

# Joint Fisheries Statement

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Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



The Scottish  
Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**  
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# Executive Summary

## Why a JFS?

The UK fisheries policy authorities have collaborated to produce a Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS), which arises from a legal requirement in section 2 of the Fisheries Act 2020 (the Act). The JFS sets out the policies of the fisheries policy authorities for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the Act's eight fisheries objectives and forms part of the UK Fisheries Management and Support Framework (the Fisheries Framework). The JFS sets out the ambition of the UK to continue delivering world class, sustainable management of fisheries in line with those objectives and how it will do so.

The JFS defines how the fisheries policy authorities have understood the fisheries objectives and how we will apply them to fisheries policy. We have also identified through the document where each of the objectives applies to any given policy, noting that, due to the inter-linked nature of the objectives, one policy will often address several objectives.

## Why is fishing important?

The fish stocks around the UK's coast are a public resource and national asset, and the JFS sets out how the fisheries policy authorities will ensure they continue to benefit fishing communities, and the seafood supply chain across the UK, now and into the future. The fishing industry forms the foundation for, and contributes significantly to, the continued prosperity of coastal communities around the UK. The industry prides itself on delivering valuable employment opportunities to otherwise remote or rural areas and providing healthy, sustainable food to the UK as a whole. Our commercial fish stocks form an integral part of healthy marine ecosystems and support recreational uses. Domestic production of seafood also has a role to play in the UK's food security, giving us national resilience in an uncertain world.

## Why is the relationship between fishing and the environment important?

A vibrant and prosperous seafood sector, supporting thriving coastal communities, depends upon a healthy and resilient marine environment. Fisheries rely on the ecosystems in which they operate, the functioning of which may be compromised by human-induced pressures, including fishing activity, and impacted by environmental threats such as climate change. To achieve the UK's vision set out in the Marine Policy Statement (UKMPS) for 'clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse oceans and seas' and ensure the UK has long-term, sustainable, and profitable fisheries and aquaculture, it is important to manage these pressures and environmental threats.

## What policies are in the JFS?

The JFS recognises the importance of fishing, recreational sea fishing and aquaculture to the UK and many of our coastal communities. It highlights the importance of working with the catching and processing sectors, along with their supply chains, on succession planning, training, access to domestic labour, and fair remuneration to encourage new entrants. The fisheries policy authorities commit to promoting the consumption of locally sourced seafood as a healthy, high-quality protein source, and to supporting prosperous and resilient UK and international markets. The JFS also commits the fisheries policy authorities to supporting the health, safety and well-being of those working in the seafood sector, particularly when at sea.

The JFS sets out the UK's approach to implementing the climate change objective by identifying and supporting changes to adapt to and mitigate climate change, including reducing emissions across the fishing industry to support decarbonisation. It also recognises the importance of protecting and restoring blue carbon habitats to support resilience to climate change, whilst ensuring a commitment to work with the scientific community to develop the evidence base.

The JFS recognises a healthy and resilient marine environment is the foundation for a prosperous seafood sector and thriving coastal communities, and sustainable use and conservation of the sea is central to the fisheries management approach. It commits to working with industry to reduce and, where possible, eliminate bycatch and entanglement of sensitive species. It will also inform our international work to ensure we act as global leaders in sustainable fisheries management.

## Why Fisheries Management Plans?

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) play a key role in the UK Administrations' commitment to sustainable fishing. The JFS sets out the overall purpose of FMPs, including their link to the fisheries objectives in the Act and the wider Fisheries Framework, together with the plans the fisheries policy authorities will publish.

The fisheries policy authorities will jointly publish individual FMPs for those stocks that are of social and economic importance, at risk of significant over-exploitation and have an ecosystem significance. Each fisheries policy authority will consider whether to bring forward its own FMPs to manage fishing activity within its jurisdiction or collaborate with another fisheries policy authority where appropriate.

FMPs will focus on the sustainable management of stocks. However, the scope of a FMP may be extended to consider wider fisheries management issues covering environmental, social and economic concerns.

## How will we evaluate progress?

In line with the Act, the JFS will remain in place until such time as the fisheries policy authorities review and consider it necessary to amend or revise the statement. It will be reviewed at least every 6 years (from date of publication).

The fisheries policy authorities will publish a report every three years on the extent to which the policies set out in the JFS have been implemented and have achieved, or contributed to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives. The report will also evaluate the extent to which the policies contained in a relevant FMP have been implemented and have affected fish stock levels.



# Introduction

The UK's seafood sector is an important part of the economy of coastal communities and has a rich cultural heritage from which many of those communities draw a sense of place and identity. The UK's relationship with the sea is rightly celebrated. All along the coast, from the largest port to the smallest quayside, fishers, fishing communities and the aquaculture<sup>1</sup> sector take pride in delivering high-quality, sustainable produce, which contributes to food security. In addition, the UK is recognised for its investment in fisheries science, not just in assessing the health of fish stocks and ecosystems, but also in developing and adapting its fishing methods and using new technologies - something more important than ever given the need to address the challenges of climate change. In this time of change, the UK will continue to value the importance of fishing to its many coastal communities, including for recreational uses, and will deliver a prosperous fishing industry for future generations while safeguarding, restoring and enhancing the marine environment on which the industry and wider society depends.

Our fisheries face a range of challenges and opportunities on which all four UK Administrations will need to work together. Continuing to rebuild fish stocks, reducing the environmental effects of fishing, as well as minimising the adverse effects on, and supporting adaptation to, climate change, will be vital to ensuring a vibrant seafood sector which is fit for the future. Promoting the consumption of locally sourced seafood as a healthy, high-protein source and supporting prosperous and resilient UK and international markets is a key part of ensuring food security. Delivering sustainable fisheries and aquaculture is essential to achieving the UK's vision for 'clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse oceans and seas'<sup>2</sup>.

Sea fish are a public resource and, having left the European Union (EU), the UK Administrations have a responsibility to manage their fisheries so as to ensure their sustainable stewardship in a way that recognises the specific needs of our diverse seafood industry and marine environment.

The [Fisheries Act 2020](#) (the Act) sets out eight fisheries objectives that provide the basis against which the fisheries policy authorities (the Secretary of State, Scottish Ministers, Welsh Ministers and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland) will manage their fisheries. This JFS sets out the policies agreed jointly between the fisheries policy authorities on sea fisheries (catching and processing), recreational sea fishing, and aquaculture management for achieving, or contributing to the

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<sup>1</sup> Aquaculture can take place in both the inshore and offshore marine environment and can be broadly grouped according to water type (marine or freshwater), species type (finfish, shellfish, or plants) and intensity (intensive, semi-intensive or extensive).

<sup>2</sup> UK Marine Policy Statement <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-marine-policy-statement>

achievement of, the fisheries objectives. These policies, together with the fisheries objectives, will be reflected by fisheries policy authorities in their own policy development. Individual fisheries policy authorities may also have existing devolved strategies and policy documents, which already reflect policies within the JFS, and therefore the fisheries objectives.

The fisheries policy authorities have jointly prepared and published this JFS for the purposes of the Act. As national fisheries authorities, they, and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), are obliged to exercise their functions in accordance with the policies in the JFS and applicable FMPs, in line with section 10 of the Act.

## **Importance of fishing to all nations in the UK**

The fishing and aquaculture sectors in the UK support a diverse supply chain which includes catching, processing of fish, transportation, loading and unloading of fish or fish products.

In the catching industry, commercial fisheries across the UK range from large pelagic vessels which can catch hundreds of tonnes of fish in a single haul, to small inshore fishing vessels and intertidal hand gatherers of shellfish. The approach to management and specific management measures can vary across the UK and in inshore and offshore waters. Fleet composition varies considerably between each nation, and fishing plays an important role in sustaining some vulnerable coastal communities and their ports and harbours.

