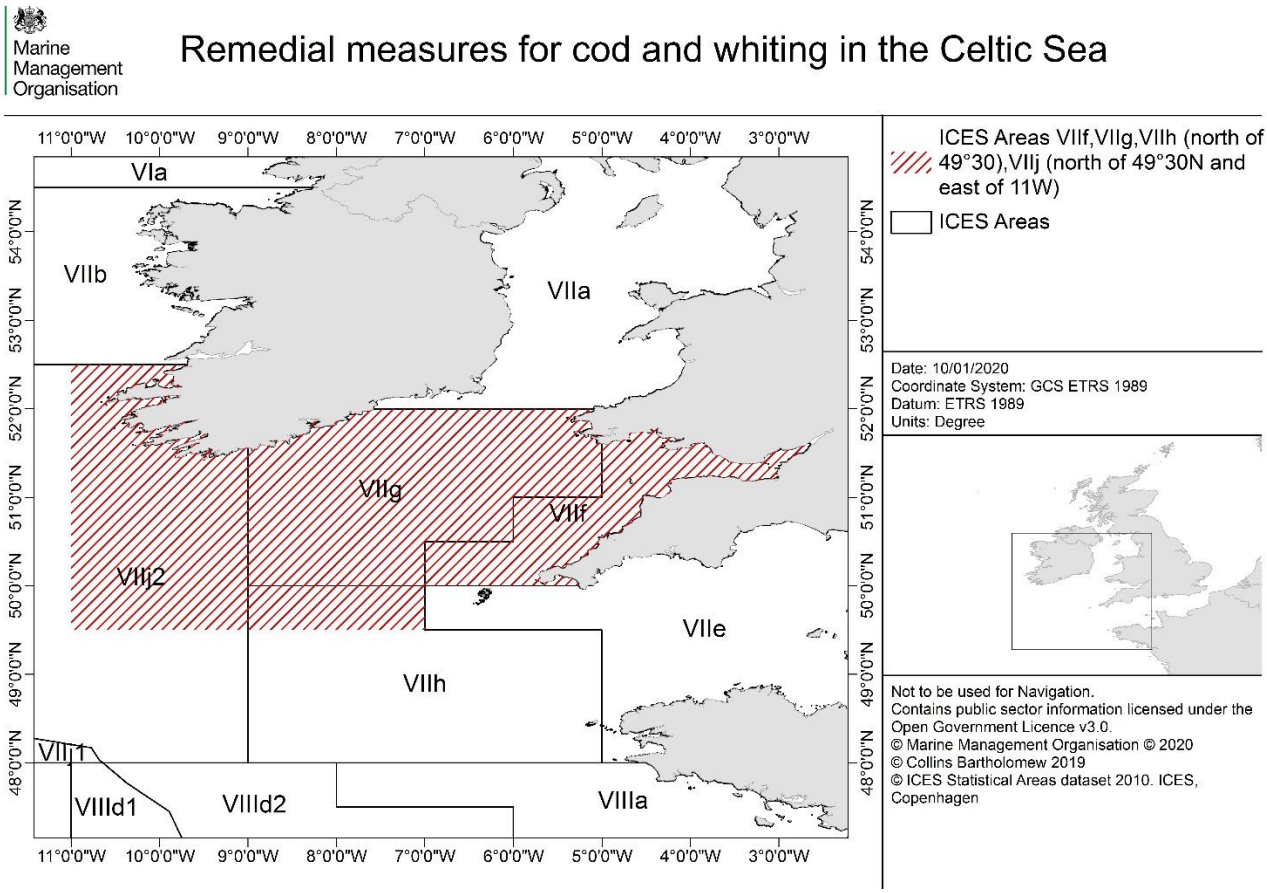
Marine Management Organisation

Document No.: V2
Date of Issue: November 2026

Fishing gear requirements and Landing Obligation exemptions Updated November 2026

Applicable to the Nephrops fishery in the Celtic Sea



Celtic Sea Protection Zone - VIIf, VIIg and parts of VIIh and VIIj North of 49°30 N and East of 11°W

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 Celtic Sea area VIIf, VIIg and parts of VIIh and VIIj North of 49°30 N and East of 11°W (also known as the Celtic Sea Protection Zone) **for those that catch more than 30% Nephrops** 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. You can choose to use a larger mesh than that stated.

