



Department  
for Environment,  
Food & Rural Affairs

# **Fisheries Act 2020: Post-Legislative Assessment**

**Memorandum to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Committee**

July 2026



Government of the United Kingdom

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

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Committee**

Presented to Parliament

by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

by Command of His Majesty

July 2026



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# Fisheries Act 2020: Post-Legislative Assessment

## 1. Introduction

This memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for submission to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (the EFRA Committee). It is published as part of the process set out in Section 40 of the [Guide to Making Legislation](#).

Whilst this assessment considers how the Act has functioned in practice across all four UK administrations, and has received factual input from the Devolved Governments, as UK-wide legislation the post-legislative scrutiny (PLS) memorandum of the Act is only required to be prepared for the UK's EFRA Committee.

## 2. Origins of the Fisheries Act 2020

The Act's origins are from the analysis carried out by the UK Government on the need for legislation after the Brexit referendum in June 2012.

On 4 July 2018, Defra published a White Paper for consultation, '[Sustainable fisheries for future generations](#).' This set out the then Government's vision for future UK fisheries management after leaving the European Union (EU). The Fisheries Bill which flowed from the White Paper was first introduced into the House of Commons in October 2018. It fell due to the General Election in 2019 and was reintroduced in January 2020. Following the Bill's successful progression through the parliamentary process, the [Fisheries Act 2016](#) (the Act) received Royal Assent in November 2020.

The Act was introduced to provide the legal framework for the UK to operate as an independent coastal State on fisheries related matters under the [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](#) (UNCLOS) outside the EU.

The Act creates broad common approaches to fisheries management between the Secretary of State and Devolved Governments, as well as conferring additional powers on the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) to improve the regulation of fishing and the marine environment in England.

Prior to the introduction of the Act, the primary UK fisheries legislation was the [Sea Fish \(Conservation\) Act 1967](#), the [Sea Fisheries \(Shellfish\) Act 1967](#), the [Sea Fisheries Act 1968](#), the [Fisheries Act 1981](#), the [Marine and Coastal Access Act \(2009\)](#) and the [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) and the all of which remain in force and operate alongside the Act. The [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) and the [Environment Act 2017](#) similarly include environmental obligations which apply to fisheries management decisions. Other relevant wildlife and environmental protection and devolved fisheries legislation is also still in force.

However, the vast majority of the legislation which applied to fisheries came from the EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The CFP was mostly directly applicable and binding on all of the governments in the UK.

The Act was developed, scrutinised and received Royal Assent before the terms under which the UK's departure from the EU had been agreed. For this reason, it had to be drafted as a framework act, capable of being used in any of the EU exit scenarios (crudely, "deal" or "no deal"). Further details can be found in the next section.

### **3. Objectives of the Act**

The Act is a framework legislative act, meaning it is primary legislation which provides UK-wide overarching goals, principles, and structures for how the UK operates on fisheries matters. Unlike a policy act, a framework act leaves specific policy details and details of mechanisms for day-to-day enforcement, for subsequent secondary legislation.

The overarching objective of the Act was to allow the UK to be able to operate outside the EU as an independent coastal State.

We have set out below, the provisions of the Act under these objectives. This section has been drafted primarily using information from the [Fisheries Act Explanatory Notes](#), as well as other publications from the time of the passage of the [Fisheries Bill](#).

#### **Establishing a UK legal framework to enable the UK to manage and regulate fisheries outside the EU**

As part of its membership of the European Union (EU), the UK was bound by the CFP, which dominated UK fisheries management policy in waters outside 6 nautical miles for 45 years. Following EU exit, the UK was no longer part of the CFP, although most relevant EU regulations were retained in UK law (now known as assimilated law). The primary objective of the Act was to allow the UK to regulate fishing outside the CFP, including to be able to amend assimilated law. Principal matters covered by the CFP were: shared access for EU fishing vessels to EU Member States' waters; Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and setting fishing opportunities for key stocks for each Member State agreed annually between EU Member States; representation of EU Member States by the European Commission in negotiations with third countries and in international fisheries agreements; and directly applicable fisheries management legislation including on detailed technical measures and control and enforcement.

The Act therefore established a domestic system of management encompassing these matters. Sections 19 to 27 (fishing opportunities) were established to provide the legal framework for the Secretary of State to determine fishing opportunities for UK vessels with the UK as an independent coastal State after leaving the EU.

Sections 29 to 35 (grants and charges) were established to enable the UK to fund the fisheries sector and charge for management services, creating a domestic financial framework after leaving the EU.

Schedule 10 was established to update existing fisheries legislation to remove EU mechanisms, whereas schedule 11 was established to remove obsolete fisheries legislation (in particular CFP-related provisions).

Importantly too, EU exit changed how devolution worked for fisheries. As noted in the previous section, the CFP was binding on all governments in the UK. However, fisheries was

an area that had been devolved in stages between 1990 and 1999. Prior to EU exit, each of the UK governments had to implement and enforce the CFP. However, there was some flexibility to introduce higher management requirements than the CFP. But the CFP effectively set a baseline for all and limited divergence within the UK (and with and between EU Member States).

Following EU exit, England, Scotland and Wales were then able to effectively manage the majority of their fisheries independently (the situation in Northern Ireland is more complex)<sup>1</sup>. This includes functions such as fishing vessel licensing and putting in place management measures in their waters (e.g. closed periods, gear restrictions) within their own respective jurisdictions.

The impact of this could be significant divergence between how fisheries is managed by each government. This potentially adds regulatory burdens costs and complexity for the fishing industry and regulators and could impact negatively on fish stocks. It was therefore agreed between each of the four UK governments, that the Fisheries Act would be a key component of the [Fisheries Common Framework](#)<sup>2</sup>.

### **Setting high level UK-wide fisheries objectives**

The Act establishes eight high-level fisheries objectives, which collectively define the approach to sustainable fishing, including aquaculture, across the UK and form a key part of the Fisheries Common Framework described above.

The fisheries objectives set out in section 1 of the Act are: (a) the sustainability objective, (b) the precautionary objective, (c) the ecosystem objective, (d) the scientific evidence objective, (e) the bycatch objective, (f) the equal access objective, (g) the national benefit objective and (h) the climate change objective. These objectives form the basis of the policies set out in the [Joint Fisheries Statement](#) (JFS).

Objectives (a) to (d) replace equivalent objectives in Article 2 of [the Common Fisheries Policy Basic Regulation](#), while (e) to (h) reflect other priorities for the UK upon leaving the CFP and the Common Fisheries Framework.

### **Co-ordinating and steering UK-wide joint fisheries management activity**

Other key components of the Common Fisheries Framework are enacted through the creation of the JFS and Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs).

