





## Introduction

To ensure you are accessing the latest guidance please check

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

This document explains the fishing gear rules in the Celtic Sea area (also known as the Celtic Sea Protection Zone).

The measures apply to all types of bottom trawl and seines (excluding beam trawls and Nephrops vessels) as these gears have highly mixed catches including valuable non-quota species with bycatch of cod, haddock and whiting.

Technical measures have been introduced in recent years aimed at conserving cod, haddock and whiting in the Celtic Sea area. In order to allow for adaptive management a new UK statutory instrument has revoked current Celtic Sea technical measures, providing for detailed technical measures to be introduced through UK and foreign vessel licences in UK waters.

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

## General fishing gear rules:

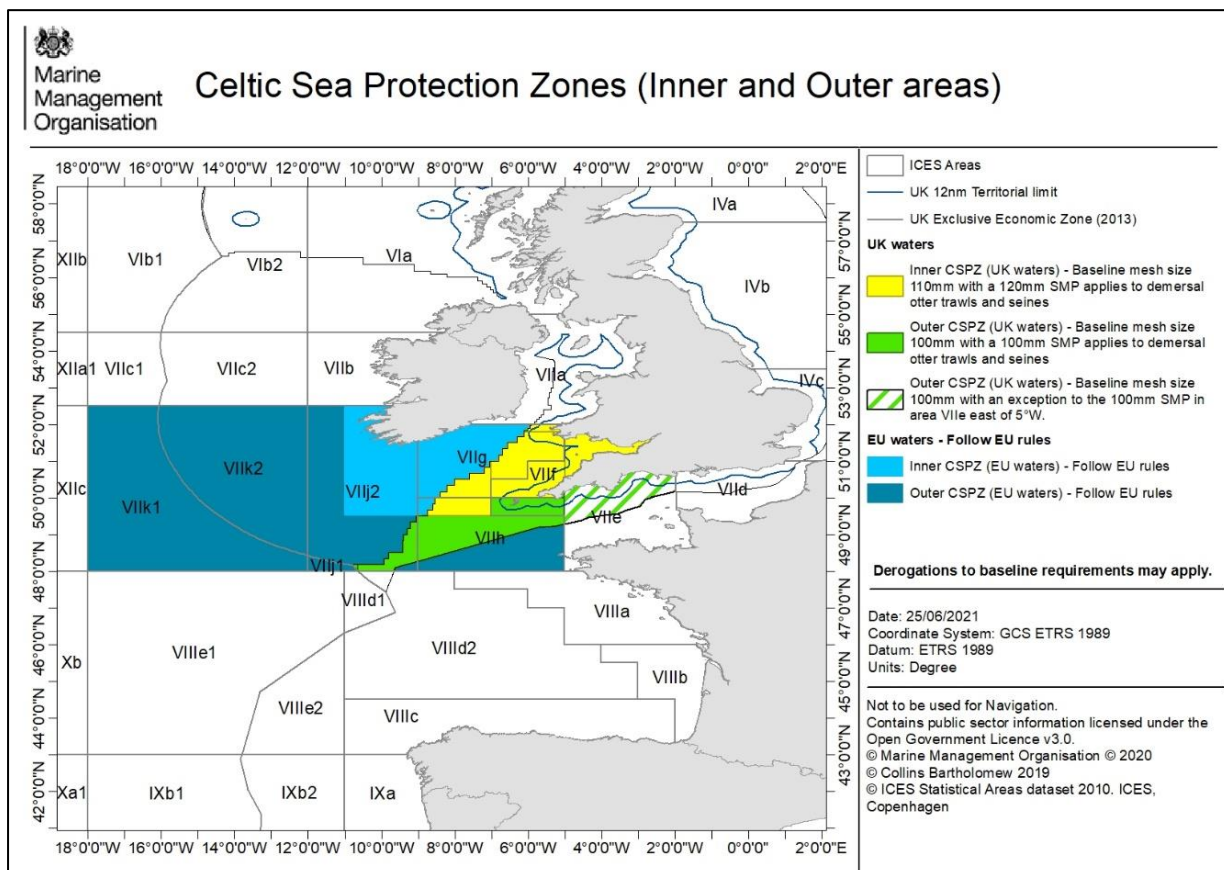
Twine thickness

- 6mm maximum for single twine cod-ends.
- 4mm maximum for double twine thickness
- Lighter twine is recommended where possible and conditional on certain derogations (see below).
- Lifting/strengthening bags are prohibited other than for vessels targeting Nephrops



## Celtic Sea Protection Zones:

Selective gear requirements apply for vessels fishing in the Celtic Sea Protection Zone (CSPZ). The Celtic Sea protection zones have two areas (an inner and an outer CSPZ zone) where gears rules differ as well as either side of the UK limit.



