



Regional Fisheries Group

Meeting

East 4c

East 4c Regional Fisheries Groups meeting

Meeting Details

Date	Monday 21 September
Start Time	15:00
End Time	15:41
Meeting Duration	41m 24s
Location or Platform	Microsoft Teams
Chair or Facilitator	Alisha Patel (MMO)
Note Taker	Mark Qureshi (MMO)

Attendance

Attendees (Industry):	Attendees (Regulators):	Apologies:
• Mike Roach • Peter Morgan	• Alisha Patel (MMO) • Mark Qureshi (MMO) • Anna MacLennan (MMO) • Daniel Bush (MMO) • Jacob Bestwick (MMO) • Alex Pearson-Ross (MMO) • Iain Glasglow (Defra) • Emily Hawks (Defra) • Helen Hunter (Defra) • Ioana Vitan (Defra) • Chris Collins (MMO) • Justin Rowley (MMO) • Luke Godwin (EIFCA) • Jim Ellis (Cefas)	• Nicola Webster • Abbie Williamson • Julian Gregory (EIFCA)

Meeting Recording

This meeting was recorded and can be accessed through the MMO YouTube account via the following link: [East RFG Meeting – 21 September 2026](#)

Timestamps for the start of each agenda item can be found in the agenda table. The following record is a summarised version of the meeting and includes participant questions.

Agenda Items

	Item	Presenter	Agency	Recorded Start
1	Introduction	Alisha Patel	MMO	00:00
2	Quota	Jacob Bestwick	MMO	00:15
3	Defra Negotiations	Iain Glasglow	Defra	10:47
4	Brown Crab Management	Helen Hunter	Defra	19:11
5	EIFCA Updates	Luke Godwin	EIFCA	24:55
6	Bass FMP updates	Chris Collins	MMO	30:20
7	East Coastal Q+A	Justin Rowley	MMO	33:14
8	AOB and close	Alisha Patel	MMO	37:26

Agenda Item #2 Quota, Jacob Bestwick – MMO

Quota presentation is at the end of this document.

Jacob provided an overview of quota uptake for key North Sea stocks including cod (ICES areas 4b and 4c), skates and rays, mackerel, spurdog, sprat, sole and herring (ICES areas 4c and 7d).

No questions were raised.

Agenda Item #3 Defra Negotiations, Iain Glasgow – Defra

ICES advice for 2027 fishing opportunities accompanying document is at the end of this document.

Iain provided an overview of key East stocks included in 2027 EU quota negotiations.

Iain requested any questions or comments on the attached, however, no questions were raised.

Agenda Item #4 Brown Crab Management, Helen Hunter – Defra

Helen stated that work is continuing on implementing the Crab and Lobster FMP, including evidence work such as a pot counting project to improve effort data and work to improve existing stock assessment data.

There is also work being done on management measures to protect spawning stocks including increasing crab Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS), which will complement the measure implemented in the South West earlier this year. Helen noted that there are regional MCRS differences and that this needs to be considered as part of the decision-making process.

Helen advised that the measures are being developed in collaboration with the Crab and Lobster Implementation Group (comprising Defra/industry/science). In addition, Defra/MMO will continue to engage with wider stakeholders.

There is also work being done with EU on potential measures for joint brown crab stocks, including in the channel. Discussions are at an early stage and will require an understanding of impacts and benefits of a joint approach.

No questions were raised.

Agenda Item #5 EIFCA Update – Luke Godwin, EIFCA

Luke provided an update on the joint EIFCA and KEIFCA East initiative for a bass drift net trial. Luke explained the importance of bass as a species for the East inshore fleet and therefore the 2015 measures (including drift net ban) impacted the fleet disproportionately due to challenges of small vessel adaptation to other species.

The proposed trial will focus on whether drift netting is as environmentally impactful as fixed netting e.g. bycatch. Luke provided an overview of what the trial could look like, explaining that it could involve up to four fishers and may include Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM). It would also have limitations and could be stopped due to e.g. high bird bycatch impacts.

Luke stated the EIFCA and KEIFCA were keen for input from the Bass Management Group.

No question were raised.

Agenda Item #6 Bass FMP Updates – Chris Collins, MMO

Chris stated that the Bass authorisation scheme review was completed last year and the report was published in November 2025, which resulted in 24 recommendations, 3 of which have been taken forward. These are:

- Issuing unused bass authorisations
- Young person scheme to utilise some of the unused authorisations
- Switch from fixed gill net to hook and line authorisation.

Chris stated that a management measures task and finish group has been created to progress these recommendations.

Chris confirmed that the Bass Management Group is now moving to medium-long term FMP measures.

Agenda Item #7 East Coastal Q+A, Justin Rowley – MMO

Justin stated he can provide further information on MMO coastal activities on the East coast, which extends from London up to Grimsby. Justin reiterated the support for exploring the proposed bass drift net trial.

No questions were raised; however, discussion focused on low attendance from the inshore fleet at Regional Fisheries Groups meetings (including North East and North West) and what efforts can be made to improve engagement.

Contact information

Team	Contact information
Regional Fisheries Groups / RFG lead	regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk Alisha.Patel@marinemanagement.org.uk
MMO Inshore Quota	inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk Katie.James@marinemanagement.org.uk Jacob.Bestwick@marinemanagement.org.uk
Defra negotiations	fisheries.negotiations.stakeholders@defra.gov.uk
Brown Crab Management	shellfish@defra.gov.uk
Bass FMP updates	FMPs@defra.gov.uk
EIFCA updates	mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk
MMO Coastal	MMO Harwich office: harwich@marinemanagement.org.uk MMO Lowestoft office: lowestoft@marinemanagement.org.uk or call 0208 026 6094

Thank you for attending this Regional Fisheries Group meeting. If you would like to be added to the mailing list or contribute in any other way, please contact the MMO Regional Fisheries mailbox: regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk or find out more via the Regional Fisheries webpage: [Regional Fisheries Groups - GOV.UK](http://RegionalFisheriesGroups-GOV.UK).