Sections 2 to 5 of the Act were established to mandate, and set out the process for, the production of the JFS (and, if necessary, a separate Secretary of State fisheries statement (SSFS) setting out any policy or policies omitted from the JFS). The JFS sets out the policy direction for the fisheries policy authorities (the Secretary of State, Scottish Ministers, Welsh Ministers and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in

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<sup>1</sup> The UK Government retains reserved functions related to international negotiations and agreements (for example representing all UK nations in international fora such as Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, quota apportionment between the four UK governments and foreign vessel access to fish in UK waters).

<sup>2</sup> The UK Common Frameworks are in place to manage shared policy areas within devolved competencies.

Northern Ireland) to achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the eight fisheries objectives. It also sets out the combined ambition of the fisheries policy authorities to continue to deliver world class, sustainable management of fisheries in line with those objectives and how they will do so.

Sections 6 to 9 of the Act were established to mandate the production and publication of FMPs. These are published plans which contain goals and measures for the management of those stocks with social and economic importance to the UK, which have a risk of significant over-exploitation, and which also have an ecosystem significance. Each fisheries policy authority has considered whether to bring forward its own FMPs to manage fishing activity within its jurisdiction or collaborate with another fisheries policy authority where appropriate. The JFS sets out a list of the proposed plans and timescales for publication.

Sections 10 and 11 of the Act were established to introduce the requirement for the national fisheries authorities to exercise functions in accordance with policies contained in relevant fisheries statements or FMPs unless a relevant change in circumstances indicates otherwise, and to report regularly on the impacts of these statements and plans. This allows for flexibility in decision making across the UK, as well as holding the national fisheries authorities accountable for delivering effective policies which contribute to the fisheries objectives.

The Act also established several provisions extending or introducing powers to Scottish Ministers, Welsh Ministers and DAERA. This includes powers to make further provision or primary legislation about fisheries, aquaculture etc. (section 42 and schedule 8) and powers to give financial assistance or impose charges in respect of the exercise of relevant marine functions (schedule 2 and schedule 7). Further, in relation to Wales, section 45 extends legislative competence and schedule 5 gives powers to provide for the sale of fishing opportunities. These powers allow each administration to tailor policy making to the priorities of their own fishing industries and seafood sectors while also jointly working to achieve the fisheries objectives.

### **Regulating access to UK waters**

Under the CFP, EU Member States are granted automatic access to each other's Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). There were also historic rights for some vessels from some Member States to fish in some parts of the 6-12 nautical mile zone in some areas. Upon leaving the CFP, EU vessels were no longer granted automatic access to fish the UK EEZ, so the Act establishes a statutory basis for regulating access to fish in UK waters by the EU (agreed through the TCA and with other coastal States like Norway and the Faroe Islands), following international negotiations.

Sections 12 and 13 of the Act (access to British fisheries and regulation of foreign fishing boats) were established to set out when foreign fishing boats may enter the UK EEZ, and require that foreign fishing boats are subject to the same regulations as British fishing boats when fishing in UK waters.

Sections 14 to 18 of the Act (licensing of fishing boats) were established to introduce the requirement for foreign fishing boats to be licensed to fish with British fishery limits, and to give UK authorities the powers to grant, refuse or set licence conditions for foreign vessels.

Sections 19 to 22 of the Act (access and licensing: offences and consequential amendments) were established to introduce a robust offence and enforcement regime for fishing access and licensing to enable consistent regulation post-EU exit.

Section 43 of the Act was established to provide for sea fish licensing authorities to make arrangements for one authority to carry out licensing functions on behalf of another to support administrative cooperation and efficiency, especially where vessels operate across different UK jurisdictions.

Section 44 was established to modify those usual UK access and licensing requirements to allow Faroese vessels to be regulated exclusively by Faroese authorities in defined circumstances. This respects existing arrangements between the UK and the Faroe Islands.

### **Supporting environmentally sustainable, socially and economically beneficial fisheries**

The fish stocks around the UK's coast are a public resource and national asset, and so their long-term sustainability is vital in ensuring that they continue to benefit fishing communities and the seafood supply chain across the UK. A vibrant and prosperous seafood sector also depends upon a healthy and resilient marine environment, and as such it is important to manage human-induced pressures and environmental threats.

Alongside the creation of the eight fisheries objectives and a binding policy framework (the JFS and FMPs), the Act also regulates on other matters to support environmentally sustainable and socially and economically beneficial fisheries. This includes adaptive controls on access and effort to support sustainability, powers over fishing opportunities and quota distribution, and powers to financially support industry transition and economic resilience.

Section 36 of the Act was established to provide powers for the Secretary of State to make, by regulations, provision on technical matters to allow the UK to meet its international obligations, conserve the marine environment and adapt fisheries legislation. The section sets out the matters to which these regulations must relate, which include fishing effort and catch controls, bycatch, gear controls, and regulation on discarded fishing equipment. These measures are intended to support the sustainable exploitation of stocks, while conserving the marine environment on which they depend. Schedule 8 provides the Devolved Governments with powers equivalent to those of the Secretary of State under sections 36.

Section 47 and schedule 9 of the Act were established to specifically create provision for the conservation of seals, to modernise and tighten protection of the species and align it with ecosystem-based fisheries policy.

## **4. Provisions of the Act**

In this chapter, we have set out the provisions in the order that they appear in the Act and a supporting explanation of their function to provide broader context for the preliminary assessment of the Act.

## **Fisheries objectives, fisheries statements, and fisheries management plans**

Section 1 of the Act lists and defines the eight UK fisheries objectives, which are the subject of the JFS.

Section 2 the Act introduces a duty on the fisheries policy authorities to set out their policies for achieving the fisheries objectives in a JFS. The JFS must also include a list of FMPs that the fisheries policy authorities intend to prepare in the future. Section 3 of the Act provides that the JFS must be reviewed whenever is appropriate, but no later than 6 years following its initial publication. It also refers to Part 1 of Schedule 1, which outlines the mechanism for bringing the JFS into effect.

Section 4 of the Act provides that the Secretary of State may publish, no later than 6 months after a JFS, a SSFS that sets out policies not included in the JFS. Section 5 of the Act provides that an SSFS must be reviewed whenever is appropriate, but no later than 6 years following its initial publication. It also refers to Part 2 of Schedule 1, which outlines the mechanism for bringing the SSFS into effect.

