

Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k (Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, and Southwest of Ireland)

ICES advice on fishing opportunities

ICES advises that when the MSY approach and precautionary considerations are applied, there should be zero catch in 2024.

ICES advice on conservation aspects

Activities that have a negative impact on the spawning habitat of herring are considered a source of risk for the species. For the time being, ICES has not identified any further conservation actions.

Stock development over time

Fishing pressure on the stock is below F_{MSY} , and spawning-stock size is below MSY $B_{trigger}$, B_{pa} , and B_{lim} .

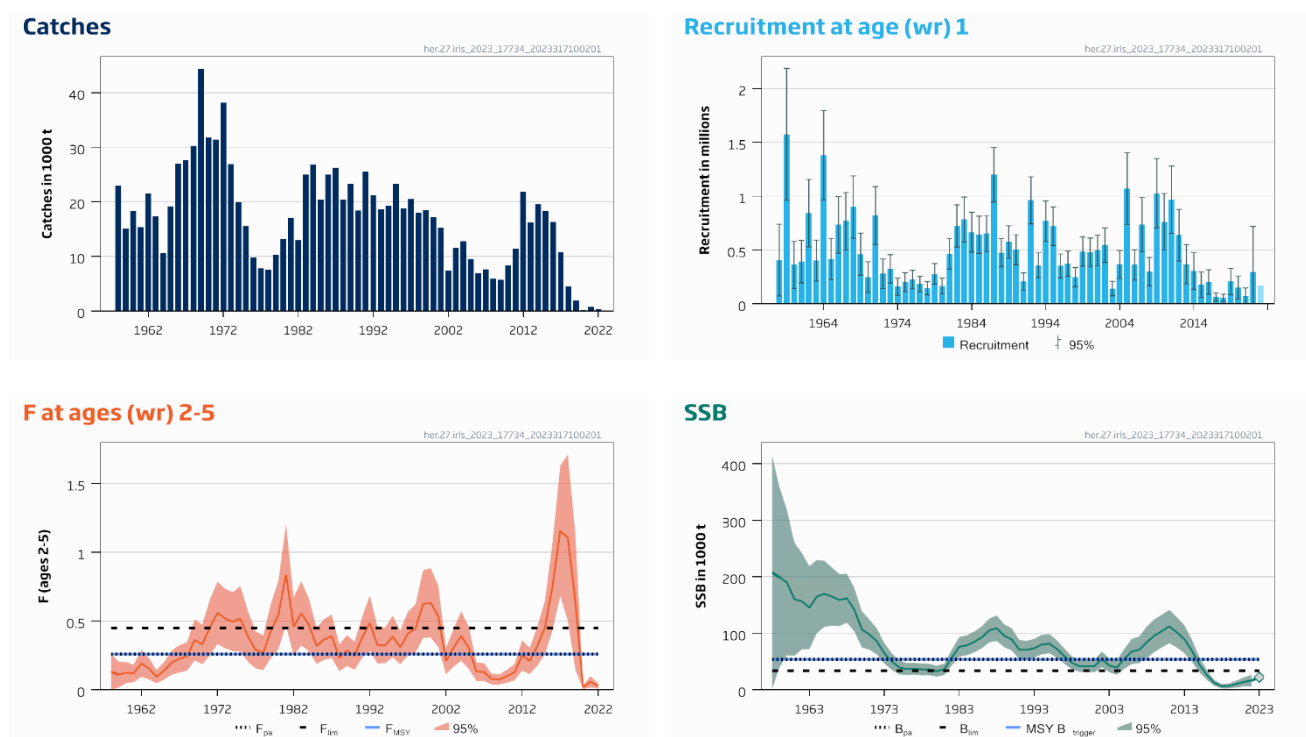


Figure 1 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k. Summary of the stock assessment. The assumed recruitment is in a lighter shade, and the forecast spawning-stock biomass (SSB) value is indicated with a grey diamond. Wr is winter ring.

Conservation status

ICES is not aware of any information on stock/species-specific conservation status.

Catch scenarios

Table 1 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k. Assumptions made for the interim year and in the forecast.

Variable	Value	Notes
$F_{ages(wr)2-5}$ (2023)	0.048	The F that corresponds to the monitoring TAC

Variable	Value	Notes
$R_{age(wr)1}$ (2023–2024)	171915	Stock–recruitment relationship based on the SSB_{2021} from the assessment output; in thousands
SSB (2023)	22149	Short-term forecast; in tonnes
Total catch (2023)	869	Monitoring TAC; in tonnes

Table 2 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k. Annual catch scenarios. Weights are in tonnes.