You can subscribe to the East RFG Newsletter using this link: [Marine Management Organisation](http://MarineManagementOrganisation)



Marine
Management
Organisation

4C RFG Quota Presentation

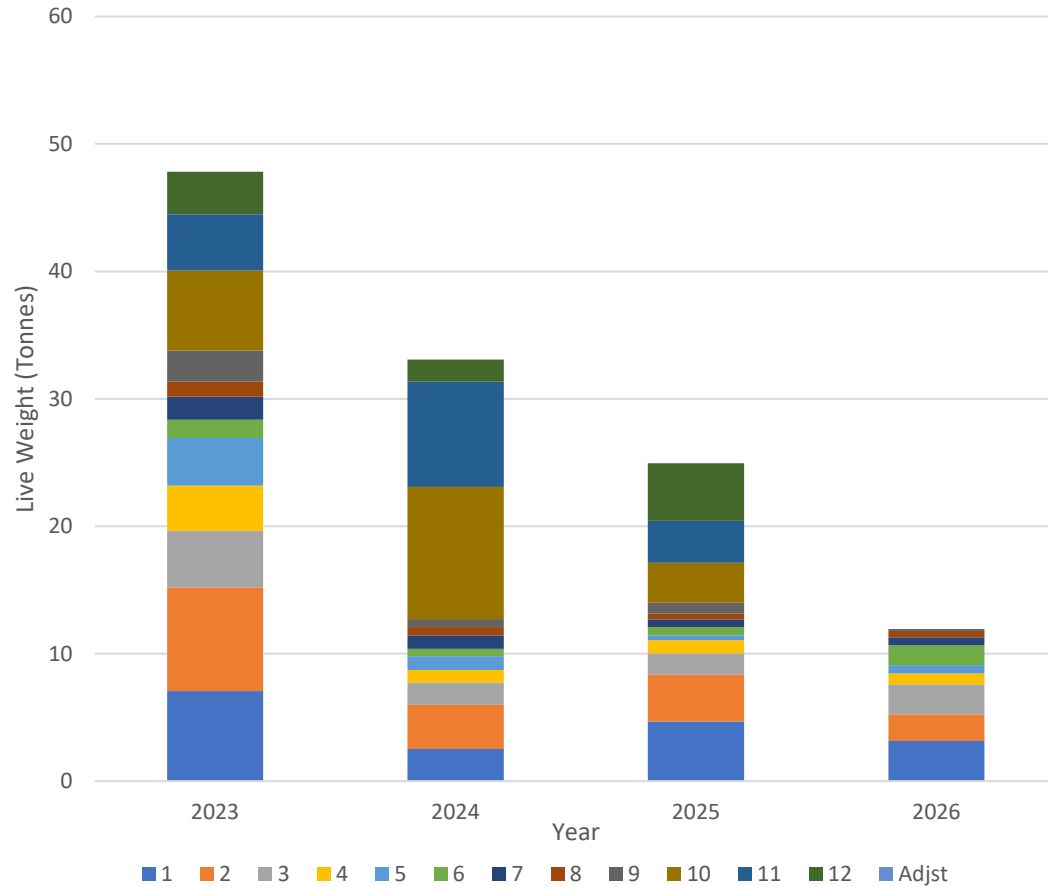
September 2026

Jacob Bestwick
&
Katie James

...ambitious for our seas and coasts



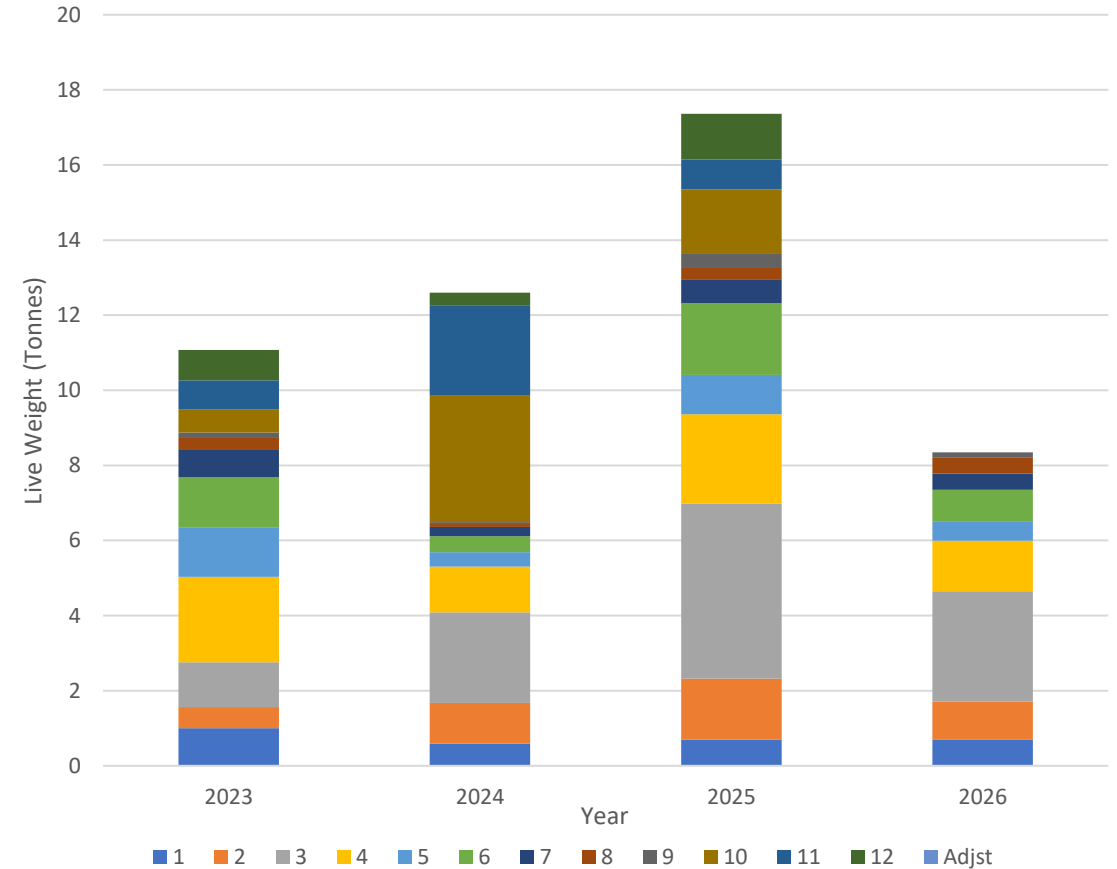
Monthly Uptake by Year - U10m – CODNS – 4BC only



New special condition introduced in 2026 limiting UK catch of cod in 4bc to 250 tonnes.

