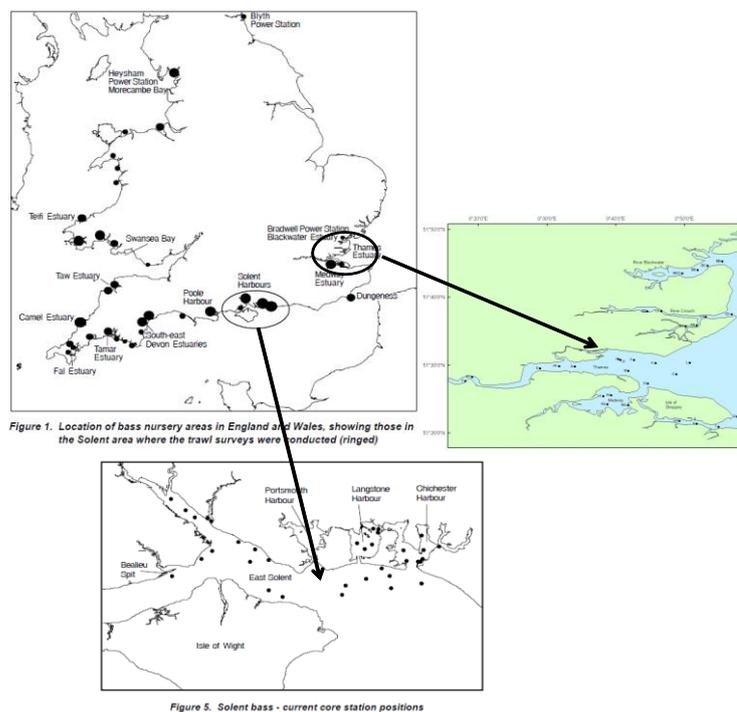


Figure B3-1. Location and tow positions for UK (England) Solent and Thames sea bass surveys.

The Solent survey has previously been presented to WGNEW as a combined index across ages in each year class. The index was derived by firstly rescaling the annual mean catch rate per age class to the mean for that age in the survey series, then taking the average of the rescaled values for ages 2–4 in each year class from surveys in May–July and September (i.e. up to six values represented in the annual combined index). The Thames survey data were worked up in the same way, although using a different age range for the combined index (ages 0–3). WGNEW 2012 provided the survey data in the more conventional tuning-file format, giving the standardised catch rates (arithmetic mean numbers per 10 minute tow) by year and age, separately for the two surveys (data in assessment report). These surveys have now been discontinued and will not be updated by future working groups unless new resources are allocated.

The spring and autumn Solent survey index series are updated to include the autumn 2013 survey and to amend an error in the autumn survey indices in 2000. The surveys do not show major year-effects, but as noted in previous assessments the autumn (September) survey shows a general increase in recruitment during the 1990s up to the mid-2000s, with very low indices for the 2008 onwards year classes, whilst the spring survey shows poor recruitment from around 2002 onwards. Previous Stock Synthesis runs show that the autumn survey is much better fitted than the spring survey. The spring survey is likely to be more strongly affected by weather and by temperature effects on distribution.

The Thames survey series indicates an increase in recruitment from the mid-1990s to early 2000s followed by some poor year classes, possibly a strong 2007 year class, then weak year classes in 2008 and 2009. A problem with the use of the Thames survey is that it may reflect recruitment from spawning that became established in the southern North Sea as the stock expanded in the 1990s under warmer sea conditions, and may therefore not reflect recruitment trends that influence the larger stock components in the Channel and Celtic Sea.

A justification of using the Solent survey as an index of recruitment over the full range of the stock was the results of a statistical, UK-only fleet-based separable model developed by Pawson *et al.* (2007) and updated by ICES WGNEW (Kupschus *et al.*, 2008). The Pawson *et al.* model was fitted only using UK age compositions for trawls, mid-water trawls, nets and lines, separately for ICES Divisions 4.b,c, 7.d, 7.e,h and 7.a,f,g, and was intended mainly to estimate fleet selection patterns. Although it excluded any tuning data, the recruitment-series for each sea area closely resembled the Solent survey indices and to an extent the shorter Thames series, and was able to provide coherent selection patterns by fleet.

The full Solent survey series was subject to a change in gear design in 1993. Some comparative trawling was carried out to develop age-varying calibration factors, but these are poorly documented and the original raw data and calibration results are currently being sought at Cefas. Pending an evaluation of this, the benchmark Stock Synthesis runs included a sensitivity run with the series split into two periods around the gear change. Some additional issues with calibration factors applied to the spring survey were detected during the benchmark, and this is considered later in the sections on model development.

A precision estimate was calculated for the Solent and Thames surveys based on the between-tow variations in catch rate of all the age classes used in the index. For the Solent spring, Solent autumn and Thames surveys, the relative standard errors were 0.42, 0.25 and 0.43 respectively.

IBP-Bass 2014 reviewed the performance of the Solent and Thames surveys and decided to exclude the Solent spring and the Thames survey for the following reasons:

- The Solent spring survey (Table B.3.1) has performed poorly in the assessment, indicating trends in recruitment not in accord with other data. This may be related to temperature or other environmental effects on distribution of small bass in spring. Unusual calibration factors noted in some years in the Solent spring data files require investigation.
- The Thames survey (Table B.3.2) may reflect recruitment from spawning that became established in the southern North Sea as the stock expanded in the 1990s under warmer sea conditions, and may therefore not reflect recruitment trends that influence the larger stock components in the Channel and Celtic Sea.

The removal of these surveys has negligible impact on the estimated stock trends.

Table B.3.1. Time-series of relative abundance indices for seabass age groups 2, 3 and 4 from the UK Solent spring and autumn trawl surveys. A change in trawl design took place in 1993.

YEAR	MAY-JULY			SEPTEMBER		
	AGE 2	AGE 3	AGE 4	AGE 2	AGE 3	AGE 4
1981	0.00	0.30	0.25		No survey	
1982	0.51	2.17	0.16	3.25	10.10	0.38
1983		No survey		9.87	0.91	1.88
1984	0.95	2.66	0.43	1.38	0.65	0.09
1985	0.00	10.33	2.56		No survey	
1986		No survey		0.27	4.26	1.31
1987	0.00	0.42	3.18	0.05	0.28	2.27
1988	0.00	0.02	0.47		No survey	
1989		No survey		6.68	0.37	0.00
1990	2.84	2.48	0.00	2.81	1.15	0.02
1991	5.78	0.62	0.09	3.08	0.21	0.03
1992	0.11	7.04	0.35	0.95	18.59	0.16
1993	0.05	7.33	14.02	6.65	3.59	4.39
1994	0.04	1.63	1.14	3.33	1.84	0.29
1995	0.05	1.57	0.97	4.83	4.69	0.72
1996	1.43	4.09	3.36	5.52	0.43	0.11
1997	0.27	1.94	0.11	33.62	4.52	0.06
1998	0.00	6.75	5.79	1.22	5.50	0.61
1999	0.61	0.95	12.30	19.37	0.67	0.87
2000	0.49	37.03	1.06	6.07	11.35	0.03
2001	1.71	6.33	3.43	34.42	3.92	1.57
2002	0.63	1.62	0.29	7.42	3.87	0.40
2003	0.06	0.32	0.38	8.37	4.60	0.59
2004	0.17	0.28	0.16		No survey	
2005	0.05	0.42	0.35	13.12	7.98	0.84
2006	0.44	2.47	1.03	9.51	9.21	1.02
2007	0.33	0.50	0.50	3.42	1.78	0.30
2008		No survey		18.52	6.66	0.34
2009	0.72	1.03	0.13	13.25	6.25	0.33
2010		No survey			No survey	
2011		No survey		2.25	1.39	0.42
2012		No survey			No survey	
2013		No survey		1.34	0.08	0.10
2014		No Survey		1.17	1.02	0.11

Note: September 2000 data amended.

Table B.3.2. Time-series of relative abundance indices for seabass age groups 0–3 from the UK Thames trawl survey.

YEAR	AGE 0	AGE 1	AGE 2	AGE 3
1997	7.737	0	0.048	0.41
1998	No survey			
1999	19.54	6.033	0.764	0
2000	4.015	14.74	0.832	0.089
2001	121.5	11.47	5.108	0.171
2002	469	20.71	2.716	1.093
2003	225.6	35.76	4.429	0.159
2004	238.92	44.99	7.32	1.03
2005	37.04	14.49	6.86	0.75
2006	245.54	11.26	3.46	0.94
2007	No survey			
2008	107.55	50.69	1.86	0.2
2009	95.43	7.79	13.59	0.91

B3.2 Other 0-gp & 1-gp surveys

The UK has undertaken a seine net survey in the Tamar Estuary, since 1985. Additional data are available from the Camel estuary and power stations in the Thames and Severn Estuary. These surveys are used as supporting information and not included in the assessment. Abundance indices for these surveys are given in Table B3.1. The Tamar survey abundance indices need to be updated to include more recent surveys. Seine net surveys in the UK estuaries Fal and Helford also have data on 0-gp and 1-gp bass.

Table B3-1. Abundance indices for 0-gp and 1-gp bass. († discontinued).

	ESTUARY SEINE SURVEYS			POWER STATION SCREEN	
	TAMAR (0-GROUP)	TAMAR (1-GROUP)	CAMEL	SEVERN	THAMES
	7E	7E	7F	7F	4C
1972				3	
1973				4	
1974				1	
1975				15	78
1976				127	100
1977				-	6
1978				-	5
1979				-	5
1980				9	37
1981			2	216	21
1982			123	83	56
1983			30	226	83
1984			134	8	62
1985	0.663	0.385	22	11	76
1986	0.005	0.014	1	3	14
1987	0.032	0.062	31	96	116
1988	1.484	1.284	48	98	54
1989	2.348	2.389	112	446	610
1990	1.038	1.516	89	25	433
1991	0.076	0.058	50	300	64
1992	2.216	2.431	25	280	104
1993	1.013	0.913	22	202	131
1994	1.126	0.346	134	-	26
1995	2.356	1.294	-	-	27
1996	0.102	0.047	119	242	†
1997	1.119	1.299	102	†	
1998	2.082	3.170	264		
1999	1.215	0.937	56		
2000	0.340	1.185	133		
2001	0.351	0.129	†		
2002	2.098	3.179			
2003	0.965	1.067			
2004	1.453	0.261			
2005	0.522	0.169			
2006	0.186	0.203			
2007	0.475	1.308			
2008	1.275	1.229			
2009	0.460				

B3.3 Evhoe survey: France

Sea bass are caught in small numbers in the French Evhoe trawl survey, which extends to the shelf edge in Subareas 7 and 8 but also extends into coastal areas of the Bay of Biscay and the Celtic Sea where bass may be caught (cf the station map). Less than 10% of the stations have bass catches in most years. A mean of 0.5 sea bass per trawl has been recorded from 1987. Abundance indices are calculated as stratified means.

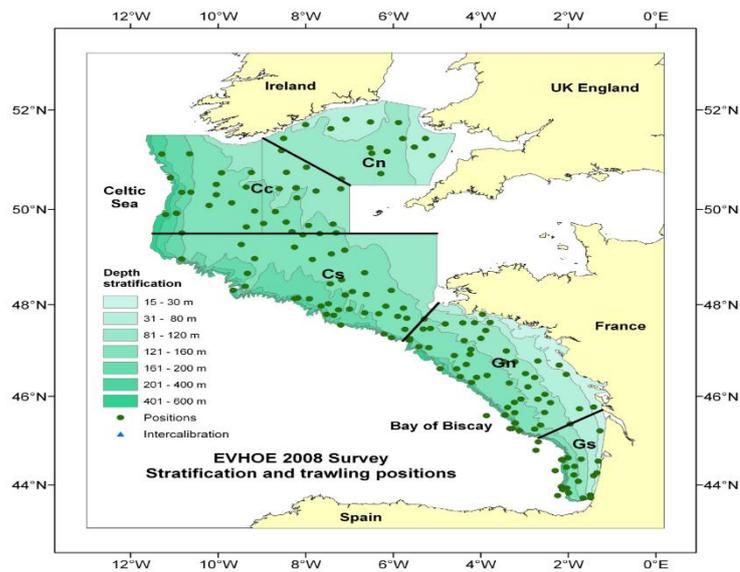


Figure B 3-2. Station positions for French Evhoe bottom-trawl survey (not used in assessment).

B3.4 Channel Ground Fish Survey (CGFS): France

Raw data on sea bass from the French scientific trawl survey "Channel Ground Fish Survey - CGFS" were not available for the previous benchmark in 2012 (IBPNEW, ICES, 2012). Details of the survey are given in Coppin *et al.* (2002), which includes a full description of the GOV trawl used in October each year at the 82 stations in ICES Division 7.d shown in Figure B3.3. The majority of sea bass are caught in the coastal waters of England and France (Figure B3.3). The abundance indices from all the stations give similar trends as from a subset of stations in the main coastal areas, and trial runs with SS3 gave similar trends. Therefore, for further SS3 development, the indices calculated from all the area are used.

The abundance indices are calculated applying a stratified random swept-area based estimator. Strata correspond to ICES statistical rectangles. Swept-area is calculated using wingspread. As this is a stratified swept-area based indicator, uncertainty is based on between haul variance within a strata and summation of variances across strata. Full methodology is presented in the WD_01, available in Annex 2 of the IBPBass report 2014. The trends in both the index and in the proportion of stations with sea bass show some similarities to the trend in total biomass estimates from the ICES WGCSE 2013 update assessment using Stock Synthesis, which lent *a priori* support to the use of the index in the assessment. The swept-area indices of abundance, the percentage of stations with sea bass, and the variance of the estimates are included in the WGCSE 2014 report and will be updated annually. The length composition of the survey index is calculated and is also input to Stock Synthesis.

The precision of the swept-area indices appears unrealistically high in some years (e.g. 0.025 in 1991), which may indicate that the index trends are driven largely by the incidence of positive catches. Modelling of the data using delta lognormal models may provide more realistic precision. During trial Stock Synthesis runs, the use of the CVs resulted in an inability to fit the selection curve for the survey due to individual years being given far too much weight. Relaxing the CVs to 0.30 for all years except the first three years (set to 0.6 given the very low incidence of positive stations) allowed the model to fit the length compositions more closely over the series. The annual indices are therefore input to Stock Synthesis with a CV of 0.30 for all years. The effective sample sizes for the annual survey length composition data are set at the number of stations with sea bass length data. The length compositions for the first three years (1988–1990) are excluded from the assessment due to very small sample sizes although the aggregate indices are retained.

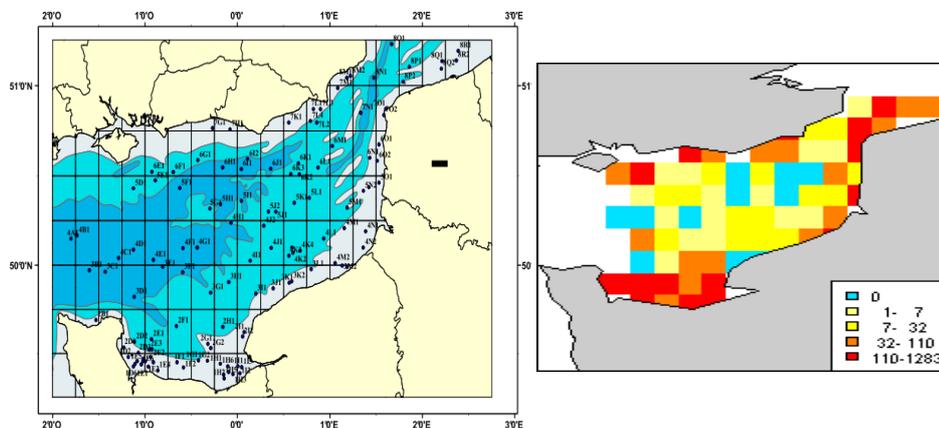


Figure B.3.3. Left: stations fished during the Channel Groundfish Survey carried out annually by France. Right: distribution of total catches of sea bass over the survey series.

B.4 Commercial lpue

ICES IBPNew2012 evaluated a range of commercial fishery lpue series for French and UK fleets operating in Areas 4 and 7. The UK analysis of official catch statistics involved filtering individual trip data to include only trips in ICES rectangles where bass catches have been recorded historically. UK vessels of 10m and under, for which historical landings data are very uncertain, were found to have a wide range of lpue trends depending on gear and area fished, often showing a very steep increase since the mid-2000s (Armstrong and Maxwell, 2012). This may be partly a consequence of more accurate reporting caused by the Registration of Buyers and Sellers regulations after its introduction in 2005, but may also represent a bias caused by increased targeting of sea bass by vessels with insufficient quotas for other stocks or trying to develop track record.

With some exceptions (e.g. trawlers in 7.d), UK >10m vessels tended to show different lpue trends to 10m and under vessels. Relative trends of seabass lpue for 70–99 mm mesh UK otter trawls (1985–2011) and French otter trawlers (2000–2010) operating in 4.b,c,7.d, 7.e,h and 7.a,f,g showed a general trend of increase in the 1980s and 1990s, followed by a levelling off and a decline after 2009 (Figure 10.1.2.7, from WGCSE 2013).

The trends for >10m UK and French trawlers in 4&7.d and in 7.e closely matched the trend in total stock biomass estimates from the final WGCSE 2013 Stock Synthesis assessment whereas the UK trawlers in 7.a,f,&g had a much lower lpuen in the early part of the time-series. These results indicated a potential for development of fishery lpuen series for inclusion in future development of SS3 for sea bass, using more sophisticated trip filtering and using more statistical approaches such as delta-lognormal modelling with GLMs to develop standardised series. However, IBP-Bass focused more on developing the survey data inputs and did not progress the development of the fishery lpuen series which remains a task for the future.

