

Meeting Notes 23rd April 2025

South – 7d

15:00 – 17:00 MS Teams Conference Call

Summary

Meeting title	S RFG Meeting
Attended participants	18
Start time	15:00
End time	16:48
Meeting duration	1h 48m

Attendees

Industry	MMO	Sussex IFCA
Caroline Gravier	Paul Johnson (Principal Marine Officer)	Robert Pearson (SUIFCA Chief)
Paul Sevier	Jonathan Brooks (Regional Fisheries Groups)	
Charlie Brock	Jacob Bestwick (Inshore Quota)	Southern IFCA Sarah Birchenough (SIFCA Deputy Chief)
John Botterell	Alisha Patel (Regional Fisheries Groups)	
Richard Stride	Adam Kershaw (Regulatory Assurance)	MCA Laurence Capstick (Principal Consultant Surveyor)
DEFRA Andy Welberry (Fleet Management Team)	Chris Collins (Fisheries Management Team)	Sam Paling (Fishing Safety Strategy & Behaviours Lead)
	Alexander Murphy (Fisheries Management Team)	
	Susan Tait (Grants)	

Agenda

1. Introduction – Paul Johnson

2. Quota update Q&A – Jacob Bestwick (00:00).
3. MCA Q&A – Laurence Capstick (31:00).
4. IVMS Update – Adam Kershaw (39:40).
5. Sussex IFCA Minimum Size Bylaw and Hand Gathering Bylaw updates – Rob Pearson (49:50).
6. Bass authorisation review update – Chris Collins (56:30).
7. Cuttlefish – action plan update / species if and recording / voluntary codes of practice – Alex Murphy (1:18:25).
8. AOB – Paul Johnson

Contact details

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Meeting recording

The meeting was recorded and can be access on the MMO YouTube account by following this link: [South Regional Fisheries Group Meeting 23/04/2025](#). The timestamps for the start agenda items can be found above.

The following record of the meeting is a summarised version of the meeting and includes participant questions.

1. Paul Johnson, MMO – Welcome & Introduction

Paul introduced himself as the Principal Marine Officer for the South and the Chair of this meeting.

There were no objections to the meeting being recorded nor were there any comments or questions prior to the start of the first speaker.

2. Jacob Bestwick, MMO - Quota

The supporting presentation can be found at the end of this document.

Jacob introduced himself as being from the MMO Inshore Quota team and provided the following updates:

Brill

U10

- Initial allocation = 32.4t
- Current allocation = 32.4t
- Catch limit = 2t
- Current uptake = 4.3t

O10

- Initial allocation = 17.3t
- Current allocation = 17.3t
- Catch limit = 2t
- Current uptake = 3.6t

Jacob stated that himself and Katie will be doing some swaps but have not started yet. In previous years the uptake has been between 20 to 25 tonnes and therefore, the initial allocation for 2025 should be enough.

Cod 7d

U10

- Current allocation = 32.8t
- Catch limit = 1t (bycatch)
- Current uptake = 1.7t

O10

- Current allocation = 4.1t
- Catch limit = 1t (bycatch)
- Current uptake = 0.0t

In previous years the data shows that there are 2 distinctive seasons, one at the start of year (January, February) and one at the end of the year (November, December). The uptake this year has been slower than previous years.

Plaice 7d

U10

- Initial allocation = 94.4t
- Current allocation = 94.4t
- Catch limit = 3t
- Current uptake = 6.7t

O10

- Initial allocation = 18.0t
- Current allocation = 18.0t
- Catch limit = 3t
- Current uptake = 1.1t

Last year quota had been traded in at the start of the year,
Based on previous years uptake was higher and more quota was traded in than needed last year.

A small amount may be traded in across both pools to ensure uptake for the stock is covered if needed.

Seasonality, there is uptake throughout the year, but February to May is where most of the uptake occurs.

Skates and Rays 7d

U10

- Current allocation = 267.4t
- Catch limit = 4t
- Current uptake = 20.4t

O10

- Current allocation = 34.5t
- Catch limit = 2.5t
- Current uptake = 1.7t

Jacob stated that this stock has seen an increase in allocation over the last few years. The monthly data is difficult for this year as the adjustments (made by the MMO) make up a large portion, but is mostly January, February and March.

Jacob explained that there is interarea flexibility for this stock if we need them, but this also works the other way if the Western stock or North Sea stock uptake is higher.

Undulate Ray, 7d and 7e

Jacob stated that this would be closing from 1st May 2025 and will reopen on 1st September 2025. There are still restrictions on the minimum and maximum landing sizes and the closed period still apply as per the UK Licence Schedules. Jacob

stated that the current catch limit is 2 tonnes per month and the current uptake is 48.3 tonnes for the whole of the UK.

The UK 2025 allocation is 1324 tonnes which is slightly down from the last year and the uptake at the UK level was just over 105 tonnes in 2024 and just over 120 tonnes in 2023.

Sole 7d

U10

- Current allocation = 106.5t
- Catch limit = 2.5t
- Current uptake = 33.9t

O10

- Current allocation = 9.5t
- Catch limit = 2t
- Current uptake = 1.2t

Jacob stated that the uptake in 2022 for under 10 metre was 213 tonnes and that has come down in the last few years (139 tonnes in 2023 and just over 100 in 2024). Jacob acknowledged that in the last RFG meeting stakeholders had mentioned that 2024 was a slow year due to bad weather.

The start of the year was slow for uptake but March had a higher uptake, taking it ahead of that in the same point in 2024.

They will look to trade some in to support both pools, but not as much as previous years. We are aware of challenges with trading in Sole 7d and 7e stocks with the consecutive cuts.

Western Mackerel

U10

- Current allocation = 598.9t
- Catch limit = 10.0t
- Current uptake = 12.2t

O10

- Current allocation = 2.2t
- Catch limit = 10.0t
- Current uptake = 2.6t

Jacob stated that this allocation increased since 2022 until 2024. In 2023 and 2024 there were in year transfers that increased this which happened later in year and is the reason why the figures are lower for 2025 (because these transfers have not happened yet). Historically there is an uptake of 80 to 100 tonnes.

Herring 4c / 7d

U10

- Current allocation = 633.0t
- Catch limit = 200.0t
- Current uptake = 246.6t

O10

- Current allocation = 181.4t
- Catch limit = 50.0t
- Current uptake = 0.4t

Jacob stated this stock covers both 4c and 7d and most of the uptake is in the 4c area. January, February and March are the main months but there is sometimes a second fishery in October, November and December. Uptake is variable but it is currently higher than the previous years for the under 10 meters.

Jacob stated if anyone wants any further information, they should get in touch with himself or Katie. (*contact details are at the beginning of this document*).

Questions, Comments & Answers:

Q: (Skates and Rays) Do the figures for 2025 include the North Sea uptake under interarea flexibility in the quota availability or is it only 7d?

A: Jacob: The data in the graphs is just the total landing values and the quota allocation for 7d. the flex. As an example, if you look at the previous uptake, in 2022 we used 193 tonnes where the allocation was approx. 150 tonnes. This would not have been an overfish, as the interarea flexibility would have been used.

Q: (Sole) Why do you feel you need to trade some in (for 2025)? You ended up with 106 tonnes left last year (2024), what did you trade it in for?

A: Jacob: Uptake was a lot lower than expected, and when looking at historical uptake there was 213 tonnes in 2022 and 139 tonnes in 2023. Last year in the RFG, fishers mentioned that whilst it was a poor year there was hope it would be a better fishery later in the year, which did not happen. This year is looking ahead of last year on uptake already and if we were to fish at the same level as last year for the remainder, it would still be 106 tonnes.

Comment: An industry member commented that there may be issues with sector trading for this stock and is something that should be kept an eye on.

Q: Paul: is there any indication that the increase in uptake is down to increase in effort or is it that the same boats are catching more?

A: Jacob: There hasn't been much change in effort, and it tends to be the same vessels from year to year.

Q: There is a concern about the decline in uptake and I was wondering whether the information you get through the catch up and RBS allows you to come to any conclusion about why that is happening. Is it changes in patterns of fishing or are boats catching less? Which do you rely on the most the RBS or catch app?

A: Jacob: The first part of your question, the decline in uptake, we are aware of and are keeping an eye on. Whilst we did not see much difference in vessels, we did

notice that vessels were not getting close to the catch limits.

Comment: An industry member commented that a lot of information is being put into the catch app, and it would be nice to know what the data is being used for. As well as know what information is coming from the EU fleet in the UK waters. This is so all have confidence in the data.

For the data source part of this question, we would need to check this with the statistics team.

**The answer to this question was not available at the time of the minutes being issued. Once available, the response will be shared with the South RFG through the regular email communications and updated in this document.*

Q: (Sole & plaice) if we are not catching as much as we used to, is that an indication that there is uptake maybe from the EU fleet in the UK water? And do you have the same level of details of uptake from that fleet?

A: Jacob: The quota team wouldn't have access to this information. We would need to check with the MMO statistics team.

**The answer to this question was not available at the time of the minutes being issued. Once available, the response will be shared with the South RFG through the regular email communications and updated in this document.*

Q: (Undulate ray) At the last meeting it was observed that undulate rays are no longer a prohibited species and we used to fish it under a scientific quota. Would it still be necessary to land the whole fish, now that it's has its own commercial quota?

A: Jacob: The restriction is still there and that it must be landed whole or gutted.

3. Laurence Capstick – MCA Q&A

Laurence introduced himself as Principal Surveyor from the Southampton office of the MCA and shared that he would be providing some short updates but was largely here to provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions.

Laurence shared that the Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) and Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) registration consultation, which was targeted towards the compulsory registration of PLBs for UK vessels, closed in February of this and the results should come out soon.

Laurence also wanted to make the group aware of the Home and Dry campaign that the MCA have been a part of a, and shared the following link: [Home - Home and Dry](#)

Laurence also shared that the MCA are currently undertaking a review of the code of practise which came into place in 2021. The activity it looking to simplify some of the areas of the new code and make it clearer and reduce any ambiguity which may exist at the moment.

Questions, Comments & Answers:

An industry member commented that when doing EPIRB and PLB registrations, no acknowledgements are received and that there is poor communication from the process. Additionally, the industry member stated he has not received the sticker for the device.

Laurence stated that he would be feed this back to the relevant team as an email should have been received to confirm it was registered. He was also not aware that

stickers were no longer issued but will find out.

**An update to this question was not available at the time of the minutes being issued. Once available, the response will be shared with the South RFG through the regular email communications and updated in this document.*

Q: With the review of the code, will the MCA look at the applicability of the Wolfson mark to catamarans? A surveyor produced a calculation for the Wolfson mark during a stability test as part of an inspection last year.

A: Laurence: Without further details, it is not possible to say how it has been applied to the vessel in this situation.

The Wolfson mark calculation is not the primary stability testing mechanism but is guidance that comes with the code. Normally surveyors would use the roll test or offset load test, or other methods that prove stability incline.

It is within the code, but it is not a mandatory stability test. It has not been put forward to become mandatory as part of the review.

Q: An industry member commented that a review of the code would be welcomed by industry as it is complicated and difficult to read. What is the process for reviewing the code? Will there be a consultations etc?

A: Laurence: The MCA are currently looking into the code, removing duplicates and adding in clarifications. It is now initially going out for a first stage of review for 12 weeks with the NFFO and other representative bodies. It is then expected to go out to wider consultation following the first stage of feedback and revision.

4. Adam Kershaw, MMO - IVMS Update

Adam introduced himself as being from the IVMS Team at the MMO and stated there is no further update to that which was recently communicated, which was that the licence condition requiring the use of a type-approved I-VMS device on any English under-12m vessel undertaking a trip to sea coming into force on 12th May 2025, but that he was here to take and answer any questions.

You can find the MMO IVMS guidance here: [Inshore Vessel Monitoring \(I-VMS\) for under-12 metre fishing vessels registered in England - GOV.UK](#)

Questions, Comments & Answers:

An industry member commented that his and others I-VMS devices are not currently working. His particular device had not updated since 28th February and he has reported it to the MMO and Succorfish. Succorfish have acknowledged it but have not yet resolved it despite the company having previously said they would be able to turnaround issues within 48 hours. The concern is that they are not able to deal with the number of requests sufficiently and the second concern is that it would not be working by 12th May.

Adam confirmed that the MMO are working with both approved suppliers to rectify the issues and have been given assurances that they can be fixed. If contact has been made to the supplier to log issues, there is no immediate restriction in being able to go to sea and enforcement will take a pragmatic approach, but fishers should ensure they have a reference number and are providing this to the MMO IVMS Team (ivms@marinemanagement.org.uk or 01900 508618 from Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm).

Q: In an MMO email there was reference to a troubleshooting guide produced by the supplier, where is this?

A: Adam: This can be requested from the IVMS team (ivms@marinemanagement.org.uk or 01900 508618 from Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm) and sent out to you.

Q: An email was received from the MMO advising the fisher to wait and not go ahead and apply for the grant. The fisher got an email stating he wouldn't be required to carry on and now recently has received an email to say he does need one by 12th May. Was there an exemption to part of the fleet at some time for this and how would this now work with grants?

A: Adam: There was never an exemption, and it has always been applicable to all under 12 metre English registered commercially licenced vessels. The confusion may be a misunderstanding from when there was a review for the <6m fleets inclusion, and there was a pause on the rollout, but this was communicated that it would apply to all under 12m vessels including the under 6m vessels. The fisher can reach out by email or phone to the IVMS to discuss the individual circumstances of this case further.

The licence condition is for all English <12m vessels. The SI, when it comes in will be for all domestic and foreign <12m vessels.

Q: What is the content of the SI?

A: Adam: I do not have the details it currently sits with DEFRA and the legal teams. It will be all encompassing for any vessel within the English EEZ.

Q: The data on the Fulcrum Nemo only shows data of the day and not historical data

A: Adam: My advice would be to contact the supplier for support as it should show historical data. But you can also email or call the IVMS team to see if they can help troubleshoot this issue.

5. Rob Pearson, Sussex IFCA – Sussex IFCA Minimum Size Bylaw and Hand Gathering Bylaw Updates

Rob introduced himself and stated he would be providing an update on a few of Sussex IFCA's bylaws.

