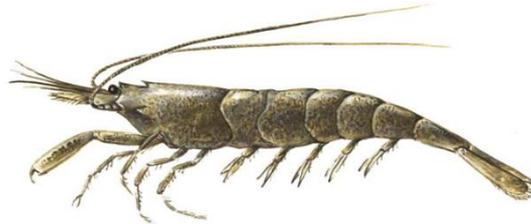


Marine Stewardship Council certification for Wash Brown Shrimp fishery

Lloyd's Register, the certification assessment body, announced this week that Wash Brown Shrimp has been certified under the Marine Stewardship Council requirements for Sustainable Fisheries



One of the highest-value fisheries in the Eastern IFCA district, the Wash brown shrimp fishery, has this week received Marine Stewardship Council “Sustainable Fisheries” certification. After two years of rigorous assessment, under a range of criteria relating to stock viability, environmental impact, and governance, the fishery has been deemed worthy of the “blue tick” that symbolises this globally-recognised sustainable fisheries scheme.

The King’s Lynn-based Shrimp Producers’ Organisation Ltd backed the certification bid, which was also supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. Eastern IFCA has supported the process as an advisor and through working closely with shrimp fishery stakeholders in the development of sustainable management measures.

Julian Gregory, Eastern IFCA CEO, said “Eastern IFCA congratulates the Shrimp Producers’ Organisation Ltd on this achievement. We fully support the certification process, which is aligned with the IFCA remit for healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and viable industry. As well as specifying measures to prevent over-fishing, the certification management plan dovetails with Eastern IFCA measures to ensure the shrimp fishery is compatible with conservation targets for our marine protected areas.”

Facts about the Wash brown shrimp fishery

Whereas the pink shrimp (*Pandalus montagui*) was once the main target species, markets have changed so all vessels now target brown shrimp (*Crangon crangon*). Approximately 95% of brown shrimp fished in UK waters are landed into King’s Lynn.

This employs a fleet of up to 50 small inshore fishing vessels, mostly based in the Wash ports of King's Lynn and Boston, which fish for shrimp using light beam trawls. Typically, each boat employs two or three crew, with fishing trips lasting one to three days. The catch is sorted and cooked on board, before being landed into King's Lynn for further processing before onwards sale, predominantly to Dutch markets but also supplying domestic demand.

Two King's Lynn-based shellfish processors, *Lynn Shellfish* and *John Lake Shellfish Ltd.* are responsible for processing and onward sale of the brown shrimp. The factories provide employment for local people in addition to the fishermen involved in catching the shrimp.

How can a trawl fishery be certified as "sustainable" – isn't all trawling bad for the environment?

Fishing using trawls that are pulled across the seabed can damage sensitive species and habitats. Beam trawls used in the Wash brown shrimp fishery are smaller and lighter than those used to target flatfish, and do not have "tickler chain" attachments that cause the most damage. Eastern IFCA has recently agreed measures – which have been taken into account in the certification assessment – to protect the most sensitive areas of seabed from damage by trawls. Effort controls have also been agreed – and signed up to by shrimp fishers – to ensure the remaining grounds are not over-fished.

How is the certification checked?

Certification lasts for five years and the fishery will be subject to an annual surveillance audit. The certification client is responsible for demonstrating that the fishery continues to comply with agreed measures. A four-year action plan has been drawn up; maintaining certification is dependent on co-operation involving fishermen, processors and fisheries managers. Certification can be suspended if agreed actions are not taken. The measures identified in the plan align with management being developed by Eastern IFCA to ensure the shrimp fishery is compatible with obligations to protect seabed habitats within the Wash and North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation.

The fishery certification report is available at:

<https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/wash-brown-shrimp/@assessments>

Eastern IFCA, January 2020