

Working Paper submitted by European Union

Additional considerations for the discussion on the revision of the chub mackerel CMM

Abstract

This document presents additional considerations for the revision of the chub mackerel CMM, highlighting the need for management measures beyond TAC reductions to address recruitment overfishing and investigating stable fishing effort despite declining catches.

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The TWGCMSA09 recognized that the stock has been in a low-productivity phase since 2016, with full maturation occurring at age 4. However, dominant age classes in the catch are ages 1-3, and strong recruitment years (2013 and 2018) also included age-0 fish. Because these immature fish have limited opportunities to spawn before being caught, F40%SPR alone is insufficient to prevent recruitment overfishing. Additional management measures might be needed alongside TAC reductions to effectively address recruitment overfishing, such as size, mesh size limitations or seasonal closures to protect juveniles.

Furthermore, despite a drastic decline in catches from 214,347 t in 2021 to 48,663 t in 2023, the purse seine fleet's average effort by vessel (fishing days) and number of vessels fishing for chub mackerel have remained relatively stable in the annual summary footprint. This is pointing at issues such as change in target species or effort creep that would need to be further investigated by the TWGCMSA.

Based on the above it seems important to ensure that the following tasks be considered by the TWGCMSA ahead of the next stock assessment meeting:

- Provision to and analysis by the TWGCMSA of gear specific data to explore whether there is a need to protect the immature portion of the stock and advice on options for achieving that, as appropriate. This includes also accessory devices used for fishing purposes, such as FADs, light devices, etc.
- Clarification of the correspondence of fishing days and the level of catch in relevant fleets, such as the purse seine fleet.

In view to providing management advice, the following information would be useful:

- Projections and associated probabilities, based on incremental catch scenarios (increments of 5.000 mt), aiming at reaching an appropriate MSY proxy (SSB and F) within 5 to 10 years.