

**DRAFT – NOT GOVERNMENT POLICY**

**NON-QUOTA SHELLFISH FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN for  
NORTHERN IRELAND**

**APRIL 2026**

## Executive Summary

Fisheries management plans (FMPs) provide a tool for managing fishing activity towards more sustainable fisheries. They are a requirement of the:

- Fisheries Act 2020 ('the Act')
- UK Joint Fisheries Statement in 2022
- Environmental Improvement Plan 2024 for Northern Ireland.

The Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) sets out how the UK fisheries policy authorities (Defra, and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) will prepare and publish over 40 FMPs by 2028.

The FMPs bring together the evidence on the state of the stocks and identify measures and actions necessary to improve the evidence base and manage the fisheries in a sustainable way. Policies in an FMP will set out the short-term actions and longer-term vision for the management of the fishery.

The FMPs also consider relevant wider legal obligations, including the arrangements for improving the natural environment in Northern Ireland under Part 2 and Schedule 2 to the Environment Act 2021, and the need for strategic environmental assessment under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004.

This FMP is entitled the Northern Ireland Non-Quota Shellfish Fisheries FMP. The title of this FMP in the initial publication of the JFS was the Northern Ireland Inshore FMP. Following a UK-wide consultation in 2024 the title was amended to better reflect the full territorial extent of the FMP and its application to all of Northern Ireland waters. The species within scope of the FMP remained unchanged.

It has been prepared and published for the purposes of the Fisheries Act 2020. The species within scope of the FMP are brown (edible) crab, velvet crab, lobster, king scallop and queen scallop.

The relevant authority for this FMP is the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). This FMP applies in Northern Ireland waters only for the fishing of the aforementioned species.

To develop this Non-Quota Shellfish FMP, DAERA established created separate working groups that focused on crabs and lobsters, and scallops species respectively. The co-design process included participation from DAERA officials, representatives of the fishing industry, fisheries scientists from the Agri-food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI), environmental non-governmental organisations, and Seafish.

In accordance with section 10 of the Fisheries Act 2020, DAERA must exercise its functions in accordance with this FMP which sets out policies designed to restore one or more stocks of sea fish to, or maintain them at, sustainable levels or contribute to the restoring or maintenance at sustainable levels.

Notwithstanding that maximum sustainable yield (MSY) is not determined for the species within scope of the FMP, DAERA considers that the available scientific advice and stock assessments prepared by AFBI are sufficient to determine existing levels of sustainability, based on accepted ICES category 3 assessment method.

## **CONTENTS**

### **Chapter 1**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

**What is an FMP?**

**Why an FMP for non-quota shellfish species**

### **Chapter 2**

#### **FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES**

### **Chapter 3**

#### **CRABS AND LOBSTERS**

**Overview of the fleet**

**Legislative measures for crab and lobster**

**Shellfish entitlement**

**Western waters regime**

**NI specific measures**

**Other policies relevant to crab and lobster**

**Vessel monitoring systems**

**Recreational fishing**

**Marking of gear**

**Scientific Advice and Stock Assessments**

### **Chapter 4**

#### **SCALLOPS**

**Scallop Fisheries**

**Current Technical Measures**

**Western Waters regime**

**King Scallops**

**Queen Scallops**

**Scallop Enhancement Sites**

**Marine Protected Areas**

**Isle of Man Queen Scallops**

**Project UK – King Scallop Fishery Improvement Plan**

**Scientific Advice and Stock Assessments**

### **Chapter 5**

#### **Windsor Framework and EU Fisheries Control**

**Windsor Framework**

**EU Fisheries Control**

## **Chapter 6**

### **Environmental Considerations**

**Environment Strategy and Environment Improvement Plan**

**Draft Green Growth Strategy**

**The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022**

**Managing and addressing environmental risks**

**MPA Strategy for Northern Ireland Inshore Region**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment**

**Nature Conservation Advice**

## **Chapter 7**

### **FMP Implementation, monitoring and review**

**Timeline for proposed management measures/actions**

**Implementation, monitoring and review**

**Monitoring performance**

**Review and revision of the FMP**

## **Annex 1**

### **Landings of species 2019-2024**

**Edible/Brown Crab**

**Velvet Crab**

**Lobster**

**King Scallop**

**Queen Scallop**

## **Annex 2**

### **Fisheries Act 2020 - Objectives**

## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1. The waters around the coast of Northern Ireland are home to many wild shellfish stocks. Shellfish stocks represent a valuable public resource that contribute to food production, employment opportunities, and recreational activities. This sector also fosters a distinct identity and sense of pride within local communities. In addition, these stocks are essential to marine ecosystems.
2. Some fish stocks are experiencing pressure from activities such as fishing, and amongst others, the impacts of climate change, marine offshore developments and industries, and pollutions. Furthermore, certain types of fishing gear can have adverse effects on the seabed. Consequently, it is essential to evaluate both the positive and negative implications of fishing within the broader context of sustainable fish stock management and marine environmental stewardship.

### What is an FMP?

3. A Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) is a document prepared and published under the Fisheries Act 2020 ('the 2020 Act') that sets out policies designed to restore one or more stocks of sea fish to, or maintain them at, sustainable levels or contribute to the restoring or maintenance at sustainable levels.
4. An FMP is an evidence-based action plan that supports delivery of sustainable fisheries for current and future generations. The FMP is a long-term plan that must be reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least once every six years.
5. An FMP sets out both a longer-term vision and goals for the fishery (or fisheries), together with the policies and management interventions necessary to achieve these goals in the shorter term.
6. Section 7 of the Fisheries Act 2020 makes provision for DAERA to prepare and publish, amendments of the FMP, a replacement FMP, or a document

revoking the FMP in order to take account of the relevant change of circumstances.

7. Relevant circumstances include (in particular) changes relating to the international obligations of the United Kingdom, things done (or not done) by the government of a territory outside the United Kingdom that affect the marine and aquatic environment, available scientific evidence, or available evidence relating to the social, economic or environmental elements of sustainable development.

### Why an FMP for non-quota shellfish species?

8. Shellfish stocks are an important natural resource within the Northern Ireland zone. DAERA continues to work with the fishing sector and wider group of stakeholders to ensure that key commercial non-quota shellfish stocks are harvested sustainably and supported by a healthy marine environment, so they continue to provide benefits into the future.
9. The main non-quota shellfish species targeted by the Northern Ireland fishing fleet are crabs, lobsters and scallops. The species within scope of this FMP are brown crab (*Cancer pagurus*), velvet crab (*Necora puber*), lobsters (*Homarus gammarus*), king scallop (*Pecten maximus*) and queen scallop (*Aequipecten opercularis*). Some other non-quota shellfish species, for example whelks, are targeted to a lesser extent by the local fleet.
10. The non-quota shellfish sector is of considerable importance to the Northern Ireland fishing industry, local communities and the wider economy.
11. Fishing opportunities for the crab, lobster and scallop stocks within scope of this FMP are not currently subject to total allowable catch (quota) limits.
12. The actions within this FMP are focused on the achievement of, and maintaining the stock at sustainable levels, continuing to deliver any existing management approaches, and identifying and delivering improvements to

management where this is needed. The actions within the FMP also allow for future action to be taken should it be needed.

## CHAPTER 2 - FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN OBJECTIVES

### Fisheries management

13. The aim of this FMP is to preserve the long-term sustainable use of fisheries resources, whilst minimising any potential negative environmental, social, or economic impacts.
14. The responsibility for the management of sea fisheries in the Northern Ireland zone lies with DAERA. Fisheries management is delivered in accordance with several key Acts including amongst others the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 and the Fisheries Act 2020, the latter providing the statutory basis for the publication of the Joint Fisheries Statement and FMPs.
15. Other legislative arrangements such as Northern Ireland Statutory Rules, UK Statutory Instruments, and assimilated EU law provide much of the detailed regulations for compliance with sea fishing legislation. Licence conditions are also used to manage sea fishing.
16. Shellfish species are a key food source for a variety of other marine species. These species are facing cumulative pressures within the marine environment from habitat loss, marine pollution, disease, and climate change. Careful consideration must be given to these issues in developing fisheries management measures in this FMP and in subsequent reviews of it.
17. To give them the best chance of survival and allow for recovery of depleted populations, it is vital they have sufficient food supply. It is important therefore that fishing for non-quota shellfish within scope of this FMP is at a sustainable level not only for human consumption but for species within the wider marine environment.
18. It is important to continue to gather evidence in this area to understand how the respective non-quota shellfish fisheries for crabs and lobsters and separately the scallop fisheries interact with the wider marine environment

and also to consider and acknowledge the social and economic benefits and value of these respective fisheries to coastal communities. This will require continued monitoring by DAERA to better understand the social economic value of these fisheries to coastal communities located in and around NI.

19. In accordance with the objectives in the Fisheries Act 2020, the FMP and actions therein must be developed in accordance with best available scientific evidence. Consequently, if there is any fishing pattern or risk associated with overfishing beyond the scientific advice, a more cautious approach may be required, even ahead of its statutory review timeframe.
20. Subsequent reviews and iterations of this FMP will need to factor in other emerging issues that may impact the marine space such as climate change, warming seas and the development of renewable energy construction.
21. In addition, to deliver on the bycatch objective in the Fisheries Act 2020, monitoring and reporting of all bycatch will be necessary, notwithstanding that monitoring and reporting is already done to some extent on an ad-hoc basis by AFBI observers, and also during the annual AFBI scallop surveys.

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN

### Objective 1 – The sustainable harvest in Northern Ireland waters of non-quota shellfish stocks within scope of this FMP (brown crab, velvet crab, lobster, king scallop and queen scallop)

The main objective of FMPs, as outlined in the Act and JFS and reiterated throughout this FMP, is to support sustainable harvesting of the respective non-quota shellfish stocks. This is intended to maintain the long-term sustainability of both the stocks and the fisheries that depend on them.

Some stocks within scope of this FMP are sustainably fished at present, while others will require some intervention. The goal is to maintain or achieve sustainable fisheries as appropriate.

#### How to maintain this

- The management of the non-quota shellfish fisheries will be informed based on the best available scientific advice.
- Establish expert groups for (i) crabs and lobsters (ii) scallop species to consider the scientific advice and other appropriate data sources and recommend policy proposals or harvest control strategies and rules for sustainable fisheries.
- Inshore Fisheries Partnership Group to consider proposals/recommendations for evidence-based policies for sustainable non-quota shellfish fisheries from aforementioned working groups.

Relevant Fisheries Act objectives • sustainability objective • scientific objective • ecosystem objective

## Objective 2 – Recognise and address gaps in evidence necessary to enhance stock assessment

### Rationale

While current stock assessments are considered sufficiently robust to inform management decisions, improvements in the understanding of biology, ecology and stock structure will lead to more accurate assessments and advice.

The initial parental pool for the cohort of lobsters is nearing the end of its usefulness.

Assessing the impact of recreational pot fishing could provide useful data for stock assessments and support current management practices in non-quota shellfish fisheries, contributing to the goals outlined in the FMP.

### How this could be achieved: short term

Identify the key drivers and main sources of uncertainty in current non-quota shellfish stock assessments.

Establish a parental pool for a new cohort of v-notched lobsters

Implement additional measures to enable impact of recreational potting on crab and lobster stocks to be assessed.

### How this could be achieved: medium to long term

Implementation and roll out of the agreed policy on vessel monitoring devices to facilitate a better understanding of the spatial data of the fishing for crabs and lobsters, and scallops by the under 12 metre fishing fleet.

Develop a research plan to address data gaps, focusing on stock structure and the distribution of non-quota shellfish in Northern Ireland waters.



Relevant Fisheries Act objectives • sustainability objective • precautionary objective • scientific objective • ecosystem objective

### Objective 3 – Identify ecosystem-based fisheries management methods applicable to non-quota shellfish fisheries

A robust fishing industry relies on the health and productivity of marine ecosystems. In accordance with the JFS and the Act, UK fisheries policy authorities are committed to implementing an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, aiming to consider and minimise impacts on non-commercial species as well as the broader marine environment.

This is also aligned with established initiatives, including the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative and Clean Catch UK.