## UK CSPZ Outer zone – Green area seen on chart

Demersal trawlers (including seines) operating in the outer CSPZ zone within UK waters must use.

- 100mm codend with a 100mm square mesh panel

*A 100mm square mesh panel is not required within UK waters of VIIe east of 5° west (see green line area).*

## UK CSPZ Inner zone – Yellow area seen on chart

Vessels fishing with demersal trawls and seines operating in the inner CSPZ zone within UK waters (*within ICES divisions from VIIf, VIIg, the part of VIIh north of latitude 49°30' North and the part of VIIj North of latitude 49°30' North and East of longitude 11° West*), the baseline mesh size is

- 110mm codend with a 120mm square mesh panel



## EU CSPZ Outer zone – Dark blue area seen on chart

Demersal trawlers (including seines) must operate using a 100mm cod-end when operating in the outer EU CSPZ zone (*within ICES divisions VIIIf to VIIk and in the area west of longitude 5°W in ICES division VIIe*).

## EU CSPZ Inner zone – Light blue area seen on chart

Demersal trawls (including seines) must operate using the following in the inner EU CSPZ zone (*within ICES divisions from VIIIf, VIIg, the part of VIIh north of latitude 49°30' North and the part of VIIj North of latitude 49°30' North and East of longitude 11° West*).

1. Demersal trawlers that catch less than 20% haddock (based on landed live weight) must operate using a 100mm cod-end.
2. Demersal trawlers that catch more than 20% haddock must operate using one of the following gear requirements;
  - I. 120mm cod-end.
  - II. 110mm cod-end and 120mm square mesh panel\*
  - III. 100mm T90 cod-end.
  - IV. 100mm cod-end and 160mm square mesh panel\* (For trawlers until 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020)

\*Raised fishing lines must be required with a minimum of 1 meter spacing between line and ground gear.



## Derogations:

- Within the inner Celtic Sea Protection Zone (CSPZ) vessels catching more than 55% whiting or more than 55% hake, angler and megrim may continue to use a 100mm codend with a 100mm square mesh panel.
- In the part of VIIIf East of the 5°W line, a derogation allows for an 80mm codend, provided the trawl is fitted with a 120mm square mesh panel, where the catch of gadoids (cod, haddock and saithe) caught, are less than 10% of the total catch over a full trip.

## Derogations pending ongoing scientific assessments

A new derogation will apply pending ongoing scientific assessment of the use of lighter twine in inshore fisheries.

- Vessels operating demersal trawls and seines in the 12 nautical mile belt of VIIIf and ICES rectangles 28E3 and 28E4 of VIIe, may use a codend of 100mm without a square mesh panel, provided that a single twine of a 5mm thickness is used.
- Vessels of 12m overall length or less with an engine power of 221kw or less may fish with 80mm codends within the 12nm belt east of 5°W in ICES VIIe. When using 80mm codends under this derogation vessels must comply with the technical conservation rules set out in regulation 1241/2019; for example, when fishing for sole and non-TAC species with 80mm gear, and a 80mm square mesh panel must be fitted.

The measures are intended to be flexible and take account of any evidence that supports further derogations. Proposals for gathering evidence for further derogations can be submitted to the MMO. Guidance will be updated with any new derogations or their withdrawal.

Vessels must follow the minimum requirements when within EU waters of the Celtic Sea Protection Zone.



## 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.

Fish Species you can Discard	Fishing Gear	UK ICES Area	Exemption
Skates and Rays	All Gears	VI and VII	Survival
Plaice (PLE)	Otter and Pair Trawlers	VIIId, to VIIg	Survival
Nephrops (NEP)	Demersal Trawls	VII	Survival
Whiting (WHG)	Demersal Trawls, Seines and Pair Trawls	VIIId to VIIj	<i>De Minimis</i>
Mackerel (MAC) and Horse Mackerel (JAX)	Demersal Trawls, Seines and Pair Trawls	VI and VIIId to VIIj	<i>De Minimis</i>
Haddock (HAD)	Demersal Trawls, Seines and Pair Trawls	VIIe to VIIj	<i>De Minimis</i>
Boarfish	Demersal Trawls and Pair Trawls	VIIId to VIIj	<i>De Minimis</i>
Megrim below MCRS	Beam trawls, Demersal trawls and Pair Trawls	VII	<i>De Minimis</i>