Recreational sea fishing is also a popular form of fishing in the UK and, like commercial fishing, provides important economic and social benefits.

As one of the UK's strategic food production sectors, aquaculture helps to underpin sustainable economic growth, both in rural and coastal communities and in the wider economy. Aquaculture policy is fully devolved within the UK, and, as such, each of the fisheries policy authorities operates under devolved legislation and policies.

The seafood processing and export sector is a locally significant employer in the UK. It consists of primary processing (like filleting and freezing) and secondary processing (like portioning, packing, smoking and breading), as well as facilities for exporting unprocessed fish. Seafood processing sites are situated across the UK, ranging from small sites to larger processing businesses with multiple sites, often clustered in key regional hubs. The sector's output is for both domestic and international markets, varying around the UK. In some parts of the UK fish are also exported as live, unprocessed goods, predominantly to the EU market. Seafood imports, alongside domestically fished species, are also important for the fish processing sector and support economic output.

## The Fisheries Framework

Fisheries management in the UK is largely devolved. This JFS forms part of the wider UK Fisheries Framework. [The Fisheries Framework](#) sets out areas where a joint approach to fisheries management across the UK will be followed, and the UK-wide legislation, policies and principles of joint working to achieve this. The Fisheries Framework consists of the Act and associated statutory instruments, relevant retained EU law, the JFS, FMPs and the Fisheries Framework Memorandum of Understanding. The latter sets out principles on ways of working and collaboration on fisheries management between the fisheries policy authorities.

Differences in approach to policy development will occur in each nation, reflecting the devolved nature of fisheries management across the UK. However, the fisheries policy authorities' approach to partnership working and collaborative management through the Fisheries Framework strives to achieve agreed common outcomes while recognising the ability and need for policy divergence and to respect devolution.

## National and International Agreements

The fisheries policy authorities, in delivering their functions in accordance with the policies in the JFS, are also required to have regard to the requirements of established national legislation and commitments the UK has made under international agreements and declarations. These include the [Trade and Cooperation Agreement \(TCA\) between the EU and the UK](#), [UN Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#), the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#), the [UN Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#), including the Global Biodiversity Framework, the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species](#), and the [Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North East Atlantic \(OSPAR\)](#). The fisheries policy authorities will also have regard to commitments stemming from membership of Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs).

Following the UK's exit from the EU, the TCA includes provisions relating to annual negotiations on fishing opportunities and access to waters and establishes a Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF) between the EU and UK to facilitate cooperation on fisheries management. The agreement recognises the UK's regulatory autonomy to decide on the fisheries management rules that apply in UK waters.

The [Marine Strategy Regulations 2010](#) (SI 2010/1627) require fishery bodies in the UK to take action to achieve or maintain Good Environmental Status (GES) in all UK waters. The [UK Marine Strategy](#) (UKMS) is a key pillar of marine policy in the UK, and the JFS is a cross-cutting measure which will help to deliver GES for commercial fisheries. Further, the JFS will help ensure fishing practices do not compromise the overall achievement of GES through impacting on other elements of GES such as biodiversity or seabed integrity.

## Northern Ireland Protocol

Collaboration on fisheries management across the fisheries policy authorities sits within the context of the [Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol \(the Protocol\)](#). The Protocol sets out the arrangements agreed between the UK and the EU to address the unique circumstances on the island of Ireland introduced by the UK's departure from the EU. Northern Ireland is a part of the UK, including being a part of the UK's customs territory, and the Protocol continues to apply certain provisions of EU law to Northern Ireland to avoid the introduction of a hard border (as set out in Annex 2 of the Protocol).

## The Scope of the JFS

The JFS covers sea fisheries policy and management within UK waters, and in negotiations with other coastal States. The JFS will also inform our approach to international agreements and engagement with international fora.

It does not apply directly to UK Overseas Territories or to the Crown Dependencies (CDs)<sup>3</sup>. However, policies within the JFS will inform our approach to engaging with the CDs in pursuit of common aims and objectives to deliver effective fisheries management in our respective jurisdictions, whilst recognising their independence and autonomy. Future engagement will be guided by new agreements which will replace existing Fisheries Management Agreements.

The Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) in England will need to have regard to the Act, the JFS and FMPs, where required by any guidance issued by the Secretary of State about performance of their functions or where undertaking a relevant function delegated to them by the MMO.

## Effect of the JFS and FMPs

The fisheries policy authorities and the MMO (in their role as national fisheries authorities, as defined by the Act), are required by the Act to exercise their functions relating to fisheries, fishing or aquaculture in accordance with the policies contained in a JFS or FMPs that are applicable to the authority unless a relevant change of circumstances indicates otherwise<sup>4</sup>.

The relevant circumstances include, in particular, changes relating to:

- The international obligations of the UK.

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<sup>3</sup> The Crown Dependencies are the Isle of Man, the Bailiwick of Jersey and the Bailiwick of Guernsey.

<sup>4</sup> Fisheries Act 2020 section 10

- Things done (or not done) by the government of a territory outside the UK that affect the marine and aquatic environment.
- Available scientific evidence, or
- Available evidence relating to the social, economic or environmental elements of sustainable development.

It is the policy of all fisheries policy authorities that any deviation would not be taken lightly. Reasons for departing from policies in either this JFS or FMPs in any decision making will be explained and published<sup>5</sup>.

## Accountability

Policies set out within this JFS will be implemented and evaluated through the normal procedures of the relevant fisheries policy authorities and any relevant national oversight mechanisms, and through the Fisheries Framework processes if required.

### 1. Our Shared Ambition

- 1.1 Our ambition is to deliver world class, sustainable management of our sea fisheries and aquaculture across the UK, and to play our part in supporting delivery of this globally.
- 1.2 As part of being an independent coastal State, the fisheries policy authorities will work together to support a vibrant, profitable, and sustainable fishing and aquaculture sector supported by a healthy marine environment that is resilient to climate change.
- 1.3 We aim to deliver this ambition through three main areas:

- **Protecting and, where necessary, recovering our fish stocks.**

Wild fish are a public natural resource and provide significant benefits to the UK, as a source of food and employment, through the provision of ecosystem services, and social and well-being benefits. We will work together to ensure fish stocks are managed and, where necessary, recovered for the wider benefit of all, maximising the benefit to coastal communities. We will continue to strive to make significant improvements in the status of the UK's wild fish stocks.

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<sup>5</sup> Fisheries Act 2020 section 7 (5) and 10 (2)

- **Reducing the adverse effects of fishing on the marine and coastal environment.**

We recognise a thriving fishing industry is underpinned by a healthy marine environment and that healthy stocks are resilient stocks. The fisheries policy authorities will ensure fisheries policy decisions take account of this relationship, including adopting an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management. Using a range of approaches, such as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and technical measures, we will significantly reduce the effects of fishing on the marine environment in a manner that supports climate change resilience and adaptation.

- **Supporting a modern, resilient and environmentally responsible fishing industry.**

The fisheries policy authorities will work together in support of a profitable and resilient fishing industry. We will support the continued development of robust supply chains, a diverse, low emission and modern fleet, with access to secure energy supplies and a safe, skilled workforce. In doing so, the workforce, fleet and supply chains will be supported to collectively respond swiftly to changing market and environmental conditions and new opportunities, while ensuring sustainable fisheries and biodiverse ecosystems for future generations, contributing to food security across the UK.

As the marine environment changes, we will help our fishing and aquaculture industries to adapt accordingly, both to ensure economic viability and reduce impacts that may be undermining marine ecosystem resilience.

## 2. The Fisheries Objectives

The fisheries objectives, as set out in the Act, provide the basis for the policies set out in the JFS. They collectively define sustainable fishing, which includes aquaculture, and are designed to help the fisheries policy authorities balance the achievement of a thriving, profitable seafood sector with a healthy and resilient marine environment in the long term.