#### How this could be achieved: short term

- Compile available data into a report on the ecosystem role of non-quota shellfish fisheries.
- Promote fishery-science partnerships to fill knowledge gaps using industry expertise.

#### How this could be achieved: medium to long term

- Consider how to undertake additional targeted evidence collection (including self-reporting and the potential for remote electronic monitoring (REM) programmes) to improve estimates of bycatch caught in gear types used to target non-quota shellfish within scope of this FMP.
- Consider research into how an ecosystem-based approach could be incorporated into future iterations of the Non Quota Shellfish FMP and where these might align with comparable approaches for other species.
- Consider development of policy aiming to minimise or eliminate any impact of the non-quota shellfish fisheries in relation to the designated features of MPAs and wider seas to progress contribution towards achieving GES in the Northern Ireland zone, compatible with targets set by the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS).

Relevant Fisheries Act objectives • sustainability objective • scientific objective • ecosystem objective • bycatch objective

## Objective 4 – Deliver a framework to support the role of the FMP in realising sustainable fisheries and marine economies.

### Rationale

As set out in the JFS and the Act, the UK holds an ambition to support a modern, resilient, and environmentally responsible fishing industry. This includes managing our fisheries sustainably by balancing environmental, economic, and social considerations, so that the capacity of fleets is such that they are economically viable, but do not overexploit marine stocks. The JFS notes that the scope of an FMP may be extended as appropriate, to consider wider fisheries management issues covering environmental, social, and economic concerns.

### How could this be achieved: short term

- Consider an economic assessment of the fisheries to identify any barriers to the realisation of economic viability to the coastal communities in Northern Ireland.
- Explore funding opportunities to encourage industry-led development of proposals and measures aimed at maximizing the efficiency of fishing vessels, whilst maintaining sustainable practices. This includes investigating the potential for automation and assessing circular economy benefits (such as total catch valorisation and utilisation of by-products).
- A review of current technical measures affecting the non-quota shellfish fisheries, to include a consideration of the impact of potential modifications to these measures on both the shellfish fisheries (in scope of this FMP) and other species.

### How could this be achieved: medium to long term

- Adapt the FMP to reflect relevant findings from economic assessments when new or improved measures are developed as appropriate.

**Relevant Fisheries Act objectives** • sustainability objective • equal access objective • ecosystem objective • national benefit objective

## **Objective 5 – Develop strategies and measures to adapt to the impact of climate change on non-quota shellfish fisheries, and assess what impact these fisheries have on climate change**

### **Rationale**

The climate change objective of the Act requires that adverse effects of fisheries on climate change are minimised and that fishery activities should adapt to climate change.

As stated in the climate change section of this FMP, climate change is likely to impact non-quota shellfish stocks with a potential to affect factors such as production, distribution, and predation.

The nature and extent of any possible changes and the ability for intervention is unknown. The development of adaptive management strategies will require the filling of evidence gaps, and this objective considers what evidence might support adaptation.

Notwithstanding the climate change objective in the Fisheries Act 2020 there is a need to carefully consider the impacts of net zero ambitions (and the impact of, for example offshore renewable sites and associated infrastructure) on food production sites in the Northern Ireland zone.

### **How could this be achieved: short term**

- Ensure that the non-quota shellfish fisheries are considered within wider research to identify the likely impacts of climate change on fisheries, their links within the wider ecosystem.
- Consider how best to maintain collaboration and involvement across government, industry, and academic sectors in initiatives to reduce environmental impacts of the non-quota shellfish fisheries (including CO2 emissions).

### **How could this be achieved: medium to long term**

- Consider identifying the impacts that the non-quota shellfish fisheries have on the marine environment (including CO2 emissions) through collaborative studies.
- Consider how ecosystem-based fisheries management approaches can be used for managing fishing for these non-quota shellfish, that are robust to the effects of climate variability.

Relevant Fisheries Act objectives • sustainability objective • climate change objective • ecosystem objective

## CHAPTER 3      CRABS and LOBSTER FISHERIES

22. Crabs and lobsters are traditionally fished using pots (or creels). The pots are baited which attracts animals into the pot through an entrance, or “eye”. In single chambered pots, the animal can get out with relative ease. However, pots which have two chambers (parlour pots) are much more difficult for the animal to get out of. These pots are traditionally used in areas where weather can prevent fishermen getting out to check the pots regularly.
23. Escape panels may be added to either style of pots. These panels allow undersized animals and some bycatch species to leave the pot. The use of pots with escape gaps results in a reduction in sorting time and therefore overall fishing time and fuel consumption.
24. Pot fishing is seen as a relatively benign form of fishing having little impact on the environment (Kinnear et al. 1996; Holt et al. 1998; Eno et al. 2001; Adey et al. 2006; OSPAR Commission, 2009). Indeed, in areas where other forms of fishing have been prohibited (for example in parts of the Northern Ireland Marine Protected Area network), the use of pots for fishing crabs and lobsters has been allowed to continue. Mortality of bycatch by pot fishing is also low in comparison to other fishing gear (Welby, 2014).
25. The crab and lobster species caught in Northern Ireland waters are targeted predominantly by the 10 metre or under vessel fleet.

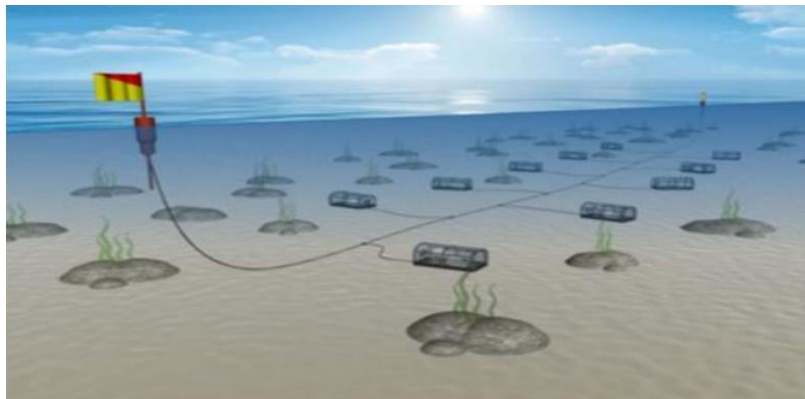
### Overview of Northern Ireland Fleet in 2025

26. The Northern Ireland fishing fleet comprised a total of 264 licensed vessels of which 171 vessels were in the 10 metre and under category. This fleet was actively engaged in targeting various shellfish species, with a significant proportion dedicated to the capture of brown crab, velvet crab, and lobster.

27. Out of the total fleet, 85 vessels (representing 30.7% of all Northern Ireland registered vessels) specifically targeted brown crab. Of these, the majority 69 vessels (81.2%), were relatively small, measuring between 0 and 9.99 metres in length. The remaining 16 vessels (18.8%) were 10 metres or longer, indicating some diversity in vessel size among those pursuing brown crab.
28. A total of 72 vessels (26% of the total fleet) focused their efforts on velvet crab. Nearly all of these vessels 69 (95.8%), were in the 0 to 9.99 metre range, while only 3 vessels (4.2%) measured 10 metres or more. This highlights a predominance of smaller vessels within the velvet crab sector.
29. Lobster was targeted by 104 vessels, making up 37.5% of the fleet. Among these, 91 vessels (87.5%) were under 10 metres in length, with 13 vessels (12.5%) measuring 10 metres or more. As with the crab fisheries, the lobster sector is largely composed of smaller vessels.
30. There was notable overlap in the targeting of different shellfish species. Specifically, 54 vessels (19.5% of the total fleet) targeted both brown crab and velvet crab. The vast majority of these vessels 51 (94.4%), were between 0 and 9.99 metres, with only 3 vessels (5.6%) measuring 10 metres or more.
31. Additionally, 94 vessels (33.9% of the fleet) targeted a combination of brown crab and/or velvet crab along with lobster. Of these, 86 vessels (91.5%) were under 10 metres, while 8 vessels (8.5%) measured 10 metres or above. This demonstrates considerable flexibility within the fleet, with many vessels equipped to pursue multiple shellfish species.
32. The majority of this fleet use the traditional D-shaped pot with two entrances on either side.



33. Pots can either be shot individually or more commonly in strings, where a number of pots are attached to one long rope and laid on the seabed, with a buoy or similar floating object used to mark the location of each end of the string. If the pots are very light weight, or shot in areas of strong tides an anchor or weight may be added at both ends of the string to minimise movement on the seabed. Some fishers use a heavier pot at the end of each string.



34. The number of pots in a string depends on many factors, such as the size and design of vessel, the area they are shot in, the type of seabed, and the personal preference of the skipper and crew. The numbers in a string in most lobster fisheries depends on the amount that the boat can comfortably handle on deck at one time.

35. Any by-catch or crabs which are undersized, soft or berried and undersized or v-notched lobster or lobsters with a mutilated tail must be immediately returned to the sea.
36. The smaller vessels in the crab and lobster fleet generally store their catch in boxes that are kept damp and out of sunlight. prior to sale These smaller vessels make up the majority of the vessels in the Northern Irish fleet.
37. The few larger vessels will store their catch in vivier tanks to keep them alive onboard the vessel and land their catch after several days of fishing. A vivier tank is a tank built into the hull of the vessel with a pump system to circulate fresh seawater to keep the animals alive. In both methods of storing the catch, any lobster will have a small elastic band fitted over its claws to prevent them damaging each other in storage.
38. Once put ashore, many shellfish buyers will transport the catch in lorries fitted with vivier tanks to ensure the shellfish are still alive and fresh when they reach the end user. This method of transportation is crucial for maintaining the quality and value of the shellfish, as well as meeting the expectations of both wholesalers and retailers.
39. The constant circulation of seawater during transit helps to reduce stress on the animals and minimises mortality rates, supporting the reputation of Northern Irish shellfish for their freshness and quality upon arrival.

## Legislative Measures for Crabs and Lobsters

40. The crab and lobster stocks in Northern Ireland are managed through a range of technical measures. These technical measures were historically provided for in the form of conservation regulations written into the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) through various EU delegated acts, many of which have now been assimilated into UK law.
41. These regulations include amongst others minimum conservation reference sizes (MCRS). Under the Windsor Framework, Northern Ireland continues to apply section 4 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1241 insofar as MCRS is concerned.
42. The Inshore Fishing (Prohibition of Fishing and Fishing Methods) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1993 consolidated previous regulations and in the main prohibited fishing by trawls in specified areas within the Northern Ireland inshore zone out to 12 nautical miles, where much of the fishing activity for crabs and lobsters by the Northern Ireland fleet is focused.
43. In 2022 DAERA made the Marine Protected Areas (Prohibited Methods of Fishing) Regulations 2022. These Regulations introduced a ban on fishing with demersal gear in the marine protected areas in the Northern Ireland inshore region. These Regulations introduced some restrictions on fishing with pots in the marine protected areas at Rathlin Island, Red Bay, Skerries and Causeway and Waterfoot.

## Shellfish Entitlement

44. The shellfish entitlement was granted by the 2003 UK Restrictive Shellfish Licensing Scheme and was set up to cap levels of crab and lobster fishing. Through this scheme a fisher was granted a shellfish entitlement based on track record (if they had landed or sold more than 200kg lobsters or 750kg crabs during any 12 month consecutive period between 1 January 1998 and

31 December 2002). The eligibility period was later extended to 31 March 2004.

45. A shellfish entitlement can only be obtained, by a current holder agreeing to transfer out a current licence or licence entitlement. A shellfish entitlement cannot be separated from a fishing vessel licence.
46. However, for those vessels without a shellfish entitlement, a condition of their licence provides that they may land up to 5 lobsters and 25 crabs per day. The licence condition for such vessels does not prevent those vessels from deploying pots to catch crab and lobsters.

### Western Waters Regime

47. The UK fisheries administrations– the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Marine Directorate (Scotland), DAERA and the Welsh Government – have joint responsibility for the Western Waters (WW) effort regime for crabs.
48. The WW regime applies to all UK fishing vessels over 15 metres in length fishing for brown crab (*Cancer pagurus*) and spider crab (*Maja squinado*) in ICES Areas VI, VII and VIII. This includes Northern Ireland waters.
49. The scheme is managed by the setting of effort limits for days at sea and providing for these in the relevant fishing vessel licence. This is subject to review each quarter by the UK fisheries administrations.

