



DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE UK SEAFOOD

For many years, the government, fishermen, processors and retailers have worked together to improve the sustainability of UK seafood. While Brexit presents some uncertainty for the UK seafood sector, what remains clear is the UK's obligation to deliver sustainable fisheries management and high quality, sustainable UK seafood, now and for the years to come.

We (the undersigned) believe it is important that the government and industry continue to support the adoption of policies and actions that maximise the environmental and social benefits of fisheries and minimise the risks. It is clear that whatever legislation is adopted as the UK exits the EU it must deliver confidence that UK seafood remains legally and sustainably sourced, and fisheries must operate in accordance with the existing regulations until such time as it is replaced by new fisheries legislation. This includes the continued implementation of the discard ban which requires fishing vessels to land all catches of specified fish so that they count against quota (where quotas apply) and to be fully documented.

With these obligations come clear opportunities, the most obvious of which is healthier fish stocks and a more resilient, profitable industry alongside greater food security. But if implemented poorly the result will be unaccounted for mortality, which undermines fishery science and could lead to overfishing. It could also constitute illegal activity which poses a significant reputational risk for the industry supply chain both at sea and on land.

The current outlook for assessed Northeast Atlantic stocks is positive with trends for mortality decreasing and for biomass increasing. We are proud of these achievements and need these positive trends to continue and not be undermined as a result of poor implementation. The UK seafood industry believes that:

1. Effective implementation of current legislation, and in time equivalent new UK and devolved law, is essential to ensure the continued biological and economic sustainability of European fisheries including those MSC certified fisheries
2. Fully documenting fisheries is an essential tool for successful fisheries management and the attainment of healthy fish stocks
3. Failing to properly document and account for catches should not be sacrificed because there are implementation challenges in some fleet sectors

In order to address this we are willing to support initiatives that will be necessary to support this outcome. These include:

- Progressive phasing of the species to be covered by the discard ban.
- Increased selectivity in fishing activities both in terms of fishing practice and gear development
- Comprehensive and cost-effective monitoring and enforcement of measures
- Innovation in access to quota – including the creation of new, more flexible quota trading platforms.
- Incentivising innovation in fishing practices to address potential choke situations.



This statement was convened by WWF as part of our programme to achieve sustainable fisheries in the UK.



Why we are here
To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.
panda.org

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