Sussex IFCA minimum size bylaw

Sussex IFCA minimum size bylaw has been in development since 2020, an informal consultation was held at the end of 2020 and a formal consultation in the summer of 2021. It had been submitted to the MMO and Defra at the end of 2021. The IFCA acknowledge the gap between the development and the upcoming implementation, which is a byproduct of bylaw development process, quality assurance and ministerial sign off process.

Rob stated that there are existing minimum size regulations for the commercial sector, but not for the recreational sector (except for bass) since EU technical measure changes in July 2019. This bylaw now introduces minimum conservation reference sizes (MCRS) for all fishers across various finfish and shellfish species. The species are listed in:

- Schedule 1A lists species where the MCRS is either new for a species or more restrictive than existing measures.
- Schedule 1B includes species that are already subject to minimum size regulations for UK-licensed vessels, except for those covered by the landing's obligation.

Rob stated that the bylaw was confirmed in December and is now in effect. Sussex IFCA are currently in a grace period to focus on informing fishers and encouraging compliance. Rob stated that paid advertisements went out in Fishing News and Sea Angler at the start of the year, social media, their website and a press statement was shared with local media. A direct email was also sent out via the Sussex IFCA mailing list. Rob stated that anyone not on the mailing list that wants to be should reach out.

Rob stated that Sussex IFCA have created and distributed various materials such as fact sheets, guidance documents, posters, and tackle box stickers. These have been delivered to stakeholders during patrols, and they have visited tackle shops. The minimum size tackle box sticker has been especially popular, and more are available if requested. All the guidance material is available on the Sussex IFCA website:

<https://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/>.

Hand gathering bylaw

The hand gathering bylaw has been in development since 2021, with formal consultations held in spring 2022 and the bylaw was submitted to MMO and Defra in July 2022. The intention of the hand gathering by law is to regulate and monitor the extent of hand gathering activities such as bait digging and coastal foraging, with a particular directive to ensure that the designated features of our six coastal marine protected areas are adequately protected from these activities.

Rob stated that there are separate provisions for each of the 6 MPAs and guidance documents have been produced for each of the areas. To summarise, a daily bag limit would be applicable for specified flora and fauna across the district and if gathers want to exceed these, they will require a commercial permit, which would then require submission on catch returns to allow a better understanding of what resources are being taken from the marine environment.

Sussex IFCA have been working on the database requirements for the permitting scheme and the education and supporting communication period is due to go live to stakeholders on the 1st of May. There will be a 2-month implementation window which allows for stakeholders to get up to date with the guidance and the permits will come into effect on 1st July 2025.

6. Chris Collins, MMO – Bass Authorisation Review

The presentation that was shared can be found at the end of this document.

Chris introduced himself as being from the MMO Fisheries Management Team and leading the Bass Authorisation Review. Chris shared that he would be providing an update on the review of the bass authorisation system.

Chris stated that the DEFRA Bass Management Group was established in November 2024 and from this the MMO was tasked by Defra to lead a review of the current bass authorisation system and that this review was currently being

undertaken via a subgroup which includes members of the bass management group and others. Representation in this group is from the commercial and recreational sector as well as regulators and non-government organisations. The role of the group is to conduct analysis of a range of aspects linked to the bass authorisation system and to inform options for improvement, amendment or revocation.

The group meet biweekly (8 meetings have been completed) and is approaching the review via a strengths and weakness analysis of the following areas:

- Track records
- Fishing capacity
- Transfers
- Gear
- Catch limits
- Discards
- Reporting
- NPV's
- Recreational

Chris reiterated that recommendations made at this stage should not be taken as the final decision and decisions or changes to business practise should not be made on this basis.

Chris provided the following updates:

Track record

- Several weaknesses have been identified and there has been recognition that the number of authorisations that are issued each year are declining over time impacting the ability to maintain the current fleet size.
- There is limited flexibility to allow new entrants into the fishery as the fleet declines or to make any changes to align with the stock.

The recommendation is that the track record process be considered for amendment and an alternative system be sought that would seek to maintain access to those currently authorised as well as allowing for new fishing opportunity subject to capacity and sustainability limits.

Fishing opportunity

- One of the weaknesses of the current system is that overall fishing capacity is largely based on the number of vessels that could demonstrate track record during the reference period.

Several recommendations have been discussed and based on further analysis of the data, there could be opportunity to create a pool of authorisations for use in a young person's scheme, open the fishery to new capacity within sustainability limits, and create a pool of authorisations for use in alternative gear trials.

Transfers:

Several recommendations have been discussed which include:

- Authorisations should remain attached to the vessel hull as it considered the most appropriate approach.
- There should be limited flexibility in engine power and tonnage restrictions when authorisations are transferred between vessels, which would allow owners to keep up with safety, fishing practise and modernisation of vessels etc.
- The current under 8 metre exemption should be retained and restricted to monohulls to prevent excessive increases in fishing capacity and the aggregation of authorisations to prevent further reduction of fishing opportunity and protect the inshore fleet.

Gear:

Initial recommendations include allowing those currently with fixed gill net authorisation, new entrants, and transferred authorisations the option to switch from a fixed gill net authorisation to hook and line authorisation. This would support reduction in discard and sensitive species bycatch reduction, as well as enabling fishing practise to be more regionally appropriate.

Mitigation:

In discussion about mitigating misreporting and the targeting of spawning bass aggregations, the recommendation is that the catch app should be amended to direct fishers to declare gear type prior to departure and for bass catches and their weight to be declared on landing. It will also be recommended that a review of the current closure period to be conducted to establish if the protection that it provides is appropriate and whether there should be a consideration of regional approaches to closures.

It has been discussed whether to allow non authorised fixed gill net fishers a small bag limit / bycatch allowance, that could be conducted initially as a trial, to provide additional benefit to fishers with minimal regulatory burden. The small allowance would have minimal impact on current bass mortality but would support the goal to reduce discards. It would additionally provide significantly important stock data at a regional level that would support future management decisions.

To support the review, the MMO has been undertaking stakeholder engagement. This has been completed in the East, Southeast, South and Northwest and will be continuing to the southwest soon. Engagement will also be taking place online at the conclusion of the review to allow any other fishers to input into the process.

At the conclusion of the review, recommendations will be fed into a report that will be presented to Defra and the bass management group. Outputs from the review at this stage do not reflect the final decision, and in terms of timings for implementation of any of the recommendations, it will largely depend on what is required to implement the legislation change so it is difficult to give any specific timings at this stage.

Chris stated if anyone wants any further information or to provide comment they should get in touch via bassfmp@defra.gov.uk.

Questions, Comments & Answers:

An industry member commented that there is no straight forward process to deal with bass authorisation transfers and the review should include that there is a need

for one.

Q: Paul: As vessels fall out of registration the bass authorisation can't be transferred because a transfer can only take place with a vessel that is licensed and registered. An example is if a boat won't pass an MCA survey, then the bass authorisation can't be transferred and will be lost. Additionally, transfers can be costly, and most likely fishers would need to go through 2 MCA inspections. Is this being looked into as this is a key issue?

A: Chris: The data showed that there is a significant reduction in the number of vessel authorisations and discussions have taken place to identify the reasons why. This has been highlighted as a weakness of the track record process and discussions are taking place on how to mitigate this issue. Further discussions are still to be had on this issue and these comments will be taken to the sub-group.

Q: An industry member asked if the output to date of the bass authorisation review subgroup meetings could be shared with industry so that members of industry can consider and feedback on what has already been discussed and or decided..

A: Chris: Yes, this has been made available for dissemination through the subgroup members, and the RFG area leads.

**The collated minutes from the bass authorisation subgroup meetings have been shared with the South RFG by email since the meeting. If you did not receive this but would like a copy, please request this by emailing jonathan.brooks@marinemangement.org.uk.*

An industry member commented as a reminder to others, that in the early days people got bass authorisations based on only their track record and a lot of people didn't get them, including trawlers. Sometime after the 2015 introduction of the authorisation system, all trawlers (towed gear vessels) got a de facto authorisation by a licence variation that allowed all trawlers a percentage bycatch. This never happened for the fixed netting fleet. It is encouraging that this is being considered, but it has already happened for the trawling fleet, so for the avoidance of discard and in the interest of equity it should have come sooner.

7. Alex Murphy, MMO – Cuttle Fish

The presentation that was shared can be found at the end of this document.

Alex introduced himself as being part of the FMP implementation team and would be providing an update on cuttlefish as part of the Channel Demersal Non-Quota Stock FMP.

Alex began by stating that cuttlefish are identified as a key species in the channel demersal NQS FMP because there is no formal ICES stock assessment and during the FMP development there were concerns raised about the over exploitation of cuttlefish in the channel.

A short-term measure is to develop an action plan for managing the cuttlefish fishery. The short to medium term measures are consideration for temporary seasonal closure for trawlers, consideration for introducing codes of practise on cuttlefish trap handling, investigating the benefits of underwater structure structures to benefit egg survival and consideration on wider changes such as MPA management and habitat improvements.

Alex continued to discuss the [cuttlefish action plan](#) and highlighted that the development of the cuttlefish action plan followed several rounds of engagement with stakeholders. The action plan covers English waters ICES divisions 7d and 7e, in line with the first proposed measure for cuttlefish in the FMP. Alex reiterated that the MMO are not looking to introduce any formal management at this time and the aim of the first iteration is to introduce greater monitoring and data collection to help inform future management.

Alex discussed some of the actions that are detailed within the cuttlefish plan and are already in the process of being implemented by the MMO. This has been summarised below:

Trap & Pot Handling Voluntary Code of Practice ICES 7d and 7e:

- Aim: to protect and increase the survivability of cuttlefish eggs that have been laid on traps and pots.
- The voluntary code of practice for trap and pot handling covers English waters ICES 7d and 7e, from 6 to 200 nautical miles. The code mainly focuses on protecting cuttlefish eggs, recommending actions like avoiding washing eggs off traps and returning egg-covered traps to the water when possible. For further information please see: [Cuttlefish VCoP.pdf](#).

Cuttlefish species ID cards:

- Currently recording at the genus level using code CTL (includes bobtail and squids).
- Issues with this include, lacking species specific data, unclear on what proportion of landed catch is cuttlefish, squids or bobtail and unclear what species of cuttlefish is being landed.

New codes to use:

- Common cuttlefish *Sepia officinalis* – CTC
- Elegant cuttlefish *Sepia elegans* – EJE
- Pink cuttlefish *Sepia orbignyana* – IAR

You can request cuttlefish species ID cards from your local MMO office.

It is important to start using the new species codes so that the data can be improved.

Cuttlefish Market Sampling Project:

- A way for the MMO to test the efficiency of cuttlefish species ID cards
- To gather evidence on the size and species of cuttlefish and catch composition throughout the fishing seasons in the English Channel.

This project started in November and initially included sampling in Newlyn and Brixham fish markets. Sampling has started in the South East in April to see if all 3 species are present during spawning season. Sampling is conducted monthly (Newlyn and Brixham) by IDing species, measuring mantle length and weighing each individual.

The project so far (November to April) has found the following species breakdown; CTC (74%), EJE (15%) and IAR (11%).

Alex confirmed that the next steps will be a stakeholder round table engagement session that will take place end of May 2025 (time, date, location TBC) which will be followed by a cuttlefish engagement roadshow visiting locations along the south coast.

Alex stated if anyone wants any further information they should get in touch with the team. (*contact details are at the beginning of this document*).

Questions, Comments & Answers:

An industry member commented that encouraging fishermen to haul traps post-season to release marine organisms has its issues. As eggs mature, they swell up and become heavier and may drop off if a fisher were to lift the traps and handle them aboard, making it best not to disturb them during the later stages of incubation. Additionally, it's also better to leave the traps where they were set, as cuttlefish prefer specific spawning areas and need a food source for their hatchlings. This also provides protection to wild eggs by deterring trawlers from fishing in the area until the traps are removed.

Alex stated he would pass this on to the cuttlefish lead.

Q: An industry member asked what the definitions of grade 1 and grade 2 are.

A: *This response has been updated post meeting for accuracy and clarification. The presentation discusses grades in relation to a length which can be used as a rule of thumb to help identify species. Due to maximum sizes of species, it is uncommon to find EJE or IAR at grade 1 (0.5kg and over) which roughly relates to a mantle length of 15cm+.

Grading on cuttlefish is only a requirement for common cuttlefish, and it is based on individuals' weight as specified in the common marketing standards for fisheries products regulation:

([https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/1996/2406#f00018:~:text=0%2C5%20to%203-.Cuttlefish,-\(Sepia%20officinalis%20and\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eur/1996/2406#f00018:~:text=0%2C5%20to%203-.Cuttlefish,-(Sepia%20officinalis%20and).)).

Grade 1 - 0.5 kg and over

Grade 2 - 0.3- 0.5 kg

Grade 3 - 0.1 - 0.3 kg

Where 'The categories of weights include fish from the lower limit up to, but excluding, the upper limit.'

Q: It is unclear what the recommendation is for bad weather and what you are mitigating, please explain further.

A: Alex: This is to stop gear getting lost and then ghost fishing

The industry member commented that there is a cost to leave the traps at sea and they do become heavily encrusted sometimes with barnacles and keel worms.

8. AOB

Q: An industry member commented that they had read a few articles about the fishing industry being used as a negotiation point in the TCA negotiations for defence deals. The industry member asked if there is any reassurance for the fishing industry in response to concerns that they are going to be negatively impacted by this?

A: Defra: At this point, the articles are speculation by the press as there is nothing substantial to report. The government do not respond to it at this stage as the conversations are all taking place behind closed doors.

Paul asked when the industry members wanted the next meeting. Industry members agreed that meetings should occur regularly every quarter even if that means a limited agenda and that additional meetings should be scheduled if anything comes up out of sync of the regular scheduling. Jonny stated that 2 options will be sent out to the group for a meeting around late July 2025.

