

Helping the fishing industry transition to independence

From 1 January 2021, the UK will become solely responsible for our seas and begin new trading relationships with the EU and the rest of the world.

For some fishers and merchants, there will be big changes required to ensure they can still compete successfully in the international market place.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is helping the fishing and seafood industries prepare for the transition to take on these new opportunities and responsibilities together.

The MMO is raising awareness of the vital role that timely submission of catch and sales records will play in enabling the industry to thrive after the UK leaves the EU.

“This data submission awareness campaign is very much in the spirit of ‘help us to help you’ It is a legal requirement to submit accurate landing declarations, logbooks, sales notes and app catch records on time, but not everyone is yet aware that these records provide the traceability data evidence needed to allow industry to operate from 1 January,” said Tom McCormack, Chief Executive Officer of the MMO.

“This data now has additional importance in fish exports, as catch certificates required for sales to EU destinations will be validated through the data provided by the fisher and merchant. And knowing the origin of the catch ensures customers have confidence to buy the product.

“The records and statistics on what is taken out of the sea, where and when, are also used by MMO and government to make decisions on the future sustainability of fish stocks and the seafood industry. This includes managing fishing opportunities, conservation measures and in very recent times, awarding grant funding.”

Barrie Deas, Chief Executive Officer of the National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations (NFFO) said: “We now have sole responsibility for our waters and it is up to us to ensure we all do the right thing to make sure our industry has a profitable and sustainable future.

“Parts of our industry have been disadvantaged by poor data for too long. We should all recognise good management decisions and good regulation depends on access to good information. The catch records necessary to make vital decisions and fight our industry’s cause – on quotas, negotiations, area closures, environmental legislation, funding and grants, port developments, export approval and more, all depend on good data. The rapid financial support during the Covid lockdown crisis was only possible because of the data held.

“There is an immediate need for everyone to begin now to change practices

where this is needed to ensure that their records are submitted within the legal deadline – if you wait until 1 January, it could be too late.”

UK exporters will have to comply with the EU’s Illegal, Unreported or Unrecorded (IUU) fishing regulations and supply catch certificates and other documents in order to continue to export fish and fishery products to customers in the EU. Accurate records – logbooks, landing declarations, catch app records and sales notes – must be submitted within the legal deadline to enable catch certificates to be issued.

Fishers and merchants should submit all logbook, landing declarations, catch recording and sales notes accurately by the legal deadline:

- Vessels under 10m – record on the catch app in accordance with your licence condition.
- Vessels 10-12m – submit paper logbooks within 48 hours; electronic logbooks within 48 hrs
- Vessels over 12m – submit electronic logbooks and landing declarations within 24 hrs of landing
- Sales notes must arrive within 24 hours of first-sale via the Electronic Reporting System or within 48 hours if submitting by post.

Records submitted on time enable the following benefits:

- Provide a stronger evidential base to negotiate better outcomes for England’s fishers and help stabilise and grow the industry
- Improve fisheries management with potentially more localised opportunities to fish
- Provide a record of traceability which assures customer confidence in UK products
- Provide the evidence for grant funding
- Improve the evidence base for environmental management and legislation changes
- Support the industry voice in marine development and conservation
- Establish track records for individual businesses to support MMO decision-making on licences to fish pressurised stocks when restrictions are required
- Facilitate trade and prevent obstructions in export trade from 1st January 2021

This initiative is just part of the MMO’s continuing commitment to engage with the seafood industry to better understand the needs of these businesses, the impact any impending changes will have on their ability to trade with the EU in 2021, and how best we can support them. The MMO is already engaging with fishers, merchants and seafood processors via online surveys and one-to-one calls, and will shortly launch its fortnightly email bulletin and ‘one-stop-shop’, offering essential support and guidance for the industry.

You can learn more about getting ready for 1 January 2021 and [sign up](#) to get the latest updates relevant to the fishing and seafood industries.

Learn more about how to [report sales information](#)