

New Fisheries Technical Measures

New measures for all demersal otter trawls and seines in the Celtic Sea mixed fisheries are to be introduced later this year following the conclusion of negotiations between the UK and the EU on catch limits for shared fish stocks for 2021.

The measures are expected to enter force on 5 September and apply to all types of bottom trawl and seines (excluding beam trawls) as these gears have highly mixed catches including valuable non-quota species with bycatch of cod, haddock and whiting. Discussions on selectivity standards which apply in the beam trawl fleet fishery, where the gear used by a significant proportion of vessels is more selective than current selectivity standards, remain ongoing.

Technical measures have been introduced in recent years aimed at conserving cod, haddock and whiting in the Celtic Sea area. The UK government has undertaken a review of these measures with a view to further reducing unwanted catches of cod and whiting as well as deriving wider benefits to the improvement of selectivity for all species. Proposed measures to be introduced in 2021 will simplify rules currently in force and will extend to cover a wider area of the west Channel (ICES 7e), excluding waters of the crown dependencies. Outside of UK waters, vessels must adhere to [EU Reg Art 15 of 2021/92 'Technical measures for cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea'](#).

New measures applicable in UK waters

In order to allow for adaptive management, a new UK statutory instrument will revoke current Celtic Sea technical measures (Art9 of EU Reg 123/2020, EU Reg Art13 of 223/2019 and EU Reg 737/2012). It will provide for detailed technical measures to be introduced through UK and foreign vessel licences in UK waters.

A key change is made in the west Channel (ICES 7e) where a baseline of 100mm codends will replace current complex rules based on catch composition.

In UK waters of the inner Celtic Sea Protection Zone (CSPZ: ICES divisions from 7f, 7g, the part of 7h North of latitude 49° 30' North and the part of 7j North of latitude 49° 30' North and East of longitude 11° West), a baseline mesh size of 110mm with a 120mm square mesh panel will apply to demersal otter trawls and seines.

In the UK area of 7e,f,g,h,j outside the inner CSPZ, a baseline mesh size of 100mm will apply. A 100mm square mesh panel will also be required except in the area of 7e east of 5° west.

In the whole area (UK waters of 7e,f,g,h,j) a maximum twine thickness of 6mm single or 4mm double will apply and strengthening bags will be prohibited other than for vessels targeting Nephrops. Specific derogations will continue to apply subject to further evidence gathering and consultation:

- The defined threshold for the Nephrops vessels (>5% Nephrops in the catch) will continue to apply and there will be specific technical measures/derogations for these fisheries.
- Current measures for vessels targeting sole in the area of 7f east of 5° west will continue to apply.
- Within the CSPZ vessels catching more than 55% whiting or more than 55% hake, angler and megrim may continue to use a 100mm codend with a 100mm square mesh panel. A new derogation will apply pending ongoing scientific assessment of the use of lighter twine in inshore fisheries.
- Vessels operating otter trawls and bottom seines in the 12 nautical mile belt of 7f may use a codend of 100mm and a 100mm square mesh panel. In this circumstance the use of a square mesh panel will be optional.
- Vessel operating otter trawls and bottom seines fishing west of 5° West in 7e (within ICES rectangles 28E3 and 28E4) or inside the 12 nautical mile belt of 7f, may use a codend of 100mm with single twine of maximum 5mm thickness. In this circumstance the use of a square mesh panel will be optional. This is conditional upon trial evaluation.

The measures are intended to be flexible and take account of any evidence that supports further derogations. Proposals for gathering evidence for further derogations can be submitted to the MMO.

The Government anticipates consulting on selectivity measures applying in the Nephrops fishery in the Celtic Sea later this year.

Square mesh panels must be fitted as per licence conditions.

Chart 1 – Rules applying in UK section of the Celtic Sea Protection Zone (CSPZ) excluding waters of the crown dependencies.

Outside of UK waters, vessels must adhere to Art 15 of 2021/92 'Technical measures for cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea' attached at the bottom of this document.

Timing

It is anticipated that these new measures will apply from 5 September, at which point licence conditions will come into force.

Derogations will be kept under review at least every two years or in the light of any new evidence and further changes will be subject to consultation.

The timing provides three months to adjust to the new measures and businesses are advised to check with net manufacturers that supply will be available.

Subject to availability, funding may be available through the Fisheries and seafood scheme for improved selectivity relating to the Celtic Sea measures. This applies prior to 5 September.

For funding information please email: FaSS.Queries@marinemanagement.org.uk

If you have any questions concerning these measures, you should contact the MMO on 0330 123 1032 or by email to info@marinemanagement.org.uk

Single Area Licence conditions

The new single area licence conditions will apply to beam trawlers (both UK and non-UK vessels). Current single area licensing rules that are in place to ensure that catches of Dover sole currently only apply to UK vessels.

The new provisions, which are expected to enter force on 4 October, will now apply to vessels of all nationalities within British fishery limits as defined within licence conditions and excluding waters of the crown dependencies.

Beam trawlers that fish in the relevant area (UK waters of 7e east of 5° West, see chart below) must not fish outside ICES area 7e on the same trip and must depart from and return to a UK port. Alternatively, vessels will be able to fish outside ICES area 7e on the same trip provided they contact the UKFMC before commencing fishing in the relevant area and prior to exit and on request make the vessel available at a checkpoint.

Where a vessel is not required by the UK FMC to facilitate an inspection it may continue to any area outside ICES area 7e.

Details of the new measures will be incorporated into vessel licence conditions.

Chart 2: Single Area Licence – Relevant area (UK waters excluding waters of the crown dependencies).

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