Paul thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting was concluded at 16:48

Thank you for attending this Regional Fisheries Group meeting. If you would like comment on these or previous minutes, be added to this groups contact list or contribute in any other way please contact the MMO Regional fisheries Mailbox: regionalfisheriesgroups@marinemanagement.org.uk or find out more at the Regional Fisheries Groups webpage: Regional Fisheries Groups - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)



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South 7d Quota Presentation

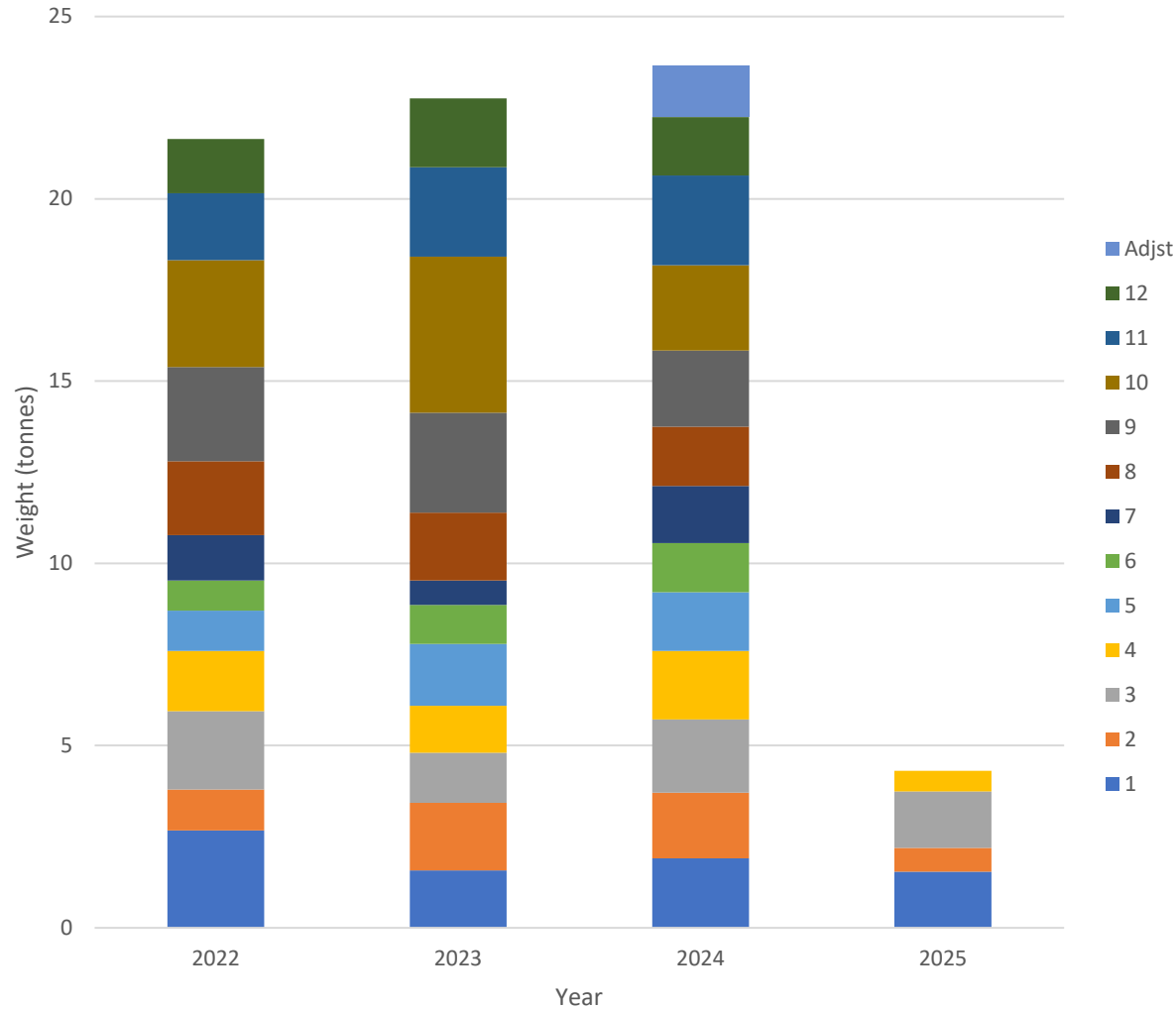
Jacob Bestwick
Katie James

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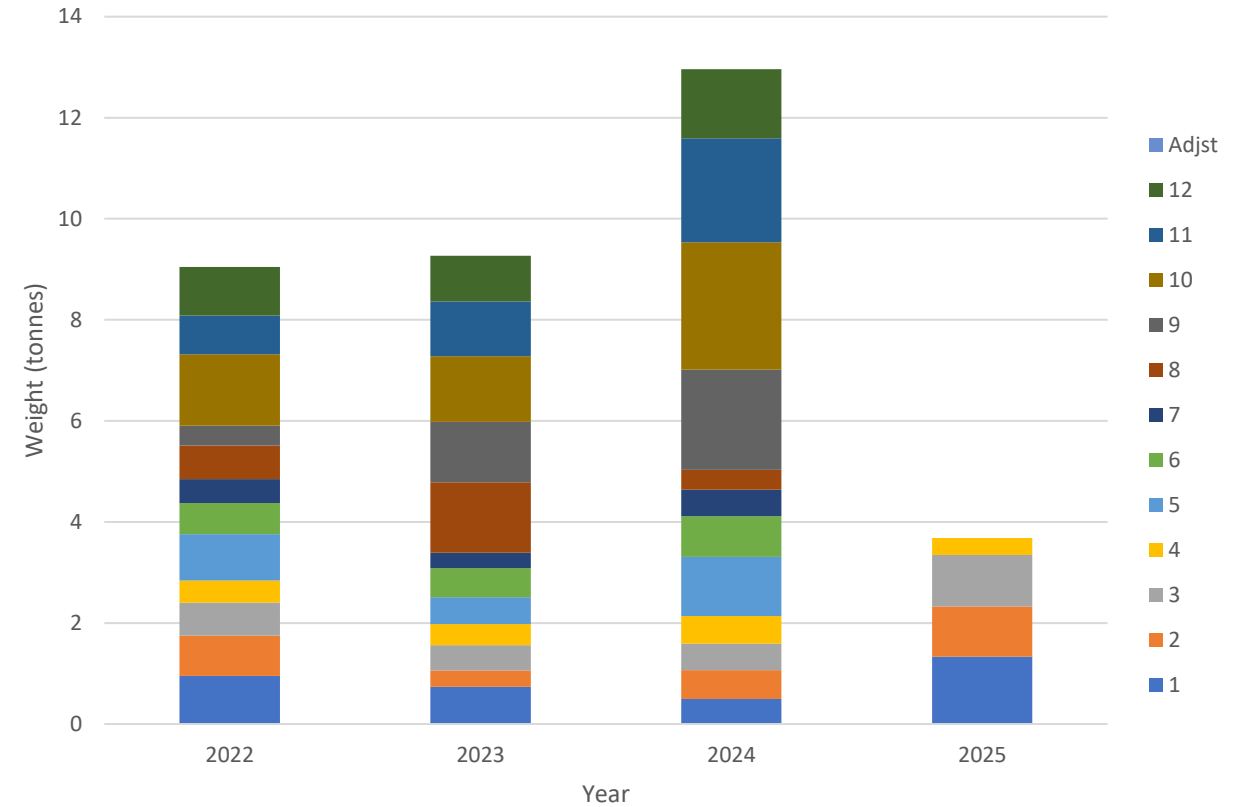


Brill 7de

Monthly Uptake by Year - BLL7DE - U10m



Monthly Uptake by Year - BLL7DE - Non-sector



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U10:

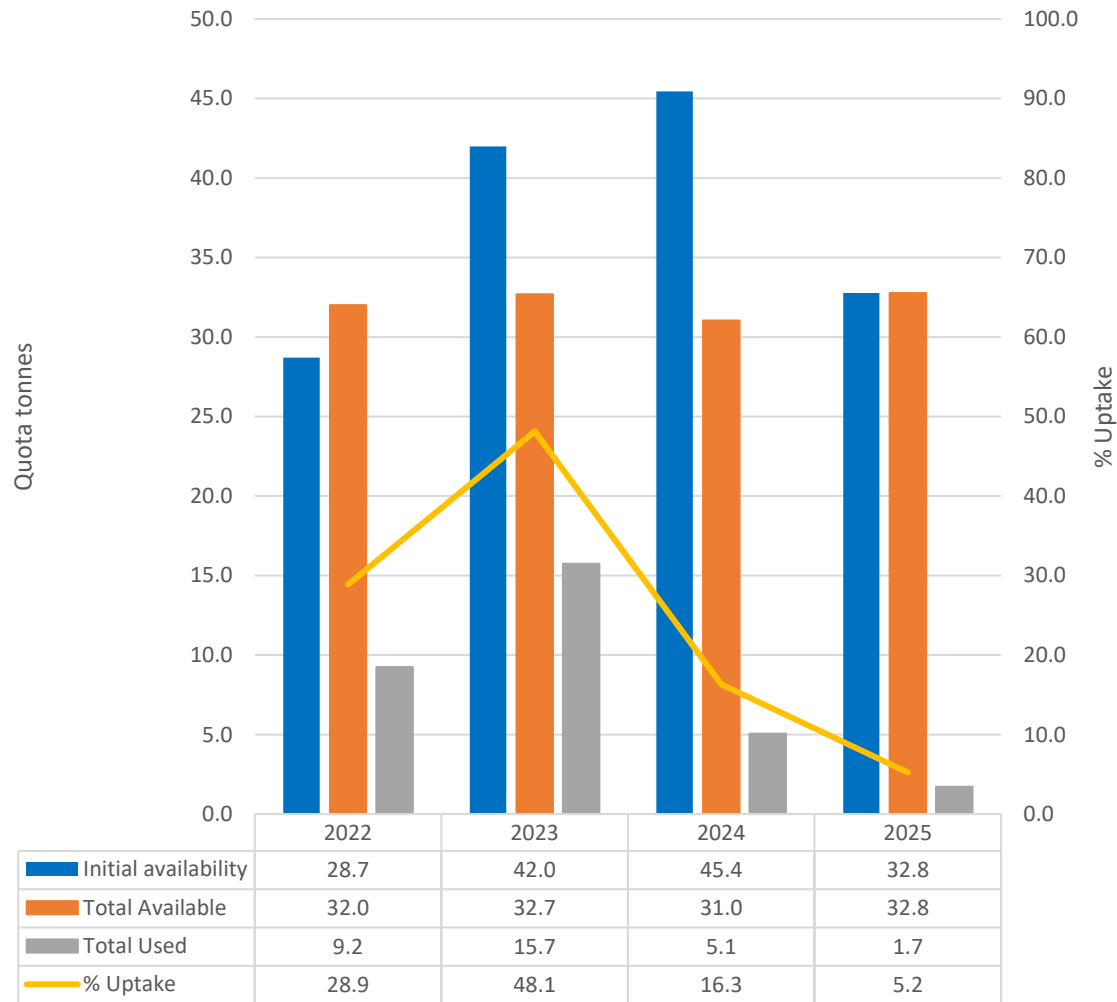
Initial Allocation = 32.4t
Current Allocation = 32.4t
Catch limit = 2t
Current uptake = 4.3t

O10:

Initial Allocation = 17.3t
Current Allocation = 17.3t
Catch limit = 2t
Current uptake = 3.6t

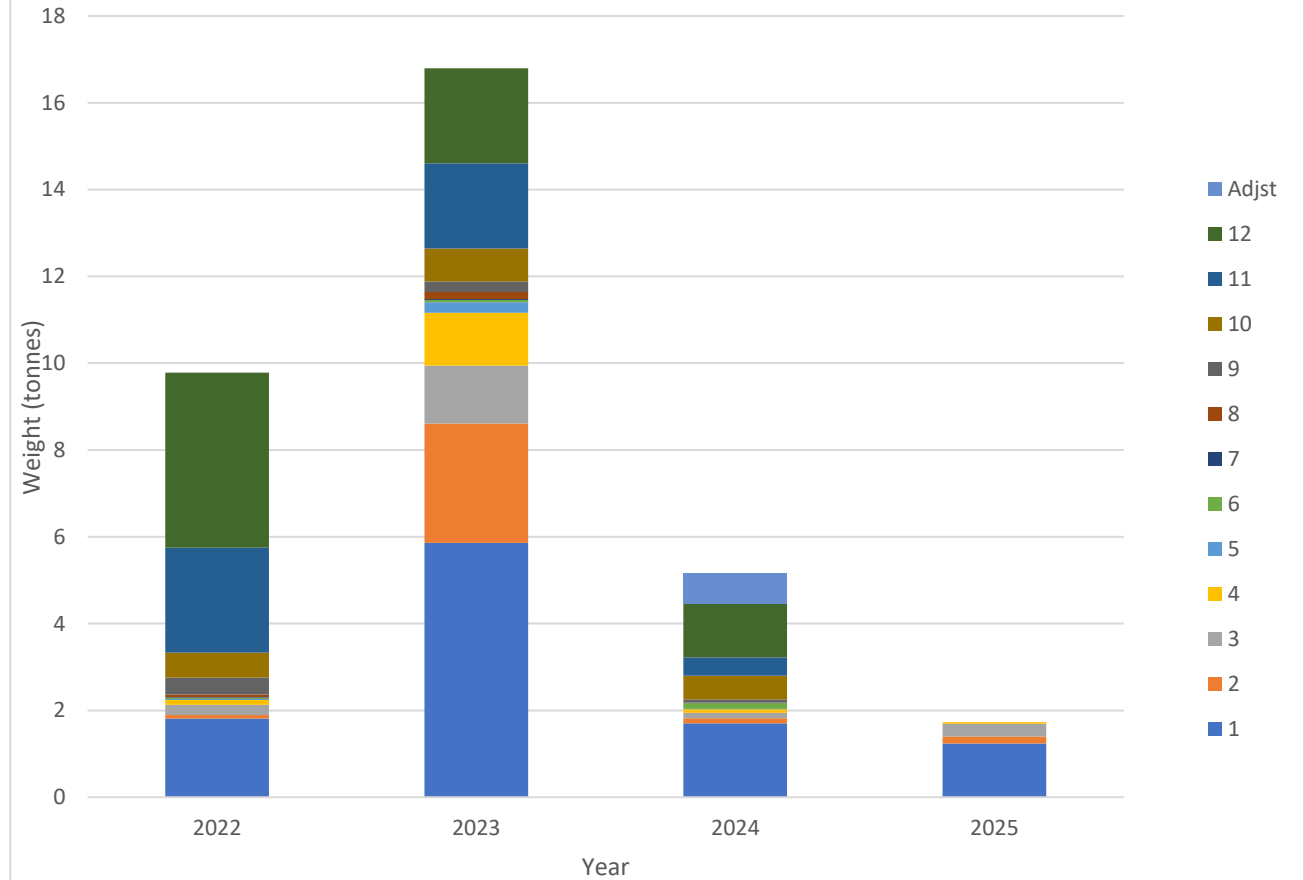
Cod 7d

Cod - Area VIId - Under 10 - Available quota and total uptake



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Monthly Uptake by Year - COD7D - U10m



