



## Consultation on March catch limits

The following is our provisional estimate of the catch limits that will apply for the main quota species for the under 10 metre pool for March 2015 and a guide on the anticipated catch limits on for the rest of the year.

The estimates are based on the level of quota available to us today (18 February 2015), and it is our intention to continue to seek gifts and swaps in of stocks for all of those listed below.

The limits below are proposed because setting at this level should ensure that the fisheries will remain open for the whole calendar year and wherever possible factors such as seasonality and best anticipated market prices are also factored in.

As it stands we are unable to monitor uptake in the over 10 metre Non Sector in the same way because there are less vessels and uptake patterns are less predictable.

We are unable to assume we can swap in stocks just because we have a good track record of doing this over previous years. It is also worth stressing that to find enough quota for the key targeted stocks it is often necessary to trade away other stocks where uptake is less than we anticipated.

We are happy to take proposals on changes to these limits to take into account local factors, but because quotas are set for a large area of coastline we have to balance the needs of each local fleet against keeping the fishery open for the full year.

For your information we have included some figures to highlight some of the issues relating to key stocks (view spreadsheet).



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We would be grateful if you could review the information below and give us your thoughts on:

1. **The proposed catch limits for March 2015**
2. **Changes to the annual catch plan – if for example you want an increase to the limit in March 2015 this will probably mean that we have to reduce the limit in other months.**

If you would like to comment on these matters please email: [FMC@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:FMC@marinemanagement.org.uk) by **5pm on Wednesday 25th February 2015**. If you require any assistance with any of the information above please contact our helpline on 0300 1231032.

We will send out a summary of the comments made and any changes we are able to make as a result after the consultation closes and these will also be published on our website.

## **Stocks**

Please find attached excel sheet ' Pool March worksheets' with suggested catch limits for March.

We have provided more detailed information on the main quota stocks in the tables below, indicating the annual catch plan for the stock. **It should be stressed however that these are only a suggestion and this often changes as uptakes are monitored and stocks are swapped into the pool.** Under the number of vessels this shows the number of vessels who on average land that fish each month. The average price is taken from our most recent market price guide which was produced in December 2014

**Area 7 Angler** - Mostly caught around the neap tides. The stock is in high demand from Producer Organisations and so it may be difficult to source additional quota for the pool. For this reason the catch limit will need to drop from 4 tonnes to 3 tonnes in March 2015. The price of this stock is fairly constant although best prices tend to be at the end of the year and the lowest around August through to October. We anticipate that we will be able to maintain a catch limit of around 3 tonnes per month for most of the year; however we plan to drop the limit at the time the prices are at their lowest.

Area 7 Angler

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	3	3	3	3	2.5	2.5	3	3	3	3
Estimated pool landings (tonnes)	20	33	32	22	28	30	32	18	16	8
No of vessels	88	103	148	146	149	131	126	88	63	61
Average price per tonne (£)	2880	2809	2815	2779	2805	2584	2595	2705	3091	3641

**Area 7b-k Cod –** Over the last 3 years this seasonal fishery hasn't taken off over the period January to March and we have had enough fish at the end of the year. This year we have less stock because the quota was reduced by 28 %. Feedback from local fishermen and early reports on catch taken in 2015 suggests that uptake is much higher this year so we anticipate that the stock will be difficult to come by. For example usual uptake patterns are around 15 tonnes for an 800kg catch limit in January and February, however 27 tonnes has already been landed in 2015.

Historically the price for this stock is at its highest in October to November, I am hopeful we can keep some back to maximise income to the pool but if high landing continue early in the year the catch limits will need to be lower later in 2015. .