B4.1 UK bass logbook scheme

The UK bass logbook scheme is described in Section B1.1. Although the survey has severe limitations for estimation of total bass landings for UK vessels, individual logbooks provide time-series of varying duration on catch-rates of individual vessels using specific gears. The logbooks with sufficient data cover eight gear types within trawls, nets and lines, covering mainly 10 m and under vessels, excluding recreational vessels. The total numbers of logbooks have declined from 50–60 in earlier years to below 20 in recent years. No logbooks were issued in 2008:

	Year														
Region	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
1	7	9	11	19	9	8	15	16	15	22	16	14	18	16	16
2	0	10	10	15	17	14	13	23	10	25	24	20	24	19	17
3	2	4	6	5	7	7	4	6	7	6	9	3	8	5	3
4	5	5	7	9	7	8	7	11	11	4	6	4	4	4	4
5	7	6	10	13	9	9	10	18	8	10	9	7	11	12	11

	Year									
Region	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009	2010
1	16	19	14	12	13	8	6	0	3	3
2	15	15	13	14	7	10	5	0	3	2
3	2	5	3	5	5	5	7	0	3	3
4	4	5	6	7	1	3	4	0	3	1
5	9	10	9	4	2	5	6	2	1	1

(Region 1: North Sea 4.b,c, 2: eastern Channel 7.d; 3: western Channel 7.e,h; 4: Celtic Sea (7.f,g); Irish Sea (7.a). The trend in number of records per year shows roughly the same pattern across gears:

An exploratory GAM method was developed (Armstrong and Maxwell, 2012) to extract a common temporal trend in lpue from the individual series for ICES Areas 4.b,c&7.d, 7.eh and 7.afg (referred in the models as areas 1&2, 3 and 4&5). This is analogous to combining series of tree ring counts from timbers of various ages to give a single series describing climate changes. The general method involves estimating log-book factors and year factors (and interactions) to minimise residual model error. Following initial model development and evaluation, a negative binomial error distribution with log link was selected. This can accommodate zero values and allows for the variance to increase with the mean. Working with a log link implies that the estimated trend with year is multiplicative not additive. The R command showing the exact options used for areas 1&2 combined (North Sea and 7.d) is:

```
bass.gam3.12 = gam(lpue ~ factor(BookGear) + s(Year, k=10, bs="ts"), family=neg-
bin(c(1,10)), optimizer="perf", data=bass.dat, subset=ARegion=="1and2")
```

Fitted trends and confidence intervals suggest an increasing lpue trend in regions 1&2 (North Sea & 7.d), and 3 (7.eh) (Figure B4-1). A relatively flat trend and possible recent decline is indicated in regions 4&5 (7.afg) although the recent trend is highly imprecise. Residual checks indicate the model assumptions are reasonable. Model diagnostics and sensitivity to smoothing and other parameters are given in Armstrong and Maxwell (2012).

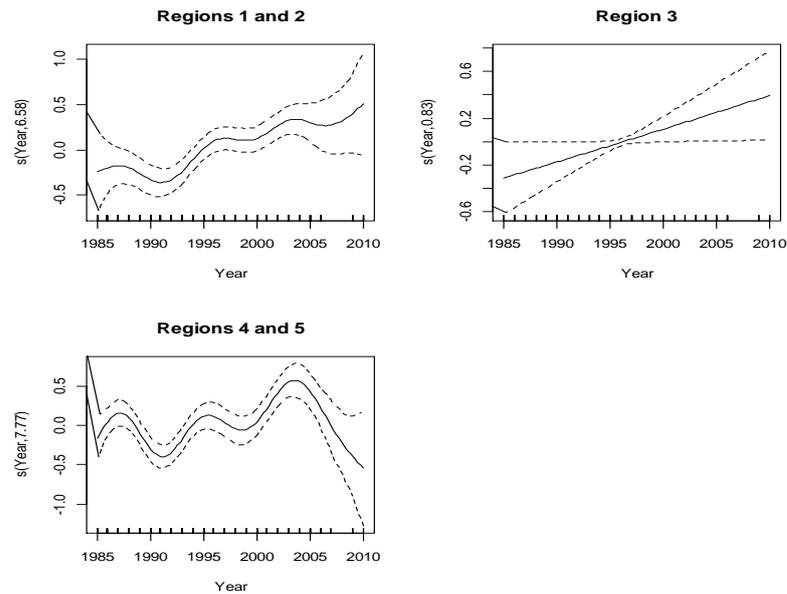


Figure B4-1. Cefas bass logbook lpue: Selected model for combined regions, plots showing year effects from a fitted model with separate mean value for each book number-gear combination and negative binomial error distribution, dashed lines are a 95% confidence interval.

B4.2 UK fleet lpue based on official catch dataseries

Armstrong and Maxwell (2012) review trends in UK commercial fishery lpue for sea bass in the North Sea (4), eastern Channel (7.d), western Channel (7.e) and Irish/Celtic Seas (7.afg) from 1985–2011, and evaluate the possibility of using the time-series as relative abundance estimates for tuning stock assessment models.

Gears which catch bass are targeted at a variety of species, and the fishing effort is distributed across many areas where sea bass have zero or very low probability of capture. A number of approaches are possible to subset fishing trips to include only those that have a probability of catching the species for which lpue is to be estimated. One approach (Stephens and MacCall, 2004) is to cluster fishing trips according to species that occur in association, and use only the cluster with the species on interest for estimating lpue. This method has not yet been applied to UK data. An alternative method to subset trips was applied. This involved (a) selecting gear types that account for ~95% of the total bass landings in each area since 2005; (b) for the selected gears and areas, identify ICES rectangles accounting for ~95% of the total bass landings since 1985. Annual lpue was then estimated for each area and gear, separately for vessels of 10 m (LOA) and under and >10 m vessels. The LOA split is important because reporting of landings and effort of 10 m and under vessels has been very uncertain historically, particularly prior to the introduction of Buyers and Sellers regulations in 2005. Lpue of 10 m and under vessels may be very inaccurate prior to 1995.

It was not possible to evaluate the effect of any increase in targeting of bass by individual vessels using the selected gear types in the selected rectangles, or effects of technology creep. Increased targeting is likely to have happened for vessels with increasingly limited quotas for other species such as cod and which have switched to non-TAC species such as sea bass. For some gears, such as beam trawls, sea bass are not targeted and are purely a bycatch.

Too many lpue series have been examined to reproduce in the Stock Annex, but can be viewed in Armstrong and Maxwell, 2012.

B4.2 French lpue sets

Lpue of French trawlers in 4.b,c, 7.d and 7.e,h is available from 2000 when Ifremer has estimated landings by ICES Divisions. A recent study has developed indices as kg/per day based on data from auction’s sales. This study was carried out on French bottom trawlers (less than 18 m), having a fishing strategy with the least distant random sampling; this fleet usually doesn’t target sea bass. Large bias can be caused where: 1. an auction sale corresponds to several days of fishing, 2. technological advances are not taken into account, and 3. changes in fishermen’s strategies are not taken into account. Never the less, for information, those from the Channel and North Sea have been compared to the UK Otter trawls lpue, and similarities shown on Figure B4-2 are observed.

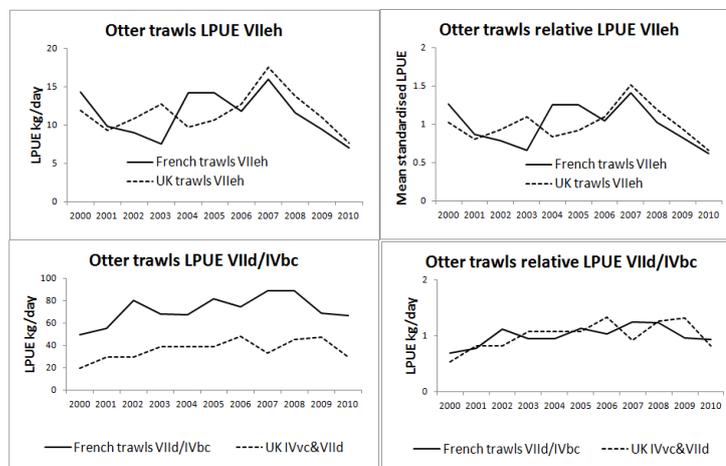


Figure B4-2. UK fleet lpue based on official catch dataserries, compared to the French lpue sets based on auction hall sales.

In 2015 for WGCSE, a study “French Logbook data analysis 2000–2013: possible contribution to the discussion of the sea bass stock(s) structure/annual abundance indices. Alain Laurec, M.Drogou” has been conducted and presented in a Working Document (WD_seabass_France_Abundance_Index.pdf: ICES, WGCSE 2015).

Daily catch rates per vessel, grouped within months and ICES squares, have been analysed basically through a multiplicative two factors model. The two factors, namely the fishing vessel effect and the stratum effect. A stratum corresponds to a so-called ICES square, a month and a year.

First conclusions provide a basic hypothesis about stock structures and spawning migrations, and directly related to this discussion apparent abundance index have been produced covering various option/areas.

The preliminary results of the study are considered promising by the group. Even if it’s still under-development and should be benchmarked to use it directly in the assessment, some comparison of the Index from two various option with the SSB is presented in Figure B4-3. This shows similar trends in stock perception confortng results of the assessment (but question on the degree of the trends).

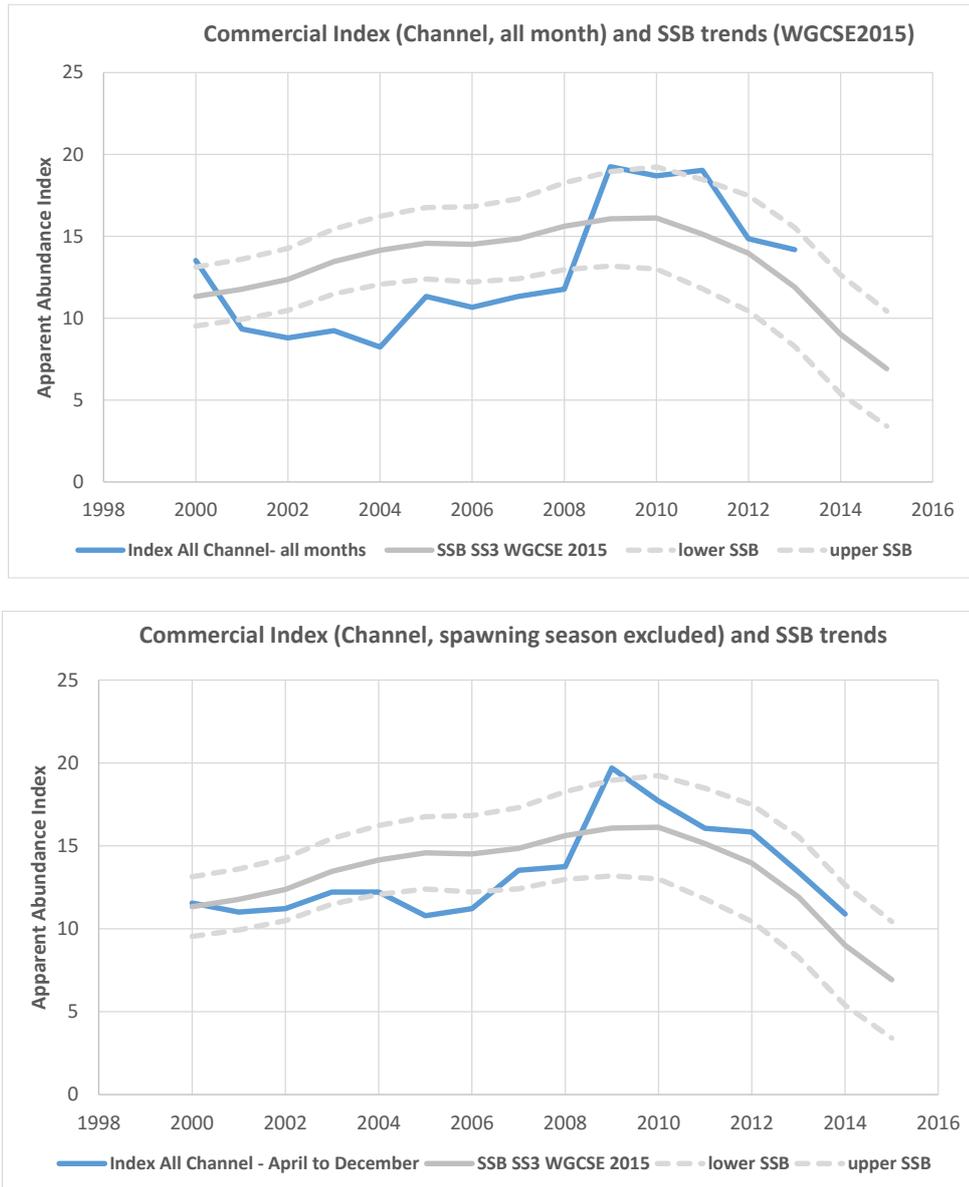


Figure B.4.3. Bass-47: Trends in commercial lpue index for French fleets overlaid on this year’s update assessment estimates of spawning–stock biomass (+/- 2 standard errors). Top: index based on data from all twelve months; bottom: index excluding fishing trips during spring spawning season.

B.5. Other relevant data

None.

C. Assessment: data and method

Software used and model options chosen

Model used: Stock Synthesis 3 (SS3) (Methot, 2010)

Software used: Stock synthesis v3.24f (Methot, 2011)

WGCSE 2015 conducted an update assessment using Stock Synthesis 3 (SS3) (Methot, 2010). The software used was Stock synthesis v3.23b (Methot, 2011), according to the Stock Annex developed by ICES IBPBass 2014 with inclusion of fishery data for 2014. The assessment requires a modelling framework capable of handling a mixture of age and length data for fisheries and surveys (fleet-based landings; landings age or length compositions, age-based survey indices for young bass) and biological information on growth rates and maturity. Landings-at-age were available for four UK fleets from 1985 onwards, whereas French fleets had length composition data that were available only since the 2000s. The Stock Synthesis assessment model was chosen, primarily for its highly flexible statistical model framework allowing the building of simple to complex models using a mix of data compositions available. The model is written in ADMB (www.admb-project.org), is forward simulating and available at the NOAA toolbox: <http://nft.nefsc.noaa.gov/SS3.html>.

IBPBass (ICES 2015) addressed the following recommendations of WGCSE 2015 for developing the assessment during the inter-benchmark meeting. Work completed is indicated in parenthesis:

- Review quality and performance of age composition data from French fishery landings in the stock synthesis model formulated by IBP-bass [*done, see below*];
- Develop input data for stock assessment including empirical weights at age [*Not done*];
- Develop age compositions for Channel ground fish survey and test in SS3 model [*Not done*];
- Evaluate the appropriateness of existing reference points and estimate new if necessary based on conclusions from WKMSYREF3 and 4 [*Not done*].

Deviations from Stock Annex

The Stock Annex has been revised to reflect the approaches developed by IBPBass2. The update assessment follows exactly the IBPBass2 data inputs and methods.

The assessment requires a modelling framework capable of handling a mixture of age and length data for fisheries, including data for French fleets that have length composition data but no age composition data, and for which the length data were available only since the 2000s. The Stock Synthesis (SS) assessment model was chosen, primarily for its highly flexible statistical model framework allowing the building of simple to complex models using a mix of data compositions available. The model is written in ADMB (www.admb-project.org), is forward simulating and available at the NOAA toolbox: <http://nft.nefsc.noaa.gov/SS3.html>. For European sea bass a model was built using Stock Synthesis 3 (SS3) version 3.24f to integrate the mix of fisheries and survey data available (fleet-based landings; landings age or length compositions, ages-based survey index for young bass and length-based CGFS survey indices) and biological information on growth rates and maturity.

Developments of the Stock Synthesis model by IBPBass2 including the following improvements:

- Include French age composition data.
- Included recreational catch as a separate fleet so that catches are consistent with recreational fishery removals of around 1 500 t in 2012.

Full details of the reasons for these changes, and diagnostics of model fits with these changes included, can be viewed in the IBP-Bass report. Information is given below on some of the key decisions of IBP-Bass concerning the final structure of the assessment model.

Changes to the plus-group

UK fishery age composition data show year-class structure extending well beyond the previous oldest true age used in the assessment (eleven years). This includes year classes well before the first year of input data (see Figure 10.1.2.1). IBP-Bass carried out runs with plus groups set at 12+, 16+, 18+ and 20+. The 16+ setting appeared sufficient to improve estimation of early recruit deviations prior to 1985, without causing problems of zero catch estimates appearing in the data file at old ages. All further runs were conducted with 16+ group.

Selectivity patterns for UK commercial fleets

The WGCSE 2013 assessment treated all commercial fleets from the UK and France as having asymptotic length-based selectivity. This reduced the number of parameters per fleet to only two, an important consideration when four UK fleets and one French fleet were being modelled. Having collapsed the UK trawls, nets and lines to a single fleet, IBPBass explored the use of a double normal selectivity pattern, which appeared to be appropriate for trawls and nets from the results of the Pawson *et al.* (2007) and Kupschus *et al.* (2008) separable model applied to separate UK fleets.

