

Minimum Sizes Byelaw 2019 – measures to protect pre-spawning fish and shellfish

Formal Consultation 2020



Eastern Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority (Eastern IFCA) is formally consulting on the byelaw to replace the FISH, MOLLUSC AND CRUSTACEA MINIMUM SIZE EMERGENCY BYELAW 2019. This byelaw intends to protect fish and shellfish stocks by preventing or reducing the removal of pre-spawning individuals.

This formal consultation is an opportunity to have your say.

The deadline for responses is 12pm on 6th April 2020.

What is being proposed?

In 2019, Eastern IFCA, in conjunction with Northumberland, North Eastern and Kent & Essex IFCAs, made an [emergency byelaw](#) in relation to the minimum conservation reference size for certain marine organisms.

The emergency byelaw was made in response to changes to European legislation. It intended to apply the rules relating to minimum sizes of fish and shellfish to replicate the provisions of the European legislation prior to their change. The byelaw included the application of minimum size rules to recreational fishers and prohibitions on the transport, sale and storage of undersize marine organisms. Eastern IFCA intends to replace the emergency byelaw with a permanent byelaw with the same effect.

Why is this needed?

IFCAs have a duty to manage sustainable, long-term fisheries. Removal of pre-spawning individuals can quickly impact on a stock's health. One of the most effective ways to prevent their removal is by setting a minimum size which fish and shellfish must reach before they can be removed from a fishery. These sizes are different for each species and generally reflect the size of a fish which is likely to have spawned already.

Changes to European legislation removed the protection for fish and shellfish captured through recreational activities or activities from the shore. Recreational fishing activities are known to contribute significantly to the total fishing mortality of many fish stocks. The changes also removed the prohibition on the transshipping, landing, transporting, storing, selling and displaying or sale of fish and shellfish less than the minimum size. This made the minimum sizes which do apply much less effective. Re-introducing these measures will ensure the protection effect of current IFCA management efforts.

What has changed since the informal consultation in October 2019?

In October 2019, Eastern IFCA undertook an informal consultation to seek the views of stakeholders and to inform refinements to the proposed byelaw. As a result of

listening to these responses, changes to the byelaw were made. The main change was made to include the species with different minimum size requirements outside the Eastern IFCA district. This is the case for two species only, whelks (*buccinum undatum*) and mackerel (*scomber scombus*).

When will it take effect?

Following the conclusion of the formal consultation on **6th April 2020**, Officers will consider responses and decide whether to submit the byelaw for consent by the Secretary of State.

Where will it apply?

The restrictions will apply throughout the entire Eastern IFCA District.

How does it affect my fishing activity?

The byelaw intends to maintain the restrictions which were in place immediately before the European legislation changed. As such, Eastern IFCA does not anticipate any impacts on commercial and non-commercial activities as it effectively maintains the previous protective effect.

Are there any other protective measures planned?

Eastern IFCA intends to make this byelaw to ensure a continued protective effect in the context of changes to EU legislation. After this byelaw has been made, consideration may be given to additional measures to protect pre-spawning individuals. These may include changes to the established minimum size for a species and / or measures in relation to mesh sizes for nets.

How can I participate?

We welcome your input. Any person wishing to comment, support or object to this byelaw must do so in writing by **12pm on 6th April 2020** to the CEO of Eastern IFCA at the below address **and** send a copy to:

Address: Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team, Marine Management Organisation, Lancaster House, Hampshire Court, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE4 7HY

Email: IFCAbyelaws@marinemanagement.org.uk

Any Questions?

You are welcome to speak to Eastern IFCA staff at our office in person, via email or over the phone. The full text of the byelaw, associated Impact Assessments and further information can be inspected at, or obtained from:

Address: Eastern IFCA, 6 North Lynn Business Village, Bergen Way, King's Lynn, PE30 2JG.

Tel: 01553 775321

Email: mail@eastern-ifca.gov.uk;

Website: www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk.