

29 June 2021

Dear Stakeholder

WHELK MANAGEMENT MEASURES 2020 CONSULTATION – PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

In 2020 the Welsh Government held a public consultation on new proposed whelk management measures to conserve stocks and ensure the sustainability of the Welsh whelk fishery:

<https://gov.wales/whelk-management-measures-2020-extension>

These measures included:

- An **authorisation scheme** for all UK vessels taking whelks with pots in the Welsh zone, and
- An **annual catch limit (ACL)** on the total amount of whelk that can be taken from the Welsh zone, and
- A **flexible monthly landing cap** for authorised vessels.

The consultation received 61 responses the majority of which were in favour of the proposed measures. An analysis of the responses is available on the Welsh Government website:

<https://gov.wales/whelk-management-measures-2020-extension>

I am writing to **inform** you of some further development of the proposals set out in the consultation, specifically:

1. The first season of the permitted whelk fishery will be 2022.

The 2020 consultation set out the Welsh Government's intention to implement the new whelk management regime in 2021. The impact of both Brexit and Covid-19, had meant we are now working towards the first permitted whelk fishing season starting on 1 March 2022.

2. The vessel master's details will be required as part of the permit application

Box 1 of the consultation stated that the vessel owner's details will be required on the whelk authorisation application form. In addition, the vessel master's details will also be required as part of the application if they are different from the owners.

3. **The first annual stock survey report will be available in autumn 2022** not spring 2021 as mentioned in the consultation.
4. **Annual stock summary reports will be available by early November each year.** Following further advice from fisheries scientists, the annual stock summary report will now be circulated in early November each year instead of July as stated in box 2 of the consultation. This additional time will allow for a more comprehensive assessment to take place. Officials will consult potential authorisation holders on the contents of the summary report during November before determining and publishing the new ACL.
5. **Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) will be a requirement from 2023 onwards.** An active and functioning VMS will not be required in the first permitted season of the fishery as set out in the consultation. However, all vessels fishing for whelk in the Welsh zone will be required to have a functioning VMS with a polling interval of 10 minutes from 2023 onwards.
6. **All vessels fishing for whelk in the Welsh zone (UK or foreign) will require a valid whelk permit.** Now the post-Brexit regulatory and legislative framework has been determined we can confirm all vessels fishing commercially for whelk in the Welsh zone will require a permit.

I am writing to seek your **comments** on the following:

7. **The ACL will be set using both historic and current stock assessment data.** The consultation stated that the first years annual catch limit for the whelk fishery would be set at 5298 tonnes based on historic catch data, after which the ACL would be set using whelk stock assessments. Following further advice from fisheries scientists, both historic landings and current stock assessment data will be used to inform the setting of the ACL which may remain at 5298 tonnes beyond the first year.

Welsh Government are writing to inform you of the above changes, however, if you wish to make any comments, information on how to do so is given below.

How to respond

If you wish to respond, a response is welcome in any written form and can be emailed to us at MarineandFisheries@gov.wales or sent to the postal address given below. If emailing please include the phrase 'Whelk Management Measures 2020 amendment' in the subject box.

Whelk Management Measures 2020 Consultation
Marine and Fisheries Division
Welsh Government Office
Sarn Mynach
Llandudno Junction
Conwy
LL31 9RZ

Is-adran Môr a Physgodfeydd /
Marine & Fisheries Division

Responses will be received for a period of one calendar month, and must arrive no later than 29 July 2021

If you would like any further information or request a paper copy of the consultation or further information on the contents of the consultation itself, please contact the Marine and Fisheries division using the details provided below.

Yours faithfully,

Mark Tilling

Fisheries Policy

Marine & Fisheries Division

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