



Marine  
Management  
Organisation

**Decision record:**  
**Undulate Ray (RJU/7DE)**  
**Catch limits in ICES Area VIId and VIIe**



**Decision under consideration**

MMO have considered whether to raise the per-trip catch limit for undulate rays in ICES Area VIId and VIIe from 200kg to 400kg from January 1 2024.

**Considerations**

MMO has taken this decision in line with the Fisheries Objectives under the Fisheries Act 2020 and other statutory duties, and in consultation with fisheries managers in Areas VIId and VIIe.

Uptake for the stock is generally low (around 10%) and evidence has been provided that an increase in landings as a result of the proposed increase would not negatively impact market prices in VIIe, though the impact in VIId is anticipated to be greater.

Fishing pressure on the stock has increased rapidly in recent years as the UK total allowable catch has increased from a small bycatch in 2018 to over 1000 tonnes in 2023, and MMO have received reports of lower abundances of the species on the ground in Area VIId, though higher abundances have been reported in Area VIIe.

Undulate rays are a slow maturing, low fecundity species, meaning they are slow to recover from increased fishing pressure. Managing the stock in a precautionary manner, in order to protect aggregations of the species in Areas VIId and VIIe is likely to support greater reproductive success for the stock, which is currently listed as 'Endangered' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Whilst the UK's total allowable catch could support increased uptake of the stock, due to the endangered nature of the species, there is a need to manage the stock on a precautionary basis. MMO has committed to gathering evidence and exploring management options for undulate rays via the Skates and Rays FMP.

**Conclusion**

In line with the precautionary objective, MMO will maintain the per-trip catch limit at 200kg at present. MMO will keep this position under review throughout 2024 and may consider an increase in future, should the evidence support this.

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