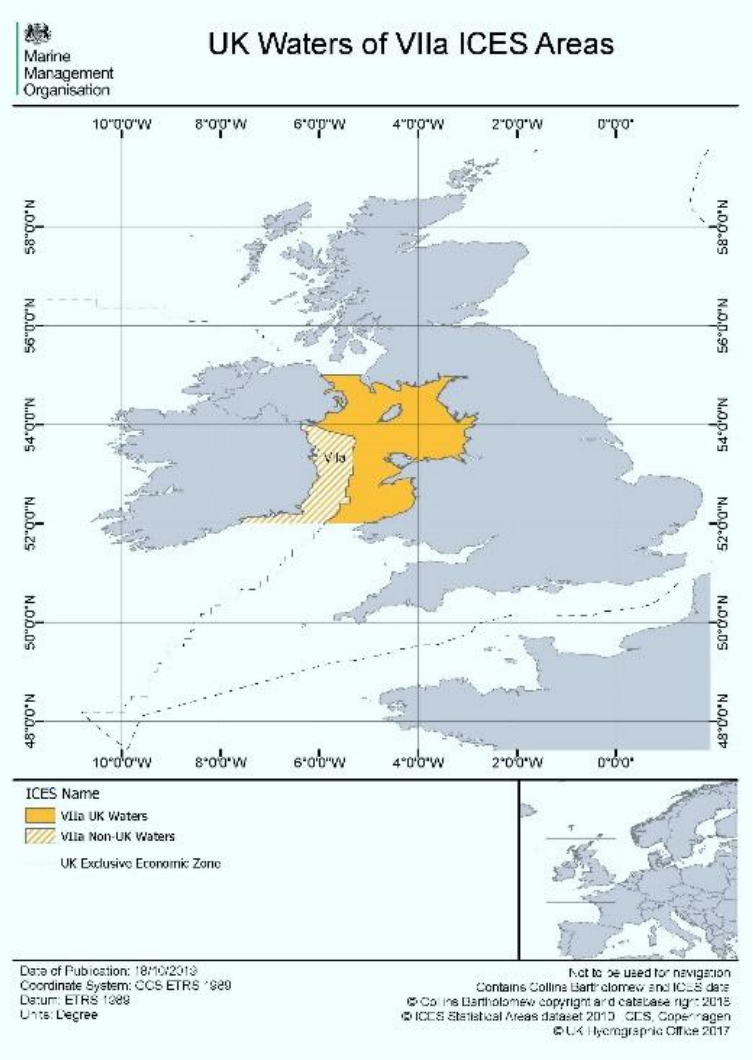
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Marine Management Organisation

Fishing gear requirements and Landing Obligation exemptions. Updated November 2026

Applicable to the Nephrops Fishery in the UK Irish Sea



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Introduction

To ensure you are accessing the latest guidance please check https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fisheries-management-landing-obligation

The guidance explains rules on which fishing gear you should be using in the Irish Sea and summarises which Landing Obligation exemptions are available to you.

This guidance is for all sizes of fishing vessel (including those under 10 metres). It does not cover IFCA byelaws – please consult your local IFCA for further information.

When operating in EU waters please refer to the EC rules on discarding
https://ec.europa.eu/oceans-and-fisheries/fisheries/rules/discarding-fisheries_en

General fishing gear rules

All mesh sizes given in this document are minimum sizes unless otherwise stated. You can choose to use a larger mesh than that stated.

Gear selectivity requirements under bycatch thresholds

All mesh sizes specified are the minimum unless otherwise stated.

Table 1: Standard gears that you must use

Fishery	Fishing Gear Options
Fisheries where catches of Nephrops exceed 30% of the total catch weight.	**You must use one of the gear options listed below** 1) 70mm cod-end (single rig) or 80mm (multiple rig) and a 300 mm square mesh panel (or 200 mm square mesh panel for vessels of 12 m or less) 2) 70mm cod-end (single rig) or 80mm (multiple rig) and SELTRA Panel** 3) 70mm cod-end (single rig) or 80mm (multiple rig) and Nordmøre sorting grid with maximum 35mm bar spacing 4) 70mm cod-end (single rig) or 80mm (multiple rig) and a Netgrid** device

** See Terminology on pages 4-5

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UK Landing Obligation exemptions

In the table below is a brief summary of exemptions from the Landing Obligation for these fisheries which allow you to discard fish. All quantities of fish discarded under the Landing Obligation must be recorded in your logbook but will not come off your quota.