### Northern Ireland specific measures

50. The MCRS for brown crab caught and landed in Northern Ireland is currently 150mm carapace width. This measure is provided for in the Edible Crabs (Undersized) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020, as amended. It has been in effect

since January 2022 having been increased initially in 2020 from the EU MCRS of 130mm to 140mm.

51. In addition, the Edible Crabs (Conservation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, as amended, prohibit the retention on board, the bringing to land or landing from a sea-fishing boat the detached claws of a brown crab, any soft-shelled brown crab and any berried (egg-carrying) brown crabs. The removal of the eggs is also prohibited. Berried and soft-shelled edible brown crab brought on board a sea-fishing boat must be immediately returned to the sea.
52. These legislative measures are a result of the proactive role played by the local fishing industry since 2010 in calling on DAERA to introduce further regulations for the crab fishery. A clear demonstration of co-management, the efforts by industry aimed to ensure the long-term sustainability of commercial crab stocks through meaningful engagement, effective consultation and the subsequent introduction of these conservation initiatives.
53. However, notwithstanding the introduction of additional regulations for the brown crab fishery, the penalty for breaching these regulations is currently a fine not exceeding £1,000. This maximum fine was established almost 50 years ago when the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 was enacted. The working group in developing this FMP has agreed that a review of the penalty system is necessary, so that monetary penalties are appropriate and act as an appropriate deterrent from offending in the first place and repeat offending.
54. Notwithstanding this, the Department has recently consulted on policy proposals for a Fisheries and Water Environment Bill which will amend the 1966 Act to increase the maximum penalty for such offences. The Bill is expected to be introduced in the Northern Ireland Assembly before the summer recess in 2026.

## VELVET CRAB

55. The MCRS for velvet crab caught and landed in Northern Ireland is 65mm carapace width. This measure is provided for in the Undersized Velvet Crabs Order 1989. Again, the current penalty for landing a velvet crab which is under MCRS is a fine not exceeding £1,000. Review of this limit was included in the recent consultation on a Fisheries Bill.

## LOBSTER

56. The current MCRS for European lobster caught and landed in Northern Ireland is 87mm carapace length. This measure is provided for in the Crabs and Lobsters (Minimum Size) Order (Northern Ireland) 2000. The current penalty for landing an undersized lobster is a fine not exceeding £1,000. Review of this limit has been included within the recent consultation on a Fisheries Bill.
57. The Lobster (Conservation of Stocks) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 prohibit the retention on board of a V-notched or mutilated lobster. A mutilated or V-notched lobster must be returned alive to the sea. The current penalty for landing a mutilated or v-notched lobster is a fine not exceeding £1,000. This limit has been the subject of the recent consultation on a Fisheries Bill

## THE LOBSTERS (PROHIBITION OF INTRODUCTION) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1982

58. To protect European lobster stocks in Northern Ireland from the threat of invasive species the Lobster (Prohibition of Introduction) Order (Northern Ireland) 1982 bans the introduction of live American lobsters (*Homarus americanus*) and European lobsters (*Homarus gammarus*) from outside Northern Ireland.

## LOBSTER V-NOTCHING

59. By way of background, a voluntary v-notching scheme was introduced in Northern Ireland over two decades ago. V-notching involves removing a small notch from the tail of any egg-carrying female (usually of legal landing size) before returning it to the sea. Because the notch remains visible for several moults, these females are protected in legislation for a number of years, allowing them to reproduce multiple times.
60. The aim of v-notching is to increase the total number of reproductive females and, in turn, overall egg production and stock resilience. More recently, the scheme has expanded to include a small proportion of “premium” lobsters (large females and males over 127mm carapace length) recognising their disproportionate contribution to reproduction and fertilisation success.
61. V-notching is widely recognised as a global exemplar of sustainable fishery management and one of the most successful and scientifically validated conservation measures for shellfish fisheries.
62. In Northern Ireland, two fishermen’s associations administer the funded V-notching schemes: the North Coast Lobster Fishermen’s Association (NCLFA) and the North-East Lobster Cooperative (NELCO). Both organisations receive grant aid in return for participation, while many other fishers voluntarily v-notch lobsters outside the funded schemes, recognising the long-term benefits to stock productivity and fishery sustainability.
63. In 2003/04, a pioneering genetic tagging programme led by Professor Paulo Prodöhl (Queen’s University Belfast), in collaboration with NELCO, and later NCLFA and AFBI, introduced DNA profiling into the v-notching scheme. This work established the first parental pool comprising over 4,000 v-notched females, from which lobster families were genetically reconstructed. Genetic tagging made it possible to identify the offspring of these v-notched lobsters in later years, enabling scientists to measure recruitment, track larval dispersal,

and assess the long-term contribution of the v-notching scheme to local stocks.

64. Results from over two decades of genetic tagging show that the programme has been highly successful. Offspring from the original 2003/04 v-notched cohort have been detected consistently in later years, most of them caught in the same general area as their parents. This confirms strong local retention and demonstrates that participating fishing communities directly benefit from their conservation efforts.
65. Genetic data have also shown that v-notched females can survive and reproduce over multiple years, with larger females contributing disproportionately to recruitment. These findings provide clear evidence that the Northern Ireland v-notching and genetic tagging programme has strengthened stock resilience and supported long-term sustainability. Notably, while lobster stocks in other UK regions without comparable schemes have declined (Cefas 2023), Northern Ireland's stocks have remained stable. This comparison reinforces the effectiveness of sustained v-notching and genetic monitoring as practical management tools.
66. However, the original 2003/04 parental pool has now reached the end of its natural usefulness. After more than twenty years, most of the females from that cohort have either died or no longer reproduce, meaning their offspring now represent only a small part of the population. To maintain the effectiveness of the genetic tagging programme, the parental database needs to be updated with v-notched females from more recent years. This will ensure that monitoring reflects the current breeding population and that the long-term benefits of the scheme continue to be measured accurately.

## OTHER POLICIES RELEVANT TO CRAB/LOBSTER FISHERIES

### Strangford Lough

67. Following a complaint to the European Commission over an alleged breach of the EU Habitats Directive, the Department introduced the Strangford Lough (Sea Fishing Exclusion Zones) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 to prohibit fishing in two zones within the Lough to protect horse mussel (*Modiolus modiolus*) reefs.
68. In 2014, against a background of needing to exercise closer control of fishing activity in the Strangford Lough Special Area of Conservation, the Department introduced a restrictive access arrangement which permitted pot fishing outside of the two zones within the Lough. The use of mobile gear in the Lough had been prohibited through a previous Statutory Rule.
69. Permits were issued to applicants who demonstrated a track record of having fished within the Lough. This allowed for the tradition of fishing the Lough to be maintained in a sustainable manner.

## VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEMS for UNDER 12 METRE VESSELS

70. In May 2024, the Minister for Agricultural, Environment and Rural Affairs approved the policy proposal for the requirement for all Northern Ireland registered under 12 metre fishing vessels to have a Vessel Monitoring System (IVMS) when operating in and outside of the Northern Ireland zone.
71. This proposal is consistent with IVMS policy for under 12 metre vessels that the fisheries administrations in England, Isle of Man, Wales have implemented and which the Scottish Government has recently consulted on.
72. Northern Ireland registered under 12 metre fishing vessels will also be impacted by the changes in relation to IVMS that the European Union is introducing by a recent amendment to its Fisheries Control Regulation. This commits its Member States (including Republic of Ireland) to having VMS

operational for under 12 metre vessels fishing in their respective waters by early in 2028 with a derogation for under 9 metre vessels to have IVMS operational by end of 2029.

73. Good quality high resolution IVMS data is key to providing the evidence base for future fisheries management decisions and will contribute to the achievement of the scientific evidence objective.
74. Notwithstanding the development of this FMP, DAERA is currently working to deliver an effective roll-out of this IVMS policy in Northern Ireland.

### RECREATIONAL FISHING USING POTS

75. Recreational fishing for crab and lobster is generally a seasonal activity which is common in some coastal areas of Northern Ireland, particularly in Co. Down, and along the north coast of County Antrim in the months from April through to October.
76. Regulations were introduced in Northern Ireland in 2008 which limit the number of pots (5) that can be used, limit the daily catch to 1 lobster and 5 crabs and prohibit the use of a stock cage. Marker buoys are to be legibly and indelibly marked with the name of the boat or owner.
77. However, there is no requirement to submit catch information. An obvious evidence gap exists insofar as DAERA does not have any information on the extent of crab and lobster catches by recreational potters. Shellfish landed by recreational fishers is for personal consumption and is prohibited from being sold.
78. Addressing such gaps would assist in the understanding of the impact of catches by recreational fishers on crabs and lobster stocks.

79. In some inshore regions in England where IFCA's have responsibility for managing the 0-6 nautical mile zone, recreational potters are required to register for permits.
80. In the Republic of Ireland, recent amendments to the EU Regulations on recreational fishing now apply. There is an obligation on each Member State to submit catch information each year to the Commission listing numbers and weights of all catches landed by recreational sea fishers (potters, anglers etc.).
81. Notwithstanding the development of this FMP, DAERA commenced a consultation on 1 October 2025, on proposed additional measures for recreational fishing for crabs and lobsters, including a requirement to be registered to conduct such activity, the tagging of creels and submitting catch returns.

### Marking of gear

82. The marking of static gear is regulated across the United Kingdom by the application of assimilated law, originally derived from when the UK was part of the EU's common fisheries policy and the issue of best practice guidance.
83. Poorly marked creels can pose risks to other marine users and marine mammals, due to entanglement with floating ropes buoys which are difficult to see.
84. As part of its implementation work with the Crab and Lobster FMP for England and Wales, the UK Shellfish Industry Advisory Group has been reviewing the assimilated law ahead of making recommendations to DEFRA and the MMO.
85. The review will look to ensure that any revised regulations will be easy to understand, implement (in terms of identifying owners, both commercial and recreational) and enforce. This review will consider the obvious risk of

entanglement of cetaceans by ropes from which pots are attached and the use of other items such as empty oil drums and milk bottles and plastic footballs, and their impact on the marine space and environment.

86. The outcome of that review and potential changes to assimilated law on the marking of static gear may have implications for the crab and lobster fisheries in Northern Ireland.
87. In 2020, the Scottish Government made the Marking of Creels (Scotland) Order which made it mandatory for marker buoys to be fixed to creels. Marker buoys were defined as equipment specifically designed for marking the position of other equipment in water. This effectively banned the use of inappropriate items such as milk cartons or oil drums, which were considered to have negative impacts on the marine environment.

## ADVICE AND STOCK ASSESSMENTS

88. A scientific work programme has been developed between AFBI and DAERA to meet the requirements for improved knowledge on the non quota shellfish fisheries which are within the scope of this FMP. Advice sheets for the respective species covered by this FMP were first prepared at the end of 2021 and have been published every year since.

### Brown Crab

89. A length-based indicator is currently used to assess the brown crab stock, with length at which growth is optimum ( $L_{opt}$ ) being used as a proxy for Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). The indicator is only used for crabs which are landed.
90. The latest AFBI [Brown Crab Stock Assessment](#) indicates that both male and female brown crab are below  $L_{opt}$  and therefore considered to be overexploited. The landings per unit effort (LPUE) for brown crab indicates a downward trend since 2017. A report published by ICES in 2025 "An Overview

of the Brown Crab (*Cancer pagurus*) fisheries and stock trends in the North-East Atlantic” 2025 reaffirms the decline in brown crab in this region.

