

De minimis exemptions:

Gadoids

There was an error copying the data. Please find attached to the email the corrected STECF table.

Pelagic by-catches

There is no French data on pelagic by-catches by beam trawls (less than 1 tonne in 2016). However, 19 French beam trawls work in 7de and occasionally catch pelagic by-catches. Six French seiners are interested in this exemption.

High survivability exemptions:

Nephrops TR1-TR2 in area 7

France

TR1 fleet:

The NWW Discard Atlas (Catchpole and Ribeiro Santos, 2014) reports that "the TR1 fishery is the predominant fishery in the Celtic Sea (including 7e, excluding 7d), with the highest fishing effort, accounting for 23% of the total effort (STECF 2013). It has a widespread distribution in the whole area, but most of the effort is exerted in ICES VII e, g and h."

TR2 fleet:

The trawlers fleet with a codend mesh size ranging 80-100mm is the fishery with second highest effort in Celtic Sea, accounting for 18% of the total effort. It is less widespread than the TR1, and the main 13 fishing areas are located in ICES 7e, close to English and French shores, and in 7g, close to the Irish shore. A fishery for Norway lobster (called 'Nephrops') operated mainly by Irish trawlers characterises the TR2 fishery in the Celtic Sea. There are significant Nephrops fisheries in the Smalls, Labidie and Porcupine bank not shown in the effort maps. According to STECF data (2013), most of the TR2 effort is operated by English and French vessels. However, most of the Spanish effort in the Celtic Sea is due to TR2 and is likely to be underestimated due to a lack of data.

The French vessels that would be concerned by this exemption are mainly bottom otter trawlers targeting Nephrops with a 90-100mm mesh size. In 2016, 24 vessels were having this activity, mainly in ICES 7f-k (Cornou et al. 2017). Nephrops represents approximately 7% of the discards.

Plaice caught by nets in 7de

France

ENSURE, a French program started in 2014 and that will end in 2018, studies the survivability of discards made by trawls and trammel nets in the Channel and in the Bay of Biscay. The preliminary results show a high potential of survivability for plaice, skates and rays, sole and seabass. It highlights the influence of air temperature on the survivability of plaice.

Among the many fishing gears deployed in Eastern Channel and Southern North Sea, the most commonly used are gill nets and trammel nets. Trammel net fisheries (GT1) are operated by a number of countries and are particularly important in more coastal waters, for example off the English North Sea and Channel coasts for sole. Catches of plaice and cod are important in this fishery. The 2017 Obsmer report (Cornou et al., 2017) states that in 2016, approximately 160 French vessels used those gears in ICES 7d and 4c, and are distributed in more than 25 harbours.

According to the 2017 Obsmer report (Cornou et al., 2017), approximately 238 French vessels under 15 meters length and 24 vessels over 15 meters length used gillnets (GNS) and trammel net (GTR), mostly in ICES 7e.

Vessels under 15 meters length are distributed in more than 60 harbours and operate mostly in 7e. They target anglerfishes and flatfishes or demersal fishes and crustaceans.

Vessels over 15 meters length are distributed in approximately seven harbours and operate between 7e and 7h. They mostly target anglerfishes and crustaceans.

Plaice caught by nets in 7fg

France

The NWW Discard Atlas (Catchpole and Ribeiro Santos, 2014) reports:

“The main gill (GN1) and trammel (GT1) nets effort are from the French and English fisheries. The GN1 effort is widely spread in the Celtic sea, but most the effort is close to the English and French shore. Both fleets mainly target demersal species including hake and pollack (*Pollachius pollachius*). The French fleet also targets for crustacean species (Spider crab and common crab). Also a Spanish small fleet (only 2 vessels) target hake operated in Divisions VII j and VIIk. A pilot survey in 2006 showed a discard rate < 5%, so discards sampling programme was not focussed on gillnets. There is an important Irish gillnet fishery targeting cod in 7e between January and March. Much of this fishery is operated by vessels under 12m. The trammel net effort is less wide spread than the gillnet fishery and most of the effort is carried out close to the Brittany coast. The targets species for this fishery are sole, anglerfish and crustaceans (Spider crab and common crab).”

Plaice caught by trawls in 7de

The 2017 Obsmer report (Cornou et al., 2017) states that in 2016, approximately 115 French vessels <18m and 47 >18m used TR2 gears in the North Sea and the Eastern Channel, and are distributed in more than 10 harbours. The vessels of this fishery use mainly bottom otter-trawl, but can also use otter twin trawls. The mesh-size used range from 80 to 99 mm (mainly 80 mm; Cornou et al., 2017) to fit the Cod Plan. The fishing operations occur in depth ranging from 20 to 90 m, and last between 45min and 4 hours. Fishing trips duration are variable, from 12h to 7 days (3 days in average), depending on the size of the boats, the species targeted, the seasons, the weather forecast or even the harbour. A large part of the fleet also operates in the Eastern Channel, regularly during the same fishing trips.

For the Western part of the Eastern Channel, the 2017 Obsmer report (Cornou et al., 2017) states that in 2016, approximately 125 French vessels used those gears in ICES 7d, and are distributed in more than 20 harbours. Catches of plaice represent approximately 50% of the catch of the fishery.

The 2017 Obsmer report (Cornou et al., 2017) states that in 2016, approximately 152 vessels under 18 meter length used otter trawls and pair trawls in the Western Channel (ICES 7e) and are distributed in more than 30 harbours. In winter and in spring those vessels target scallops and in between, they target demersal fishes.

Plaice caught by trawls in 7fg

The 2017 Obsmer report (Cornou et al., 2017) states that in 2016, approximately 132 vessels over 18 meters length used bottom otter trawl, otter twin trawls and bottom pair trawls in the Celtic Sea (ICES 7, 7d excluded) and are distributed in more than 35 harbours. They mostly target anglerfishes and gadoids. Since August 2012, these vessels are using a square mesh panel in ICES 7fg.

The French bottom trawl fishery targeting Nephrops is also likely to catch plaice. According to the 2017 Obsmer report (Cornou et al., 2017), 24 French vessels used OTB and OTT to catch Nephrops in the area 7f-k.

Plaice caught with beam trawls in 7a-k

According to the 2017 Obsmer report (Cornou et al., 2017), 19 French vessels use beam trawl (TBB) with an 80mm mesh size to target crustaceans and plaice in the English Channel (ICES area 7de). Vessels are distributed in approximately 10 harbours. Catches of plaice represent approximately 15% of the catches of the fishery.

Data presented in the table are from STECF table for the year 2016.

Skates and rays

All French trawlers, netters or longliners working in 7b-k are interested in this high survivability exemption: around 900 vessels.

ENSURE, a French program started in 2014 and that will end in 2018, studies the survivability of discards made by trawls and trammel nets in the Channel and in the Bay of Biscay. The preliminary results show a high potential of survivability for skates and rays, sole, plaice and seabass. It highlights the influence of air temperature on the survivability of skates and rays.

Discard data (do not take into account *Raja undulata*) are the following, based on OBSMER (observers at sea) program:

- Trawls: skates and rays represent 6.3% of catches. Discards represent 34.2% of skates and rays catches.
- Nets: skates and rays represent 4.5% of catches. Discards represent 8% of skates and rays catches.
- Hooks and lines: no data available (less than 0.1% of catches)