Section 6 of the Act introduces a duty on relevant fisheries authorities to prepare and publish the FMPs as per the timeline set out in the JFS. Each FMP must specify the relevant authority or authorities (Defra, Scottish Government, Welsh Government or DAERA in Northern Ireland) that published it and to which it applies. The FMPs must also specify each stock, fishing activity and geographical area to which it relates. Sections 7 and 8 of the Act set out the requirements for preparing and publishing replacement or amendments to FMPs where there has been a relevant change in circumstances. Section 9 of the Act allows one or more fisheries policy authority to prepare and publish an FMP before a JFS has been agreed and published.

Section 10 of the Act requires the national fisheries authorities to pursue the policies outlined in the relevant fisheries statements or FMPs unless a relevant change in circumstances indicates otherwise.

Section 11 of the Act requires the fisheries policy authorities to prepare reports on the extent to which the policies outlined in the JFS, SSFS and FMPs have been implemented, and how these policies have achieved the fisheries objectives and/or impacted on levels of fish stocks.

## **Access to British fisheries and regulation of foreign fishing boats**

Section 12 of the Act sets out when foreign fishing boats may enter British fishery limits and enables the Secretary of State and Devolved Governments the power to designate, by order, the foreign countries whose boats may enter British fishery limits.

Section 13 of the Act introduces Schedule 2, which contains amendments to subordinate legislation to ensure that foreign fishing boats are subject to the same regulations as British fishing boats when fishing in UK waters.

## **Licensing of fishing boats**

Section 14 of the Act requires that fishing anywhere by a British fishing boat is an offence unless that boat has been authorised under a licence, and sets out exemptions to the requirement to have a licence. Section 15 of the Act provides powers for the Devolved

Governments and MMO to grant licences to British fishing boats, limited by reference to fishing in a particular area; to the periods, times or particular voyages during which fishing is authorised; to the descriptions and quantities of fish which may be caught; and to the method of sea fishing.

Section 16 of the Act makes it an offence for foreign fishing boats to fish within British fishery limits without a licence issued by a fisheries administration. Section 17 of the Act provides powers for the Devolved Governments and MMO to grant licences to foreign fishing boats, limited by reference to certain matters, such as the area in which fishing is authorised, etc.

Section 18 of the Act defines “sea fishing licence” and introduces Schedule 3, which makes further provision about sea fishing licences.

### **Access and licensing: offences and consequential amendments**

Section 19 of the Act sets out the penalties for licensing offences, and section 20 of the Act sets out the circumstances in which the officer of a body corporate as well as the body corporate may be found guilty of committing a relevant offence. Section 21 of the Act provides that the relevant offences may be treated as having been committed in any place in the UK.

Section 22 of the Act introduces Schedule 4, which contains minor and consequential amendments and transitional provision in relation to the licensing provisions.

### **Fishing opportunities**

Section 23 of the Act sets out the Secretary of State’s function of setting the maximum quantity of sea fish that may be caught by British fishing boats (catch quota) and days that British fishing boats may spend at sea during a specified period (effort quota), in accordance with the UK’s international obligations.

Section 24 of the Act sets out the duties of the Secretary of State when making or withdrawing a determination on fishing opportunities, including the requirement to consult with the Devolved Governments and the MMO before doing so.

Section 25 of the Act provides that transparent, objective criteria, relating to environmental, social and economic factors, must be used when national fisheries authorities distribute catch quotas and effort quotas to fishing boats.

Section 26 of the Act places a duty on the national fisheries authorities to exercise their functions to ensure that a catch quota and effort quota determined by the Secretary of State is not exceeded by British fishing boats.

Section 27 of the Act allows the Secretary of State to provide, in regulations, for the sale of the right to use one of more English catch quota or English effort quota. It also introduces Schedule 5, which confers equivalent powers on the Welsh Ministers to make regulations to sell Welsh catch quota and Welsh effort quota to the Welsh fishing industry.

### **Discard prevention charging schemes**

Section 28 of the Act allows the Secretary of State to provide in regulations for a scheme that would require a charge to be paid in respect of unauthorised catches of sea fish.

Sections 29 to 31 of the Act set out further provisions about how the scheme would operate in practice.

### **Grants and charges**

Section 33 of the Act creates new powers for the Secretary of State to make grants or loans to the fishing and aquaculture industries by regulations. It also introduces Schedule 6, which confers corresponding financial assistance powers on the Devolved Governments, as well as consequential and transitional provision relating to these provisions.

Section 34 of the Act provides a power for the Secretary of State to make regulations for the MMO to impose charges for carrying out certain marine functions. It also refers to Schedule 7, which contains provisions conferring corresponding powers on the Devolved Governments.

Section 35 of the Act extends a requirement that Seafish must recover the full cost of any services it provides to persons in other countries.

### **Power to make further provision**

Section 36 of the Act provides a power for the Secretary of State, by regulations, to make provision on technical matters previously regulated by the EU under the CFP to allow the UK to meet its international obligations. Section 38 of the Act provides a power for the Secretary of State to make regulations about aquatic animal diseases. Sections 37 and 39 to 41 of the Act set out the scope and procedure for regulations made under sections 36 and 38.

Section 42 of the Act introduces Schedule 8, which confers powers corresponding to powers under sections 36 and 38 on the Devolved Governments.

### **Miscellaneous**

Section 43 of the Act permits the establishment of agency arrangements between the 4 sea fish licensing authorities in relation to their fisheries and product movement functions.

Section 44 of the Act provides that any prohibition, restriction or obligation in any enactment relating to sea fishing applicable to foreign fishing boats does not apply to exclusively Faroe Island-regulated fishing boats within the Special Area between the UK and the Faroe Islands, or to the fish caught by those boats within that area.

Section 45 of the Act extends the legislative competence of Senedd Cymru to enable it to make primary legislation on matters relating to fishing, fisheries or fish health in the area of the Welsh zone. Section 46 of the Act makes changes to primary legislation consequential on section 45.

Section 47 of the Act introduces Schedule 9 which includes amendments to legislation in connection with the conservation of seals.

Section 48 of the Act introduces Schedule 10 which amends the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to allow the MMO to carry out certain functions beyond the UK marine area and extends the powers of the MMO and the Devolved Governments to regulate the exploitation of sea fisheries resources for marine conservation purposes.

Section 49 of the Act introduces Schedule 11 which makes minor and consequential amendments to retained direct EU legislation and Scottish statutory instruments.

## 5. Implementation of the Act

All of the provisions under the Act have come into force. This section sets out the commencement date of those provisions, alongside whether those powers have been used since Royal Assent. Further detail on the work produced using these powers can be found in the preliminary assessment section. From a policy perspective, the Act mandates the production of a JFS and FMPs, and this section therefore also sets out how and when these elements have been implemented.

