

To interested organisations on the attached list

23 October 2003

Dear Colleague

WESTERN WATERS : EFFORT CEILINGS FOR THE NEW REGIME

1. I am writing to producer organisations and other bodies on the attached list to:
 - (i) advise of the arrangements that Fisheries Departments are making to provide effort data to the Commission;
 - (ii) ask recipients for their co-operation in identifying areas of activity, in particular relating to fishing for non-TAC species that may not be fully recorded in departmental records.
2. Any responses to this letter should be sent to David Lee in our Fisheries Statistical Unit at 10 Whitehall Place (see full address above) by close of play on Friday 7 November (tel 020 7270 8073; fax 020 7270 8072 or email DavidJLee@defra.gsi.gov.uk). Colleagues in SEERAD are writing separately to POs and other organisations in Scotland.

Background

3. A new effort regime for Western Waters will take effect no later than 1 August 2004, with effort ceilings being set for each Member State based on the annual average of fishing activity (kilowatt days) incurred by vessels over 15 metres in the reference period 1998 to 2002.
4. To enable effort ceilings to be set Member States are required to submit effort data to the Commission by 30 November 2003, along with a list of vessels that will be eligible to fish in Western Waters and the national measures to be adopted to ensure effort ceilings are not exceeded. It is envisaged that all UK vessels over 15 metres will be authorised to fish in Western Waters, as at present, and that effort ceilings will be enforced through the variation of fishing vessel licences, ie where an effort ceiling is in danger of being breached further fishing activity will be prohibited.

Fisheries for which the UK will have effort ceilings

5. We expect to establish effort allocations for the following fisheries and zones:

Western Waters zone (ICES Area)	Demersal fisheries using fixed and towed gear	Scallop fisheries using towed gear	Edible crabs and spider crabs using fixed gear (pots and nets)
V/VI	YES	YES	YES
VII	YES	YES	YES
VIII	YES	UNLIKELY	UNLIKELY

6. Fishing effort in each of the above fisheries will be assessed by reference to the gear type used and the species caught on each fishing trip by vessels over 15 metres in the 1998 to 2002 reference period. Demersal species will include crustacea and molluscs such as nephrops, shrimps and cuttlefish but not scallops and edible crabs/spider crabs. Nor will demersal species include the deep sea species covered by annexes I and II of Council Regulation 2347/2002 (see lists at annex A).

Construction of UK effort data

7. The UK effort data for the reference period 1998 to 2002 will be compiled from trip and gear data provided by vessels via logbooks and other documents. For the period 2000 to 2002 the Fisheries Departments should hold comprehensive data because all vessels over 10 metres have been required to submit logbook returns for all fishing trips and all species taken. Prior to 2000 it was only mandatory to submit logbook returns for fishing trips lasting more than 24 hours and in the course of which more than 50 kg of TAC species were taken (although a significant number of vessel owners have made voluntary returns). Additionally local fishery offices historically provided information on the gear types used for trips lasting less than 24 hours when processing data drawn from landing declarations and sales notes.

Comprehensiveness of UK fisheries data

8. The information the Fisheries Departments hold on demersal activity between 1998 and 2002 should be reasonably comprehensive. However if any recipient is concerned that there may be areas where our data are deficient, for example, in regard to non TAC fishing activity, I should be grateful if they would let David Lee know by 7 November (see contact details at paragraph 2).

9. There may be gaps in the information that the Department hold about fishing trips for scallops and edible/spider crabs. We are therefore intending to:

- (i) send individual vessels owners details of the trip data held in our statistical database before the end of October;
- (ii) ask owners whether that information is comprehensive and if not to supplement it, wherever possible, within 3 weeks.

We recognise that the timetable is very tight but we are constrained by the need to submit data to the Commission by 30 November.

Irish Hake Box

10. Within Area VII, and to safeguard juvenile hake stocks, separate effort ceilings are to be established for the waters to the south west of Ireland (see co-ordinates at Annex B), again for demersal, scallop and edible/spider crab fisheries but based on the past activity of vessels **over 10 metres**. Effort data for the hake box has also to be with the Commission by 30 November. We believe that UK activity in the hake box will be confined to vessels over 15 metres but if any recipient is aware of activity by UK vessels between 10 and 15 metres David Lee would be grateful to know.

Other matters

11. We expect to be able to let producer organisations and other bodies have provisional UK totals of effort data for the reference period 1998 to 2002 by early November along with the totals for over 18 metre vessels previously reported to the Commission under the existing Western Waters regime.

12. We shall be writing to all vessel owners in the New Year with revised guidance on compliance with Western Waters requirements. As you will be aware the number of effort zones has been considerably reduced and the requirement to provide effort reports eliminated other than for the Irish hake box.

13. In the meantime if there is any point on which you would like clarification do not hesitate to call David Lee (020 7270 8073), Keith Porter (020 7270 8134) or myself (020 7270 8139).

Yours ever

Barry

B S EDWARDS
Fisheries IV

INTERESTED ORGANISATIONS

Anglo Scottish - FPO

East of England FPO

FPO

North Sea PO

Northern PO

Lowestoft FPO

South Western FPO

Cornish FPO

Wales and West Coast FPO

Fleetwood FPO

Northern Ireland FPO

Anglo North Irish FPO

UKAFPO

NFFO

Shellfish Association of Great Britain

South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen Ltd

Association of Sea Fisheries Committees

Simon Bossy - States of Jersey

Jon Torode – Guernsey SFC

Andy Read – DAFF Isle of Man