

# Wales secures strong deal to safeguard fish stocks

As part of the UK Ministerial negotiating team, the Welsh Government helped secure the deal at the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels which concluded in the early hours of this morning.

The Welsh Government secured deals to:

- avoid needless discards of sea bass and protect the interests of commercial and recreational fishers whilst keeping the stock on track to recovery
- increase or maintain quotas for skates/rays, plaice, haddock and megrim in the Celtic Sea and for cod, haddock, plaice and sole in the Irish Sea while still meeting sustainability targets
- facilitate interim solutions to the challenges posed by zero-catch advice for a number of species under the implementation of the Discard Ban in accordance with the Common Fisheries Policy.

The Minister said:

“I would like to thank the members of the Welsh Marine Fisheries Advisory Group who have helped identify the key issues around sea bass and other important stocks in Wales. As a result, we were able to present a strong Welsh case to the Presidency and Commission, along with colleagues from the UK Government and other Devolved Administrations.

“In line with our commitments to ensure our natural resources are sustainably managed, my priority was to safeguard fish stocks whilst securing a positive outcome for those coastal communities whose economies depend so much on the sea. This year’s negotiations were more important than ever with the uncertainty Brexit presents.

“There is a need to fish at sustainable levels based on the best available scientific advice. Finding the right balance in the negotiations was a challenge but we were successful in securing a deal which matches Wales’ priorities.

“I believe a strong and fair balance was struck between protecting the economic interests of small-scale fishers and recreational anglers with the need to move stocks toward the position where they can be fished sustainably into the future.”