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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response

Conwy Bay and Estuary Mussel Fishery

Consultation on the closure of the Conwy Bay and Estuary Mussel Fishery pursuant to Byelaw 13a of the former North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee (“NWNWSFC”)

31 August 2018

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Background

Byelaw 13A (Cockles and Mussels – Management of the Fishery) of the former North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee (“NWNWSFC”) provides that the Welsh Ministers may close any cockle or mussel fishery for the purposes of fishery management or for controlling the rate of exploitation. Before taking such action, the Welsh Ministers must have received scientific advice that such a closure is necessary and must have consulted such persons or bodies as appear to the Welsh Ministers to represent local cockle or mussel fishermen.

The Welsh Government’s Fisheries Science Team has undertaken the necessary environmental assessment in connection with the proposed closure and limited authorisation of mussel fishing activity within Conwy Bay. That environmental assessment has concluded, provided the restrictions mentioned below are adhered to, that:

“Welsh Government Science officers consider that beyond all reasonable scientific doubt, there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of any European Marine Site, either resulting from the predicted effects of the plan or project on its own or when those predicted effects are considered in combination with the effects resulting from other relevant plans or projects”.

The restrictions which must be adhered to are as follows:

- a. the authorisations will be issued for the period from 00:01 on 1 September 2018 to 23:59 on 30 April 2019;
- b. the level of fishing activity at the Conwy Bay and Estuary Mussel Fishery does not exceed 22 gatherers;
- c. those gatherers operate from boats only when there is at least 1 metre of water beneath the boat;
- d. the gathering is undertaken using a traditional hand held raking method from a small boat and using a hand held rake of not more than one metre in width.

The authorised fishermen must also comply with all other relevant legislation (including the other Byelaws of the former NWNWSFC, which include (at Byelaw 15) a minimum landing size for mussels of 45 millimetres in length) and must also obtain any other necessary permissions and/or authorisations before undertaking the activities permitted by the authorisations.

Summary

Having undertaken the necessary environmental assessments pursuant to the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC), a Consultation letter was issued on 20th July 2018 with a closing date given as 14 August 2018. The Welsh Government has received NO replies to the consultation or objections to the proposal.

Therefore:

- a Public Notice, closing the Fishery from 00:01 on 1 September 2018 to 23:59 on 31 August 2019 will be issued;
- application forms for up to 22 authorisations to apply for an authorisation to fish for mussels in Conwy Bay (during the period 00:01 on 1 September 2018 until 30 April 2019) have been issued.