

UK and EU agreement on catch levels for 2021

The UK has now concluded annual fisheries negotiations with the EU, providing certainty for the fishing industry on catch limits for the remainder of 2021.

The catch limits known as Total Allowable Catches have been set for 70 fish stocks and supersede the previous provisional catch limits for 2021.

The agreement provides stability for UK fleets with all Total Allowable Catches remaining in line with the provisional catch limits set earlier this year, apart from eight that have small increases.

The annual negotiations for 2021, in which the UK participated as an independent coastal State outside of the Common Fisheries Policy, follow the signing of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the UK and EU.

The agreement means:

The total value of the UK-EU fishing opportunities for the UK in 2021 is approximately £333 million. This equates to around 160,000 tonnes.

As a result of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement and these negotiations, the UK fleet will have around 26,000 tonnes more quota for these stocks compared to quotas allocated in 2020. This increase is estimated to be worth around £27 million.

Both parties have also committed to exchanging fishing quota on an interim basis ahead of a longer-term exchange system which will be set up by the Specialised Committee on Fisheries.

The Specialised Committee on Fisheries established under the Trade and Cooperation agreement will provide a forum for discussions on fisheries matters between the EU and UK and will meet for the first time in June.

UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid said:

Crucially, this agreement and the formation of a Specialised Committee on Fisheries, means that both parties can now move forward with exchanging fishing quota. This is an issue that is particularly important to the whitefish fleet in Scotland.

I continue to work with UK Government colleagues, Scottish Government Ministers and, most importantly, industry representatives, in delivering on the best interests of the Scottish Seafood industry now that the UK is an independent coastal State.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

As we move forward as an independent coastal State, we have been steadfast in representing the interests of our industry and seeking to manage our fisheries more sustainably.

This agreement provides certainty to our fishing industry and we now have a stable platform in place for managing our fisheries this year and in future years.

As a responsible coastal State, the UK is committed to increasing the sustainable management of fish stocks in UK waters.

The agreement with the EU also provides a framework, via the Specialised Committee on Fisheries, for continued cooperation on fisheries management to support conservation and sustainable fishing. The agreement also adjusted measures for the management of seabass to reduce the level of wasteful discards without affecting sustainability.

The Written Record for these negotiations will be published following the EU's internal ratification processes.

Further information

The UK will have roughly £27m more quota in these 70 stocks than that which was allocated in 2020. This figure takes into account the UK's new, larger, shares of quota under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement as well as Total Allowable Catch reductions which were made for sustainability reasons.

As an independent coastal State with a commitment to achieving sustainable fisheries the UK is taking a more rigorous approach to assessing MSY in relation to negotiated outcomes.

As a result of an independent review of the assessment method these figures are not comparable to previous years, a more detailed report will be published shortly outlining the assessment method and a comparison of this year's negotiated outcomes to previous years.

This 'MSY review', initiated by Defra, demonstrates ministerial commitments to strengthening sustainable fisheries management for the benefit of our marine environment.

Trilateral annual fisheries negotiations between the UK, EU and Norway concluded on 16 March