

[News story: Master of vessel pleads guilty to fishing over quota limits](#)

The master of the fishing vessel Ocean Rover (SN2) pleaded guilty to 3 offences of fishing over quota limits and 2 offences of being present in a real time closure area at a speed of less than 6 knots.

Newcastle Crown Court heard on 25 July 2017 that marine officers from the MMO used sales note data to prove that the Ocean Rover, skippered by Gerry Lafferty, had landed in excess of its monthly quota allocations in 2015.

In January 2015 the vessel landed 510kg of whiting in excess of its quota and 10,214kg of plaice. Between July and September 2015 it landed 7,272kg of nephrops over quota. The total value of catch which was not within quota limits for 2015 is £23,274.

The court also heard that vessel monitoring system data had shown that the vessel, on two occasions in 2015 had been present in real time closure areas travelling at less than six knots, contrary to conditions in the vessel's licence

Sentencing Lafferty, Her Honour Judge Rippon said:

“These are serious offences and you understand better than most that the regulations are in place to protect the integrity of fish stocks. If they are not enforced this will present difficulties for future generations.”

Accepting that the defendant was of very limited means, the judge imposed a sentence of a conditional discharge of 24 months.