Area 7b-k  
Cod

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	0.8	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	7	5	3	4	4	4	6	10	11	6
No of vessels	102	100	97	103	101	94	146	149	157	91
Average price per	2188	2015	2634	2271	2068	2109	1875	2391	3342	2660



tonne (£)										
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**Area 7d Cod –** Although the pool allocation is quite low most of the UK landings come from the pool. Consequently we try to trade as much stock in as we can to make the fishery viable. End year pool uptake of this stock is typically at least double the initial allocation. In 2014 we consulted on reallocating some of this stock into the pool. 117 tonnes were traded in via swaps or reallocated. However because 2014 take up of the stock was around 98% we have been unable to bank much of the stock into this year and although there is a 5% increase in quota the net effect is a lower starting allocation than last year. As is the case with 7b-k Cod landings are much higher in 2015 than they were last year in fact they stand at 31.8 tonnes. Consequently we are unable to increase the catch limit at this time from 300kg and anticipate that because it is a winter fishery, the fishery will be closed between April to September and reopened in October when the price and availability of the stock improves and we have hopefully traded in more of the stock. However we will continue to monitor the uptake of the stock and the 300kg catch limit will need to be reviewed.-

#### Area 7d Cod

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	0.3	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed	0.3	0.3	0.3
Estimated uptake(tonnes)	5	1	0	0	0	0	1	7	24	14
No of vessels	145	22	0	0	0	0	13	121	153	117
Average price per tonne (£)	1652	2010	2416	2032	1768	1792	1930	1806	2000	2062

**Area 7 b-k Haddock** – we have seen reductions in this stock year on year for some time and the pressure on the stock has increased. We were able to keep the fishery open during 2014 because we doubled our initial quota through swaps. However because there has been another reduction in quota this year, we are unable to release more than 300kg per month catch limits. In fact on this figure we will need to swap in a further 20 tonnes at least and we will need to keep this under regular review.

Area 7 b-k  
Haddock

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Estimated uptake(tonnes)	2	4	6	7	6	5	3	2	1	1
No of vessels	47	53	59	55	53	38	33	24	17	4
Average price per tonne (£)	1281	1529	1435	1222	1333	1484	1323	1640	1218	1256



**Area 4c/7d Herring** – most of the landings of this stock tend to occur between January to March and September to December, however this can be difficult to predict. We have received a number of requests to increase the catch limits and have been able to source additional quota out of a gift from a Producer Organisation and so are able to make a modest increase to the February catch limits to 3.5 tonnes and propose 5 tonnes in March. We expect there will be a by catch limit of around a tonne until October when the limit will go back up to 5 tonnes, depending on quota use until then.

#### 4c/7d Herring

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit(tonnes)	5	5	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	5
Estimated uptake(tonnes)	59	12	3	2	2	1	3	21	26	19
No of vessels	86	63	36	23	9	5	26	68	94	60
Average price per tonne (£)	574	358	1540	1195	1072	1971	1834	723	319	629



**Western Ling** – we have recently traded in 40 tonnes of this stock which makes the fishery viable and has helped us to increase the catch limit in February from 200kgs to 1 tonne. Although prices are generally not high in the spring we acknowledge also that the fish can be caught by netters and wreck netters targeting Pollack and Cod. In line with the increase to Pollack catch limits I recommend an increase in the catch limit to 2 tonnes.

Western  
Ling

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	2	2	1.5	1.5	1
Estimated uptake tonnes	15	8	4	4	6	4	2	1	3	2
No of vessels	85	100	95	90	99	76	70	50	69	49
Average price per tonne (£)	950	862	1136	1231	1253	1272	1341	1344	1574	1589





**Plaice 7de** – uptake by the pool in 2014 was very high and because we were unable to trade in as much as we normally can we had to close the fishery.. Our safety margin for this stock is very small because it is landed at times by over 300boats.. We anticipate that penalties will apply to the level of quota available to us in 2015 due to the high landings in 2014and so have had to reduce the catch limits accordingly. However we have recently traded in 30 tonnes of the stock and hope to be able to trade in more. It is proposed to increase the catch limit to 500kgs in March from 250kgs in February.

