

# **FACTSHEET: Crab and lobster Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)**

## **Why an FMP for crab and lobster?**

Crab and lobster have been prioritised due to the vulnerability of these stocks to over-exploitation, the economic value of the fisheries, and a lack of evidence to properly assess and monitor the state of the stocks.

Crab and lobster fisheries contribute culturally, socially, and economically to coastal communities through employment and recreational fishing interests. Improved management action is therefore needed to protect these stocks and secure their future and the future of the industry that depend on them.

## **What does the FMP do?**

The FMP was developed by Seafish (the Sea Fish Industry Authority) in partnership with Defra and in collaboration with the shellfish industry's Crab Management Group

The FMP collates evidence to assess the status of crab and lobster stocks and fisheries around England, identifies existing management measures, and sets out short- and long-term actions for the sustainable management of English crab and lobster fisheries.

## **Summary** -----

### **Current Management**

The management landscape for crab and lobster in England is highly fragmented with a range of national and regional measures variously applied across differing jurisdictions. These include shellfish entitlements, minimum landing sizes, pot limitations, permitting schemes, vessel length restrictions, and specific conservation regulations.

The existing management is largely based on administrative boundaries (for example Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) jurisdictions or borders between devolved administrations) which does not necessarily reflect the biological boundaries between stocks.

### **Goals for the FMP**

To embed suitable management based on better species and fishery data to ensure the long-term sustainability of these important fisheries.

### **Proposed Actions in the FMP**

- Establish a fit for purpose evidence base by improving data collection approaches
- Introduce initial management measures to protect stocks whilst the evidence base improves. The key proposals are exploring opportunities to standardise or

increase lobster and crawfish minimum landing sizes across English waters to harmonise with existing IFCA measures, prohibiting the landing of soft brown crab for bait, and piloting management regimes for brown crab and European lobster in certain areas.

- Develop and embed long-term targeted management measures to manage fishing effort. Measures under consideration include seasonal closures, pot limitations, effort limitations, catch limits, and assessing the impact of latent capacity within the fleet.

### **Environmental Impacts of crab and lobster fisheries**

All FMPs are subject to legal obligations for environmental protection arising from legislation. The Crab and Lobster FMP identifies two potential environmental risks; a) bycatch, b) marine litter. Both risks are currently considered low.

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### **What does this consultation mean for me?**

This is an opportunity for you to have your say in the future of crab and lobster 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/crab-lobster-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 Crab and Lobster FMP will be updated as appropriate.

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