Marine Management Organisation

Bass fishing opportunities 2026

Introduction

Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is opening an application process inviting **English licensed** (excluding crown dependencies) **8 metre and under, monohull, commercial fishing vessels administered by MMO** to apply for a limited number of authorisations to land bass caught by **hooks and lines gear.**

What's happening

The bass fishery has been carefully managed since 2015 to support stock recovery, with measures such as catch limits, seasonal closures, and authorisations helping to reduce pressure on the stock.

The review identified that the total number of vessels authorised to land bass had declined over time and considered alternative approaches to managing access and to improve fishing opportunities:

- Maintain access to those currently authorised to land bass under existing rules: Bass Fishing Guidance
- Reinstate a proportion of the total number of unused authorisations that were identified during the authorisation review.



What to expect

MMO invites **English licensed** (excluding crown dependencies) **commercial fishing vessels, administered by MMO,** to apply for a limited number of authorisations to land bass caught by **hooks and lines gear**.

The process will **only apply to 8 metre and under monohull** vessels **without a current bass authorisation** and will be used to assess applicants against defined eligibility criteria.

Authorisations will be issued to successful applicants following a ballot process. Applying will not guarantee access to the bass fishery but will be required to be considered.

Once the application window has closed, **MMO will inform all applicants of the outcome of the ballot,** and for successful applicants timings for the activation of a bass authorisation.

How to apply

The application process will open on **Monday 9 November 2026** and be live over a 6-week period ending on **Monday 21 December 2026**

Full guidance will be published on GOV.UK (MMO Fisheries Management Plan Updates) when the process opens, including details on eligibility, conditions and application routes.

MMO will undertake engagement around the coast to answer questions and help with the application process. Details of the engagement events will be published soon on the FMP blog**.**

…ambitious for our seas and coasts