The fisheries objectives are complementary, and one policy may contribute to the achievement of several objectives.

### 2.1 Interpreting the Objectives

2.1.1 (1) The 'sustainability objective' is that:

(a) fish and aquaculture activities are—

(i) environmentally sustainable in the long term, and

(ii) managed so as to achieve economic, social and employment benefits and contribute to the availability of food supplies, and

(b) the fishing capacity of fleets is such that fleets are economically viable but do not overexploit marine stocks.

- 2.1.2 Sustainable, healthy marine and coastal habitats, and species, are fundamental to supporting fishing and aquaculture activities. Sustainable fishing and aquaculture means environmental, economic and social considerations are appropriately balanced when managing our fisheries and aquaculture to benefit present and future generations. It means ensuring that fish stocks can be fished, commercially and recreationally, both now and in the future. In doing so, the fisheries policy authorities will consider both the short-term and the long-term impacts of decisions on fish stocks and the fishing industry before acting; short-term socio-economic decisions should not significantly compromise the long-term health of the marine environment. These decisions will need to recognise the cultural importance of fishing through maintaining and, where possible, strengthening coastal communities and livelihoods alongside the requirement for fish stocks to reach and maintain sustainable levels.
- 2.1.3 To strike this balance, the fisheries policy authorities will take fisheries management decisions that are informed by the best available evidence.
- 2.1.4 The fisheries policy authorities will place emphasis on rebuilding stocks and protecting the environment. This will need to be delivered in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of fishing interests, including coastal communities, and takes account of wider environmental factors.
- 2.1.5 **(2) The ‘precautionary objective’** is that—
- (a) the precautionary approach to fisheries management is applied, and
- (b) exploitation of marine stocks restores and maintains populations of harvested species above biomass levels capable of producing Maximum Sustainable Yield.
- 2.1.6 The Act defines a precautionary approach to fisheries management as ‘an approach in which the absence of sufficient scientific information is not used to justify postponing or failing to take management measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species, non-target species or their environment’.
- 2.1.7 To support the precautionary objective, the fisheries policy authorities will focus on ensuring that demands for additional evidence are not used to avoid or delay taking difficult management decisions.
- 2.1.8 The Act defines Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) as ‘the highest theoretical equilibrium yield that can be continuously taken on average from a marine stock

under existing environmental conditions without significantly affecting the reproduction process’.

- 2.1.9 The objective of maintaining biomass levels above levels capable of producing MSY provides fisheries policy authorities with a valuable tool to assess and manage the status of fish stocks. However, MSY assessments require a data-rich approach which limits the number of stocks that can be assessed on this basis. Throughout the JFS, reference is made to MSY or to using suitable proxies in line with the precautionary approach. For example, for the Black Scabbardfish in the Northeast Atlantic, an abundance index is utilised to determine catch advice. The use of these suitable proxies alongside MSY, both to assess the state of stocks and inform management choices, will help drive improved sustainability across a greater number of stocks.
- 2.1.10 **(3) The ‘ecosystem objective’ is that—**
- (a) fish and aquaculture activities are managed using an ecosystem-based approach so as to ensure that any negative impacts on marine ecosystems are minimised and, where possible, reversed, and
  - (b) incidental catches of sensitive species are minimised and, where possible, eliminated.
- 2.1.11 An ecosystem-based approach is defined in the Act as ‘an approach which (a) ensures that the collective pressure of human activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of GES within the meaning of the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010, and (b) does not compromise the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes.’
- 2.1.12 Our fishing and aquaculture sectors operate in, and depend upon, a high-quality marine environment. We acknowledge there are many kinds of interactions within the marine environment, and the fisheries policy authorities will work together to build our understanding of how these issues influence management decisions.
- 2.1.13 The fisheries policy authorities will achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the ecosystem objective and GES through management regimes which maintain or, where required, recover, protect and improve the health of marine ecosystems. Such management approaches will be designed to minimise the impacts of fishing on the environment beyond individual stocks, such as damage to seabed habitats and bycatch of sensitive species and non-target species, while allowing appropriate human uses of our seas for the benefit of current and future generations.
- 2.1.14 **(4) The ‘scientific evidence objective’ is that—**
- (a) scientific data relevant to the management of fish and aquaculture activities is collected,



(b) where appropriate, the fisheries policy authorities work together on the collection of, and share, such scientific data, and

(c) the management of fish and aquaculture activities is based on the best available scientific advice.

2.1.15 The scientific evidence objective means fisheries policy authorities will always take an evidence-based approach and make full use of the best available scientific advice to support decision making. This includes improving our collective understanding of how fishing and aquaculture impacts the marine environment in conjunction with other marine sectors and activities. As fisheries is a devolved competence, the fisheries policy authorities will continue to work together to deliver this evidence base.

2.1.16 **(5) The 'bycatch objective'** is that—

(a) the catching of fish that are below minimum conservation reference size and other unwanted bycatch, is avoided or reduced,

(b) catches are recorded and accounted for, and

(c) bycatch that is fish is landed, but only where this is appropriate and (in particular) does not create an incentive to catch fish that are below minimum conservation reference size.

2.1.17 The bycatch objective looks to avoid or reduce the catching of fish that are unwanted or below the minimum conservation reference size. The fisheries policy authorities are committed to ending the wasteful practice of discarding and to increasing the level of accountability for fishing activities at sea, while building the confidence we have in our seafood products.

2.1.18 The fisheries policy authorities are committed to ensuring that all catches of fish are accounted for with a preference that all catches of fish managed by Total Allowable Catch (TAC) are landed, unless:

- There is strong evidence fish will survive the capture process or
- There are limits to the application of technical mitigations or
- Landing the fish will result in excessive disposal costs

2.1.19 **(6) The 'equal access objective'** is that the access of UK fishing boats to any area within British fishery limits is not affected by—

(a) the location of the fishing boat's home port, or

(b) any other connection of the fishing boat, or any of its owners, to any place in the United Kingdom.

- 2.1.20 The fisheries policy authorities recognise any vessels registered and licensed in the UK have an equal right to fish in UK waters. On this basis, the equal access objective means no fisheries policy authority will put in place any measures to restrict the access of any UK-licensed vessel to any part of UK waters on the basis of a vessel's home port.
- 2.1.21 Restrictions on a vessel's ability to fish are a key tool of the fisheries policy authorities, but all such restrictions will be based on objective criteria and based on the need to protect stocks and the marine environment. In return, vessels will abide by the rules set by the fisheries policy authority in whose waters they are fishing.
- 2.1.22 **(7) The 'national benefit objective'** is that fishing activities of UK fishing boats bring social or economic benefits to the UK or any part of the UK.
- 2.1.23 The national benefit objective means that the fisheries policy authorities will make conditions for each UK vessel they license to bring either economic or social benefits to the UK, or any part of the UK.
- 2.1.24 **(8) The 'climate change objective'** is that—
- (a) the adverse effect of fish and aquaculture activities on climate change is minimised, and
  - (b) fish and aquaculture activities adapt to climate change.
- 2.1.25 Seafood can make a valuable contribution to a low-carbon future. The fishing fleet is diverse, and some fishing methods are already relatively low carbon. Seafood is a potentially lower-carbon and healthy source of protein which can grow sustainably to fulfil its potential within the food sector. The fisheries policy authorities recognise, however, that throughout the fishing fleet and aquaculture activities there are opportunities to contribute to each nation's path to net zero through innovation and adoption of alternative technologies and fishing methods to begin the transition to a lower carbon future. In doing so, there are opportunities for sustained improvements to energy security, reductions to overheads and benefits for the marine environment. Additionally, that pathway can have multiple benefits of reducing costs for fishers and reducing the impact of fisheries on the marine environment. This is a significant transition requiring sustained and substantial changes. The fisheries policy authorities will each take steps to encourage decarbonisation and gear innovation in the seafood sector, with a particular focus on the catching sector.
- 2.1.26 Climate change will continue to alter the marine environment around the UK, changing the species composition of marine ecosystems. In accordance with the climate change objective, the fisheries policy authorities will support fisheries to adapt to these changes and challenges. As ranges expand and new stocks arrive, we will consider the use of FMPs to ensure their management is

sustainable from the outset. The fisheries policy authorities will pursue appropriate policies to control fishing activity on vulnerable stocks and to protect, recover and enhance valuable blue carbon habitats.









