

[News story: Guidance on 2018 bass fishing published](#)

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) [has published guidance](#) on bass fishing in 2018 for fishermen in England. This follows publication of [Council Regulation 2018/120](#) within the Official Journal of the European Union.

The MMO implements fisheries regulations set by the EU and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The European Commission has determined that bass stocks remain under pressure despite the measures taken in previous years. It has placed further restrictions on the commercial and recreational fishing sectors in order to address this.

The regulations apply to all vessels. [The MMO guidance](#) sets out how these regulations will be implemented in the seas around England where it has a fisheries management and enforcement remit. Each UK devolved administration will consider whether it publishes guidance for the implementation of the regulations for the fishing vessels it licenses.

Recreational fishing for bass

For recreational fishers, any bass caught during 2018 must be returned immediately. This applies if you are fishing from a boat or from the shore. The MMO will continue to work with the Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities in enabling and ensuring compliance with this control measure.

Commercial fishing for bass

Throughout 2018 commercial bass fishing from shore is prohibited. In addition, the guidance sets out the areas where commercial fishermen must not catch, retain, transship or land bass. Commercial fishing for bass in any restricted area is prohibited during February and March 2018.

Measures to conserve sea bass stocks were implemented by the MMO in 2017 by issuing bass fishing authorisations to eligible vessels; those that could demonstrate bass fishing within a defined reference period. During early 2018 the MMO will issue authorisations to all vessel owners that received one in 2017. In addition we will be running a representation process for those individuals who did not submit and have their case considered in 2017. Complaints about bass authorisations will be considered by the MMO.

Monitoring and enforcement

The MMO regularly monitors data on fishing activity, including bass catch levels, to ensure enforcement is targeted accordingly. It pursues reported breaches in the appropriate way, using a range of sanctions ranging from verbal or written advice through to prosecution in the most serious of cases.

Earlier in January 2018 the MMO [advised fishermen](#) that 2017 restrictions were to remain in place until this 2018 regulation was published.