



Introduction

The need for JFS arises from the Fisheries Act 2020. The Act set out eight objectives for fisheries management in the UK, post-Brexit. (For more detail on the Objectives, please see [CFPO briefing on the Fisheries Act 2020](#)).

The JFS is a more detailed, follow-on document from the four fisheries policy authorities (the Secretary of State for the Environment; Scottish Ministers; Welsh Ministers; DAERA in Northern Ireland) setting out the specific policies that will be implemented to achieve those eight objectives. **It is the roadmap to delivery of the Fisheries Act.**

In this, it defines how the four policy authorities understand and define the objectives and how that applies to fisheries policies. The JFS also notes wherever any one policy may meet multiple objectives.

A key element of the JFS is further detail on Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs). The JFS defines their purpose and lists the specific plans that authorities intend to publish. It does not contain the content of the FMPs.

The JFS will be reviewed a minimum of every six years. Policy authorities will publish a progress report every three years, explaining the extent to which the JFS has been implemented, and how much this has contributed towards meeting the Fisheries Act objectives. The report will also include information on FMPs' progress and related stock status information.

Ambitions of the JFS

- i) Protecting and, where necessary, recovering UK fish stocks**
 - Recognising wild fish as a public resource, and expressing a need to maximise benefit of stocks to coastal communities.
- ii) Reducing the effects of fishing on the marine environment**
 - Includes an ambition for ecosystem-based management, the use of MPAs and technical measures as management tools, and reference to reducing the effects of fishing on marine carbon stocks.
- iii) Supporting a modern, resilient and environmentally responsible fishing industry**
 - Including the development of robust supply chains, a low-emission and modern fleet, and skilled workforce that can respond to shifting market conditions.

Fisheries management, fishing opportunities & capacity

The Secretary of State will determine the total fishing opportunities (through catch quota and effort quota) for the British fishing fleet annually. For most stocks, this will follow international negotiations. Sometimes, fishing opportunities will be determined on a 'provisional basis', if negotiations overrun. The SoS determines the share of the opportunities to go to each fishing authority, and each authority then determines the way in which those opportunities are distributed to industry. How fishing opportunities are divided between authorities will be set out in publicly available **UK Quota Management Rules (QMR)**. Fisheries authorities will also publish their own QMR, publicly and transparently. Factors that may influence how quota is distributed (as foreseen in the Fisheries Act) include:

- Historic catch levels, contribution of fishing to the local economy, compliance with regulation, impact of fishing on the environment.

Authorities may also use quota distribution to incentivise:

- The use of more selective fishing gear and the use of fishing techniques that have a reduced impact on the environment.

The JFS notes an ambition to restore or restore all stocks to 'biomass levels that produce yields that are sustainable for the long-term' but **does not reference MSY** in this context. **It provides more flexibility than CFP MSY-based targets by**

noting that the journey towards achieving long-term target biomass levels ‘may need to speed up or slow down’ based on changeable environmental, social and economic factors. MSY is noted as one of the core principles of how the UK will engage on international fishery negotiations, where the text refers to ‘increasing the overall number of [shared] stocks fishing at MSY or suitable MSY proxy’.

As detailed in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (see CFPO briefing here), the JFS notes that the UK and the EU are in a 5.5 year ‘adjustment period’, allowing fleets from both sides to adjust to new access arrangements. **At the end of the adjustment period, access as well as fishing opportunities will be subject to annual negotiations.**

For stocks that exist only in UK waters, the government will use the precautionary approach, using the ‘best available scientific evidence’.

Developing sustainable management for non-quota stocks (NQS) is listed as a priority in the JFS, both domestically and internationally – through the Specialised Committee on Fisheries (established by the TCA).

Fishing capacity will continue to be set at a level which balances economic needs against the need to maintain stock health, and highlights that public funds will not be given to new fishing vessels where this would increase fishing capacity beyond this level.

On fisheries monitoring, a [UK ‘work plan’](#) is set out as part of our commitments to the Data Collective Framework. Exploring options for Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) is referenced, but no commitment to roll-out is included.

Displacement

The JFS notes that fisheries conservation measures may result of displacement of fishing activity, and that this can have negative social, economic and environmental impacts. The statement says that government will ‘work with sea users’ to identify and address thought issues – noting pressures from offshore wind in particular.

Climate change

The JFS highlights ways in which the seafood sector can respond to climate change, both by supporting efforts to reduce its impacts and by identifying ways to adapt to it.

