

## **Recreational Fishing Management Discussion Document**

This report was created by the Marine Resources Section (Department of the Environment) for circulation at the States of Jersey Marine Resources Panel Meeting on Monday 15 January 2018.

The report is the first draft of a discussion paper for the Marine Resources Panel and not a proposal. The intention was to gather the comments and views of Panel members and to incorporate these into a revised version of the document which would have been published for wider consultation.

However, selected aspects of this draft report have been commented in public and, in the interests of transparency and exactitude, Marine Resources have released a full version. The report presented here is identical to the one circulated to the Marine Resources Panel ahead of their 15 January Meeting.

All comments should be sent to: [fisheries@gov.je](mailto:fisheries@gov.je)

**Agenda Item 3.**

**Recreational Fishing Management Discussion Document**

**-2018-**

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## 1 - Introduction

The island of Jersey has a long and well-established fishing history that focuses on three main traditions: boat fishing; shore angling; and low water fishing (*pêche à pied*). Historically, the proportion of a catch that was retained for consumption or sold for profit depended on the needs of the household in terms of sustenance or finance. However, the growth of a professional commercial fishing fleet has taken place across the last couple of centuries to a point where most modern fishing can be categorised as being either commercial or recreational in nature. Due to Jersey's laws and traditions there can be a blurring of the boundary between commercial and recreational fishing to a higher degree than may be seen elsewhere in the UK or France.

Over recent decades the focus of regulation has been on the boat based commercial fishery. This sector has seen the consistent growth in terms of technology, effort and catches often driven by advances in gear design, fishing techniques and technology such as fish finders and sidescan sonar. Changes within the commercial fishery have necessitated increased regulation to prevent overfishing and environmental damage. However, while the commercial fishery has become more regulated, shore anglers, low water fishermen and recreational boaters have been left comparatively unrestricted in terms of the species and quantities they may land and, in the case of shore operators, whether they choose to use their catches for food or profit.

Jersey's licensed commercial fishing fleet comprises some 150 boats and provides a livelihood for around 200 fishermen. Annual commercial landings of fish and shellfish are in the region of 1,300 tonnes per year but catches for some key stocks have recently been declining including those for Brown Crab, Bass and Whelks. Even historically successful stocks, such as lobster, are beginning to show signs of reaching their maximum sustainable yield. The available evidence suggests that there is an increasing pressure on Jersey's fishery and that management is needed to secure the long-term viability of the commercial fleet. At a time when many commercial species are being fished close to or over their maximum sustainable yields, bringing Jersey's recreational regulations more into line with those of other countries will liberate stock for the commercial fishery without damaging the traditional practice of catching sufficient seafood for the family table.

The size and impact of Jersey's recreational fishing sector is not fully understood. Based on lifestyle and other surveys, the number of recreational/unlicensed fishermen in Jersey is estimated at between eight and ten thousand with their landed catch projected to be anywhere within the range of 10 to 100 tonnes per year. While the recreational sector is responsible for a smaller proportion of the total catch, the species targeted are often the same high-value ones that form the foundation of the commercial fishery. This includes lobsters, crabs, mackerel and other finfish most of which may currently be taken by recreational fishermen with only a minimal restriction on quantity taken and gear use.

There are currently several areas of disparity between licensed and unlicensed fishing that an update in regulations will address. Examples include:

### *Landing sizes/Restrictions*

The landing size and quotas/bag limits for some species (such as lobster) are attached to the commercial fishing license as conditions and so apply only to commercial fishing boats. Recreational fishermen face no restrictions on species such as these. In the case of lobster, a small commercial boat may only take 15 individuals per day where a recreational boat has no catch limit.

*Gear Restrictions:* Commercial fishermen are by much tighter boat netting controls than recreational fishermen.

*Sale of Fish:* The sale of fish caught from a boat requires a commercial fishing license. However, selling fish caught from the shore or on foot in the intertidal zone does not require a license.

*Small eyed rays:* While commercial fishermen have a zero quota for this species these fish can be landed and retained by recreational fishermen.

## 2.0 – Proposed Measures

It is proposed that Jersey creates some of the same basic but equitable restrictions on recreational fishing that have been used in the UK and France to help manage species' stocks. These restrictions are not draconian and will allow recreational individuals to take home more than enough fish and shellfish for personal/family consumption. However, they will prevent recreational fishers from taking home catches of a size that will impact commercially fished stocks or, in the case of shore operators, be sold so as to undermine the markets and prices of the commercial fishing sector. Doing this will create a clear divide between the recreational and commercial fishing sectors in Jersey.

