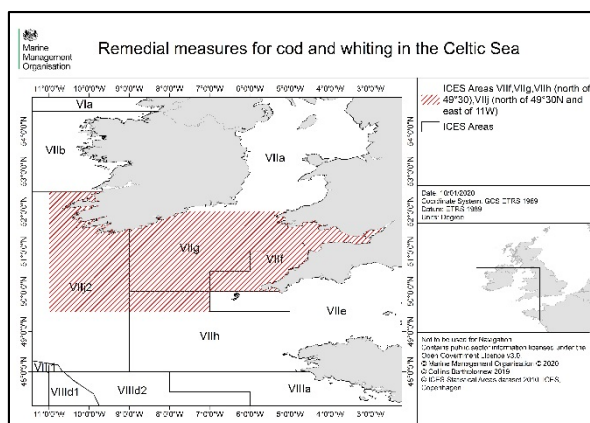




Fishing gear requirements and Landing Obligation exemptions 2021

Applicable to the Nephrops fishery in the Celtic Sea



Celtic Sea Protection Zone

Introduction

This document explains rules on which fishing gear you should be using in the Celtic Sea area (also known as the Celtic Sea Protection Zone) for those that catch more than 5% Nephrops.

Please note: The Celtic Sea Protection Zone has increased in area since 2020 and includes VIIf, VIIg and parts of VIIh and VIIj North of 49°30' N and East of 11°W. This document summarises which Landing Obligation exemptions are available to you.

This guidance is for all sizes of fishing vessel (including those under 10 metres). It does not cover IFCA byelaws – please consult your local IFCA for further information.



General fishing gear rules - All mesh sizes given in this document are minimum sizes. You can choose to use a larger mesh than that stated.

- 6mm maximum for single twine cod-ends.
- 4mm maximum for double twine thickness

Gear selectivity requirements

Fishing Gear Options. You must use one of the gear options listed below	
1)	80mm cod-end and SELTRA Panel**
2)	80mm cod-end and sorting Grid with 35mm bar spacing or a similar Netgrid*** selectivity device. Refer to pages 5 and 6 for details of the CEFAS Net Grid.
3)	100mm cod-end and 100mm square mesh panel.
4)	80mm cod-end and 300mm square mesh panel (for fishing vessels of 12m or more LOA). or: 80mm cod-end and 200mm square mesh panel (for fishing vessels under 12m LOA).
5)	Dual cod-end. The uppermost cod-end must be 90mm with T90 mesh. The uppermost cod-end must also be fitted with a separator panel of maximum 300mm mesh. The lower cod-end will be 80mm.

UK Landing Obligation exemptions

In the table below is a brief summary of exemptions from the Landing Obligation for these fisheries which allow you to discard fish. All quantities of fish discarded under the Landing Obligation must be recorded in your logbook, but will not come off your quota.

You must ensure that the following rules are complied with:

- All catches of quota species must be kept on board, landed and counted against quota, except where the exemptions listed below apply.
- All catches and discards must be recorded in your logbook.



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- Any fish returned to the sea under the exemptions described below must be kept in good condition in order to maximise their survival chances. This includes keeping them wet, handling them carefully and releasing them promptly.

Survival exemptions - allow you to discard fish under certain conditions based on the likelihood of a fish being able to survive being caught and returned to the sea. You are permitted to discard certain species of fish provided you comply with the conditions specified in the table below.

De minimis exemptions - allows a small percentage of the total catch of certain species to be discarded because it is difficult to completely avoid unwanted catches. It is important that discards are recorded in your logbook. *De minimis* exemptions may be withdrawn where discard levels are too high.

Fish Species you can Discard	ICES Area	Exemption
Skates and Rays	All Celtic Sea Areas	Survival
Nephrops (NEP)	All Celtic Sea Areas	Survival
Plaice (PLE)	VIIe to VIIg	Survival
Whiting (WHG)	All Celtic Sea Areas	<i>De Minimis</i>
Haddock (HAD)	All Celtic Sea Areas	<i>De Minimis</i>
Horse Mackerel (JAX)	All Celtic Sea Areas	<i>De Minimis</i>
Mackerel (MAC)	All Celtic Sea Areas	<i>De Minimis</i>
Megrim – below minimum conservation reference size.	All Celtic Sea Areas	<i>De Minimis (mesh size range of 70-99mm only)</i>
Boarfish	All Celtic Sea Areas	<i>De Minimis</i>



Table 1 Gear references.

** The Seltra Panel¹ means a selectivity device which:

- consists of a top panel of at least 270mm mesh size (diamond mesh) placed in a four-panel section and mounted with a joining ratio of three meshes of 90mm to one mesh of 270mm, or of a top panel of at least 140mm mesh size (square mesh).
- is at least 3 metres long and is positioned no more than 4 metres from the cod line.
- is the full width of the top sheet of the trawl (i.e. from selvedge to selvedge)

*** A 'Netgrid selectivity device' means a selectivity device consisting of a four panel section inserted into a two-panel trawl with an inclined sheet of diamond mesh netting with a mesh size of at least 200mm leading to an escape hole in the top of the trawl.

CEFAS Net Grid

Defined as a Netgrid selectivity device developed by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science for catches of Nephrops (*Nephrops norvegicus*) in the Irish Sea.

Specification:

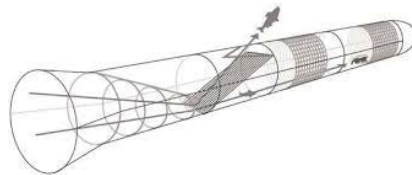
1. The species selective grid shall be attached in trawls with full square mesh cod-end with a mesh size equal to or larger than 70mm and smaller than 90mm. The minimum length of the cod-end shall be 8 metres. It shall be prohibited to use any trawl with more than 100 square meshes in any circumference of the cod-end, excluding the joining or the selvedges. The square mesh cod-end is required only in Skagerrak and Kattegat.
2. The grid shall be rectangular. The bars of the grid shall be parallel to the longitudinal axis of the grid. The bar spacing of the grid shall not exceed 35mm. It shall be permitted to use one or more hinges in order to facilitate its storage on the net drum.

¹ Refer to: [COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION \(EU\) 2018/2034](#) of 18 October 2018 establishing a discard plan for certain demersal fisheries in North-Western waters for the period 2019-2021



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3. The grid shall be mounted diagonally in the trawl, upwards and backwards, anywhere from just in front of the cod-end to the anterior end of the untapered section. All sides of the grid shall be attached to the trawl.
4. In the upper panel of the trawl there shall be an unblocked fish outlet in immediate connection to the upper side of the grid. The opening of the fish outlet shall have the same width in the posterior side as the width of the grid and shall be cut out to a tip in the anterior direction along mesh bars from both sides of the grid.
5. It shall be permitted to attach in front of the grid a funnel to lead the fish towards the trawl floor and grid. The minimum mesh size of the funnel shall be 70mm. The minimum vertical opening of the guiding funnel towards the grid shall be 15cm. The width of the guiding funnel towards the grid shall be the grid width.



Schematic illustration of a size and species selective trawl. Entering fish are led towards the trawl floor and grid via a leading funnel. Larger fish are then led out of the trawl by the grid while smaller fish and Norway lobster pass through the grid and enter the cod-end. The full square mesh cod-end enhances escapement of small fish and undersized Norway lobster. The square mesh cod-end shown in the diagram is required only in Skagerrak and Kattegat.