



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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# Whelk permit fee, conditions, annual and monthly catch limits 2025 to 2026

We want your views on the proposed whelk permit conditions for 2025 to 2026.

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# Overview

Proposed whelk permit fee, conditions, annual and monthly catch limits 2025 to 2026.

The Welsh Fishing Permit (Wales) Order 2021.

The Welsh Government are seeking views on proposals for the Wales whelk fishery through a two-week consultation from 22 November to 6 December 2024. This is regarding the 2025-2026 whelk permit period commencing on 1 March 2025. This includes:

- the permit fee, to increase with inflationary costs to £309
- the Annual Catch Limit (ACL) to decrease by 5% from 4,768 tonnes to 4,529 tonnes
- no change to the initial Monthly Catch Limit (MCL) of 50 tonnes
- whelk permit conditions to remain the same

Details of how to respond to the consultation are at the end of this letter and we would welcome email responses to be sent to

[Fisheries.Management@gov.wales](mailto:Fisheries.Management@gov.wales).

## Whelk Permit fee

The Welsh Government set out its intention to charge a fee for whelk permits. This reflects the costs of administering and managing the fishery, including stock assessment surveys, but excluding enforcement.

Recovering costs incurred by the Welsh Government in managing the whelk fishery is in line with the principles of Managing Welsh Public Money 2016.

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Doing so will ensure we improve upon the data which helps the fishery.

## Methodology to determine Whelk Permit fee

From the 2024 to 2025 permit period the Welsh Government will ensure the costs are accurately calculated and proportionate. Our aim will be to work toward full cost recovery within five years, whilst also looking to identify efficiencies and minimise costs to fishers.

An inflationary rise would result in permit fee of £309, this would take cost recovery to 23% of survey cost and is equivalent to 23% of the average price of a tonne of whelk.

## Fee for 2025 to 2026 permit period

The proposal is to have the cost of the permit fee to increase with inflationary costs at £309. Permit conditions will be published on Whelk Fishery guidance 2025 to 2026 on [Fishing for whelks: guidance, permits and legislation](#).

Other fee options ranging from £400 to £677 were considered but was in the best interest of fishers to recommend £309 at a time when there has been considerable inflation over recent years.

## Annual Catch Limit (ACL)

The ACL is the combined total amount of whelk which can be taken by all permitted vessels during a permit period. The purpose of the ACL is to conserve the whelk stock and ensure the fishery is sustainable.

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The Welsh Government commissioned Bangor University to develop a methodology for calculating the ACL. In 2024 to 2025 permit period, the baseline ACL was 4,768 tonnes.

## **ACL for 2025 to 2026 permit period**

To inform the ACL and MCL for 2025 to 2026, Bangor University completed a whelk stock assessment survey in October 2024. There will be a reduction in ACL by 5% from 4,768 tonnes to 4,529 tonnes.

## **Flexible Monthly Catch Limit (MCL)**

The MCL is the maximum amount of whelk each permitted vessel can take with pots from the Welsh zone each month. All permitted vessels will have the same amount. Once the ACL of the permitted fleet is set, it is important this is not exceeded.

Our aim is to ensure the benefit of the fishery is spread across the permit period in line with the historical fishing patterns. At present the MCL on 1 March is an initial 50 tonnes unless there is evidence to suggest a different limit. In the following months, monthly catch returns from permit holders will be used to assess the rate of progress towards the ACL. The proposal for the MCL for 2025 to 2026 is to remain the same.

## **Permit conditions**

The proposal is that permit conditions remain the same:

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1. The activities authorised by this permit must be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of **The Whelk Fishing Permit (Wales) Order 2021**.
2. This permit only entitles the permit holder (the authorised person) and/or vessel skipper/master on behalf of the owner(s)/charterer(s) named in this permit to take whelk (*Buccinum undatum*) with pots using the vessel named in this permit.
3. This permit is not transferable.
4. The permit holder is responsible for checking and relaying to the vessel skipper/master and crew the flexible Monthly Catch Limit (MCL) when it becomes available on **GOV.WALES** each month.
5. The Monthly Catch Limit (MCL) must not be exceeded.
6. The permit holder must make a full and true report (“Catch Return”) of all Whelks (*Buccinum undatum*) fished for and taken with pots from the Welsh zone by 23:59 on the last day of each month, even if they have not fished.
7. The Catch Return must be completed for each day fished this must include: weight of retained catch (Kg), number of pots lifted, soak time (days) and location of fishing activity (ICES Sub Rectangle).
8. If during a single fishing trip a vessel fishes inside the Welsh zone and outside the Welsh zone, all whelk taken on that trip must be included in the Catch Return and will be deducted from the vessels Monthly Catch Limit (MCL).
9. The permit holder must retain and land only whole whelk in their shell.
10. A copy of this permit (paper or electronic) must be available for inspection by Marine Enforcement Officers on the named vessel.
11. The permit holder must notify the Welsh Ministers using the Whelk fishery - change the vessel on your permit form using the link provided on **GOV.WALES** if the details relating to the named vessel identified in the permit change at any time during the permit period.
12. The permit holder must comply with any suspension of fishing notices in the Welsh zone issued by the Welsh Government.

Conditions required to comply with the Conservation of Habitats and Species

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Regulations 2017 and the Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (together referred to as “the HRA Regulations” as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019/579).

13. Whelk potting is not permitted on the area of maerl bed characterised by the red seaweed *Phymatolithon calcareum* described in Annex 1.1.
14. The use of whelk potting gear with securing anchors, designed to penetrate sediment, is not permitted in the areas of seagrass (*Zostera marina*) described in Annex 2.1.1 and 2.1.2.
15. The use of whelk potting gear with securing anchors, designed to penetrate sediment, is not permitted in the areas containing seapens (*Virgularia mirabilis*) and burrowing megafauna biotope described in Annex 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.
16. The use of whelk potting gear with securing anchors, designed to penetrate sediment, is not permitted in the areas of horse mussel reef (*Modiolus modiolus*) described in Annex 2.3.

## How to respond

We would welcome email responses to be sent to [Fisheries.Management@gov.wales](mailto:Fisheries.Management@gov.wales).

## Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

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## Contact details

For further information, please contact:

Fisheries Division  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

This document is also available in Welsh: [Ffi, amodau, terfynau dalfeydd drwyddedau cregyn moch blynyddol a misol 2025 i 2026](#)

## UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for Welsh Government consultations and for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation.

Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government. (Art 6(1)(e))

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. In the case of joint consultations this may also include other public authorities. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of

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consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation and that the Welsh Government may be under a legal obligation to disclose some information.

If your details are published as part of the consultation response then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

## Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who

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For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the UK GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:  
Welsh Government  
Cathays Park  
Cardiff  
CF10 3NQ

e-mail: [dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales](mailto:dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales)

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

Tel: 0303 123 1113

Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

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