Basis	Total catch (2024)	F_{2-5} (2024)	SSB* (2024)	% SSB change**	SSB* (2025)#	% TAC change***	% advice change^
ICES advice basis							
MSY approach: zero catch	0	0	23998	8.4	25850	-100	
Other scenarios							
F_{MSY}	4927	0.26	21454	-3.1	19677	467	
$F_{MSY} \times SSB_{2023} / MSY B_{trigger}$	2171	0.11	22911	3.4	23035	150	
$F = 0$	0	0	23998	8.4	25850	-100	
F_{pa}	4927	0.26	21454	-3.1	19677	467	
F_{lim}	7858	0.45	19791	-10.6	16382	804	
$SSB_{2024} = B_{lim}^{^^}$							
$SSB_{2024} = B_{pa}^{^^}$							
$SSB_{2024} = MSY B_{trigger}^{^^}$							
$F = F_{2023}$	1000	0.048	23504	6.1	24535	15.1	
TAC = monitoring TAC	869	0.042	23569	6.4	24728	0	

* For this autumn- and winter-spawning stock, the SSB is determined at spawning time (October) and is influenced by fisheries between 1 April and spawning.

** SSB 2024 relative to SSB 2023.

*** Total catch in 2024 relative to the advised monitoring TAC in 2023 (869 tonnes).

^ This is not provided because catch advice for 2023 is zero.

^^ These catch scenarios are left blank because the stated SSB cannot be achieved, even with $F = 0$.

Assuming the same catch scenario in 2025 as in 2024.

There are no catch scenarios that will rebuild the stock above B_{lim} by 2025, and the ICES advice for zero catch is the same as last year.

Basis of the advice

Table 3 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k. The basis of the advice.

Advice basis	MSY approach
Management plan	ICES is not aware of any agreed precautionary management plan for herring in this area

Quality of the assessment

SSB is consistently overestimated, and fishing mortality had been underestimated until the current year; however, this bias does not impact the outcome of the advice.

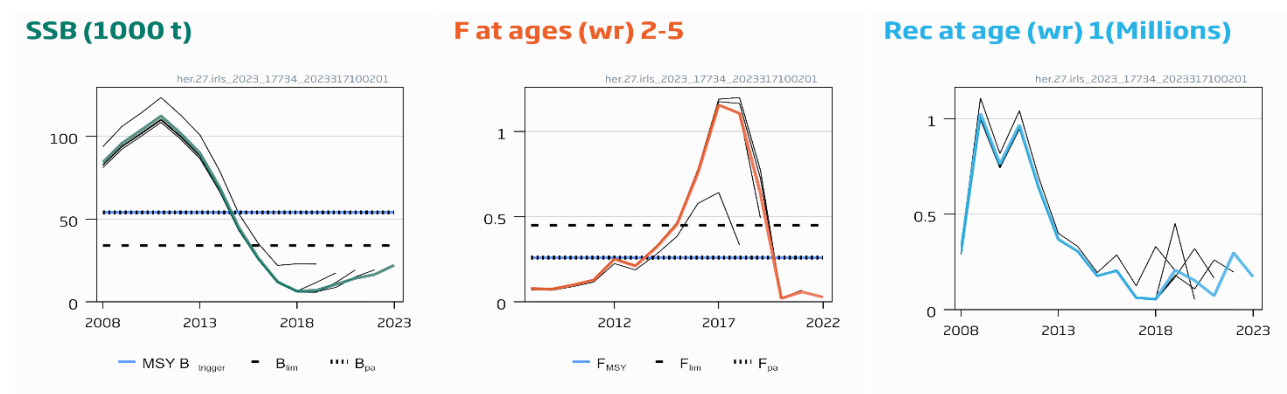


Figure 2 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g-h, and 7.j-k. Historical assessment results. Final-year recruitment and SSB estimates included. *Wr* is winter ring.

Issues relevant for the advice

Recruitment estimates are uncertain because of a lack of recruitment indices. It is known that Celtic Sea herring and adjacent populations mix with the Irish Sea stock, but the level of mixing is unknown. Recent genetic analyses of the 2021 and 2022 Irish Sea Acoustic Survey samples indicated mixing of populations primarily in the area to the west of the Isle of Man. This included immature and mature individuals. The consequences of this mixing need to be further evaluated for management and advice.

