

11. Other Flatfish complex

Status and catch specifications (t) of other flatfish in recent years. Biomass for each year corresponds to the projection given in the SAFE report issued in the preceding year. The OFL and ABC for 2016 and 2017 are those recommended by the Plan Team. Catch data are current through November 5, 2016.

Area	Year	Total Biomass	OFL	ABC	TAC	Catch
BSAI	2015	143,000	17,700	13,250	3,620	2,415
	2016	102,300	17,414	13,061	2,500	2,810
	2017	113,450	17,591	13,193	n/a	n/a
	2018	113,450	17,591	13,193	n/a	n/a

In 2016, the other flatfish TAC increased to 2,862 t after a reallocation of 362 t from the non-specified reserves.

Changes from previous assessment

The assessment incorporates 2015 and 2016 total and discarded catch and 2016 EBS shelf trawl survey biomass, 2016 AI trawl survey biomass, and 2016 EBS slope trawl survey biomass. There were no changes to the assessment methodology.

Spawning biomass and stock trends

EBS shelf survey biomass estimates for this complex were all below 100,000 t from 1983-2003, and reached a high of 150,480 t in 2006. The EBS and AI survey estimate for 2016 was 113,450 t, about 10% above that of last year. Starry flounder, rex sole, and butter sole comprise the majority of the fishery catch with a negligible amount of other species caught in recent years. Starry flounder continues to dominate the shelf survey biomass in the EBS.

Tier determination/Plan Team discussion and resulting ABCs and OFLs

The SSC has classified “other flatfish” as a Tier 5 species complex with harvest recommendations calculated from estimates of biomass and natural mortality. Natural mortality rates for rex (0.17) and Dover sole (0.085) borrowed from the Gulf of Alaska are used, along with a value of 0.15 for all other species in the complex. Projected harvesting at the 0.75 *M* level (biomass-weighted) average $F_{ABC} = 0.117$ gives a 2016 ABC of 13,193t for the “other flatfish” complex. The corresponding 2016 OFL (average $F_{OFL} = 0.155$) is 17,591t.

Status determination

This assemblage is not being subjected to overfishing. It is not possible to determine whether this assemblage is overfished or whether it is approaching an overfished condition because it is managed under Tier 5.