

Detailed guide: Manage and lease fishing quota

Updated: Details on page updated

Quota allocations

MMO divides up England's fishing quotas across the 3 fishing industry groups:

- sector – fish producer organisations that manage quota for their members
- 10-metres-and-under pool – vessels 10 metres or under that are not members of a producer organisation
- non-sector – vessels over 10 metres that are not members of a producer organisations

The number of fixed quota allocation (FQA) units held by the individual vessels in each group, or by a group collectively, establishes what [proportion of the EU quota is allocated to each group](#).

The quota assigned to the non-sector and 10-metre-and-under pools may be adjusted in line with underpinning arrangements – this is where there are guaranteed minimum levels of allocated quota. The minimum level for each stock will be a percentage of the UK quota equal to the average percentage share of initial allocations made to the 10-metres-and-under fleet from 1991 to 1993.

For vessels over 10 metres, FQA units are associated with the licence of the vessel. For vessels 10 metres and under, FQA units are held centrally by MMO.

FQA units

It is important that you are clear about your own FQA units and those associated with any licence or licence entitlement you buy. Statements of the FQA units associated with individual licences are issued to licence holders each year, usually in May.

As the holder of a licence you can request details of the FQA units associated with your licence at any time from MMO.

You can:

- transfer FQA units from a licence entitlement
- apply for a replacement FQA holding statement

Read more about [FQA units and get the application forms](#).

Quota swaps

Producer organisations can swap quota with other groups within the UK and MMO approves these swaps. The PO submits the [Domestic Quota Swap Form](#) to quotaswap.dqs@marinemanagement.org.uk.

MMO negotiates quota swaps with other EU member states.

Leasing extra quota

You can apply to lease extra quota from a producer organisation (PO), to supplement your catch limits or to keep fishing a stock where the 10-metres-and-under or non-sector pool allocation has been used.

If quota allocations have not been confirmed it is still possible to lease quota from a PO. Each PO should submit a leasing request to the MMO using the supplied letter template.



[Leasing scheme letter](#)

PDF, 241KB, 2 pages

You should follow the following steps once quota allocations have been issued.

Step 1

Contact the MMO fisheries management team to find out if the extra quota you need can be made available by an increase in the catch limit for the stock in question. Telephone 0300 123 1032 or email quotaswap.dqs@marinemanagement.org.uk

Step 2

If the MMO is unable to meet your requested catch limit increase, contact a PO directly to agree a lease.

Step 3

The PO that you are leasing quota must complete a [Domestic Quota Swap Form](#) that includes your:

- vessel's name
- Registry of Shipping and Seamen (RSS) number
- port letters and numbers (PLN)
- name and contact details
- amount of quota requested for lease

The PO must submit the form to quotaswap.dqs@marinemanagement.org.uk.

A group application must detail the proportion of the leased quota for each vessel.

Step 4

MMO considers applications to lease quota on a case-by-case basis. MMO checks the licence and vessel details and considers the catch limits, amount of stock being leased and the overall UK uptake position for the stock.

MMO take up to 10 days to process the application.

Step 5

If the application is approved, MMO will send:

- an approved form back to the donor PO
- a permit letter confirming leased quota details to you naming the boat it applies to – the letter becomes part of your vessel's fishing vessel licence and will be sent to you by email or post if no email address is available
- a copy of the leasing letter to the vessel's administration port

Step 6

You can start fishing against the leased quota as soon as you receive the leasing letter either by email or post. You must comply with the leasing scheme requirements.

Scheme requirements

You must be the owner of a vessel that is:

- 10-metres-or-under or non-sector
- fishing against the English pool allocation for any stocks
- fishing in English waters in the current year

Quota can be leased by individuals or a group:

- in year only
- for a minimum of 100kg
- in multiples of 100kg
- only for the purpose of fishing against the leased quota

Unused leased quota will be carried forward into the next month and the licence holder will be permitted to fish the leased in quota, in addition to the monthly catch limit.

