



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Welsh Government

Welsh Proposed Amendments Consultation – Summary of responses.

August 2021

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

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1. Background

In 2020 the Welsh Government (WG) 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>

On the 29 June 2021 Welsh Government wrote to stakeholders to **inform** them 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 Welsh Government can confirm all vessels fishing commercially for whelk in the Welsh zone will require a permit.

Welsh Government also sought **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.

2. Consultation Period and Distribution

The proposed amendments letter <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2021-06/whelk-consulting-letter.pdf> was released on the 29 June. Comments were invited for point 7 above only. The consultation period for point 7 closed on the 29 July.

The letter was sent to all registered fishers, placed on the Welsh Government website, distributed by Twitter and direct communication with stakeholders took place. Stakeholders were also given the opportunity to talk to officials directly.

Respondents were able to respond by email or written response.

3. Responses

The Welsh Government would like to thank everyone who took the time to submit their views and respond to the proposed amendments letter, all responses will be considered before new measures are introduced.

Four written responses were received as a result of stakeholders receiving the letter. However, no responses commented on the specific point of which comments were sought.

Responses included:

- Concerns that a track record was going to be required as part of an eligibility check for a permit.
- A respondent requested details on the jurisdiction of the Welsh Zone. (via telephone)
- One respondent suggested a capped number of permits should be available for vessels with a track record.

- One concern was raised about the true reflection of catches on a fishers catch returns with regards to market conditions.
- One comment related to residency
- One comment related to the time taken for bringing in whelk management measures.

<p>Track Record</p> <p><i>“do you plan to only allow larger vessels with track record to fish”</i></p> <p><i>“It appears from your letter that we will not be granted a whelk permit since we do not have a track record”</i></p>
<p>Capped number of permits</p> <p><i>“If we are going on annual catch limit there should surely be a capped permit allocation to the amount of vessels that caught that amount”</i></p>
<p>Catch returns</p> <p><i>“With landing restrictions that are being enforced by buyer's due to lack of sales, due to Covid how can a stock analysis be true on fisher's returns”</i></p>
<p>Welsh Zone</p> <p>Clarity on the extent of the Welsh Zone was requested.</p>
<p>Residency</p> <p><i>“Crews should be UK residents”</i></p>
<p>Duration</p> <p><i>“Should have come in two years ago”</i></p>

4. Summary

The consultation asked for comments on a specific proposal relating to the Annual catch Limit. No comments were received.

The proposed amendments letter also made stakeholders aware of the following

- The first season of the permitted whelk fishery will be 2022
- The vessel master's details will be required as part of the permit application
- The first annual stock survey report will be available in autumn 2022
- Annual stock summary reports will be available by early November each year
- Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) will be a requirement from 2023 onwards
- All vessels fishing for whelk in the Welsh zone (UK or foreign) will require a valid

5. Next Steps

Welsh Government policy officials will now consider all responses and comments which have been received. Officials will now prepare a brief for the Minister on the results and seek to prepare new legislation and a new management process to sustainably manage the Welsh whelk fishery.

Officials continue to liaise with stakeholders and will work to enable the introduction of the new permitting scheme.