



Consultation decision: Seasonal closure of the crawfish fishery in ICES area 7

Background

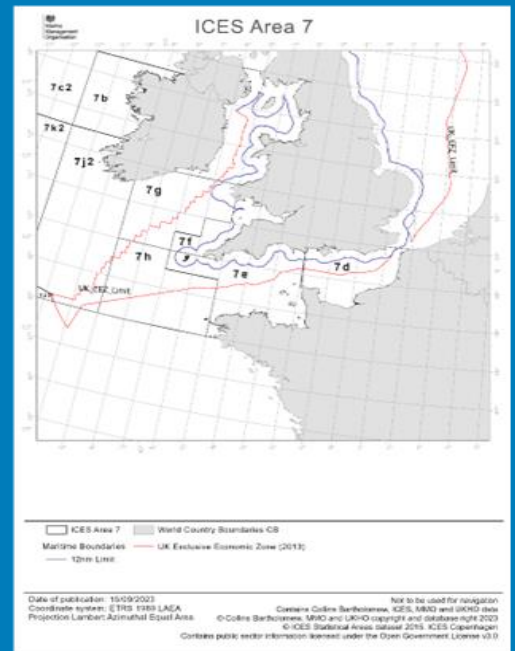
Following the first seasonal closure introduced for the crawfish fishery in 2024 from 5 February - 30 April, MMO have consulted on an enhanced closure to protect the stock. The purpose of the proposed closure is to provide additional protection to spawning potential through decreased removals and interactions with fishing activities, to allow settlement of juvenile stock and reduce the risk of nets being left for long soak times or lost during unpredictable winter weather.

Consultation

MMO opened a consultation from 23 July 2024 to 18 August 2024. The consultation proposed a closure that would prohibit the landing and/or retaining of crawfish in English waters of ICES area 7 for all UK and EU vessels using all gear types.

MMO proposed the following potential closure periods for consideration:

- no closure
- 01 November 2024 to 31 May 2025
- 01 December 2024 to 31 May 2025.



Consultation outputs

MMO will implement a closure of the crawfish fishery from **16 December 2024 to 31 May 2025** 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.

The decision has been made with consideration of the consultation responses, scientific evidence, the social and economic impact of the closure and relevant legislation and policy.

Although this chosen closure period was not an option outlined in the consultation, it has been chosen following consideration of responses from the consultation process and stakeholder engagement. This highlighted the impact of decreased fishing opportunities in the southwest and requests for closure dates to be closer aligned to tides to allow for fishing opportunities.

This closure length will provide increased protection for berried and juvenile crawfish whilst balancing socio-economic considerations and allowing the shellfish industry time to adapt business processes. Please refer to [MMO decision document](#) for further information, including a summary of responses received and the reasoning behind this decision.

Contact us

If you have any queries, then please contact MMO's Fisheries Management Team using the email address provided here: sustainablefisheries@marinemanagement.org.uk.