

European Association of Fish Producers Organisations

Association Européenne des Organisations de Producteurs dans le secteur de la pêche

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EAPO summary of DEFRA consultations

Following Brexit, the UK has published the Fisheries Act 2020. This act provides the framework to manage UK fisheries as an independent coastal state. This document is available [here](#).

In the UK Fisheries Act, there is a provision for the publication of Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs), which can apply to specific species or fishing areas. A total of 43 FMPs are scheduled to be published in the coming years. Each of these plans will have an online consultation period, during which stakeholders can provide their opinions. The list of Fisheries Management Plans is available [here](#).

EAPO has identified 2 FMPs of interest:

- [Channel demersal non-quota species FMP](#)
- [Flatfish FMP](#)

On top of these FMPs, 2 other consultations are of interest for EAPO members:

- [Discards reform](#)
- [Remote electronic monitoring \(REM\)](#)

Short summaries of each consultation are available

Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species Fisheries Management Plan

DEFRA has prioritized 19 species¹ due to their vulnerability to overfishing, the economic value of their fisheries and the lack of data to monitor the state of the stock. DEFRA's goal is to achieve economic,

¹ Bony fishes

Bib / pouting / pout (*Trisopterus luscus*), Brill (*Scophthalmus rhombus*), Lemon sole (*Microstomus kitt*), Turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*), John dory (*Zeus faber*), Red mullet / striped red mullet / surmullet (*Mullus surmuletus*), Grey gurnard (*Eutrigla gurnardus*), Red gurnard (*Chelidonichthys cuculus*), Tub gurnard (*Chelidonichthys lucerna*),

social and environmental sustainability and to develop models and data for non-quota species. To do so, they have defined priority areas that must be addressed:

- Restriction of future flyseining effort
- Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes
- Cuttlefish
- Monitoring programme
- Education, adoption of voluntary guidelines and development of codes of conduct.

On top of these priorities, DEFRA has produced an Environmental report that is available on their website. It notes that fisheries have an impact on the marine environment through seabed disturbance and bycatch of unwanted/protected species. It highlights the need to develop robust mitigation strategies.

It is important to note that the plan will be reviewed every 6 years.

What about EU vessels ?

All regulatory measures to implement the FMPs will be binding on all vessels fishing in UK waters. **Consultation closes on the 1st of October at 23h59.** More information is available [here](#).

Southern North Sea and Eastern Channel Mixed Flatfish FMP

Flatfish in the southern North Sea and eastern Channel (lemon sole, witch, turbot, brill, dab, flounder, halibut, plaice and sole) were prioritised to be one of the 6 frontrunner FMPs. The FMP sets 5 objectives across 4 themes:

Theme	Objective
Evidence	Develop an improved evidence base for quota and non-quota flatfish in the Southern North Sea and Eastern Channel Mixed Flatfish fishery.
Sustainable fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver effective management of the harvesting of flatfish stocks within the southern North Sea and eastern Channel area. • To support wider environmental sustainability by understanding how the fishing activities within this FMP impact

Elasmobranchs

Lesser spotted dogfish / lesser spotted catshark (*Scyliorhinus canicula*), Starry smoothhound (*Mustelus asterias*), Common smoothhound (*Mustelus mustelus*),

Cephalopods

Common cuttlefish (*Sepia officinalis*), Elegant cuttlefish (*Sepia elegans*), Common octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*), Curled octopus (*Eledone cirrhosa*), Veined squid / Long-finned squid (*Loligo forbesii*), European Common squid (*Alloteuthis subulata*), Common squid / European squid (*Loligo vulgaris*)

	on the wider marine environment and identify options to minimise negative impacts.
Social and Economic	To better understand the social and economic value of the fisheries to the coastal communities within the FMP area.
Climate Change	Explore options for mitigating risk onto the fishery from the changing climatic conditions.

Initial measures to improve flatfish management could be

- Principles to set the TAC in line with MSY approach
- Introduction of Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes for lemon sole, turbot and brill
- Developing viable options to manage towed gears inside the 12 nautical miles

It is important to note that the plan will be reviewed every 6 years.

What about EU vessels ?

All regulatory measures to implement the FMPs will be binding on all vessels fishing in UK waters.

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Remote Electronic Monitoring

DEFRA aims for fully documented fisheries in English waters. To do so, they have planned a roadmap that will be implemented in 3 phases:

1. Evidence review undertaken to identify priority fisheries (2023)
2. Steering group to guide the implementation of remote electronic monitoring in five priority fisheries (2023-2028)
3. Remote electronic monitoring is likely mandatory in at least two of the priority fisheries and progress towards fully implementing remote electronic monitoring across further fisheries is underway (2028)

The proposed priority fisheries are the following:

- Over 24m pelagic trawls operating in English waters
- Over 10m demersal seines in English waters of the Southern North Sea and English Channel
- Over 10m demersal trawls using mesh sizes up to 120 mm in English waters of the North Sea
- Over 10m fixed and drift nets in English waters of the Celtic Sea and English Channel
- Over 10m demersal trawls including beam trawls in English waters of the Celtic Sea and English Channel

What about EU vessels ?

When mandatory within selected priority fisheries (subject to this consultation), remote electronic monitoring will be required on all vessels active within the fishery, in line with how the fisheries are defined in Table 2.

Remote electronic monitoring programmes should have the potential to be interoperable with monitoring systems from other fishing authorities to avoid adverse impacts on fishing activity

Consultation closes on the 9th of October at 23h59. More information is available [here](#).

Discard reform

DEFRA has stated that “it is clear that the landing obligation has proved ineffective and we need to consider reform”. The Fisheries Act 2020 contains a bycatch objective providing 3 aims for DEFRA to achieve:

- Catches should be recorded and accounted for.
- Bycatch should be avoided or reduced.
- Bycatch should be landed where appropriate.

To meet these objectives, DEFRA has identified a few stocks that could be at risk of having landings and discards exceeding quotas:

Sea Area	Stocks
Celtic Sea	Cod (COD/7XAD34) Haddock (HAD/7X7A34) Whiting (WHG/7X7A-C)
North Sea	Cod (COD/2A3AX4) Hake (HKE/2AC4-C) Saithe (POK/2C3A4) Whiting (WHG/2AC4)
West of Scotland	Cod (COD/5BE6A) Haddock (HAD/5BC6A.) Whiting (WHG/56-14)
Irish Sea	Cod (COD/07A.) Whiting (WHG/07A.)

DEFRA is setting up a steering group to identify gear modifications and other measures that could reduce discarding in the fishery. To do so, they will be discussing changes in catch accounting, changes to gear selectivity, area closures, the implementation of a Discard Prevention Charge and exemptions.

What about EU vessels ?

All changes to the way quotas are being distributed only apply to English vessels. Changes to gear selectivity could be mandatory for all vessels in the fishery as well as area closures. Regarding Discard Prevention Charge and Exemptions, they would only apply to English vessels.

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