This applies from the date of the letter until such time as:

- the additional leased-in quota is exhausted
- the fishery is closed at UK level
- the fishery is closed by the 31 December

If you do not fish the quota by 31 December, the MMO may use unused quota to benefit the whole fishing industry including under 10 and non-sector pools or to swap with other countries.

Unfished leased quota may be returned to the producer organisation from which it was leased (if the producer organisation agrees) up to the year end, but not beyond 31 December.

You may not:

- fish against leased quota if the fishery is subject to a UK closure (all Fish Producer Organisations and non sector licences).
- transfer leased quota except by agreeing to return it to the PO it came from
- use leased quota to increase FQA units

You must complete and submit full European Union logbooks and landing declarations within 48 hours of landing to your [local MMO office](#) for all stocks that you retain on board, discard and land. If you don't, you may be prosecuted.

Your catch is counted against the pool allocation first and your leased quota once the pool allocation is used. For example, if a monthly pool catch limit for a stock is 1 tonne and you lease in an extra 2 tonnes, your first tonne of a 2-tonne catch will be recorded against the pool and the second tonne against your leased quota.

You must make sure your vessel does not exceed the total quota available to you. If you catch more than your limit, you may be prosecuted.

How we manage fisheries quota

European Union laws limit the amount of fish that may be landed each year – the total allowable catch (TAC) – to preserve fish stocks. Each member state, including the UK, receives an agreed share of the TAC as its quota.

The UK quota is divided between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. If the UK fishing fleet exceeds its quota, the quota may be reduced and there could be large fines.

All UK vessels are subject to detailed quota management rules, which are updated each year.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is responsible for managing England's fishing quotas and publishes specific English quota management rules for English vessels.

MMO monitors landings of quota stocks and compares the amount caught and landed against total quota allocation. This is used to inform decisions about quota swaps, changes to catch limits and closing fisheries.

Detailed guide: Understand your fishing vessel licence

Updated: Annexes updated

Understanding your vessel licence

Your fishing vessel licence is in several parts. You must read each part carefully to make sure you understand the terms attached to it and that they are correct for your fishing activity.

Contact your [local Marine Management Organisation \(MMO\) office](#) with any questions and notify them immediately if any of the details are incorrect.

An incorrect licence is invalid and you could be liable to penalties.

It is your responsibility to check your licence documents before going to sea as licences can be changed at any time. MMO publishes variations online and notifies those who have provided their contact information.

You can provide MMO with up to 2 emails, mobile phone numbers, or both, as a way of getting direct alerts about changes. You can receive notifications yourself, but it may make sense to nominate someone based onshore who can contact you on your vessel quickly.

Variations are considered to have been received when they are published online. You are required, as part of your licence conditions, to check [each week for any changes](#).

Part 1: Vessel details

This part includes:

- category of licence
- official licence number
- characteristics of your vessel
- registered owners
- specific authorities for scallop dredging, beam trawl fishing, fish for shellfish with pots, fixed nets or both
- membership of a fish producer organisation

Part 2: Conditions

This specifies how your vessel will fish. You may be directed to make landings at certain ports and times.

Part 3: Schedule

This sets out the authority under which you are allowed to fish.

Part 4: Annex

This lists species that you are not permitted to fish and any catch limits for stocks that you are able to fish and land.

Fishing vessel licences: 10 metre and under vessels – non-sector

These are vessels 10-metres-and-under that don't belong to a producer organisation.

Uncapped licences for the non-sector and Isle of Man have the same conditions and schedules, and their own specific annexes.

- [Uncapped licence: conditions \(91\)](#)
(PDF, 107KB, 3 pages)
- [Uncapped licence: schedule \(91\)](#)
(PDF, 115KB, 5 pages)
- [Uncapped licence: Lyme Bay and Torbay Site of Community Importance conditions \(91\)](#)
(PDF, 80.6KB, 1 page)
- [Uncapped licence: annexe \(9199\)](#)
(PDF, 171KB, 5 pages)
- [Uncapped licence: annexe – Isle of Man \(9123\)](#)
(PDF, 169KB, 5 pages)
- [Monitored licence: schedule \(45\)](#)
(PDF, 116KB, 5 pages)
- [Monitored licence: conditions \(45\)](#)
(PDF, 107KB, 3 pages)

- [Monitored licence: Annexe \(4599\)](#)
(PDF, 172KB, 5 pages)
- [Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation \(172\)](#)
(PDF, 101KB, 4 pages)

Capped licences for the non-sector have the same conditions, schedule and annex.