U10:

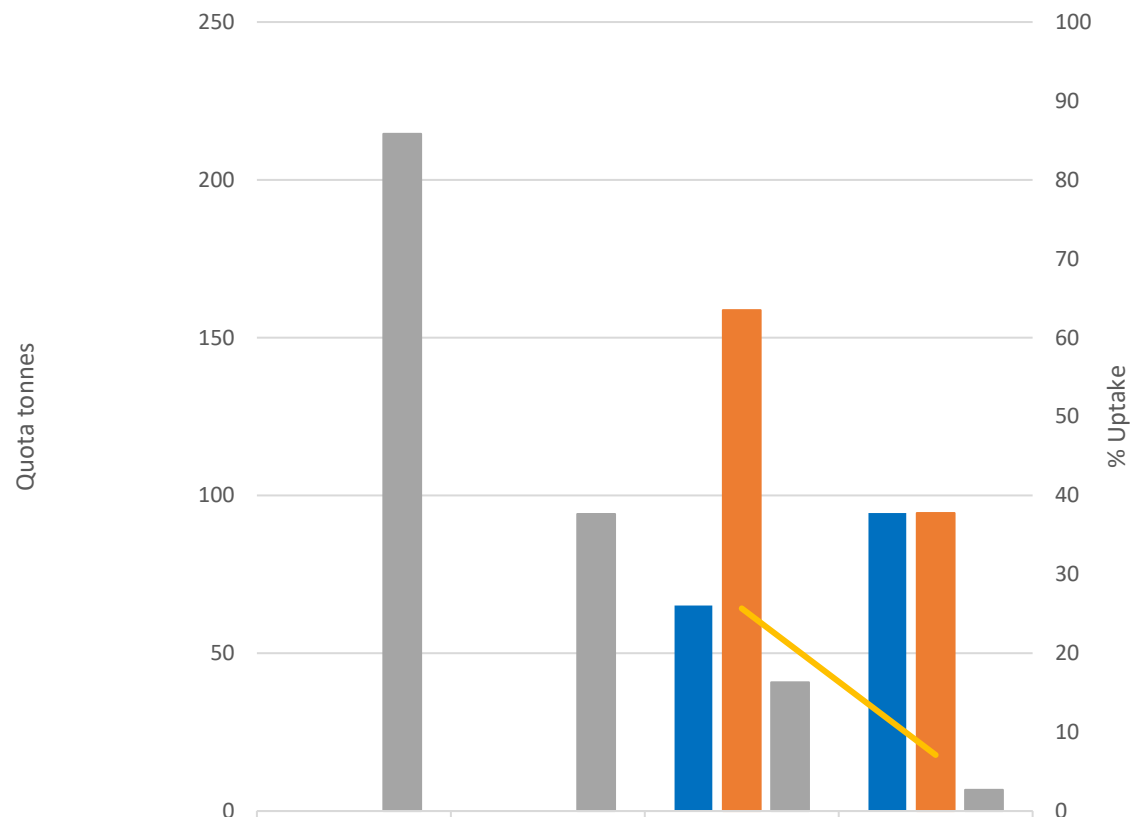
Current allocation = 32.8t
Catch limit = 1t (Bycatch)
Current uptake = 1.7t

O10:

Current allocation = 4.1t
Catch limit = 1t (Bycatch)
Current uptake = 0.0t

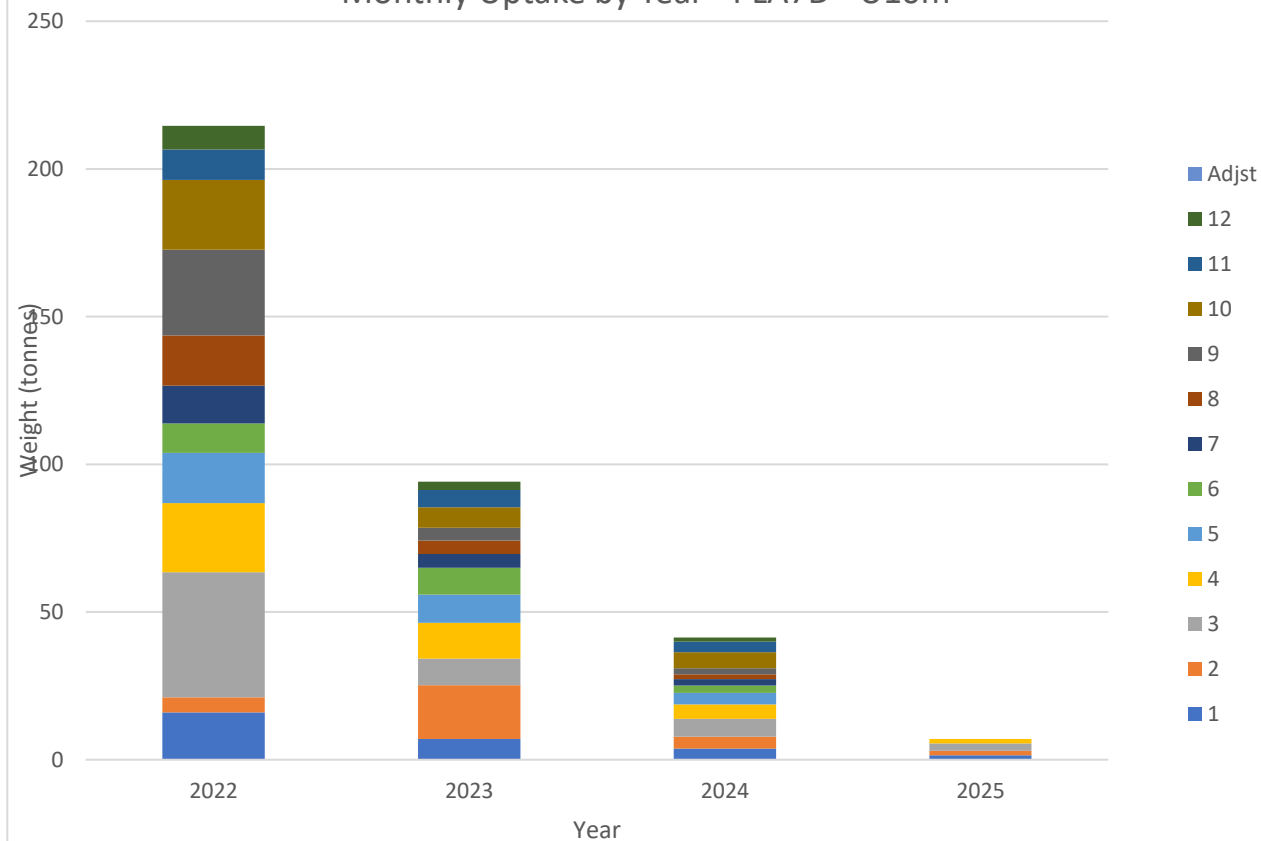
Plaice 7d – Under 10

Plaice - 7d - Under 10 - Available quota and total uptake



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Monthly Uptake by Year - PLA7D - U10m



U10:

Initial Allocation = 94.4t

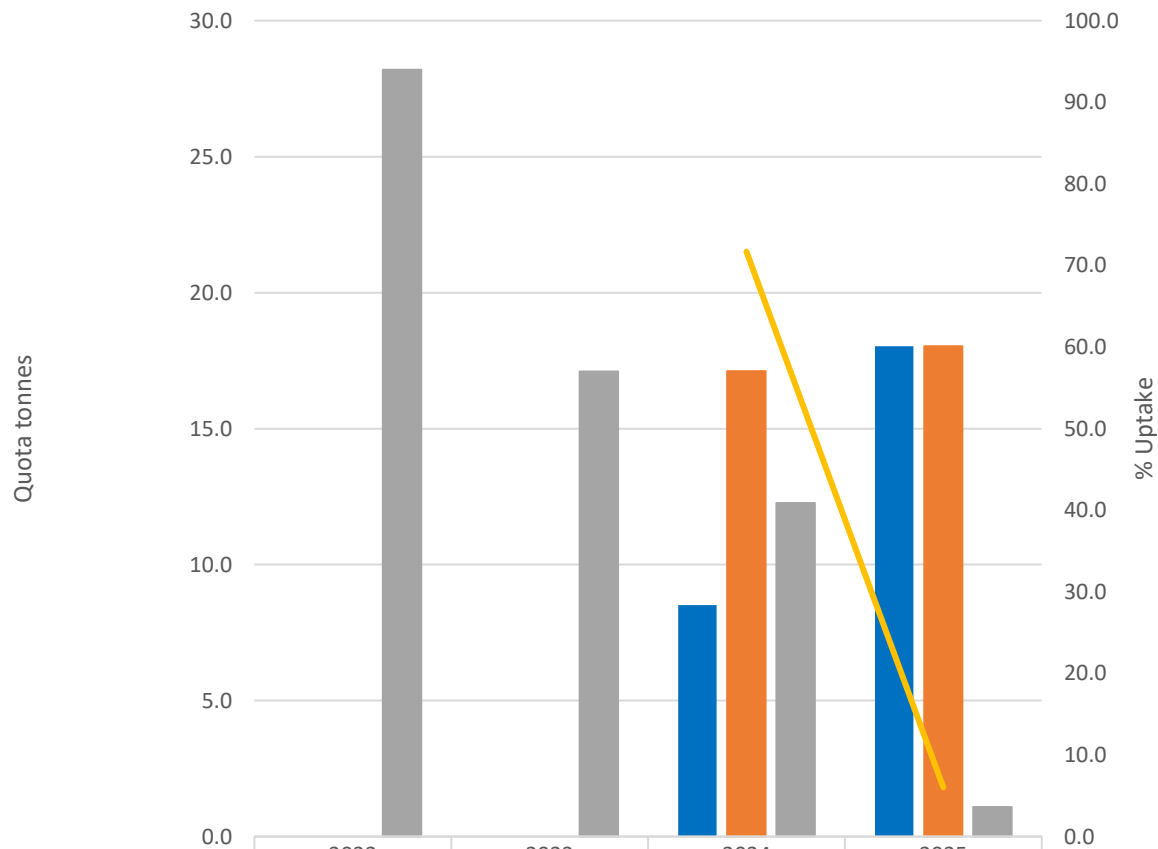
Current Allocation = 94.4t

Catch limit = 3t

Current uptake = 6.7t

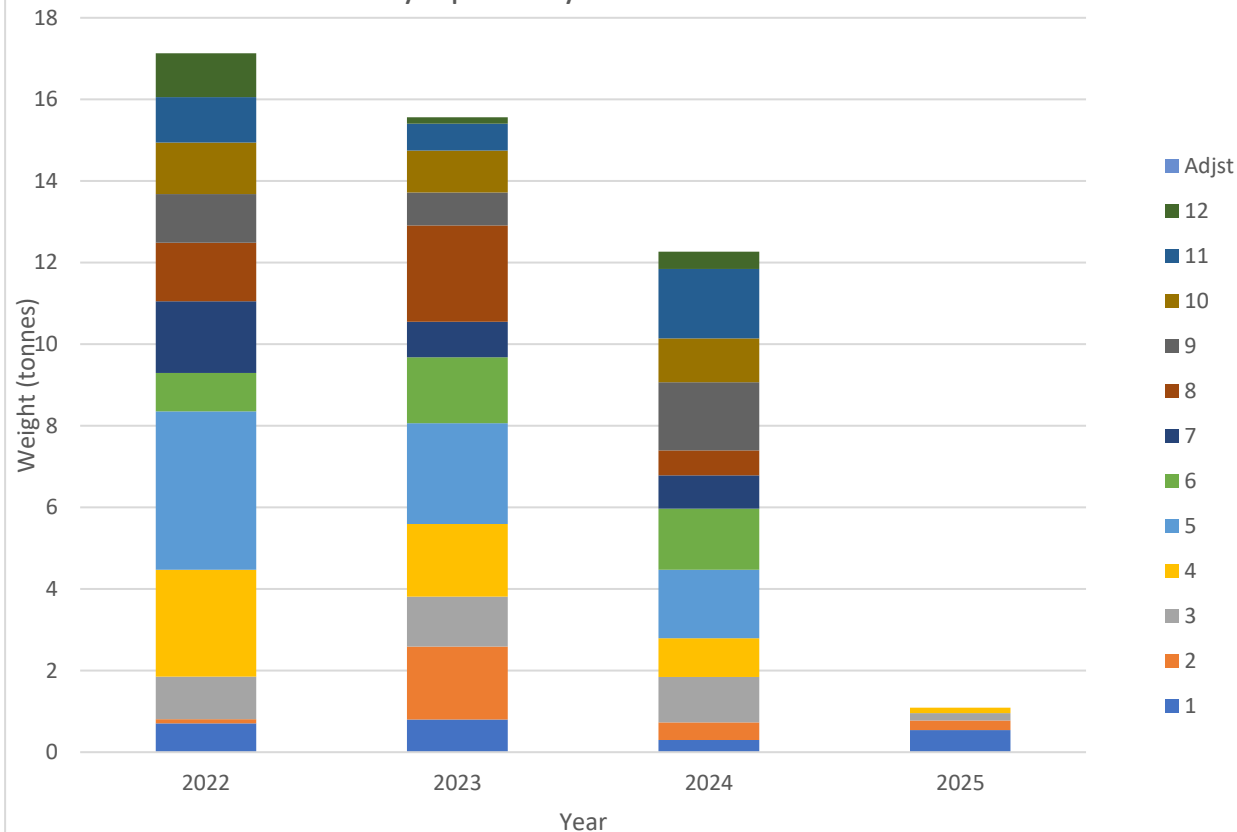
Plaice 7d – Over 10

Plaice - 7d - Over 10 - Available quota and total uptake



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Monthly Uptake by Year - PLA7D - Non-sector



O10:

Initial Allocation = 18.0t

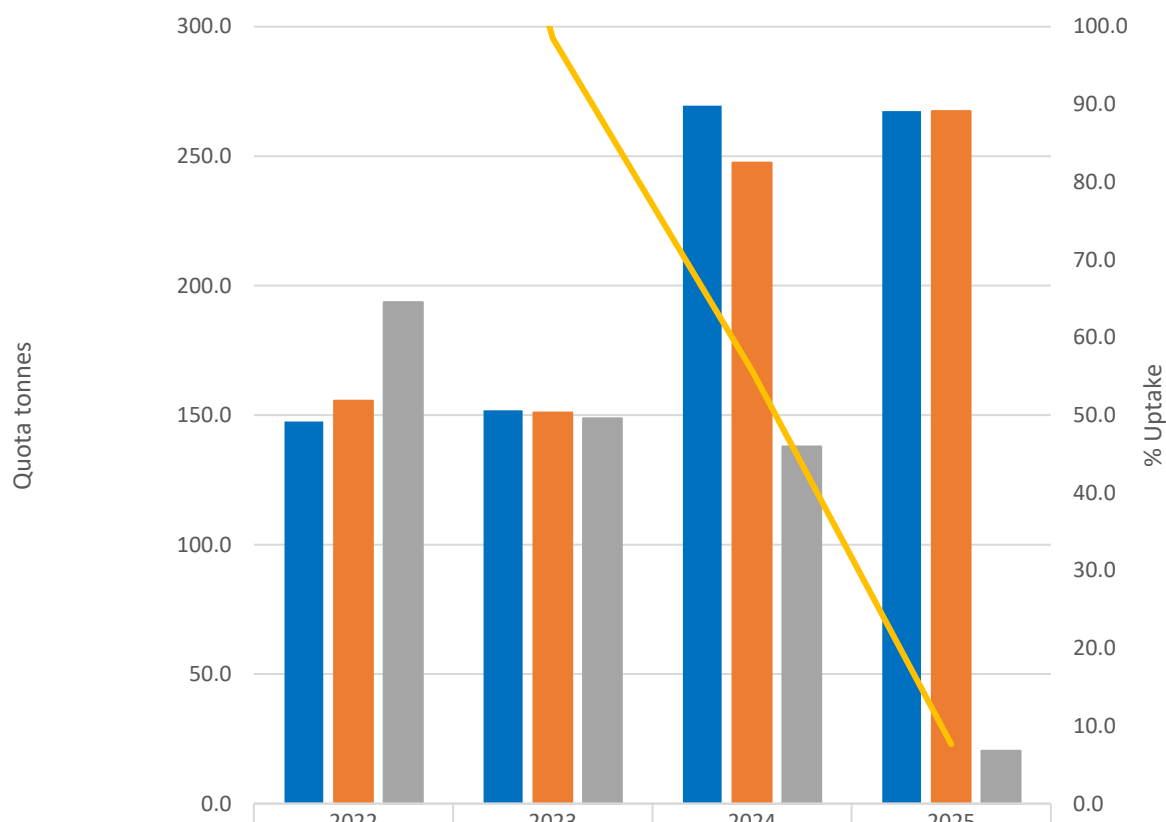
Current Allocation = 18.0t

Catch limit = 3t

Current uptake = 1.1t

Skates and Rays 7d

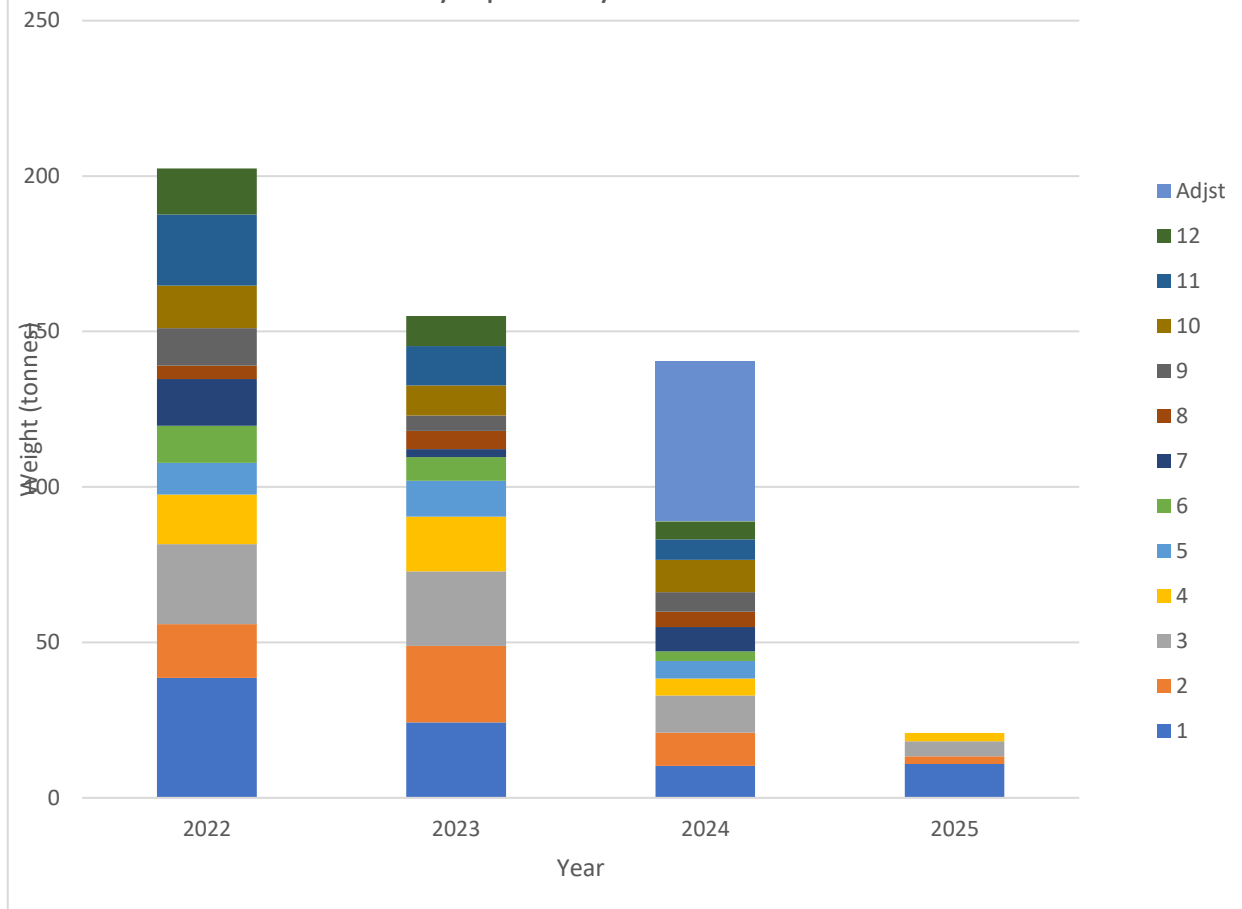
Skates and rays - Area VIId - Under 10 - Available quota and total uptake



Initial availability	147.6	151.9	269.5	267.4
Total Available	155.6	151.1	247.4	267.4
Total Used	193.7	148.8	137.9	20.4
% Uptake	193.2	98.5	55.7	7.6

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Monthly Uptake by Year - SKA7D - U10m



U10:

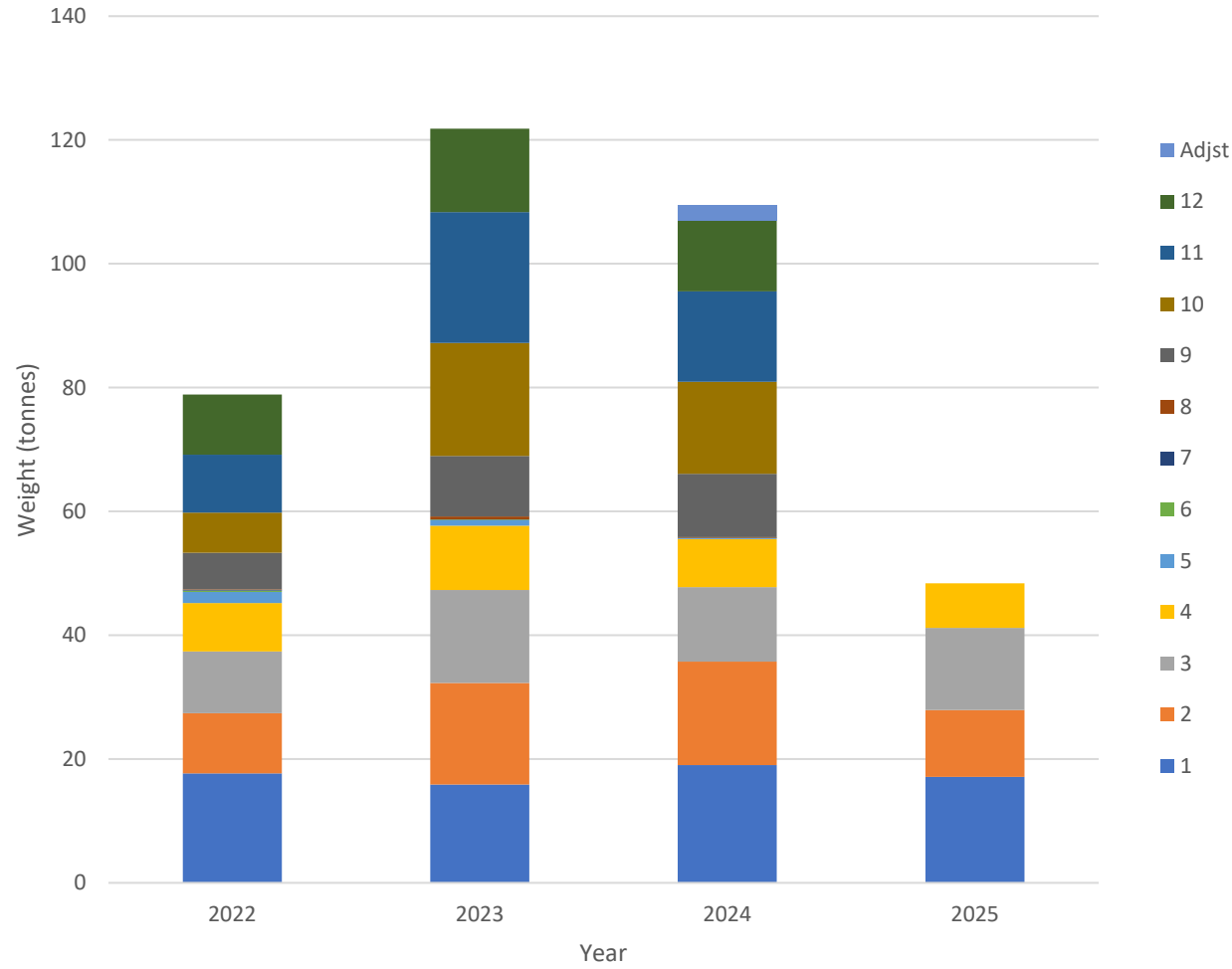
Current allocation = 267.4t
Catch limit = 4t
Current uptake = 20.4t

O10:

Current allocation = 34.5t
Catch limit = 2.5t
Current uptake = 1.7t

Undulate Ray 7d & e

Monthly Uptake by Year - RJU7DE



UK 2025 allocation = 1324t

Restrictions on the minimum and maximum landing sizes and the closed period (May-August) still apply as per the UK Licence schedule.