Evidence and advice from France and other European fisheries suggests that the creation of bag limits for key species is the simplest and most easily enforceable means of separating commercial and recreational fishing. This document proposes creating bag limits for many of the commercially fished species in Jersey's waters. In most instances, the proposed limits are the same as those used in Normandy and Brittany, so as to harmonise regulations within the Bay of Granville area.

Other proposed restrictions include the introduction of landing sizes on several species that at present do not have one (again, harmonised with France, where practicable) and the suggestion of some measures relating to seasonality and gear restrictions.

### 2.1 - Bag limits

The simplest and quickest management measure for the recreational sector is a set of daily bag limits for individual species or, where more appropriate/more pragmatic, groups of species. Whether at sea or on the shore, bag limits are easy to understand and enforce and are a demonstrable means of ensuring that

Bag limits can be brought in by Order from the Minister for the Environment. This means bag limits may be altered relatively quickly and so may be responsive to local and regional changes.

In 2017 an assessment was undertaken of the main recreationally fished species in Jersey waters in relation to their biology and local distribution and stock status. A census was also undertaken of recreational restrictions placed on these species in France and the UK. Based on this the following bag limits are proposed (\* = unchanged):

<b>SPECIES / FAMILY GROUPS</b>	<b>BAG LIMIT</b>	<b>+ BOAT LIMIT</b>
<b>BAIT WORM (Lug, Cat, Rag, Verm)</b>	<b>1kg</b>	
<b>SMALL CLAMS: Cockles (Common, Dog, Norwegian, &amp; Rough), Palourdes (Chequered, Golden, Pullet, Banded Palourde &amp; Manilla Clam), Praise, Surf Clam</b>	<b>150</b>	
<b>OTTER SHELL</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>OYSTER (Native &amp; Pacific)</b>	<b>30</b>	
<b>RAZORFISH (mixed)</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>SCALLOP</b>	<b>24</b>	
<b>PERIWINKLE</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>LIMPETS (mixed: Blackfooted, China, European)</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>*ORMER</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>WHELK</b>	<b>5kg</b>	<b>5kg</b>

<b>BROWN CRAB</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>COMMON PRAWN</b>	<b>5kg</b>	
<b>CRAWFISH</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>LOBSTER</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SHORE CRAB</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>SPIDER CRAB</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>VELVET CRAB</b>	<b>40</b>	
<b>BREAM family (Black, Gilt head &amp; Red)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>COD family (Hake, Cod, Whiting, Pollock Haddock, Rocklings, Ling, Pouing, Poor Cod, Coley)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>CONGER EEL</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Flat fish (Mixed)</b>	<b>10</b>	
<b>GURNARD family (Red, Tub, Grey, Streaked)</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>Herring like fish (Herring, Sprat, Sardine, Anchovy)</b>	<b>50</b>	
<b>Mackerel, Scad, Bonito, Amber Jack</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>MULLETS (thick lipped, thin lipped, golden &amp; Red Mullet)</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>SAND EEL</b>	<b>50</b>	
<b>SKATE &amp; RAYS</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Small sharks/ Dogfish, (Cat shark, Bull-Huss, Starry smooth hound)</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>SQUID, CUTTLEFISH, OCTOPUS</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>WRASSE family (Ballan, Cuckoo)</b>	<b>5</b>	

## 2.2 - Landing sizes

A review of Jersey's commercial landing sizes alongside those from the adjacent French and English coasts was undertaken. This was assessed against the best available scientific figures relating to size of 50% maturity in the stock and the advised best practice landing sizes from UK agencies. Based on this the following landing sizes are proposed (\* = unchanged):

<b>SPECIES</b>	<b>SIZE LIMIT (mm)</b>	<b>Rational</b>
<b>COMMON COCKLE</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Fr</b>
<b>PALOURDE Spp. (CHEQUERED, GOLDEN, PULLET, BANDED, MANILLA CLAM)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>Fr</b>
<b>DOG COCKLE</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>Fr</b>
<b>OYSTER (Native &amp; Pacific)</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>PRAIRE</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>Fr</b>
<b>SURF CLAM</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Fr</b>
<b>LIMPETS (Blackfooted, China,</b>	<b>20</b>	