## 2.2 Applying the Objectives

- 2.2.1 The fisheries policy authorities will strive to make significant overall progress in reducing the effects of fishing and aquaculture on the marine environment and the health of our fish stocks – particularly given the growing risks from climate change. We will also seek to ensure we maintain and improve the economic and cultural benefits we receive from our fisheries and wider sectors.
- 2.2.2 Given the complexity of UK fisheries and our marine environment, we will continue to take an ecosystem-based, precautionary approach to fisheries management and adopt a balanced and proportionate approach to achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives in a manner that contributes towards achieving and maintaining GES.
- 2.2.3 The policies set out in the JFS are to be read as a package, designed to meet all of the fisheries objectives. The overarching policies in the JFS will apply to the day-to-day management decisions of the national fisheries authorities.
- 2.2.4 Section 2.1 explains how the fisheries objectives have been interpreted. In the JFS we have used a numeric colour-coded system, supported by a narrative description, to identify how the fisheries objectives apply to policies and to help demonstrate how we have proportionately applied them. Section 5 sets out how we propose to use FMPs to achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives.
- 2.2.5 The fisheries policy authorities have an obligation to set out policies for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, all of the fisheries objectives, and these are set out within this JFS and the listed FMPs. All of the fisheries objectives are important, but some policies will favour particular objectives more than others. Table A in section 2.3 sets out the balance of policies against the objectives.
- 2.2.6 In formulating the policies in this JFS, the fisheries policy authorities recognise their interconnected relationship. For example, without the sustainable management of our stocks, we would not have a seafood sector which supports jobs and coastal communities for the future; we would not have products to market; and we would not deliver against our commitment to achieve GES with fish as a key ecosystem component.
- 2.2.7 It may, at times, be necessary to prioritise one fisheries objective over another in the short term. Decision making in such prioritisation will need to take place on a case-by-case basis taking into account individual circumstances and an

assessment of risks. For example, to help a fishing community adjust to the introduction of a management measure, or to address an environmental challenge in a fishery such as the bycatch of sensitive species in a particular area or fleet. However, when doing so, the fisheries policy authorities will have regard to the other objectives, for example by adopting an evidence-based approach, and being mindful of the precautionary approach whilst ensuring that management interventions are proportionate to the risk of the issue being addressed.

## 2.3 Objectives by Policy Areas

2.3.1 Each of the fisheries objectives has been assigned a numeric symbol from 1 to 8 as illustrated in the key below. These symbols are used in sections 3-5 of this document to indicate which policies are contributing to the achievement of individual objectives. A summary is provided in Table A below.

Objective	Number
Sustainability objective	
Precautionary objective	
Ecosystem objective	
Scientific evidence objective	
Bycatch objective	
Equal access objective	
National benefit objective	
Climate change objective	

**Table A: Summary of the fisheries objectives by policy area in this JFS**

Policy heading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>3.2 Science and evidence</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
<b>4.1 Our approach to fisheries management</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>4.2 Achieving the fisheries objectives through our policies</b>								
4.2.1 Fishing Opportunities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
4.2.2 Non-quota stocks	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes
4.2.3 Wider international engagement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4.2.4 Fishing capacity	Yes							
4.2.5 Approach to access to UK waters	Yes					Yes		
4.2.6 Fisheries monitoring and enforcement	Yes	Yes		Yes				
4.2.7 Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing	Yes		Yes		Yes			
4.2.8 Reducing bycatch and minimising catches of sensitive species	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes			

Policy heading	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4.2.9 Displacement	Yes		Yes				Yes	
4.2.10 Marine Spatial Planning	Yes		Yes	Yes			Yes	
4.2.11 Marine Protected Areas			Yes	Yes				Yes
4.2.12 Marine litter and end of life fishing gear	Yes		Yes	Yes				
4.2.13 Coastal and freshwater	Yes		Yes					
4.2.14 Climate change		Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes
4.2.15 Aquaculture	Yes		Yes	Yes				Yes
4.2.16 Recreational sea fishing	Yes		Yes	Yes				Yes
4.2.17 Production, marketing and consumption of Seafood	Yes		Yes				Yes	Yes
<b>5.0 Fisheries Management Plans</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

## 3. Delivering the JFS

### 3.1. Principles

- 3.1.1 The national fisheries authorities will deliver the policies in the JFS through the exercise of their functions and in line with the fisheries objectives. The use of best available evidence and scientific advice, transparent decision making and partnership working, will be core principles that underpin delivery. This is in addition to the principles of simplification and coherent regulations, as well as collaboration between fisheries enforcement authorities.
- 3.1.2 The JFS provides a transparent framework that sets out cross-Government priorities for UK waters to deliver the fisheries objectives, implemented by the fisheries policy authorities and contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. This is similar to how the [UKMPS](#) provides a framework for preparing marine plans and taking decisions affecting the marine environment.
- 3.1.3 The fisheries policy authorities will have regard to the fisheries objectives, where appropriate, in future policy development, and will set out further policies in their respective areas of competence to support the achievement of the objectives.

### 3.2. Science and Evidence



- 3.2.1 Good science and a robust evidence base that commands trust and confidence will be essential to achieve the fisheries objectives. The UK has the opportunity as a coastal State to fulfil its ambition to be a world leader in science and innovation. The UK's expertise, together with its wealth of experience in gathering scientific data and information on the marine environment, means that it can continue to develop high-quality, scientific fisheries and aquaculture evidence.

#### **Our Approach**

- 3.2.2 In line with the scientific evidence objective, the UK will take an evidence-based approach to fisheries and aquaculture management, making full use of the best available scientific evidence, supporting the UK in continuing to meet its international obligations. This will be underpinned by a wide-ranging and coordinated monitoring programme and advisory framework, which will be further enhanced by research.

## **Best Available Scientific Advice**

- 3.2.3 We will ensure that a coordinated approach is taken across the fisheries policy authorities and externally to develop and procure scientific advice. We will seek opportunities to engage more widely with international organisations, including the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and RFMOs, as well as with environmental organisations, the fishing and aquaculture industries and the wider seafood sector.
- 3.2.4 The UK understands the importance and value of its continued membership of ICES. We will continue to play a full and active role in ICES, where UK scientists make a significant contribution at all levels of its advisory process, including on the Science and Advisory Committees and through participation in expert groups.
- 3.2.5 The UK will also utilise fully its position as an independent advice requestor of ICES, to strengthen the relationship with ICES and seek opportunities to improve fisheries and marine ecosystem science across the North East Atlantic.
- 3.2.6 Fisheries data and science can be complex, with ICES assessment areas and TAC management areas not often being directly aligned, requiring interpretation. Many stocks do not have sufficient data to make a MSY assessment and thus require other assessments in order to establish their health and appropriate management measures to be applied in accordance with these limitations, in line with the precautionary objective. To increase transparency, we will work with others to make it easier for everyone to understand how negotiated management outcomes relate to advice on sustainable fishing. We will also seek ways to assess the wider effects of fishing on non-commercial species and the wider marine environment.
- 3.2.7 The UK will also provide reporting on the sustainability of stocks through a combination of overarching metrics that reflect the status of a large number of stocks alongside more detailed information on individual stocks.