91. Since 2020 DAERA has introduced several legislative measures aimed at arresting these declines and sustaining the brown crab fishery. These include two separate increases in minimum conservation reference size, initially from 130mm to 140mm, and then again from 140mm to 150mm.
92. In addition, legislation has been introduced to prohibit the landing of berried (egg-carrying) brown crabs, detached crab claws, and also the landing of soft-shelled edible crab.
93. In October 2025, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) published a report “[An Overview of the Brown Crab \(\*Cancer pagurus\*\) fisheries and stock trends in the North-East Atlantic 2025](#)”. This report provides a summary of the issues faced by the brown crab fisheries in Europe and describes the main trends by country, focusing on landings, fishing effort, stock status indicators, and stock assessments. This report is a useful reference report for the implementation of actions in this FMP which apply to brown crab.
94. A breakdown of landings of brown crabs caught in ICES rectangles within which the Northern Ireland zone forms part of, can be found in Annex 1 of this FMP.

### **Velvet Crab**

95. A length-based indicator is also used to assess the velvet crab stock, with  $L_{opt}$  being used as a proxy for MSY. This indicator is used only for crabs which are landed.

96. The latest AFBI [Velvet Crab Stock Assessment](#) indicates that female velvet crab are being fished sustainably whereas male velvet crab are shown to be overexploited.
97. A breakdown of landings of brown crabs caught in ICES rectangles within which the Northern Ireland zone forms part of, can be found in Annex 1 of this FMP.

## Lobster

98. A length-based indicator is used to examine the health of the NI lobster stock. In this model,  $L_{opt}$  is used as a proxy for Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). The current MCRS for landing lobster in Northern Ireland is 87mm.
99. Whilst usually only landed animals are used in shellfish stock assessments, for lobsters, as many animals greater than the MLS are v-notched, all lobsters greater than or equal to 87mm have been included in the analysis, regardless of whether they were landed or returned to sea.
100. The latest AFBI [Lobster Stock Assessment](#) indicates that female lobsters are above the optimum length, whereas male lobsters have fallen below the optimum length.
101. A breakdown of landings of lobsters caught in ICES rectangles within which the Northern Ireland zone forms part of, can be found in Annex 1 of this FMP.

## PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR CRAB AND LOBSTER FISHERIES

Ref.	Species	Action	Rationale	Targets/Indicators	Timing
NQS1	All	Implementation of the roll-out of Inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems (IVMS) for under 12 metre fishing vessels	<p>Policy Agreed.</p> <p>To address the evidence gap of spatial and positional data for the under 12 metre fishing fleet</p>	<p>IVMS devices successfully installed and tested on the under 12 metre fleet</p> <p>Northern Ireland Statutory Rule</p>	Medium term
NQS2	All	Regular review of existing conservation measures for all shellfish species with scope of the FMP	Need to take account of latest stock assessments and scientific advice	Consultations on proposed conservation measures	Long term
NQS3	All	Review and update of the penalties applicable to breaches of legislation conserving non-quota shellfish stocks in the Northern Ireland zone	<p>Reflect the ecological and economic significance of non-quota species to Northern Ireland's marine environment and coastal communities.</p> <p>Ensuring that sanctions are proportionate, enforceable, and serve as an effective deterrent against repeat offending.</p>	<p>Amendments to maximum penalties applicable for breaches of regulations made under the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 and in Northern Ireland under the Sea Fish Conservation Act 1967.</p> <p>Introduction of fixed administrative penalties for aforementioned breaches.</p>	Short term

			Align penalties with those in other UK jurisdictions		
CL1	Crab and Lobster	Review existing legislation for recreational potters.	To address the evidence gap in terms of impact on stocks from recreational potting	<p>Consultation on proposed amendments to include registration, pot tagging and catch recording.</p> <p>Opt-in arrangement for recreational fishers to tag pots and submit catch records.</p> <p>Amendments to the Unlicensed Fishing for Crabs and Lobsters (NI) Regulations 2008</p>	Short term
CL2	Crab and lobster	Restriction on access to 0-6 Mile zone in NI waters by vessels with track record of landings greater than 200 tonnes of crab/lobster	Mitigate risk and impact on NI inshore fleet and its main target species of potential over exploitation of crab/lobster stocks by larger vessels - "supercrabbers"	Fishing licence variation	Short term
CL3	Crab and Lobster	A review of powers to enable permitting of sea fishing.	To control existing levels of effort that are sustainable for the potting fleet.	Introduction of legislative amendments to enable permitting arrangements for commercial fishing in specified sea areas (e.g. in	Short term

				North Coast or Strangford Lough) or for particular species in the specific areas in the Northern Ireland zone	
CL4	Crab and Lobster	Review of licences without a shellfish entitlement	Need for compliance of catch limits	Review of licence conditions	Short term
CL5	Crab and Lobster	Monitoring and assessment of bycatch in gear deployed in fishing for crabs and lobster	Commitments in the Fisheries Act, the Joint Fisheries Statement and the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative	Research, monitoring, and fishery-specific studies to assess bycatch in crab/lobster fisheries  If evident, trial of gear modifications e.g. escape hatches, increased net size.	Medium term
CL6	Crab and lobster	Consider measures for the potting fleet to support the fishing industry's contribution to delivering climate change.  Consider impact of climate change on crab and lobster stocks.	Commitments in the Fisheries Act, the Joint Fisheries Statement and Net Zero targets in the NI Climate Change Act.  Effects of rising sea temperatures on the marine ecosystems and the abundance and distribution of shellfish stocks.	Collection of data to establish a baseline carbon footprint for crab/lobster fleet in Northern Ireland  Effective management measures to ensure that creel fisheries are not overfished and do not impact negatively on marine ecosystems such as blue carbon seabed habitats.	Long term

				<p>Trial more efficient fuel consumption systems on potting vessels.</p> <p>Promotion of local seasonal shellfish consumption</p>	
CL7	Crab and Lobster	Review of existing measures for creel marking requirements	To improve visibility and reduce gear conflict and entanglement risks. Ensure traceability of gear to its owner.	<p>Consultation with industry and inshore stakeholders</p> <p>Subordinate legislation and best practice guidance</p>	Medium term
L1	Lobster	Evaluate the v-notching scheme in terms of its successful contribution to the recruitment of lobster stock numbers	<p>The success of the v-notching scheme in Northern Ireland is a key contributor to the health of lobster stocks in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The original 2003/04 parental pool of female lobsters has now reached the end of its natural usefulness. Need to maintain the effectiveness of the</p>	<p>Lobster associations to continue to make applications for funding from the financial assistance schemes for marine and fisheries</p> <p>Project to update the parental database with v-notched females from more recent years. This will ensure that monitoring reflects the current breeding population and</p>	Short term

			genetic tagging programme	that the long-term benefits of the scheme continue to be measured accurately.	

## CHAPTER 4      SCALLOP FISHERIES

102. Within scope of this FMP are the king scallop (*Pecten maximus*) and queen scallop (*Aequipecten opercularis*) shellfish fisheries in the Northern Ireland waters of the Western Irish Sea (ICES area 7a) and the North Coast (ICES area 6a). This FMP applies to scallop (king and queen) fishing activity in Northern Ireland waters. This includes activity from other UK, EU, and other coastal state vessels in Northern Ireland waters.
103. Fishing opportunities for the scallop stocks within the scope of this FMP are not subject to total allowable catch limits (quotas).
104. The actions within this FMP are focused on the achievement and maintaining the scallop stocks at sustainable levels, continuing to deliver any existing management approaches, and identifying and delivering improvements to management where this is needed. The actions within the FMP also allow for future measures to be taken should it be needed.
105. Any measures for king and queen scallops adopted in accordance with this FMP must be consistent with the requirements of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) between the UK and the European Union.
106. This includes in particular Article 496 of the TCA which requires that fisheries management interventions are evidenced-based, are proportionate and are non-discriminatory to either party, and any relevant decisions made via the Specialised Committee for Fisheries (SCF), such as the adoption of any multi-year strategies (MYSts) for shared non-quota stocks.

## King Scallops Fishery

107. Most king scallops are targeted using spring-loaded dredges, known as a Newhaven dredge. Dredges are rigid structures that are towed along the seabed.
108. In NI waters, the main dredge fishery is for king scallops. Each dredge is designed specifically to suit the fishery and target species. Scallop dredges consist of a triangular frame, about 750mm wide, with a toothed bar at the front to flip the scallops out of the seabed and into a collecting bag behind it. This bag is made of chain links forming a chain mesh on the bottom, and chain or netting on the top.



Figure: A diagram representing a Newhaven scallop dredge

109. Several of these dredges are towed behind a heavy spreading bar, usually one bar from each side of the vessel but with some vessels using multiple bars. The length of bar and number of dredges is dictated by the power of the vessel and its length of side deck to work the dredges over.
110. The limits to how many dredges can be used in Northern Ireland inshore waters are provided for in the Conservation of Scallops Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008.

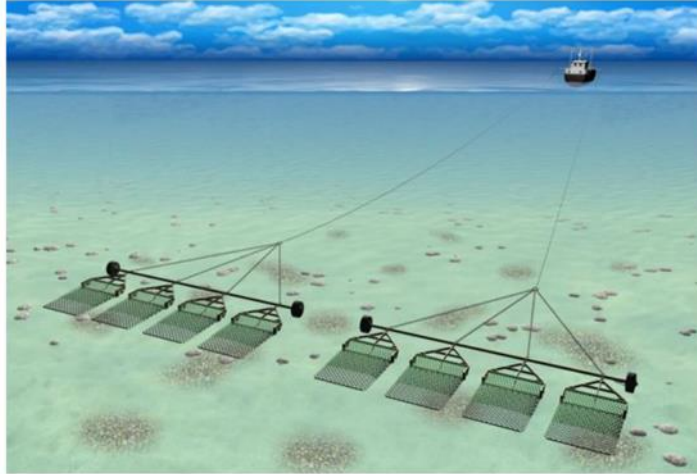


Figure: A diagram illustrating a scallop dredge fishing targeting king scallops

111. The vessels and rigging are very similar to that of beam trawling, with the beam trawls being replaced by the steel bar with multiple dredges towed behind it. There is strict legislation on the size and number of dredges used in various areas around the UK.
112. These limits apply to the fishing for king scallops but not fishing for queen scallops. Dredges are not often used by Northern Ireland registered vessels to fish queen scallops in the fishery on the North Coast. Other gear types such as otter trawls are preferred.
113. Although not common in NI waters, king scallops may be fished for by commercial and recreational divers.

### Current technical measures for scallops

114. The harvesting of scallop stocks (both king and queen) is provided for through domestic legislation (either UK or NI) or assimilated law which has been derived from the time the United Kingdom was part of the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy. In some cases, the measures are introduced through the issue of fishing licence variations.

115. In regard to scallops, the Inshore Regulations were amended in 1998 to prohibit fishing for scallops in the northern part of the Strangford Lough and introduce a closed season for fishing scallops in the rest of the Lough.
116. The Inshore Regulations were amended further in 2008 to introduce a prohibition on the use of dredges in Belfast Lough and extend the area in Belfast Lough where the use of any trawl net or any seine net is prohibited.

### **Western Waters Regime**

117. The Western Waters effort regime applies to UK fishing vessels over 15 metres in length fishing in UK territorial waters. The UK fisheries administrations (UKFAs) – the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), Marine Directorate (Scotland), DAERA and the Welsh Government have joint responsibility for the regime, which applies to both king and queen scallops.
118. The scheme is managed by the setting of days at sea limits and reflected in the relevant fishing vessel licences. This limit is subject to review each quarter by the UK fisheries administrations.

### **King Scallops**

119. The MCRS for King scallop caught and landed in Northern Ireland is 110mm. This is provided for in the [Conservation of Scallops Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2008](#) which also introduced a range of further measures in the Northern Ireland zone.
120. These include the following prohibitions;

- i. a night time curfew during the week between 8pm to 6am and a weekend curfew between 6am on Saturday and ending on 6am the next following Monday.
  - ii. taking king scallops by diving during the period 1st June to 31st October (except for Strangford Lough),
  - iii. no more than 6 dredges per side for boats while they are fishing for king scallops,
  - iv. no scallop dredge tow bars longer than 5.5m being carried on board a vessel, and;
  - v. the taking and retaining on board a sea fishing boat, king scallops of a size of less than 110mm.
121. In addition, [the Scallops \(Irish Sea\) \(Prohibition of Fishing\) Order 1984](#) prohibits the fishing for king scallops in the Irish Sea between 1<sup>st</sup> June to 31<sup>st</sup> October every year.
122. There is currently no requirement for vessels fishing in the Northern Ireland zone to have remote electronic monitoring (REM) systems operational when fishing for scallops. [The Sea Fisheries \(Remote Electronic Monitoring and Regulation of Scallop Fishing\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2024](#) came into force in Scotland in June 2024 and requires all registered fishing boats (including Northern Ireland vessels) to have REM systems (cameras, gear sensors etc.) operating when fishing for scallops in Scottish waters.