European)		
PERIWINKLE	16	UK
*ORMER	90	Fr
*RAZORFISH (Bandy, Curved, Straight)	100	Fr
*KING SCALLOP	102	
*WHELK	45	Fr
SHRIMP	30	Fr
VELVET CRAB	65	Fr
*BROWN CRAB (shell width)	140	Fr
*COMMON PRAWN	50	Fr
*CRAWFISH (carapace)	110	Fr
*LOBSTER (carapace)	87	Fr
*SHORE CRAB	65	Fr
*SPIDER CRAB	120	Fr
ANGLERFISH / MONKFISH	500	Brittany
SAITH / COALFISH	350	EU
HERRING	200	EU
SARDINES / PILCHARDS	110	EU
BALLAN WRASSE	Min 200; Max 300	

### 2.3 - Gear restrictions

At present recreational boats have a greater freedom to fish than small inshore commercial boats. It seems inequitable that a hobbyist has greater access to a fishery than someone looking to make a living from it. To this end recreational gear restrictions are proposed to bring Jersey regulations in line with either commercial fishing regulations or with equivalent French or UK practice.

#### 2.3.1 Potting

##### **Pots (Creel, Parlour, Inkwel)**

Currently there is no limit on the number of pots a recreational fisherman can use and it alleged that some boats have worked as many as 200 pots. A proposed pot limit of **20 pots** would still allow a fishermen to return 4 to 8 sized lobster or crab from a trip, enough to feed a family and therefore suitable to a recreational limit. This, however, would be very difficult to enforce without a pot tagging scheme and that will require significant administrative support.

French fisheries managers have similarly concluded that pot limits are largely unenforceable and that bag limits are a better means of stock management. Our view is that a bag limit on crab and lobster will be more effective and enforceable than a pot limit.

##### **Pots (whelk)**

A recreational bag limit of 2 kg of whelks per day is proposed above. This could, if desirable, be accompanied by a pot limit of **5 pots** per boat to limit the chance of grey/black market commercial fishing but, as with creels, parlours, inkwell, again faces the challenges of enforcement.

##### **Pots (prawn)**

No regulations proposed at present.

### 2.3.2 Nets

#### Boat Set Nets

Although net fishing can be targeted, the use of nets often results in the capture and death of non-target species, sometimes in significant quantities. Consequently netting a greater bycatch and mortality impact than other permitted fishing metiers. The effort involved in setting, hauling and cleaning a net, combined with the potential size of the catch makes it of limited appeal to the majority of purely recreational fishermen. However, evidence from landing and other checks suggests that recreational netting may be used by some fishermen to obtain fish for illicit sale or exchange. This situation undercuts commercial fishermen but is hard to enforce as it is difficult to prove the intended destination of recreationally netted fish that are inspected on board or at the quayside.

One option is to completely close the setting of recreational nets from boats as has been done on the shore.

An alternative would be to place some restrictions on recreational netting which will significantly reduce fish mortality and discard rates but without closing off the metier completely to amateur enthusiasts. It is therefore suggested that following limits be applied to the recreation use of a net from a boat:

- Minimum mesh size: 110 mm**
- Maximum soak time: 12 hours**
- Maximum net length: 35 meters**
- Max nets per boat: 2**

### 2.3.3 Dredging / Trawling (mobile gear)

While not widely practiced by the recreational sector it would be prudent to **ban the uses of trawls and dredges by recreational boats**. Most of the inshore no mobile gear areas have been closed to commercial boats through their license conditions which means that recreational boats can still operate dredges and trawls in these areas. This is nonsensical as many of the no mobile gear zones were established to protect fragile inshore habitats and yet they are theoretically still open to unrestricted recreational boats. There is no rationale for allowing dredging or trawling as a means of recreational fishing and closing the practice would seem to be appropriate.

### 2.3.4 Fish traps

Traps for bream, conger and flat fish can be an effective fishing technique. A maximum of **5 traps** per boat, with each trap **measuring no more than 150cm in diameter**, should be sufficient for a domestic catch and is therefore proposed as the limit for the recreational sector. The same enforcement issues apply to fish traps.

### 3. Conclusion

The above measures are considered the most practical means of ensuring that there is a clear separation between the local recreational and commercial fishing sectors and that stocks are being managed sustainably for the benefit of everyone. These measures should ensure that the impact of the recreational sector (both on stocks and the viability of the commercial sector) is kept low and yet will still permit a sufficient catch for the table and for the public to enjoy the sport of fishing.