## **Scientific Data Collection and Sharing**

- 3.2.8 We will ensure the continuity and consistency of fisheries and aquaculture data collection and sharing that is necessary to meet the UK's commitments and needs through having a coordinated programme of data collection across the fisheries policy authorities. The UK is currently undertaking a detailed review and analysis of its monitoring programme to ensure data collection is fit for purpose and supports UK commitments and priority needs.
- 3.2.9 This will be delivered through a specific UK Work Plan, in accordance with the Fisheries Framework. The UK Work Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it continues to meet UK data needs.



- 3.2.10 We will gather a range of data and information - including scientific, technical, economic and social - from a wide range of sources. This includes fisheries independent surveys, fisheries dependent sampling and fishing activity data, as well as data and intelligence from industry and international expertise.
- 3.2.11 Effective monitoring and fully documented fisheries are key components of ensuring a well-evidenced, sustainable future for the fishing industry and marine environment. Where appropriate, the fisheries policy authorities will explore the use of technologies such as Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) and Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) for scientific purposes and to aid the sustainable management and control of fisheries.
- 3.2.12 The fisheries policy authorities will also put in place appropriate monitoring and surveillance programmes to improve our understanding of the environmental effects of fishing activities to inform our progress towards achieving GES and the fisheries objectives, including on sustainability, climate change and the ecosystem-based approach.
- 3.2.13 Fisheries management measures will be reviewed regularly for effectiveness and updated when appropriate based on available evidence. This evidence will be gathered as part of the wider UK Work Plan, domestic fisheries monitoring and research programmes. This will ensure decision making supports sustainable fisheries and contributes to the achievement of the sustainability objective. A sustainable fishing industry will provide social and economic benefits, enabling sustainable resources and employment for current and future generations. This will also support the achievement of the national benefit objective.
- 3.2.14 The national fisheries authorities will aim to provide each other with as full and open access to scientific and technical information as possible. This will provide for the continued monitoring of UK fisheries, meeting of reporting commitments and management of shared stocks.
- 3.2.15 We will make this information publicly available, where appropriate, thereby encouraging better coordination, and access to and sharing, of data in order to advance our fisheries management.
- 3.2.16 We will continue to share data where appropriate with other countries, including to support regional co-ordination of monitoring. We will engage with, and establish where necessary, appropriate fora to facilitate cooperation.

### **Improving the Evidence Base**

- 3.2.17 The evidence base will be maintained and enhanced to support the fisheries objectives, including on sustainability, climate change, bycatch and an

ecosystem-based approach. This includes improving our collective understanding of the impact of fishing and aquaculture on the marine environment and seeking ways to assess the wider effects of fishing on non-commercial species. This will be achieved through targeted research, exploring innovative approaches, and capitalising on the outputs from joint partnerships across fisheries, aquaculture and marine - such as with industry, academia and international partners, including through the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

- 3.2.18 The national fisheries authorities will be open to exploring potential new and innovative sources of, and methods of gathering, scientific data and information to enhance the collection of high-quality data and standards of advice. This includes an ambition to encourage industry participation in the collection of data to support the management of stocks in support of a sustainable fishing industry. Both existing and new approaches will continually be evaluated to ensure these deliver useful and relevant data and information, as well as being cost effective.
- 3.2.19 We will seek to foster collaborative innovation together with industry, seeking solutions to fisheries management problems, such as effective monitoring, optimising working practices, fishing gear selectivity and impact reduction.

### **3.3. Working in Partnership**

- 3.3.1. Given the devolved nature of fisheries in the UK, and the number of stocks the UK shares with other coastal States, effective management is co-dependent on both UK-wide and international solutions. Fisheries management therefore cannot be delivered in isolation, and the fisheries policy authorities will work together and with our stakeholders, other coastal States and international partners.
- 3.3.2. To achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives, the national fisheries authorities are committed to working with our partners and engaging widely with a range of stakeholders, who play an important role in the management of our seas and natural resources. Alignment and integration with wider marine management mechanisms is essential, including our network of protected sites, the marine planning system across the UK, and the UKMS.

### **3.4. Participatory Decision Making**

- 3.4.1. Our future vision is that industry should play a greater role in managing fisheries. This can include work to develop new management practices and contributing to fisheries science, being more actively engaged in fisheries management decisions, and co-designing future policy. Wild fish are a public resource which the fishing sector benefits from, and, as such, the fisheries policy authorities will

explore how the fishing sector might make a greater contribution towards the costs of managing those fisheries.

- 3.4.2. There are different models of participatory decision making in place across the UK, which provide the seafood and marine sectors, non-government organisations and coastal communities with a voice in the decisions that impact them. The fisheries policy authorities are committed to further developing and strengthening these arrangements for moving toward co-management of our fisheries and promoting inclusivity and involvement in our management approach across all parts of society.
- 3.4.3. The fisheries policy authorities will also continue to use established groups, where appropriate, as part of an effective and robust decision-making approach, and will encourage the early participation of stakeholders during policy development to identify issues and potential solutions as well as to promote transparency.
- 3.4.4. The fisheries policy authorities recognise that strong, clear, and transparent governance arrangements should be in place, to ensure that appropriate engagement takes place and that decisions are taken at the right level. This will include setting out in relevant policy and implementation documents, the role that sectoral, national and local groups will play in supporting decision making and delivering effective management of our fisheries, whilst respecting the ultimate accountability of regulators and Ministers.

## **3.5. Reporting and Review Process**

- 3.5.1. The JFS will remain in place until it is amended or replaced. The Act requires the fisheries policy authorities to review the JFS whenever they consider it appropriate to do so, and in any event within six years of its publication or most recent review.
- 3.5.2. A FMP will remain in place until it is replaced or revoked. A FMP may also be amended. The Act requires the relevant authority or authorities to review a FMP whenever they consider it appropriate to do so, and in any event within six years of its publication or most recent review.
- 3.5.3. The Act requires all fisheries policy authorities, acting jointly, to prepare and publish a report, on a three-year cycle, on the extent to which the policies in the JFS have been implemented, and have achieved, or contributed to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives. The report must also describe the extent to which the policies contained in a relevant FMP have been implemented and have affected sea fish stock levels.
- 3.5.4. Further information on the reporting and review process for the JFS and FMPs can be found in the Act in sections 3, 8 and 11, and Parts 1 and 3 to Schedule 1.

## 3.6 Monitoring

- 3.6.1 To measure the impact of the JFS, the fisheries policy authorities will, in the first instance, use existing data sources, particularly those from ICES, to monitor the health of wild fish stocks, and the comprehensive socio-economic data collected on the size and composition of the UK fleet. We will also draw upon the relevant UKMS indicators and monitoring programmes. Maintaining this data continuity will allow for a consistent measurement of the impacts of the measures taken in the JFS on the health of fish stocks and the fishing fleet.
- 3.6.2 In cases where existing indicators are inadequate, the fisheries policy authorities will develop additional indicators and commission further research where appropriate.

# 4. Delivering Sustainable Management of Fisheries

## 4.1 Our approach to Fisheries Management



- 4.1.1 A vibrant and prosperous seafood sector, supporting thriving coastal communities, depends upon a healthy and resilient marine environment. The sustainable use and conservation of the sea's natural capital for present and future generations is therefore central to our fisheries management approach.
- 4.1.2 Fisheries are fully reliant on the ecosystems in which they operate, and these ecosystems can be compromised by human-induced pressures, including pollution, marine litter and unsustainable exploitation of marine resources. This includes the impact of stock levels on the processes and functioning of the wider ecosystem - for example, the removal of prey species.
- 4.1.3 Long-term, sustainable and profitable fisheries therefore require management to ensure the adverse impacts of fishing activity on ecosystem functioning, marine ecosystems resilience, or the impacts of environmental threats such as climate change, are minimised.
- 4.1.4 This also recognises the obligation set out in the UKMS to achieve GES. The JFS forms an important part of delivering GES and the UKMS on both commercially targeted and non-targeted species of fish, as well as supporting achievement of a host of other targets including on cetaceans, seals, birds, food webs, benthic habitats, seabed integrity and marine litter. In turn, it is recognised that measures taken to achieve or maintain GES for contaminants in seafood, contaminants more generally and eutrophication will also underpin healthy fish stocks.

