



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cornish fishing industry lead the way for sustainable crawfish fishery

Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation increase the minimum landing size for crawfish to protect stock for future generations

NEWLYN, Cornwall., August 10, 2022 – The Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation (CFPO) announce the rollout of a new, industry-led, voluntary management measure for the Cornish crawfish (also known as [spiny lobster](#)) fishery. The voluntary measure will see an increase in the minimum landing size from 95mm to 110mm outside the 6 nautical mile (nm) limit. Fishermen signed up to the measure will only land crawfish (*Palinurus elephas*) that meet the MLS, any crawfish with a carapace (body shell) length less than 110mm will be returned to sea. MLS is a technical measure used in fisheries management, it aims to protect species and increase the opportunity for reproduction and overall sustainability of the stock.

This landmark move from the CFPO has come following considerable consultation with CFPO members. Chris Ranford, CEO of the CFPO, explains why they have decided to move forwards with the decision:

“This is an ambitious step, but sustainability is a fundamental principle of our industry and our members want to put protective measures in place now, so they can safeguard the stock and continue to benefit from the crawfish fishery in the future. To see the industry taking the lead on the management of crawfish is very positive and demonstrates the importance of sustainability to the CFPO membership.”

Currently, national legislation allows for an MLS of 95mm carapace length for crawfish caught outside of the 6nm limit, managed by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), and an MLS of 110mm carapace length inside the 6nm limit, managed by the Cornwall IFCA. The new voluntary approach will harmonise legislation.

The southwest's crawfish fishery is a lucrative industry for Cornish fishermen, with prices at market regularly reaching £28 per kilo. Until recently, crawfish were scarce in Cornish waters due to poor management during the 1960s and early 1970s. The first signs of significant recovery did not occur until 2014, when large numbers of recently settled individuals started to appear in locations where they had been absent for decades. Although in recent years crawfish numbers have seen a remarkable recovery, CFPO members are calling for effective fisheries management to be put in place now to secure a sustainable future for the species.



"We're taking responsibility for this now because we care about the future, and we don't want history repeating itself," said inshore fisherman and CFPO member Andrew Pascoe, who lands crawfish as part of his mixed catch. "Although this change will see an initial reduction in our catch and income, it makes more sense to take action now, while stocks are healthy. But if we're really going to make this work in the long term, it needs to be officially recognised as national legislation to ensure everyone is on the same page."

Although this is currently a local voluntary initiative, the CFPO is pushing for this harmonisation of the minimum landing size to become a national regulation. By increasing the minimum landing size nationally, the CFPO hopes that crawfish reproduction and recruitment (the ability of stocks to produce offspring) could be significantly improved, helping to ensure the sustainability of the species for decades to come.

Ranford continues: *"This industry-led approach is unique and forward thinking and follows on from previous initiatives the CFPO have led on in the past. Our members have set a precedent, but the minimum landing size needs to be replicated everywhere and applied to all vessels, UK and EU wide. Voluntary measures are good and demonstrate the industry's willingness to be proactive with fisheries management, but they're not the law. We hope that by sharing what our members are doing we will see this becoming the industry standard until national legislation is in place."*

To help fishermen transition to the new MLS, the CFPO and Fishy Filaments, an innovative organisation recycling fishing nets, have produced gauges from recycled gillnets and issued them to members that are targeting crawfish. The gauges are available on request via the CFPO office. For more information, get in touch with Chris Ranford: chris@cfpo.org.uk.

Watch a [short video](#) about the announcement.

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Notes to editors

The [Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation \(CFPO\)](#) was established in 1975 by local fishermen in Cornwall. Today, they are proud to represent fishermen from all over Cornwall and beyond who make up one of the most sustainable and diverse fishing fleets in Europe.



Fisherman, Andrew Pascoe, holding a pair of crawfish



Andrew Pascoe with landed crawfish



The fishy filaments gauge



Measuring the length of a crayfish carapace