

Brill



Scophthalmus rhombus

Brill, *Scophthalmus rhombus*, is a flatfish. The North Sea accounts for most of the annual total landings of brill (68%) which since 2000 have varied between 2,142 and 3,141 tonnes (t), averaging 2,371 t (1).

Biology

Brill is a shallow-water flatfish found in areas close inshore, usually over clean sand and mud sea beds. It grows quite slowly to a maximum of 75cm and does not live to a great age. Brill feeds on bottom living fishes and larger crustaceans. Brill move inshore in the spring to spawn in shallow water.

Fisheries and gears

Brill is mainly caught in mid-class and large beam trawlers. These vessels are mostly flatfish directed. These species are also captured in otter trawls and static nets (gill and tangle nets).

Stock assessment and catches

Biological sampling of research vessel and commercial catches is carried out and reported by the ICES Working Group on the Assessment of New MoU Species (WGNEW) (2013) (1).

ICES provided quantitative advice on brill as a data-limited stock in June 2013.

In June 2013 ICES reported for Baltic stocks that the survey data indicates an increasing trend in stock size until 2011, but low stock size in 2012. The average stock size indicator (landings per unit effort – lpue) in the last two years (2011–2012) is 26% higher than the average of the three previous years (2008–2010) (2). A TAC of 29 tonnes is recommended for 2014 (landings were 30 t in 2012).

For North Sea, Skaggerak, Kattegat and English Channel stocks ICES (3) reported landings had been relatively stable and above historical values since 1998 and were considered a reliable approximation of catches as only little discarding of brill occurs. The stock size indicator (lpue) in the last three years (2010–2012) is 56% higher for the North Sea, or 2% lower for Kattegat, than the average of the five previous years (2005–2009). ICES advised that catches should be no more than a 20% increase in recent average catches (2010–2012) at no more than 2,727 tonnes in 2014 and 2015.

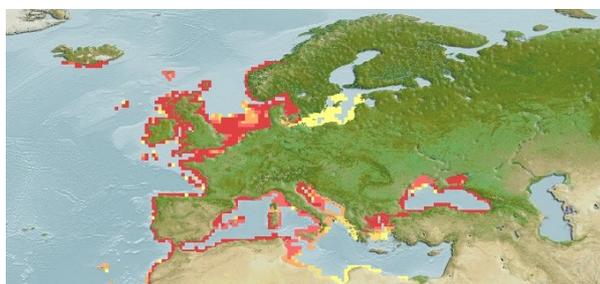
Responsible Sourcing Services

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Distribution

Brill is found throughout the North East Atlantic, from 64°N, down to northwest Morocco and extending into the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. They are also found in small quantities in Skagerrak, Kattegat, and in the Belt and Baltic Sea.



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Management and conservation

There is a serious shortage of basic information for these stocks due to severe deficiencies in the data (lack of updates, gaps in time series, little data on discards and limited survey information.) The North Sea fishery, where around 20% of the brill catches are reported, is controlled by a precautionary Total Allowable Catch (TAC), usually based on previous catches. The combined brill and turbot TAC for 2012, 2013 and 2014 for ICES division IIa (off Norway) and for North Sea (ICES Sub area IV) (4) was set at 4,642 t.

Historical overview of combined TACs (1).

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
TAC	5,263	5,263	5,283	4,642
Year	2012	2013	2014	
TAC	4,642	4,642	4,642	

Product Characteristics

Brill has a dark mottled appearance although the colour is variable, with small, smooth scales. Brill maybe steamed, pan-fried, broiled, boiled, microwaved or baked.

Supply chain standards

There are supply chain standards from capture to retailer:

- **Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme.** Sets best practice standards for fishing vessels: (BSi: PAS 72:2006).
- **British Retail Consortium (BRC) Global Standard/Safe and Local Supplier Approval (SALSA)** certification. Designed to raise standards in the seafood processing and wholesaling sectors.

References and sources

1. <http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2013/WGNEW/WGNEW%20report%20160513.pdf>
2. http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2013/2013/Bll-2232_201304091608%2008July.pdf
3. <http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2013/2013/bll-nsea.pdf>
4. *Council Regulation (EC) 43/2014.

*EU legislation see: <http://europa.eu>

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