### King Scallop landings

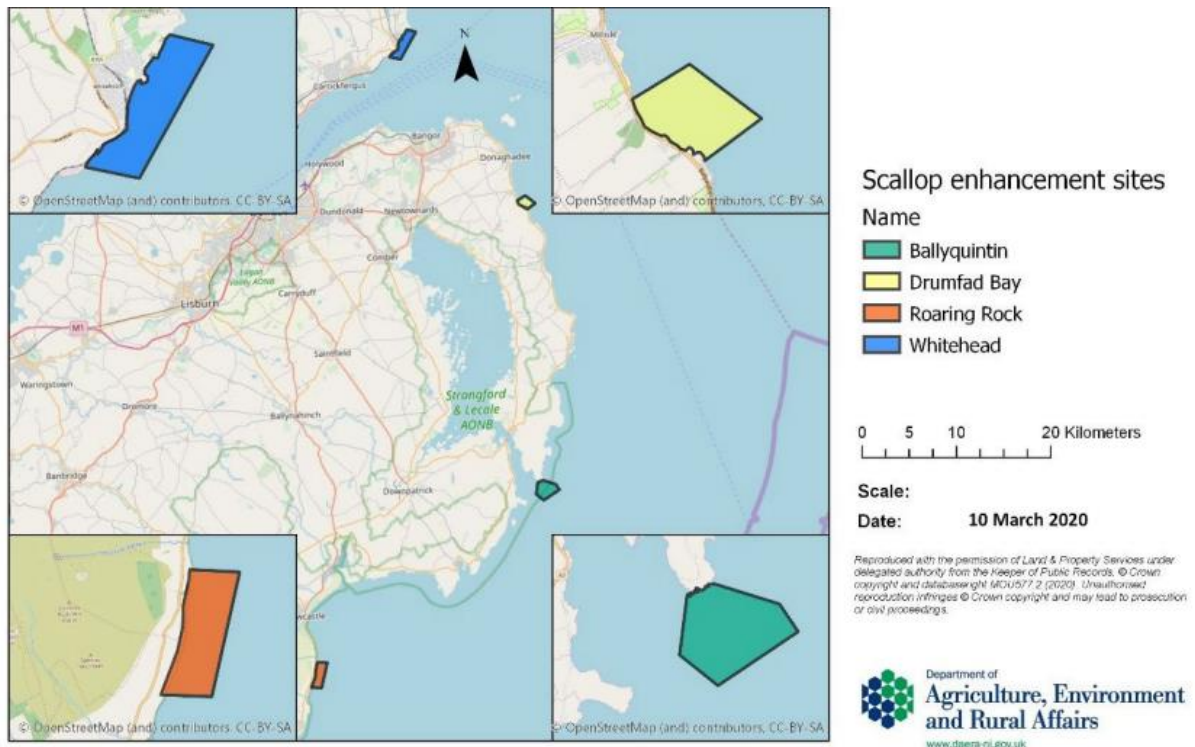
123. A breakdown of landings of king scallops caught in ICES rectangles within which the Northern Ireland zone forms part of, can be found in Annex 1 of this FMP.

### Queen Scallops

124. The Conservation of Scallops Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 and the Scallops (Irish Sea) (Prohibition of Fishing) Order 1984 do not however apply to queen scallops.
125. The MCRS for queen scallops is 40mm. This is provided for in [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/1241](#) which continues to apply in Northern Ireland under the Windsor Framework.
126. A seasonal closure for queen scallops between 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June has been in effect for in UK waters in ICES areas 6a and 7a since 2015. This closure is given effect through a licence condition and is to protect scallops during the main spawning season, allowing animals to spawn before they are caught as well as increasing protection for juvenile scallops to grow before encountering scallop gear. The absence of dredging gear also reduces the removal of benthic organisms which scallop larvae use to settle on.

### Scallop Enhancement Sites

127. Within the Northern Ireland zone four locations have been established as scallop reseeded sites. These sites are located at Ballyquintin, Drumfad Bay, Roaring Rock and Whitehead.



128. This was a result of work between the scallop industry, Seafish and AFBI in identifying the most suitable sites.
129. The Scallop Enhancement Sites (Prohibited Methods of Fishing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 prohibit fishing for sea-fish by demersal mobile fishing gear and diving for scallops in these sites, thereby protecting the grounds. It is too soon to determine how successful these sites have been.

### Marine Protected Areas

130. The Marine Protected Areas (Prohibited Methods of Fishing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 came into operation to prohibit fishing for sea-fish by demersal mobile fishing gear in many of the marine protected areas in Northern Ireland inshore waters.
131. These measures were introduced following an earlier consultation to protect the sensitive habitats and species in the respective areas. The prohibitions therein prevent fishing by gears typically used to fish for scallops.

## Isle of Man – Queen Scallops

132. Notwithstanding that the extent of this FMP is Northern Ireland, it is worth noting that the territorial waters of the Isle of Man which are adjacent to Northern Ireland waters are an important fishing ground for the Northern Ireland fleet which targets queen scallops. The [Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence](#) provides for a partial closure for queen scallops fishing within certain areas in IoM waters.

## Project UK King Scallop Fishery Improvement Plan

133. The UK King Scallop Fishery Improvement Project (FIP), coordinated by Seafish and supported by DAERA, is a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at improving the sustainability of scallop fisheries across UK waters. The project has developed a comprehensive Action Plan and is delivering outputs that are directly relevant to the management of scallop stocks in Northern Ireland.
134. This FMP is cognisant of the UK Scallop FIP's recommendations and integrates relevant findings and actions into its framework where appropriate. This alignment will ensure consistency in management approaches across jurisdictions, avoid duplication of effort and maximise the use of existing evidence and strengthen the credibility and scientific basis of the FMP.
135. The UK Scallop FIP involves a habitat mapping project for the entire Northern Ireland marine area. This data will be critical for informing any proposals for spatial management measures within the context of this FMP.
136. The FIP's trials of innovative gear and Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) systems align with this FMP's objectives to reduce bycatch and improve compliance.
137. This NQS FMP proposes reassessing minimum conservation reference sizes and extending technical regulations to queen scallops. These measures

should be informed by the FIP's scientific reviews and stakeholder consultations.

138. The FIP's Working Group and Steering Group provide a valuable forum for stakeholder input. DAERA and representatives from the Northern Ireland fishing sector are involved with these groups and this active engagement should be maintained to ensure coordinated policy development for scallop stocks.

## SCIENTIFIC ADVICE AND STOCK ASSESSMENTS

139. A scientific work programme has been developed between DAERA and AFBI to meet the requirements for improved knowledge on the main inshore fisheries. This work takes the form of stock assessment reports and advice for non-quota stocks that are important including both scallop species.

The latest reports can be found here:

[King scallop, \*Pecten maximus\*](#)

[Queen scallop, \*Aequipecten opercularis\*](#)

### King scallops

140. Since 1992 annual surveys have been carried out to examine trends in scallop stocks within NI waters. The survey Index (standardized biomass caught during the survey) has decreased in recent years from a peak in 2014. The recruitment index (standardized catch of scallops below 106mm) has also decreased over this period. In 2023 there was a small decrease estimated in the standardised biomass recruitment index from 2022 survey data.
141. The Northern Ireland annual scallop survey is used to indicate stock trends. For 2025 the advice from AFBI is that the landings of king scallops could be increased by 4.1% in comparison to the average landings in the past 3 years.

## Queen Scallops

142. Surveys have been carried out to examine trends in queen scallop stocks within ICES Rectangles 39E3 and 40E3 since 2013. The survey is based on Under Water Towed Video (UWTV) counts and fishing catches. The survey-estimated biomass had been increasing, but the 2023 survey showed a sharp decline. Average abundance (per 100m<sup>2</sup>) from UWTV counts also showed a decline in the 2023 survey, following a peak in 2021.
143. The Northern Ireland annual queen scallop survey is used to indicate stock trends and the advice from AFBI is that the landings of queen scallops in 2025 should be reduced (by 52.55%) in comparison with the average landings in the past three years.
144. A breakdown of landings of queen scallops caught in ICES rectangles within which the Northern Ireland zone forms part of, can be found in Annex 1 of this FMP.

## PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR SCALLOP FISHERIES

Ref	Species	Action	Rationale	Targets / Indicators	Timing
QSC1	Queen Scallops	Review of existing legislation for minimum conservation reference size (MCRS)	<p>Sustainability of queen scallop stocks as evidenced in most recent stock assessments and scientific advice.</p> <p>No market for queen scallops at existing EU MCRS of 40mm</p>	<p>Consultation on increase to MCRS</p> <p>Statutory Rule to give effect to any agreed MCRS change</p>	Short term
QS2	Queen Scallops	Review of Conservation of Scallops Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008	<p>The Regulations apply solely to King Scallops.</p> <p>There is an obvious risk to over exploitation of queen scallops if same technical measures (e.g. dredge specifications) did not apply to Queen scallops</p>	<p>Consultation on proposed technical amendments</p> <p>Northern Ireland Statutory Rule</p>	Short term
SC1	King Scallops Queen Scallops	Consider adoption of technological advances with remote electronic monitoring systems (onboard cameras, sensors etc.)	Effective monitoring and control and enforcement of scallop fisheries	Consultation on REM systems for scallop fisheries	Medium term

				Licence condition or subordinate legislation to give effect to requirement.	
SC2	King Scallops  Queen Scallops	Consider measures to assess and reduce bycatch in gear deployed in fishing for king and queen scallops	Commitments in the Fisheries Act, the Joint Fisheries Statement and the Bycatch Mitigation Initiative	Research, monitoring, and fishery-specific studies to assess bycatch in the respective scallop fisheries  Trial of gear modifications	Medium term
SC3	King Scallops  Queen Scallops	Consider measures for the scallop fleet to support the fishing industry's contribution to delivering climate change.  Consider impacts of climate change on scallops stocks.	Commitments in the Fisheries Act, the Joint Fisheries Statement and Net Zero targets in the NI Climate Change Act.  Effect of rising sea temperatures on marine ecosystems and the abundance and distribution of shellfish stocks.	Collection of data to establish a baseline carbon footprint for the scallop fleet in Northern Ireland  Trialing of more efficient gears for fishing scallops	Long term
KS1	King Scallops	Develop a draft harvest strategy responsive to king scallop stocks in Northern Ireland zone	Alignment with action plan in UK King Scallop improvement plan (ref Action ID no.1)	Draft input and output controls for harvest strategy (by Dec 2029)  Consult on harvest strategy (by Dec 2030)	Mid-term

KS2	King Scallops		Alignment with action plan in UK King Scallop improvement plan (ref Action ID no.3)	Consider options for defining limits and target reference points (or equivalent proxies) – by August 2028  Define limits and target reference points (by August 2029)	Mid-term
KS3	King Scallops	Development of Harvest Control Rules (HCR)	Alignment with action plan in UK King Scallop improvement plan (ref Action ID no.4)	Develop options for harvest control rules (by March 2030)  Consult on HCR and consider means of implementation and decision-making protocols (by end 2030)  Implementation of HCR (by March 2031)	Long term
KS4	King Scallops	Recording interactions with endangered, threatened, or protected (ETP) species and development of management measures (where necessary)	Alignment with action plan in UK King Scallop improvement plan (ref Action ID no.6)	Develop options for management approaches for reducing ETP interactions and impacts (if necessary – by December 2028)  Implement ETP management approaches	Short term  Long term

				(if necessary) – by March 2030	
KS5	King Scallops	Assess the impacts of the Scallop Enhancement Sites (Prohibited Methods of Fishing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) on scallop stocks	Determine whether the prohibition contributes to stock recovery, habitat protection, and sustainable management outcomes	Evaluation report on impact of the Regulations	Short-term

## CHAPTER 5 WINDSOR FRAMEWORK and EU FISHERIES CONTROL

### Windsor Framework

145. It is important for this FMP to clarify the extent to which obligations under the Windsor Framework apply.
146. The statutory obligation for DAERA to prepare and publish this FMP for non-quota shellfish species remains a domestic responsibility and is not contingent on Windsor Framework implementation.
147. However, it is acknowledged that broader legislative developments such as the implementation of EU Animal Health Law and aquatic animal movement regulations and marketing standards for fish and fisheries products are being progressed under the Windsor Framework.
148. In addition to the marketing standards which apply directly to fish and bring into scope the non-quota shellfish in this FMP, there is an obligation for Northern Ireland to comply with the minimum conservation reference sizes for species listed in Regulation (EU) 2019/1241.
149. Landings from recreational fishing are prohibited from being marketed or sold and therefore do not engage trade-related provisions under the Windsor Framework.
150. The Windsor Framework shapes certain aspects of Northern Ireland's post-Brexit regulatory landscape, and its obligations must be complied with to ensure the sustainable management of the fishing activity for non-quota shellfish fisheries.
151. The Department will continue to monitor developments and engage with industry so that any measures are workable and compliant with the Windsor Framework.

