



National Bass Programme Update for Anglers

Age Profile of the Bass Population

To date, IFI has received over 400 bass scale samples from anglers around the country in 2018.

Angler-caught bass ranged in length from 13 to 79cm and in age from 1 to 18 years old in 2018 (Fig. 1). Forty per cent of bass aged to date from 2018 were 4 years old (2014 year class) and ranged in length from 30-47cm. These young bass were recorded as far west as the Shannon and as far east as Wicklow, providing reasonable angling between May and October 2018. It appears that these small bass took advantage of favourable weather conditions to temporarily expand their range. Anecdotal reports suggest this year class was abundant at least as far northeast as Carlingford but scale samples were not available to provide confirmation.

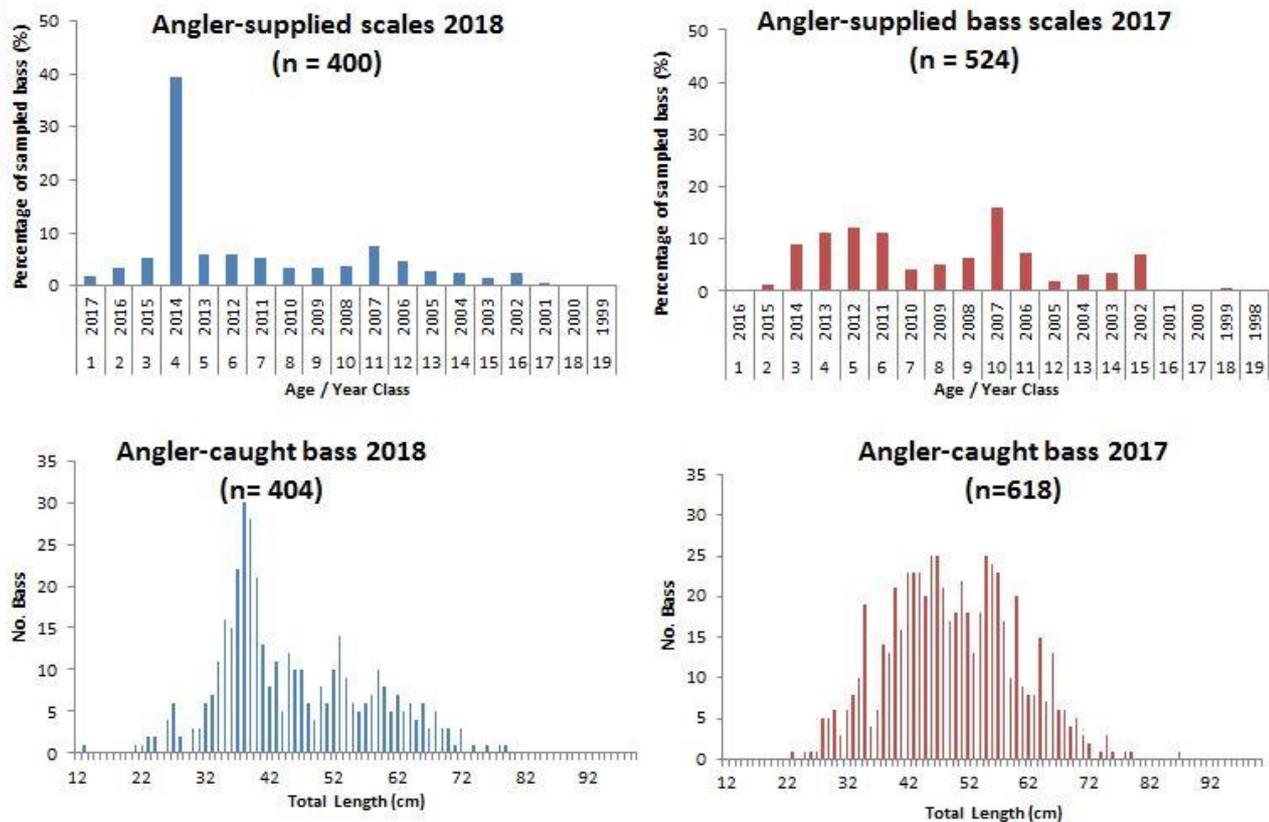


Fig. 1 Length and age frequency distribution of angler-supplied bass samples in 2017 and 2018.

