

MMO restarting coastal operations to further support the fishing industry through Covid-19.

In preparation for the easing of lockdown, MMO locally-based teams have been returning to their usual duties on shore and at sea, following rigorous training in 'Covid-19 secure' operational practices over the past three weeks.

Much of the English fishing fleet is now back in operation, and in response to this increased activity, MMO's presence and activity in ports, fish quays and markets in coastal areas, and inspections at sea, will provide further reassurance of a level playing field for the industry.

As the marine manager and independent regulator for the English seas, part of MMO's role is to support and assure the sustainable harvesting of fish and the protection of the marine environment through compliance with national and international regulations.

During lockdown, MMO continued its surveillance and intelligence activities to identify potential illegal, unreported or unrecorded fishing and took action where appropriate. Coastal teams also continued to provide support and advice to the industry, guiding fishers to the available practical, financial and welfare support. In addition, MMO, with Defra, (the government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) secured and rapidly administered a £10m fund to provide financial assistance to fishers and other seafood businesses to help with their fixed costs.

Fishing industry representatives have welcomed the return of MMO's coastal teams onshore and at sea. Barrie Deas, CEO of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations said:

The MMO has provided very effective support for the fishing industry during lockdown, not least in the prompt distribution of financial support. As the coastal teams return to providing a physical presence in the ports, we have a shared goal of working together to deliver a sustainable and profitable future for the whole industry.

Phil Haslam, Operations Director, MMO, said:

As we support the fishing industry in its recovery, we will ensure that the vast majority who are fishing legally are not disadvantaged by anyone who is not complying with the regulations that are aimed at securing the sustainability of fishing for the future.

The safety of our colleagues, customers and stakeholders is our first priority. We are following Covid-19 secure procedures and, after testing and learning over recent weeks, we are confident we can deliver our support and assurance services on shore and on board our patrol boats, safely for ourselves and those we work with.

We have had a very positive response from the industry so far and we would like to thank vessel owners and crews, harbour and market officers who have welcomed our measured and safe return to a physically distanced presence in the industry.

Whilst MMO offices remain closed, all other services continue to be provided working remotely. For more information, visit our [website](#) or email us on info@marinemanagement.org.uk or call our helpline 0300 123 1032.