The form of the selectivity pattern was investigated initially using a simple cohort analysis applied to the aggregated catch-at-age for the four UK fleets since 2013. The terminal F for this aggregate “pseudo cohort” was adjusted until the pattern of partial F 's for the UK midwater trawl and lines fleets were as close as possible to asymptotic, as these fleets target a wide range of adult and juvenile bass in inshore and offshore waters. The pattern of partial F 's for the trawls and nets fleets were then revealed as being strongly domed, confirming previous results in the Pawson *et al.* (2007) separable model (Figure 10.1.3.1). Input initial parameters and bounds for a double-normal selectivity function (a selectivity form recommended in the Stock Synthesis manual) were derived for UK trawls and nets using the spreadsheet developed for Stock Synthesis. The fitted selectivity for this fleet and for the midwater trawl fleet in the update Stock Synthesis run closely match the selectivity patterns given by the empirical approach using cohort analysis (Figure 10.1.3.1).

Given the need to include the recreation catch as a separate fleet, IBPBass2 reintroduced the UK line fleet as a separate fleet with asymptotic selectivity so that the recreational catch could mirror the selectivity of this fleet.

The WGCSE 2016 update assessment uses the same selectivity models and input selectivity parameters as agreed by IBPBass2, fitting the parameters using soft bounds rather than priors with hard bounds. This resulted in fitting twelve selectivity parameters

for commercial fleets (six for UK trawls and nets, and two each for UK lines, UK mid-water trawls and combined French fleets. The “other fleet” was assumed to have the same selectivity as the French fleet).

Natural mortality and stock–recruit steepness

The value (or vector) of natural mortality used in an analytical assessment is a key parameter determining the estimated productivity, abundance and MSY or other reference points (RPs). The assumed shape of the stock–recruit curve acts with the assumed M to constrain any possible biological reference points (Mangel *et al.* 2013). A key parameter defining a stock–recruit curve is steepness, defined as the ratio of recruitment from an unfished population to recruitment when the spawning–stock biomass is at 20% of the unfished level.

IBP-Bass explored the performance of the Stock Synthesis model for a range of different values for natural mortality and stock–recruit steepness, using a similar model formulation to the WGCSE 2014 update but excluding the recreational fishing mortality vector. The total of negative log likelihood was compiled for the range of combinations, along with the SSB depletion in 2013 from the virgin SSB, and the relative standard error of the SSB in that year.

Total negative log likelihood tended to be lowest at steepness values approaching unity, with the greatest tendency at low values of M , and likelihood also decreased with increasing M (Figure 10.1.3.3. top left). Despite the lower value of negative log likelihood, the relative standard errors of the SSB estimates for 2012 (from the inverse Hessian) increased with increasing M but were almost unaffected by steepness (RSE values at steepness 0.999 were 0.158 at $M=0.15$; 0.164 at $M=0.20$; 0.175 at $M=0.25$ and 0.199 at $M=0.30$). The unusual value at steepness 0.8, $M=0.3$ in Figure 10.1.3.3 was a result of the selectivity curve for the combined UK trawls, nets and lines flipping from a domed to an asymptotic pattern. Otherwise, the values show smooth relationships with input M and steepness.

The depletion of SSB in 2013 compared with the virgin SSB was progressively lower as M was increased (Figure 10.1.3.3. top right), but was far less sensitive to steepness.

Recruitment in sea bass has varied widely in response to environmental factors including conditions in the estuarine and other inshore nursery habitats. There is almost no information to indicate declining recruitment at lower SSB and to discern the true value of steepness. A wide range of values appears plausible (Figure 10.1.3.3. lower plots), though the model fit slightly favours the (biologically implausible) steepness value of unity.

IBP-Bass decided to retain a fixed steepness value of 0.999 given the relative insensitivity of the assessment to this parameter. This means that F or biomass at MSY cannot be estimated, and that proxy F_{MSY} reference points have to be specified using yield-per-recruit and spawner biomass per recruit computations.

The tendency for likelihoods to improve with increasing M , despite the inferences that a relatively low M is consistent with sea bass life-history traits and maximum age approaching 30 years, however suggested that additional mortality associated with the recreational fishery could perhaps be accommodated within the model.

Incorporating information on recreational fishery catches

Recent surveys in France, England and the Netherlands have provided estimates of recreational fishery removals that are around a third of the reported commercial fishery landings in each country (see Section 2). Taking possible hooking mortality of released fish into account, the total recreational removals from the stock may be as high as 1500t. The relative standard error of this estimate is likely to be in the range 0.2–0.3 based on the information available on the component surveys. With only one combined survey estimate available, IBPBass could see no easy way to incorporate this directly into Stock Synthesis.

However, by not representing recreational fishery removals in the assessment, the estimates of total mortality derived from the commercial fishery age and length composition data are attributed only to natural mortality and to commercial fishing mortality. In reality, part of the observed total mortality is attributable to the unaccounted-for recreational fishery removals. This becomes a problem when forecasting stock size and yields based on multipliers applied to the apparent commercial fishing mortality, when in fact only part of the apparent F is due to the commercial fleet.

IBP-Bass explored an approach for evaluating the magnitude of recreational fishery F by including a fixed vector of recreational F -at-age in the assessment, added to the fixed natural mortality vector. The recreational F vector, with a plausible selectivity pattern for the harvest (kept component), was then scaled iteratively until the expected recreational removals in 2012 were around 1500 t; the recent total recreational removals estimate from the surveys in France, England and the Netherlands. This is equivalent to treating recreational fishers as a predator whose historical abundance and predation is largely unknown, but are assumed to impose a constant mortality in exactly the same way as all other predators are subsumed into a constant M vector.

There is some evidence from a series of surveys in England and Wales since 1970 that the number of people going sea angling has fluctuated without obvious increasing or decreasing trend (Table 10.1.3.1). Part of the observed variability will relate to differences in survey methodology, but all are based on some form of sampling of the population as a whole. Sea bass has been a prized target for recreational sea anglers in England and Wales (and southern Ireland) over a much longer period than the current assessment, and sea bass angling was developed to a high level of technical skill and knowledge of the species as far back as the 1970s. There is no information on the actual effort expended by the angling population on sea bass as the stock has changed in abundance, or on changes in efficiency, but an assumption of a constant recreational fishing mortality is a reasonable first approximation for evaluating recreational F .

Recreational fishery selectivity

It is first necessary to identify an appropriate selectivity function to characterise the selectivity of recreational fishing. The recreational fishery in England and Wales is predominantly rod-and-line, but it is known that other gears (especially fixed or driftnets, or seines) are deployed recreationally throughout Europe. However, in France around 80% of the recreational fishing catch is from sea angling.

The length frequency of retained sea bass recorded during the recent *Sea Angling 2012* survey in England (Anon, 2014) is very noisy due to small samples (many bass are released) and a clear tendency in some cases for lengths to have been reported to the nearest 5 cm (Figure 10.1.3.2). However, the distribution is clearly much more similar to that of the UK commercial line fishery than to the other commercial fishery gear groups. It was therefore decided to use the UK commercial line fishery selectivity (age-

based) to represent the combined selectivity and retention of the recreational fishery for the whole of the bass stock. The line fishery selectivity-at-age was obtained from a Stock Synthesis run treating lines as a separate fleet with asymptotic selectivity estimated from UK age composition inputs. The assumption regarding selectivity may not hold beyond the UK, but was adopted in the absence of other information. Weights-at-age in the retained catch were assumed to be the same as in the UK commercial fishery landings given the strong influence of minimum landing size of 36 cm on retention in both fisheries.

Natural mortality component of combined mortality vector

A range of natural mortality values from 0.15 to over 0.20 can be inferred from life-history parameters and observed maximum age (see earlier). IBPNew 2012 adopted a value of 0.20 for all ages. The SS3 runs carried out by IBP-Bass at different values of M indicated that likelihoods improved as M was increased, but the precision of recent biomass estimates declined, and at $M=0.30$ some instability in fitting selectivity parameters was evident. IBP-Bass therefore set up a run using the lower bound of M inferences ($M=0.15$) in order to avoid the combined M and recreational F going too high, and scaled the recreational fishery selectivity so that the calculated recreational landings in 2012 were 1500t. The selectivity and recreational F vector achieving this are given in Table 10.1.3.2. The recreational $F(5-11)$ is 0.09 derived from a multiplier of 1.0 applied to the selectivity curve. The combination of $M=0.15$ and recreational F leads to a combined mortality vector increasing from 0.15 at the youngest ages to 0.25 at-age 8 with a combined $F(5-11)$ of 0.24, compared with the total M value of 0.20 used by WGCSE 2013. The sensitivity of the assessment to different absolute values of recreational fishery harvest in 2012, and to the choice of $M=0.15$ or 0.20, is explored later in this report

The structure and input data/ parameters of the IBPbass2 (2015) model, used for the update assessment by WGCSE 2015, are summarized below:

The structure and input data/ parameters of the IBPbass2 revised SS3 model are summarized below:

Model structure

- Temporal unit: annual based data (landings, survey indices, age frequency and length frequency);
- Spatial structure: One area;
- Sex: Both sexes combined.

Fleet definition

Six fleets defined: 1. UK bottom trawls, nets; 2. UK lines; 3. UK midwater pair trawls; 4. French fleets (combined); 5. Other (other countries and other UK fleets combined); 6. Recreational fishery landings. [WGCSE 2015 assessment modelled selectivity for the combined UK trawls, nets and lines].

Landed catches

Annual landings in tonnes from 1985 to final year for the four fleets from ICES Subdivisions 4.b, c, 7.a, d-h. French data were as provided by Ifremer.

Abundance indices

Channel Groundfish Survey in 7.d in autumn (France), 1988 to present: total swept-area abundance index and associated length composition data. Number of stations with sea bass is used as initial input values for effective sample size. Input CV for survey = 0.30 all years. First three years of composition data are excluded. [Survey not included in WGCSE 2013 assessment].

Cefas Solent survey in autumn (7.d). Years 1986 to 2011; 2013. One single abundance index series were defined, combining the age groups (2, 3, 4 years old). It was treated as three independent surveys in WGCSE2015 (following a recommendation from R. Methot) to circumvent difficulties in estimating selectivity parameters for a survey series comprising only three young age groups, although this approach loses covariance information due to year-effects in the survey.

Fishery landings age composition data

Age bins: 0 to 15 with a plus group for ages 16 and over. Age compositions for fleets are expressed as fleet-raised numbers-at-age, although they are treated as relative compositions in SS3.

Year range for UK trawls/nets and UK lines: 1985 to present; UK midwater pair trawl: 1996 to present; French fleet 2000 to present;

Length composition data

The length bin was set from 4 to 100 cm by 2 cm intervals. Length compositions for the following fishing fleets were used: UK trawls/nets: 1985 to present; and UK lines: 1986 to present UK midwater pair trawl: 1996 to present; French all fleets combined: 2000 to present.

Effective sample size weighting for age and length composition data

Effective sample size for the fleets and survey age and length compositions were adjusted to equal the sample sizes (numbers of fishing trips sampled) as concluded in IBP-bass (ICES 2014). IPBBass2 revisited the sample sizes and where information was available used the number of trips per year for each of the datasets. Sample sizes were adjusted using the Francis method of weighting. This was carried out using an iterative re-weighting process of compositional data using the input sample sizes and the effective sample sizes based on model fit. This method reduces the disproportionate effect of the different dataset used. The table below provides the multiplier by fleet for each of the age and length composition data sources.

FLEET	DATA TYPE	MULTIPLIER
UK otter trawl/nets	Length compositions	0.2625
	Age compositions	0.2376
UK Lines	Length compositions	0.1539
	Age compositions	0.1591
UK midwater trawl	Length compositions	0.1601
	Age compositions	0.7251
French – all gears	Length compositions	0.2023
	Age compositions	0.3362
Autumn Bass survey	Age compositions	0.8443
French channel ground fish survey (CGFS)	Length compositions	0.3562

Model assumptions and parameters

The following table summarises key model assumptions and parameters. Other parameter values and input data characteristics are defined in the SS3 control file Bass47.ctl, the forecast file Forecast.SS and the data file Bass47.dat as used by IBPBass2 2015. Model inputs and year ranges (for WGCSE 2016) are in Figure C1.

Key model assumptions and parameters from the WGCSE 2014 update assessment.

CHARACTERISTIC	SETTINGS
Starting year	1985
Ending year	2015
Equilibrium catch for starting year	0.82* landings in 1985 by fleet.
Number of areas	1
Number of seasons	1
Number of fishing fleets	6
Number of surveys	Two surveys: CGFS; Solent autumn survey.
Individual growth	von Bertalanffy, parameters fixed, combined sex
Number of active parameters	83
Population characteristics	
Maximum age	30
Genders	1
Population length bins	4–100, 2 cm bins
Ages for summary total biomass	0–30
Data characteristics	
Data length bins (for length structured fleets)	14–94, 2 cm bins
Data age bins (for age structured fleets)	0–16+
Minimum age for growth model	2
Maximum age for growth model	30
Maturity	Logistic 2-parameter – females; L50 = 40.65 cm
Fishery characteristics	
Fishery timing	-1 (whole year)
Fishing mortality method	Hybrid
Maximum F	2.9
Fleet 1: UK Trawl/nets selectivity	Double normal, length-based
Fleet 2: UK lines selectivity	Asymptotic, length-based
Fleet 3: UK Midwater trawl selectivity	Asymptotic, length-based
Fleet 4: Combined French fleet selectivity	Asymptotic, length-based
Fleet 5: Other fleets/gears selectivity	Asymptotic: mirrors French fleet
Fleet 6: Recreational fishery selectivity	Asymptotic: mirrors UK lines fleet
Survey characteristics	
Solent autumn survey timing (yr)	0.83
CGFS survey timing (yr)	0.75
Catchabilities (all surveys)	Analytical solution
Survey selectivities: Solent autumn:	Age and length based selectivity
Survey selectivities: CGFS	Double normal, length based
Fixed biological characteristics	
Natural mortality	0.15
Beverton–Holt steepness	0.999
Recruitment variability (σ_R)	0.9
Weight–length coefficient	0.00001296
Weight–length exponent	2.969

CHARACTERISTIC	SETTINGS
Maturity inflection (L50%)	40.649 cm
Maturity slope	-0.33349
Length-at-age Amin	19.6 cm at Amin=2 ¹
Length-at-Amax	80.26 cm
von Bertalanffy k	0.09699
von Bertalanffy Linf	84.55 cm
von Bertalanffy t0	-0.730 yr
Std. Deviation length-at-age (cm)	SD = 0.1166 * age + 3.5609
Age error matrix	CV 12% at-age
Other model settings	
First year for main recruitment deviations for burn-in period	1969
Last year for recruit deviations	2014 (last year class with survey indices)
Last year no bias adjustment	1971
First year full bias adjustment	1982.5
Last year full bias adjustment	2011
First year recent year no bias adjustment	2013
Maximum bias adjustment	0.92

¹ as recommended by R. Methot after scrutinizing earlier SS3 runs during IBPNEW 2012, and used by IBPNEW and WGCSE. The WGCSE 2013 tabulated the original value of 5.78 cm at-age 0 in error.

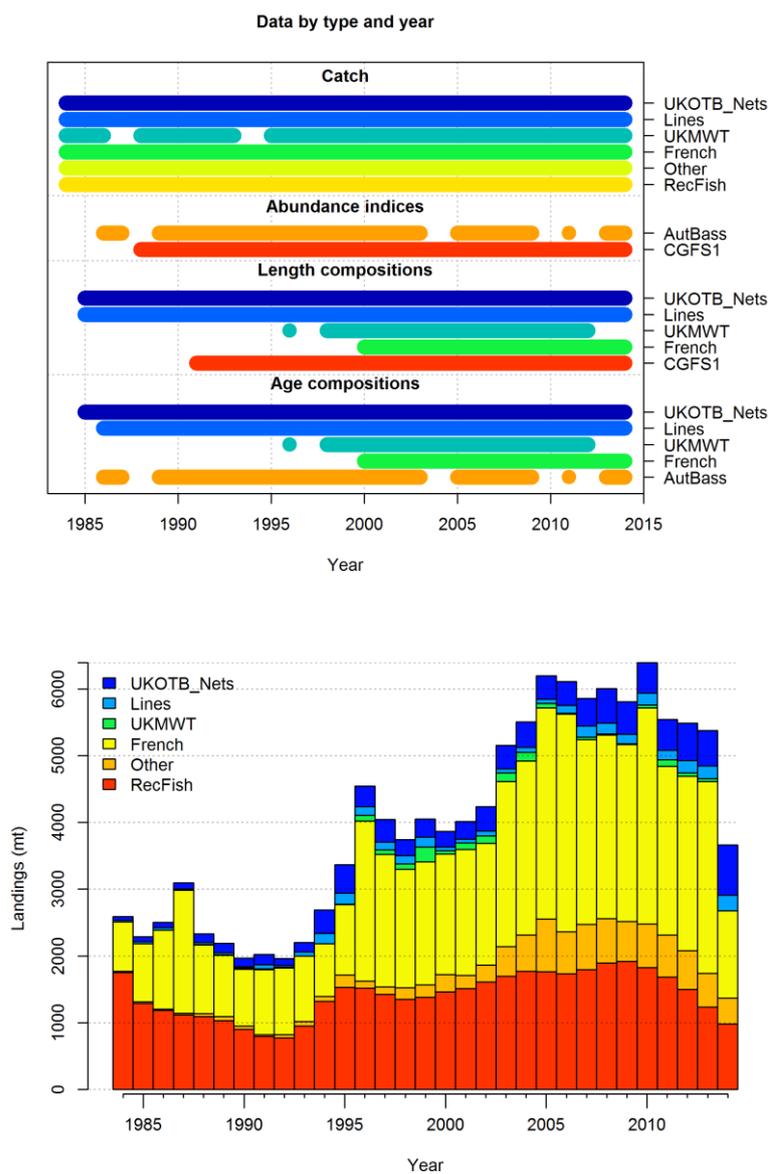


Figure C1. Summary of inputs and year ranges for Stock Synthesis assessment.