### Commencement of provisions and use of powers

The Act came into force in stages, with all provisions having commenced by 1 March 2021. The provisions all came into force as per the commencement dates set out in section 54 of the Act. These were either at Royal Assent, within two months of Royal Assent, on Implementation Period (IP) Completion Day, or on 1 March 2021. IP Completion Day is defined in the [European Union \(Withdrawal Agreement\) Act 2020](#) as 31 December at 11pm, meaning the end of the transition period.

Provisions relating to fisheries objectives and statements, fishing opportunities, financial assistance, power to make further provision, agency agreements between sea fishing licensing authorities and general functions of the MMO came into force the day that the Act received Royal Assent (23 November 2020).

Powers relating to fisheries objectives and statements have been used, with the eight fisheries objectives set out under section 1 guiding the policy work under the Act. Powers under section 2 were used to publish the JFS in November 2022, and the first corresponding report, under section 11, in March 2026. Powers under section 3 have not yet been used as it has not been considered that any amendments to the JFS are needed, and the six-year review point has not yet been reached. Powers under section 10 have also not yet been used as no decisions have been taken which are not in accordance with the policies contained in the JFS or FMPs. The UK Government has not published a SSFS, provided for under section 4 of the Act, as it considers all required fisheries policies (including those related to reserved matters) necessary for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives are incorporated into the JFS, published jointly with the Devolved Governments.

Powers relating to financial assistance have been used, with various financial support schemes set up to support the UK fishing industry under section 33 of the Act.

Powers relating to power to make further provision have also been used in various circumstances, to implement international obligations, for conservation purposes and for fishing industry purposes under section 36 of the Act.

Powers relating to agency arrangements between sea fish licensing authorities (the MMO, Scottish Marine Directorate, Welsh Government and DAERA) have been used, with cross-administration arrangements in place under section 43 of the Act to allow one sea fish licensing authority to act on behalf of others in certain circumstances.

Powers relating to the general functions of the MMO have been used, with a range of functions taking place, such as licensing under sections 15, 17 and 18.

Provisions relating to access and licensing of foreign fishing boats, distribution and sale of fishing opportunities, charging by the Sea Fish Industry Authority, powers of the MMO to charge, powers relating to the exploitation of sea fisheries resources and minor and consequential amendments came into force on IP Completion Day (31 December 2020).

Powers relating to access and licensing of foreign fishing boats have been used, with access of foreign fishing vessels currently regulated under sections 12 and 13 of the Act. Powers under sections 19 to 22 of the Act have been used for enforcement purposes in order to prosecute those found guilty of licensing offences.

Powers relating to the distribution of fishing opportunities is routinely used under section 25 of the Act, however enabling powers under section 27 of the Act in regard to the sale of fishing opportunities in England and Wales have not yet been exercised to make regulations.

Powers enabling the MMO to charge for carrying out certain marine functions have not yet been exercised by the Secretary of State, as no regulations have been made to this effect.

Powers enabled under sections 28 to 32 (discard prevention charging schemes) have not yet been used. Defra consulted on proposals for reforming the way discards were managed in England in 2023, which included a proposal to introduce a discard prevention charge. The [consultation responses](#) showed limited support for such a charge along with the potential challenges of its implementation, so it was decided not to proceed at that time.

Provisions relating to the legislative competence of the Senedd Cymru came into force at the end of the period of two months beginning with the day the Act received Royal Assent (23 January 2021).

Provisions relating to the conservation of seals in England, Wales and Northern Ireland came into force on 1 March 2021, strengthening protections for seal populations.

### **Development and publication of the Joint Fisheries Statement**

Section 2 of the Act required the fisheries policy authorities to prepare and publish a JFS within two years of the date the Act received Royal Assent. On 23 November 2022 the fisheries policy authorities published the JFS.

The JFS sets out the policy direction for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the 8 fisheries objectives in the Act, as well as an annex (A) setting out the publication timeline and coordinating authorities for 43 FMPs.

Following consultation, [an amended version of annex A](#) was published in December 2024. This made changes to the publication dates and technical details of some FMPs, however no amendments were made to the JFS itself.

As required by section 11 of the Act, the fisheries policy authorities prepared and published the first [report on the Joint Fisheries Statement](#) in March 2026. This report sets out the extent to which policies in the JFS and in FMPs have been implemented during the first 3-year reporting period, between November 2022 and November 2025. It also reports on the extent to which this work has achieved, or contributed to, the fisheries objectives.

The JFS covers a broad range of policy themes. The report highlights that progress has been made by all fisheries policy authorities in implementing work under each of these

themes. It also demonstrates that a notable contribution has been made towards achieving the fisheries objectives.

Delivering the meaningful change set out in the JFS will require continuous and ongoing effort from the fisheries policy authorities working collaboratively with the fishing industry and seafood sector, as well as international partners. We are encouraged by the progress made during the first JFS reporting period but not complacent and remain fully committed to delivering the ambitions of the JFS and the Act.

### **Development and publication of Fisheries Management Plans**

As required under section 6 of the Act, the fisheries policy authorities must prepare and publish the proposed FMPs set out in the JFS. The JFS lists 43 FMPs, some of which will be developed jointly by 2 or more fisheries policy authorities and others which will be developed by a single authority for its own waters.

FMPs are evidence-based action plans, developed in collaboration with the fishing sector and other stakeholders. Their purpose as set out in the Act, is to set out policies and actions to restore or maintain stocks at sustainable levels. Each plan specifies the stocks, type of fishing that takes place and the geographic area covered.

Once drafted, FMPs must go through a public consultation, giving all interested parties the opportunity to give their views prior to publication. Once published, FMPs inform a wide range of fisheries management actions and measures for each stock covered by each plan. Therefore, FMPs will vary in content and format.

To date, 11 FMPs have been published. These are:

- [Bass FMP](#) for English and Welsh waters (December 2023)
- [Channel demersal non-quota species FMP](#) for English waters (December 2023)
- [Crab and lobster FMP](#) for English waters (December 2023)
- [King scallop FMP](#) for English and Welsh waters (December 2023)
- [Whelk FMP](#) for English waters (December 2023)
- [Southern North Sea and Eastern Channel mixed flatfish FMP](#) for English waters (October 2024)
- [Cockle FMP](#) for English waters (December 2025)
- [North Sea and Channel Sprat FMP](#) for English and Scottish waters (December 2025)
- [Queen scallop FMP](#) for English waters (December 2025)
- [Southern North Sea and Channel skates and rays FMP](#) for English waters (December 2025)
- [Southern North Sea non-quota demersal FMP](#) for English waters (December 2025)

Defra is preparing for the publication later in 2026 for the final 4 FMPs where they are the lead drafting authority:

- Celtic Sea and Western Channel demersal FMP for English and Welsh waters
- Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic FMP for English and Welsh waters
- Seabream FMP for English waters
- Wrasses complex FMP for English waters