There has been an increase in marine anthropogenic activity. Activities that have a negative impact on the spawning habitat of herring – such as the dumping of dredge spoil, the extraction of marine aggregates (e.g. gravel and sand), and the erection of structures such as wind turbines in the vicinity of spawning grounds – are a cause for concern (see e.g. de Groot, 1979, 1996; ICES, 2003, 2015a), as a gravel substratum is an essential habitat for herring spawning in autumn (Frost and Diele, 2022). Activities that have a negative impact on the spawning of herring should not occur unless the effects of these activities have been assessed and shown not to be detrimental to the productivity of the stock (ICES, 2003, 2015a).

Reference points

Table 4 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g-h, and 7.j-k. Reference points, values, and their technical basis. Weights are in tonnes.

Framework	Reference point	Value	Technical basis	Source
MSY approach	MSY $B_{trigger}$	54000	B_{pa}	ICES (2018b)
	F_{MSY}	0.26	Stochastic simulations using a segmented regression stock-recruitment relationship from 1970–2014	ICES (2018b)
Precautionary approach	B_{lim}	34000	B_{loss} = the lowest observed SSB (1980)	ICES (2018b)
	B_{pa}	54000	$B_{pa} = B_{lim} \times \exp(1.645 \times \sigma_B)$, with $\sigma_B = 0.29$ from assessment uncertainty in the terminal year	ICES (2018b)
	F_{lim}	0.45	Equilibrium F maintaining SSB > B_{lim} with 50% probability	ICES (2018b)
	F_{pa}	0.26	The F that provides a 95% probability for SSB to be above B_{lim} (F_{P05} with advice rule [AR])	ICES (2018b)
Management Plan	SSB _{mgt}	Not defined		
	F_{mgt}	Not defined		

Basis of the assessment

Table 5 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k. Basis of the assessment and advice.

ICES stock data category	1 (ICES, 2023a)
Assessment type	Age-based analytical assessment (ASAP; ICES, 2023b) that uses catches in the model and in the forecast
Input data	Commercial catches (weights, ages, and length frequencies from catch sampling); Acoustic survey index (CSHAS [A4057], excluding 2017); annual weights-at-age in the stock; fixed maturity ogive; natural mortality assumed constant
Discards and bycatch	Included in the assessment
Indicators	None
Other information	Benchmarked in WKWEST (ICES, 2015b) and inter-benchmarked in 2018 (ICES, 2018). Assessed on a seasonal basis, 1 April–31 March, to allow for the inclusion of the spawning cycle in the assessment period. This is an autumn-/winter-spawning stock. Age is given in winter rings (wr), so e.g. a 2-year-old fish is termed “1-winter ring”, as fish do not lay down a ring in their first winter.
Working group	Herring Assessment Working Group for the Area South of 62°N (HAWG)

History of the advice, catch, and management

Table 6 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k. ICES advice, agreed TAC, ICES landings, and ICES estimated catch. Weights are in tonnes and by calendar year.

Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC	ICES landings	Discards	ICES estimated catch
1988	TAC	13000	18000	16800	2400	19200
1989	TAC	20000	20000	19200	3500	22700
1990	TAC	15000	17500	17700	2500	20200
1991	TAC (TAC excluding discards)	15000 (12500)	21000	21700	1900	23600
1992	TAC	27000	21000	20900	2100	23000
1993	Precautionary TAC (including discards)	20000–24000	21000	19200	1900	21100
1994	Precautionary TAC (including discards)	20000–24000	21000	17400	1700	19100
1995	No specific advice		21000	18300	700	19000
1996	TAC	9800	16500–21000**	18800	3000	21800
1997	If required, precautionary TAC	< 25000	22000	18100	700	18800
1998	Catches below 25	< 25000	22000	20300	0	20300
1999	F = 0.4	19000	21000	18100	0	18100
2000	F < 0.3	20000	21000	18267	0	18267
2001	F < 0.34	17900	20000	17729	0	17729
2002	F < 0.35	11000	11000	10550	0	10550
2003	Substantially less than recent catches		13000	10875	0	10875
2004	60% of average catch 1997–2000	11000	13000	11065	0	11065
2005	60% of average catch 1997–2000	11000	13000	8452	0	8452
2006	Further reduction 60% average catch 2002–2004	6700	11000	8530	0	8530
2007	No fishing without rebuilding plan		9400	8268	0	8268
2008	No targeted fishing without rebuilding plan		7900	6853	0	6853
2009	No targeted fishing without rebuilding plan		5900	5760	0	5760
2010	F _{mgt} = 0.19	10150	10150	8406	0	8406
2011	See scenarios		13200	11503	0	11503
2012	MSY approach	< 26900	21100	21604	161	21765
2013	MSY approach	< 18500	17200	16067	118	16185
2014	MSY approach	< 35942	22300	18930	644	19574
2015	MSY approach	< 15140	15700*	17579	247	17826
2016	MSY approach	< 23164	15400*	16659	182	16841
2017	MSY approach	< 16145	14500*	11194	130	11324
2018	MSY approach	≤ 5445	10100*	4589	0	4589

