

FACTSHEET: Channel Demersal Non- Quota Species (NQS) Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)

Why a Channel Demersal NQS FMP?

NQS are of significant economic value, and the fisheries are of huge importance to local communities. However, NQS are largely data poor compared to quota species. Many of these demersal NQS have radically different biology to most quota species, with a mix of very short-lived species (for example, cuttlefish and squid), as well as slow growing long lived finfish.

What does the FMP do?

The Channel Demersal NQS FMP establishes a road map to achieve long-term sustainable management of demersal NQS in the English Channel. The FMP applies to demersal NQS fished by all methods and all vessels operating in English waters of the ICES areas 7d and 7e. The species in scope are cuttlefish, squid, octopus, bib, turbot, brill, lemon sole, red gurnard, grey gurnard, tub gurnard, red mullet, john dory, lesser spotted dogfish and smoothhound.

Summary -----

Current Management

The level of management applied is variable, due primarily to the diverse nature and location of NQS fisheries. These species are considered to be data poor - the majority are subject to limited data collection regimes (i.e., landings data only), and only seven are assessed by ICES within the English Channel.

Goals of the FMP

- **Sustainable fisheries:**
 - 1) Deliver effective management of demersal NQS in the English Channel,
 - 2) Deliver wider biological sustainability.
- **Social and economics:**
 - 1) Better understand and optimise economic and social benefits, and
 - 2) Build capacity for the industry to be able to input into matters effecting NQS fisheries management.
- **Evidence:**
 - 1) Better understand wider NQS evidence gaps, and
 - 2) Develop the NQS evidence base.

Proposed Actions in the FMP

- a) **Building collaborative capacity:** Creating a NQS management group, which will act as a forum for addressing management concerns and needs.
- b) **Restricting flyseining effort:** Following Defra's consultation on this issue in 2022, it is recommended to introduce a standard net mesh size of 100mm for all

flyseine vessels operating in English waters of the Channel. It is also recommended to restrict effort by engine power to 221 kilowatts (kW) for flyseine vessels within 12 nautical miles (nm) of the English Channel.

- c) **Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes (MCRS):** Cuttlefish, lemon sole, turbot, and brill were highlighted as key FMP species requiring protection during the juvenile life stages of their development. The proposed MCRS are cuttlefish – 23cm; lemon sole – 25cm; turbot – 30cm; and brill – 30cm. These sizes have been identified to align with the MCRS in Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) in the short term and will be evidenced further to determine the appropriate size based on maturity sizes for these species. Considering an MCRS for other flyseine targeted species, such as red mullet, bib and gurnards is recommended as a medium-long term measure.
- d) **Cuttlefish:** The FMP recommends considering temporary seasonal closures for cuttlefish trawlers to protect pre-spawn juvenile cuttlefish, or egg-laying habitat, pending further evidence for longer term management approaches.
- e) **A monitoring programme:** The initial recommendation is to focus on an early adopter scheme for flyseining vessels alongside a holistic monitoring programme, subject to the outcomes of the consultation on REM in summer 2023.
- f) **Education:** Through partnership working, the FMP proposes to develop voluntary guidelines, education, and codes of conduct for both commercial and recreational fishers.

Environmental Impacts of the Channel Demersal NQS fisheries

Given the comparative lack of data on the direct impacts of Channel demersal NQS fisheries further work is required and the assessment is at high-level and based on best available science.

What does this consultation mean for me?

This is an opportunity for you to have your say in the future of Channel Demersal NQS management in English waters. We want to receive your input and views throughout the consultation and beyond.

Give us your views

Find the consultation online at:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/fisheries-management-plans-1/channel-demersal-nqs-fmp-consultation/>

or scan the QR code to visit the page.

The consultation is open to 23:59 on 1 October 2023.



What happens next?

Your feedback will be analysed and considered as part of the consultation process. Following this the Channel Demersal NQS FMP will be updated as appropriate.

The aim is to have the final FMP published by the end of 2023.