

European Anglers Alliance, EAA
European Fishing Tackle Trade Association, EFTTA
Rue de la loi 81a
1000 Brussels
Belgium



Tel: +32 (0)2 725 11 15 • Email: info@eaa-europe.eu • Web: www.eaa-europe.eu • www.eftta.com
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Brussels, 6 July 2018

Mr Karmenu VELLA,
Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs
and Fisheries
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Cc:
Minister Mr Denis DUCARME, Belgium
Minister Ms Eva KJER HANSEN, Denmark
Minister Mr Stéphane TRAVERT, France
Minister Ms Julia KLÖCKNER, Germany
Minister Mr Michael CREED, Ireland
Minister Ms Carola SCHOUTEN, Netherlands
Minister Mr George EUSTICE, United Kingdom

Dear Mr Vella,

Concerning revised ICES sea bass advice 2018 – recreational fisheries

We would like to thank you and DG MARE for your efforts to preserve the sea bass stock, which is of great importance to the European angling community.

We were very happy to read the ICES revised advice published a few days ago concerning northern sea bass (1). The advice shows that the ICES advice from last year overestimated the recreational fishing mortality considerably.

1) <http://ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2018/2018/bss.27.4bc7ad-h.pdf>

Thus, the ministers' decision from December last year, that recreational fishers should not be allowed to keep any northern bass this year, was a decision based on inaccurate data.

Therefore, we ask in urgency that the one bass bag limit, which was in force last year, is reinstated as quickly as possible.

We do realise that a fast tracking procedure will put an extra strain on the Commission, for which we thank you. We also acknowledge that this request requires Member States' support. We believe the 'bass' Member States will be supportive to our request.

We would like to stress that the recreational anglers and the jobs and economy that depend on their spending have been hit disproportionately hard by recent management measures. This unfavourable trend is confirmed by ICES data.

	Recreational fisheries share of total bass mortality in %	Commercial fisheries share of total bass mortality in %
2012	25.8	74.2
//	//	//
2017	15.9	84.1
2018	6.4	93.6

If we go further back in time, to the 70s, sea bass was predominantly caught by recreational fishers without the stock being overfished. Then commercial fishing took off and the stock became depleted. This adds to the frustration we experience among common anglers. They don't understand, neither do we, why recreational anglers have to pay the highest price for missing or inaccurate data, and consequently unfair management measures.

Without a fair deal for our members, we stand to lose their support – all of us.

Mr Vella, we know you are very familiar with fishers' needs and motivations, so we trust you understand very well that being able to take home fish for the table is very important to most recreational anglers, thus also of crucial importance to the angling dependent jobs and businesses. A recent study gives these figures:

“Total economic impact of marine recreational fishing amounts to 10.5 billion euro, supporting almost 100,000 jobs.”

Source: *“Research for PECH Committee - Marine recreational and semi-subsistence fishing - its value and its impact on fish stocks”*; Kieran HYDER et al (2017)

We thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fred Bloot', with a horizontal line underneath.

Fred Bloot,
President of the EAA

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jean Claude Bel', with a horizontal line underneath.

Jean Claude Bel,
CEO of EFTTA

Contact:

Jan Kappel

Tel: +32 2 725 11 15 (office)

Mob: +32 498 84 05 23

● **EAA, the European Anglers Alliance** comprises angling organisations from 16 European countries with about 3 million members.

● **EFTTA, the European Fishing Tackle Trade Association** is the leading European trade association for manufacturers and wholesalers of sportfishing equipment. Membership is open to manufacturers, wholesalers, agents and press in the tackle industry.