Area 7de  
Plaice

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	34	24	42	19	28	30	43	45	27	8
No of vessels	296	262	266	222	278	258	319	295	268	183
Average price per tonne (£)	977	1274	1172	1027	1224	1310	1124	1346	1095	1047



**Area 7 Pollack** – we had a good increase in uptake during 2014 and had a surplus of around 90 tonnes of the stock at year end. We have received a number of requests from netters to increase the catch limit of this stock but challenges from commercial rod and liners who believe catch limits should be reduced to protect spawning stock and release more of the stock during summer months when the price is higher. However as this stock is realigned to us and relatively easy to source from Producer Organisations, I think we are justified in increasing the catch limit in March only to 15 tonnes and then reducing the limits from the Spring onwards

#### Pollack 7

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	15	5	3	3	3	3	5	5	3	3
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	84	36	72	54	62	36	27	21	24	26
No of vessels	239	204	290	259	290	234	284	289	290	239
Average price per tonne (£)	975	1314	2479	2297	2413	2722	2620	2659	2876	3004



**Area 6&7 Skate and Ray** – uptake of the quota last year was higher than anticipated and we closed the fishery in October. We have set the limits at lower levels this year with the aim that the stock lasts over the full year. Our analysis on price of this stock suggests that August to November has the highest prices. . We will continue our endeavours to source as much of the quota as we can and revise the catch limits up if possible. We have to take into account that Guernsey vessel are fishing without quota restrictions against this stock and their landings come off the English pools’ total. They are capable of landing over 100 tonnes each year so we have to be more defensive with English under ten and non-sector catch limits. The MMO is discussing this situation with Defra and Guernsey’s government.

Area 6&7  
Skate and  
Ray

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	1	1.5	1.5	0.5
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	40	41	48	49	47	36	56	42	24	12
No of vessels	121	151	152	148	136	151	166	143	118	93
Average price per tonne (£)	1388	1202	1168	1073	1099	1351	1182	1373	1439	1197



**Skate and Ray 7d** – again uptake was higher than we anticipated and our analysis showed that the higher catch limits over June and July 2014 resulted in landings more than double those in 2013. Although we hope to release more of the quota as the year goes on, the limits will be much more moderate than in 2014. We propose increasing the February limit of 200kgs to 250kgs in March.

Area 7d  
Skate  
and Ray

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	0.25	0.25	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	8	6	6	8	7	4	4	7	7	3
No of vessels	140	124	123	95	102	80	74	112	108	64
Average price per tonne (£)	1498	1176	1262	1078	1133	1099	1090	1768	1440	1352



**Sole 7d** –the quota has been cut by 28% at UK and pool levels and so we have had to reduce catch limits until we can source more quota. We expect there will be over 50 tonnes banked from 2014 and have also traded in a further 30 tonnes, however we have only been able to propose a modest increase in catch limits from 200kgs in February to 500kgs in March as we hold the stock back for when the market supports better prices from summer onwards.

Sole 7d

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	0.5	1.25	1.5	1.75	2	2.25	2.25	2.25	1.75	1.5
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	46	75	37	53	57	58	54	41	41	17
No of vessels	192	212	148	141	171	167	179	195	194	160
Average price per tonne (£)	5429	5362	6304	5626	5794	6879	6514	6952	6978	6558



**Sole 7e** –to make this fishery viable we target a doubling of the amount of quota the under ten pool is given at the start of the year using swaps. Unfortunately although there was a 2% increase in quota we believe this will continue to be a modest fishery in 2015. The price of this stock improves significantly in the summer and autumn months so we increase the catch limits to their peak over that time. In March and April the price is at its lowest level so we keep catch limits down. We tend to be able to release more quota towards the end of the year because that is when the quota becomes available to us in deals with Producer Organisations who have finalised their own catch plans. We are suggesting maintaining the 30kgs current catch limit in March.

Area 7e  
Sole

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	0.03	0.05	0.075	0.1	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.15	0.15
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	1	1	1	2	3	3	4	4	2	1
No of vessels	88	70	56	76	113	105	122	133	102	89
Average price per tonne (£)	7517	7206	11617	10027	9484	10352	9572	9402	9613	9384

**North Sea Cod** – we have a good quota for this stock and anticipate that we will be able to increase the March catch limit to 2.5 tonnes with a drop off from April to September and increasing the catch limits in the October to December period.

