



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Fisheries Management Plans

Update 21 February 2024

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)

- The Fisheries Act 2020 commits the UK to developing FMPs to support sustainable fisheries management.
- The Joint Fisheries Statement sets out the 43 plans that will be delivered across the UK for a range of species and regional areas.
- FMPs set out policies and measures to manage fishing activity to restore and/or maintain fish stocks to sustainable levels, whilst supporting a thriving fishing industry and a healthy marine environment.
- Each FMP sets out which waters it applies to. Of the FMPs published to date, 3 apply to English waters and 2 (seabass and scallops apply to English and Welsh waters)
- FMPs are being developed with extensive stakeholder engagement through a collaborative approach.
- FMPs in themselves don't change fisheries management. They set out actions that need to be implemented over their 6 year lifecycle.
- FMPs have to be reviewed every 6 years, but can be changed sooner if the situation requires it.

FMP recap



- Consulted on 6 FMPs last summer. Consultation closed 1 October.
- Received over 500 responses across the FMPs (including from EU and MS).
- Ran a series of online and in person engagement events.
- Reviewed responses and amended the draft FMPs.
- 5 FMPs published in December 2023:
 - Crab and Lobster, Whelk & King Scallop, Bass & English Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species
- Developing an implementation programme, including establishing what regulatory changes will be required and how to manage evidence gaps.
- Aiming to publish the Southern North Sea flatfish plan in late spring/early summer.

Changes we made...

- Brought forward key actions
 - Bass – inshore and shore based netting reviews
 - Whelk – introduce permit scheme & a minimum conservation reference size (MCRS)
 - Scallop – consider the development of effort management & assess environmental impacts
 - Lobster and crab – consider the development of effort management – pilots in local areas
- Review our engagement and representation.
- Replaced cuttlefish MCRS with developing an Action plan.
- Collaborative/coordinated approach to implementation and evidence.
- Reaffirmed our commitment to continue building our positive working relationships with the EU – ensuring compliance with the TCA.

Timeline for development of next set of Defra led FMPs

Joint Fisheries Statement sets out the timetable for 43 FMPs

➤ Defra are the coordinating authority for 15 FMPs

2024	2025
Cockles	Celtic Seas demersal*
North Sea & Channel sprat#	Celtic Seas pelagic*
Southern North Sea and Channel Skates and rays	Black Sea Bream
Southern North Sea demersal NQS	Wrasses complex
Queen scallop	
Southern North Sea flatfish (2024)	

* Joint with Welsh Government;

Joint with Scottish Government

Devolved Administration led plans

- The UK administrations (Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland) are working together develop the joint UK FMPs.
- 21 Scottish led plans to be published end of 2024
 - Drafts currently being prepared by Scottish Govt.
 - UK stakeholder engagement planned soon
 - Consultation planned for summer (TBC)
- 2 Northern Irish led plans to be published in 2024
 - Defra working with stakeholders via working groups to draft plans
 - Irish Sea Pelagic FMP: consultation planned for late spring (TBC)
 - Irish Sea Demersal FMP: consultation planned for summer (TBC)

The remaining plans cover Devolved Administration waters.

Implementation of published FMPs

- The identified management measures need to be implemented. Short, medium and longer term measures over 6 year life cycle of the plans.
- Planning how we deliver these with the Marine Management Organisation
- A range of mechanisms will be used - such as voluntary measures, statutory instruments, licence conditions or byelaws.
- 160+ evidence gaps identified .
- We want to work in a more collaborative and open way. We need to consider how we will work with the EU.



Implementation – the short term measures

Management measure	FMP
Set up Channel Demersal NQS Group	Channel Demersal
Cuttlefish round table/ develop action plan	Channel Demersal
Consider introducing codes of practice on cuttlefish trap handling (cuttlefish action plan)	Channel Demersal
Consider seasonal closures for trawlers including cuttlefish trawlers (cuttlefish action plan)	Channel Demersal
Investigate the benefits of underwater structures to benefit egg survival of cuttlefish (cuttlefish action plan)	Channel Demersal
Consider wider changes such as MPA management or habitat improvements to benefit the cuttlefish fishery	Channel Demersal
Propose to monitor catches, create research plan and gather evidence for octopus	Channel Demersal
Consider introducing voluntary guidelines/education for recreational fishers	Channel Demersal
Consider a gross tonnage limit for flyseiners in ICES 7d and 7e (SI)	Channel Demersal
Statutory Instrument for fly-seining mesh size (100mm), engine restrictions (221 KW), MCRS for brill, turbot, lemon sole, and crawfish	Channel Demersal/Flatfish/Crab and Lobster
Set up Bass Management group (BMG)	Bass
Consider the current bass authorisation system	Bass
Consider more adaptive management systems e.g. moving catch limits from SI into licence conditions	Bass
Improving regulator communication with stakeholders & collaboration between MMO/IFCAs on targeted enforcement in how both regulators enforce legislation	Bass
Consider gear modifications to reduce bycatch	Bass
Collate additional evidence on bass discards	Bass
Consider incentivising domestic participation in scientific trials to improve data on discards	Bass
Consider the timing and duration of the closed seasons	Bass
Consider allowing fishers to switch between fixed nets and hook and line gears	Bass
Consider regulation of shallow inshore and shore-based netting	Bass