Year	ICES advice	Catch corresponding to advice	Agreed TAC	ICES landings	Discards	ICES estimated catch
2019	MSY approach	≤ 4742	4742	1841	0	1841
2020	MSY approach	0	869 [^]	132	0	132
2021	MSY approach	0	869 [^]	609	0	609
2022	MSY approach and precautionary considerations	0	869 [^]	483	0	483
2023	MSY approach and precautionary considerations	0	869 [^]			
2024	MSY approach and precautionary considerations	0				

* Initial TAC before carry-over of unused quota from previous year.

** Revised in 1996 after the ACFM May meeting.

[^] Monitoring TAC.

History of the catch and landings

Table 7 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k. Catch distribution by fleet in 2022/2023 (1 April 2022–31 March 2023) as estimated by ICES.

Catch	Landings	Discards
350 tonnes	Pelagic trawlers 100%	Negligible
	350 tonnes	

Table 8 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k. ICES estimates of landings by country and ICES estimates of total annual unallocated/misreported, discards, and catch by assessment year (1 April–31 March). Weights are in tonnes.

Year	Denmark	France	Germany	Ireland	Netherlands	UK	Unallocated/misreported	Discards	Total
1988/1989	-	-	-	17000	-	-	-	3400	20400
1989/1990	-	+	-	15000	1900	-	2600	3600	23100
1990/1991	-	+	-	15000	1000	200	700	1700	18600
1991/1992	-	500	100	21400	1600	-	-100	2100	25600
1992/1993	-	-	-	18000	1300	-	-100	2000	21200
1993/1994	-	-	-	16600	1300	+	-1100	1800	18600
1994/1995	-	+	200	17400	1300	+	-1500	1900	19300
1995/1996	-	200	200	20000	100	+	-200	3000	23300
1996/1997	-	1000	-	17900	1000	-	-1800	750	18850
1997/1998	-	1300	-	19900	1400	-	-2100	-	20500
1998/1999	-	+	-	17700	1200	-	-700	-	18200
1999/2000	-	-	200	18300	1300	+	-1300	-	18500
2000/2001	-	573	228	16962	44	1	-617	-	17191
2001/2002	-	-	-	15236	-	-	-	-	15236
2002/2003	-	734	-	7465	257	-	-991	-	7465
2003/2004	-	800	-	11536	610	14	-1424	-	11536
2004/2005	-	801	41	12702	-	-	-801	-	12743
2005/2006	-	821	150	9494	799	-	-1770	-	9494
2006/2007	-	-	-	6944	518	5	-523	-	6944
2007/2008	-	379	248	7636	327	-	-954	-	7636
2008/2009	-	503	191	5872	150	-	-844	-	5872
2009/2010	-	364	135	5745	-	-	-499	-	5745
2010/2011	-	636	278	8370	325	-	-1239	n/a	8370
2011/2012	-	241	-	11470	7	-	-248	n/a	11470
2012/2013	-	3	230	16132	3135	-	2104	161	21765
2013/2014	-	-	450	14785	832	-	-	118	16185
2014/2015	-	244	578	17287	821	-	-	644	19574
2015/2016	-	-	477	16320	1304	+	-	254	18355
2016/2017	-	-	419	14585	1025	559	-451	182	16319
2017/2018	-	-	298	9627	648	64	-	130	10767

Year	Denmark	France	Germany	Ireland	Netherlands	UK	Unallocated/misreported	Discards	Total
2018/2019	-	-	-	4227	436	-	-245	-	4418
2019/2020	-	-	-	1803	38	-	-	-	1841
2020/2021	1	-	-	132	+	-	-	-	133
2021/2022	-	-	-	745	-	-	-	-	745
2022/2023	-	-	-	350	-	-	-	-	350

+ Designates catch of less than 0.5 tonnes.