C.2 Assessment procedure

The model is run with the executable file SS3.exe in the same folder as the following files:

Bass47.ctl	SS3 configuration file
Bass47.dat	SS3 data inputs
Starter.SS	SS3 startup file
Forecast.SS	SS3 forecast file

Results are output in the same folder (key results file is “results.sso”). Plots can be generated using r4ss after calling library(r4ss), using the following code (adjusted with correct path name):

```
age <- SS_output(dir= 'C:/Users/ma02/Documents/ICES/WGCSE2014/Bass47/SS3
update assessment')
SS_plots(replist=age,pdf=F,png=T,dir='C:/Users/ma02/Docu-
ments/ICES/WGCSE2014/Bass47/SS3update assessment')#,uncertainty=F)
```

Retrospective analysis is done with the output files from the base run in the same folder as the file retro.bat. For five retrospectives, six Starter files are included. The base file Starter.SS includes the following code nine lines from the bottom:

```
-5 # retrospective year relative to end year (e.g. -4)
```

The five retrospective Starter files use the name convention Starter-5; Starter-4; Starter-3; Starter-2; Starter-1, amending the command -5 # retrospective year relative to end year (e.g. -4) to reflect the year peel stated in the file name. A piece of code “Retro-Plots_R4SS” is available to plot the retrospectives although an Excel file is currently used to read the results from each of the Report.sso files imported into worksheets.

The recreational landings were arrived at iteratively to generate a constant fishing mortality for the time-series equal to the recreational fishery mortality for the landings in 2012 of 1 500 t.

Future runs may need to revise this to generate a constant fishery mortality for recreational catch where data are estimated in the model.

When the end year for the Stock Synthesis run is specified as the last year with fishery data, the Report.sso file contains estimates of biomass and numbers only to the start of the final year with data, and Zs only to the year before the final one. A work-around to get biomass and numbers for survivors at the end of the last year with data, and Zs for the final year with data, the end year can be specified as the year after the last with data. F values, as used by ICES, are not generated automatically by Stock Synthesis but can be computed from the Zs after subtracting M.

D. Forecast

Due to the original complexity of adding a fixed recreational fishing mortality for removals (harvest), and the time required to configure Stock Synthesis to mirror the ICES procedures for short-term forecasts, IBPBass2 decided not to try and develop a forecast procedure within Stock Synthesis for use by WGCSE. This loses the ability to provide MCMC confidence intervals around the assessment and forecasted variables, and the forecasts are entirely deterministic. Management options involving biological reference points (BRPs) adopt BRPs conditional on the assumptions in the assessment regarding M , selectivity, maturity, weights-at-age, etc. The procedures for deriving inputs for the short-term forecast are described below.

D.1 Estimating year-class abundance

Stock Synthesis should be set up to estimate recruit deviations only until the last year that has survey data to make the estimates. E.g. including the Solent survey indices for ages 2–4 in 2014 means that the last year class tuned by a survey index is 2012 (two year-olds in 2014). SS3 will put a value from the fitted stock–recruit curve for later year classes. WGCSE overwrites these later year classes using the long-term (1985 onwards) geometric mean, or a short-term GM if there is a persistent reduction in recent recruitment. The numbers-at-age for the starting year of the forecast are also over-written for these year classes by reducing the GM recruitment by the appropriate number of years of M (as there is no catch for the first few years of age).

WGCSE (2013) reviewed some information on environmental influences on sea bass recruitment which supported a recent reduction in recruitment. Survival of 0-gp and 1-gp sea bass in nursery areas in estuaries and salt-marshes is thought to be enhanced by warmer conditions promoting survival through the first two winters, and increasing the growth rates (Pawson, 1992). WGCSE 2014 presented an argument for choosing a particular recruitment value for the 2012-year class for inclusion in forecasts, based on a consideration of past recruitment in relation to temperature. The data and arguments in WGCSE 2014 should be consulted for an explanation of the logic used.

The format for reporting the recruitment values for the short-term forecast are summarised using an example in Table D1.1., and an example of a short-term forecast input file is given in Table D.1.2.

Table D.1.1. Example of recruitment estimates included in a short-term forecast for sea bass, from IBPBass 2013.

YEAR CLASS	SS3 (AGE 0)	GM 2008–2011	GM 2008–2011
2011	2648 thousand		
2012		1815 thousand	
2013			6057 thousand
2014			6057 thousand

Example input for the short-term catch predictions is in Table D 1.2. The derivation of the inputs is described in Table D 1.3.

Table D.1.2. Example inputs for sea bass short-term forecast, from WGCSE 2014. Inputs for short-term forecast. F(5–11) is mean for years 2011–2013. Numbers-at-ages 0–2 in 2014 are adjusted by replacing Stock Synthesis average values in 2012–2014 (years with no recruit deviations estimated) with the short-term (2008–2011) GM in 2012 and the long-term GM in 2013 and 2014, with adjustments for natural mortality. Rules are below table.

age	No. at age in 2014	weight in stock	Proportion mature (female)	H.Cons mean F (2011-2013)	H.Cons mean weights	Recreational F	Recreational removals mean weight	M
0	6057	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.007	0.000	0.007	0.15
1	5213	0.022	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.000	0.052	0.15
2	1345	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.388	0.000	0.154	0.15
3	1687	0.218	0.000	0.014	0.584	0.002	0.295	0.15
4	225	0.382	0.186	0.070	0.715	0.013	0.480	0.15
5	1433	0.587	0.419	0.161	0.877	0.054	0.702	0.15
6	830	0.825	0.638	0.220	1.093	0.091	0.954	0.15
7	1749	1.088	0.792	0.247	1.331	0.099	1.228	0.15
8	1491	1.370	0.885	0.256	1.588	0.100	1.517	0.15
9	808	1.664	0.937	0.266	1.860	0.100	1.815	0.15
10	625	1.964	0.965	0.271	2.143	0.100	2.116	0.15
11	519	2.264	0.980	0.274	2.431	0.100	2.416	0.15
12	312	2.562	0.989	0.275	2.719	0.100	2.711	0.15
13	140	2.853	0.993	0.276	3.002	0.100	2.998	0.15
14	60	3.135	0.996	0.276	3.276	0.100	3.275	0.15
15	77	3.406	0.998	0.276	3.540	0.100	3.540	0.15
16+	76	4.017	0.998	0.276	4.069	0.100	4.134	0.15

Age 0,1,2 over-written as follows

- 2014 yc 2014 age 0 replaced by 1985-2011 LTGM (6057);
- 2013 yc 2014 age 1 replaced by SS3 survivor estimate at age 1, 2014 * LTGM / SS3 estimate of age 0 in 2013
- 2012 yc 2014 age 2 replaced by SS3 survivor estimate at age 2, 2014 * STGM (1815) / SS3 estimate of age 0 in 2012 (weak y
- 2011 yc estimated from Solent survey in 2013, age 2

Table D 1.3. Derivation of short-term forecast inputs (based on example from IBPBass 2014).

INPUT DATA	DERIVATION
Starting numbers-at-age 0–16+ in first year (intermediate year)	SS3 output. (N age zero overwritten where necessary by long-term GM, short-term GM or other prediction, reduced by $M=0.15$ the the require number of years (if no commercial catches) or multiply N at-age in starting year from the assessment by ratio of the replaced recruit value with the SS3 estimate.
Recruitment 2014 onwards	Long-term GM, short-termGM or other predictor.
Mean wt-at-age in stock	SS3 output
Proportion mature (female)	SS3 output
Commercial fishery (H-cons) mean F at-age	Rescaled F to the average last three years: SS3 output Zs minus $M=0.15$, partial Fs for commercial fleets using ratio from catch numbers by fleet.
Commercial fishery (H-cons) mean weight-at-age	SS3 output figures on mean weight in UK, French and other fleets, weighted by SS3 model estimates of landings numbers-at-age for the fleets
Recreational removals mean F at-age	Rescaled F to the average last three years: SS3 output Zs minus $M=0.15$, partial Fs for recreational fleet.
Recreational removals mean weights-at-age	SS3 output figures on mean weight.
M	0.15 at all ages

An example detailed forecast is given in Table D1.4 for the *status quo* F option, which is the most likely forecast given the absence of any restrictive management controls on effort or landings of sea bass. See WGCSE 2014 for examples of management options tables.

Future forecast routines may be configured in Stock Syntheses, allowing MCMC estimation of confidence limits.

Table D 1.4. Example of detailed short-term forecast (WGCSE 2014).

Year: 2014
 H.cons F mult: 1 F(5-11): 0.242
 Recreational F mult: 1 F(5-11): 0.092

Age	F(5-11):		Catch Nos:		Yield:		Stock Nos	Biomass	SSB nos.		SSB tonnes	
	Commercial	Recreational	Commercial	Commercial	Recreational	Recreational			Jan 1	Jan 1		
0	0.000	0.000	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6057	9	0	0		
1	0.000	0.000	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	5213	117	0	0		
2	0.000	0.000	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	1345	135	0	0		
3	0.014	0.002	21.1	12.3	2.8	0.8	1687	369	0	0		
4	0.070	0.013	14.1	10.1	2.6	1.2	225	86	42	16		
5	0.161	0.054	193.1	169.4	65.3	45.9	1433	841	601	352		
6	0.220	0.091	146.3	159.9	60.3	57.5	830	684	530	437		
7	0.247	0.099	340.7	453.4	136.2	167.2	1749	1903	1385	1507		
8	0.256	0.100	300.2	476.7	116.8	177.3	1491	2044	1319	1808		
9	0.266	0.100	168.0	312.5	63.1	114.5	808	1345	757	1260		
10	0.271	0.100	132.1	283.1	48.7	103.0	625	1227	603	1184		
11	0.274	0.100	110.7	269.1	40.4	97.6	519	1176	509	1153		
12	0.275	0.100	66.7	181.3	24.2	65.7	312	798	308	789		
13	0.276	0.100	30.1	90.2	10.9	32.7	140	400	139	397		
14	0.276	0.100	12.9	42.3	4.7	15.3	60	188	60	188		
15	0.276	0.100	16.5	58.4	6.0	21.1	77	261	77	261		
16+	0.276	0.100	16.3	66.2	5.9	24.3	76	304	76	303		
Total			1569	2585	588	924	22647	11887	6404	9654		

Year: 2015
 H.cons F mult: 1 F(5-11): 0.242
 Recreational F mult: 1 F(5-11): 0.092

Age	F(5-11):		Catch Nos:		Yield:		Stock Nos	Biomass	SSB nos.		SSB tonnes	
	Commercial	Recreational	Commercial	Commercial	Recreational	Recreational			Jan 1	Jan 1		
0	0.000	0.000	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6057	9	0	0		
1	0.000	0.000	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	5213	117	0	0		
2	0.000	0.000	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.1	4487	452	0	0		
3	0.014	0.002	14.5	8.4	1.9	0.6	1157	253	0	0		
4	0.070	0.013	89.6	64.1	16.4	7.9	1430	547	266	102		
5	0.161	0.054	24.0	21.1	8.1	5.7	178	105	75	44		
6	0.220	0.091	175.2	191.4	72.2	68.9	994	820	634	523		
7	0.247	0.099	102.0	135.8	40.8	50.1	524	570	415	451		
8	0.256	0.100	214.4	340.5	83.5	126.6	1065	1460	942	1291		
9	0.266	0.100	186.9	347.6	70.2	127.4	899	1496	842	1401		
10	0.271	0.100	102.0	218.5	37.6	79.5	482	947	465	914		
11	0.274	0.100	79.1	192.3	28.9	69.8	371	840	364	824		
12	0.275	0.100	65.8	178.9	23.9	64.8	307	788	304	779		
13	0.276	0.100	39.5	118.7	14.3	43.0	184	526	183	522		
14	0.276	0.100	17.8	58.3	6.4	21.1	83	260	82	259		
15	0.276	0.100	7.6	27.0	2.8	9.8	36	121	35	121		
16+	0.276	0.100	19.4	78.7	7.0	28.9	90	362	90	361		
Total			1138	1981	415	704	23559	9670	4698	7591		

Year: 2016
 H.cons F mult: 1 F(5-11): 0.242
 Recreational F mult: 1 F(5-11): 0.092

Age	F(5-11):		Catch Nos:		Yield:		Stock Nos	Biomass	SSB nos.		SSB tonnes	
	Commercial	Recreational	Commercial	Commercial	Recreational	Recreational			Jan 1	Jan 1		
0	0.000	0.000	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6057	9	0	0		
1	0.000	0.000	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	5213	117	0	0		
2	0.000	0.000	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.1	4487	452	0	0		
3	0.014	0.002	48.3	28.2	6.4	1.9	3861	844	0	0		
4	0.070	0.013	61.5	44.0	11.3	5.4	981	375	183	70		
5	0.161	0.054	152.7	133.9	51.7	36.3	1133	665	475	279		
6	0.220	0.091	21.8	23.8	9.0	8.6	124	102	79	65		
7	0.247	0.099	122.2	162.6	48.8	60.0	627	683	497	540		
8	0.256	0.100	64.2	102.0	25.0	37.9	319	437	282	387		
9	0.266	0.100	133.5	248.3	50.1	91.0	642	1068	601	1001		
10	0.271	0.100	113.4	243.0	41.8	88.4	536	1053	518	1017		
11	0.274	0.100	61.0	148.4	22.3	53.8	286	648	281	636		
12	0.275	0.100	47.0	127.9	17.1	46.3	220	563	217	557		
13	0.276	0.100	39.0	117.1	14.1	42.4	182	519	181	515		
14	0.276	0.100	23.4	76.6	8.5	27.7	109	341	108	340		
15	0.276	0.100	10.5	37.2	3.8	13.5	49	167	49	166		
16+	0.276	0.100	15.9	64.9	5.8	23.8	74	298	74	297		
Total			914	1558	317	537	24901	8341	3544	5869		

E. Biological reference points

E.1 Background

The Stock synthesis model currently used fixes stock–recruit steepness at 0.999. There are insufficient observations at low SSB to suggest the possible steepness of the relationship. This means that MSY reference points cannot be obtained from a plausible stock–recruit relationship and have to be derived from yield-per-recruit. WGCSE 2013 and 2014, IBPBass 2014 and IBPBass2 2016 computed yield-per-recruit based biological reference points $F_{0.1}$ and $F_{35\%spr}$ based on the inputs and outputs of the stock synthesis update assessment. In 2013, with an input M of 0.20, the $F(5-11)$ value for $F_{35\%spr}$ was 0.17 and the $F_{0.1}$ was 0.18. In 2014, WGCSE reduced the M to 0.15, and this caused a reduction in the $F_{35\%spr}$ to 0.13 for combined commercial and recreational landings, and the $F_{0.1}$ was 0.12. The F reference points therefore scale directly with M , as expected, with some effect of changes in estimated fishery selection patterns and weights-at-age.

The revised SS3 model proposed by IBPBass2 now includes an explicit recognition of the possible recreational fisher landings. The recreational landings is indicative only, in the sense that it is conditioned on a total annual recreational removal estimate of ~1 500 t in 2012, which is considered as a “plausible scenario”. Different scenarios for total recreational removals affect how total fishing mortality is split between commercial and recreational F , but the combined F estimates are minimally affected as they are driven by the fishery composition data.

E.2 MSY BRPs or proxies for sea bass

BRPs for this assessment based on advice from ICES WKMSYREF2 (ICES, 2014), and recognising that F_{MSY} cannot be obtained from a fitted stock–recruit curve include:

- 1) Setting an F_{MSY} proxy as $F_{0.1}$ or $F_{xx\%spr}$ based either on the commercial fishery only, or the combined commercial and recreational F .
- 2) Setting a B_{MSY} trigger around a low percentile of the expected range of SSB when fishing at F_{MSY} .

Unfortunately it is not yet possible yet to carry out a full MCMC bootstrap of the sea bass assessment and to propagate this into a forecast period to evaluate the percentiles of expected SSB whilst fishing at F_{MSY} . A concern with sea bass is that recruitment has shown longer term changes in mean recruitment (and hence stock productivity) that appear related to changes in sea temperature at decadal scales. For a biomass reference point, WGCSE 2014 selected the lowest observed SSB (B_{loss}) as a value for B_{lim} , the limit reference point for SSB. There is therefore no MSY or precautionary reference point for biomass (Table E.2.1).

WGCSE chose $F_{35\%spr}$ as a proxy for F_{MSY} (value: $F(5-11) = 0.13$ for combined commercial and recreational fishery). As for many stocks, this value is close to $F_{0.1}$. (Table E.2.1).

The yield per recruit curve is flat-topped and F_{MSY} in sea bass is poorly defined (Figure E.2.1). Fishing at F_{MAX} implies a yield-per-recruit only marginally higher than at $F_{35\%SPR}$ but requires much higher F , with much larger fishing costs where these are proportional to F .

E.3 Inclusion of BRP in short-term forecast

For the estimation of Yield-per-recruit and Spawner biomass per recruit, WGCSE 2014 varied the multipliers on both fisheries by the same amount. The resulting yield-per-

recruit curve therefore reflects total F and total yield, but does not assume a particular allocation between any fisheries.

For short-term forecasts, WGCSE agreed that the multiplier on the recreational F vector should be maintained at 1.0 for all management options except zero F, and only the commercial fishery vector is altered in management options. The relative contribution of commercial and recreational F to the total F will not be the same as the contribution used in calculating the F_{MSY} based on the mean F for 2011 to 2013. However, the selectivity and weights-at-age for the two fisheries are sufficiently close that the agreed F_{MSY} can be applied for different combinations of commercial and recreational F with relatively minor differences. This allows managers to select an F relative to F_{MSY} for a forecast year but decide how the resultant catch forecast can be allocated between the different fishery sectors. This is no different to management of different commercial fishery fleets.