Closes 1st May– Open 1st September

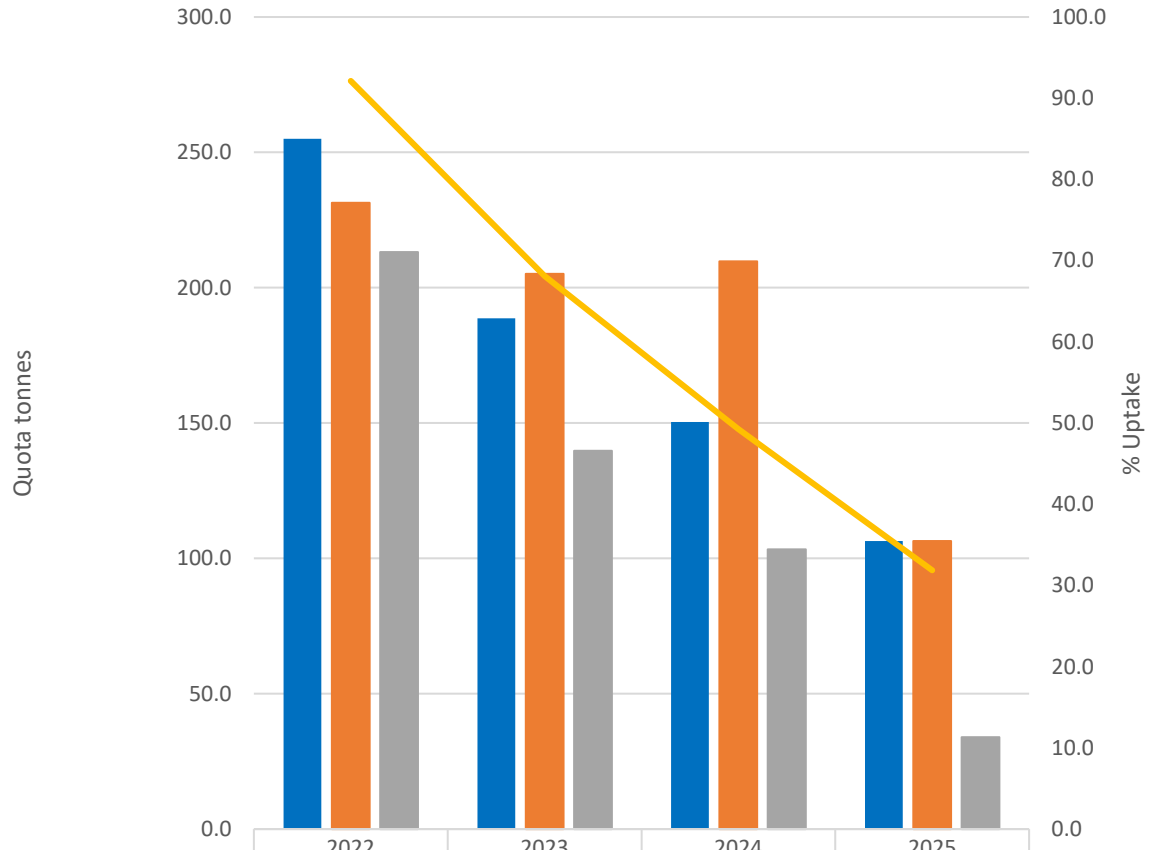
Current catch limit 2t per month

Current uptake – 48.3t

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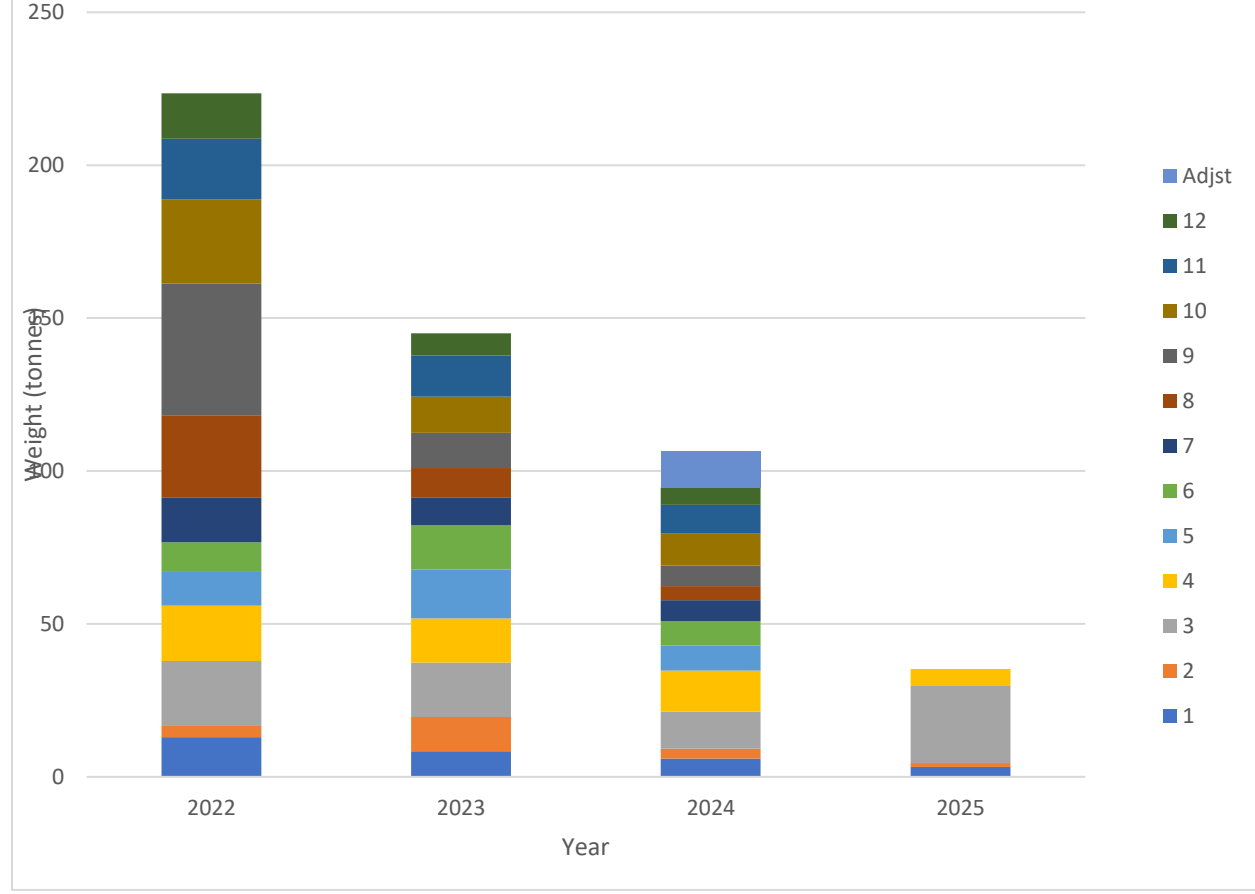
Sole 7d

Sole - Area VIId - Under 10 - Available quota and total uptake



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Monthly Uptake by Year - SOL7D - U10m



U10:

Current allocation = 106.5t

Catch limit = 2.5t

Current uptake = 33.9t

O10:

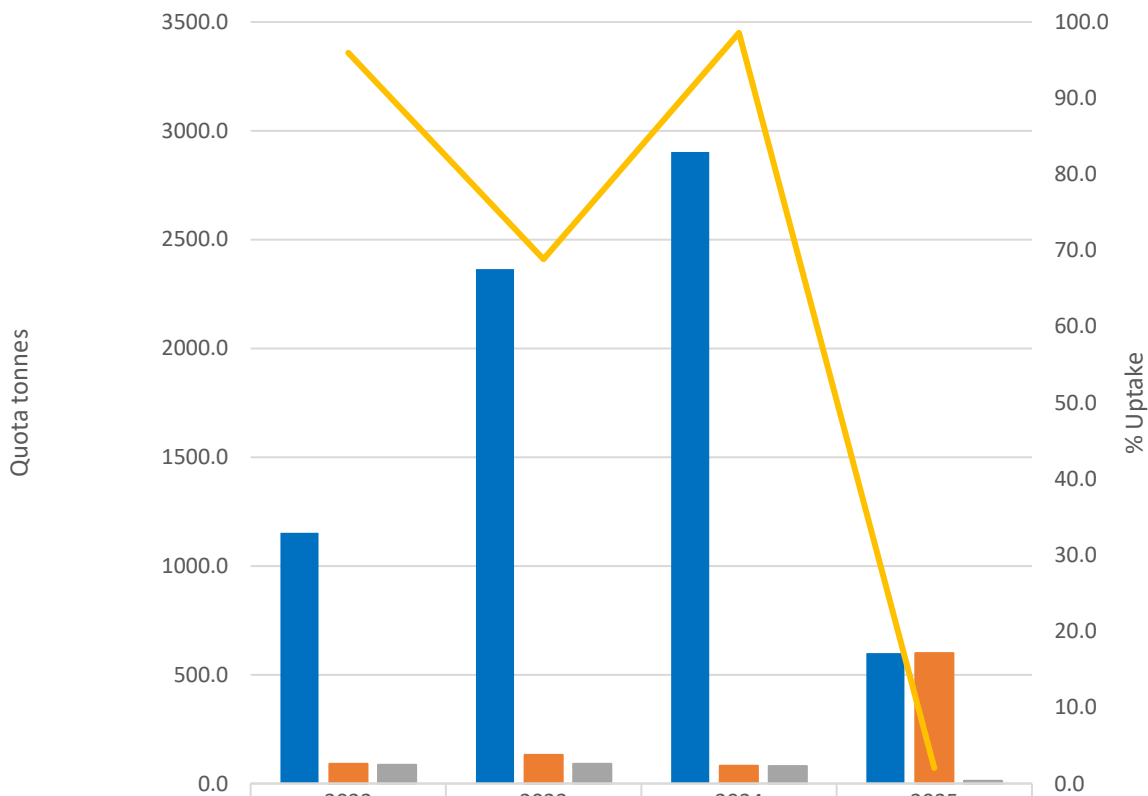
Current allocation = 9.5t

Catch limit = 2t

Current uptake = 1.2t

Mackerel Western

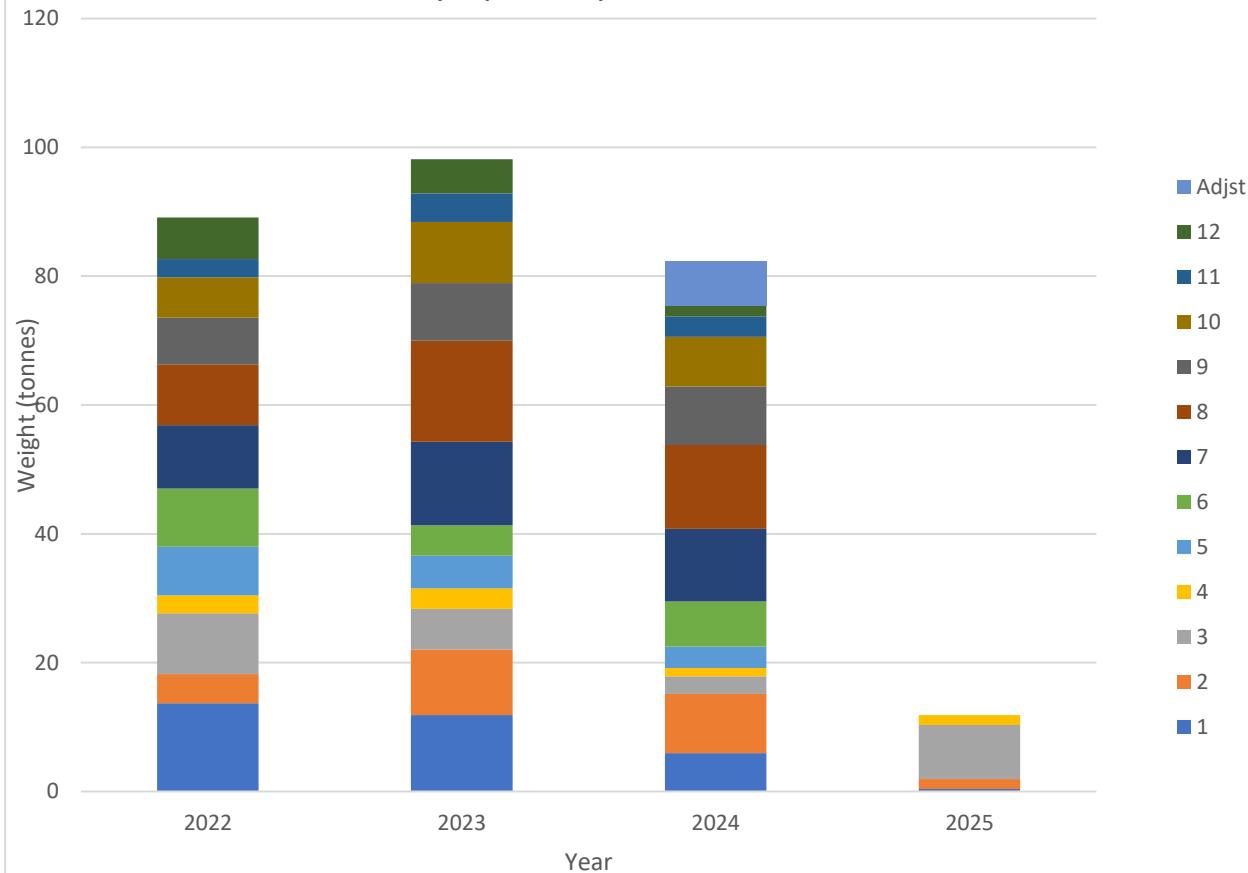
Mackerel - Western - Under 10 - Available quota and total uptake



Initial availability	1152.2	2363.9	2902.6	598.9
Total Available	90.1	131.2	81.6	598.9
Total Used	86.5	90.3	80.4	12.2
% Uptake	96.0	68.8	98.6	2.0

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Monthly Uptake by Year - MACWS - U10m



U10:

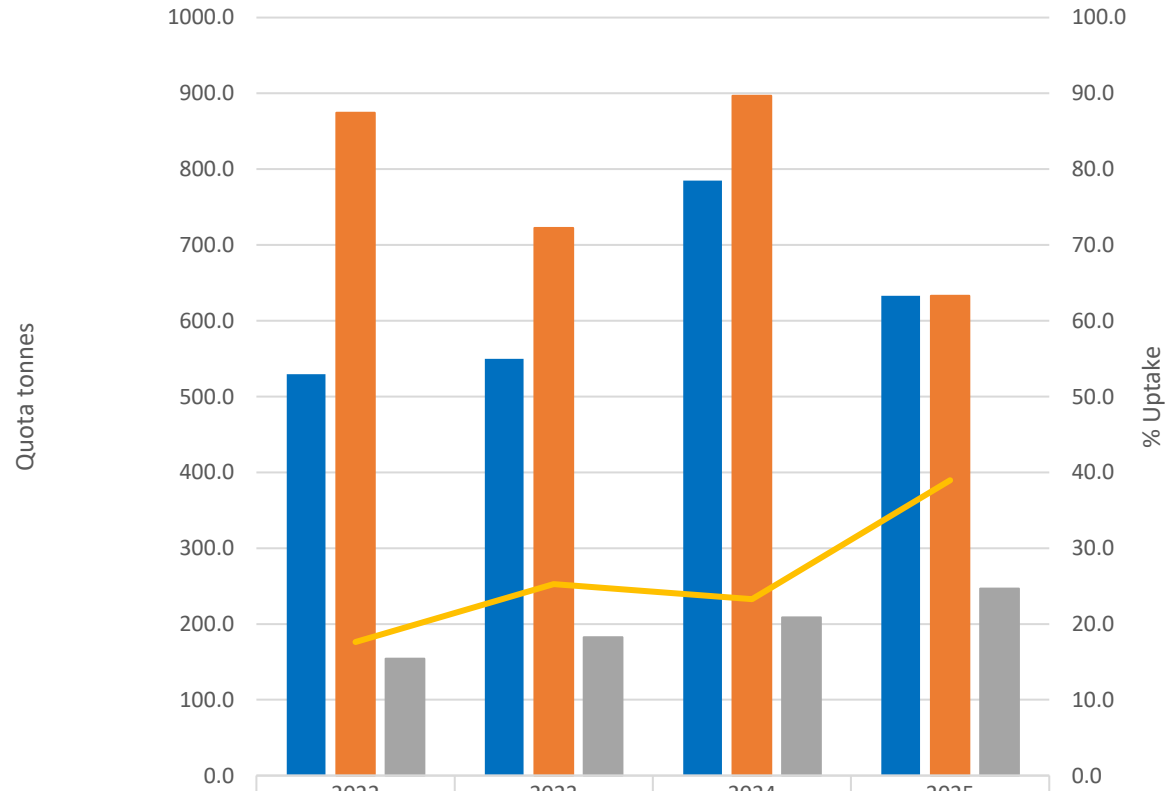
Current allocation = 598.9t
Catch limit = 10t
Current uptake = 12.2t

O10:

Current Allocation = 2.2t
Catch limit = 10t
Current uptake = 2.6t

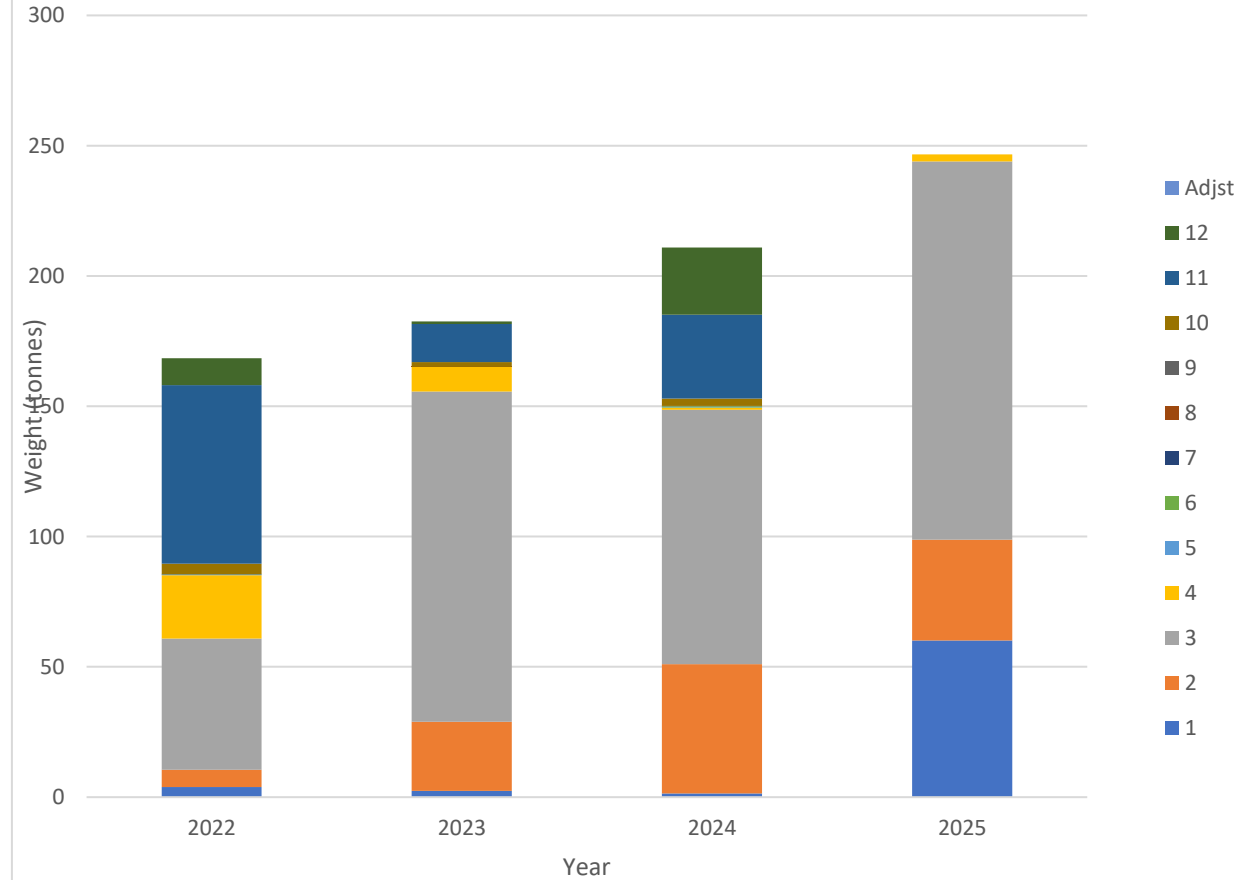
Herring 4c / 7d

Herring - Areas IVc and VIId - Under 10 - Available quota and total uptake



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Monthly Uptake by Year - HER4C7D - U10m



U10:

Current Allocation = 633.0t
Catch limit = 200t
Current uptake = 246.6t

O10:

Current Allocation = 181.4t
Catch limit = 50t
Current uptake = 0.4t



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Please remember you can get in touch with us
regarding catch limits – Email, Text or Call....

Katie James: 07747638655

Jacob Bestwick: 07469443840

inshorequotamanager@marinemanagement.org.uk

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Useful Links

Uptake Statistics

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/quota-use-statistics>

Catch limits

Under 10m <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/current-catch-limits-10-metres-and-under-pool>

Over 10m <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/current-catch-limits-over-10-metre-non-sector-pool>

Trading

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fishing-quota-trading-and-swaps>

Catch limit Review (front page of MMO website during last 7-10 days of each month) – May 2025 Live now

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/may-2025-catch-limit-review#:~:text=Summary,limit%20changes%20proposed%20for%20May.>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/marine-management-organisation>

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Bass authorisation review

23 April 2025


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Bass authorization review - Scope

Analysis of the current system **to inform** areas for;
improvement, amendment, revocation

- **Track records**
- **Fishing capacity**
- **Transfers**
- **Gear**
- **Catch limits**
- **Discards**
- **Reporting**
- **NPV's**
- **Recreational**



Assess suitability of current system for UK vessels
Recommend options for future system for UK vessels

Outputs

- Although recommendations have and will continue to be made through the review process, Outputs from this review do not reflect a final decision.
- Recommendations will undergo a decision making process which may include further consultation, evidence gathering and consideration of wider impacts before final decisions are made.
- Therefore decisions or changes to business practice should not be made on the basis of recommendations from this review.

Recommendations

- Track record process
- Fishing opportunity
- Transfers
- Mitigation
- Gear

Engagement

East

- Wells
- Southwold
- Whitstable
- West
- Mersea
- Harwich

South/Southeast

- Rye
- Eastbourne
- Shoreham
- Portsmouth
- Poole

Northwest

- Barrow in Furness
- Lytham St Annes
- Liverpool

Southwest

- Lyme Regis
- Brixham
- Plymouth
- Mevagissey
- Newlyn

Next steps

- Continuation of review process
- Continuation of Engagement
- Report to BMG

Those who wish to provide comment for the bass authorisation review can email bassfmp@defra.gov.uk



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Any Questions ?



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Cuttlefish Channel Demersal NQS FMP Implementation

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Channel Demersal NQS FMP Recap

Short-term measure

- Develop an action plan for managing the cuttlefish fishery.

Short- to medium-term measures

- Consider temporary seasonal closures for trawlers.
- Consider introducing codes of practice on cuttlefish trap handling.
- Investigate the benefits of underwater structures to benefit egg survival.
- Consider wider changes such as MPA management and habitat improvements which could deliver benefits for the cuttlefish fishery

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Cuttlefish Action Plan

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Cuttlefish Action Plan

- Published on the 10th April 2025 [Cuttlefish Fishery Action Plan - GOV.UK](#)
- English waters ICES divisions 7d and 7e, in line with the first proposed measure for cuttlefish in the Channel Demersal NQS FMP.
- MMO are not looking to introduce any formal management at this time.
- The aim of the first iteration of the action plan is to introduce greater monitoring and data collection to help inform future management.
- Several of the actions detailed within the cuttlefish action plan are already in the progress of being implemented by the MMO.
 - **Trap & Pot Handling Voluntary Code of Practice ICES 7d and 7e**
 - **Cuttlefish species ID cards**
 - **Cuttlefish Market Sampling Project**

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Voluntary Code of Practice on Trap/Pot Handling

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Voluntary Code of Practice

- The aim of this code of practice is to protect and increase the survivability of cuttlefish eggs that have been laid on traps and pots.

Traps and Pots Handling Voluntary Codes of Practice

To improve cuttlefish egg survivability and recruitment the following recommendations should be followed when potting and trapping in English waters from the 6nm limit out to 200nm in ICES divisions 7d and 7e:

- When hauling and shooting pots/traps, if cuttlefish eggs are attached aim to minimise damage to eggs and ensure the pots/traps are returned to the water with the cuttlefish eggs attached.
- Avoid cleaning or washing cuttlefish eggs off pots/traps.
- If cuttlefish eggs are still attached to pots/traps at the end of the cuttlefish season, fishers should leave their pots/traps in the water until the eggs have hatched.
- When leaving pots/traps at sea, fishers should remove entrance panels to avoid ghost fishing or regularly attend their pots/traps to remove captured animals.
- In the event of predicted bad weather at sea, pots/traps should be hauled to avoid gear loss.
- Fishers should seek to avoid conflict with other fishers when leaving pots/traps at sea and avoid damaging marine protected area features.

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Cuttlefish Species ID

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Cuttlefish Species ID

Current recording

- Cuttlefish currently mainly recorded at the genus level using the code CTL
- This code includes bobtail and squids
- Lacking species specific data

The issue?

- We don't know what proportion of landed catch is cuttlefish and what is bobtail and squids when recorded at genus level
- We don't know what species of cuttlefish are being landed

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Cuttlefish Species ID

Cuttlefish Species in the English Channel


- Three cuttlefish species that are known in the English Channel
 - Common cuttlefish *Sepia officinalis* – species code CTC
 - Elegant cuttlefish *Sepia elegans* – species code EJE
 - Pink cuttlefish *Sepia orbignyana* – species code IAR

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Cuttlefish Species ID – Common Cuttlefish (CTC)

Can be either:

- Grade 1 > 15 cm ML
- Grade 2 ≤ 15 cm ML





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Common cuttlefish – *Sepia officinalis*

Catch App Species Code - CTC

Identifying features	
Tentacular Club	5-6 rows of suckers that vary in size 5-6 median suckers twice diameter of rest
Body	Broadly Oval Up to 490 mm mantle
Colour	Variable: blackish-brown Striped or mottled
Quota / Non Quota	Non Quota

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Sources: FAO (2005), Photo: © Alberto. M. Arias (right)

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Cuttlefish Species ID – Elegant Cuttlefish (EJE)

Only:

- Grade 2 ≤ 15 cm ML



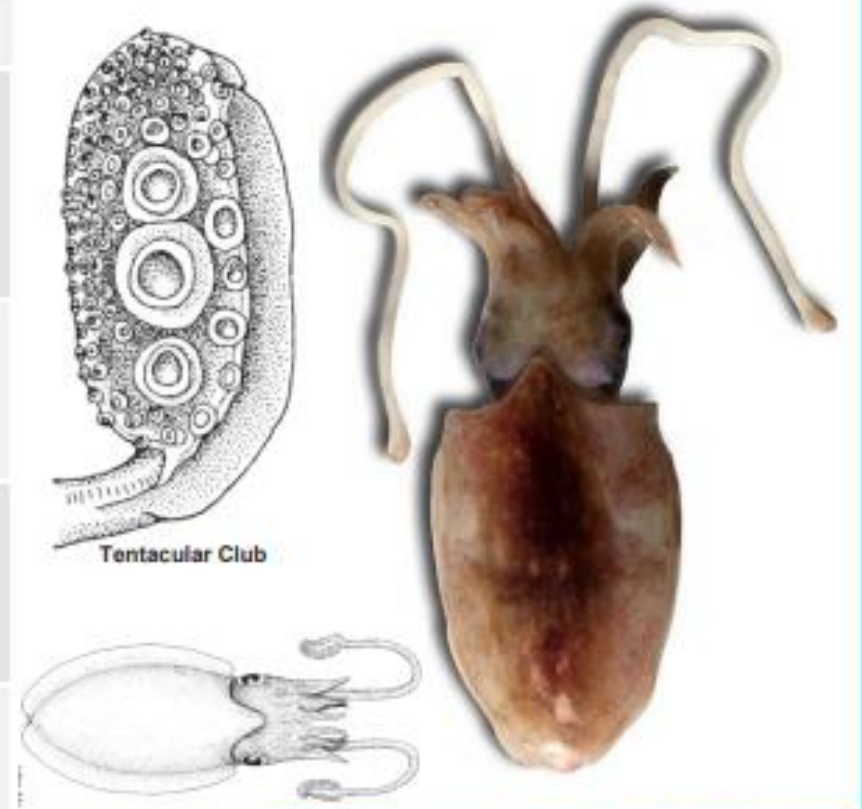
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Elegant cuttlefish – *Sepia elegans*

Catch App Species Code - EJE

Identifying features

Tentacular Club	Short and Oval 6-8 rows of suckers 3-4 greatly enlarged suckers in the middle
Body	Elongate-oval Up to ~75 mm mantle length
Colour	Red-brown More yellowish than common cuttlefish
Quota / Non Quota	Non Quota



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Sources: FAO (2005), Photo: © Alberto. M. Arias (right)

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Cuttlefish Species ID – Pink Cuttlefish (IAR)

Only:

- Grade 2 ≤ 15 cm ML




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Pink cuttlefish – *Sepia orbignyana*

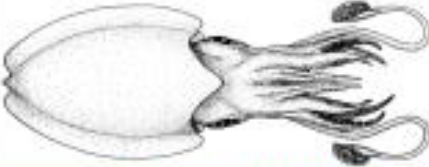
Catch App Species Code - IAR

Identifying features	
Tentacular Club	Short and oval 5-6 rows of suckers 3 large suckers in the middle with one slightly smaller sucker on each side of them
Body	Elongate-oval Up to ~120 mm mantle length, spine on rear of body
Colour	Red-orange More reddish than common cuttlefish
Quota / Non Quota	Non Quota



Tentacular Club





Sources: FAO (2005), Photo: © Alberto. M. Arias (right)

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Cuttlefish Species ID

How to start improving species data

- Firstly, stop using CTL to record cuttlefish start using CTC to start
- We are unsure if you will have any other species other than common cuttlefish caught in pots in your area, the market sampling and your IDing will help us assess this.
- The most difficult to distinguish between is the small common and the elegant cuttlefish especially if tentacular club is missing
- Pink cuttlefish have a recognisable spine protruding at rear of body
- If unsure default to common cuttlefish code CTC rather than genus code CTL

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Cuttlefish Market Sampling Project

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Market Sampling Project

Why?

- A way for the MMO to test the efficacy of the cuttlefish species I.D cards
- To gather evidence on the size and species of cuttlefish and catch composition throughout the season in the English Channel

Where?

