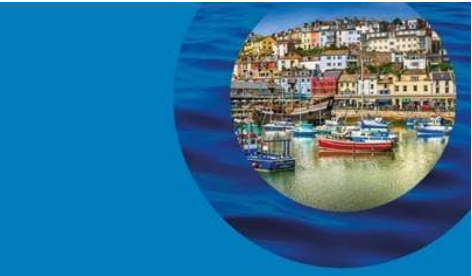
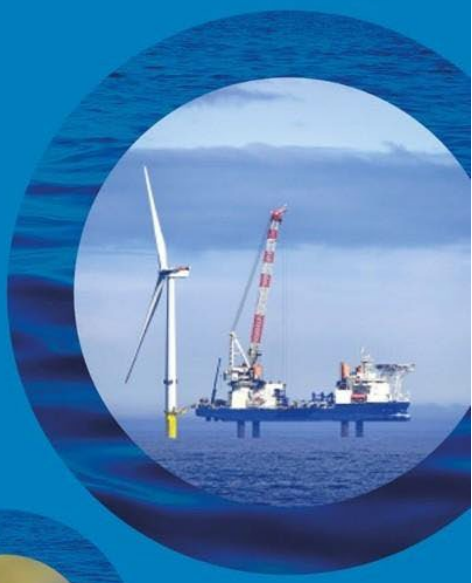
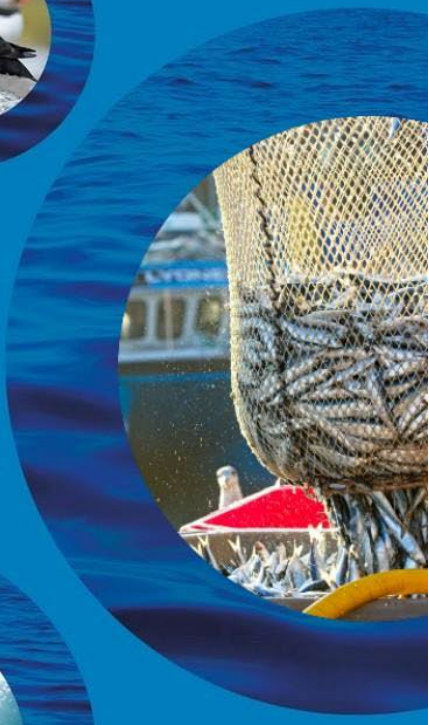
Marine Management Organisation

Bass authorisations application process 2026

Questions and answers





...ambitious for our seas and coasts

Unused authorisations application process

Contents

1. What was the rationale for issuing unused bass authorisations? 3
2. How will this process impact on existing bass authorisation holders? 3
3. How can further authorisations be considered alongside recent increases in landing limits? 3
4. Why are we restricting applications to 8 metre and under monohulls? 3
5. Why focus only on hooks and lines authorisations? 4
6. Why are you only issuing a small proportion of the overall identified unused authorisations? 4
7. What is going to happen with the remaining unused authorisations? 4
8. Why can’t existing authorisation holders apply for another bass authorisation? 4
9. No enforcement history in the last three years. Why exclude people based on past mistakes? 4
10. If I get an unused authorisation, why can’t I sell my vessel with the authorisation attached? 5
11. What happens if I do not use my new bass authorisation? 5
12. Do I have to agree to Voluntary REM participation? 5
13. Why reject applications over minor errors or late submission? 5
14. Why are applications being selected via a ballot? 5
15. What happens if I meet the criteria but don’t get picked in the ballot? 6
16. Will I find out where I am on the reserve list? 6
17. Can I appeal if I am unsuccessful in the ballot? 6

1. What was the rationale for issuing unused bass authorisations?

Alongside improved bass stock health over the last couple of years, the decision to allocate some unused bass authorisations, and the criteria attached to them comes from the Bass Authorisation Review, a structured process to consider the short-term measures within the Bass Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) to review the current domestic authorisation system for bass.

This was developed with input from a mixed stakeholder group, including industry representatives, fisheries regulators, scientists and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This means the recommendations reflect a range of perspectives and sector knowledge, rather than a single organisational view.

2. How will this process impact on existing bass authorisation holders?

An unused authorisation is one that is no longer linked to a fishing vessel, for example because the vessel has been retired.

Existing bass authorisation holders will not be affected in terms of their current access to the fishery and may continue to operate in accordance with the MMO's existing Bass Fishing Guidance.

The issuing of some unused bass authorisations is intended to provide new access to vessels that meet the stated eligibility criteria while ensuring the fishery remains effectively managed. MMO will continue to monitor the fishery and manage authorisations in line with fisheries management and sustainability objectives.

3. How can further authorisations be considered alongside recent increases in landing limits?

The number of new authorisations will be limited to a small proportion of the total available, restricted to vessels 8 metre and under in overall length, monohull and authorised as hooks and lines gear only to align with sustainability objectives within the Bass FMP.

Future issuing of unused authorisations will be subject to the outcomes of a review and monitoring period, including levels of fishing activity and key sustainability indicators.

These measures help provide confidence that additional authorisations can be introduced without compromising the sustainability of the bass stock.

4. Why are we restricting applications to 8 metre and under monohulls?

The restriction supports a precautionary approach and helps ensure that any allocation of fishing opportunities remains within legal limits on fishing capacity, avoiding an unintended increase in the overall capacity of the fleet.