- 4.1.5 Policies in the JFS will be key to meeting UKMS targets to restore and maintain populations of harvested species at least at levels which can produce MSY, and maintain stocks at, or above, levels that sustain long-term exploitation of stocks at fishing MSY.
- 4.1.6 Current evidence shows that physical disruption of the seabed from fishing pressure is one of the main obstacles to achieving GES for seabed habitats. Part one of the UKMS (2019), showed that between 2010 – 2015, disturbance<sup>6</sup> caused by fishing activities was widespread and that appropriate fisheries management measures will be critical to the achievement of the GES targets for seabed habitats.
- 4.1.7 Fisheries management can be seen as a cyclical process. We undertake research and collect data to improve our understanding of the state of stocks, of the interaction of fisheries with the marine environment, and of the seafood sector itself. We agree and allocate fishing opportunities; apply measures to manage fishing mortality, reduce environmental impacts, and improve supply chain sustainability; assess the effectiveness of the management measures; and use this data to improve our science and evidence base, which then informs our approach to securing fishing opportunities and developing management measures. These areas are in line with the scientific evidence objective. This approach also needs to take into account the protection of biodiversity and healthy functioning marine ecosystems in line with the ecosystem objective.
- 4.1.8 The vital role of the seafood sector in the supply of food and employment, as well as its significant cultural value, is also recognised. Decisions by the fisheries policy authorities on the management of fisheries should take this into account in accordance with the sustainability, equal access and national benefit objectives in order to ensure continuity of this role, and to protect the long-term interests of the sector and well-being of the communities it supports.
- 4.1.9 The fisheries policy authorities will apply the fisheries objectives both in our domestic and international work. Domestically, this will include when taking decisions on allocating fishing opportunities and when developing future fisheries management policies and measures. Through fisheries negotiations with other coastal States and in international fisheries fora, the UK will actively seek to achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives.
- 4.1.10 The fisheries policy authorities and national fisheries authorities will take an ecosystem-based approach to managing our fisheries. They will continue to take

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<sup>6</sup> Disturbance is defined as the effect of different combinations of pressure (varying in intensity and duration) on benthic habitats and species

account of the need to ensure the healthy functioning of marine ecosystems when exercising their functions and consider the impacts of fishing on the marine environment alongside other human activities. This will support the achievement of the sustainability, precautionary and ecosystem objectives, as well as contributing to the achievement of GES. This will include measures to sustainably manage fisheries, maintain healthy populations of target species, recover populations of vulnerable species, and protect key forage species. Such measures recognise the interdependence of healthy stocks and a healthy environment and will support a thriving fishing industry into the future.

- 4.1.11 The fisheries policy authorities will also take a precautionary approach to fisheries management in accordance with the precautionary objective and will aim to fish within sustainable limits based on the best available scientific advice, including MSY or using suitable proxies where sufficient scientific data are available, as well as considering evidence on mixed fisheries interactions where appropriate, which is in line with the scientific evidence objective. Where data are not available, this will not be used as a reason for not taking appropriate pre-emptive steps to manage or address the risk either to stocks or the marine environment.
- 4.1.12 The fisheries policy authorities will continue to work with the fishing industry and other stakeholders on a range of management initiatives such as protecting spawning and nursery areas of key stocks, reducing seabed abrasion, and reducing unwanted catches. The fisheries policy authorities will consider their approach to fisheries monitoring, including the use of technologies such as VMS and REM. A move to a more collaborative approach to fisheries management, as noted in section 3 above, will enable the fishing sector to contribute its information on activities and impacts to help co-design management actions. In taking such an approach, the fisheries policy authorities and fishing industry can work collectively to contribute to the delivery of the fisheries objectives.
- 4.1.13 The fisheries policy authorities will ensure our financial support does not undermine but delivers or contributes to the fisheries objectives. For example, supporting onshore infrastructure, gear innovation in capture fisheries and reducing vessel emissions.
- 4.1.14 Our FMPs will set out policies for specific fisheries or stocks to contribute to delivering the fisheries objectives (section 5). Each FMP must describe the relevant indicator or indicators that fisheries managers will use to assess the effectiveness of the plan. Where possible, the indicator will include MSY values where they can be identified, otherwise suitable proxies will be used for more data-limited stocks. Where feasible, a FMP will include plans for additional data collection in order to establish MSY values or will explain why no such plans are proposed.
- 4.1.15 The fisheries policy authorities understand the need to take robust action to tackle climate change. Marine ecosystems are both impacted by rising carbon

dioxide levels and climate change<sup>7</sup>, including warming seas, reduced oxygen levels, ocean acidification, and rising sea levels, and provide us with opportunities to help us adapt to rising temperatures, and to lock up and store blue carbon. Climate resilient ecosystems are essential for healthy stocks and management of our seas must be considered in this context. In line with the climate change objective in the Act, the fisheries policy authorities aim to minimise the adverse effects of fish and aquaculture activities on climate change. The fisheries policy authorities will explore, in partnership with the fishing industry, the best pathways to contribute to net zero carbon targets within the timeframes specified by each fisheries policy authority, including through investigating and supporting reduction in fishing vessel and supply chain emissions (section 4.2.14).

## 4.2 Achieving the Fisheries Objectives through our Policies

### 4.2.1. Fishing Opportunities



This section sets out how fishing opportunities are determined, apportioned and distributed, and how the fisheries objectives will be considered at each stage.

#### **How fishing opportunities are determined**

- 4.2.1.1 The Secretary of State may determine the maximum quantity of fish that may be caught by the British fishing fleet (a catch quota) and the maximum number of days that the British fishing fleet may spend at sea (an effort quota) following consultation with the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers, the Northern Ireland department and the MMO. Collectively, catch quotas and effort quotas can be described as fishing opportunities.
- 4.2.1.2 This determination will normally be made on an annual basis and will establish fishing opportunities for that fishing year, which will be managed by the UK's fisheries policy authorities.
- 4.2.1.3 Most fish stocks straddle UK and other neighbouring coastal State waters. As such, international fisheries negotiations are one of the key mechanisms for achieving our objectives relating to sustainable fisheries management, and provide the opportunity to influence the management of stocks beyond our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

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<sup>7</sup> MCCIP (2020) Marine Climate Change Impacts: Marine Climate Change Impacts Report Card 2020

- 4.2.1.4 The determination of UK fishing opportunities for these stocks will normally follow international negotiations and will reflect any agreements from those negotiations. These negotiations are conducted by the UK Government and supported by expertise from across the fisheries policy authorities.
- 4.2.1.5 In some circumstances, fishing opportunities may be determined on a provisional basis. This could occur, for example, where international negotiations have not concluded by the time a fishing year begins.
- 4.2.1.6 For stocks found solely within UK waters, and not subject to agreement with other coastal States, the fishing opportunities will be determined by the UK.
- 4.2.1.7 After the Secretary of State has determined fishing opportunities, these may be apportioned between the fisheries policy authorities by the Secretary of State. It is then for each authority to decide how to distribute its share to industry.
- 4.2.1.8 Fishing opportunities may be managed and exchanged during the fishing year by the fisheries policy authorities and any organisations permitted to carry out this function by the fisheries policy authorities.
- 4.2.1.9 Fisheries policy authorities recognise the importance of managing fishing activity to account for natural change, to allow for the dynamic nature of marine ecosystems and improve resilience to fishing pressure, natural variation and climate change. We will therefore seek to agree and set fishing opportunities that scientific advice indicates should provide progress towards restoring and maintaining all commercial stocks above biomass levels and which produce yields that are sustainable in the long term.
- 4.2.1.10 We recognise that to balance our environmental, economic and social commitments, the trajectories (towards achieving these biomass levels) may need to speed up or slow down, and achieving the balance between these three elements will be a central component of delivering the sustainability objective. These decisions should be mindful of the impact on coastal communities and yet not jeopardise sustaining long-term recovery of stocks or delivery of a healthy marine environment.

