

King Scallop Closure

The decision by the four UK Fisheries Administrations (FAs) has been taken following a second public call for evidence on whether to extend closure of the fishery.

Fishing has been suspended since 12 July to enable scientific analysis of the state of the shellfish stock to be undertaken so management decisions can be made in consultation with industry. These decisions seek to balance sustainability and the economic needs of the shellfish industry.

A survey and analysis by Cefas this month demonstrated that scallops in the closed areas are currently either spawning or about to spawn. Evidence from other areas suggests the spawning will continue until late autumn.

The extension of the closure until 11 October 11 will protect the stock during spawning and allow time for a further survey to be done that will increase understanding of the state of the shellfish stock.

The closure covers ICES rectangles 37F1, 37F2, 37F3, 38F1, 38F2, 38F3, 39F1 and 39F2 in the Dogger Bank. Fishing licences will be varied to reflect the situation.

Three organisations responded to the FAs' second call for evidence, including the Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG). All three agreed the closure should be extended beyond 29 August 2020.

The FAs remain committed to working with the scallop industry throughout the closure and on future management of the fishery.

Jim Portus, Chair of the SICG and South West Fish Producers Organisation, said: "When the King Scallop fishery emerged on the Dogger Bank this summer, the Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG) members called for the initial closure to allow stock assessment surveys and data collection to be conducted by CEFAS.

"Using this data to help decision-making processes, the vital and valuable King Scallop resource can be well-managed and harvested sustainably in the future.

"Consultation has been an important part of decision-making and the SICG welcomes the extended closure to October 11th, and actually has now called to keep the fishery closed until March 2021."