



Department  
for Environment,  
Food & Rural Affairs

## **Proposed Seabream Fisheries Management Plan**

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report - Non-technical Summary**

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Version: public consultation



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# Non-technical Summary

The draft Seabream Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) has been prepared to meet the requirements of [the Fisheries Act 2020](#). It sets out the policies and proposed actions that Defra will use to manage black seabream and gilthead bream fishing activity, so stocks are harvested within sustainable levels. Alongside these actions, the draft Seabream FMP also sets out management to help support wider social, economic and environmental aspects of the fishery.

This environmental report (ER) has been produced in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations 2004). The following issues (from Schedule 2, paragraph 6 of the SEA Regulations 2004) were scoped into the assessment:

- biodiversity
- fauna
- flora
- geology and sediments (soil)
- water
- climatic factors
- cultural heritage
- landscape and seascape

This assessment focuses on how the policies and actions in draft Seabream FMP are likely to give rise to both significant positive and negative environmental effects. The findings of this assessment have been used to inform the development of the FMP.

The assessment was conducted against a baseline that primarily used existing evidence on the state of the marine environment set out in [updated UK Marine Strategy \(UK MS\) Part 1](#), published in 2019. Additional sources of evidence were used to establish the status of the environment in relation to issues not covered by the UK MS, such as climatic factors and cultural heritage. The historical impact of fishing activity on the marine environment has been considered part of the baseline. Our assessment used the best available evidence to reach a suitable judgement on the environmental effects of the draft Seabream FMP.

This report sets out those plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives, both international and domestic that Defra consider relevant to the draft Seabream FMP.

This report considers and acknowledges the existing environmental effects of targeted black seabream and gilthead bream fishing using drift and fixed nets and recreational sea angling on those issues scoped into this assessment in relation to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), the UK MS descriptors and the wider environment.

Furthermore, the report considers the environmental impacts of demersal and pelagic trawls, and demersal seines, which also record large numbers of black seabream landings. Vessels which operate demersal and pelagic trawls, as well as seines in English waters may target black seabream as part of a mixed fishery (primarily alongside gurnard, red mullet and other non-quota species), but may also land bycaught seabream in general. The potential positive and negative environmental effects of the draft Seabream FMP policies and proposed actions alone and in-combination have also been assessed.

This report concluded that current evidence shows the Seabream FMP fishery in its current state has a relatively small environmental impact. This is largely attributed to the small scale of its current commercial operations, with both black seabream and gilthead bream not largely targeted. However, the seabream fisheries in English waters are anticipated to expand in the coming years, as more seabreams migrate into our waters and the projections of other fish moving away from English waters in response to climate change. Black seabream are a popular target for recreational fishing, with survey data showing high retention rates. Beyond the impact of high retention on seabream populations, rod and line gear present minimal bycatch risk and align well with the Good Environmental Status (GES) of UK Marine Strategy (MS) descriptors due to their highly selective nature.

This SEA assesses the risk of static and drift nets, demersal and pelagic trawls, demersal seines (under towed gear), and rod and lines on the marine environment. With the exception of rod and lines, these gear types post moderate to high risks towards bycatch of MPA designated features and GES of UK MS descriptors. The impact of fishing in MPAs is managed in the 0-12 nautical miles zone in English waters, with four MPAs within the 0-6 nautical miles zone listing black seabream as designated features. Management in MPAs beyond the 12 nautical mile limit is in development. Further work is required to minimise any future impacts of targeted seabream fishing on habitats beyond MPAs to ensure GES targets are achieved. The contribution of black seabream and gilthead bream fishing to climate change related issues were also considered. The draft Seabream FMP sets out proposals to monitor, and where required, introduce mitigation to address these impacts.

The assessment of likely negative effects identified a low risk of significant adverse effects on the environment from implementing individual policies and actions. The policies and actions, will, where appropriate, be developed to avoid any potential negative effects identified by the assessment progress. The environmental effects of implementing the draft Seabream FMP policies and actions will also be monitored to identify unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage, so appropriate remedial action can be undertaken.

This assessment recommends the draft Seabream FMP should consider the following additional points:

1. Future iterations of the draft Seabream FMP should consider how to develop the cultural heritage of each fishery and how fisheries management can contribute to reducing potential negative interactions with submerged prehistoric landscapes or seascapes.