NS Cod

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	2.5	1	1	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.75	1.75	1.75	1.75
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	109	52	28	12	8	9	19	43	45	52
No of vessels	174	169	138	114	90	99	129	159	175	168
Average price per tonne (£)	1797	1750	1713	1921	2003	2261	2183	2334	2060	2147



**North Sea Haddock** – uptake in 2014 in the pool was very low and this stock was traded out to secure additional stocks like Skate and Ray, Sole and Whiting. We do not anticipate this will be the case in 2015. Little appears to have been landed so far in 2015 so the February catch limit of 1.5 tonnes will be maintained in March. According to our own records the price of this stock is at its highest around August through to October so it would be useful to keep some stock back for this period. If the stock isn't fished it may then be a useful trading stock.

NS  
Haddock

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	1.5	2	2.25	2.25	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	2	3	38	38	1	1	1	3	3	5
No of vessels	35	26	36	38	6	6	6	33	43	41
Average price per tonne (£)	1281	1529	1435	1222	1333	1484	1323	1640	1218	1236





**North Sea Skate and Ray** – as is the case with a number of east coast stocks we have to swap in significant quantities of this stock to support pool vessels. We were unable to source as much of the stock in 2014 as we did in 2013 and although there is no reduction in quota this year, we believe it will be difficult to trade the stock in. For that reason we propose that there is no increase to the catch limit because we need to ensure the fishery stays open for the whole year. The price of this stock tends to be at its lowest in the spring and summer and at its highest in late autumn and early winter.

NS Skate  
and Ray

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.15	0.15	0.15
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	5	14	16	15	6	6	5	7	7	5
No of vessels	51	119	121	117	96	85	84	85	77	55
Average price per tonne (£)	1337	1157	1252	1128	1012	980	1085	1302	1396	1348



**North Sea Sole** – the pool is highly dependent on swapping in this stock and early attempts to source this have been unsuccessful. Demand around the EU is very high and trades of stocks like Mackerel are not as attractive because the value of that stock has been reduced due to the poor availability of markets and less demand for the stock due to increased quotas. Unfortunately we have had to revise down our estimates on how much of the stock we can source. For these reasons, catch limits will be lower in 2015 than in 2014. We are proposing to make an increase from 200kgs in February to 300kgs in March. Because there are high fluctuations in price of this stock we are planning to release more quota from May onwards to enable better returns on the limited amount of quota available.

#### NS Sole

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	1	11	13	15	23	27	23	20	13	7
No of vessels	59	116	114	119	125	125	132	136	124	83
Average price per tonne (£)	5773	5873	7327	6402	6423	7550	7563	8146	6655	6749

**North Sea Whiting** – we recently traded in 50 tonnes of this stock which enables us to set similar catch limits to those in place last year, albeit on a monthly rather than quarterly quota basis. The March catch limit is proposed to be maintained from February at 2 tonnes.

NS  
Whiting

2015	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Catch limit (tonnes)	2	2	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Estimated uptake (tonnes)	15	11	13	44	42	15	32	42	52	32
No of vessels	72	65	35	36	28	28	56	60	74	79
Average price per tonne (£)	944	1280	1262	968	838	1166	821	1139	986	771



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### Other Stocks Where Catch Limit Changes are Proposed

Megrim VII – reduced from 4t to 1t as this will cover all vessels needs to our knowledge and as our under ten yearly allocation is just around 35 t.

Ling - North Sea (Area IV EC Zone) – has been reduced to 50kg because we have very limited quota available

Herring - Areas VIIe and VIIf – - we have reduced the catch limit to 1 tonne to ensure there is enough fish for the second winter fishery

Sole VIIa – has been reduced to 50kg as we have a very small allocation of tonnes

Sprats - Areas VIIId and VIIe – we have closed the fishery because our quota has already been used in full

With my best regards

Mr Steven Eglintine

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