Table E.2.1. BRPs proposed by IBPBass 2 2016 for sea bass in Areas 4 and 7.

	TYPE	VALUE	TECHNICAL BASIS
Precautionary approach	Blim	8 075 t	Lowest observed spawning stock biomass
	Bpa	12 673 t	$Blim \times \exp(-1.645 \times \sigma)$; $\sigma=0.274$
	Flim	Undefined	
	Fpa	Undefined	
MSY approach	FMSY	0.13	Based on F giving SSB per recruit 35% of value at zero F.
	MSY Btrigger	12 673 t	Bpa

F_{MAX} is not definable.

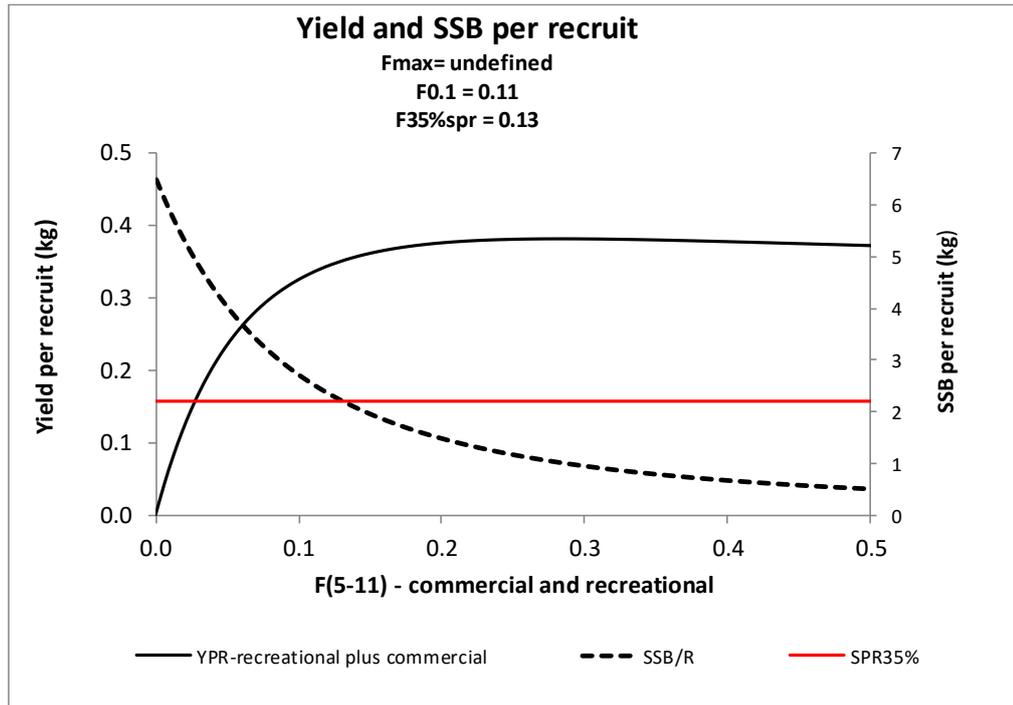


Figure E.2.1. Yield and biomass per recruit analysis from IBPBass2 2016: conditional on mean pattern of F-at-age for 2011–2013. The 35%spr is indicated (red line) to show where this occurs on the SPR curve.

E.4 Yield-per-recruit reference point calculations

Example inputs for a yield-per-recruit analysis are given in Table E.4.1.1. They are identical to the short-term forecast inputs except that the values are extended to 30 years of age. SS3 provides population estimates out to this age. It is assumed that no fish survive after the 30th year, as no fish older than 28 years have been observed historically. The input data are entered into the ICES Standard Plots system on SharePoint, which produces the YPR and SPR plots together with estimates of F_{MAX} , $F_{0.1}$ and F_{MED} . $F_{35\%SPR}$ is not output but can easily be computed using a spreadsheet, checking that the $F_{0.1}$ and SPR values are the same as the ones generated by the ICES Standard Plots software. (This software cannot at present display the partial YPR values for individual fleets).

Table E.4.1.1. Example inputs to yield-per-recruit analysis. F(5–11) and weights-at-age are the recent three year average. The values for a 16+ gp are indicated although using this prevents the mean stock weight to increase in the plus group as F is reduced, leading to a small bias in SSB per recruit at low or zero F. Bass in the wild have been recorded up to 28 years old.

Age	M	Pmat	Stock wt		Catch wt
			(kg)	F(5-11)	(kg)
0	0.15	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.000
1	0.15	0.000	0.023	0.000	0.055
2	0.15	0.001	0.096	0.000	0.171
3	0.15	0.012	0.209	0.006	0.470
4	0.15	0.068	0.369	0.065	0.621
5	0.15	0.241	0.570	0.197	0.769
6	0.15	0.513	0.807	0.294	0.961
7	0.15	0.749	1.073	0.327	1.207
8	0.15	0.887	1.359	0.332	1.495
9	0.15	0.951	1.659	0.332	1.804
10	0.15	0.978	1.967	0.332	2.118
11	0.15	0.990	2.278	0.331	2.431
12	0.15	0.995	2.588	0.331	2.740
13	0.15	0.997	2.892	0.331	3.041
14	0.15	0.998	3.189	0.331	3.333
15	0.15	0.999	3.475	0.331	3.614
16	0.15	0.999	3.750	0.331	3.882
17	0.15	1.000	4.012	0.331	4.138
18	0.15	1.000	4.261	0.331	4.380
19	0.15	1.000	4.496	0.331	4.608
20	0.15	1.000	4.717	0.331	4.822
21	0.15	1.000	4.924	0.331	5.022
22	0.15	1.000	5.117	0.331	5.208
23	0.15	1.000	5.296	0.331	5.380
24	0.15	1.000	5.462	0.331	5.539
25	0.15	1.000	5.614	0.331	5.685
26	0.15	1.000	5.753	0.331	5.818
27	0.15	1.000	5.880	0.331	5.938
28	0.15	1.000	5.994	0.331	6.046
29	0.15	1.000	6.095	0.331	6.142
30	0.15	1.000	6.322	0.331	6.358
+16	0.15	1.000	4.699	0.331	4.334

There is currently no TAC for sea bass, and control of fishing mortality would have to be through other approaches to managing effort on sea bass, and including technical measures to alter selectivity and/or restrict fishing seasonally or spatially. Note that the inclusion of discards in the assessment would alter the reference points and historical series. In the absence of discards, it is difficult to infer benefits to YPR or SSB/R in improving the selectivity patterns of the fleets. There is currently no time-series of recreational fishing catches to monitor the impacts of any management measures, and the frequency and extent of future surveys remains uncertain.

F. Other Issues

F.1. Historical overview of previous assessment methods

Previous assessments of sea bass in the 4 & 7 area are summarised below.

2007: Pawson *et al.* 2007. ADMB separable model on UK data; updated 2008 at WGNEW (Kupschus *et al.*, 2008).

2012: IBP-NEW (ICES, 2012). Development of age and length based Stock Synthesis assessment.

2013: WGCSE. Update assessment using IBP-NEW SS model. Recommended inter-benchmark to improve model.

2014: IBP-BASS. Added new CGFS surveys series; removed poorly performing surveys; improved fleet structure and selectivity model; incorporated recreational fishery information; developed forecast and BRPs.

2014: WGCSE. Update assessment using IBP-Bass model.

2015: WGCSE. Update assessment using IBP-Bass model.

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Appendix 1

Content of Stock Synthesis Control File (Bass47.ctf) selected as the final accepted assessment model at IBP-Bass 2 2016. Rows preceded by # are skipped, and are greyed out.

```
# C Sea bass 4 7 input control file
# _SS-V3.24f
# benchmark IBPBass2 2016
# -----
# -----

1          #_N_Growth_Patterns
1          #_N_Morphs_Within_GrowthPattern(GP)
#_Cond 1   #_Morph_between/within_stdev_ratio (no read if N_morphs=1)
#_Cond 1   #vector_Morphdist_(-1_in_first_val_gives_normal_approx)
#
##1      # N recruitment designs goes here if N_GP*nseas*area>1 #here 1 gp, 4 seasons,
1 area
##0      # placeholder for recruitment interaction request
#      # GP seas area for each recruitment assignment
##1 1 1 # example recruitment design element for GP=1, season=1, area=1
#
#_Cond 0   # N_movement_definitions goes here if N_areas > 1
#_Cond 1.0 # first age that moves (real age at begin of season, not integer) also
cond on do_migration>0
#_Cond 1 1 1 2 4 10 # example move definition for seas=1, morph=1, source=1 dest=2,
age1=4, age2=10
#
# -----

0          #_Nblock_Patterns
#          #_blocks_per_pattern
#          #begin and end years of blocks in first pattern
#
# -----

0.5       #_fracfemale #? Note sex ratio in bass increases with length.
```

```

0          #_natM_type: 0=1Parm; 1=N_breakpoints; 2=Lorenzen; 3=agespecific; 4=agespec_withseasinterpolate
#0.150 0.150 0.150 0.152 0.163 0.209 0.247 0.256 0.257 0.257
      0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257
      0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257 0.257
      0.257 0.257 0.257

# -----

1      # GrowthModel: 1=vonBert with L1&L2; 2=Richards with L1&L2; 3=not implemented; 4=not implemented #note - maguire et al 2008 pg 1270, Downloaded from icesjms.oxfordjournals.org at ICES on October 17, 2011
2      #_Growth_Age_for_L1
28     #_Growth_Age_for_L2 (999 to use as Linf)
0      #_SD_add_to_LAA (set to 0.1 for SS2 V1.x compatibility)
3      #_CV_Growth_Pattern: 0 CV=f(LAA); 1 CV=F(A); 2 SD=F(LAA); 3 SD=F(A)
1      #_maturity_option: 1=length logistic; 2=age logistic; 3=read age-maturity matrix by growth_pattern; 4=read age-fecundity; 5=read fec and wt from wtatage.ss
#_placeholder for empirical age-maturity by growth pattern

# -----

4      #_First_Mature_Age
1      #_fecundity_option:(1)eggs=Wt*(a+b*Wt);(2)eggs=a*L^b;(3)eggs=a*Wt^b
0      #_hermaphroditism_option: 0=none; 1=age-specific fxn
1      #_parameter_offset_approach (1=none, 2= M, G, CV_G as offset from female-GP1, 3=like SS2 V1.x)
1      #_env/block/dev_adjust_method (1=standard; 2=logistic transform keeps in base parm bounds; 3=standard w/ no bound check)

#_growth_parms
#_LO HI INIT PRIOR PR_type SD PHASE env-var use_dev dev_minyr dev_maxyr dev_stddev Block Block_Fxn

0.01 0.5 0.15 0.15 -1 0.1 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0      # NatM_p_1_GP_1
-1 30 19.67 19.67 -1 0.5 -5 0 0 0 0 0 0      # L_at_Amin_GP_1
60 100 80.26 80.26 -1 15 -4 0 0 0 0 0 0      # L_at_Amax_GP_1
0.01 0.2 0.09699 0.09699 -1 0.05 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0      # VonBert_K_GP_1
2 6 3.9 3.9 -1 0.8 6 0 0 0 0 0 0      # CV_young_GP_1
4 10 6.9 6.9 -1 0.8 6 0 0 0 0 0 0      # CV_old_GP_1

```

```

# weight-length relationship
-1 1 0.00001296 0.00001296 -1 0.05 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # Wtlen_1
2 4 2.969 2.969 -1 0.05 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # Wtlen_2

# proportion mature at length
30 50 40.649 40.649 -1 5 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # Mat50%
-5 1 -0.33349 -0.33349 -1 0.03764 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # Mat_slope

# fecundity option 1, parm values from dissertation (units of millions of eggs per kg)
-3 3 1 1 -1 0.8 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # Eg/gm_inter
-3 3 0 0 -1 0.8 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # Eg/gm_slope_wt

# recruitment apportionment
0 0 0 0 -1 0 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # RecrDist_GP_1
0 0 0 0 -1 0 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # RecrDist_Area_1
0 0 0 0 -1 0 -4 0 0 0 0 0 0 # RecrDist_Seas_1

# cohort growth deviation (fix value at 1 with negative phase; needed for blocks or
annual devs)
0 0 0 0 -1 0 -4 0 0 0 0 0 0 # CohortGrowDev

#
#_Cond 0 #custom_MG-env_setup (0/1)
#_Cond -2 2 0 0 -1 99 -2 #_placeholder when no MG-environ parameters
#
#_Cond 0 #custom_MG-block_setup (0/1)
#_Cond -2 2 0 0 -1 99 -2 #_placeholder when no MG-block parameters
#_Cond No MG parm trends
#
#_seasonal_effects_on_biology_parms
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 #_femwtlen1,femwtlen2,mat1,mat2,fec1,fec2,L1,K
#_Cond -2 2 0 0 -1 99 -2 #_placeholder when no seasonal MG parameters
#
#-6 #_MGparm_Dev_Phase
#

```

```

#_Spawner-Recruitment
3      #_SR_function

#_LO HI INIT PRIOR PR_type SD PHASE
1 16 10 5 -1 1 1          # SR_R0
0.2 0.999 0.999 0.999 -1 0.2 -1  # SR_steep
0.1 2 0.9 0.9 -1 0.2 -5        # SR_sigmaR
-5 5 0 0 -1 1 -3            # SR_envlink
-5 5 0 -0.7 -1 2 -2         # SR_R1_offset
0 0 0 0 -1 0 -99           # SR_autocorr

0      #_SR_env_link
0      #_SR_env_target_0=none;1=devs;_2=R0;_3=steepness

1      #do_recdev: 0=none; 1=devvector; 2=simple deviations
1969   # first year of main recr_devs; early devs can precede this era
2014   # last year of main recr_devs; forecast devs start in following year 2013. Young-
est survey age 2gp 2013; revised WGCSE 2015
3      #_recdev phase
1      # (0/1) to read 13 advanced options
0      #_recdev_early_start (0=none; neg value makes relative to recdev_start)
-4     #_recdev_early_phase
0      #_forecast_recruitment phase (incl. late recr) (0 value resets to maxphase+1)
1      #_lambda for prior_fore_rec occurring before endyr+1
1971   #_last_early_yr_nobias_adj_in_MPD
1982.5 #_first_yr_fullbias_adj_in_MPD
2011   #_last_yr_fullbias_adj_in_MPD 2012
2013   #_first_recent_yr_nobias_adj_in_MPD 2013
0.92   #_max_bias_adj_in_MPD (1.0 to mimic pre-2009 models)
0      #_period of cycles in recruitment (N parms read below)
-5     #min rec_dev
5      #max rec_dev
0      # 3 #_read_recdevs
#_end of advanced SR options
#

```

```

#Fishing Mortality info
0.2    # F ballpark for tuning early phases
-2001  # F ballpark year (neg value to disable)
3      # F_Method: 1=Pope; 2=instan. F; 3=hybrid (hybrid is recommended)
2.9    # max F or harvest rate, depends on F_Method

# no additional F input needed for Fmethod 1
# if Fmethod=2; read overall start F value; overall phase; N detailed inputs to read
#0.3 3 0 # if Fmethod=3; read N iterations for tuning for Fmethod 3
5 # N iterations for tuning F in hybrid method (recommend 3 to 7)
#

#_initial_F_parms
#_LO HI INIT PRIOR PR_type SD PHASE
0 2 0.03 0.3 -1 0.5 1 # InitF_OTB_Nets_Lines
0 2 0.03 0.3 -1 0.5 1 # InitF_Lines
0 2 0.03 0.3 -1 0.5 1 # InitF_Midwater
0 2 0.03 0.03 -1 0.5 1 # InitF_French
0 2 0.03 0.03 -1 0.5 1 # InitF_Other
0 2 0.03 0.03 -1 0.5 1 # InitF_RecFish
#

#_Q_setup
# Q_type options: <0=mirror, 0/1=float, 2=parameter, 3=parm_w_random_dev,
4=parm_w_randwalk)
#_Den-dep env-var extra_se Q_type
0 0 0 0 # FISHERY1
0 0 0 0 # FISHERY2
0 0 0 0 # FISHERY3
0 0 0 0 # FISHERY4
0 0 0 0 # FISHERY5
0 0 0 0 # Fishery6
0 0 1 2 # SURVEY AutBass
0 0 1 2 # Survey CGFS1

```

#_Cond 0 #_If q has random component, then 0=read one parm for each fleet with random q; 1=read a parm for each year of index

#_Q_parms(if_any)

LO HI INIT PRIOR PR_type SD PHASE

-5 5 0 0 -1 1 4 # Q_extraSD_AutBass

-5 5 0 0 -1 1 4 # Q_extraSD_CGFS1

-10 10 0 0 -1 1 1 # Q_type_AutBass

-10 10 0 0 -1 1 1 # Q_type_CGFS1

#

#_size_selex_types

24 0 0 0 # 1 UKTrawl_Nets #_RDM now all fleets have size selectivity

1 0 0 0 # 2 UKLines

1 0 0 0 # 3 UKMidwater

1 0 0 0 # 4 French

15 0 0 4 # 5 Other

15 0 0 2 # 6 RecFish

24 0 0 0 # 7 AutBass

24 0 0 0 # 8 CGFS1

#

#_age_selex_types

#_Pattern ___ Male Special

10 0 0 0 # 1 UKTrawl_Nets

10 0 0 0 # 2 UKLines

10 0 0 0 # 3 UKMidwater

10 0 0 0 # 4 French

15 0 0 4 # 5 Other

15 0 0 2 # 6 RecFish

11 0 0 0 # 7 AutBass

10 0 0 0 # 8 CGFS1

#_LO HI INIT PRIOR PR_type SD PHASE env-var use_dev dev_minyr dev_maxyr dev_stddev Block Block_Fxn

