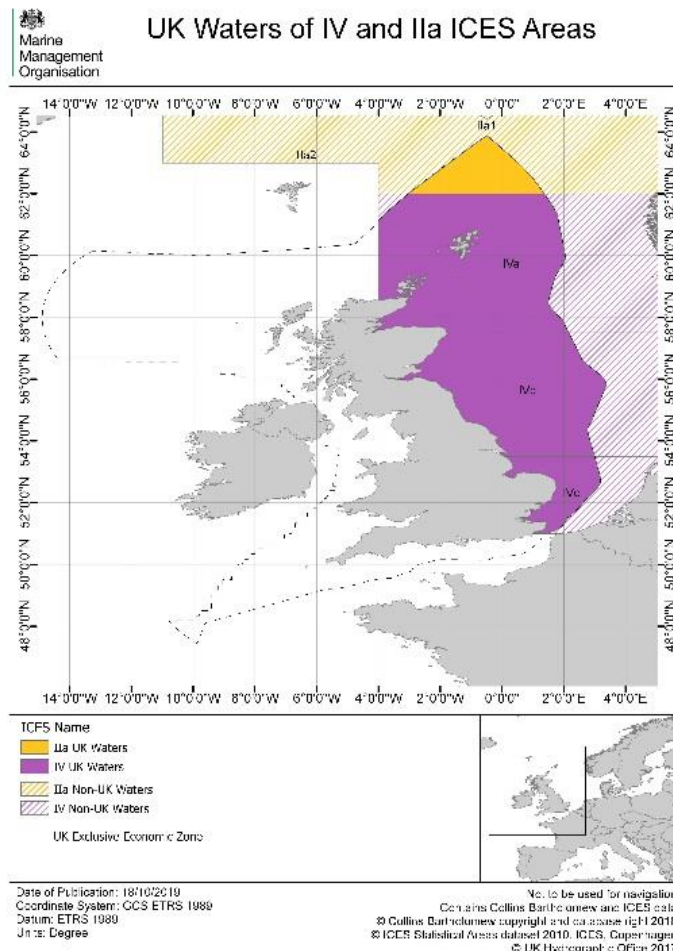




Fishing gear requirements and Landing Obligation exemptions. Updated January 2025

Applicable to Gill net, Trammel net and Drift net fishing in UK waters of the North Sea





Introduction

To ensure you are accessing the latest guidance please check

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fisheries-management-landing-obligation>

The guidance explains rules on which fishing gear you should be using in UK waters of the North Sea and 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.

When operating in EU waters please refer to the EC rules on discarding

https://ec.europa.eu/oceans-and-fisheries/fisheries/rules/discarding-fisheries_en

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.

- The baseline mesh size in this area is now a 120mm and this must be used where catches exceed 20% of cod haddock and saithe combined.
- If you have a landed catch of less than 20% of cod, haddock and saithe combined, then you may use a mesh size below 120mm as specified below in Table 1.

Gear selectivity requirements:

All mesh sizes specified are the minimum.

Table 1: Standard gears that you must use

Fishery	Conditions
Haddock, Whiting, Dab, and Bass (See Bass guidance on gov.uk)	100mm mesh
Flatfish or any non-TAC species	90mm mesh
Pelagic species	50mm mesh**

** 71—89 mm prohibited in some areas for UK vessels - SI 1284/1989



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Pinger requirements

You must fit and use a device that meets the legal technical requirements and can be used by UK fishing vessels. If your vessel is 12 metres or over and use Bottom Set, Gill or Entangling nets please refer to the relevant guidance:

[Reduce dolphin and porpoise by-catch - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.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.
- 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.

See next page for discard table



Species you can discard	Gear	UK ICES Area	Exemption Type
Skates and Rays	Gill, Trammel and Drift Nets	Ila and IV	Survival
Plaice (PLE)	Gill and Trammel Nets	IV	Survival
Dover Sole (SOL)	Gill, Trammel and Drift Nets	Ila and IV	<i>De Minimis</i>