- [Capped licence: conditions \(94\)](#)
(PDF, 107KB, 3 pages)
- [Capped licence: schedule \(94\)](#)
(PDF, 192KB, 5 pages)
- [Capped licence: Lyme Bay and Torbay Site of Community Importance conditions \(94\)](#)
(PDF, 80.6KB, 1 page)
- [Capped licence: annexe \(9499\)](#)
(PDF, 166KB, 4 pages)

Fishing vessel licences: 10 metre and under vessels – sector

All vessels that are members of a producer organisation have the same conditions and schedule.

- [Sector: conditions \(91\)](#)
(PDF, 115KB, 5 pages)
- [Sector: schedule \(91\)](#)
(PDF, 114KB, 5 pages)
-

[Sector: Lyme Bay and Torbay Site of Community Importance conditions \(91\)](#)
(PDF, 80.6KB, 1 page)

They each have their own specific annexes.

- [Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers' Organisation \(911\)](#)
(PDF, 100KB, 4 pages)
- [Anglo-Scottish Fish Producers' Organisation \(915\)](#)
(PDF, 101KB, 4 pages)
- [Eastern England Fish Producers' Organisation \(9114\)](#)
(PDF, 101KB, 4 pages)
- [South Western Fish Producers' Organisation \(913\)](#)
(PDF, 102KB, 4 pages)

Fishing vessel licences: over 10 metre vessels – Category A

All Category A vessels have the same conditions and schedule.

- [Category A: conditions \(11\)](#)
(PDF, 267KB, 9 pages)
- [Category A: transitional condition \(11\)](#)
(PDF, 267KB, 9 pages)
- [Category A: schedule \(11\)](#)
(PDF, 196KB, 7 pages)
- [Category A: Lyme Bay and Torbay Site of Community Importance conditions \(11\)](#)
(PDF, 64.2KB, 1 page)

There are specific annexes for vessels in the non-sector, Isle of Man, and each producer organisation.

- [Non-sector \(1199\)](#)
(PDF, 175KB, 7 pages)
- [Non-sector – Isle of Man \(1123\)](#)
(PDF, 168KB, 5 pages)
- [Aberdeen Fish Producers' Organisation \(118\)](#)
(PDF, 102KB, 4 pages)
- [Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers' Organisation \(111\)](#)
(PDF, 100KB, 4 pages)
- [Anglo-Scottish Fish Producers' Organisation \(115\)](#)
(PDF, 101KB, 4 pages)
- [Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation \(112\)](#)
(PDF, 101KB, 4 pages)
- [Eastern England Fish Producers' Organisation \(1114\)](#)
(PDF, 100KB, 4 pages)
- [Fife Fish Producers' Organisation \(1110\)](#)
(PDF, 106KB, 5 pages)
- [Fish Producers' Organisation \(114\)](#)
(PDF, 101KB, 4 pages)
- [Interfish Fish Producers' Organisation \(1125\)](#)
(PDF, 188KB, 4 pages)

- [Lowestoft Fish Producers' Organisation \(1117\)](#)
(PDF, 101KB, 4 pages)
- [Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation \(117\)](#)
(PDF, 102KB, 5 pages)
- [Northern Producers' Organisation \(1120\)](#)
(PDF, 102KB, 4 pages)
- [North Atlantic Fish Producers' Organisation \(1126\)](#)
(PDF, 100KB, 4 pages)
- [North Sea Fishermen's Organisation \(1118\)](#)
(PDF, 164KB, 4 pages)
- [Scottish Fishermen's Organisation \(119\)](#)
(PDF, 163KB, 4 pages)
- [South Western Fish Producers' Organisation \(113\)](#)
(PDF, 102KB, 4 pages)
- [West of Scotland Fish Producers' Organisation \(1121\)](#)
(PDF, 283KB, 5 pages)

Fishing vessel licences: over 10 metre vessels – Category A (Islands)

There are no producer organisation vessels that are Category A (Islands) vessels. All Category A (Islands) vessels are in the non-sector and have the same conditions, schedule and annex.

