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European Commission
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Dear Commissioner,

Emergency measures to protect threatened sea bass stocks

We are writing, following representations made to your office by the same commercial fishing interests whose actions have helped create the current crisis in bass stocks, to reiterate that the Angling Trust is in full support of the Commission's proposed emergency measures for the protection of seabass in EU waters.

We were pleased to see the Commission's proposals are in line with those put forward originally by the UK and we believe that the closure of targeted mid water and pelagic trawling for aggregating/spawning bass across all the relevant ICES areas is a long overdue management measure. The practice of allowing unlimited fishing effort on an adult spawning stock, such as this, has been the single largest contributing factor to the spawning stock biomass of bass converging towards its lowest historically observed level and ICES advising an 80 per cent cut in catches.

We call on you to ensure that the Commission's proposals are implemented in full and that the use of article 12 of Regulation 1380/2013, recognising that continued targeted fishing may inflict unsustainable damage on the spawning stock, means that the short term commercial interests of some member states' fleets do not undermine the proposals needed in order to protect and restore a commonly-owned stock and one that the Commission has already recognised is being subjected to fishing mortality four times higher than the stock can sustain.

Please, therefore, be robust and ensure that the Commission's draft regulation, *Establishing measures to alleviate a serious threat to the conservation of the sea bass stock in the Celtic Sea, Channel, Irish Sea and southern North Sea*, is implemented in full and without further delay.

In addition, we urge you to increase the minimum legal size to be above the 42cm breeding size to increase the resilience of the fishery by allowing any new adult entrants to get a chance to breed and replace themselves before they can be legitimately harvested.

We also wish to make clear that while we accept that all sectors must make a contribution to limiting bass mortality this should be done in a fair, balanced and proportionate way recognising that the recreational sector has the least impact on the stock.

Yours sincerely,

David Mitchell

Marine Campaigns Manager, Angling Trust