Summary of the assessment

Table 9 Herring in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k. Assessment summary. Weights are in tonnes and recruitment is in thousands. High and Low refer to 95% confidence intervals.

Year [^]	Recruitment-at-age (wr) 1	High	Low	SSB**	High	Low	Total catch [^]	F at ages (wr) 2–5	High	Low
1958	407026	740563	73497	208079	416644	0	22978	0.130	0.27	0.00
1959	1575120	2187522	962678	199297	359514	39086	15086	0.111	0.21	0.0168
1960	361935	580382	143498	190175	319093	61267	18283	0.125	0.20	0.048
1961	392846	591535	194165	160525	260917	60143	15372	0.119	0.183	0.056
1962	842972	1156100	529840	156984	242264	71696	21552	0.193	0.29	0.094
1963	402358	592370	212350	145418	219000	71840	17349	0.154	0.23	0.076
1964	1380460	1795902	965098	165209	230119	100301	10599	0.096	0.145	0.048
1965	415829	608649	223011	169938	228517	111363	19126	0.140	0.20	0.075
1966	734437	997531	471349	165132	216758	113502	27030	0.199	0.29	0.110
1967	767627	1034504	500756	158940	205174	112706	27658	0.23	0.33	0.126
1968	898891	1189009	608771	162169	205447	118893	30236	0.24	0.35	0.138
1969	461580	656006	267154	141818	180242	103398	44389	0.36	0.51	0.21
1970	248305	390939	105681	107013	139176	74844	31727	0.33	0.48	0.187
1971	821055	1089933	552187	97902	124827	70977	31396	0.45	0.66	0.25
1972	279093	417197	140983	85840	109033	62647	38203	0.56	0.79	0.33
1973	325107	456281	193939	64539	82615	46463	26936	0.52	0.74	0.30
1974	160135	240682	79598	50036	64897	35175	19940	0.50	0.71	0.28
1975	201789	289304	114276	39602	51892	27312	15588	0.52	0.75	0.28
1976	225842	312078	139602	36763	47560	25966	9771	0.39	0.57	0.20
1977	184486	255844	113136	37358	47950	26768	7833	0.29	0.43	0.155
1978	145377	206365	84395	36104	46642	25566	7559	0.27	0.39	0.142
1979	278252	373914	182586	35958	46049	25867	10321	0.43	0.62	0.23
1980	166205	240567	91853	32945	42743	23145	13130	0.55	0.79	0.30
1981	464491	605332	323648	36455	46565	26345	17103	0.84	1.21	0.47
1982	723789	919927	527653	57365	71390	43340	13000	0.46	0.67	0.25
1983	784109	992517	575703	76306	93691	58921	24981	0.56	0.79	0.32
1984	665672	850868	480472	78917	96594	61240	26779	0.47	0.67	0.28
1985	641875	814462	469298	84997	103421	66573	20426	0.32	0.45	0.188
1986	653472	820456	486484	92974	112547	73401	25024	0.37	0.51	0.22
1987	1199270	1452610	945990	105361	126593	84127	26200	0.39	0.55	0.23
1988	475158	605426	344894	108867	131682	86058	20447	0.23	0.33	0.136
1989	575256	725643	424877	95607	115960	75254	23254	0.29	0.40	0.173
1990	503026	642551	363509	89137	108948	69324	18404	0.25	0.35	0.146
1991	207218	287590	126850	70979	88103	53855	25562	0.38	0.53	0.23
1992	961732	1181054	742406	70891	86759	55023	21127	0.48	0.69	0.28
1993	359515	475444	243596	73574	90376	56772	18618	0.33	0.46	0.191
1994	768209	956307	580113	80334	97693	62975	19300	0.32	0.45	0.192
1995	721691	900838	542542	81841	98825	64857	23305	0.39	0.54	0.24
1996	352152	463307	240993	72377	88079	56675	18816	0.31	0.43	0.186
1997	372720	488942	256498	59849	73299	46399	20496	0.41	0.57	0.25
1998	248764	338254	159266	47968	59640	36296	18041	0.45	0.62	0.27
1999	486727	622258	351202	42001	52240	31762	18485	0.62	0.87	0.38
2000	478254	611761	344739	42115	52632	31598	17191	0.63	0.88	0.38
2001	496519	638610	354430	41853	52907	30799	15269	0.53	0.76	0.31