- [Category A \(Islands\): conditions \(12\)](#)
(PDF, 216KB, 9 pages)

- [Category A \(Islands\): schedule \(12\)](#)
(PDF, 190KB, 6 pages)
- [Category A \(Islands\): Lyme Bay and Torbay Site of Community Importance conditions \(1299\)](#)
(PDF, 64.2KB, 1 page)
- [Category A \(Islands\): annexe \(1299\)](#)
(PDF, 167KB, 5 pages)

Fishing vessel licences: over 10 metre vessels – Category A (Pelagic)

All Category A vessels have the same conditions and schedule.

- [Category A \(Pelagic\): conditions \(17\)](#)
(PDF, 235KB, 12 pages)
- [Category A \(Pelagic\): schedule \(17\)](#)
(PDF, 196KB, 8 pages)
- [Category A \(Pelagic\): Lyme Bay and Torbay Site of Community Importance conditions \(1799\)](#)
(PDF, 64.3KB, 1 page)
- [Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers' Organisation \(171\)](#)
(PDF, 203KB, 4 pages)

There are specific annexes for vessels in each producer organisation. There are no Category A (Pelagic) non-sector vessels.

- [Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation \(177\)](#)
(PDF, 86.4KB, 4 pages)
-

[South Western Fish Producers' Organisation \(173\)](#)

(PDF, 102KB, 4 pages)

-

[Wales and West Coast Fish Producers' Organisation \(1119\)](#)

(PDF, 150KB, 6 pages)

Fishing vessel licences: over 10 metre vessels – Category B

All Category B vessels have the same conditions and schedule.

-

[Category B: condtions \(31\)](#)

(PDF, 215KB, 9 pages)

-

[Category B: schedule \(31\)](#)

(PDF, 195KB, 7 pages)

-

[Category B: Lyme Bay and Torbay Site of Community Importance conditions \(31\)](#)

(PDF, 64.2KB, 1 page)

-

[Non-sector \(3199\)](#)

(PDF, 227KB, 5 pages)

There are specific annexes for vessels in the non-sector, Isle of Man, and each producer organisation.

-

[Non-sector – Isle of Man \(3123\)](#)

(PDF, 187KB, 4 pages)

-

[Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation \(312\)](#)

(PDF, 264KB, 4 pages)

-

[Scottish Fishermen's Organisation \(319\)](#)

(PDF, 244KB, 4 pages)

- [South Western Fish Producers' Organisation \(313\)](#)
(PDF, 271KB, 5 pages)

Fishing vessel licences: over 10 metre vessels – Category C

All Category C vessels have the same conditions and schedule.

- [Category C: conditions \(41\)](#)
(PDF, 203KB, 10 pages)
- [Category C: schedule \(41\)](#)
(PDF, 198KB, 7 pages)
- [Category C: Lyme Bay and Torbay Site of Community Importance conditions \(41\)](#)
(PDF, 64.2KB, 1 page)
- [Non-sector \(4199\)](#)
(PDF, 222KB, 4 pages)

There are specific annexes for vessels in the non-sector, Isle of Man, and each producer organisation.

- [Non-sector – Isle of Man \(4123\)](#)
(PDF, 184KB, 4 pages)
- [Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers' Organisation \(411\)](#)
(PDF, 261KB, 4 pages)
- [Eastern England Fish Producers' Organisation \(4114\)](#)
(PDF, 181KB, 4 pages)
- [Fife Fish Producers' Organisation \(4110\)](#)

(PDF, 266KB, 4 pages)

Fishing vessel licences: over 10 metre vessels – Deep sea species

All deep sea species vessels have the same conditions and schedule.