Central to the JFS is the government’s commitment to supporting the sector through this, and in particular, improving understanding of the impact of climate change across the industry supply chain as a whole. The effects of climate change on marine species, their habitats and fisheries will be monitored through a range of methods including the Marine Climate Change Impacts Programme, and **the JFS notes a focus on understanding the importance of blue carbon habitats and their interactions with the fishing sector.**

The JFS states that these findings will be used to develop, in partnership with the industry, fisheries management approaches that will allow for long-term sustainable fishing success for stocks affected by climate change. **Innovations to either reduce the impacts of climate change or respond to it will be identified, including technical engine upgrades, gear choices, and alternative fuels, along with behavioural and management changes.**

Reducing bycatch

The JFS notes that the government is committed to partnership working with industry on reducing all forms of bycatch through developing management measures. Each authority can develop their own discard exemptions for commercial catches, and the JFS points to the impending '**Bycatch Mitigation Initiative**', which will include broad principles for reducing bycatch of sensitive species (such as whales, dolphins, seabirds, seals and turtles). The BMI is not yet published, but will set out actions to improve monitoring of sensitive species bycatch, and develop and adopt effective mitigation measures. Additional bycatch policies, under the BMI, may be developed in partnership with industry - including fishery-specific policies within FMPs.

Production, marketing & consumption of seafood

The JFS highlights the need to support coastal communities and all those working in the industry, ensuring its long-term prosperity. It highlights the government’s intention to work with the sector to strengthen the workforce and encourage new workers to the industry, including an increase in the domestic workforce. Specifically, improved training,

work conditions and standards (including a focus on safety at sea), and fairer pay conditions are noted. Opportunities to diversify will be identified in collaboration with industry and pursued to help all those working in the industry adapt to the changing environment and respond to consumer needs.

Of particular interest to the PO from a Seafood Cornwall perspective, the commitment to strengthen both the domestic and international markets is highlighted through references to the promotion of healthy, sustainable and distinctive products **using recognised labelling to support accreditation and demonstrate quality**, sustainability and the responsible practices of the UK industry, along with the use of the best available (new and existing) markets.

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) are being established to set out socio-economic and environmental measures relating to sustainability, the ecosystem, climate change and bycatch objectives.

FMPs will be one of the policy instruments with the most direct impact on the fishing industry's day to day existence, shaping management and data requirements on a fishery basis. Some key details:

- They will be prepared either by one national fisheries authority, or jointly, and will set out a range of policies aimed at restoring or maintaining stocks at sustainable levels, along with targets for achieving those goals.
- Not all stocks will be covered by an FMP – data, including commercial interest, economic value, socio-economic importance and ecosystem significance, will determine whether a stock should have an FMP.
- FMPs will, where possible, include specific approaches to data collection, modelling and monitoring of stocks and ecosystem health.
- Regional FMPs may also be developed, recognising geographic differences, and cover local variations in fishing activity and stocks that are not the focus of a UK-wide FMP.

The JFS also highlights the role of FMPs in informing the UK's international negotiating position on achieving sustainable stocks, particularly for stocks where the UK shares management responsibility with other coastal States and therefore requires support from other states to deliver against the objectives of an FMP.

Existing conservation/management measures operated by each authority will be retained, and EU Multiannual Plans retained under UK law will continue to apply, although government will consider which elements may be retained or be included in FMPs with a view to phasing out EU MAPs in due course.

Before being published, all FMPs will be subject to public consultation.

FMPs will be monitored, their effectiveness regularly assessed and reported on at least every 3 years, and reviewed fully every six years (as a maximum). Reports will note progress on the implementation of policies in an FMP and the subsequent effects on sea fish stock levels in the UK.

Other briefings – the NFFO & NGO positions

The NFFO has issued a short 'first response' [statement on the JFS consultation](#). The NFFO welcomes the 'emphasis on delivering resilient supply chains and acknowledgement of the role the fishing industry plays in providing food security', as well as the JFS stressing the importance of quality, well-paid jobs in the sector. The NFFO says the complexity of delivering FMPs across administrative boundaries 'implies a mountain of work ahead', and notes concern about the wider political and policy context that the JFS is surrounded by – eg. relationships and working with the EU through the TCA. **There is very little mention of anything like 'co-management' in the JFS** – and the NFFO highlights this as a core concern. They also **note that reference to the impacts of displacement are very brief, not recognising the scale of the potential issue.**

A collective of eNGOs has produced a [briefing on the JFS](#). They call for more specific time-frames in achieving environmental goals, 'urgent and effective action to tackle wildlife bycatch in UK waters', a requirement / commitment to roll-out Remote Electronic Monitoring, and the delivery of a 'climate-smart' fishing strategy from each fishing authority.