The Scottish Government has prepared 21 FMPs for public consultation in tranches during 2026. The consultation for their demersal plans closed on 11 March, seeking views on the following:

- North Sea and West coast of Scotland haddock FMP
- Atlantic (Rockall) haddock FMP
- North Sea and Eastern Channel whiting FMP
- West coast of Scotland whiting FMP
- North Sea and West coast of Scotland monk/anglerfish FMP
- North Sea and West coast of Scotland megrim FMP
- North Sea and West coast of Scotland saithe FMP
- Northern shelf hake FMP
- Northern shelf ling FMP
- Atlantic (Rockall) cod FMP
- Northern shelf cod FMP

The public consultation for their two nephrops plans closed on 17 June:

- North Sea nephrops FMP
- West Coast of Scotland nephrops FMP

The public consultation on their eight pelagic plans is expected shortly, which will cover the following stocks:

- Northern shelf mackerel
- Atlanto Scandian herring
- North Sea herring
- West Coast of Scotland (and Clyde) herring
- North Sea greater silver smelt
- West of Scotland greater silver smelt
- Northern Shelf blue whiting
- North Sea horse mackerel

Additionally, DAERA is preparing 3 plans (Irish Sea demersal, Irish Sea pelagic and Northern Ireland non-quota shellfish) and Welsh Government is preparing one plan (crab and lobster) for publication in 2026. Finally, DAERA will publish a Northern Ireland intertidal hand gathering of shellfish plan in 2027 and Welsh Government will publish separate cockle and whelk plans in 2028.

## **6. Secondary legislation**

A list of secondary legislation made under the Act can be found at Annex A. This includes the territorial extent, the relevant section(s) of the Act, the date it came into force and a headline indication of purpose.

## 7. Legal issues

Defra is aware of two legal challenges in the UK relating to the content of the Act, details of which are set out in this section.

### **Blue Marine Foundation judicial review**

A judicial review was brought by the Blue Marine Foundation (BMF) to challenge the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the lawfulness of the [Determination of fishing opportunities for British fishing boats](#) ('the Determination') made in December 2023 pursuant to sections 23 and 24 of the Act.

There were three grounds of challenge. Firstly, that the Secretary of State failed to properly take into account relevant scientific advice from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) in the Determination. The BMF argued that the Secretary of State failed to follow the obligations in the Act to give scientific advice from ICES sufficient weight or give cogent reasons for departing from it.

The second ground of challenge was that the Secretary of State failed to act in accordance with the policies in the JFS and in relation to the Act's fisheries objectives in the Determination. The BMF argued that there was no evidence that the Secretary of State considered the precautionary approach objective, and that the Secretary of State failed to have proper regard to the ecosystem, bycatch and scientific evidence objectives.

The third ground of challenge was that the Secretary of State unlawfully fettered their discretion by treating the outcome of TAC negotiations as levels for the Determination. The BMF argued that the Secretary of State was not required by section 23 of the Act to make the Determination solely for the purpose of complying with the outcome of the UK's international negotiations, and therefore this separate, prior process should not have determined the content of the Determination.

The judicial review was heard by the High Court on 5 March 2025. In the [judgment](#) that was handed down on 28 March 2025, the High Court found that the Determination made under sections 23 and 24 of the Act was lawful. In relation to Ground 1, the High Court determined that there was ample evidence that the Secretary of State had proper regard to scientific advice from ICES prior to, and during, the international negotiations which led to the Determination. In relation to Ground 2, the High Court found that the Secretary of State had proper regard to the fisheries objectives, and that the weight given to JFS policies and competing factors was a matter for the Secretary of State to determine in the exercise of their discretionary judgement. Finally, in relation to Ground 3, the High Court found that the international context, including international negotiations and agreements, was fundamental to the section 23(1) exercise.

### **Sunbeam Fishing Limited judicial review**

A judicial review was brought by Sunbeam Fishing Limited to challenge the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on the lawfulness of a decision made in 2022 to not apportion UK quota for sandeel.

The challenge contended that it was futile to introduce conservation measures that prohibit only a small part of the wider international sandeel fishery and that there had been no apparent consideration of the petitioner's property rights.

The judicial review was heard in the Outer House, Court of Session in 2023. In the [judgment](#) that was handed down on 28 February 2023, the court refused the petition. Among other things the court found that the decision to not apportion UK sandeel quota had some, albeit limited, environmental benefit.

### **UK-EU Sandeel arbitration**

The EU brought [arbitration](#) proceedings against the UK under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement in relation to the English prohibition to fish for sandeel in English waters of the North Sea and the Scottish prohibition in all Scottish waters. These measures both related to the Fisheries Act, but the focus of the proceedings was determining the UK's compliance with the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The UK successfully defended its position in relation to the Scottish prohibition. The UK was unsuccessful on one ground in relation to the English prohibition in relation to having regard to applying a proportionate measure. The UK came into compliance with the arbitration ruling in June 2025.

## **8. Other reviews**

### **Parliamentary reviews**

In June 2022, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee launched an [inquiry](#) into how effectively the UK Seafood Fund, created under section 33 of the Act, had met its stated objectives.

In January 2025, the EFRA Committee launched a long-term iterative [inquiry](#) into fisheries and the marine environment to examine how competing pressures on the sea were managed alongside post-Brexit fisheries arrangements and marine conservation.

In April 2026, the EFRA Committee published a report, '[Resetting the relationship with fishing communities](#)', drawing on the findings of both inquiries and outlining how the Government can help the UK fishing industry thrive. The section with closest links to the Act related to the Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund.

### **Stakeholder reviews**

In January 2026, the environmental non-governmental organisation (eNGO) Green Alliance published the report '[UK fisheries policy five years after Brexit](#),' examining the Act's operation five years on from Royal Assent and EU Exit.

Green Alliance's key arguments in the document were that the Act's sustainability and scientific evidence objectives are not legally binding; that FMP delivery has been slower than anticipated; that there is more innovation but increased fragmentation across administrations (especially on monitoring and enforcement) and international credibility is fragile after the 2024 UK-EU sandeel arbitration.

Their recommendations to improve the operation of the Act were that the Government should enshrine binding sustainability duties within it; standardise FMPs to more closely align them with Good Environmental Status (GES) criteria; expand Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) coverage; embed ecosystem-based management; enhance intergovernmental coordination and integrate climate and spatially informed planning.

In 2025, the eNGO Oceana UK published the factsheet '[Overview of UK Fisheries Management 2025](#),' providing an overview of the UK fisheries management system under the Act.

