

Catch recording implementation continues following further industry engagement

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has made further improvements to its new electronic catch recording service following feedback from fishermen and talks with the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO).

Three quarters of the UK's active small scale fishing fleet have so far signed up for the service and over 5000 records have already been recorded.

All skippers in the inshore fleet of around 2000 small fishing boats (under-10 metres long) are being asked to register and record the species and weight of their catch.

For the first time this will provide the accurate information needed to help get the best deal for future quota allocations and better reflect fishing interests in future marine development.

Following recent talks with the NFFO, the MMO confirmed that updates to the service had already been made and continues to provide assurances that those reporting the weight of their catch in good faith would not face prosecution.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive Officer of the MMO said: "Our main interest is to build an accurate picture of fishing activity because this will help us to help the fishing industry prosper.

"Fishermen who are recording catches to the best of their ability have no need to worry – we are here to support and guide them over the coming months. If and when there is ever a need to consider enforcement or prosecution actions, for example someone persistently misreporting or not recording at all, that decision would be taken on a wide range of evidence. The important thing is that we continue to work together."

NFFO Chief Executive Barrie Deas said: "The MMO has continued to engage and listen to concerns and we welcome this further improvement. It will enable fishermen to provide the information to their best endeavours, while removing the fear of prosecution if they make an honest mistake.

"The under-10m fleet has suffered for too long from not having enough of the right fishing data – it will help us improve our quota allocations and increase access to more fish in future. The majority of fishermen are complying already and we welcome the support the MMO continues to provide to help those who need assistance as the new system beds in."

The MMO will continue to support the English fleet to adapt to using the new digital solution with further engagement and support.

The latest updates to the service can be found on the App and online guidance

available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/record-your-catch>.