#### **Determining fishing opportunities through international negotiations**

- 4.2.1.11 As a coastal State, the UK is subject to the requirements of UNCLOS, which obliges coastal States to manage the living resources in their EEZ in a sustainable manner. This includes cooperating with other coastal States on fish stocks that occur jointly in their respective EEZs.
- 4.2.1.12 It is critical that we work in partnership with our neighbouring coastal States. This will promote the sustainable use of stocks and responsible management of our respective waters.



- 4.2.1.13 The principal way in which we do this is through formal annual consultations underpinned by international agreements such as the TCA, and our fisheries framework agreements with Norway and the Faroe Islands. And in respect of highly migratory and straddling fish stocks, through engagement with coastal States or other relevant States, and in the relevant RFMOs.
- 4.2.1.14 The UK will approach international fisheries negotiations using the following principles, and with regard to the fisheries objectives.

### **Principles of International Fisheries Negotiations**

Through fisheries negotiations, the UK will seek to achieve, or contribute to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives in the Act. In particular, the UK will seek to:

- increase the overall number of stocks fished at MSY or suitable MSY proxy, consistent with the best available scientific advice and taking into account best available evidence on the effects of fishing activity.
  - ensure sustainable exploitation of stocks through the establishment of comprehensive TAC (quota) sharing underpinned by the principle of zonal attachment.
  - secure outcomes consistent with wider obligations for the conservation and sustainable use of the marine environment including the UKMS, and international commitments such as those under the CBD, OSPAR Convention, and UN Sustainable Development Goals.
  - minimise the negative impacts of fishing on non-target species, marine habitats and ecosystems by applying an ecosystem-based approach.
  - manage the harvesting of shared stocks sustainably, including non-quota stocks (NQS).
  - support delivery of the policies contained in FMPs and existing Long-Term Management Plans.
  - enable the continued reduction and elimination of harmful and illegal discarding, and address ongoing choke risks, including through supporting the recovery of bycatch stocks.
  - ensure stock-rebuilding initiatives take appropriate account of socio-economic considerations; and
  - provide certainty and profitable outcomes for the industry.
- 4.2.1.15 Establishing TACs is a key aspect of the negotiations between coastal States. TACs, alongside agreements on quota shares, are necessary to ensure that collectively coastal States remain within catch limits.

- 4.2.1.16 The UK negotiates the TACs for around 70 stocks with the EU on an annual basis. The agreed TACs are shared between the UK and EU as set out in the TCA. Policy positions on fishing opportunities for discussion with the EU are developed through consultations between the fisheries policy authorities.
- 4.2.1.17 The TCA recognises the UK's sovereign control of its waters from 1 January 2021. There is an adjustment period lasting five and a half years from that point to allow time for fleets on both sides to adapt to the new access arrangements. During this period the TCA allows for continued reciprocal access to each other's waters at levels commensurate with each Party's share of fishing opportunities in nearly all stocks and, for NQS, at historic levels. As set out in the TCA, at the end of the adjustment period, access as well as fishing opportunities will be subject to annual negotiations.
- 4.2.1.18 Trilateral negotiations between the UK, EU and Norway are conducted on an annual basis to agree TACs for North Sea jointly managed stocks. Each Party's fishing opportunities are determined by the TACs and the shares agreed as part of those negotiations.
- 4.2.1.19 Widely distributed pelagic stocks - notably, mackerel, blue whiting and Atlanto-Scandian herring - are jointly managed through multilateral negotiations by the UK and a number of other countries in the North East Atlantic. During annual negotiations, the Parties aim to agree a global TAC for each stock in addition to other management measures and sharing arrangements. The UK advocates a science and evidence-based approach to managing these stocks and will continue to do so as it looks to agree comprehensive sharing arrangements.
- 4.2.1.20 The UK views information on the geographic distribution of fish stocks as fundamental to establishing both the TAC and a coastal State's share of a given stock, be that in bilateral, trilateral or multilateral negotiations. This information should also form the basis for how catch advice for each biological stock should be apportioned across TAC management areas.
- 4.2.1.21 In annual bilateral negotiations with the Faroes and Norway, the UK will aim to reach agreements which see a fair and balanced exchange of opportunities, through quota exchanges and access; and return the best value to the UK fleet.
- 4.2.1.22 Fisheries in international waters (also known as the 'high seas'), and for highly migratory and 'straddling' fish stocks, are typically managed by RFMOs. The UK is an independent Contracting Party to a number of RFMOs, including the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The UK's position at RFMO negotiations will need to be informed by both our domestic and international objectives, including the fisheries objectives where relevant.

4.2.1.23 In addition to RFMOs, the UK is also party to the [Treaty of Paris on Spitsbergen](#) (Svalbard) 1920, which offers fishing opportunities in waters outside the UK's EEZ.

#### **Determining fishing opportunities for UK only stocks**

4.2.1.24 We will take the same approach to those stocks for which we are solely responsible, taking account of the fisheries objectives and using best available science and evidence to decide on our position regarding quota and NQS. The main difference is this position is not subject to negotiation, and so where managed by quota, it is something we will unilaterally implement through the process of the Secretary of State's determination (as outlined above). We will apply a precautionary approach, using best available scientific evidence and advice for stocks that exist solely in UK waters.

#### **Apportionment of opportunities across the UK**

4.2.1.25 The apportionment method of fishing opportunities between the fisheries policy authorities will be set out in the publicly available UK Quota Management Rules (QMR).

4.2.1.26 These rules may include other matters which are relevant to how fishing opportunities are managed between national fisheries authorities. This may include, but is not limited to, how we will manage:

- Stocks that are not apportioned.
- In-year international and domestic exchanges.
- Inter-annual transfers (banking and borrowing).
- Unauthorised fishing and penalties.
- Movements of vessels between fisheries policy authorities' areas.

These rules will be updated from time to time by the Secretary of State in consultation with the other national fisheries authorities. Where appropriate, this may also include consultation with industry and other stakeholders as well as the wider public.

#### **Distribution of fishing opportunities within each fisheries policy authorities' areas**

4.2.1.27 Following apportionment, it is then for each fisheries policy authority to decide how to distribute its share to industry. The criteria and methods used will be set out by each authority in its respective, publicly available QMR.

4.2.1.28 These rules will be updated from time to time by the relevant fisheries policy authority. Where appropriate, this may also include consultation with the other

national fisheries authorities, industry, and other stakeholders as well as the wider public.

4.2.1.29 In accordance with section 25(1) and (2) of the Act, when distributing fishing opportunities, each national fisheries authority will publish and use transparent and objective criteria. These will have regard to the fisheries objectives and will include criteria relating to environmental, social, and economic factors. This may, in particular, relate to:

- The impact of fishing on the environment.
- The history of compliance with regulatory requirements relating to fishing.
- The contribution of fishing to the local economy.
- Historic catch levels.

4.2.1.30 The criteria to be published by the national fisheries authorities must also seek to incentivise:

- the use of more selective fishing gear, and
- the use of fishing techniques and vessels that have a reduced impact on the environment (for example, use less energy or cause less damage to habitats).