20 93 45 45 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 # SizeSel_2P_1_OTB

-10.0 4.0 -6.0 -6.0 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # SizeSel_2P_2_OTB

1.0 5.0 3.3 3.3 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_3_OTB
3.0 6.0 4.4 4.4 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_4_OTB
-8.0 9.0 -8 -8 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_5_OTB
-5.0 9.0 -1 -1 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_6_OTB
20 91 39 30 -1 0.1 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_5P_1_Lines
0.01 30 2 5 -1 0.01 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_5P_2_Lines
20 91 39 30 -1 0.1 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_5P_1_MWT
0.01 30 2 5 -1 0.01 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_5P_2_MWT
20 91 38.8836 30 -1 0.1 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_5P_1_French
0.01 30 5.18514 5 -1 0.01 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_5P_2_French
19 93 32 32 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_1_AutBass
-7.0 4.0 -6.0 -6.0 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_2_AutBass
1.0 5.0 3.3 3.3 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_3_AutBass
1.0 6.0 4.4 4.4 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_4_AutBass
-11.0 9.0 -8 -8 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_5_AutBass
-10.0 9.0 -1 -1 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_6_AutBass
20 93 32 32 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_1_CGFS1
-6.0 4.0 -6.0 -6.0 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_2_CGFS1
1.0 5.0 3.3 3.3 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_3_CGFS1
3.0 6.0 4.4 4.4 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_4_CGFS1
-11.0 9.0 -8 -8 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_5_CGFS1
-5.0 9.0 -1 -1 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# SizeSel_2P_6_CGFS1
#0 15.8 7.4 7.4 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# PEAK value ageSel_1P_1_OTB
#-6.0 4.0 -6.0 -6.0 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# TOP logistic ageSel_1P_1_OTB
#-3 9.0 0.3 0.3 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# WIDTH exp ageSel_1P_1_OTB
#-1.0 9.0 -0.8 -0.8 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0	# WIDTH exp ageSel_1P_1_OTB
#-10.0 9.0 -5 -5 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# INIT logistic ageSel_1P_1_OTB
#-5.0 9.0 1.8 1.8 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# FINAL logistic ageSel_1P_1_OTB
#0 16 7.0 7.0 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0	# ageSel_2P_1_Lines

```

#0.01 30 7.02399 5 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # ageSel_2P_2_Lines

#0 16 7.0 7.0 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 # ageSel_2P_1_MWT
#0.01 30 7.02399 5 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # ageSel_2P_2_MWT

#0 16 7.0 7.0 -1 0.05 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 # AgeSel__2P_1_French
#0.01 30 7.02399 5 -1 0.05 3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # AgeSel__2P_2_French

2 2 2 2 -1 99 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # AgeSel_10P_1_Autumn 2 min age
4 4 4 4 -1 99 -3 0 0 0 0 0 0 # AgeSel_10P_2_Autumn 4 max age

#_Cond 0 #_custom_sel-env_setup (0/1)
#_Cond -2 2 0 0 -1 99 -2 #_placeholder when no enviro fxns
#_custom_sel-blk_setup (0/1)
#_Cond No selex parm trends
#_Cond -4 # placeholder for selparm_Dev_Phase
#_env/block/dev_adjust_method (1=standard; 2=logistic trans to keep in base parm
bounds; 3=standard w/ no bound check)
#
# Tag loss and Tag reporting parameters go next
0 # TG_custom: 0=no read; 1=read if tags exist
#_Cond -6 6 1 1 2 0.01 -4 0 0 0 0 0 0 #_placeholder if no parameters
#
1 #_Variance_adjustments_to_input_values
#_fleet/svy: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 #_add_to_survey_CV
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 #_add_to_discard_stddev
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 #_add_to_bodywt_CV
0.5 0.5 0.5 0.5 0.5 0.5 1 1 #_mult_by_lencomp_N
0.5 0.5 0.5 0.5 0.5 0.5 1 1 #_mult_by_agecomp_N
1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 #_mult_by_size-at-age_N

#
3 #_maxlambdaphase
1 #_sd_offset
#

```

```

0      # number of changes to make to default Lambdas (default value is 1.0)
# Like_comp codes: 1=surv; 2=disc; 3=mnwt; 4=length; 5=age; 6=SizeFreq; 7=sizeage;
8=catch;
# 9=init_equ_catch; 10=recrdev; 11=parm_prior; 12=parm_dev; 13=CrashPen;
14=Morphcomp; 15=Tag-comp; 16=Tag-negbin
# like_comp fleet/survey phase value sizefreq_method
# 5 1 1 0.1 1 #_RDM reduce emphasis on age comp and wt-at-age by 10x
# 5 2 1 0.1 1
# 5 3 1 0.1 1
# 5 4 1 0.1 1
# 7 1 1 0.1 1
# 7 2 1 0.1 1
# 7 3 1 0.1 1
# 7 4 1 0.1 1
#
# lambdas (for info only; columns are phases)
# 0 0 0 0 #_CPUE/survey:_1
# 1 1 1 1 #_CPUE/survey:_2
# 1 1 1 1 #_CPUE/survey:_3
# 1 1 1 1 #_lencomp:_1
# 1 1 1 1 #_lencomp:_2
# 0 0 0 0 #_lencomp:_3
# 1 1 1 1 #_agecomp:_1
# 1 1 1 1 #_agecomp:_2
# 0 0 0 0 #_agecomp:_3
# 1 1 1 1 #_size-age:_1
# 1 1 1 1 #_size-age:_2
# 0 0 0 0 #_size-age:_3
# 1 1 1 1 #_init_equ_catch
# 1 1 1 1 #_recruitments
# 1 1 1 1 #_parameter-priors
# 1 1 1 1 #_parameter-dev-vectors
# 1 1 1 1 #_crashPenLambda
0 # (0/1) read specs for more stddev reporting
# 1 1 -1 5 1 5 1 -1 5 # selex type, len/age, year, N selex bins, Growth pattern, N growth
ages, NatAge_area(-1 for all), NatAge_yr, N Natages
# 5 15 25 35 43 # vector with selex std bin picks (-1 in first bin to self-generate)

```

1 2 14 26 40 # vector with growth std bin picks (-1 in first bin to self-generate)

1 2 14 26 40 # vector with NatAge std bin picks (-1 in first bin to self-generate)

999

Appendix 2

Content of Stock Synthesis Data file (Bass47.dat) selected as the final accepted assessment model at IBP-Bass 2 2016. Rows preceded by # are skipped, and are greyed out.

```
# C Sea bass 47 input data file
# benchmark IBPBass2 2016
# -----
# -----
1985      # _styr
2014      # _endyr
1         # _nseasons lr number of quarters in a year
12        # _nmonths per season
1         # _spawn_seas
6         # _Nfleet
2         # _Nsurveys
1         # _N_areas

# -----
# FLEET/SURVEY NAMES, TIMING, ETC.
# -----
# Fishery & survey names separated by "%"
# -----
UKOTB_Nets%Lines%UKMWT%French%Other%RecFish%AutBass%CGFS1
-1 -1 -1 -1 -1 -1 0.83 0.75      # _surveytiming_in_season
1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1      # _area_assignments_for_each_fish-
ery_and_survey
1 1 1 1 1 1      # _units of catch: 1=bio; 2=num
0.1 0.1 0.1 0.1 0.1 0.1      # _se of log(catch) only used for
init_eq_catch and for Fmethod 2 and 3
1      # _Ngenders
30     # _Nages
57.5 24.4 0.51 713.7 18.7 1625      # _init_equil_catch_for_each_fishery (1985
landings * 0.82 see IBPNEW2012)
30 # _N_lines_of_catch_to_read
# Retained catch in biomass (metric tonnes (mt))
# -----
# includes RETAINED ONLY
```

#UKOTB_Nets Lines UKMWT French Other RecFish Year Season

70	30	1	870	23	1291	1985	1
84	33	2	1180	19	1186	1986	1
96	18	0	1840	25	1117	1987	1
129	30	8	1028	44	1092	1988	1
141	29	7	917	67	1028	1989	1
128	18	22	849	47	904	1990	1
152	60	14	971	29	794	1991	1
105	23	8	1001	49	772	1992	1
146	62	1	979	68	948	1993	1
354	154	0	786	76	1318	1994	1
424	169	4	1057	181	1532	1995	1
308	128	87	2395	104	1519	1996	1
335	119	71	1984	111	1422	1997	1
241	121	85	1773	170	1353	1998	1
274	148	220	1843	185	1380	1999	1
236	53	52	1805	261	1460	2000	1
263	58	97	1883	199	1511	2001	1
361	75	110	1825	251	1610	2002	1
353	65	127	2471	443	1696	2003	1
380	72	131	2604	544	1771	2004	1
353	59	68	3161	789	1766	2005	1
359	119	11	3259	629	1732	2006	1
413	166	37	2771	677	1794	2007	1
514	163	17	2750	663	1894	2008	1
486	147	9	2649	598	1919	2009	1
452	183	42	3236	649	1828	2010	1
462	143	98	2526	629	1682	2011	1
564	185	49	2610	579	1500	2012	1
530	191	39	2871	506	1236	2013	1
751	236	1	1303	391	979	2014	1

52 #_N_cpue_and_surveyabundance_observations

#_Units: 0=numbers; 1=biomass; 2=F

#_Errtype: -1=normal; 0=lognormal; >0=T

#_Fleet Units Errtype

1	1	0	#	UK OTB_Nets
2	1	0	#	UK Lines
3	1	0	#	UK MWT
4	1	0	#	French fleets
5	1	0	#	Other
6	1	0	#	RecFish
7	0	0	#	AutBass
8	0	0	#	CGFS1

#####

yr qtr indexNumber(5-6) indexResult indexSE

##	AutBass	(numbers 2):		
1986	1	7	5.84	0.433295234
1987	1	7	2.6	0.433295234
1989	1	7	7.05	0.433295234
1990	1	7	3.98	0.433295234
1991	1	7	3.32	0.433295234
1992	1	7	19.7	0.433295234
1993	1	7	14.63	0.433295234
1994	1	7	5.46	0.433295234
1995	1	7	10.24	0.433295234
1996	1	7	6.06	0.433295234
1997	1	7	38.2	0.433295234
1998	1	7	7.34	0.433295234
1999	1	7	20.91	0.433295234
2000	1	7	17.46	0.433295234
2001	1	7	39.91	0.433295234
2002	1	7	11.7	0.433295234
2003	1	7	13.55	0.433295234
2005	1	7	21.93	0.433295234
2006	1	7	19.73	0.433295234
2007	1	7	5.5	0.433295234
2008	1	7	25.52	0.433295234
2009	1	7	19.83	0.433295234

2011	1	7	4.05	0.433295234
2013	1	7	1.52	0.433295234
2014	1	7	2.3	0.433295234
##	CGFS1:			
1988	1	8	245776	0.6
1989	1	8	77716	0.6
1990	1	8	11299140.6	
1991	1	8	42506350.3	
1992	1	8	26179840.3	
1993	1	8	22999180.3	
1994	1	8	10978290.3	
1995	1	8	10217400.3	
1996	1	8	12242380.3	
1997	1	8	18175990.3	
1998	1	8	25310440.3	
1999	1	8	16422700.3	
2000	1	8	25709960.3	
2001	1	8	31506740.3	
2002	1	8	38724270.3	
2003	1	8	87390570.3	
2004	1	8	35984400.3	
2005	1	8	30053170.3	
2006	1	8	55179990.3	
2007	1	8	36613140.3	
2008	1	8	64688410.3	
2009	1	8	25646960.3	
2010	1	8	18045370.3	
2011	1	8	15137450.3	
2012	1	8	20345540.3	
2013	1	8	995987	0.3
2014	1	8	669931	0.3

DISCARDED CATCH

0 #_N_fleets_with_discard

```

0      # N discard obs

# -----
# MEAN BODY WEIGHT
# -----
0 # _N_meanbodywt_obs
30    #_DF_for_meanbodywt_T-distribution_like

# -----
# LENGTH COMPOSITION SET-UP
# -----
# population length bins (not necessarily same as data bins, below)
2      # length bin method: 1=use databins; 2=generate from binwidth,min,max below; 3=read vector
2      # number of population length bins to be read
4
94

-0.001 #_comp_tail_compression
1e-007 #_add_to_comp
0      #_combine males into females at or below this bin number

# -----
# LENGTH COMPOSITION DATA
# -----
41    #_N_LengthBins
# vector of length N_LengthBins with lower edges of each bin
14    16    18    20    22    24    26    28    30    32    34
      36    38    40    42    44    46    48    50    52    54
      56    58    60    62    64    66    68    70    72    74
      76    78    80    82    84    86    88    90    92    94

125   #_N_Length_obs
#Yr Season Flt/Svy Gender Part Nsamp datavector(female-male)
# -----

```

LANDINGS OF COMMERCIAL FLEETS (1 TO 5), ORDERED BY YEAR AND QUARTER:

#	-----									
1985	1	1	0	2	8.926117202	0	0	65	0	
	0	130	0	185	2154	9307	17771	11520	7353	
	6195	3248	4184	4005	4135	3269	1254	1171	1641	
	1224	1180	584	234	414	94	152	445	152	0
	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1986	1	1	0	2	13.65170866	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	8881	6175	1522	7181	8854	4903	9250	
	8551	5295	4432	3045	2208	3867	2638	1567	1380	
	2851	995	1375	352	90	5036	311	1794	4	216
	109	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1987	1	1	0	2	29.66621305	0	0	0	0	
	0	188	0	0	5148	20706	17049	22638	11144	
	13791	5629	5008	2384	2475	1252	1681	1460	1001	913
	2667	2945	713	2229	194	761	381	660	191	0
	0	179	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1988	1	1	0	2	19.1648987	16	16	0	0	
	0	32	761	1431	7219	6402	12495	35742	14723	
	11915	12763	17220	6430	4406	1698	2566	1639	918	
	2439	1888	153	1194	822	1964	515	743	552	210
	172	177	33	20	0	0	0	0	0	
1989	1	1	0	2	24.67808873	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	10076	7434	16034	20457	12060	
	11120	15380	11197	11691	8578	6183	3381	3457	2999	
	2588	2852	2309	1579	1472	1344	427	540	56	41
	56	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1990	1	1	0	2	16.53957011	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	231	6223	6914	
	8672	4714	9034	16220	7610	9973	7415	5356	3246	
	1226	2895	1784	1441	1099	565	346	158	304	124
	0	98	148	0	566	0	0	0	0	
1991	1	1	0	2	17.58970154	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	60	179	7350	23199	11237	
	6005	4235	4202	4461	5509	5105	5275	5129	7434	
	3315	5836	2703	729	2551	2614	3546	727	84	
	1379	202	4	260	0	0	0	0	0	0
1992	1	1	0	2	13.91424152	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	202	10251	34088	28604	
	14364	11787	4507	2927	1668	4105	1574	2119	1510	
	1313	1072	953	363	340	245	257	1502	604	0
	0	75	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1993	1	1	0	2	42.792856	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	22	3824	899	9580	63497	38604	
	24428	12330	8183	4533	4499	2704	1619	1925	1808	

2003	1	1	0	2	74.82186478	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	34	46	1424	8235	57062	77986	
	70341	43681	29493	20640	18412	15623	11819	7903	6477	
	3672	2989	1869	2803	1021	723	294	1397	197	193
	348	0	0	118	0	0	0	0	0	
2004	1	1	0	2	48.83111175	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	30	477	7112	56436	77855	
	88743	75236	57578	43440	17089	10998	7706	2454	1193	
	1019	705	1193	1093	797	277	382	310	149	88
	54	0	0	0	0	0	48	0	0	
2005	1	1	0	2	18.37730012	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	15	480	9736	118997	87391	
	54041	51857	41817	31495	23782	9021	5197	4800	2206	
	2090	1049	1075	717	324	221	221	113	36	46
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2006	1	1	0	2	17.58970154	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	3306	22629	108391	100915	
	86929	45290	32101	20844	15954	10699	7506	3681	2838	
	1708	1912	511	761	2580	308	132	0	154	22
	0	22	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2007	1	1	0	2	16.80210297	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	470	3489	54082	70396	
	64601	54445	58842	37746	18707	11681	15625	7831	4841	
	8448	2259	3735	4278	438	455	117	1226	316	159
	117	0	255	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2008	1	1	0	2	25.72822017	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	401	13790	175049	148847	
	104728	76223	44614	33457	14676	13238	11255	8194	5767	
	2706	1499	1369	1236	777	862	222	113	0	8
	586	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2009	1	1	0	2	29.66621305	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	146	2887	104904	107730	
	93431	55081	50155	25947	30223	16007	15940	12696	7388	
	6801	2355	683	4323	91	486	955	1257	337	
	1781	108	108	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	1	1	0	2	25.72822017	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	40	3168	80969	65663	
	100554	56013	63911	49857	14519	12059	8624	6881	7079	
	4950	4215	3011	2984	2604	1229	1072	1059	335	302
	410	358	254	127	0	0	0	0	0	
2011	1	1	0	2	27.04088446	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	82	3514	42567	46238	
	51629	63594	50320	59307	31597	27273	18416	13379	6216	
	7016	3569	5620	2394	1025	2151	1077	718	1327	289
	86	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2012	1	1	0	2	29.92874591	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	2232	12451	100744	129415	