## EU FISHERIES CONTROL REGULATION

152. In accordance with the evolving regulatory landscape, the NQS FMP acknowledges the relevance of the revised EU Fisheries Control Regulation (Regulation (ECU) 1224/2009 as amended by Regulation (EU) 2023/2842) to fisheries management in Northern Ireland and its application in certain aspects under the Windsor Framework. While the UK is no longer bound by the Common Fisheries Policy, Northern Ireland remains subject to certain EU obligations where trade, traceability, and regulatory alignment are concerned.
153. Regulation (EU) 2023/2842 introduces phased requirements for electronic catch recording and systems for recording positional data, extending to all vessels under 12 metres by 2028 (with a derogation for under 9 metre vessels to operate IVMS by the end of 2029). This draft NQS FMP incorporates actions to support the Northern Ireland fleet engaged in fishing for non-quota stocks in Northern Ireland waters and in EU waters (e.g. Irish waters) in meeting these obligations.
154. Additionally, the EU Regulation also amended the IUU regulation 1005/2008 that mandates enhanced traceability for fishery products entering the EU single market that enter through the Northern Ireland Points of Entry. All catch certificates required under this regulation must now be entered onto the CATCH IT system
155. All shellfish (including non-quota shellfish) originating from Northern Ireland and exported to the EU must be supported by robust documentation to facilitate compliance and market access. with EU marketing standards and traceability requirements and market access.
156. The Regulation also introduces provisions for monitoring recreational fisheries, remote electronic monitoring (REM) for high-risk vessels, and harmonised sanctions for serious infringements. While these measures may

not immediately apply to the non-quota shellfish sector in Northern Ireland, the NQS FMP will remain responsive to future developments and risk-based assessments that may trigger additional compliance requirements.

157. The Department will continue to engage with stakeholders and monitor legislative updates to ensure that the NQS FMP remains aligned with EU regulatory expectations where applicable, while safeguarding the sustainability and viability of non-quota shellfish fisheries in Northern Ireland.





## CHAPTER 6 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Environment Strategy and Environment Improvement Plan

158. The Environment Strategy is an overarching document setting out Northern Ireland's environmental priorities for the coming decades and forms part of the Green Growth agenda (the Green Growth Strategy will provide more detail on actions in respect of climate change & greenhouse gas emissions).
159. The Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland is the first published Environment Strategy and forms the basis for a coherent and effective set of interventions that can deliver real improvements in the quality of the environment and thereby improve the health and well-being of all who live and work here; elevate Northern Ireland to an environmental leader; create opportunities to develop our economy; and enable us to play our part in protecting the global environment for decades to come.
160. It includes a mix of both existing and new environmental objectives, targets and actions for DAERA and other departments with a role in improving the environment.

### Draft Green Growth Strategy

161. The draft Green Growth Strategy sets out an ambitious vision and a framework for delivery with which all other Northern Ireland government policies and strategies must align.
162. It provides us with a vitally important opportunity to embed wider climate change, a green economy and environmental considerations into decision making.

### The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

163. The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (CCANI) is an important piece of legislation that all Government Departments need to consider when developing policies and plans. It sets a target of an at least 100% reduction in net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 (i.e., net zero emissions by 2050) for Northern Ireland compared to baseline, along with interim targets including an at least 48% reduction in net emissions by 2030.
164. DAERA has also set updated interim emissions reduction targets for 2030 and 2040 to ensure that they are in line with the 2050 net zero target.
165. Section 20(1) of the CCANI also commits DAERA to develop and publish sectoral plans for the fisheries sector setting out how it will contribute to the achievement of the targets in the CCANI. These sectoral plans are significant in considering and developing future policies in the respective sectors and this draft FMP will need to acknowledge any actions that are set out in any sectoral plan for fisheries.

### **Managing and addressing environmental risks**

166. Under the UK Marine Strategy Regulation 2010, the UK has a responsibility to take the necessary measures to achieve or maintain good environmental status (GES). The UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) provides the policy framework for delivering marine policy at the UK level and sets out how the vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas will be achieved.
167. The target for GES is measured through 11 qualitative descriptors, which describe what the environment will look like once GES has been achieved.
168. In addition to ensuring that stocks are fished sustainably, this FMP includes objectives to ensure that the environmental impacts associated with the fishing activities in targeting the species within scope of this FMP are understood. Where the respective fisheries are considered to have an

adverse impact on the marine environment, action is taken to avoid, remedy or mitigate such impacts.

### **MPA Strategy for Northern Ireland Inshore Region**

169. The Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Strategy for the Northern Ireland Inshore Region (2025-2030) was published in February 2026 and seeks to set out a roadmap for the protection, management and restoration of that marine space, through to 2030.
170. Building on the original strategy published in 2014, this updated version reflects significant global shifts in environmental policy, particularly in relation to biodiversity loss and climate change. It incorporates the evolving understanding of the vital role marine ecosystems play in climate change mitigation and adaptation.
171. This Strategy recognizes the critical contribution Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) can make in addressing biodiversity loss and their capacity to deliver nature-based solutions to climate challenges. It also highlights how MPAs will be managed so that their wider environmental and societal benefits can be fully achieved.
172. The updated strategy and associated action plan reflect an innovative and collaborative approach which holds the potential to deliver wide-ranging benefits for both the environment and society.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

173. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report for this draft FMP was prepared in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 by the JNCC.

174. It assesses the likely significant environmental effects of the FMP's policy goals and actions for crab, lobster and scallop fisheries in Northern Ireland waters.
175. The SEA considers effects on biodiversity, fauna and flora; seabed and sediments; water quality (including marine litter and underwater noise); climatic factors; cultural heritage; and landscape and seascape. The assessment is informed by the UK Marine Strategy baseline, Statutory Nature Conservation Body advice, and evidence on existing fishing pressures, particularly from demersal trawls, dredges and pots/traps.
176. The assessment concludes that fishing for non-quota shellfish can affect the wider marine environment primarily through seabed disturbance from demersal trawls and dredges, and bycatch or entanglement of sensitive species. Bycatch risks to mobile species are generally assessed as low to moderate but are constrained by evidence gaps, while physical impacts to benthic habitats and seafloor integrity represent the highest environmental risk. Marine litter is assessed as a moderate risk, and climate change interactions are recognised but remain uncertain.
177. No significant adverse environmental effects are predicted from the implementation of the FMP's policy goals and actions at this stage, provided that mitigation, monitoring and future assessments are applied as the plan develops. The FMP places strong emphasis on improving the evidence base, adopting an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, and aligning with wider UK Marine Strategy and Marine Plan objectives.
178. The SEA recommends enhanced monitoring of fishing activity and environmental effects, including bycatch and benthic impacts, improved recording of lost fishing gear, and continued assessment of interactions with Marine Protected Areas, Priority Features, cultural heritage and climate change. Environmental effects will be monitored and reviewed through the

FMP lifecycle, with further Habitats Regulations and site-specific assessments undertaken before any new management measures are implemented.

### Nature Conservation Advice

179. JNCC also provided statutory nature conservation input to support the development of this draft FMP. It assesses the environmental risks associated with non-quota shellfish fisheries (crab, lobster and scallops), focusing on the use of demersal trawls, dredges and pots/traps.
180. The assessment considers impacts across three frameworks: designated features of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs); Northern Ireland Priority Features protected under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011; and UK Marine Strategy (UK MS) descriptors, particularly biodiversity, food webs, seafloor integrity and marine litter.
181. Risks are assessed using indicative low, moderate and high ratings, taking a precautionary approach where evidence is limited. Existing and forthcoming fisheries management measures are assumed to manage risks within MPAs, and therefore the advice focuses on impacts occurring outside site boundaries, particularly for mobile species.
182. Overall, the advice concludes that bycatch and entanglement risks are generally low to moderate across gears, but are constrained by significant evidence gaps, particularly for demersal trawls and pots/traps. Prey depletion risks are low, as target shellfish species are not key prey and most predators are generalist feeders.
183. Physical impacts to the seabed from demersal trawls and dredges represent the highest environmental risk, particularly for Priority Features and for achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) under the UK Marine Strategy. Marine litter, especially from abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear, presents a moderate risk, although fishing is only one contributor to overall litter pressures.

184. The advice recommends enhanced monitoring and evidence collection, including targeted use of Remote Electronic Monitoring, continued engagement with UK-wide bycatch initiatives, and improved recording of gear loss. It highlights that strategic, cross-FMP action will be required to address benthic impacts, including support for a UK-wide Benthic Impacts Working Group, and emphasises that FMPs should be supported by wider government coordination and an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management.

## CHAPTER 7 FMP IMPLEMENTATION

### Timeline for proposed management measures/actions

185. Sufficient time is required to develop the detail of the future measures. This will vary depending on the nature of the measure, for example:
- whether the measure is new or updated;
  - the complexity of the proposed measure;
  - the geographical and stock area to which it applies
  - the evidence available on which to underpin and inform the details
  - what mechanism will be required to implement the measure.
186. Thorough analysis will be needed to develop the measures set out in the FMP, building on existing evidence and information as well as lessons learnt from measures applied to other fisheries.
187. The actions set out in this FMP will begin to be progressed once the final FMP has been published and in particular those considered a high priority. To support this detailed work plans will be developed with relevant stakeholders to set out the required actions, time and resources necessary to give effect to them.
188. The following provides an initial estimate of time required to deliver actions set out for the various approaches:
- short term – within 1 year of publication of the plan
  - medium term – within 2-3 years
  - long term – more than 3 years.

189. Post publication of the final FMP, the implementation of some of the proposed management measures may require funding and will be subject to securing the necessary funding.
190. The Department through its Marine Environment and Fisheries Fund (MEFF) provides financial assistance to support marine and fisheries activity and helps deliver against the aims and objectives within the Joint Fisheries Statement (including its FMPs) and NI Executive's commitments to Green Growth and Net-zero.
191. Support is available for projects that deliver on sustainable economic growth in the sea fisheries and aquaculture sectors as well as opportunities for industry to invest in projects that focus on Net-Zero commitments, fleet resilience and an innovative approach to addressing environmental concerns and the restoration of blue carbon.
192. The MEFF includes (amongst others) funding schemes for investments onboard licensed fishing vessels, fisheries innovation, science & partnerships, and environment and conservation action

### **Implementation, monitoring and review**

193. This Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) establishes a structured framework outlining the goals and objectives for sustainable non-quota shellfish fisheries within Northern Ireland waters, as well as the policies and management measures required to achieve these objectives.
194. The measures created within this framework will move into an implementation phase, during which suitable mechanisms will be identified for their delivery. These mechanisms may involve statutory rules, licence conditions, or voluntary actions.