The factsheet is largely factual, however does highlight some stakeholder concerns with the Act, including the lack of clear statutory deadlines; no requirement for REM and no legally binding duty to achieve the fisheries objectives. Whilst the factsheet does not call for amendments to be made to the Act, it does stress the importance of effective implementation of the Act through TAC decisions, the JFS, FMPs and wider fisheries management measures.

Other stakeholder reviews or reports examine policy-specific elements falling out from the Act as opposed to the functioning of the Act itself. As such, we have taken the decision not to include these. Instead, we have used stakeholder feedback in the preliminary assessment section below. This feedback is being considered by the relevant teams as they continue to develop and deliver those policies.

## **9. Preliminary assessment**

The outcome of this preliminary assessment is that the Act has operated as intended when it received Royal Assent, namely providing the fisheries administrations the powers they needed following the UK's exit from the EU.

In this way, we consider that it has met or is contributing to all of its intended objectives, to allow the UK to regulate and manage its fisheries outside the EU; to set high level-UK-wide fisheries objectives; to co-ordinate and steer UK-wide joint fisheries management activity; to regulate access to UK waters; and to support sustainable, socially and economically beneficial fisheries.

As noted above, some eNGOs expressed concerns that certain provisions within the Act are not binding enough to result in meaningful change. However, we consider that the Act as written allows for sufficient flexibility in working towards achieving the eight fisheries objectives whilst recognising there are wider factors and pressures beyond the scope of the Act, for example the impacts of changes in climate, which may also impact future stock sustainability. The issue of whether objectives were binding or not was extensively debated during the passage of the Act.

In this section, we give a short, high-level assessment of how the Act has worked in practice, categorised by the objectives identified in section 3 of this memorandum. This draws on data from a range of sources, notably the contents of the first JFS report, as well as examining existing stakeholder feedback elicited through engagement, consultation, research and formal evaluation. Stakeholders impacted by provisions in the Act include the UK fishing industry, fisheries administrations and regulators, the seafood sector, the aquaculture sector,

eNGOs and conservation bodies, foreign fishing operators and governments, scientific and research organisations and industry bodies.

## **Establishing a UK legal framework to enable the UK to manage and regulate fisheries outside the EU**

It is our assessment that this objective has been met given that the legal framework is now in place for the UK to operate as an independent coastal State. This subsection sets out some of the business-as-usual processes and outcomes carried out under the relevant provisions in the Act.

### *Fishing opportunities*

Upon leaving the EU, the UK has had competence to manage the fisheries in its waters, in compliance with international agreements including the TCA.

The UK has actively engaged in international bilateral and trilateral negotiations annually with the EU, Norway and the Faroe Islands to determine many of the UK's fishing opportunities.

A significant proportion of fishing opportunities for the UK fleet refer to the maximum quantity of fish that may be caught (catch quota), which is determined by the Secretary of State. Powers under section 23 of the Act have been used several times a year by the Secretary of State following the conclusion of annual negotiations and consultations. In one case, opportunities were determined on a provisional basis, where one set of international negotiations had not concluded by the time the fishing year began. Determinations are [published](#).

As set out in section 24 of the Act, Scottish, Welsh and DAERA Ministers and the MMO are consulted ahead of publishing the determination, which is made publicly available on GOV.UK for transparency, and laid in parliament.

Following determination, fishing opportunities are distributed to the UK fleet by the Secretary of State using the powers under section 25 of the Act. The UK sets out the apportionment of these opportunities in the [UK Quota Management Rules](#) (QMR). The QMR have been updated twice in July 2023 and September 2024 to reflect stakeholder views following the outcome of the consultation on '[Managing Quota in 2023 and Beyond](#),' which ran in 2022.

As is their duty under section 26 of the Act, the national fisheries authorities ensure that fishing opportunities are not exceeded primarily through quota allocation, licence conditions, catch monitoring and enforcement.

Criticism from stakeholders around fishing opportunities has focused on the levels of TAC and quota negotiated rather than section 23 of the Act. The link to the objectives in section 1 of the Act is also queried, with criticisms that environmental sustainability is not binding or the key objective. Criticism about the allocation of fishing opportunities has focused on UK Government decisions rather than section 24 of the Act.

### *Grants and charges*

Powers under section 33 of the Act have been used to provide financial assistance to the fishing industry in England, replacing the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) following EU exit.

Defra used section 33 to delivered investment through the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) to safeguard the long-term sustainability, resilience and prosperity of the English seafood sector.

Defra is also using section 33 to deliver the Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund, which will provide £360 million in funding over the next 12 years to support the UK's fisheries and seafood sector, and coastal communities.

While Defra has received positive feedback on its funding schemes, there has also been feedback from the fishing industry that budgets have been insufficient, could be better targeted, and that allocations have been insufficiently aligned with regional needs. These criticisms have not related to the Act, but to Defra policy decisions.

### **Setting high level UK-wide fisheries objectives**

It is our assessment that this objective has been met, with the eight fisheries objectives embedded in any fisheries policy decisions at both the domestic and international level.

The drafting of section 1 has allowed the national fisheries authorities to balance the objectives as intended.

The JFS policy ambitions and FMPs both set out means by which the UK will achieve or will contribute to achieving these objectives. The first JFS report, published in March 2026, includes a section detailing progress towards the achievement of the fisheries objectives, showing that demonstrable progress has been made in the first three-year reporting period since the JFS was published.

### **Co-ordinating and steering UK-wide joint fisheries management planning**

It is our assessment that this objective has been met, with the JFS and FMPs providing an appropriate degree of coherence in fisheries management across the UK. The provision of necessary powers to the Devolved Governments has also allowed for flexibility in the application of management in order to best suit the needs of the industries and regions they impact.

Powers under section 2 have been used to prepare a JFS, which was published in November 2022. This details the policy ambitions of the four fisheries policy authorities for achieving the fisheries objectives and setting the overarching direction for fisheries management across the UK.

During development, and shortly after publication, the JFS attracted criticism that it was too broad and lacked a level of specific policy detail. However, it was intended that the JFS set the direction of travel for achieving the fisheries objectives, recognising that the UK was still at the beginning of its journey as an independent coastal State. The policy areas identified also allow for flexibility in implementing fisheries management policies, many of which are a devolved competence, across the different UK governments.

Powers under section 11 were used to publish the first report on the JFS in March 2026. This sets out the extent to which the policies in the JFS have been implemented, and have

achieved, or contributed to the achievement of the fisheries objectives. It also reports on the extent to which the policies in relevant, published FMPs have been implemented and have affected the levels of stocks of sea fish. Generally, the report shows positive progress in implementing work under each of the JFS policy areas in each UK administration, and a notable contribution to the fisheries objectives. However, the UK is not complacent and recognises that there is still work to do.

