

Enforcement Policy: Byelaw 5 (use of edible crab (*Cancer pagurus*) for bait)

Date Issued: 12 January 2026

Background

Eastern IFCA has a duty to manage sea fisheries resources within its [district](#), including through the use of implementing byelaws.

Byelaw 5 prohibits the use of Edible Crab (the species of crab *Cancer paguurs*, also known as brown crab) as bait. Using any form of edible crab as bait is prohibited under the byelaw, including cooked offal.

The intention of the byelaw is to protect crab stocks by preventing the removal of soft-shelled or berried (egg-bearing) edible crabs for use as bait, which is otherwise permitted under the Sea Fisheries Shellfish Act 1967. It was also intended to reduce the risk associated with the use of undersize as bait as an ancillary measure to the Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) of 115mm.

Byelaw 5 was reviewed in 2023 and the Authority agreed at the 51st Eastern IFCA Meeting to revise the prohibition to allow the use of cooked offal for the purpose of commercial fishing¹.

This decision was made on the basis that it is prohibited to remove soft-shelled and berried edible crab from the fishery under a separate byelaw² and edible crab cooked offal (which is a waste product from crab processing) must have met the MCRS in order to be removed from the fishery (including in relation to storage, transport and making for sale under the [Minimum Sizes Byelaw 2019](#)). It is also understood that allowing the use of cooked offal would be of significant benefit to fishing industry and enable the use of waste products which would otherwise have to be disposed of via landfill. Overall, the revision was considered to present no risk to edible crab fishery and provide a benefit to industry.

The byelaw which would bring the revision into effect has not yet been confirmed by the Secretary of State.

Enforcement Policy

The strength of the case for the revision is such that the Authority does not consider it to be in the public interest to enforce the prohibition where a person would be in contravention of the byelaw because they are using edible crab cooked offal.

Therefore, the Authority will not enforce Byelaw 5: prohibition on the use of edible crab (*Cancer Pagurus*) as bait where a person is using cooked offal only.

¹ Paper and minutes for Action Item 14 at the 51st Eastern IFCA Meeting held on 8 March 2023 - [Authority Meeting Papers - Eastern IFCA](#)

² [Byelaw 6](#): berried (egg bearing) or soft shelled crab (*Cancer Pagurus*) or lobster (*Humarus gammarus*)

The Authority reserves the right to amend or revoke this policy where it is found to pose a risk to fisheries within the district or is no longer considered to be consistent with the Authority's main duties as set out in the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Gregory', written in a cursive style.

Date: 10/02/2026

J. Gregory
CEO