As usually observed for pre-adult bass the 2014 year class was largely confined to its estuarine habitat in 2017 and was encountered in relatively small numbers by anglers (8% of aged samples)(26-40cm). Substantial numbers (39%) of this year class were encountered over the course of IFI's 2017 estuary trawling surveys of the Slaney, the Barrow-Nore-Suir and the Munster Blackwater (23-43cm). 98% of all fish were returned alive in each survey.

The prominent 2014 year class is evidence of a small recovery in one cohort of the bass population. Assuming good survival it will contribute to improved bass stocks over the next decade.

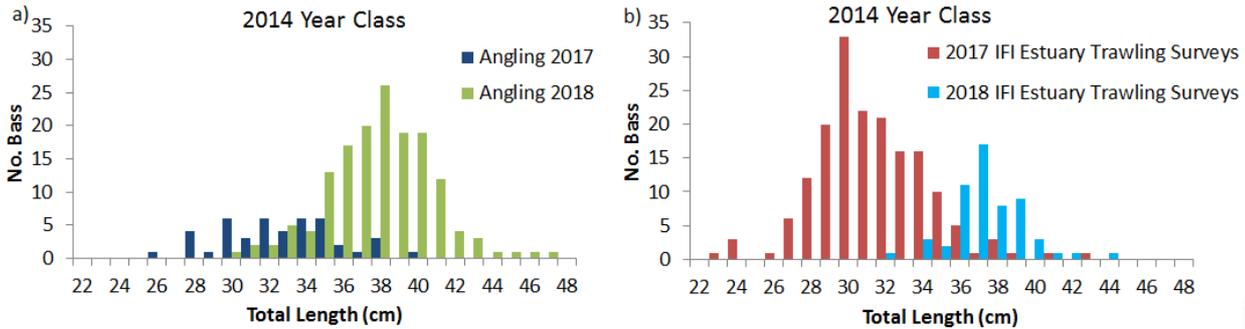


Fig. 2 Length-frequency of the 2014 year class encountered by a) anglers and b) IFI estuary trawling surveys.

Bass Angling Effort Data

IFI bass logbooks have been submitted by a small number of anglers since 2013. These logbooks provide information on catches and fishing effort and can advise on trends if sufficient returns are made. Provisionally the logbook data suggests that bass angling has remained relatively steady at around 0.5 bass per angler per hour between 2013 and 2018. 2016 was a poor year.

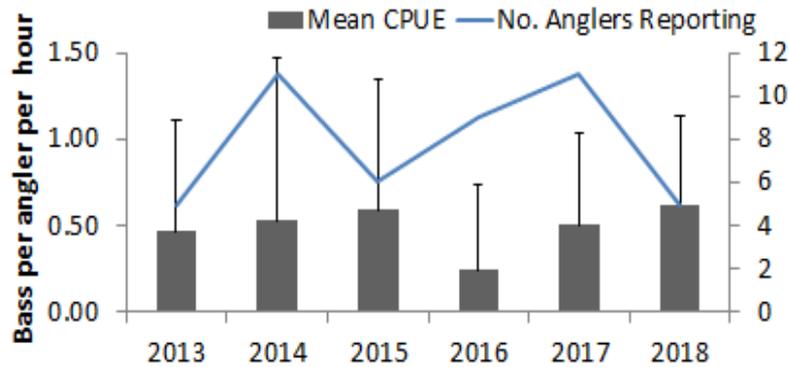


Fig. 5 Bass catch per unit effort (no. bass per angler per hour). Logbooks were submitted by a combination of recreational anglers and expert anglers.

Logbooks can provide an indication of changes in the size of the bass population around the Irish coast. Angling logbooks were submitted by a mixture of recreational sea anglers and expert bass anglers. However an increase in the number of anglers of all skill levels submitting logbooks is required before assessment of the abundance of the bass population can be reported with confidence. If you have not logged your angling efforts and would like to do so, please send a request for a logbook to the email address below.

Many thanks for your ongoing participation which continues to contribute invaluable information to our understanding and monitoring of the bass population around the Irish coast. Your support with this programme is much appreciated.

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