



# Crawfish fishery closure in ICES area 7: 5 February – 30 April 2024

## Why the need for a closure?

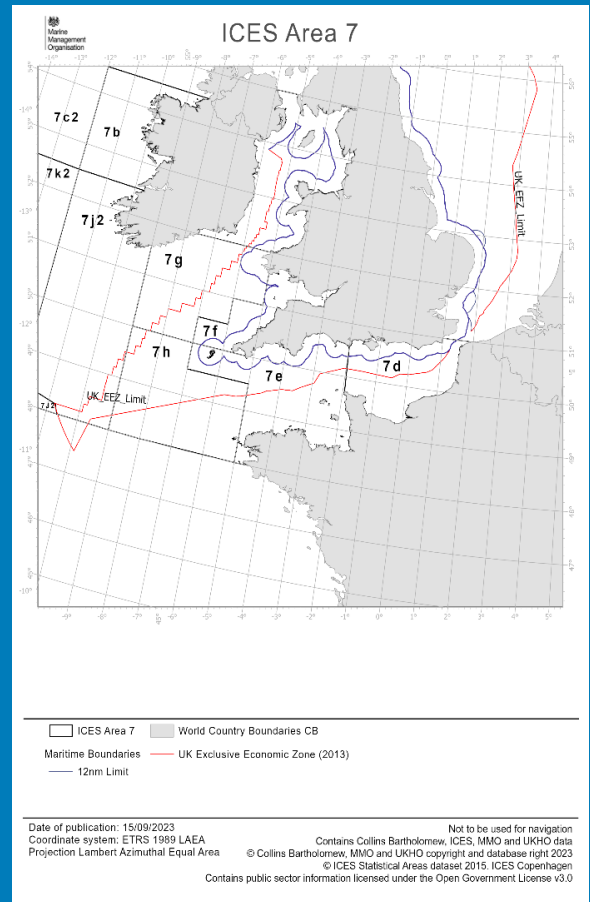
The fishing industry shared views that the recent increase in crawfish (*Palinurus spp*) landings coupled with an observed increase in the size of the fishery may impact the long-term crawfish stock.

The purpose of 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.

Proposals on closure options were drafted following scientific advice, engagement with the fishing industry, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs), and UK Fisheries Administrations (UKFAs).

A consultation ran from 13 November to 27 November 2023 to gather views from the fishing industry. Further information on the consultation is available [online](#).



## Consultation outputs

MMO, on behalf of UKFAs and IFCAs, will implement a closure of the crawfish fishery from 5 February to 30 April 2024 inclusive, in English waters of ICES area 7.

The closure will apply to all UK and EU vessels using all gear types. The closure will be implemented via a licence condition and will prohibit the fishing, retaining on board, storing or landing of crawfish with no bycatch allowance.

This decision has been made following consideration of the consultation responses, scientific evidence, the social and economic impact of the closure and relevant legislation and policy. This closure length will protect berried and juvenile crawfish whilst balancing socio-economic considerations, fulfilling EU notification obligations and allowing the shellfish industry time to adapt business processes.

Further information on a summary of responses received and reasoning behind the decision is available [here](#).

MMO is considering whether additional management measures, including potential effort management, is needed to ensure the long-term sustainable fishing of crawfish. A workshop to discuss potential options is due to be held in mid-February 2024 and will run alongside a consultation exercise. MMO will share further details in due course.

If you wish to be involved or have any questions, please contact the Fisheries Management Team at [effort@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:effort@marinemanagement.org.uk).