



Key messages

- The Fisheries White Paper – '[Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations](#)' – **charts the course for a sustainable and profitable fishing industry.**
- Leaving the EU means **taking back control of our waters for the first time in 40 years**, access will be on the UK's terms and for the benefit of UK fishermen. When we leave the EU, the UK will become an **independent coastal state** under international law.
- The UK will have the opportunity to move towards a **fairer share of fishing opportunities** - overhauling the current system where UK fishermen have received a poor deal that is based on fishing patterns from the 1970s.
- Fisheries **will be a separate strand of our future relationship with the EU** to the future economic partnership. Through the fisheries strand there will be a separate process whereby the EU and **the UK, as an independent coastal state, will negotiate on access to waters and fishing opportunities on an annual basis.**
- The government will **introduce the Fisheries Bill** in this session of Parliament, to create powers to give the UK full control of our waters, set fishing opportunities and manage fisheries.
- Underpinning everything will **be our commitment to sustainability** – supporting future generations of fishermen and allowing our marine environment to thrive.
- There will be a ten week consultation closing on 12 September 2019.

Future access to waters and fishing opportunities

- We will take back control of who has access to our waters, and on what terms.
- The government will negotiate access and fishing opportunities with our European neighbours on an annual basis.
- We will seek to move away from relative stability towards a fairer and more scientific method for future quota shares.
- We do not yet know the outcome of the UK's negotiations to withdraw from the EU or on a future economic partnership. The White Paper is clear that market access for fisheries products is separate from the question of fishing opportunities and access to waters.
- Fisheries will be a separate strand of our future relationship with the EU to the future economic partnership. Through the fisheries strand there will be a separate process whereby the EU and the UK, as an independent coastal state, will negotiate on access to waters and fishing opportunities on an annual basis.

Commitment to sustainability

- Healthy stocks are the foundation on which all else depends: commercial fishing, recreational fishing and thriving communities.
- We remain committed to fishing within sustainable limits (maximum sustainable yield) to restore stocks to healthy levels. We will publish an annual statement setting out the health of fish stocks based on the latest scientific evidence.
- We will continue to work towards ending the wasteful practice of fish discards and comply with the landing obligation.

- We will make clear that vessels will only be allowed to fish in our waters if they adhere to our high sustainability standards.
- As set out in its 25 Year Environment Plan, the government will pursue an ecosystem approach to fisheries management that will minimise impacts of fishing on the wider marine environment.

Devolution and a UK framework

- Our approach will benefit the whole of the UK.
- Fisheries is devolved and the UK government is committed to respecting the devolution settlements. Particular attention will also be given to maintaining cross-border co-operation between Northern Ireland and Ireland.
- The UK government will continue to work with the Devolved Administrations to develop a new UK framework for fisheries management, which will maximise their power to manage their fisheries while maintaining the integrity of the UK internal market.

The Fisheries Bill

In the White Paper the government has announced proposals for the Bill to include powers to:

- enable UK to take back control of access to our fishing waters
- preserve equal access for UK vessels throughout UK waters
- set fishing opportunities (quotas or days at sea)
- manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources to ensure we can protect our marine environment
- allow the UK to respond to scientific advice, protect the marine environment and meet our international commitments by taking a power to amend retained EU law
- introduce reforms to fisheries management in England, including schemes to tender or auction quota and to enable fishers to avoid the problem of choke species
- improve Marine Management Organisation's cost-recovery powers and modernise grant making powers

Reforms to fisheries management

- We will continue to use existing methodologies based on Fixed Quota Allocation for apportioning any existing quota within the UK.
- For any additional fishing opportunities we negotiate as an independent coastal state, we will explore other methodologies such as zonal attachment. Defra intends to begin a conversation with the Devolved Administrations and stakeholders to allocate these on a different basis.
- We are fully committed to working with partners to introduce a management regime that works for the catching sector, coastal communities, the seafood sector, consumers, NGOs and the wider public.
- We will consider, with interested parties whether and how to replace the EMFF, which has supported the sector across the UK.
- In England, the government will:
 - develop a tailored package of measures to prevent wasteful discarding
 - develop a new approach to tackling 'choke species'
 - consider the establishment a reserve of quota to be managed and allocated according to new criteria to meet future industry needs
 - review the current "under 10" category of low impact inshore vessels
 - consider a targeted scientific trial of the 'effort system' for quota management
 - consider the further integration of recreational angling into the new fisheries framework;
 - to use technology to support the collection and use of data and information to develop a much more transparent regime;
 - explore new management systems for non-quota stocks (e.g. shellfish) in western waters

A guide to UK fisheries policy

How does UK fisheries policy currently work?