...ambitious for our seas and coasts

Monthly Uptake by Year – O10 – CODNS – 4BC only



U10:

Current Allocation = 54.8t

Catch limit = 1t

Current uptake = 12.1t

O10:

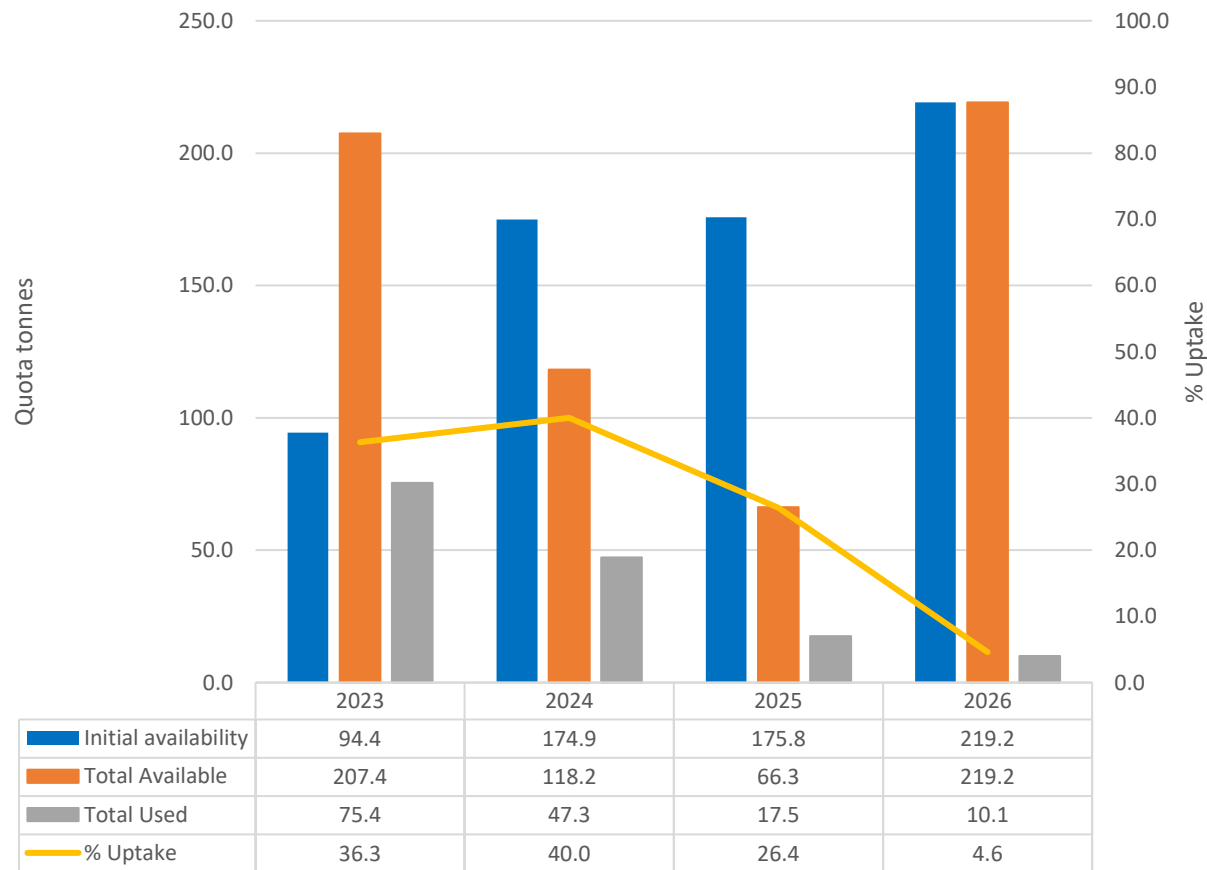
Current Allocation = 20.2t

Catch limit = 1t

Current uptake = 8.4t

NS Skates & Rays

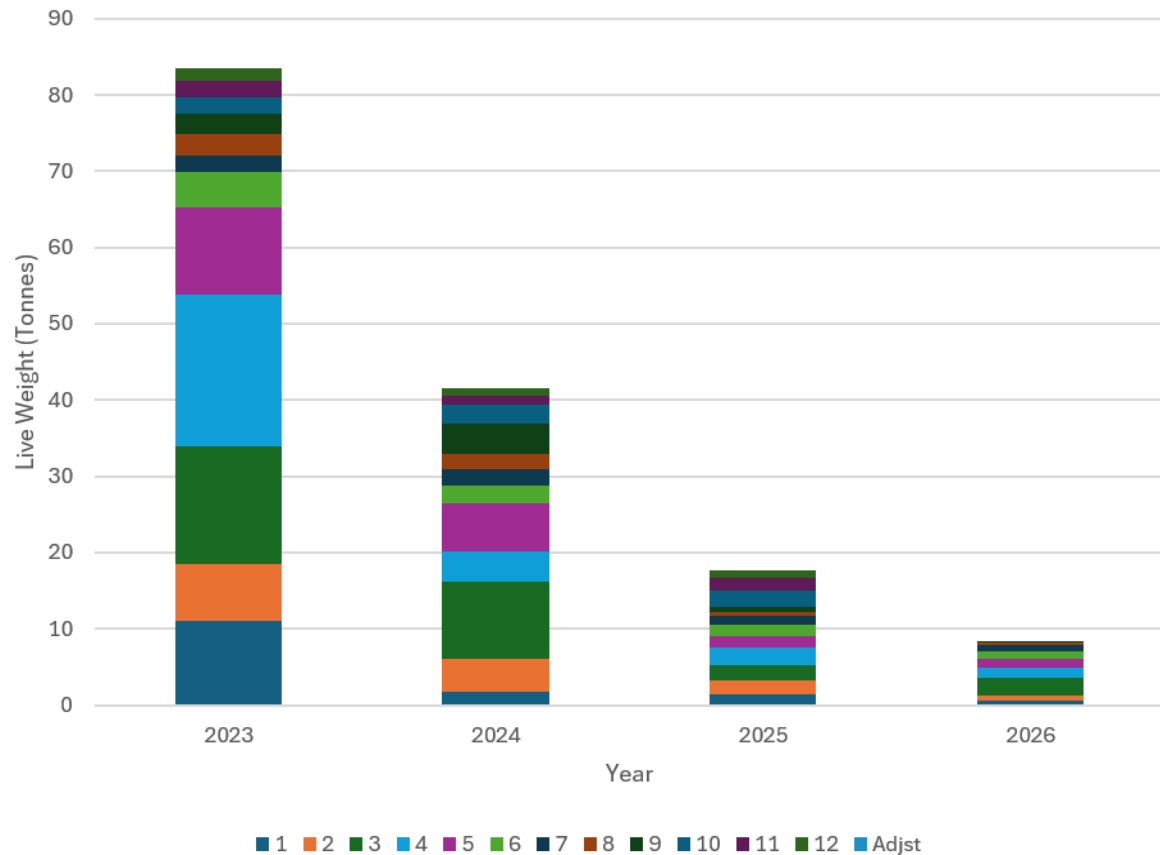
Skates and rays - North Sea - Under 10 - Available quota and total uptake



2027 ICES ADVICE DUE OCTOBER

...ambitious for our seas and coasts

Monthly Uptake by Year - U10m - SKANS



U10:

Current Allocation = 219.2t

Catch limit = 4t

Current uptake = 10.1t

O10:

Current Allocation = 55.4t

Catch limit = 3t

Current uptake = 1.4t

NS Mackerel

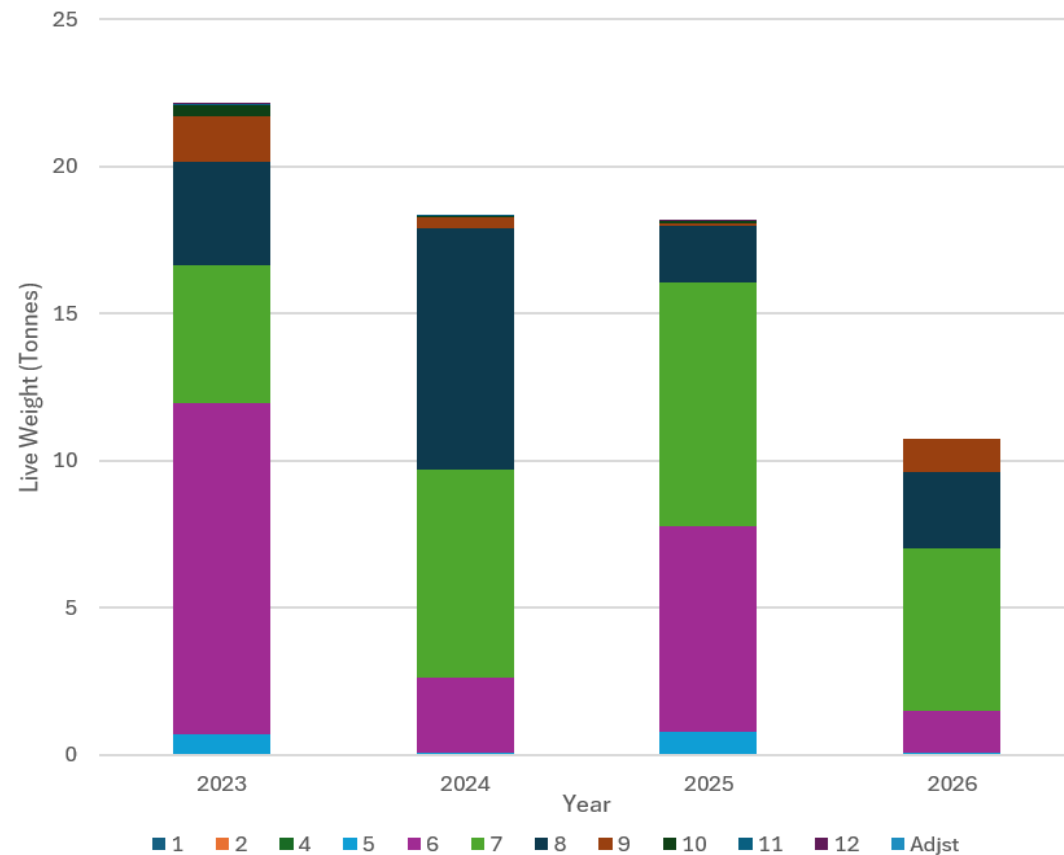
Mackerel - North Sea - Under 10 - Available quota and total uptake



ICES ADVICE DUE 30 SEPTEMBER

...ambitious for our seas and coasts

Monthly Uptake by Year - U10m - MACNS



U10:

Current Allocation = 32.5t

Catch limit = 5t

Current uptake = 11.2t

O10:

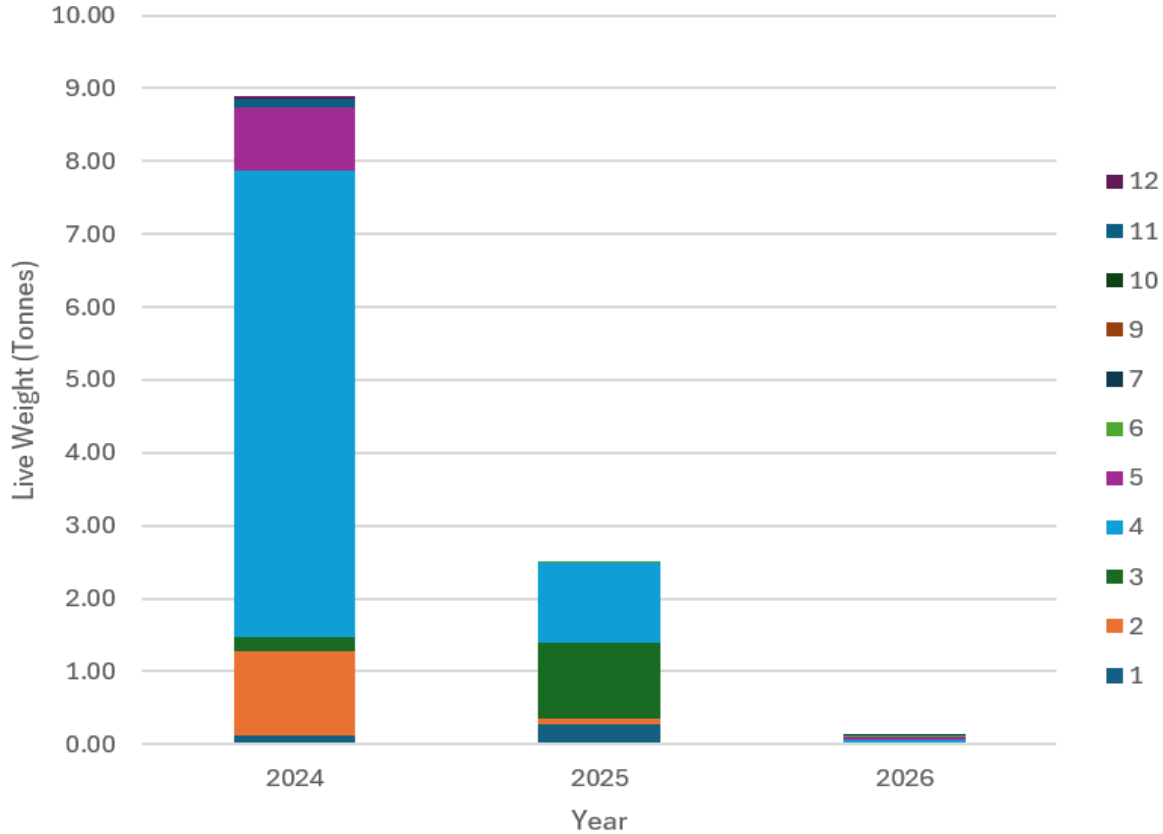
Current Allocation = 19t

Catch limit = 1t

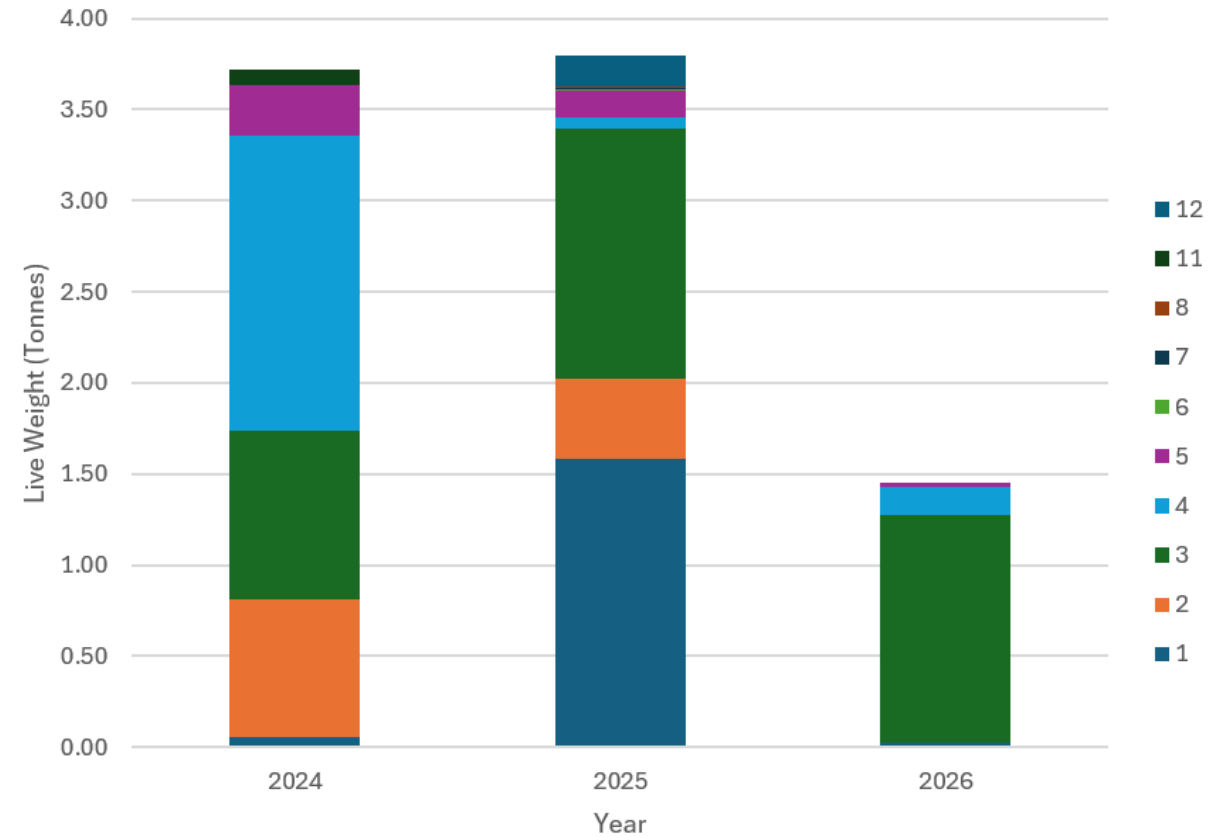
Current uptake = 0t

NS Spurdog

Monthly Uptake by Year - U10 - NS DGS



Monthly Uptake by Year - O10 - NS DGS



...ambitious for our seas and coasts

U10:

Current Allocation = 42.1t

Catch limit = 5t

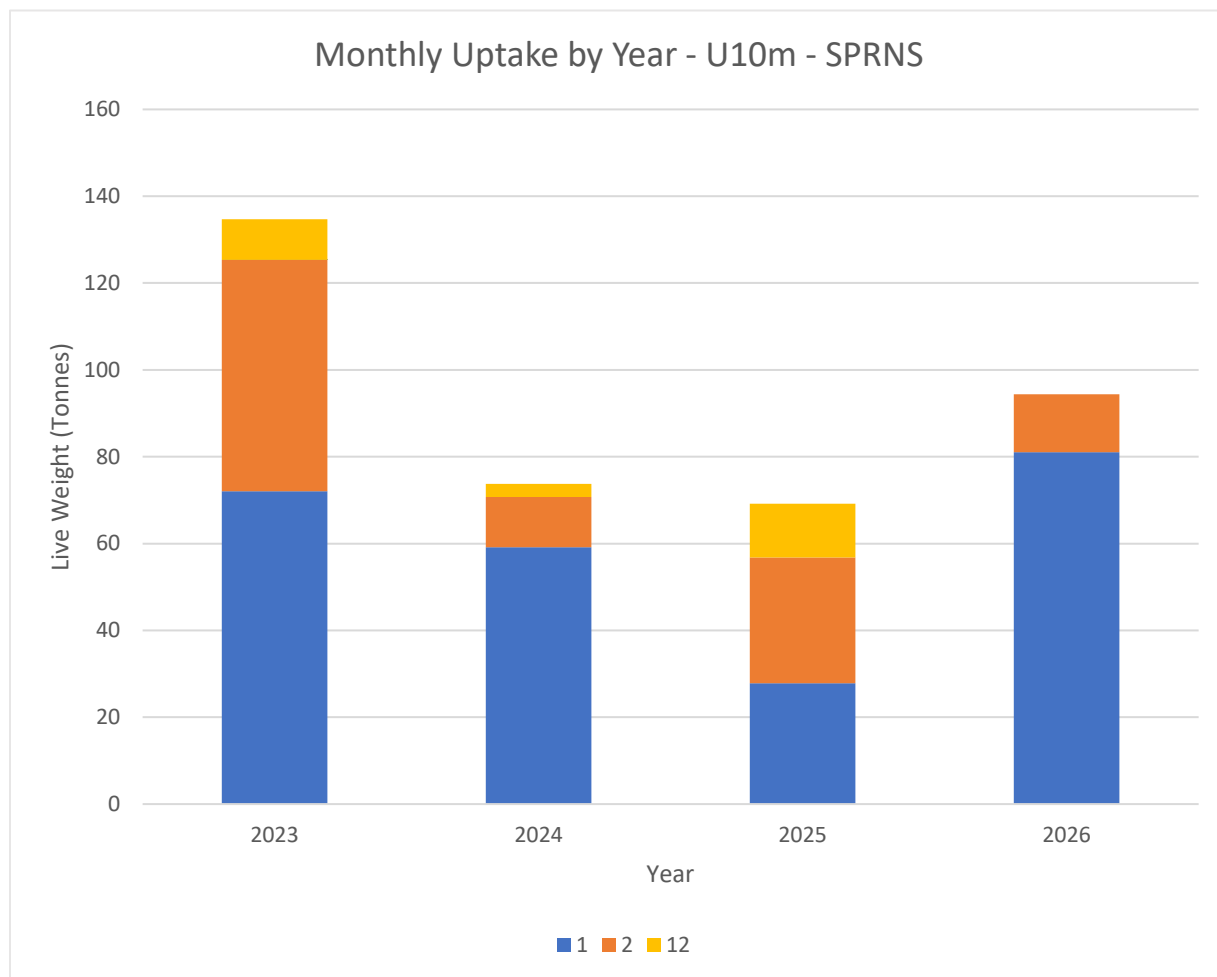
Current uptake = 0.1t

O10:

Current Allocation = 21t

Catch limit = 5t

Current uptake = 1.5t



ICES ADVICE DUE APRIL 2027

Quota runs **July 2026 – June 2027**

U10:

Allocation = 186.6t

Available = 486.6t

Catch limit = 200t weekly

Uptake 26/27 = 0t (2026 uptake is before July 26)

Uptake 25/26 = 106.8t

O10:

26/27 Allocation = 20.3t

26/27 Available = 20.3t

Catch limit = 200t weekly

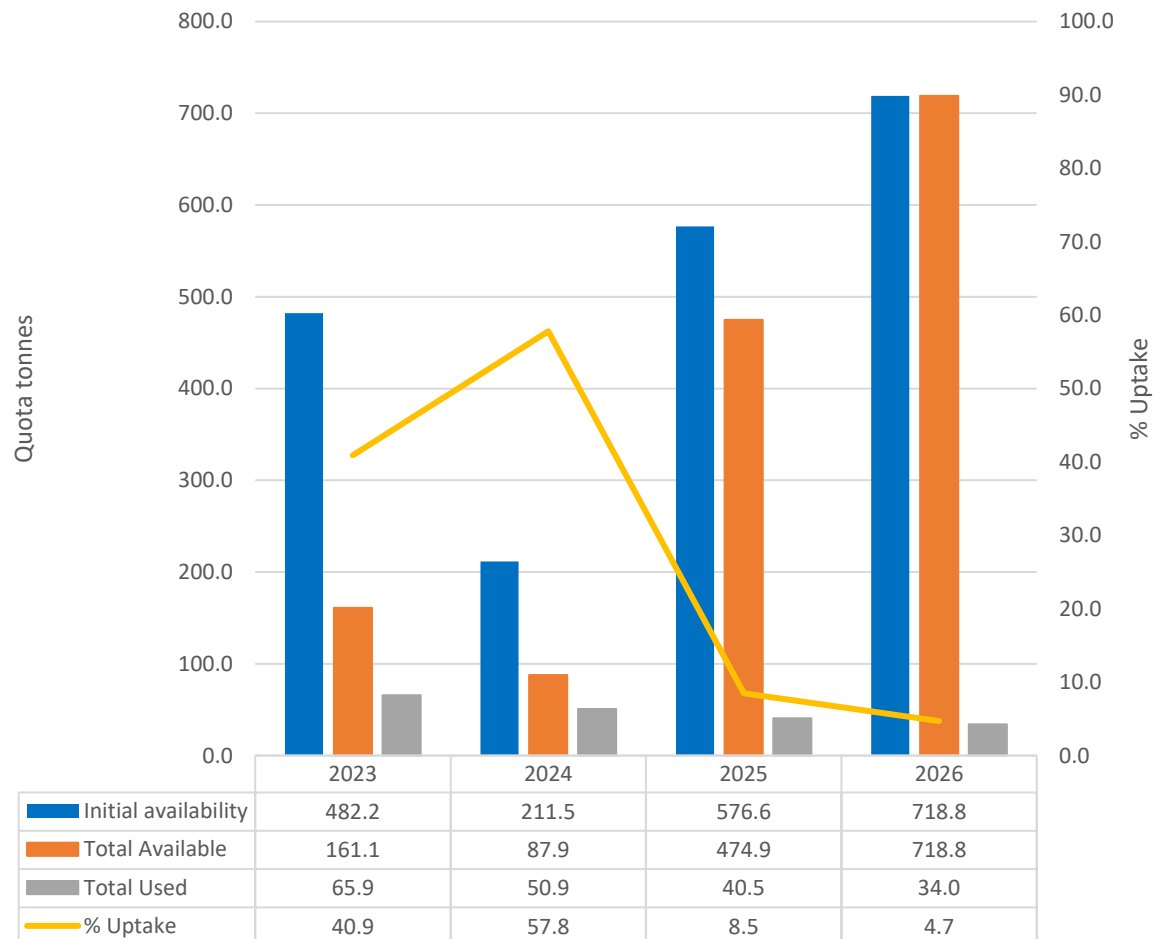
Uptake 26/27 = 0t

Uptake 25/26 – 12.3t

...ambitious for our seas and coasts

NS Sole

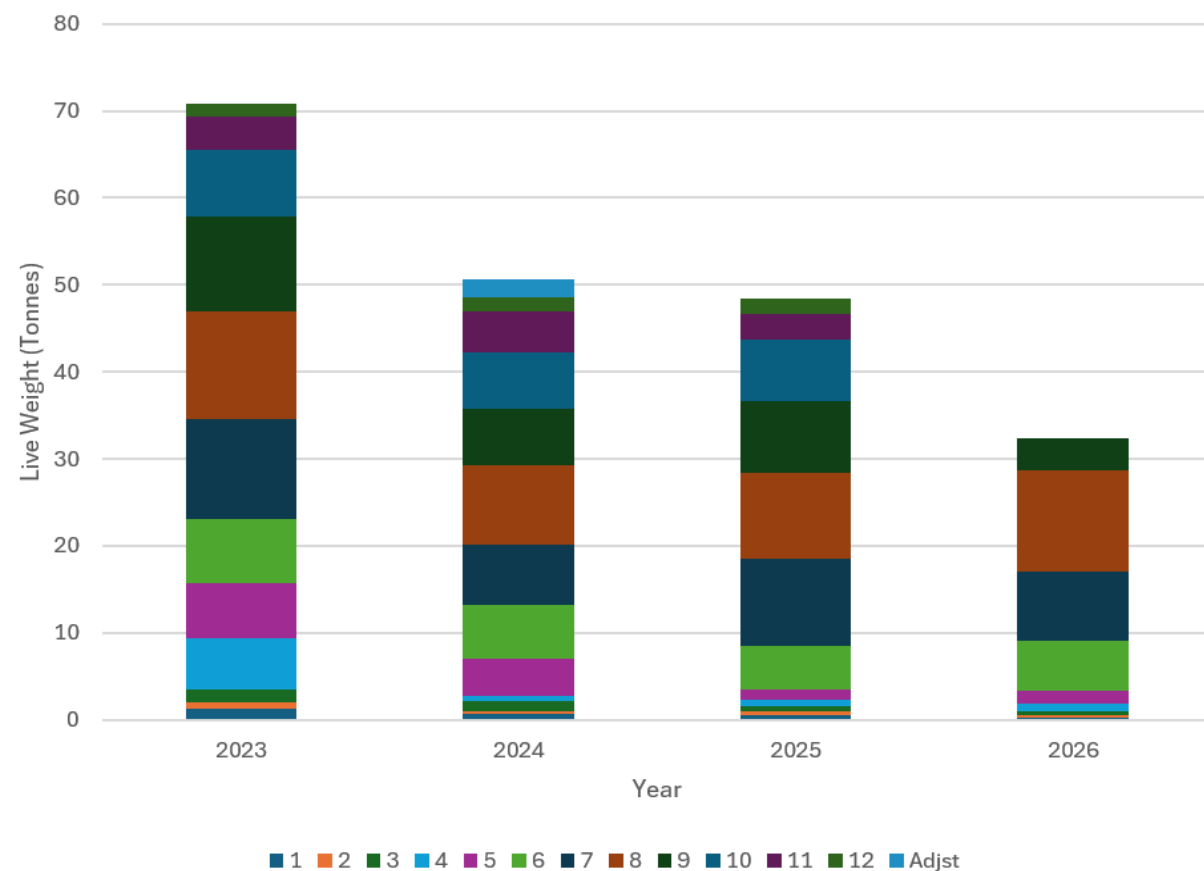
Sole - North Sea - Under 10 - Available quota and total uptake



2027 ICES ADVICE = +98%

...ambitious for our seas and coasts

Monthly Uptake by Year - U10m - SOLNS



U10:

Current Allocation = 718.8t

Catch limit = 5t

Current uptake = 34t

O10:

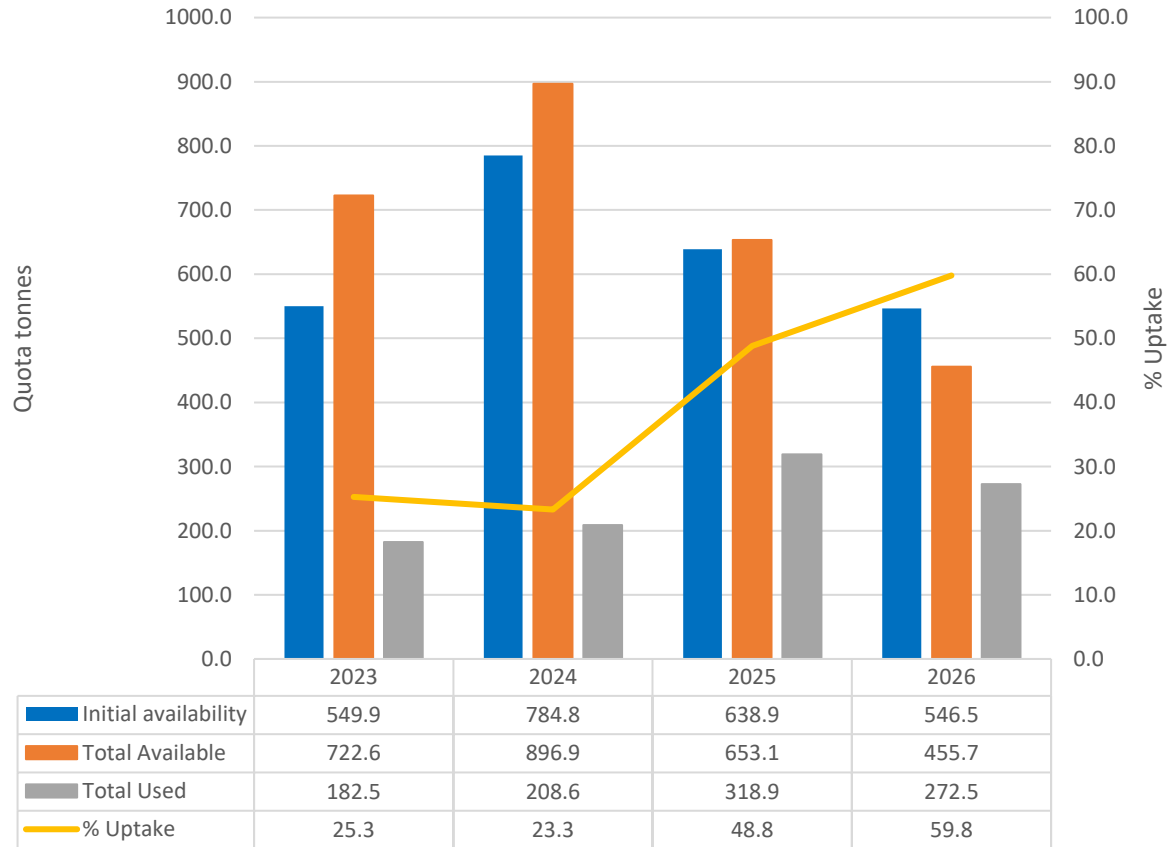
Current Allocation = 7.9t

Catch limit = 6t

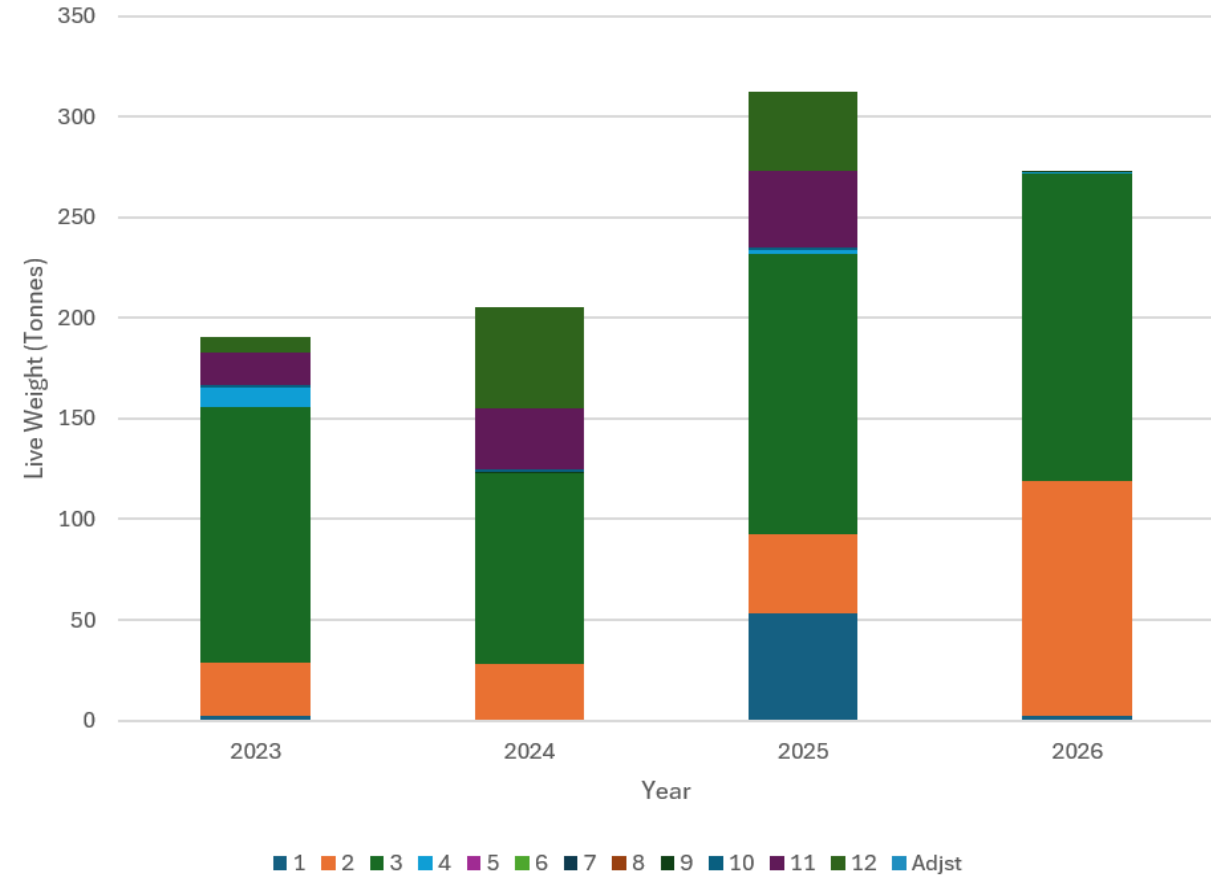
Current uptake = 2t

Herring 4c / 7d

Herring - Areas IVc and VIId - Under 10 - Available quota and total uptake



Monthly Uptake by Year - U10m - HER4C7D



ICES ADVICE 2027: +21%

...ambitious for our seas and coasts

U10:

Current Allocation = 455.7t
Catch limit = 300t
Current uptake = 275.5t

O10:

Current Allocation = 0.6t
Catch limit = 50t
Current uptake = 0.5t



Marine
Management
Organisation

Please remember you can get in touch with us
regarding catch limits – Email, Text or Call....

Katie James: 07747638655

Jacob Bestwick: 07469443840

inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk

...ambitious for our seas and coasts





Marine
Management
Organisation

Useful Links

Uptake Statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/quota-use-statistics>

Catch limits

Under 10m <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/current-catch-limits-10-metres-and-under-pool>

Over 10m <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/current-catch-limits-over-10-metre-non-sector-pool>

Trading

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishing-quota-trading-and-swaps>

Catch limit Review (front page of MMO website during last 7-10 days of each month)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/marine-management-organisation>

...ambitious for our seas and coasts



ICES advice for 2027 fishing opportunities

ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) has begun publishing the scientific advice that will inform negotiations between the UK and the EU, and in some cases Norway, on fishing opportunities for 2027.

Defra would welcome your views, particularly on stocks that are important to your business and local fishing communities. We have highlighted below some of the quota stocks of particular importance to fishers on the east coast of the southern North Sea, although this should not be considered an exhaustive list.

We would welcome your views on the scientific advice, your local observations of stock abundance and distribution, and any comments you may have on issues that should be considered during the forthcoming negotiations.

Stock	Comment
North Sea sole	ICES has recommended a 98% increase in the catch opportunity. If accepted, this would result in a UK quota of just over 4,000 tonnes. We are aware that some fishers have reported low local abundance on established fishing grounds and would welcome views on how these observations compare with the stock-wide assessment.
Herring in the southern North Sea and eastern Channel	ICES has recommended a substantial reduction in catch opportunity, which would result in a UK quota of approximately 514 tonnes. We would welcome views on the potential impacts of this reduction on fishing businesses and local communities. Correction issued 15.09.2026 Thank you for your comments. We would like to correct the previous line on herring in the southern North Sea and eastern Channel and clarify that ICES has not advised a substantial reduction in catch opportunities for North Sea Autumn Spawning herring. The latest scientific advice is for a 21% increase in catch opportunities for the stock overall. The figure referenced previously reflects changes to management arrangements which change the structure of ICES advice but should not be interpreted as indicating a reduction in the underlying scientific advice. Noting that by following the latest ICES advice would lead to a 21% increase in available quota for 2027, Defra would welcome any views on local abundance, availability and distribution of herring, and whether these observations align with the stock assessment.
North Sea skates and rays	Formal ICES advice for the 2027 TAC will not be available until October. However, the most recent species-specific advice

	suggests a modest reduction in catch opportunities if the scientific advice is followed. The UK's opening quota in 2026 was 2,727 tonnes . We are also aware of reports of declining local abundance, particularly of thornback ray, and would welcome any views or evidence on recent trends.
North Sea turbot and brill	ICES advice for 2027 recommends a modest increase (+13%) in catch opportunity. We would welcome observations on the local abundance and availability of both species.
North Sea cod	ICES advice is expected in the autumn. We would welcome any views on the fishery now and may seek further views once the scientific advice has been published.
Bass	Bass is not subject to a TAC, but management measures will be reviewed through the negotiations process, and we would welcome stakeholders' views on future management.

Defra welcomes input on these stocks and any other stocks that are important to your fishing business or community.

Defra welcomes input on these stocks and any other stocks that are important to your fishing business or community. For a full list of UK-EU shared quota stocks, please refer to Annex 35 of the [UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#), and to Annex 36, Table A, for UK-EU-Norway shared quota stocks.

Please send responses to fisheries.negotiations.stakeholders@defra.gov.uk.

We would be grateful for any evidence, observations or views that may help inform the UK's approach to the 2027 negotiations by 18th September 2026.