Year [^]	Recruitment-at-age (wr) 1	High	Low	SSB ^{**}	High	Low	Total catch [^]	F at ages (wr) 2–5	High	Low
2002	545855	706188	385532	54179	68140	40218	7465	0.21	0.31	0.113
2003	142195	210073	74327	43177	55336	31018	11536	0.31	0.44	0.168
2004	365937	495308	236572	39450	52127	26773	12743	0.39	0.57	0.21
2005	1071370	1404737	738063	55138	72906	37370	9494	0.31	0.46	0.151
2006	361670	502684	220656	68041	90460	45624	6944	0.132	0.200	0.064
2007	735976	987977	483983	70940	94591	47289	7636	0.130	0.195	0.065
2008	299693	430947	168433	84178	112210	56146	5872	0.078	0.118	0.039
2009	1027200	1348875	705525	95875	125055	66695	5745	0.075	0.112	0.038
2010	762359	1025118	499602	103921	132989	74851	8370	0.099	0.147	0.052
2011	967730	1279860	655600	112227	141844	82616	11470	0.128	0.187	0.068
2012	638149	877780	398520	101864	128814	74906	21820	0.25	0.36	0.139
2013	368570	550482	186658	89799	114716	64882	16247	0.21	0.31	0.114
2014	305090	475096	135084	69469	89296	49642	19574	0.32	0.46	0.176
2015	177058	297247	56873	44896	58554	31238	18355	0.45	0.65	0.26
2016	202804	316413	89187	26533	35321	17745	16318	0.76	1.08	0.43
2017	62180	101411	22949	12127	17491	6763	10767	1.16	1.63	0.68
2018	55467	90354	20578	6474	10436	2511	4418	1.11	1.71	0.50
2019	206633	329234	84026	7024	11454	2595	1841	0.64	1.13	0.142
2020	152616	258838	46382	10563	16814	4312	132	0.020	0.034	0.0055
2021	72139	148585	0	14215	22280	6150	745	0.058	0.099	0.0180
2022	297217	718875	0	16539	26767	6311	350	0.028	0.047	0.0089
2023	171915***			22149*						

* From the short-term forecast.

** SSB estimated at spawning time (1 October).

*** Stock–recruitment relationship based on SSB₂₀₂₁ from the assessment output.

[^] Assessment year (1 April–31 March).

Sources and references

- de Groot, S. J. 1979. The potential environmental impact of marine gravel extraction in the North Sea. *Ocean Management*, 5: 233–249. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0302-184X\(79\)90003-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0302-184X(79)90003-9)
- de Groot, S. J. 1996. The physical impact of marine aggregate extraction in the North Sea. *ICES Journal of Marine Science*, 53: 1051–1053. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jmsc.1996.0131>
- Frost, M., and Diele, K. 2022. Essential spawning grounds of Scottish herring: current knowledge and future challenges. *Review in Fish Biology and Fisheries*, 32: 721–744. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11160-022-09703-0>
- ICES. 2003. Report of the Working Group on Fish Ecology (WGFE), 3–7 March 2003, ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen, Denmark. ICES CM 2003/G:04. 113 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.9744>
- ICES. 2015a. Second Interim Report of the Working Group on Maritime Systems (WGMARS), 2–5 December 2014, ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark. ICES CM 2014/SSGSUE:08. 35 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5430>
- ICES. 2015b. Report of the Benchmark Workshop on West of Scotland Herring (WKWEST), 2–6 February, Dublin, Ireland. ICES CM 2015\ACOM:34. 299 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5429>
- ICES. 2018. Report of the Benchmark Workshop on Pelagic Stocks (WKPELA 2018), 12–16 February 2018, ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark. ICES CM 2018/ACOM:32. 313 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.5432>
- ICES. 2023a. Advice on fishing opportunities. *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. ICES Advice 2023, Section 1.1.1. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.22240624>
- ICES. 2023b. Herring Assessment Working Group for the Area South of 62° N (HAWG). *ICES Scientific Reports*. 5:23. <http://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.22182034>

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

Recommended citation: ICES. 2023. Herring (*Clupea harengus*) in divisions 7.a South of 52°30'N, 7.g–h, and 7.j–k (Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, and southwest of Ireland). *In* Report of the ICES Advisory Committee, 2023. ICES Advice 2023, her.27.irls. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.21907962>