	87343	57287	33655	19594	22391	21406	19679	17983	11586	
	10398	8571	5215	3351	2452	2792	1025	865	521	499
	410	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2013	1	1	0	2	34.39180451	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	209	2114	10865	65525	91135	
	87003	60752	37589	32577	21034	21530	19731	23574	19268	
	7202	10270	6993	3741	2360	1532	4060	682	1944	0
	189	108	0	94	0	13	0	0	0	
2014	1	1	0	2	29.40368019	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	6555	39382	72183	
	82901	67301	47751	35694	26112	26014	28791	31275	31236	
	27240	19207	13470	8783	4304	5533	3379	2344	939	796
	174	0	0	123	0	0	0	0	0	
1985	1	2	0	2	2.924411826	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	2822	5368	5711	5594	1624	2170	3688	
	1284	1590	1002	2424	1123	1485	1669	1171	457	143
	443	207	139	325	7	14	0	125	257	375
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1986	1	2	0	2	4.771408768	0	0	0	0	0
	0	32	59	461	1123	2607	2174	3118	1579	
	1540	963	1083	1435	1868	2033	1350	1721	863	741
	621	539	681	351	392	254	177	177	59	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1987	1	2	0	2	10.62023242	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	26	102	245	658	757	1024	924	
	1630	497	1079	214	461	358	806	1122	717	526
	431	172	98	77	97	562	44	240	46	183
	17	28	39	7	4	0	0	4		
1988	1	2	0	2	8.15756983	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	24	838	4597	4578	3030	1744	
	2166	2108	1304	1295	1215	747	740	481	841	630
	651	884	398	429	308	311	156	52	59	61
	24	169	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1989	1	2	0	2	4.001826709	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	276	630	21750	21856	999	366
	259	183	24	75	49	75	235	420	235	231
	429	169	328	210	50	185	25	93	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1990	1	2	0	2	3.386161061	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	119	164	474	533
	1063	1380	1324	1085	967	760	769	414	494	627
	345	277	266	190	196	0	196	156	74	0
	74	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1991	1	2	0	2	8.15756983	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	10	10	1811	3158	2495	860
	591	628	1053	1530	1536	1440	1344	1062	1067	

2001	1	2	0	2	17.54647095	0	0	0	0	
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	5531	7145	5337	4579	2859	2679	1560	1386	1932	
	1651	1315	1332	529	635	247	220	185	200	70
	44	89	70	0	35	0	0	0	0	
2002	1	2	0	2	22.31787972	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	85	1113	4776	4791	
	4551	5657	7479	6871	5474	3452	2449	2632	2723	
	1873	1572	792	1243	909	446	523	394	396	171
	180	85	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2003	1	2	0	2	13.85247707	0	0	0	0	
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	8447	7163	6892	5129	4649	3693	3070	1752	1639	
	1094	974	609	580	388	315	191	119	266	8
	107	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2004	1	2	0	2	10.62023242	0	0	0	0	
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	7305	7164	6298	5551	4972	4272	3418	3519	1990	
	1623	1259	1182	957	1195	511	161	429	124	3
	136	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2005	1	2	0	2	3.847910297	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	1459	5096	
	5733	5562	5847	2889	2587	1756	2391	2107	2111	
	1980	2538	812	1071	42	400	849	261	163	142
	0	240	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2006	1	2	0	2	10.3123996	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	74	0	3969	12293	
	12638	14461	14923	10989	8786	9345	5063	4132	4038	
	4524	2755	1619	2088	621	794	551	244	169	560
	344	54	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2007	1	2	0	2	4.771408768	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	1136	5131	14565	
	15142	14050	12606	10768	12287	8705	5167	6074	4873	
	3812	4817	4253	2142	3384	1247	1252	0	747	487
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2008	1	2	0	2	4.617492356	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	313	4013	11689	
	16359	18034	18687	12444	10441	7197	13773	7484	3684	
	3598	3289	2458	2440	303	506	318	615	591	0
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2009	1	2	0	2	2.924411826	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	74	8613	14610	
	12252	18429	15522	11032	9124	7768	5868	4579	4902	
	2018	3718	2757	1475	1029	814	667	147	520	299
	74	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2010	1	2	0	2	6.310572887	0	0	0	0	
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	30120	30121	40653	24649	10232	6746	3421	2913	2137	
	1626	1675	507	760	539	302	598	331	222	56
	0	56	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2011	1	2	0	2	8.619319065	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	12	180	2327	7968	
	10975	13369	10926	11254	10787	9886	6722	6716	4301	
	3064	2450	2410	2342	1525	625	501	297	251	228
	145	102	69	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2012	1	2	0	2	15.39164119	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	520	4350	11740	
	12483	14279	12748	12865	7284	13932	9586	9411	10724	
	5622	4735	2099	2450	2478	1173	566	675	137	394
	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2013	1	2	0	2	6.464489299	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	569	6040	14247	
	17604	17459	11704	10487	7481	10703	9458	9034	6570	
	6686	5108	5206	1152	1560	1394	1065	555	742	507
	292	244	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2014	1	2	0	2	11.23589807	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	241	4662	10862	
	13728	25651	20722	19848	13851	10523	9996	9716	8768	
	8485	6856	5460	3433	2486	1624	627	279	564	190
	12	161	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
1985	1	-3	0	2	0.320262515	0	1	3	2	
	1	1	1	2	2	2	0	1	0	0
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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1987	1	-3	0	2	0.160131257	0	0	0	0	0
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	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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1988	1	-3	0	2	0.320262515	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	76	228	301
	882	1103	594	515	443	367	149	145	76	76
	0	76	228	152	76	76	0	0	0	0
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1989	1	-3	0	2	0.640525029	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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	421	532	207	140	85	69	0	4	11	26
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1991	1	-3	0	2	0.160131257	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	435	2111	2590	1683	720	820	0	0	0

2004	1	3	0	2	7.045775324	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	535	2809	6208	
	12248	12365	8469	13915	17395	19369	4008	9317	288	
	1054	1196	1196	566	677	278	343	167	56	56
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2005	1	3	0	2	12.65036933	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	173	785	
	3157	6929	9226	11041	10516	6448	3185	2440	1366	
	1541	794	494	311	311	92	103	22	46	22
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2006	1	3	0	2	4.483675206	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	106	741	
	1904	2328	2116	635	952	529	423	529	106	106
	106	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
2007	1	3	0	2	19.21575088	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	18	37	320	883	
	2096	2641	5049	4236	3881	2081	2455	1652	906	619
	617	373	150	150	113	56	37	75	18	18
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
2008	1	3	0	2	10.8889255	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	135	542	993
	1095	1112	1005	1319	1199	1169	1206	722	709	446
	362	229	120	75	17	10	7	9	2	2
	7	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2009	1	3	0	2	22.25824477	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	81	239	690
	1020	1615	1163	827	967	510	227	99	183	83
	96	39	41	21	20	3	4	10	4	0
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2010	1	3	0	2	6.885644066	0	0	0	0	
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	5121	5036	3218	3657	2543	962	1850	1217	755	
	1023	384	180	178	197	100	50	17	33	0
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2011	1	3	0	2	16.01312574	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	293	1045	
	4271	4583	11310	8588	9653	9609	7336	3924	3130	
	2508	2382	1785	925	934	312	293	0	0	0
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2012	1	3	0	2	22.57850729	0	0	0	0	
	0	0	0	0	0	0	200	3001	2588	
	4530	5537	5034	7019	4509	4023	4008	1503	1589	587
	644	71	57	43	71	100	43	43	29	57
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
2000	1	4	0	2	40.45080885	0	0	0	0	
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		126730	102836	80478	93344	80934	55399	52948	42094	26460	
		27357	23581	14295	18044	10773	9903	5709	5721	2345	
		2595	2102	888	1021	548	123	0	0	0	0
2001	1	4	0	2	40.45080885	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	17962	19809	68920		
		76594	98008	109595	106857	77694	57055	51658	36737	35839	
		22762	25834	18773	13532	11068	9120	11771	5733	5345	
		2782	1691	583	296	204	0	61	0	0	0
2002	1	4	0	2	40.45080885	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	1015	0	12469	38249	46427		
		62503	82461	91064	86723	62163	55905	46180	35998	26001	
		19019	14210	11129	16771	11011	5447	4795	4559	1825	
		1260	357	155	109	0	0	0	0	0	0
2003	1	4	0	2	40.45080885	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	3455	13054	58717	105655	125326	180475		
		119495	145456	104545	130023	115806	91915	93878	48742	60839	
		31614	33688	30691	18823	13230	7960	5374	5617	3275	
		1356	297	783	112	148	0	0	0	0	0
2004	1	4	0	2	40.45080885	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	14	13057	78811	127801	124051		
		227214	282390	243107	188494	126685	72581	82331	50633	60284	
		31334	19126	23996	14799	10650	8569	4880	2974	2675	
		2567	548	425	149	295	0	149	0	0	0
2005	1	4	0	2	40.45080885	0	0	0	0	0	0
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		231750	266905	344681	270532	239265	169478	115269	62106	67741	
		61132	43591	35774	25788	12456	13360	8908	8053	9811	
		5020	2378	1365	107	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	1	4	0	2	40.45080885	0	0	0	0	0	0
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		178250	196868	289998	285451	263272	200874	119836	99509	99674	
		54522	45908	23763	20607	14969	13976	9653	4521	3424	
		2883	731	201	261	30	0	0	0	0	0
2007	1	4	0	2	40.45080885	0	0	0	0	0	0
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		146272	145122	164011	130859	100043	99210	75929	74405	55147	
		46087	28056	23057	18091	8715	8793	4835	2707	1962	
		1010	399	158	37	59	0	0	0	0	0
2008	1	4	0	2	40.45080885	0	0	0	0	0	0
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		266408	237160	270810	228996	142650	112385	74336	66260	48853	
		39689	29840	28335	14420	12694	9039	6821	4714	1623	
		1257	534	261	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
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		225545	193030	222613	238849	155222	159658	114530	84649	96257	

1992	1	8	0	0	8.191909801	0	0	0	0	
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	78328	79289	26490	42201	0	0	15138	5247	0	
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1993	1	8	0	0	7.479569819	0	0	0	0	
	0	5551	38106	121556	170213	347228	237317	321637	247396	
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1994	1	8	0	0	6.767229836	0	0	0	0	
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1995	1	8	0	0	6.054889853	0	0	0	0	
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1996	1	8	0	0	9.260419775	0	0	0	0	
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1999	1	8	0	0	13.17828968	0	0	0	0	
	18433	15128	83225	167646	146928	90595	177558	153662	195992	
	214407	105858	79810	47256	78075	7863	17639	0	9059	0
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2000	1	8	0	0	12.82211969	0	0	0	0	
	18644	65257	62040	125296	417455	440978	309620	338993	204879	
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2004	1	8	0	0	15.67147962	0	0	0	0	0
	0	2692	0	122879	403673	714884	730822	416792	287359	
	324966	129278	137035	115126	31042	39375	29156	18125	9347	0
	61811	2692	2692	9347	0	0	0	0	0	0
	9347	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
2005	1	8	0	0	14.24679965	0	0	0	0	0
	15565	0	210994	418270	315562	267295	354515	215506	225666	
	181642	106404	138927	146271	109108	98370	34142	9487	52772	
	51553	21543	10751	10751	0	0	10223	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2006	1	8	0	0	12.82211969	0	0	0	0	0
	0	9814	197122	866753	893641	788190	1120577	531053	311464	
	137430	190156	96298	71441	84223	86273	31873	22996	25308	
	19628	9814	3032	0	9814	0	0	11099	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2007	1	8	0	0	11.75360971	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	47391	407308	386452	394375	609358	479157	314000	
	219897	169994	170481	111148	80056	57131	123245	25737	18311	0
	11929	0	10662	5331	19351	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
2008	1	8	0	0	14.24679965	0	0	0	0	0
	10729	52876	128066	266412	229414	731914	1661470	931172	880632	
	758996	224765	208707	112521	79753	13259	72807	14967	28587	
	19628	0	0	0	42166	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2009	1	8	0	0	9.260419775	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	21413	77225	253598	386804	279160	234313	217371	
	238780	238652	168707	110777	82775	99010	56555	38480	0	
	21413	12158	0	0	0	12249	0	0	15256	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2010	1	8	0	0	10.68509974	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	20661	79020	106240	232673	118288	117886	316567	
	207944	97593	110810	191255	62479	14580	62090	0	22711	0

	14580	0	14580	0	0	0	0	14580	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
2011	1	8	0	0	9.616589767	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	13881	0	45451	95055	204438	227355	208472	
	118040	120428	68027	88143	90627	60054	47411	9869	0	
	33403	36907	46184	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2012	1	8	0	0	8.904249784	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	29922	15009	161369	400458	247182	200887	183315	
	84361	197280	103031	86442	77382	31957	43195	19956	39781	
	11851	40610	19956	20305	20305	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2013	1	8	0	0	6.767229836	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	42825	113195	62476	113528	127750	96177	135950	
	70592	33717	44279	61410	11237	17382	17382	48087	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
2014	1	8	0	0	7.123399827	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	68544	62919	72216	235064	
	138177	171873	205729	78929	0	0	0	38360	25884	0
	0	0	0	28103	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		

AGE COMPOSITION SET-UP

17 #_N_age_bins

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

AGEING ERROR

1 #_N_ageerror_definitions

0.5	1.5	2.5	3.5	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5
	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5
	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5	27.5	28.5	29.5	30.5
0.05	0.15	0.25	0.35	0.45	0.55	0.65	0.75	0.85	0.95	1.05
	1.15	1.25	1.35	1.45	1.55	1.65	1.75	1.85	1.95	2.05
	2.15	2.25	2.35	2.45	2.55	2.65	2.75	2.85	2.95	3.05

AGE COMPOSITION DATA

116 #_N_Agecomp_obs

1 #_Lbin_method: 1=poplenbins; 2=datalenbins; 3=lengths (set to 3 for cond'l age-at-length?)

0 #_combine males into females at or below this bin number

#Yr Seas Flt/Svy Gender Part Ageerr Lbin_lo Lbin_hi Nsamp datavector(female-male)

1985	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	31.12561412	0
	0	65	11844	30828	6121	9692	1240	3914	9713
	2454	2581	1320	343	841	286	892		
1986	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	10.92960496	0
	0	0	15673	20303	18759	3453	7662	704	3197
	10503	1833	1403	2889	1222	1688	3595		
1987	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	26.84881218	0
	0	0	439	30263	58458	13753	2095	2437	656
	5731	2565	1889	761	817	2796			726
1988	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	8.316003773	0
	0	0	1930	20862	54472	41710	12803	1721	2315
	451	5503	2024	1312	801	2589			780
1989	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	71.04243223	0
	0	33394	5411	1223	7659	43911	26891	9002	3076
	2901	1878	2896	8914	1499	1286	3436		
1990	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	31.60081434	0
	0	0	3035	2503	3770	16047	31459	21020	5042
	2186	1463	846	1100	4837	353	2703		
1991	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	68.19123094	0
	0	1533	6933	36938	2381	1283	6576	18064	16248
	7033	589	2617	2321	480	6659	3674		
1992	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	47.99522178	0
	0	0	15982	55550	33557	1183	796	1956	4750
	4762	1230	451	433	139	497	3202		
1993	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	51.7968235	0
	0	0	657	81429	65981	21858	1351	627	1796
	4803	3920	1500	710	735	475	2347		
1994	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	67.0032304	0
	0	2	1328	30970	369416	41472	16079	1130	294
	2282	5842	4387	1596	650	646	3717		
1995	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	27.3240124	0
	0	0	5599	37064	81529	334815	17932	6931	702
	1046	3440	3215	1846	2699	2680			415
1996	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	38.72881757	0
	0	191	11473	43831	31632	64618	173733	8235	3622
	315	454	1881	1688	534	1784			216

1997	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	32.55121477	0
	0	0	2490	8501	64000	45238	39229	145407 8105	
	4456	632	640	294	2689	1712	2235		
1998	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	39.20401779	0
	0	0	1103	44997	49461	69489	25366	15136 41057	
	2671	860	96	96	385	623	811		
1999	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	51.7968235	0
	0	241	82	80414	146338	43841	28582	9612 6192	
	18072	1112	729	40	270	97	830		
2000	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	93.85204258	0
	0	0	9528	2584	151515	72747	11772	11046 4992	
	4636	8323	818	184	14	55	643		
2001	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	67.95363083	0
	0	614	11085	92408	29064	105169	25329	7388 8742	
	5811	8136	7522	804	768	69	759		
2002	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	8.553603881	0
	0	338	11495	43605	240476	16779	67647	16021 7450	
	8022	2682	3842	10166	645	193	568		
2003	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.5904166	0
	0	0	5698	75254	70415	154267	8719	38901 14072	
	4789	3196	2260	1599	3937	937	756		
2004	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	22.33441013	0
	0	0	4406	38270	214112	76652	95133	2733 12227	
	4039	1583	994	802	263	1029	221		
2005	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	18.05760819	0
	0	0	18910	135210	89202	124422	33796	30175 3112	
	7357	1390	1123	363	173	650	842		
2006	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	10.45440474	0
	0	0	20497	141335	144890	54069	56281	17344 24148	
	2207	3475	2277	859	210	188	1433		
2007	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	43.95601994	0
	0	0	955	33606	169272	96625	44423	34061 12877	
	14366	11530	4527	1621	11	254	428		
2008	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	21.14640959	0
	0	0	9338	110875	296983	139083	47617	19838 17332	
	8660	6128	852	793	988	317	824		
2009	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	38.49121746	0
	0	0	2659	73056	169969	172602	64997	19002 14443	
	9064	8631	3610	2235	1302	0	249		
2010	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	17.34480787	0
	0	0	319	77100	155258	118179	78410	28938 11821	
	6979	6043	2645	2083	2273	534	1663		
2011	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	18.53280841	0
	0	0	845	28630	124625	92582	71094	54338 31775	
	10438	11227	6347	2933	2203	675	1692		