Fisheries management in the UK currently operates under a set of EU rules called the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). Central elements of the CFP include mutual access to EU waters, and the allocation of fish stock shares to Member States based on historic fishing patterns ('relative stability'). Total Allowable Catch (TAC) are agreed between the EU Commission (acting on behalf of Member States) and countries with which it has shared stocks e.g. bilaterally with Norway and the Faroe Islands. TAC for each stock for the next year are agreed annually at the December Fisheries Council. Once EU TACs have been set, they are divided between Member States in the form of national quotas. The EU distributes quota to Member States in accordance with a method known as 'relative stability' – this grants EU countries a fixed percentage of quota for each fish stock covered by TACs. Relative stability was agreed in 1983 and was based on Member States' historical fishing patterns dating back to the 1970s.

The CFP also provides comprehensive rules in a number of other areas, including the size of the EU fishing fleet, conservation of fish stocks, technical standards, data collection, landing obligations, funding, and allocation of fishing opportunities.

Fisheries policy is also an area of devolved competence under each of the three devolution settlements, meaning that England and each Devolved Administration is free to manage its fisheries within the boundaries set by the CFP, as well as other international obligations. The current UK-wide approach to fisheries is achieved because each Fisheries Administration is required to comply with EU law – including the CFP – and because they have agreed a voluntary fisheries concordat which sets out how they work together.

What will change when we leave the EU?

When we leave the EU, the UK will become an independent coastal state under international law (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea), with jurisdiction over our territorial sea and Exclusive Economic Zone – out to 200 nautical miles (nm), or the median line between us and neighbouring states.

In the short term, the UK will continue to abide by CFP rules during the implementation period. From 2020 we will be negotiating access to waters and fishing opportunities as an independent coastal state.

The Fisheries White Paper - 'Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations' - charts our course for managing fisheries after Brexit.



Important fisheries terms

- **The UK Exclusive Economic Zone and Territorial Seas (Map I and II)** under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the sea, independent coastal states have jurisdiction over their **territorial seas** (0-12 nautical miles) and over the **Exclusive Economic Zone** (EEZ, out to 200 nautical miles or the median line between states). When the UK leaves the EU, it will become an independent coastal state and will gain control of the EEZ. Under the London Fisheries Convention (LFC) , five European countries have access to a portion of UK territorial seas, 6-12 nautical miles. The UK gave notice of its intention to leave the LFC on 2 July 2017.
- **Fishing opportunities** – catch limits (expressed in tonnes or numbers) that are set for most commercial fish stocks and can be calculated using **quota** or **effort** (i.e. limits to days that may be spent at sea). At the moment, **Total Allowable Catches (TAC)** for stocks are agreed at an EU level and then proportions allocated to Member states as fishing opportunities.
- **Fixed quota allocation units (FQAs)** - the current methodology used to apportion quota within the UK. Fishing opportunities are apportioned to each of the four Fisheries Administrations by the Secretary of State. Each of the Fisheries Administrations is then able to allocate its quota to its industry as it wishes. FQAs were established in 1999, based on historic catches from 1993 to 1996, and the government recognises that UK fishermen have invested in FQAs. The government will continue to use this methodology for the apportionment of existing quota after we leave the EU.
- **Zonal Attachment** - the term used to describe the spatial distribution of fish stocks. For any additional fishing opportunities the UK negotiates as an independent coastal state, we will explore alternative methodologies to FQAs, such as zonal attachment.
- **Effort system (or days at sea)** - a measure of the fishing activity of vessels based on fishing capacity and the time spent fishing. Some fishermen advocate a greater use of an effort system in place of the quota system. Defra will consider a targeted scientific trial of this methodology by small scale, low impact fishing vessels in English waters.
- **Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)** - for a given fish stock this is the highest possible annual catch that can be sustained over time, by keeping the stock at the level producing maximum growth. After we leave the EU we will remain committed to fishing within MSY, in line with the commitments we have made in our 25YEP and internationally.
- **Ecosystem approach** – this means not only managing commercial fish stocks but effectively managing the wider impacts of fishing on other marine species and on marine habitats. We will pursue this approach to help minimise the impacts of fishing on the wider marine environment.
- **Reserve of quota** – in England, we will consider the establishment of a reserve of quota drawing on any additional fishing opportunities available to England. Some of the quota from the reserve could then be used to meet the future needs of the industry including to raise revenue (through a tendering or auctioning system) or to help offset choke species.
- **Landing obligation** - an obligation to land all catch to end wasteful discarding of fish. UK Ministers worked with the EU to introduce this reform to avoid up to a million tonnes of fish being thrown back each year. The UK government remains committed to the discard ban.
- **Choke species** – “choke” occurs when fishermen have used up all their quota for a specific stock, but are unable to avoid catching the species because they are found in mixed fisheries (i.e. amongst other fish). The White Paper proposes two solutions to this problem in England: a reserve of quota that could be used to offset choke species, coupled with a new scheme to help fishermen unable to find quota to set against their catch.