Powers under section 6 have been used to publish 11 of the 43 FMPs listed in Annex A of the JFS, with the remaining 32 plans in the process of being prepared. Some have been developed jointly by 2 or more fisheries policy authorities where stocks cover more than one authority's waters.

As set out in the implementation section above, FMP timelines have been revised since the JFS was first published, so plans have not been delivered as quickly as initially intended. This was due to optimism bias and lessons learned from developing and publishing the first set of plans. It was agreed that more time would allow for greater supporting scientific research to be carried out as well as providing more time for additional, meaningful, engagement with fishers and other stakeholders as the plans are prepared.

The first JFS report sets out the extent to which the policies in those 11 published FMPs have been implemented. While there has been progress in implementing some of the policies, evidence for the impact on stocks covered by these plans remains limited. This is likely to take years to see. Work is therefore underway to continue to press ahead with implementation of the plans whilst also addressing these evidence gaps in order to be able to properly evaluate impacts on stock levels in the next scheduled JFS report.

FMPs have also attracted criticism from stakeholders for being overly high-level and difficult to enforce, therefore not yet translating into clear management outcomes. However, FMPs have been intentionally designed to be flexible and adaptive to balance competing objectives and operate in a complex fisheries system.

Prior to the Act, although the regulation of sea fishing was devolved in the Welsh inshore area, the Senedd Cymru did not have legislative competence in relation to fisheries in the Welsh offshore area (they did have executive competence). The Act extended the legislative competence of the Senedd Cymru to enable the Senedd to make primary legislation on fishing, fisheries and fish health matters in the Welsh zone.

Powers under schedule 5 were introduced to provide equivalence and have not been used thus far.

Powers under schedule 6 have been used by Welsh Government, Scottish Government and DAERA in Northern Ireland to introduce regulations to provide financial assistance to their fishing industries, replacing the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) following EU exit.

Powers under schedule 8 were introduced to provide equivalence to the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers and the Northern Ireland department corresponding to those conferred on the Secretary of State by sections 36 and 38. These powers have not been utilised by Welsh Ministers since the Act received Royal Assent. Schedule 8 powers have been used by Scottish Ministers to introduce the [Sea Fisheries \(Remote Electronic Monitoring and](#)

[Regulation of Scallop Fishing\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2024](#) (SSI 2024/165), mandating REM on scallop dredge vessels.

### **Regulating access to UK waters**

Powers under sections 12 and 13 of the Act have been used to successfully regulate the access of foreign fishing vessels to UK waters, and deliver the access agreement in the TCA and other international agreements. Existing voisinage reciprocal access arrangements between Ireland and Northern Ireland, where they apply to the 0-6 nautical mile limit, continue to be respected and all fishing vessels operating in UK waters are legally obliged to be in receipt of a commercial fishing licence and must comply with the relevant access rules and regulations included in their licence conditions.

Powers under sections 14 to 18 and 43 of the Act have been successfully used to license both British vessels fishing in external waters and foreign vessels fishing in UK waters. This is primarily carried out by the UK Single Issuing Authority (UKSIA), an MMO-operated service that issues and administers British vessel external waters and foreign fishing vessel licences on behalf of the UK sea fish licensing authorities.

The national fishing authorities also continue to strengthen domestic monitoring, control and enforcement systems in order to successfully prosecute those found guilty of access and licensing offences under sections 19 to 22 of the Act. Further detail on work undertaken in this area can be found in the 'Fisheries monitoring and enforcement' section of the first JFS report.

### **Supporting environmentally sustainable, socially and economically beneficial fisheries**

It is our assessment that we are meeting this objective. Being the broadest, the evidence presented in this section demonstrates a notable contribution towards this objective, which by its nature and the nature of fisheries management in a dynamic marine environment and ecosystem will be enduring.

Powers under section 36(a) enabled the Secretary of State to implement international obligations relating to fisheries, fishing or aquaculture. For example, the UK implemented the [Sea Fisheries \(International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas\) \(Amendment\) \(No.2\) Regulations 2024](#) when it became an independent contracting party of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). Through its membership, the UK has strengthened ICCAT's measures for sensitive and highly migratory species, as well as securing an increase in bluefin tuna quota.

Powers under section 36(b) provided the Secretary of State powers to make further provision for a conservation purpose. For example, the UK introduced the [Sea Fisheries \(Amendment\) \(No. 2\) Regulations 2024](#) as part of implementing FMPs across the UK. This introduced measures such as increasing the minimum conservation reference size (MCRS) for certain stocks and introducing restrictions on certain fishing techniques to better protect stocks and ensure their long-term sustainability. Powers granted to the MMO under amendments made to the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 under schedule 10 of the Act have also enabled the introduction of 9 byelaws introducing measures to prohibit harmful fishing gears in 60% of English Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This has helped to ensure

the sustainability of the English marine environment by safeguarding entire ecosystems and key habitats such as seagrass beds, maerl, kelp forests and reef systems.

Powers under section 36(c) provided the Secretary of State powers to make further provision for a fishing industry purpose. For example, the UK and Devolved Governments have introduced several statutory instruments, such as the [Fisheries Act 2020 \(Scheme for Financial Assistance\) \(England\) Regulations 2021](#), which enabled the MMO to award grants for fisheries-related activities. This helps to support coastal communities by providing financial assistance to help maintain a prosperous fishing industry and seafood sector.

Powers under section 47 were used to ensure the UK complied with import requirements under the US Marine Mammal Protection Act, which from January 2022 only permits imports of fisheries products from countries that do not allow the deliberate killing, injuring or taking of marine mammals as part of commercial fisheries.

## **10. Conclusion**

The outcome of this preliminary assessment is that the Act has operated as intended when it received Royal Assent, namely providing the fisheries administrations the powers they needed following the UK's exit from the EU and providing a key element of a Common Fisheries Framework for the UK.

