



Consultation on seasonal closure of crawfish fishery in ICES area 7

Background

The fishing industry shared concerns regarding the recent increase in crawfish (*Palinurus spp*) landings coupled with an observed increase in the size of the fishery.

MMO held a co-design workshop on 3 October 2023 with fishers to discuss the current issues with the southwest crawfish fishery, and proposed options for management in the short-term.

Consultation

Following this MMO has opened a consultation on a potential seasonal closure of the crawfish fishery. The potential closure would seek to prohibit the retaining and landing of crawfish in English waters of ICES area 7 for all UK and EU vessels using all gear types.

MMO is proposing the following potential closure periods for consideration:

- **No closure**
- **Mid December 2023 to 31 May 2024:** This would provide the greatest protection to crawfish.
- **1 January 2024 to 31 May 2024:** This would allow fishing for the Christmas market.
- **1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024:** This would align with the French (Brittany) crawfish closure.

The rationale for the closure is to:

- Offer protection for breeding and spawning opportunities.
- Reduce the risk of high mortality rates from catching fish that are in poor condition and from the potential of long net soak times or net loss in poor weather.
- Support future growth in the population by allowing settlement of juvenile stock.

This consultation has been drafted following scientific advice, engagement with the fishing industry, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities, and UK Fisheries Administrations. This consultation supports the work of the crab and lobster fisheries management plan.

Tell us your views

The consultation is open from 13 November to 27 November 2023.

To respond to this consultation and access further information, please see [MMO website](#) or contact us at effort@marinemanagement.org.uk.

Any changes to the fishery will be enacted by a licence variation.