Facts and figures – the fisheries sector

The seafood sector is worth over £1 billion to the UK

- The sector includes catching, processing and aquaculture.
- Seafood sector represents 0.08% of the UK economy and contributes £1.45 billion.
- In the UK, the seafood sector employs around 33,000 people.

UK catching sector

- There are around 12,000 fishermen in the UK fleet – most (81%) of them work full time.
- The UK fishing fleet is made up of 6,000 fishing vessels, roughly 80% of which are classed as small (10m or under in size).
- In 2016, UK fishermen caught a total of 701,000 tonnes of sea fish, with a value of over £936 million. Around 60% of total catch by value was caught by the Scottish fleet.
- Of that total amount fisherman caught, 570,000 tonnes of fish was harvested within the UK's waters (EEZ) - it was worth over £770 million.
- UK vessels landed 130,000 tonnes (£140 million) of fish into EU ports and 120,000 tonnes (£110 million) to non-EU countries.
- Foreign vessels landed 50,000 tonnes (£80 million) of fish to UK ports.
- On average between 2012 and 2016, other EU Member States' vessels landed around 760,000 tonnes of fish (£540 million revenue) caught in UK waters per year whereas UK vessels landed 90,000 tonnes (£110 million revenue) of fish caught in other Member States' waters per year in the same time period.
- Catching fish is not only for commercial reasons, during 2015 -2016 around 106,000 people on average take part in recreational fishing in England per week.

The UK has a thriving aquaculture sector

- Aquaculture employs over 3,000 workers, with around 60% employed in Scotland (2013).
- The sector contributes £275 million to the UK economy (2014).
- We are the leading aquaculture producer in the EU by value and second by volume (2014).
- Atlantic salmon production in Scotland dominates UK aquaculture by volume and value.
- As a whole the aquaculture sector produced over 200,000 tonnes of seafood in 2014. This was valued at almost £800 million, with most of that coming from finfish (such as salmon) as opposed to shellfish (such as crabs).

