

Tope (*Galeorhinus galeus*) in subareas 1–10, 12, and 14 (Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES advises that when the precautionary approach is applied, landings should be no more than 301 tonnes in each of the years 2022 and 2023. ICES cannot quantify the corresponding catches.

Stock development over time

ICES cannot assess the stock and exploitation status relative to maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and precautionary approach (PA) reference points, because information to define reference points is not available.

Landings

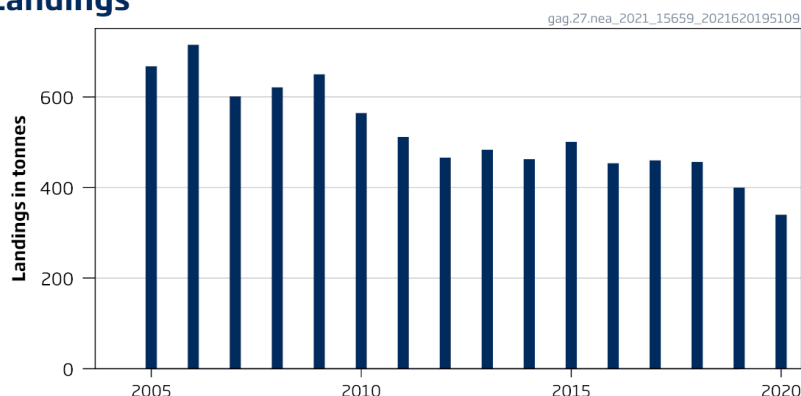


Figure 1 Tope in subareas 1–10, 12, and 14. Summary of the stock assessment. ICES estimates of species-specific landings (tonnes) since 2005, considered to be minimum estimates based on reported landings (landings data before 2005 are incomplete and not shown). Available catch data from FAO areas 34 and 37 are included.

Catch scenarios

ICES framework for category 5 stocks was applied (ICES, 2012). For stocks without information on abundance or exploitation, ICES considers that a precautionary reduction of catches should be implemented where there is no ancillary information clearly indicating that the current level of exploitation is appropriate for the stock. The precautionary buffer was last applied in 2019; therefore, the buffer has not been applied in 2021.

Discarding is known to take place, but ICES cannot quantify the corresponding dead catch. Discard survival, which is likely to occur, has also not been estimated.

Table 1 Tope in subareas 1–10, 12, and 14. The basis for the catch scenarios.

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Advised landings for 2020–2021 (issued in 2019) | 301 tonnes |
| Discard rate | Unknown |
| Precautionary buffer | Not applied |
| Landings advice for 2022–2023 * | 301 tonnes |
| % Advice change** | 0% |

* Landings advice for 2022–2023 = advised landings 2020–2021.

** Advice value for 2022 and 2023 relative to advice value for 2021.

Basis of the advice

Table 2 Tope in subareas 1–10, 12 and 14. The basis of the advice.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Advice basis | Precautionary approach |
| Management plan | ICES is not aware of any agreed precautionary management plan for tope in this area |

Quality of the assessment

Landings data are uncertain. National landings for tope may include an unknown proportion of other aggregated landing categories (e.g. “dogfish and hounds”) and may also include cases of misidentification/misreporting of other species (e.g. smooth-hounds). Species-specific landings for the Mediterranean and Northwest Africa, which are considered to be part of the distribution area for the biological stock, are incomplete.

The current trawl surveys are not indicative of stock trends (ICES, 2021a) and therefore are not included in the assessment.

Issues relevant for the advice

The Northeast Atlantic tope stock is distributed mainly in ICES subareas 4 to 10 and extends into the Mediterranean Sea and off Northwest Africa (CECAF area; FAO areas 34 and 37).

The low productivity and aggregating nature of this species makes it particularly vulnerable to overexploitation.

Since 2015, tope has been listed as a prohibited species on EU fishing regulations (EU [2015], applicable to longline only and not applicable to subareas 9 and 10). Since 2008, UK vessels have not been allowed to land more than 45 kg of tope per day, with no landings allowed by hook and line gears (The Tope (Prohibition of Fishing) Order 2008).

This species is taken by recreational fishers and, although often released, post-release survival is unquantified. No landings are allowed in UK recreational fisheries.

Reference points

No reference points are defined for this stock.

Basis of the assessment

Table 3 Tope in subareas 1–10, 12, and 14. Basis of the assessment and advice.

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ICES stock data category | 5 (ICES, 2021b) |
| Assessment type | No assessment (ICES, 2021a) |
| Input data | Landings |
| Discards and bycatch | Unknown |
| Indicators | None |
| Other information | None |
| Working group | Working Group on Elasmobranch Fishes (WGEF) |

History of advice, catch, and management

Table 4 Tope in subareas 1–10, 12, and 14. History of ICES advice, the agreed TAC, and ICES species-specific estimates of landings. All weights are in tonnes.