195. The implementation phase will be based on the current evidence, actions taken during the development of the FMP, and options that have been discussed with stakeholders.
196. This will undergo regular monitoring and review to track progress. This FMP, like all FMPs, is required to go through a statutory review process no later than six years after publication.
197. After this stage, it will be necessary to document the outcomes resulting from the implementation of these actions and measures. The review process will include monitoring for potential environmental effects to determine if any adjustments are required in the management of the respective non-quota shellfish fisheries.

### Monitoring performance

198. This is the first version of this FMP, which sets out the first steps and longer-term vision necessary for the sustainable management of the respective fisheries within scope. The measures will take time to develop and implement and are intended to allow an adaptive approach which will be subject to review as further evidence is collected and collaboration continues with the relevant stakeholders in regard to the wider interests of sustainable management of the fisheries.
199. To measure the effectiveness of the policies for restoring or maintaining the stocks at sustainable levels, other indicators will be considered such as:
  - review of existing measures within and outside this FMP area, to identify opportunities for alignment;
  - a management framework based on input and output controls, to develop measures which can be responsive to signals and trends in stock levels, as well as contribute to the evidence base for the stocks.

## Review and revision of the FMP

200. This FMP must be reviewed when appropriate, and at least every six years. This formal review will assess how the FMP has performed in terms of meeting the objectives of the Fisheries Act 2020.
201. The findings of these reviews will inform the development of subsequent versions of the non-quota shellfish FMP. The FMP will also be assessed as part of the process to report on the contribution of FMPs in meeting the objectives of the Joint Fisheries Statement.



**BROWN (EDIBLE) CRAB**

Total annual live weight(Tons) landed from ICES Rectangle that includes NI waters

RECTANGLE_CODE	Vessel COUNTRY_CODE	NAME	Sum of wgtlive(T)/Year						Grand Total
			2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
<b>36E4</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Brown/Edible Crab	91.91	98.11	56.91	86.48	42.54	11.31	387.27
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>91.91</b>	<b>98.11</b>	<b>56.91</b>	<b>86.48</b>	<b>42.54</b>	<b>11.31</b>	<b>387.27</b>
	<i>Isle of Man</i>	Brown/Edible Crab						0.93	0.93
	<b>Isle of Man Total</b>							<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.93</b>
	<i>England</i>	Brown/Edible Crab	0.23						0.23
	<b>England Total</b>		<b>0.23</b>						<b>0.23</b>
	<i>Belgium</i>	Brown/Edible Crab	0.53						0.53
	<b>Belgium Total</b>		<b>0.53</b>						<b>0.53</b>
<b>36E4 Total</b>			<b>92.67</b>	<b>98.11</b>	<b>56.91</b>	<b>86.48</b>	<b>42.54</b>	<b>12.24</b>	<b>388.96</b>
<b>37E3</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Brown/Edible Crab	13.32	1.17	4.79	0.46	0.58		20.31
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>13.32</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>4.79</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>0.58</b>		<b>20.31</b>
<b>37E3 Total</b>			<b>13.32</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>4.79</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>0.58</b>		<b>20.31</b>

<b>37E4</b>	<b><i>Northern Ireland</i></b>	Brown/Edible Crab	570.76	382.45	364.60	347.01	371.51	288.70	2,325.02
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>570.76</b>	<b>382.45</b>	<b>364.60</b>	<b>347.01</b>	<b>371.51</b>	<b>288.70</b>	<b>2,325.02</b>
	<b><i>Scotland</i></b>	Brown/Edible Crab	0.18				0.89		1.07
	<b>Scotland Total</b>		<b>0.18</b>				<b>0.89</b>		<b>1.07</b>
	<b><i>Isle of Man</i></b>	Brown/Edible Crab	0.40					38.05	38.45
	<b>Isle of Man Total</b>		<b>0.40</b>					<b>38.05</b>	<b>38.45</b>
	<b><i>England</i></b>	Brown/Edible Crab			0.01		2.46	1.18	3.65
	<b>England Total</b>				<b>0.01</b>		<b>2.46</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>3.65</b>
	<b><i>Belgium</i></b>	Brown/Edible Crab		0.35					0.35
	<b>Belgium Total</b>			<b>0.35</b>					<b>0.35</b>
	<b><i>Ireland</i></b>	Brown/Edible Crab	4.16	3.69					7.85
	<b>Ireland Total</b>		<b>4.16</b>	<b>3.69</b>					<b>7.85</b>
<b>37E4 Total</b>			<b>575.50</b>	<b>386.49</b>	<b>364.61</b>	<b>347.01</b>	<b>374.86</b>	<b>327.93</b>	<b>2,376.40</b>
<b>39E3</b>	<b><i>Northern Ireland</i></b>	Brown/Edible Crab	116.59	89.74	98.27	126.70	89.86	59.82	580.99
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>116.59</b>	<b>89.74</b>	<b>98.27</b>	<b>126.70</b>	<b>89.86</b>	<b>59.82</b>	<b>580.99</b>

	<i>Scotland</i>	Brown/Edible Crab					0.01	0.94	0.95
	<b>Scotland Total</b>						<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>0.95</b>
<b>39E3 Total</b>			<b>116.59</b>	<b>89.74</b>	<b>98.27</b>	<b>126.70</b>	<b>89.87</b>	<b>60.76</b>	<b>581.93</b>
<b>39E4</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Brown/Edible Crab	22.86	7.19	28.30	67.83	82.03	60.59	268.81
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>22.86</b>	<b>7.19</b>	<b>28.30</b>	<b>67.83</b>	<b>82.03</b>	<b>60.58</b>	<b>268.81</b>
	<i>Scotland</i>	Brown/Edible Crab	35.41	34.70	64.51	37.12	16.89	15.24	203.87
	<b>Scotland Total</b>		<b>35.41</b>	<b>34.70</b>	<b>64.51</b>	<b>37.12</b>	<b>16.89</b>	<b>15.24</b>	<b>203.87</b>
	<i>England</i>	Brown/Edible Crab	129.16	20.76			8.66	62.46	221.04
	<b>England Total</b>		<b>129.16</b>	<b>20.76</b>			<b>8.66</b>	<b>62.46</b>	<b>221.04</b>
<b>39E4 Total</b>			<b>187.43</b>	<b>62.65</b>	<b>92.81</b>	<b>104.95</b>	<b>107.58</b>	<b>138.28</b>	<b>693.70</b>

## VELVET CRAB

Total annual live weight(Tons) landed from ICES Rectangle that includes NI waters

RECTANGLE_CODE	Vessel COUNTRY_CODE	NAME	Sum of wgtlive(T)/Year						Grand Total
			2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
36E4	<i>Northern Ireland</i> Northern Ireland	Velvet Crab	1.05	6.08	3.81	2.31	1.51		14.76
		<b>Total</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>6.08</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>1.51</b>		<b>14.76</b>
<b>36E4 Total</b>			<b>1.05</b>	<b>6.08</b>	<b>3.81</b>	<b>2.31</b>	<b>1.51</b>		<b>14.76</b>
37E3	<i>Northern Ireland</i> Northern Ireland	Velvet Crab	4.94	2.20	3.03	1.39	2.03	0.42	14.02
		<b>Total</b>	<b>4.94</b>	<b>2.20</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>1.39</b>	<b>2.03</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>14.02</b>
<b>37E3 Total</b>			<b>4.94</b>	<b>2.20</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>1.39</b>	<b>2.03</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>14.02</b>
37E4	<i>Northern Ireland</i> Northern Ireland	Velvet Crab	200.46	197.78	245.66	211.65	173.80	168.73	1,198.08
		<b>Total</b>	<b>200.46</b>	<b>197.78</b>	<b>245.66</b>	<b>211.65</b>	<b>173.80</b>	<b>168.73</b>	<b>1,198.08</b>
	<i>Scotland</i>	Velvet Crab					4.37		4.37
	<b>Scotland Total</b>					<b>4.37</b>		<b>4.37</b>	
<b>37E4 Total</b>			<b>200.46</b>	<b>197.78</b>	<b>245.66</b>	<b>211.65</b>	<b>178.17</b>	<b>168.73</b>	<b>1,202.45</b>
39E3	<i>Northern Ireland</i> Northern Ireland	Velvet Crab	0.02		0.02				0.04
		<b>Total</b>	<b>0.02</b>		<b>0.02</b>				<b>0.04</b>

	<i>Scotland</i>	Velvet Crab						0.11	6.28	6.39
	<b>Scotland Total</b>							<b>0.11</b>	<b>6.28</b>	<b>6.39</b>
<b>39E3 Total</b>			<b>0.02</b>	<b>0.02</b>				<b>0.11</b>	<b>6.28</b>	<b>6.43</b>
<b>39E4</b>	<i>Scotland</i>	Velvet Crab	7.05	9.04	19.48	13.58	12.72	7.02		68.88
	<b>Scotland Total</b>		<b>7.05</b>	<b>9.04</b>	<b>19.48</b>	<b>13.58</b>	<b>12.72</b>	<b>7.02</b>		<b>68.88</b>
<b>39E4 Total</b>			<b>7.05</b>	<b>9.04</b>	<b>19.48</b>	<b>13.58</b>	<b>12.72</b>	<b>7.02</b>		<b>68.88</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>213.50</b>	<b>215.10</b>	<b>272.00</b>	<b>228.93</b>	<b>194.54</b>	<b>182.45</b>		<b>1,306.52</b>

\*May include tonnages outside the Northern Ireland Zone

## LOBSTER

Total annual live weight(Tons) landed from ICES Rectangle that includes NI waters

RECTANGLE_CODE	Vessel COUNTRY_CODE	NAME	Sum of wgtlive(T)/Year						Grand Total	
			2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
<b>36E4</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Lobsters	3.00	1.90	1.62	4.27	1.85	0.55	13.20	
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>3.00</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>1.62</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>1.85</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>13.20</b>	
	<i>Isle of Man</i>	Lobsters						0.32	0.32	
	<b>Isle of Man Total</b>							<b>0.32</b>	<b>0.32</b>	
	<i>England</i>	Lobsters	0.25						0.25	
	<b>England Total</b>		<b>0.25</b>						<b>0.25</b>	
	<b>36E4 Total</b>			<b>3.25</b>	<b>1.90</b>	<b>1.62</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>1.85</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>13.77</b>
	<b>37E3</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Lobsters	1.30	1.79	1.48	1.30	1.99	1.15	9.00
		<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>1.30</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>1.48</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>9.00</b>
<b>37E3 Total</b>			<b>1.30</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>1.48</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>9.00</b>	
<b>37E4</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Lobsters	29.33	22.19	31.27	41.55	49.44	54.19	227.97	
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>29.33</b>	<b>22.19</b>	<b>31.27</b>	<b>41.55</b>	<b>49.44</b>	<b>54.19</b>	<b>227.97</b>	
	<i>Scotland</i>	Lobsters					0.75		0.75	
	<b>Scotland Total</b>						<b>0.75</b>		<b>0.75</b>	
	<i>Isle of Man</i>	Lobsters						11.71	11.71	
	<b>Isle of Man Total</b>							<b>11.71</b>	<b>11.71</b>	
	<i>England</i>	Lobsters			0.01	0.01	1.99	0.11	2.11	
	<b>England Total</b>				<b>0.01</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>1.99</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>2.11</b>	