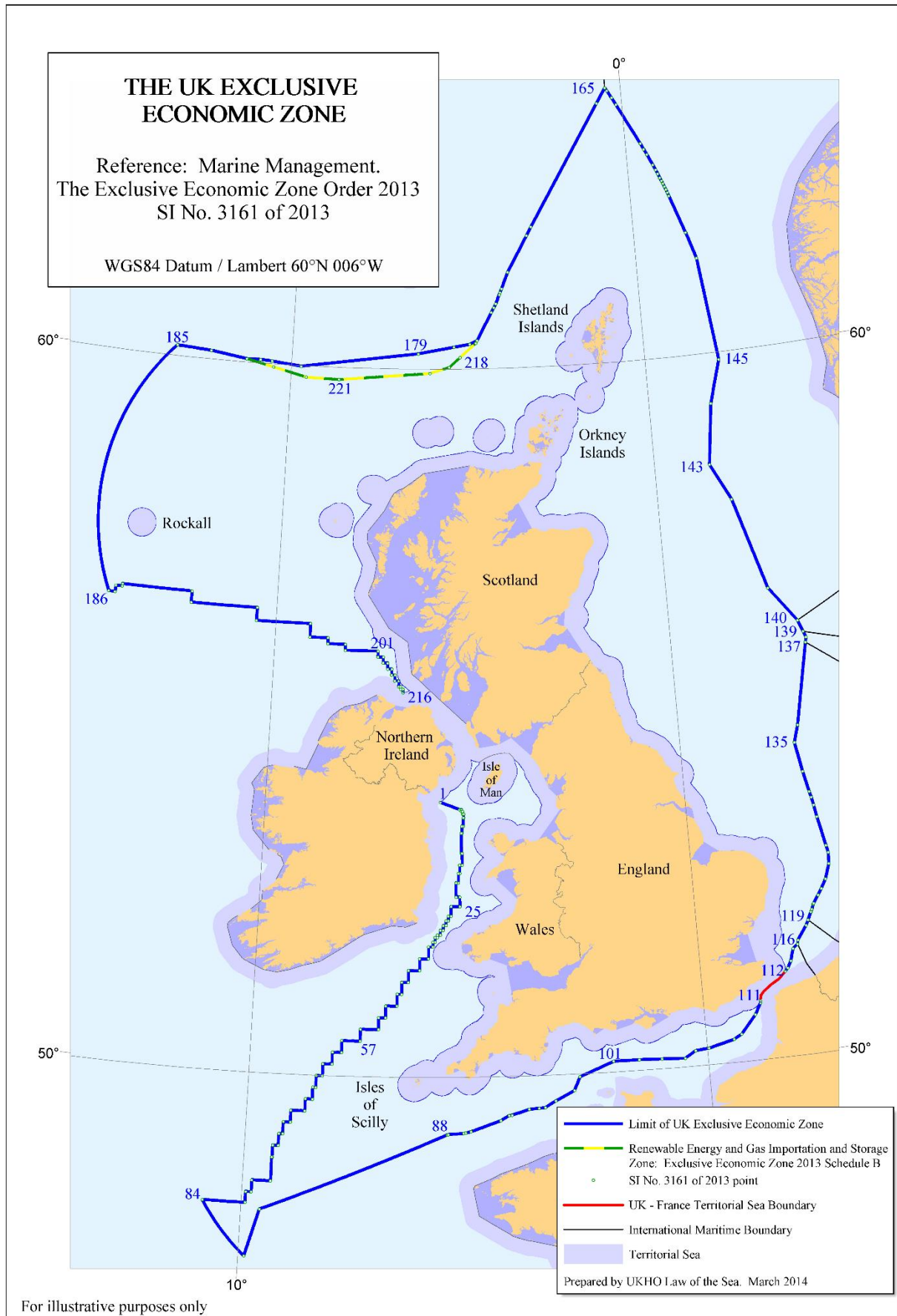
The importance of the processing sector

- The seafood processing sector employs around 18,000 people (2016). It has a turnover of £4.4 billion, contributing almost £800 million to the UK economy (2014).

And UK seafood is consumed all over the world

- The UK exports £1.6 billion of seafood all over the world. Salmon caught or farmed in the UK is particularly popular.
- In total the UK imports £3.1 billion of seafood, meaning we run a global trade deficit in seafood. Our most popular imports by value include shrimps and prawns, cod and salmon.
- However, we run a trade surplus with the EU. We export £1.2 billion to the EU, but only import £1 billion.

Map I: The UK Exclusive Economic Zone



Map 2: The UK, Isle of Man and Channel Islands Territorial Sea Limits