Implementation – the short term measures

Management measure	FMP
Statutory Instrument for lobster MCRS	Crab and lobster
Statutory Instrument for removal of soft-shelled crab as bait exemption	Crab and lobster
Pilot Finer scale management for brown crab and lobster (see lobster MCRS actions) in selected fishery units	Crab and lobster
Implement measures to improve the information base on recreational crab & lobster fishing. Consider how to manage recreational fishing effort	Crab and lobster
Commence work to develop an effort management strategy for crab and lobster	Crab and lobster
Consideration of broad alignment of scallop measures where environmental, social or economic benefits	King scallop
Area based closures/ area based management	King scallop
Development of an overarching management framework based on either an input or output control basis	King scallop
Assess and mitigate the effects of scallop fishing on seafloor integrity	King scallop
Partnership Engagement	King scallop
Consider the introduction of a whelk fishing permit scheme with conditions	Whelk
Increase whelk MCRSs where appropriate	Whelk

Examples of short-term actions for 2024

- Banning landings of soft-shelled crab for bait
- Pilot schemes for crab and lobster effort management
- Review of harmonisation of scallop management across UK administrative boundaries
- Developing a permit or entitlement scheme for whelk
- Setting up a new bass management group who will collaboratively review the bass authorisation process and netting provisions
- Developing an action plan for better managing cuttlefish
- Introducing legislation to manage flyseining effort and MCRS for three flatfish species in the Channel.

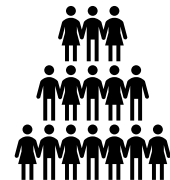
* Those in blue will affect the EU. Those in black will not affect the EU immediately.

Science and Evidence

- **Overview:**
 - Defra-led FMPs identified critical evidence gaps in fish stock management and environmental support.
- **Workshops:**
 - Collaborative discussion among representatives from academia, industry, conservation, recreation, policy, science, and regulation.
- **Collaborative Approach:**
 - Defra will use feedback to develop a collaborative FMP Evidence Approach.
- **Publication:**
 - Evidence gaps and revised Evidence Statements from 1st FMPs to be published later this year.
- **UK/EU engagement**



Need to consider how, but hope that there can be good cooperation on science and evidence



A

Themes

Interactions between fishing and the environment



Bycatch – of marine mammals, seabirds, protected species etc.



Benthic impacts – impacts to seabed habitats and species



Climate mitigation – impacts of fishing on climate change



Discards – discarding unwanted fish species



Pollution – litter and pollution



Wider Environment – impacts to the wider environment

Themes

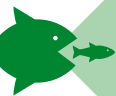
B

Fishery – the fishery landing the FMP species/stocks



Fishery – understanding landings, catch locations, gear types etc.

C



Species / stocks – understanding the species/stocks in the FMPs

Life History – understanding the species biology e.g. habitat, nursery areas, growth rates etc.



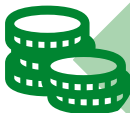
Climate adaption – understanding impacts of climate change and resilience

D

Management – understanding how to manage the stocks / species



Stock assessment – improving or initiate stock assessments



Social and economic – improving social and economic understanding of the fishery

Things to note

- We are still working out how we engage or work with the EU. The Specialised Committee may have a role (eg on Multi Year Strategies, but progress has been slow) for some aspects, but may not be appropriate for everything.
- Engagement before FMPs are finalised or while management measures are being developed is better. Once final documents are published, or legislation is published, it's too late to influence.
- Timings are likely to be affected by the UK general election which is likely to take place this year.
- Political priorities for the UK government may change as a result of the general election.

Questions and discussion