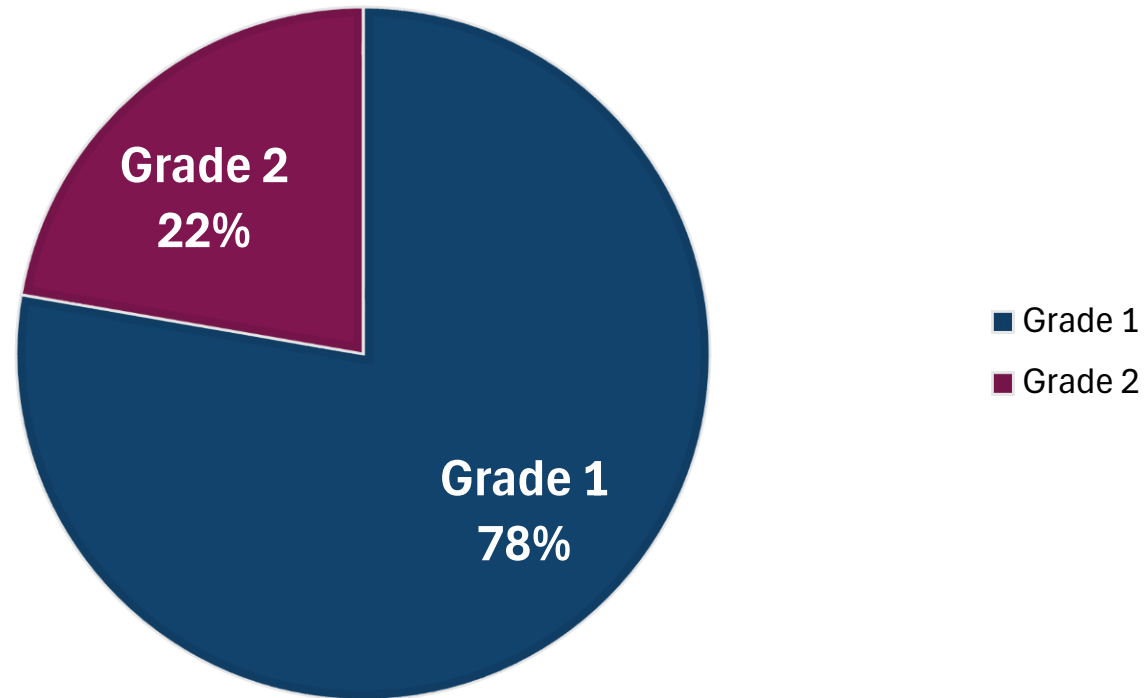
- Market sampling of cuttlefish at Newlyn and Brixham Fish markets started in November
- Sampling to start in April in the southeast to see if all three species are present during spawning season

How?

- Monthly sampling at Newlyn and Brixham
- IDing species, measuring mantle length and weighing each individual
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Market Sampling Project

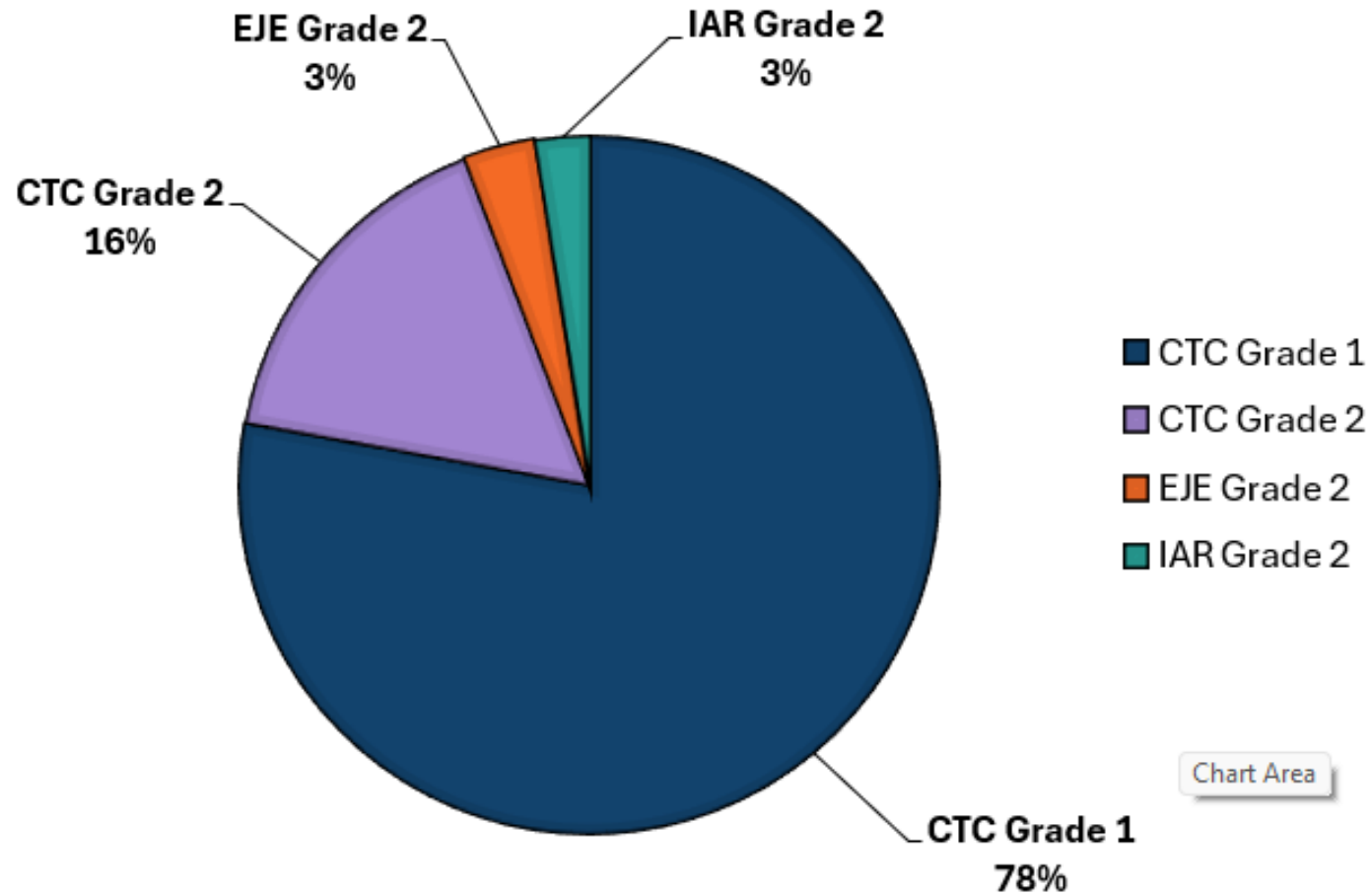
What we have found so far.....



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Market Sampling Project

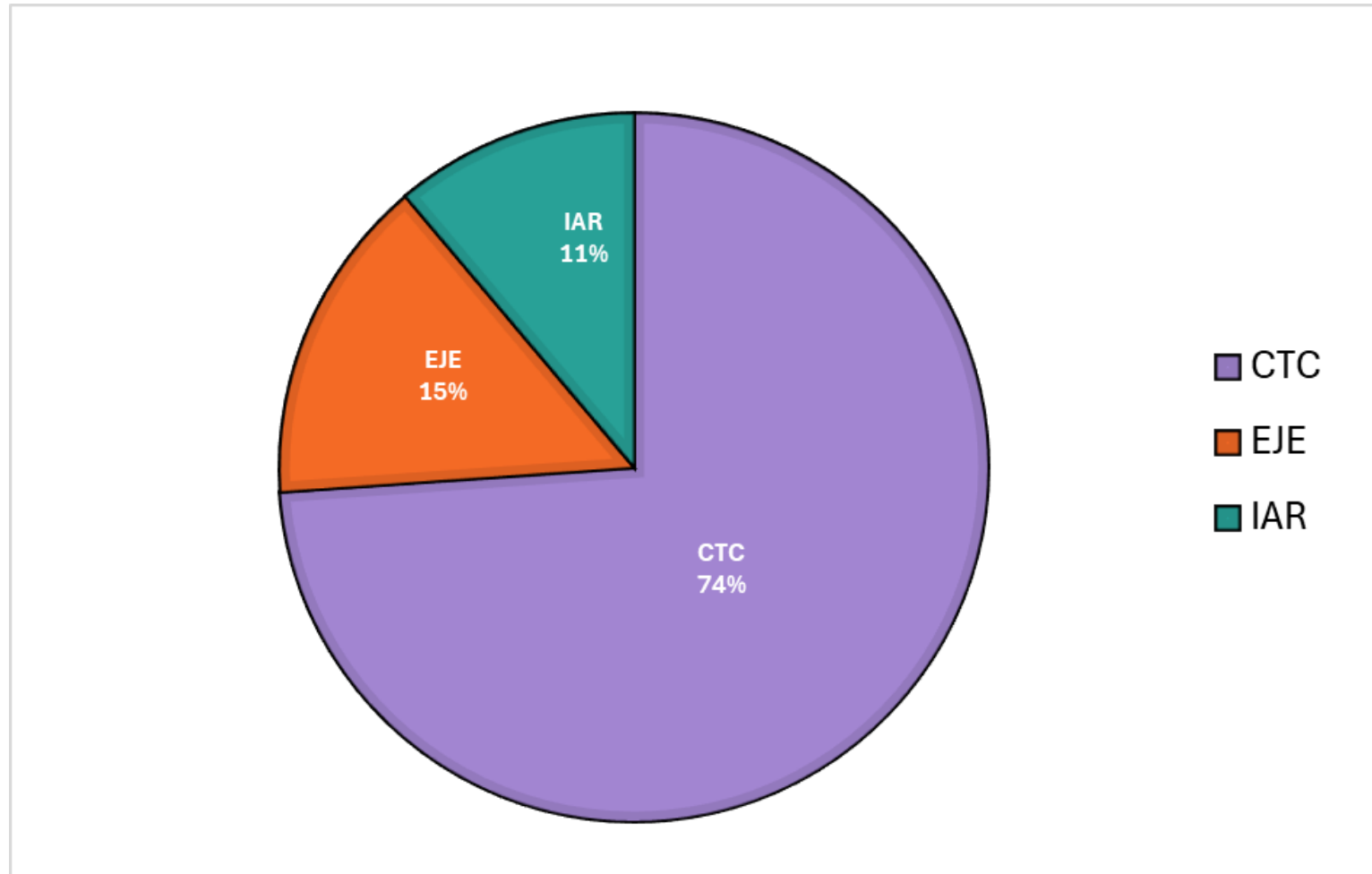
What we have found so far.....



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Market Sampling Project

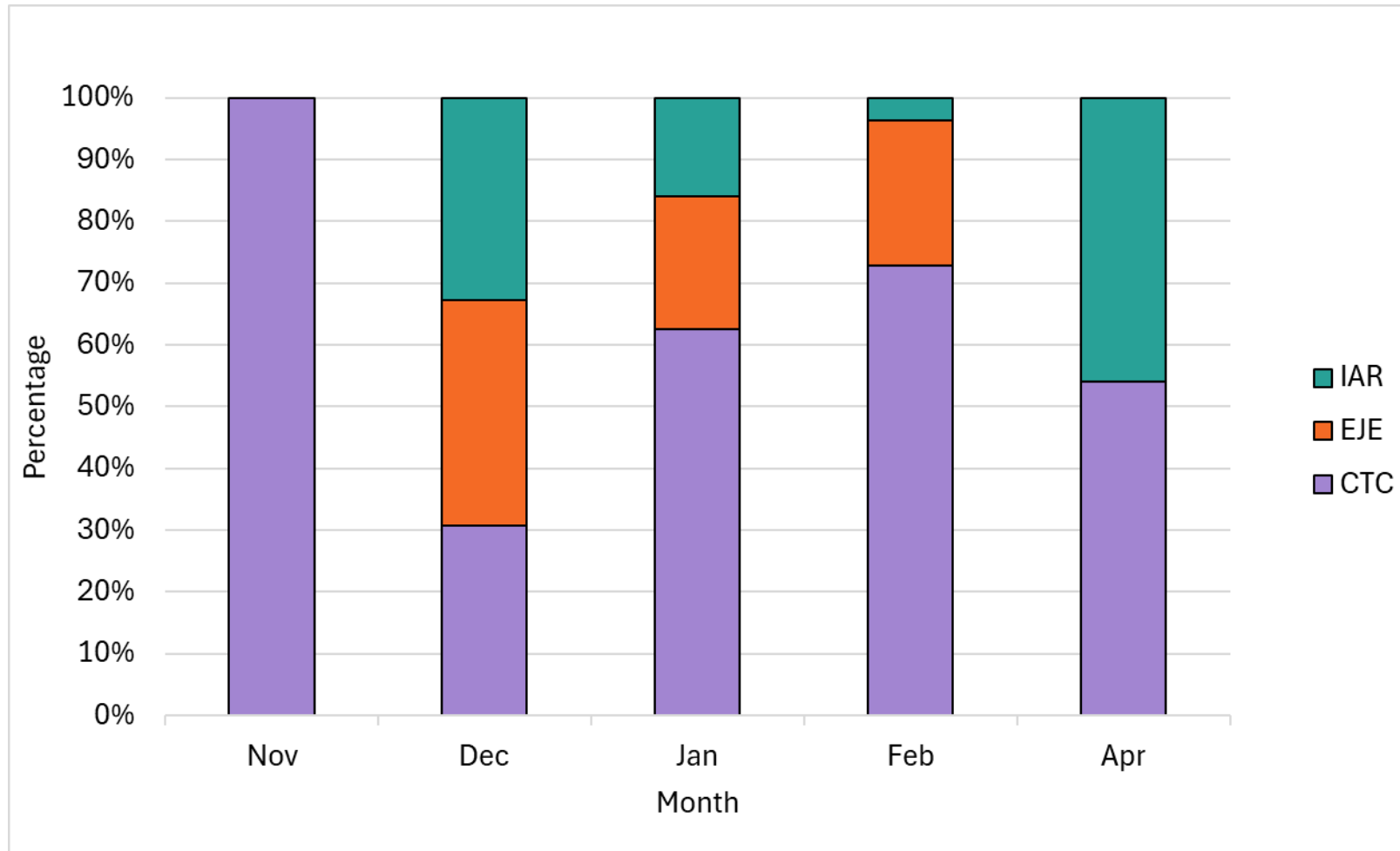
What we have found so far.....



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Market Sampling Project

What we have found so far.....



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Next Steps

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Next Steps....

Stakeholder Engagement

- Stakeholder roundtable engagement session end of May 2025 - TBC
- Followed by a cuttlefish roadshow visiting locations covering the south coast

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Questions ???

Email:

sustainablefisheries@marinemanagement.org.uk

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