	<i>Ireland</i>	Lobsters	3.17	2.30					5.47
	<b>Ireland Total</b>		<b>3.17</b>	<b>2.30</b>					<b>5.47</b>
<b>37E4 Total</b>			<b>32.50</b>	<b>24.49</b>	<b>31.28</b>	<b>41.56</b>	<b>52.18</b>	<b>66.01</b>	<b>248.02</b>
<b>39E3</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Lobsters	19.82	21.97	24.27	22.68	26.07	18.67	133.48
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>19.82</b>	<b>21.97</b>	<b>24.27</b>	<b>22.68</b>	<b>26.07</b>	<b>18.67</b>	<b>133.48</b>
	<i>Scotland</i>	Lobsters					0.05	0.87	0.92
	<b>Scotland Total</b>						<b>0.05</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.92</b>
<b>39E3 Total</b>			<b>19.82</b>	<b>21.97</b>	<b>24.27</b>	<b>22.68</b>	<b>26.12</b>	<b>19.54</b>	<b>134.40</b>
<b>39E4</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	Lobsters	4.49	3.41	4.18	5.07	2.97	5.96	26.08
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>4.49</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>4.18</b>	<b>5.07</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>5.96</b>	<b>26.08</b>
	<i>Scotland</i>	Lobsters	7.47	6.80	10.09	11.94	8.60	10.99	55.89
	<b>Scotland Total</b>		<b>7.47</b>	<b>6.80</b>	<b>10.09</b>	<b>11.94</b>	<b>8.60</b>	<b>10.99</b>	<b>55.89</b>
	<i>England</i>	Lobsters	0.28	1.02			0.05	1.52	2.87
	<b>England Total</b>		<b>0.28</b>	<b>1.02</b>			<b>0.05</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>2.87</b>
<b>39E4 Total</b>			<b>12.24</b>	<b>11.23</b>	<b>14.27</b>	<b>17.01</b>	<b>11.62</b>	<b>18.47</b>	<b>84.84</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>69.11</b>	<b>61.38</b>	<b>72.92</b>	<b>86.82</b>	<b>93.76</b>	<b>106.04</b>	<b>490.03</b>

\*May include tonnages outside the Northern Ireland Zone

## KING SCALLOP

Total annual live weight(Tons) landed from ICES Rectangle that includes NI waters

RECTANGLE_CODE	Vessel	COUNTRY_CODE	NAME	Sum of wgtlive(T)/Year						Grand Total	
				2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024		
36E4	<i>Northern Ireland</i>		King Scallops	32.12	32.71	30.42	38.96	29.61	11.53	175.34	
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>			<b>32.12</b>	<b>32.71</b>	<b>30.42</b>	<b>38.96</b>	<b>29.61</b>	<b>11.53</b>	<b>175.34</b>	
	<i>Scotland</i>		King Scallops	2.59				2.27	2.07	6.93	
	<b>Scotland Total</b>			<b>2.59</b>				<b>2.27</b>	<b>2.07</b>	<b>6.93</b>	
	<i>Isle of Man</i>		King Scallops		0.55				1.87	2.43	
	<b>Isle of Man Total</b>				<b>0.55</b>				<b>1.87</b>	<b>2.43</b>	
	<i>England</i>		King Scallops		0.24	0.08	0.04	0.04		0.40	
	<b>England Total</b>				<b>0.24</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>0.04</b>		<b>0.40</b>	
	<i>Belgium</i>		King Scallops	0.39	0.13					0.52	
	<b>Belgium Total</b>			<b>0.39</b>	<b>0.13</b>					<b>0.52</b>	
	<i>Ireland</i>		King Scallops	2.17	24.17	2.27	0.63	1.81	0.04	31.09	
	<b>Ireland Total</b>			<b>2.17</b>	<b>24.17</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>31.09</b>	
	<b>36E4 Total</b>				<b>37.27</b>	<b>57.80</b>	<b>32.76</b>	<b>39.63</b>	<b>33.72</b>	<b>15.51</b>	<b>216.70</b>
	37E3	<i>Northern Ireland</i>		King Scallops				1.21			1.21
<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>							<b>1.21</b>			<b>1.21</b>	
<b>37E3 Total</b>							<b>1.21</b>			<b>1.21</b>	

<b>37E4</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	King Scallops	223.95	106.78	204.59	102.50	164.85	159.42	962.08
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>223.95</b>	<b>106.78</b>	<b>204.59</b>	<b>102.50</b>	<b>164.85</b>	<b>159.42</b>	<b>962.08</b>
	<i>Scotland</i>	King Scallops	11.20	5.50	1.94		2.52	0.37	21.54
	<b>Scotland Total</b>		<b>11.20</b>	<b>5.50</b>	<b>1.94</b>		<b>2.52</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>21.54</b>
	<i>Isle of Man</i>	King Scallops	22.70	0.88	0.66	1.52	4.45	0.49	30.70
	<b>Isle of Man Total</b>		<b>22.70</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>1.52</b>	<b>4.45</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>30.70</b>
	<i>Belgium</i>	King Scallops		0.08					0.08
	<b>Belgium Total</b>			<b>0.08</b>					<b>0.08</b>
<b>37E4 Total</b>			<b>257.85</b>	<b>113.24</b>	<b>207.19</b>	<b>104.02</b>	<b>171.82</b>	<b>160.28</b>	<b>1,014.40</b>
<b>39E3</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	King Scallops	7.38	45.00	1.79	62.08	136.57	104.24	357.07
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>7.38</b>	<b>45.00</b>	<b>1.79</b>	<b>62.08</b>	<b>136.57</b>	<b>104.24</b>	<b>357.07</b>
	<i>Scotland</i>	King Scallops	14.64	29.90	10.83	43.72	9.26	1.62	109.96
	<b>Scotland Total</b>		<b>14.64</b>	<b>29.90</b>	<b>10.83</b>	<b>43.72</b>	<b>9.26</b>	<b>1.62</b>	<b>109.96</b>
	<i>Isle of Man</i>	King Scallops	0.27	0.75			1.26		2.29
	<b>Isle of Man Total</b>		<b>0.27</b>	<b>0.75</b>			<b>1.26</b>		<b>2.29</b>
<b>39E3 Total</b>			<b>22.29</b>	<b>75.65</b>	<b>12.62</b>	<b>105.80</b>	<b>147.09</b>	<b>105.86</b>	<b>469.32</b>
<b>39E4</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>	King Scallops	3.01	6.04	1.96	1.43	10.04	1.10	23.59
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>		<b>3.01</b>	<b>6.04</b>	<b>1.96</b>	<b>1.43</b>	<b>10.04</b>	<b>1.10</b>	<b>23.59</b>
	<i>Scotland</i>	King Scallops	120.27	72.56	65.99	102.92	79.64	76.55	517.92
	<b>Scotland Total</b>		<b>120.27</b>	<b>72.56</b>	<b>65.99</b>	<b>102.92</b>	<b>79.64</b>	<b>76.55</b>	<b>517.93</b>
	<i>Isle of Man</i>	King Scallops	69.42	40.13	63.31	30.12	38.27	54.52	295.76
	<b>Isle of Man Total</b>		<b>69.42</b>	<b>40.13</b>	<b>63.31</b>	<b>30.12</b>	<b>38.27</b>	<b>54.52</b>	<b>295.76</b>

<b>England</b>	King Scallops	1.78	5.11		3.97	0.44	12.35	23.64
<b>England Total</b>		<b>1.78</b>	<b>5.11</b>		<b>3.97</b>	<b>0.44</b>	<b>12.35</b>	<b>23.64</b>
<b>Wales</b>	King Scallops					0.18	4.40	4.57
<b>Wales Total</b>						<b>0.18</b>	<b>4.40</b>	<b>4.57</b>
<b>39E4 Total</b>		<b>194.48</b>	<b>123.83</b>	<b>131.26</b>	<b>138.44</b>	<b>128.57</b>	<b>148.91</b>	<b>865.49</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>511.89</b>	<b>370.52</b>	<b>383.83</b>	<b>387.89</b>	<b>481.20</b>	<b>430.56</b>	<b>2,567.12</b>

\*May include tonnages outside the Northern Ireland Zone

## QUEEN SCALLOP

Total annual live weight(Tons) landed from ICES Rectangle that includes NI waters

RECTANGLE_CODE	Vessel	COUNTRY_CODE	NAME	Sum of wgtlive(T)/Year					Grand Total	
				2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		2024
<b>36E4</b>	<i>Scotland</i>		Queen Scallops	23.86						23.86
	<b>Scotland Total</b>			<b>23.86</b>						<b>23.86</b>
<b>36E4 Total</b>				<b>23.86</b>						<b>23.86</b>
<b>37E3</b>			Queen Scallops							N/A
<b>37E3 Total</b>										<b>N/A</b>
<b>37E4</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>		Queen Scallops		3.59		1.73	0.81		6.13
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>				<b>3.59</b>		<b>1.73</b>	<b>0.81</b>		<b>6.13</b>
	<i>Isle of Man</i>		Queen Scallops		2.19					2.19
	<b>Isle of Man Total</b>				<b>2.19</b>					<b>2.19</b>
<b>37E4 Total</b>					<b>5.78</b>		<b>1.73</b>	<b>0.81</b>		<b>8.32</b>
<b>39E3</b>	<i>Northern Ireland</i>		Queen Scallops			87.14	111.29			198.43
	<b>Northern Ireland Total</b>					<b>87.14</b>	<b>111.29</b>			<b>198.43</b>
	<i>Scotland</i>		Queen Scallops				994.89	446.45	5.15	1,446.49
	<b>Scotland Total</b>						<b>994.89</b>	<b>446.45</b>	<b>5.15</b>	<b>1,446.40</b>
	<i>Ireland</i>		Queen Scallops		0.75	0.02				0.77
	<b>Ireland Total</b>				<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.02</b>				<b>0.77</b>
<b>39E3 Total</b>					<b>0.75</b>	<b>87.16</b>	<b>1,106.18</b>	<b>446.45</b>	<b>5.15</b>	<b>1,645.69</b>
<b>39E4</b>	<i>Scotland</i>		Queen Scallops				12.39	117.03		129.42

<b>Scotland Total</b>				<b>12.39</b>	<b>117.03</b>		<b>129.42</b>
<i>Isle of Man</i>	Queen Scallops			0.95	0.59		1.53
<b>Isle of Man Total</b>				<b>0.95</b>	<b>0.59</b>		<b>1.53</b>
<b>39E4 Total</b>				<b>0.95</b>	<b>12.39</b>	<b>117.62</b>	<b>130.95</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>23.86</b>	<b>6.53</b>	<b>88.11</b>	<b>1,120.03</b>	<b>564.88</b>	<b>5.15</b>

\*May include tonnages outside the Northern Ireland Zone

## Annex 2 Fisheries Act Objectives

The fisheries objectives are provided for in section 1 of the Fisheries Act 2020—

- the sustainability objective,
- the precautionary objective,
- the ecosystem objective,
- the scientific evidence objective,
- the bycatch objective,
- the equal access objective,
- the national benefit objective, and
- the climate change objective.

The “sustainability objective” is that—

(a) fish and aquaculture activities are—

(i) environmentally sustainable in the long term, and

(ii) managed so as to achieve economic, social and employment benefits and contribute to the availability of food supplies, and

(b) the fishing capacity of fleets is such that fleets are economically viable but do not overexploit marine stocks.

The “precautionary objective” is that—

(a) the precautionary approach to fisheries management is applied, and

(b) exploitation of marine stocks restores and maintains populations of harvested species above biomass levels capable of producing maximum sustainable yield.

The “ecosystem objective” is that—

(a) fish and aquaculture activities are managed using an ecosystem-based approach so as to ensure that their negative impacts on marine ecosystems are minimised and, where possible, reversed, and

(b) incidental catches of sensitive species are minimised and, where possible, eliminated.

The “scientific evidence objective” is that—

(a) scientific data relevant to the management of fish and aquaculture activities is collected,

(b) where appropriate, the fisheries policy authorities work together on the collection of, and share, such scientific data, and

(c) the management of fish and aquaculture activities is based on the best available scientific advice.

The “bycatch objective” is that—

(a) the catching of fish that are below minimum conservation reference size, and other bycatch, is avoided or reduced,

(b) catches are recorded and accounted for, and

(c) bycatch that is fish is landed, but only where this is appropriate and (in particular) does not create an incentive to catch fish that are below minimum conservation reference size.

The “equal access objective” is that the access of UK fishing boats to any area within British fishery limits is not affected by—

(a) the location of the fishing boat's home port, or

(b) any other connection of the fishing boat, or any of its owners, to any place in the United Kingdom.

The “national benefit objective” is that fishing activities of UK fishing boats bring social or economic benefits to the United Kingdom or any part of the United Kingdom.

The “climate change objective” is that—

(a) the adverse effect of fish and aquaculture activities on climate change is minimised, and

(b) fish and aquaculture activities adapt to climate change.