- 6mm maximum for single twine cod-ends.
- 4mm maximum for double twine cod-ends.

Gear selectivity requirements

Table 1. Gear Options

Fishing Gear Options. You must use one of the gear options listed below
1) 80mm cod-end and SELTRA Panel**
2) 80mm cod-end and Nordmøre sorting grid (which consists of a rigid grid with a maximum bar spacing of 35 mm)
3) 80mm cod-end and a Netgrid selectivity device. Refer to pages 5 and 6 for details of the CEFAS Net Grid.
4) 80mm cod-end and a 300 mm SMP.

Landing Obligation exemptions

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

You must ensure that the following rules are complied with:

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

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

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

Fish Species you can Discard	ICES Area	Exemption
Skates and Rays	VI and VII	Survival
Nephrops (NEP)	VI and VII	Survival
Plaice (PLE)	VIId to VIIg	Survival
Whiting (WHG)	VIId to VIIj	*De Minimis*
Haddock (HAD)	VIIe to VIIj	*De Minimis*
Horse Mackerel (JAX)	VI and VIId to VIIj	*De Minimis*
Mackerel (MAC)	VI and VIId to VIIj	*De Minimis*
Megrim – below MCRS.	VII	*De Minimis (mesh size range of 70-99mm only)*
Boarfish	VIId to VIIj	*De Minimis*

Table 1 Gear references.

The Seltra Panel means a selectivity device which:

- consists of a top panel of at least 270mm mesh size (diamond mesh) placed in a four-panel section and mounted with a joining ratio of three meshes of 90mm to one mesh of 270mm, or of a top panel of at least 140mm mesh size (square mesh).

- is at least 3 metres long and is positioned no more than 4 metres from the cod line.

'Nordmøre sorting grid' means a selectivity device which:

(i) consists of a rigid grid with a maximum bar spacing of 35 mm

A 'Netgrid selectivity device' means a selectivity device consisting of a four-panel section inserted into a two-panel trawl with an inclined sheet of diamond mesh netting with a mesh size of maximum 200mm leading to an escape hole in the top of the trawl.

CEFAS Net Grid

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

Specification:

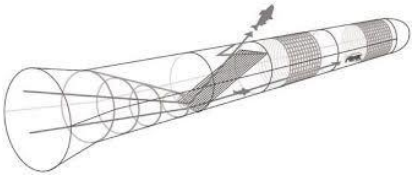
1. The species selective grid shall be attached in trawls with full square mesh cod-end with a mesh size equal to or larger than 70mm and smaller than 90mm. The minimum length of the cod-end shall be 8 metres. It shall be prohibited to use any trawl with more than 100 square meshes in any circumference of the cod-end, excluding the joining or the selvedges. The square mesh cod-end is required only in Skagerrak and Kattegat.

2. The grid shall be rectangular. The bars of the grid shall be parallel to the longitudinal axis of the grid. The bar spacing of the grid shall not exceed 35mm. It shall be permitted to use one or more hinges in order to facilitate its storage on the net drum.

3. The grid shall be mounted diagonally in the trawl, upwards and backwards, anywhere from just in front of the cod-end to the anterior end of the untapered section. All sides of the grid shall be attached to the trawl.

4. In the upper panel of the trawl there shall be an unblocked fish outlet in immediate connection to the upper side of the grid. The opening of the fish outlet shall have the same width in the posterior side as the width of the grid and shall be cut out to a tip in the anterior direction along mesh bars from both sides of the grid.

5. It shall be permitted to attach in front of the grid a funnel to lead the fish towards the trawl floor and grid. The minimum mesh size of the funnel shall be 70mm. The minimum vertical opening of the guiding funnel towards the grid shall be 15cm. The width of the guiding funnel towards the grid shall be the grid width.



Schematic illustration of a size and species selective trawl. Entering fish are led towards the trawl floor and grid via a leading funnel. Larger fish are then led out of the trawl by the grid while smaller fish and Norway lobster pass through the grid and enter the cod-end. The full square mesh cod-end enhances escapement of small fish and undersized Norway lobster. The square mesh cod-end shown in the diagram is required only in Skagerrak and Kattegat.