You must ensure that the following rules are complied with:

- All catches of quota species must be kept on board, landed and counted against quota, except where the exemptions listed below apply.
- All catches and discards must be recorded in your logbook.
- Any fish returned to the sea under the exemptions described below must be kept in good condition to maximise their survival chances. This includes keeping them wet, handling them carefully, and releasing them promptly.

Survival exemptions - allow you to discard fish under certain conditions based on the likelihood of a fish being able to survive being caught and returned to the sea. You are permitted to discard certain species of fish provided you comply with the conditions specified in the table below.

De minimis exemptions - allows a small percentage of the total catch of certain species to be discarded because it is difficult to completely avoid unwanted catches. It is important that discards are recorded in your logbook. *De minimis* exemptions may be withdrawn where discard levels are too high.

Species you can discard	UK ICES Area	Exemption Type	Conditions
Skates and Rays	VI and VII	Survival	No Conditions
Nephrops	VII	Survival	Cod-end mesh size equal to or greater than 70mm
Megrim – below MCRS	VII	*De Minimis*	Cod-end mesh size of 70-99mm

See gear design terminology on pages 4 to 5.

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Terminology

The Seltra Panel[1] means a selectivity device which:

- consists of a top panel of at least 300mm mesh size (diamond mesh) placed in a four-panel box section and is in the straight section of codend
- is at least 3 metres long and is positioned no more than 4 metres from the cod line
- is the full width of the top sheet of the trawl (i.e., from selvedge to selvedge)

Net Grid (Illustration on page 6)

Defined as a Net Grid selectivity device developed by The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science for catches of Nephrops (*Nephrops norvegicus*) in the Irish Sea.

The Net Grid comprises a wall of netting within the trawl that creates a physical barrier to whitefish while allowing the passage of Nephrops through to the cod end.

Specification:

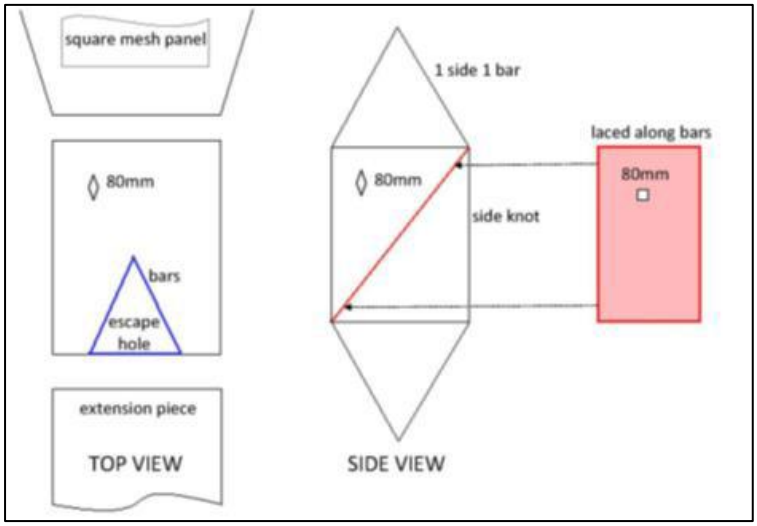
1. The net grid must be situated between the cod end and the existing square mesh panel.
2. The net grid must be fixed within a four-panel box section ("the box section"), which must be inserted into the two-panel trawl.
3. The net grid must be positioned at an incline made of diamond mesh netting with a maximum mesh size of 200mm. At the upper end of which, on the top of the box section, there must be a triangular fish escape hole, the base of which must be 28 meshes wide and formed by cutting along the bar from the outer ends till the sides meet.
4. The netting barrier must be laced to the top and both sides of the box section.
5. The lower end of the netting barrier must be laced to the bottom of the box section for 300mm from the relevant selvedge (each bottom outside corner) towards the centre.
6. The net grid must be constructed of maximum 99mm mesh of twisted twine and attached in a square mesh orientation in parallel with the box section.
7. The escape hole is a triangular opening with a flat apex cut in the top sheet of the trawl which allows the escape of fish too large to through the net grid.
8. The escape hole is cut 12 meshes from each corner where the net grid is joined to the top panel of the box section (all bar cut) and extends along the

[1] Refer to: COMMISSION DELEGATED REGULATION (EU) 2018/2034

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top sheet towards the headline into a triangle, leaving five meshes across at its apex.

9. The escape hole should then be strengthened with nylon twine, pulled tight to form a triangle.



CEFAS Net Grid