Following this initial allocation, MMO will undertake a review to assess the outcomes, including levels of fishing activity and relevant sustainability indicators. Subject to the findings of that review, and where the evidence demonstrates that fishing pressure remains

within sustainable limits and legal capacity requirements continue to be met, MMO may consider a further phase of fishing opportunities**.**

5. Why focus only on hooks and lines authorisations?

Hooks and lines remain the only targeted fishery for bass. This gear type is more selective, so helps reduce levels of discarding or unwanted bycatch and therefore aligned with the goals in the Bass FMP

6. Why are you only issuing a small proportion of the overall identified unused authorisations?

MMO has taken a cautious approach to the allocation of unused bass authorisations.

By releasing a small proportion of the available unused authorisations, MMO can provide additional access to the fishery in a controlled manner while supporting the sustainable management of bass stocks and ensuring that fishing opportunities remain consistent with fisheries management objectives.

This will be followed by a period of review to assess outcomes, including fishing activity and sustainability indicators. Subject to the findings of this review, and where it is demonstrated that fishing pressure remains within sustainable limits, a further phase of fishing opportunities may be considered.

7. What is going to happen with the remaining unused authorisations?

Following the initial phase MMO will undertake a period of review and monitoring to assess outcomes, including fishing activity and sustainability indicators.

Subject to the findings of this review, and where it is demonstrated that fishing pressure remains within sustainable limits, a further phase of fishing opportunities may be considered.

8. Why can’t existing authorisation holders apply for another bass authorisation?

This approach ensures that new entrants to the bass fishery or those that were previously unsuccessful can apply, thereby supporting opportunity and fairness across the fleet.

9. No enforcement history in the last three years. Why exclude people based on past mistakes?

The requirement is time-limited and proportionate, focusing only on recent compliance. It ensures that access to new opportunity is given, where applicable, to those demonstrating current responsible behaviour.

It also reinforces the principle that access to the bass fishery is linked to compliance and good practice.

10. If I get an unused authorisation, why can't I sell my vessel with the authorisation attached?

Non-transferability is designed to prevent speculative applications where authorisations are obtained for vessel resale value rather than fishing. It ensures authorisations are actively used, allowing monitoring and future prediction of fishing effort.

Those who wish to sell their vessel with the authorisation attached within the 3-year period will have to return their authorisation to the MMO for reallocation prior to any sale. After the 3-year period, normal transfer rules resume.

11. What happens if I do not use my new bass authorisation?

MMO will review the use of authorisations each year. If an authorisation is not being regularly used to fish for bass, MMO may consider recalling and reallocating it. This helps ensure bass fishing opportunities are actively used and provides a clearer picture of fishing activity and pressure on bass stock

12. Do I have to agree to Voluntary REM participation?

No. This condition simply identifies a willingness to participate in any potential Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) trials, it does not establish a mandatory obligation to do so.

Any future REM trials could help to improve data quality, which can support better, evidence-based management and potentially reduce future regulatory burden.

13. Why reject applications over minor errors or late submission?

To ensure all applicants are treated fairly and consistently, applications must be submitted by the published deadline and contain all the required information. Applying the same requirements to every applicant helps maintain a transparent and equitable process.

Accepting late or incomplete applications could disadvantage those who submitted their applications correctly and on time and could also delay the assessment and allocation process.

MMO has sought to make the application process as accessible as possible by providing a six-week application window and offering a range of alternative application routes, to accommodate different individual needs.

These arrangements provide sufficient opportunity for applicants to submit a complete application before the deadline.

14. Why are applications being selected via a ballot?

Where the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of unused bass authorisations being made available, authorisations will be allocated through a ballot. All applicants who meet the published eligibility criteria will have an equal opportunity to be selected, regardless of any other factors.

MMO considers a ballot to be the fairest and most transparent allocation method in these circumstances. It ensures that all eligible applicants are treated equally and avoids favouring

applicants. By using a ballot, MMO can allocate the available authorisations in an objective, consistent and equitable manner while maintaining confidence in the allocation process.

15. What happens if I meet the criteria but don't get picked in the ballot?

Applicants selected to receive a bass authorisation through the ballot process will be notified directly by MMO.

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria but are not selected in the ballot will be placed on a reserve list. Should additional bass authorisations become available for allocation in the future, MMO will use this reserve list to identify potential recipients.

16. Will I find out where I am on the reserve list?

It can be assumed that by successfully completing the application process and meeting the published eligibility criteria applicants will be entered into the ballot process.

MMO will contact all applicants who meet the published eligibility criteria to inform them of the outcome of the ballot process.

Due to the anticipated volume of applications, MMO will not be able to provide eligible applicants with their position on the reserve list. This helps ensure the process can be administered efficiently and consistently for all applicants.

17. Can I appeal if I am unsuccessful in the ballot?

The allocation of unused bass authorisations will be made through a ballot open to all applicants who meet the published eligibility criteria.

As all eligible applications are treated equally and selections are made at random, there is no discretionary assessment or scoring of applicants that could be reviewed through an appeals process.

For this reason, there is no right of appeal against the outcome of the ballot. However, if applicants believe that the process has not been administered or operated correctly, they may submit a complaint to the MMO through its standard complaint's procedure.