- [Deep sea species: conditions \(85\)](#)
(PDF, 136KB, 6 pages)
- [Deep sea species: schedule \(85\)](#)
(PDF, 9.61KB, 1 page)

There are specific annexes for vessels in the non-sector and each producer organisation.

- [Non-sector \(8599\)](#)
(PDF, 196KB, 2 pages)
- [Aberdeen Fish Producers' Organisation \(858\)](#)
(PDF, 255KB, 2 pages)
- [Lowestoft Fish Producers' Organisation \(8517\)](#)
(PDF, 256KB, 2 pages)
- [Northern Producers' Organisation \(8520\)](#)
(PDF, 255KB, 2 pages)
- [Wales and West Coast Fish Producers' Organisation \(8519\)](#)
(PDF, 256KB, 2 pages)

Fishing vessel licences: over 10 metre vessels – Handline mackerel

There are no producer organisation vessels with handline mackerel conditions

and schedules. There is no annex.

- [Handline mackerel: conditions \(24\)](#)
(PDF, 86KB, 2 pages)
- [Handline mackerel: schedule \(24\)](#)
(PDF, 8.28KB, 1 page)

Fishing vessel licences: over 10 metre vessels – Thames and Blackwater

There are no producer organisation vessels with these conditions and schedules. There is no annex.

- [Thames and Blackwater: conditions \(23\)](#)
(PDF, 22.5KB, 1 page)
- [Thames and Blackwater: schedule \(23\)](#)
(PDF, 7.25KB, 1 page)

Single licence category for the over ten metre fleet segment in Scotland.

Marine Scotland have created a single licence category for the over ten metre fleet segment in Scotland.

Different licence categories will remain in existence in England after 30 June 2017. Category B or C licence entitlements transferring from Scotland will be received as a Category B or C as they were prior to 1 July 2017.

Scottish licences created through disaggregation or aggregation in Scotland after 30 June 2017 will be tracked back to the lowest common denominator and received accordingly on transfer to England. For example a licence aggregation between an ex-Category B and an ex-Category A licence in Scotland will be received in England as a Category B licence.

Application to change UK fisheries administration

This [application to change UK fisheries administration](#)
(ODT, 40.1KB)

form must be completed by the vessel owner(s) who wish to request the change of administration from England to Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

Latent capacity licence monitoring

In 2015 Defra carried out an exercise to address latent capacity in the English under 10m fleet. A number of licences had their finfish licence capped at 350kgs and/or had their shellfish permit temporarily suspended. This exercise included an appeals process. Some appeals were successful but subject to a monitoring period of 2 years.

This period drew to an end in most cases on 31 December 2017. Defra officials will be seeking to review this policy in 2018. In the interim all licences subject to monitoring will continue to be able to fish to the limits as set out in their current licence until further notice.

If you have any queries please contact the Defra Helpline on 0345 933 5577 or email fisheriesreform@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

Further information

More information on:

- [vessel licence types](#).
- [current catch limits: over 10 metre non-sector](#)
- [current catch limits: 10 metres and under](#)
- [licence variations](#)

Statutory guidance: Quota management rules

Updated: Link updated

The UK fisheries administrations discussed these rules and produced the final rules based on the agreements reached and comments received.

Guidance: Marine licensing: fees

Updated: Fees updated

Fees are payable for different types of project based on the time it takes the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science to process the application.

An MMO case manager will notify you of the suitable fee band for your application. This can be changed if new information about your project makes a different band more suitable. If your application is moved to a different band, MMO will seek your agreement before doing any further work.

Where an application is to carry out more than 1 licensable activity and they fall in different fee bands, the higher fee band is payable.

For example, an application to dredge material and dispose of it at sea includes a band 3 project (dredging) and a band 2 project (disposal – if fewer than 1 million cubic metres), so the fees applied to the application will be band 3.

From 1 October 2014 you will also be charged a fee for any new licence variation or post-consent work, even if the licence was issued before this date.

Further information

See how to [get a licence for a burial at sea](#).

Contact information

Marine Licensing Team

0300 123 1032

marine.consents@marinemanagement.org.uk

[Detailed guide: Apply for a scientific research dispensation](#)

Updated: Text added

Please complete the dispensation request form and submit it to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). We aim to make a decision on most applications within 20 working days, however, each application is different and some applications will take longer than this if we are required to consult with other regulatory bodies.



