

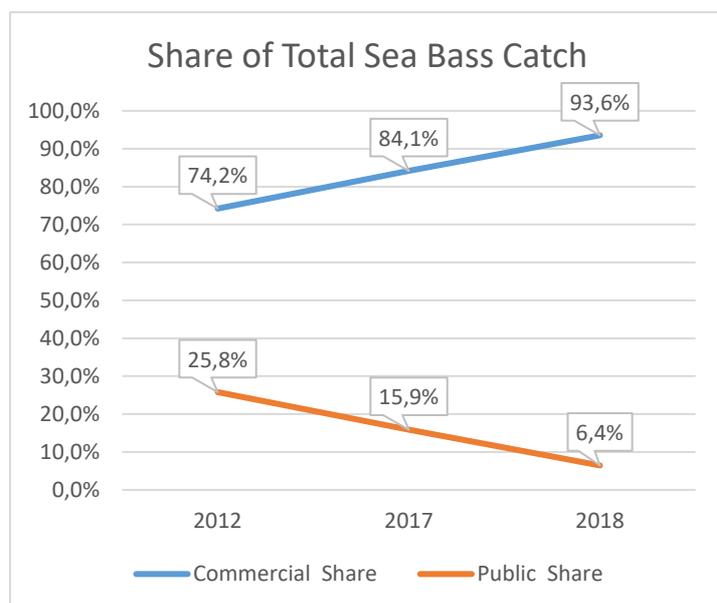


Dear Fisheries Managers,

A Sustainable Sea Bass Fishery

Bag Limit for Recreational Catches

The ICES figures show that public sea anglers have been hit disproportionately compared to commercial fishermen. This is unjust and out of line with the EU Commission's stated objective of proportional cuts for sustainable métiers.



It is now imperative to even things up by reallocating some commercial allowances to public sea anglers. The public should come first: we deliver the greatest socio-economic benefits and thousands of jobs are highly dependent on sea bass angling.

Provided the science supports it we believe a 2 fish a day bag limit is just.

Growing the Stock

ICES has said that we may be able to recover the stock to Blim by 2020. But they are unable to say when the stock will recover to full safety (Bpa), even if fishing pressure in 2019 is nil.

In 2019 I want you to target the same level of tonnage that you targeted in 2018: 915 tonnes. The stock is still dangerously low (below Blim) and we need to get it out of danger as quickly as possible, rather than increase fishing opportunities.

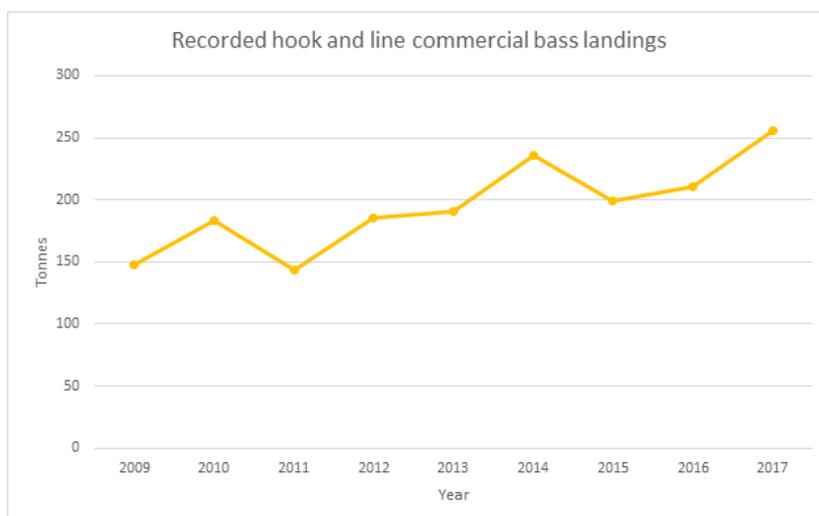
Hook & Line Commercial Fishing

I want some real cuts for hook & line fishermen, to even things up with public sea anglers. In the UK, the 5 tonnes limit has restricted just 7 hook & line vessels, which is a pathetic 1% of the hook & line fleet. This is completely unjust when compared to the severe cuts on public sea anglers.

Cut the limit to 1.5 tonnes.

A 1.5 tonne limit would reduce bass landings by half, but would impact just [50] UK vessels (representing just [10]% of the UK fleet). The 90% of vessels that are fishing at sustainable levels will be completely unaffected and will obtain higher prices for their catch as the supply falls.

The current 5.0 tonne limit isn't working: the overall tonnage landed by UK hook and line vessels is actually increasing! This is an outrage at a time when the stock is below Blim and public sea anglers have suffered large cuts.



Fixed Netting

Get the nets out of the sea bass fishery.

Either get rid of the “unavoidable” by-catch allowance altogether or bring it into line with other métiers by applying a percentage of catch per trip restriction, so that it allows only true by-catch and stops illegal targeting. The percentage should be 10%.

The current allowance is being treated by fixed netters as a targeting allowance, because they and the enforcement authorities know the law is unenforceable and the enforcement authorities admit they are not even attempting to enforce the law.

Bay of Biscay

Increase the MCRS to 42cm.

The scientists have now told us that sea bass in the Bay of Biscay mature at 42cm. And tagging studies show that the “Southern” stock and the “Northern” stock mix above the 48th Parallel.

It is no longer defensible to have a different MCRS for the “Southern” stock. We must protect immature sea bass in order to protect the fishery.
