Marine Management Organisation

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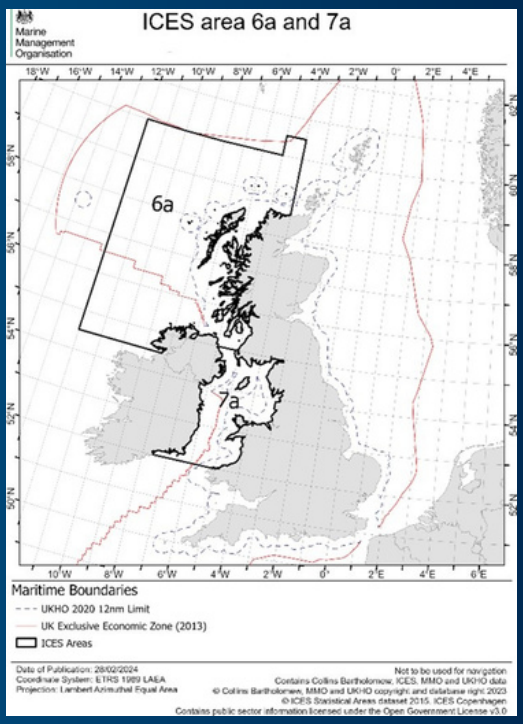
Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Queen Scallop Closure 2025 – ICES divisions 6a & 7a



Who will it impact and when will it happen?
It will affect all vessels who fish for queen scallops (Aequipecten opercularis) in ICES divisions 6a and 7a. The closure will take place from 1 April 2025 - 30 June 2025.

Why the need for a seasonal closure?
The closure mirrors that which took place in 2024 (and in previous years), following a voluntary closed season introduced in 2015. The reason for this closure is to protect queen scallops during the main spawning season, as well as increasing protection for juvenile scallops to grow before encountering scallop gear. The absence of dredging gear also reduces the removal of benthic organisms, plants and hard substrates which scallop larvae use to settle on.

What is the scientific evidence?
Scientific evidence indicates queen scallops typically spawn in the spring (March - May), although secondary spawning can occur periodically throughout the summer and in autumn. The spring spawning is considered to be the most significant for the settlement of juveniles, although in some years the later spawning may also be important. Heavy spawning in April to June also produces low yields of meat and roe.

What are the commercial implications?
Spawning is commercially important because it impacts the meat and roe (the mature reproductive organs) of the scallop. The timing of any closure needs to be considered as a balance between maximising reproductive output and maintaining the meat and roe-on product availability. During heavy spawning there are low yields (proportion of useable product weight to overall weight) of both meat and roe. As a result, a closure during the primary spawning season (when roe levels are low) will also limit the economic impacts on the fishery.

What happens next?
The closure will be exacted by a licence variation. This variation will state:
This licence does not authorise fishing for queen scallops (Aequipecten opercularis) in ICES divisions 6a and 7a between 00:01 hours on 1st April 2025 and 23:59 hours on 30th June 2025.

Have any questions or comments?
Please don't hesitate to contact the Fisheries Management Team at sustainablefisheries@marinemanagement.org.uk.

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