Dispensation request form

PDF, 152KB, 4 pages

You must notify the MMO if your research is not being carried out on a licensed fishing vessel. An email stating the vessel name, dates of the survey, type of survey and equipment used should be sent to dispensationrequests@marinemanagement.org.uk

Examples of activities that require a dispensation include:

- using undersized nets or modified trawls
- catching and keeping on board undersized fish species
- fishing beyond set [effort management limits \(days at sea\)](#)
- catching and landing fish over a vessel's catch limits – MMO may be able to provide extra quota to licensed fishing vessels involved in research
- catching and landing fish stocks for which a vessel has no quota allocation

2% of quota allocated to England is in principle available for scientific dispensations. For any quota requests made by applicants for dispensations the MMO will determine whether the quota can be granted based on the context of the application and the availability of the specific quotas.

Licensing and consenting requirements

You may require additional licenses and consents to carry out your proposed research. This is relevant regardless of which type of vessel you are using, and whether you require a fisheries dispensation.

Protected species

A [marine wildlife licence](#) is required by anyone who wishes to carry out an activity in the English marine area or the Welsh offshore area that is prohibited under nature conservation legislation where the activity cannot be sufficiently mitigated against.

Marine licensing requirements

Work within the dispensation application may also require a marine licence or application for an exemption. It is the applicants responsibility to ensure that they have all relevant licences in place before they start any survey. Information on the [application process](#) and list of licensable activities is available.

Marine Protected Areas (MPA)

The MMO is responsible for making byelaws in English inshore waters to protect European Marine Sites (EMS) and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) from activities that may harm them; these may be commercial and/or recreational. [MMO byelaws](#) must help to further the conservation objectives of the site.

You may be required to comply with these [byelaws](#) and, unless stated, the derogation does not allow you to operate where it is not permitted within the sites.

Your dispensation application will ask you to provide details of any marine protected area you may be operating in. A [map](#) and details of all marine protected areas can be found on the [Joint Nature Conservation Committee \(JNCC\)](#) website.

Foreign vessels engaged in research or UK vessels which do not complete a dispensation application are encouraged to complete a voluntary notification form if the survey will take place within or close to an MPA.

MPA activity – [Voluntary notification form](#)

Other authority consents

You may also require consent or approval from other bodies before you are able to carry out the work that the dispensation applies to.

Local byelaws are the responsibility of the local Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA). You should familiarise yourself with the IFCA byelaws in your research area and [contact your local IFCA](#) if necessary.

If your research involves salmon, eels, elvers, lamprey, sea trout, smelt or crayfish the [Environment Agency](#) should also be contacted to discuss your research.

If your research involves work within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Natural England should be contacted to discuss the research application.

Further information

For research in other UK waters, dispensations will be issued by:

- [Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs](#)
- [Marine Scotland](#)
- [Welsh Government](#)

Under international law, all states have the right to conduct marine science research subject to the rights and duties of other States. The [Marine Science Research \(MSR\)](#) webpage contains application forms and guidance.

The UK Government has a target to protect habitats and species in our seas. Foreign vessels engaged in research are encouraged to complete a voluntary notification form.



Voluntary notification form

PDF, 69.9KB, 3 pages

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology.

Request an accessible format.

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email communications@marinemanagement.org.uk.

Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

Contact information

Marine Conservation Team

To discuss fisheries dispensations, wildlife licensing and Marine Protected Areas.

Telephone: 0300 123 1032

dispensationrequests@marinemanagement.org.uk

Fisheries Management Team

Telephone: 0300 123 1032

fmc@marinemanagement.org.uk

Marine Licensing Team

To discuss sampling and sediment analysis.

Telephone: 0300 123 1032

marine.consents@marinemanagement.org.uk

Marine Conservation and Enforcement Team

To discuss wildlife licensing and Marine Protected Areas.

Telephone: 0300 123 1032

conservation@marinemanagement.org.uk