| Year | ICES advice | Predicted landings corresponding to advice | TAC * | ICES species-specific estimated landings |
|------|--|--|-----------|--|
| 2005 | No advice | - | No TAC | 668 |
| 2006 | No advice | - | No TAC | 715 |
| 2007 | No advice | - | No TAC | 601 |
| 2008 | No advice | - | No TAC | 621 |
| 2009 | No advice | - | No TAC | 650 |
| 2010 | No advice | - | No TAC | 564 |
| 2011 | No advice | - | No TAC | 511 |
| 2012 | No advice | - | No TAC | 466 |
| 2013 | Reduce catch by 20% | - | No TAC | 483 |
| 2014 | No new advice, same catch value as for 2013 | - | No TAC | 462 |
| 2015 | No new advice, same catch value as for 2013 | - | No TAC | 501 |
| 2016 | Precautionary approach | 283 | No TAC | 454 |
| 2017 | Biennial | 283 | No TAC | 460 ^^ |
| 2018 | Precautionary approach | ≤ 376 ^ | No TAC | 457 ^^ |
| 2019 | Precautionary approach (same advice as for 2018) | ≤ 376 ^ | No TAC | 400 |
| 2020 | Precautionary approach | ≤ 301 | No TAC | 340 |
| 2021 | Same advice as for 2020 | ≤ 301 | No TAC ** | |
| 2022 | Precautionary approach | ≤ 301 | No TAC | |
| 2023 | Precautionary approach | ≤ 301 | No TAC | |

* Between 2010 and 2014 catches of tope caught by longline were included in the zero TAC for spurdog. Since 2015 tope is on the EU list of prohibited species, which prohibits the longline fishery for tope in EU waters of Division 2.a and Subarea 4, as well as in EU and international waters of subareas 1, 5–8, 12, and 14 (EU, 2015).

** In 2021, tope was prohibited when taken with longlines in United Kingdom waters and EU waters of ICES Division 2.a and Subarea 4 and in United Kingdom and Union waters of ICES sub-areas 5, 6, 7 and 8.

^ The revision of the landings statistics for 2012–2014 (ICES, 2016) led to an increase in advised landings.

^^ Landings for 2017–2018 revised in 2021 (ICES, 2021a).

History of catch and landings

The distribution of this species may extend into the NEAFC Regulatory Area, but the main component of the stock occurs in shelf seas. Catches from the NEAFC Regulatory Area are not quantified but are assumed negligible.

This is a bycatch species in longline, gillnet, and trawl fisheries.

Table 5 Tope in subareas 1–10, 12 and 14. Catch distribution by fleet in 2020 as estimated by ICES.

| Catch (2020) | Landings | | | | Discards |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------|----------|--------|----------|
| | Otter trawl | Hooks and lines | Gillnets | Others | |
| Unknown | 58% | 17%* | 16% | 9% | Unknown |
| 340 tonnes | | | | | |

* Landings by hooks and lines were from subareas 9 and 10, with these gears accounting for 52% of tope landings from these areas.

Table 6 Tope in subareas 1–10, 12, and 14. History of landings. ICES species-specific estimates of landings by country. All weights are in tonnes. Blank cell = no data reported; 0 = a value ≤ 0.5 tonnes.

| Year | Belgium | Denmark | Germany | Spain | France | UK | Ireland | Netherlands | Norway | Portugal | Sweden | Total landings * |
|------|---------|---------|---------|-------|--------|----|---------|-------------|--------|----------|--------|------------------|
| 2005 | | 7 | | 182 | 348 | 81 | 6 | | | 45 | 0 | 668 |
| 2006 | | 6 | | 182 | 383 | 92 | 7 | | | 45 | 0 | 715 |
| 2007 | | 2 | | 203 | 302 | 49 | 3 | | | 43 | 0 | 601 |
| 2008 | | 3 | | 163 | 365 | 41 | 2 | | | 47 | 0 | 621 |
| 2009 | | 2 | | 234 | 354 | 23 | 3 | | | 34 | | 650 |
| 2010 | | 2 | | 179 | 320 | 17 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 41 | | 564 |
| 2011 | | 3 | | 138 | 291 | 17 | 1 | 18 | 0 | 44 | | 511 |
| 2012 | | 1 | | 94 | 283 | 16 | 0 | 25 | | 47 | | 466 |
| 2013 | | | | 100 | 309 | 17 | | 11 | 0 | 46 | | 483 |
| 2014 | | 3 | | 101 | 261 | 20 | | 11 | | 65 | | 462 |
| 2015 | | 1 | | 56 | 350 | 17 | | 6 | 0 | 71 | | 501 |
| 2016 | 0 | 1 | | 37 | 303 | 20 | | 8 | | 85 | | 454 |
| 2017 | 0 | 2 ^ | 0 | 41 | 313 | 14 | | 19 | | 71^ | | 460 |
| 2018 | 0 | 2 ^ | | 31 | 356 | 13 | | 12 | 0 | 44^ | | 457 |
| 2019 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 33 | 320 | 16 | | 0 | 0 | 30 | | 400 |
| 2020 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 44 | 258 | 14 | | 0 | 0 | 23 | | 340 |

* Landings include those reported to ICES from FAO Areas 34 and 37, which are incomplete and not based on all nations fishing in those areas.

^ Landings for 2017–2018 revised in 2021 (ICES, 2021a).

Summary of the assessment

There are no assessments for tope in this area.

Sources and references

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ICES. 2016. Report of the Workshop to compile and refine catch and landings of elasmobranchs (WKSHARK2), 19–22 January 2016, Lisbon, Portugal. ICES CM 2016/ACOM:40. 69 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5590>.

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Tope (Prohibition of Fishing) Order 2008 (SI 2008/691). Accessed: 01 January 2019 at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/691/contents/made>.

[Download the stock assessment data and figures.](#)

Recommended citation: ICES. 2021. Tope (*Galeorhinus galeus*) in subareas 1-10, 12 and 14 (the Northeast Atlantic and adjacent waters). In Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2021. ICES Advice 2021, gag.27.nea. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.7754>.