## Annex A: Secondary legislation of the Fisheries Act

### Extent: United Kingdom

| SI number    | Section or Schedule             | Date in force    | Title                                                                       | Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SI 2021/698  | Section 36(1)(c), section 51(1) | 5 September 2021 | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (Amendment etc.) Regulations 2021</a>         | <p>Amended existing fisheries legislation across the UK to ensure it remained operable post-EU exit and to support sustainable fisheries management.</p> <p>Revokes retained EU legislation relevant to technical measures in the Celtic Sea. The purpose is to enable improved measures to be brought in through appropriate application of domestic and foreign vessel licence conditions. Also makes adjustments to the level of European seabass that may be caught as bycatch within the English and Welsh zones of British fishery limits and incidental and consequential adjustments to the bass management measures.</p> |
| SI 2021/1429 | Section 36(1)(b) and (c)        | 31 December 2021 | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (Amendment etc.) (No. 2) Regulations 2021</a> | <p>Extended and updated several retained EU fisheries measures, revised seabass bycatch and technical conservation rules, revoked expired provisions and updated the UK's Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated fishing vessel list.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| SI 2022/498  | Section 36(1)(c)                | 21 May 2022      | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 2022</a>              | <p>Updated seabass management measures in line with UK-EU 2022 fisheries agreements to reflect stock recovery and maintain sustainable fishing pressure.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| SI 2022/835  | Section 38, section 51(1)       | 15 August 2022   | <a href="#">The Aquatic Animal Health (Amendment) Regulations 2022</a>      | <p>Removed aquatic animal disease-related species and import lists from legislation so that they can be updated</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

|              |                                                    |                  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              |                                                    |                  |                                                                                                                                         | administratively, enabling faster, science-based changes to protect aquatic animal health and support trade.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| SI 2023/273  | Section 36(1)(b) and (c)                           | 1 April 2023     | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 2023</a>                                                                          | Adjusted European seabass catch limits, aligned recreational fishing seasons with commercial ones and updated prohibited species adding mako shark and removing spurdog.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| SI 2024/231  | Section 36(1)(b) and (c)                           | 6 April 2024     | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 2024</a>                                                                          | Updated UK law to implement ICCAT agreed control measures by amending retained EU rules on highly migratory species.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| SI 2024/439  | Section 36(1)(a), section 51(1)                    | 1 April 2024     | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas) (Amendment) Regulations 2024</a>        | Updated UK law to implement ICCAT agreed control measures by amending retained EU rules on highly migratory species.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| SI 2024/655  | Section 36(1)(1) and (b), section 51(1)(a)         | 7 June 2024      | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas) (Amendment) No. 2) Regulations 2024</a> | Updated retained EU tuna fisheries law so that the UK could implement newly adopted ICCAT recommendations. It creates clear prohibitions on recreational Bluefin Tuna (BFT) fishing. It also establishes a legislative framework to enable the four UK fisheries authorities to establish permitting regimes to authorise the recreational targeting of BFT in their waters and enable recreational BFT fisheries to be opened. |
| SI 2024/1028 | Section 36(1)(b) and (c), section 36(4)(a) and (j) | 16 December 2024 | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2024</a>                                                                  | Introduced new fisheries management measures as part of implementing FMPs across English waters including minimum conservation reference sizes for specific stocks, measures in respect of flyseining and removing catch limits for commercially caught sea bass to                                                                                                                                                             |

|             |                                                  |                  |                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             |                                                  |                  |                                                                | be dealt with by licence conditions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| SI 2026/105 | Section 36(1)(b) and (c), (4)(e), (6)(a) and (c) | 27 February 2026 | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (Amendment) Regulations 2026</a> | Makes adjustments to the number of European sea bass that may be caught within British fishery limits for recreational fisheries. Also removes picked dogfish from the list of prohibited species. Any fishing restrictions on picked dogfish will be managed through vessel licence conditions. |

#### Extent: England

| SI number   | Section or Schedule                                           | Date in force    | Title                                                                                               | Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SI 2021/908 | Section 33(1) and (2)                                         | 27 July 2021     | <a href="#">The Fisheries Act 2020 (Scheme for Financial Assistance) (England) Regulations 2021</a> | Created a grant scheme in England enabling the MMO to award, oversee, vary or reclaim financial assistance for fisheries-related activities subject to compliance and reporting conditions.                                                                                                                                                                     |
| SI 2025/92  | Section 36(1)(b) and (c), (4)(a), (c) and (d), (6)(a) and (c) | 28 February 2025 | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2025</a>                            | Removed several landing obligation exemptions in English waters following scientific review and consultation. Disapplies four discard exemptions in English waters, three fully and one partially. When disapplied, fishers will no longer be allowed to discard fish using these exemptions. All fish caught will have to be landed and counted against quota. |

#### Extent: Wales

| SI number     | Section or Schedule       | Date in force   | Title                                     | Summary                                                    |
|---------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| WSI 2022/1259 | Paragraph 2 of schedule 6 | 1 December 2022 | <a href="#">The Marine, Fisheries and</a> | Created a Welsh Government scheme that provides grants and |

|  |  |  |                                                                                    |                                                                                      |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  | <a href="#">Aquaculture (Financial Assistance) Scheme (Wales) Regulations 2022</a> | loans to support marine, fisheries and aquaculture activities, replacing EU funding. |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

#### Extent: Scotland

| SI number    | Section or Schedule                     | Date in force                                               | Title                                                                                                                          | Summary                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SSI 2022/85  | Paragraph 1(1) and (2) of schedule 6    | 1 April 2022                                                | <a href="#">The Aquaculture and Fisheries etc. (Scheme for Financial Assistance) (Scotland) Regulations 2022</a>               | Established a Scottish scheme allowing Ministers to provide grants and loans to support fisheries and aquaculture, replacing previous EU funding mechanisms.    |
| SSI 2024/165 | Paragraph 1(1)(b) and (c) of schedule 8 | Various depending on regulation 7 June 2024 to 7 March 2026 | <a href="#">The Sea Fisheries (Remote Electronic Monitoring and Regulation of Scallop Fishing) (Scotland) Regulations 2024</a> | Mandated the use of remote electronic monitoring (REM) on scallop dredge vessels operating in Scottish waters or by Scottish vessels wherever they are fishing. |

#### Extent: Northern Ireland

| SI number      | Section or Schedule                                  | Date in force | Title                                                                                                 | Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NI SR 2021/161 | Section 33(10), paragraph 3(1) and (2) of Schedule 6 | 5 July 2021   | <a href="#">The Sea Fish Industry (Coronavirus) (Fixed Costs) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021</a> | Established a grant scheme to help Northern Ireland fishing vessels cover fixed costs during COVID-19 pandemic.<br><br>The purpose of this Statutory Rule is to provide a financial support scheme for the static gear fishing fleet to help with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the markets for the key shellfish species, typically crab and lobster. The scheme assists with the fixed costs of sea fishing vessels in the Northern Ireland fleet whose incomes have been significantly |

|                |                           |              |                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                |                           |              |                                                                                                              | affected. Provides details of the eligibility criteria for grants, how the amount of grant is calculated and the maximum amount of grant payable along with an appeal mechanism and a provision for the recovery of grant where applicable. |
| NI SR 2024/141 | Paragraph 3 of schedule 6 | 30 June 2024 | <a href="#">The Fisheries Act 2020 (Scheme for Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024</a> | Established a Northern Irish scheme empowering DAERA to award grants for permitted purposes.                                                                                                                                                |

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