Regional Fisheries Groups (RFGs) collated questions, actions and MMO/Defra/Cefas collated responses

Area 7a

5. *Cefas action: to investigate getting the work of Bangor University on Seabass incorporated into stock assessments.*

CEFAS Response

The key message from the Bangor University work was that one can differentiate bass that spend most of their time in North/Mid Wales from those in South Wales based on isotopic signatures in scales/otoliths and that some fish spend all of their feeding life in estuaries; i.e. two strategies, estuary versus estuary followed by fully marine. There is still no definitive evidence of localised spawning, but it seems likely especially given some of the Cefas DST (Data Storage Tag) work (i.e. fish swimming up to Morecambe from Ireland and back).

The ICES assessment working group has had a number of questions recently about sea bass population structure and are investigating further.

There is a lot of work on sea bass stock structure and connectivity emerging from France, Wales, Ireland and England. This has been collected in a number of different projects that included electronic tagging of adults, stable isotope and microchemistry, genetics, particle tracking modelling, and adult individual-based models (IBMs). Most of the projects are still to publish their final reports, so the results are not yet in the public domain. However, the publication and initial report from the 2015 Bangor University study that indicates that there was differences in isotope signals between south and north wales are provided (Cambie *et al*., 2015 – document attached: Cambie et al 2015.pdf: Cambie et al., 2016 – document attached: cambie 2016.pdf). In addition, there may be an ICES workshop to review sea bass stock identity in the light of all the new research. Any changes to the current structure identified at this stage will feed into the assessment process (e.g. new management units, combined assessment with mixing between subpopulations, current structure).

Suggested next steps:

Cefas' colleagues to update the RFG when additional information is published.


cambie 2016.pdf


Cambie et al 2015.pdf