

## **Forthcoming rule changes which will affect the fishing industry**

MMO provides advance information on changes to regulations affecting the UK fishing industry.

The MMO is providing an update on the upcoming changes to fisheries regulations to enable the fishing industry to prepare.

### **What is happening?**

- A new technical conservation regulation is due to be introduced this summer. This regulation aims to reduce capture of juvenile fish and to minimise environmental harm. The technical conservation regulation that is now in force was launched in 1998 and will be superceded by the new rules following a review last year.

The new technical conservation regulation is much less prescriptive than the one it replaces. It has also been changed to take into account Landing Obligation rules. The amendments to the regulation now make rules regional – these are by area such as North Western Waters (Union waters of ICES sub-areas V, VI and VII) or North Sea (Union Waters of ICES divisions IIa, IIIa and IV).

The main effect of this change is to allow fishermen to work more flexibly. For example, mesh sizes are now “minimum” sizes and do not prevent fishermen from using larger mesh sizes if they want to. However, in some fisheries fishermen may be required to use more selective gear, such as adding a square mesh panel to their net.

The text of the amended technical conservation regulation has now been agreed by European Member States and is expected to come into force during the summer of 2019.

The MMO will be producing and promoting public guidance for fisheries affected by changes in these rules.

- The MMO promoted the change in Landing Obligation rules for 2019 last autumn. New gear requirements were introduced in the Irish Sea from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019. However, changes in gear requirements for some fisheries in the Celtic Sea area only come into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019.

We would therefore like to remind fishermen working in this area that they need to be aware of these rule changes. Guidance on the new rules for the Celtic Sea is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landing-obligation-2019-rules-and-regulations>, or you can speak to your local MMO office.

- The UK is currently working with other European countries to look at the possible introduction of “bycatch reduction plans”. Bycatch reduction plans are considered

where zero catch (Total Allowable Catch) of a fish stock is recommended for a given year.

The aim of these plans is to reduce unavoidable bycatch and to help that stock to recover. Various measures to assist in reduction of bycatch are being considered and discussed with affected local fishing industry representatives. When these measures have been agreed, we will issue further communications on this.

### **What the Marine Management Organisation is doing**

As explained in its [compliance and enforcement strategy](#) the MMO will provide guidance and raise awareness of the rules as a first step to achieving compliance. Work being carried out by the MMO so that it can support industry to understand and comply with the changes includes:

- Working with the EC and Defra to gain understanding of the implications of legislation changes by location of fishing activity, sector and gear type
- Training staff so that they can provide advice and guidance to fishermen in person
- Working with fishing industry representatives to understand the best way to provide guidance to fishermen and help spread the word about the changes
- Producing tailored guidance and materials to help people understand how the changes may affect them
- Working with Devolved Administrations to send out clear and consistent information