2012	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	23.99761089	0
	0	0	1620	14135	166965	219883	61319	39609	31669
	15268	9427	4092	3864	2546	538	930		
2013	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	2.613601186	0
	0	0	0	45016	60547	182858	117821	33448	30222
	22727	17473	11825	2908	2687	2429	2133		
2014	1	1	0	0	1	-1	-1	24.71041121	0
	0	0	6888	33495	118368	66823	131890	88847	41481
	28525	32526	20835	5954	1978	2186	1690		
1985	1	-2	0	0	1	-1	-1	0.795510267	0
	0	0	9225	11491	3441	5902	891	1113	5133
	1176	694	913	46	122	134	936		
1986	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	8.432408826	0
	0	0	577	8939	3343	933	2354	358	758
	5428	960	871	953	573	645	1307		
1987	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	9.546123199	0
	0	0	108	1052	3719	2132	581	477	432
	1578	845	211	167	179	1187			523
1988	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	14.63738891	0
	0	0	33	1751	13389	5067	2398	551	1014
	456	1863	895	715	523	977			209
1989	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	10.50073552	0
	0	22	0	538	8171	36046	1842	371	104
	58	215	1040	115	87	334			208
1990	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	39.61641128	0
	0	0	305	82	185	1284	3456	2407	897
	369	193	242	1261	81	828			357
1991	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	44.70767698	0
	0	0	131	8420	471	177	792	4927	4024
	1842	89	1229	1685	367	4831	2887		
1992	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	56.79943304	0
	0	0	1195	5473	5267	294	269	518	1193
	1633	563	130	195	169	143	1411		
1993	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	66.50465829	0
	0	16	526	11652	11776	7569	590	289	931
	3941	3344	1367	663	703	643	3789		
1994	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	45.6622893	0
	0	0	71	4059	119784	18540	9393	943	173
	1754	5414	5570	1205	639	274	2790		
1995	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.88873736	0
	0	0	486	6943	21979	97509	7380	5313	480
	831	5684	3696	1936	840	4733			699
1996	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	26.41094085	0
	0	0	210	8804	12487	15338	57127	4566	4979
	510	364	2521	1573	1300	2346			127

1997	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	24.97902237	0
	0	59	454	3102	15613	11415	8287	50819	2853
	1635	557	354	243	2195	1065	1570		
1998	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	23.06979773	0
	0	0	3676	8366	10920	22630	10485	6452	28231
	2949	1091	138	196	793	1381	1254		
1999	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	29.27477781	0
	0	479	255	25158	37306	13589	13697	5288	5001
	20522	1669	2038	247	777	315	3314		
2000	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	37.70718664	0
	0	0	421	294	19380	12402	2696	3285	1476
	1248	4697	330	258	16	88	559		
2001	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	65.39094391	0
	0	54	471	7385	1392	17864	7702	2027	3239
	1685	1761	3774	440	301	27	420		
2002	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	78.75551639	0
	0	30	729	2609	14173	2686	17358	7757	2621
	5179	1463	1766	3687	322	101	180		
2003	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	37.54808458	0
	0	0	80	7166	7917	25014	2167	10164	3262
	1473	982	796	681	1704	186	166		
2004	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	24.1835121	0
	0	0	279	1697	13884	8601	17310	2398	6365
	3626	1181	1189	1172	406	2243	143		
2005	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	20.20596077	0
	0	0	621	2669	5059	14699	5529	6985	589
	5697	1845	236	1307	33	189	606		
2006	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	13.84187864	0
	0	0	44	16121	35990	13714	22306	5794	12717
	1644	3135	1258	305	358	1016	734		
2007	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	8.750612933	0
	0	0	22	6611	31578	28396	14511	17834	8499
	10951	5163	3121	5119	85	344	485		
2008	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	15.27379712	0
	0	0	199	5010	27319	42071	21561	12265	12566
	5458	4960	1372	1032	3431	198	992		
2009	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	6.045878026	0
	0	0	315	8415	19843	33661	25695	12017	9320
	5021	5371	4748	811	1075	0	0		
2010	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	8.114204719	0
	0	0	814	7029	45515	54766	39716	15835	5147
	2395	2910	706	522	359	81	277		
2011	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	5.409469813	0
	0	0	8	5209	11538	24667	19293	16668	13032
	4947	6066	2695	1941	2187	522	657		

2012	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	7.955102666	0
	0	0	91	1695	18362	28593	23507	22946	17909
	10199	7725	2994	2672	2158	596	820		
2013	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	14.47828685	0
	0	0	0	1187	6979	35135	32251	18057	14762
	10333	10543	6106	3730	2886	1957	1938		
2014	1	2	0	0	1	-1	-1	6.523184186	0
	0	0	980	4985	26081	20743	39548	28357	15323
	12440	12413	8018	4889	1976	1673	1322		
1996	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	48.5821764	0
	0	0	0	289	796	3892	71666	5583	1648
	334	154	622	485	199	559			21
1998	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	0	245	5979	11845	8553	8135	25138
	2517	345	93	53	119	893	569		
1999	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	0	2983	18409	15106	27147	13818	18060
	43097	4389	1686	324	387	308	2689		
2000	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	15	60	2476	7587	3270	4497	1459
	2830	7077	634	174	39	96	420		
2001	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	0	179	899	19777	20290	7042	5268
	3124	2845	9666	857	636	123	261		
2002	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	3	37	2380	1578	24087	9693	6297
	5978	450	5664	9215	0	0	530		
2003	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	0	2689	10619	39257	7971	40551	10293
	3162	3254	618	169	4043	77	281		
2004	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	7	1254	12502	14372	48109	3199	20694
	8010	353	1797	1141	91	968	18		
2005	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	0	114	2103	15321	14397	17408	1907
	5182	0	1831	99	0	40	599		
2006	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	0	227	567	608	4076	1423	3085
	176	111	0	0	0	53			254
2007	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	0	385	2517	7038	5387	6833	2795
	1900	631	807	12	37	19	121		
2008	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0
	0	0	45	445	1540	3279	1787	1412	1557
	960	30	183	490	0	40			755

2009	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0	
	0	0	0	90	635	2175	2596	843	784	168
	298	173	11	169	0	0				
2010	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0	
	0	0	9	36	1741	5546	8261	6678	4755	403
	3786	152	294	313	551	50				
2011	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0	
	0	0	0	255	4397	10231	13640	15909	13642	
	4424	4233	2773	1688	1003	264	423			
2012	1	3	0	0	1	-1	-1	36.25535552	0	
	0	0	0	391	4461	10776	10016	8757	5789	
	2741	1134	290	433	143	127	226			
2000	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	0	0	9440	222655	273687	139562	79413	47258	
	43924	49293	20207	10767	4925	4927	10901			
2001	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	0	2651	55640	47734	298773	211740	90962	44742	
	21074	39908	36007	17787	4394	6838	8034			
2002	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	0	8114	73892	125531	90294	236147	86108	31151	
	23025	17823	14760	15912	9752	3743	1553			
2003	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	2611	10800	364427	241694	318445	96562	254050	114829	
	57883	26223	19879	14232	18088	6600	4028			
2004	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	3	4	80483	627951	438799	297961	65297	131612	
	77533	25416	14848	14254	13528	7628	5270			
2005	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	0	24195	77794	253455	735235	352182	443765	39104	
	161572	69617	26314	17996	19238	17974	22718			
2006	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	3138	74600	131099	564668	361515	841651	146484	253945	
	13655	132370	84910	22068	6648	6999	16069			
2007	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	0	5307	73224	135809	460583	124606	139879	79978	
	69214	33191	65868	68599	11131	9034	5486			
2008	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	1208	79917	175402	545960	401231	456312	143871	147881	
	40719	57341	17882	35092	12669	5518	6091			
2009	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	315	23355	119979	282754	473020	238022	408951	100487	
	200417	73570	37114	32657	55506	33537	23529			
2010	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0	
	0	717	1962	39409	221063	515711	411737	437222	200328	
	172430	109342	75421	46461	21880	4806	16480			

2011	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0
	0	0	0	6087	172404	252236	312186	303804	314164
	125800	89188	34465	28352	12942	5585	337		
2012	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0
	0	0	406	14357	65157	262593	346334	308183	264012
	214803	83939	50701	24784	8470	3191	1583		
2013	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0
	0	0	60	569	52216	96064	609903	377156	367869
	481247	245982	158757	43008	21825	14812	11520		
2014	1	4	0	0	1	-1	-1	33.61582887	0
	0	0	603	6846	11735	123435	149938	133129	143241
	39242	39476	12679	7347	3067	198	0		
1986	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	12.66472795	0
	0	0.27	4.26	1.31	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1987	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	14.35335834	0
	0	0.05	0.28	2.27	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1989	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	17.73061913	0
	0	6.68	0.37	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1990	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	20.26356472	0
	0	2.81	1.15	0.02	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1991	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	15.19767354	0
	0	3.08	0.21	0.03	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1992	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	29.55103189	0
	0	0.95	18.59	0.16	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1993	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	29.55103189	0
	0	6.65	3.59	4.39	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1994	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	29.55103189	0
	0	3.33	1.84	0.29	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1995	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	30.39534708	0
	0	4.83	4.69	0.72	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1996	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	28.70671669	0
	0	5.52	0.43	0.11	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1997	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	29.55103189	0
	0	33.62	4.52	0.06	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			

1998	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	30.39534708	0
	0	1.22	5.5	0.61	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1999	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	27.86240149	0
	0	19.37	0.67	0.87	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2000	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	30.39534708	0
	0	6.07	11.35	0.03	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2001	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	27.86240149	0
	0	34.42	3.92	1.57	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2002	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	30.39534708	0
	0	7.42	3.87	0.4	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2003	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	29.55103189	0
	0	8.37	4.6	0.59	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2005	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	29.55103189	0
	0	13.12	7.98	0.84	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2006	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	28.70671669	0
	0	9.51	9.21	1.02	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2007	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	28.70671669	0
	0	3.42	1.78	0.3	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2008	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	30.39534708	0
	0	18.52	6.66	0.34	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2009	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	29.55103189	0
	0	13.25	6.25	0.33	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2011	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	29.55103189	0
	0	2.25	1.39	0.42	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2013	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	29.55103189	0
	0	1.34	0.08	0.1	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2014	1	7	0	0	1	-1	-1	28.70671669	0
	0	1.17	1.02	0.11	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0			

```
# MEAN LENGTH OR BODYWEIGHT-AT-AGE
# -----
0      #_N_MeanSize-at-Age_obs
#Yr Seas Flt/Svy Gender Part Ageerr Ignore datavector(female-male)
#      samplesize(female-male)

# -----
# ENVIRONMENTAL DATA
# -----
0      #_N_environ_variables
0      #_N_environ_obs

# -----
# GENERALIZED SIZE COMPOSTION DATA
# -----
0      # N WtFreq methods

# -----
# TAG-RECAPTURE
# -----
0      # Do_Tags (0=omit, 1=enter conditional data per manual)

# -----
# STOCK COMPOSITION
# -----
0      # no morphcomp data

999    # end of data file marker
```

Appendix 3

Content of Stock Synthesis Starter file (Starter.SS) selected as the final accepted assessment model at IBP-Bass 2 2016.

```
# SS3 V3.24f    # Bass-47 IBPBass2 final proposed assessment
Bass47.dat
Bass47.ctf
0 # 0=use init values in control file; 1=use ss3.par
1 # run display detail (0,1,2)
1 # detailed age-structured reports in REPORT.SSO (0,1)
0 # write detailed checkup.sso file (0,1)
4 # write parm values to ParmTrace.sso (0=no,1=good,active; 2=good,all;
3=every_iter,all_parms; 4=every,active)
1 # write to cumreport.sso (0=no,1=like&timeseries; 2=add survey fits)
1 # Include prior_like for non-estimated parameters (0,1)
1 # Use Soft Boundaries to aid convergence (0,1) (recommended)
2 # Number of bootstrap datafiles to produce
8 # Turn off estimation for parameters entering after this phase
10 # MCMC burn interval
2 # MCMC thin interval
0 # jitter initial parm value by this fraction
-1 # min yr for sdreport outputs (-1 for styr)
-1 # max yr for sdreport outputs (-1 for endyr; -2 for endyr+Nforecastyrs)
0 # N individual STD years
#vector of year values
0.0001 #0.0001 # final convergence criteria (e.g. 1.0e-04)
0 # retrospective year relative to end year (e.g. -4)
0 # min age for calc of summary biomass
2 # Depletion basis: denom is: 0=skip; 1=rel X*B0; 2=rel X*Bmsy; 3=rel X*B_styr
0.4 # Fraction (X) for Depletion denominator (e.g. 0.4)
2 # SPR_report_basis: 0=skip; 1=(1-SPR)/(1-SPR_tgt); 2=(1-SPR)/(1-SPR_MS); 3=(1-
SPR)/(1-SPR_Btarget); 4=rawSPR
2 # F_report_units: 0=skip; 1=exploitation(Bio); 2=exploitation(Num); 3=sum(Frates)
#COND 3 10 #_min and max age over which average F will be calculated with F_re-
porting=4
0 # F_report_basis: 0=raw; 1=F/Fspr; 2=F/Fmsy ; 3=F/Fbtgt
999 # check value for end of file
```

Appendix 4

Content of Stock Synthesis Forecast file (Forecast.SS) selected as the final accepted assessment model at IBP-Bass 2 2016. This is not used for creating forecasts yet, but has to be available.

```
#V3.24f

# for all year entries except rebuild; enter either: actual year, -999 for styr, 0 for endyr,
neg number for rel. endyr

1 # Benchmarks: 0=skip; 1=calc F_spr,F_btgt,F_msy
1 # MSY: 1= set to F(SPR); 2=calc F(MSY); 3=set to F(Btgt); 4=set to F(endyr)
0.4 # SPR target (e.g. 0.40)
0.4 # Biomass target (e.g. 0.40)

#_Bmark_years: beg_bio, end_bio, beg_selex, end_selex, beg_relF, end_relF (enter ac-
tual year, or values of 0 or -integer to be rel. endyr)

0 0 0 0 0

# 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 # after processing

1 #Bmark_relF_Basis: 1 = use year range; 2 = set relF same as forecast below
#

0 # Forecast: 0=none; 1=F(SPR); 2=F(MSY) 3=F(Btgt); 4=Ave F (uses first-last relF yrs);
5=input annual F scalar

3 # N forecast years

1 # F scalar (only used for Do_Forecast==5)

#_Fcast_years: beg_selex, end_selex, beg_relF, end_relF (enter actual year, or values
of 0 or -integer to be rel. endyr)

0 0 0 0

# 1180696575 1667592815 7631713 0 # after processing

1 # Control rule method (1=catch=f(SSB) west coast; 2=F=f(SSB) )
0.4 # Control rule Biomass level for constant F (as frac of Bzero, e.g. 0.40); (Must be >
the no F level below)
0.1 # Control rule Biomass level for no F (as frac of Bzero, e.g. 0.10)
0.75 # Control rule target as fraction of Flimit (e.g. 0.75)

3 #_N forecast loops (1=OFL only; 2=ABC; 3=get F from forecast ABC catch with allo-
cations applied)

3 #_First forecast loop with stochastic recruitment

0 #_Forecast loop control #3 (reserved for future bells&whistles)
0 #_Forecast loop control #4 (reserved for future bells&whistles)
0 #_Forecast loop control #5 (reserved for future bells&whistles)

2011 #FirstYear for caps and allocations (should be after years with fixed inputs)
```

```

0 # stddev of log(realized catch/target catch) in forecast (set value>0.0 to cause active
impl_error)
0 # Do West Coast gfish rebuilder output (0/1)
-1 # Rebuilder: first year catch could have been set to zero (Ydecl)(-1 to set to 1999)
-1 # Rebuilder: year for current age structure (Yinit) (-1 to set to endyear+1)
1 # fleet relative F: 1=use first-last alloc year; 2=read seas(row) x fleet(col) below
# Note that fleet allocation is used directly as average F if Do_Forecast=4
0 # basis for fcast catch tuning and for fcast catch caps and allocation (2=deadbio; 3=re-
tainbio; 5=deadnum; 6=retainnum)
# Conditional input if relative F choice = 2
# Fleet relative F: rows are seasons, columns are fleets
#_Fleet:
# 0 0 0 0
# 0 0 0 0
# 0 0 0 0
# 0 0 0 0
# max totalcatch by fleet (-1 to have no max) must enter value for each fleet
-1
# max totalcatch by area (-1 to have no max); must enter value for each fleet
-1
# fleet assignment to allocation group (enter group ID# for each fleet, 0 for not included
in an alloc group)
0
#_Conditional on >1 allocation group
# allocation fraction for each of: 0 allocation groups
# no allocation groups
0 # Number of forecast catch levels to input (else calc catch from forecast F)
2 # basis for input Fcast catch: 2=dead catch; 3=retained catch; 99=input Hrate(F) (units
are from fleetunits; note new codes in SSV3.20)
# Input fixed catch values
#Year Seas Fleet Catch(or_F)

#
999 # verify end of input

```