The national fisheries authorities will each develop the criteria in collaboration with industry and other stakeholders. These will be subject to review on a regular basis. It will be for each fisheries policy authority to determine how their respective criteria will be used to distribute fishing opportunities.

## 4.2.2. Non-quota Stocks



4.2.2.1 In addition to those fishing opportunities that we manage through quotas and shares, we may also manage NQS through effort or catch limits where appropriate, fisheries closures and technical measures. We jointly manage many of these stocks with the EU. The UK will prioritise the development of management approaches for NQS domestically in line with the sustainability, precautionary, ecosystem, scientific evidence and climate change objectives in the Act. We will also seek to develop multi-year strategies for conservation and management for NQS via the SCF. Exchanges of fisheries management data will improve both parties' understanding of these shared stocks and help inform management strategies.

4.2.2.2 The UK approach to managing NQS in UK waters will inform our negotiating position on future multi-year strategies for conservation and management.

4.2.2.3 For those NQS not subject to international negotiations, the fisheries policy authorities will apply the approach to fisheries management outlined in section 4.1 and put in place, individually or acting together, appropriate measures to enhance management of fishing activity that exploits NQS. This will include how these stocks can be sustainably harvested, using the best available evidence, and taking a precautionary approach where appropriate. Measures for specific NQS may be set out in FMPs or placed in alternative policy documents, as appropriate.

### 4.2.3. Wider International Engagement



4.2.3.1 In addition to its activities on RFMOs, described in paragraph 4.2.1.22 of this document, the UK plays an active role in negotiations and meetings related to sustainable fisheries management in the United Nations, in the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations and at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. These negotiations, and the legislation they create contribute to the UK's sustainability, precautionary, ecosystem, bycatch, scientific evidence and climate change objectives.

4.2.3.2 As a responsible coastal State and leader in sustainable fisheries, the UK will actively participate in these international fora to share best practice globally and press for effective regulation of fishing activities on the high seas. The fisheries policy authorities will support engagement with these international fora where we will promote high standards in fisheries management. In doing so we will promote the principles set out in the fisheries objectives where appropriate. This will include, for example, promoting the sustainable use and protection of stocks, and facilitating international cooperation to tackle climate change, to support achievement of the sustainability, precautionary, ecosystem and climate change objectives. Where possible, such agreements will also support achievement of the national benefit objective through providing direct or indirect socio-economic benefits to the UK.

4.2.3.3 The UK has signed bilateral Memoranda of Understanding with both Iceland and Greenland to enhance cooperation in fisheries. These include sharing expertise in sustainable fisheries management; encouraging collaboration between our respective private sectors; and cooperation in scientific research. These agreements provide examples of how the UK will meet the fisheries objectives in the international context, these being predominantly the sustainability, precautionary, ecosystem, bycatch, scientific evidence and climate change objectives, and act as a responsible coastal State. Similar principles will be applied in future Memoranda of Understanding.

#### 4.2.4. Fishing Capacity



- 4.2.4.1 As part of achieving the sustainability objective, the national fisheries authorities will ensure the fishing capacity of fleets is appropriately balanced between maintaining economic viability and maintaining stock health. The UK fishing fleet is diverse, from large pelagic trawlers to 6m netters. This is an important issue that we will factor into our decision making as different parts of the fleet have different needs and priorities. There will be a presumption against allocating public funding for new fishing vessels where this increases fishing capacity beyond sustainable levels.

#### 4.2.5. Approach to Access to UK Waters



- 4.2.5.1 In relation to access by UK fishing boats to UK waters, the Act contains an 'equal access objective' to be applied to all future fisheries policy across the UK. This objective sets out that access of UK fishing boats to any area within British fishery limits is not limited based on the location of the fishing boat's home port or connection of the fishing boat, or any of its owners to any place in the UK.
- 4.2.5.2 The fisheries policy authorities have to take account of the JFS in delivering their policies and functions. All vessels fishing in UK waters are legally obliged to comply with the rules or regulations set by the relevant fisheries policy authorities in these waters. These rules or regulations will align with the sustainability and equal access objectives.
- 4.2.5.3 The UK will continue to respect pre-existing voisinage reciprocal access arrangements that apply to its 0-6 nautical mile limit. Non-UK vessels availing of such access will be required to comply with fisheries legislation and management measures that apply to UK vessels fishing in that area.

#### 4.2.6. Fisheries Monitoring and Enforcement



- 4.2.6.1 Fisheries enforcement provides an assurance of compliance leading to a higher confidence level of the data for fisheries products removed from UK waters. Accurate data allows for robust analysis that supports the scientific evidence objective.
- 4.2.6.2 The national fisheries authorities will work together to continue to deliver on the UK's commitment to sustainable fishing by ensuring effective enforcement of fishing by all vessels in UK waters and UK vessels, wherever they may be fishing in the world. Where appropriate, the fisheries enforcement authorities will

cooperate and collaborate to assure compliance with their respective regulations.

- 4.2.6.3 Each national fisheries authority will regulate and enforce fisheries using methods that are appropriate and proportionate to their respective waters and fisheries. The introduction of any new monitoring or surveillance regime will be proportionate and based on the best available evidence.
- 4.2.6.4 Fisheries enforcement authorities will work together where appropriate to ensure enforcement meets the requirements of the legislation in place and the legal framework under which they operate, ensuring where feasible, a consistency in approach and simplification of existing procedures.
- 4.2.6.5 Fisheries enforcement authorities will carry out enforcement that is intelligence-led, risk-based or is required by the UK's international obligations. Enforcement of the respective regulations will be in line with applicable guidelines for regulators.
- 4.2.6.6 Effective fisheries monitoring and enforcement is the key requirement to ensure we are aware of which vessels fish in UK waters, when they are in UK waters and how much catch is removed from UK waters. This supports all of the fisheries objectives, with particular emphasis on the sustainability and precautionary objectives.

#### **4.2.7. Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing**



- 4.2.7.1 Illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing is one of the major threats to marine life and undermines effective fisheries management. By tackling IUU fishing, the UK will support the achievement of the sustainability, ecosystem and national benefit objectives.
- 4.2.7.2 The fisheries policy authorities will work together to continue to deliver on the UK's commitment to sustainable fishing by ensuring effective control of our waters and tackling IUU fishing overseas. The fisheries policy authorities will cooperate and collaborate to ensure their respective controls and IUU regulations are effective and proportionate.
- 4.2.7.3 The fisheries policy authorities will work together to produce plans for the control of fishing activity in UK waters and tackling IUU fishing. The fisheries policy authorities will engage with stakeholders as these plans are developed. In both areas, ensuring there is traceability of fish products will be central. The fisheries policy authorities will work together to develop robust Monitoring Control and Surveillance measures. These will ensure a higher level of accuracy for fisheries

catch data, discourage illegal discarding, and increase our understanding of the incidence and causes of sensitive species bycatch.

4.2.7.4 To support our seafood sector, the fisheries policy authorities will work together to ensure our exporters can efficiently and effectively meet the IUU fishing requirements of other countries.

4.2.7.5 To tackle IUU fishing, the fisheries policy authorities will cooperate to manage the UK IUU Fishing Vessel List and the UK Identification of Non-Cooperating Third Countries in the fight against IUU fishing.

#### **4.2.8. Reducing Bycatch and Minimising Catches of Sensitive Species**



4.2.8.1 The sustainability and bycatch objectives in the Act underline the UK's commitment to addressing the root cause of discarding. The fisheries policy authorities are committed to the principle of reducing bycatch, including fish below the minimum conservation reference size and minimising discards. The fisheries policy authorities will work towards fully documented fisheries, to ensure all catches are recorded and accounted for. The fisheries policy authorities will also work in partnership with stakeholders to develop a range of management measures that support fishers to avoid unwanted catches of quota species, to reduce unnecessary fish mortality and discarding of fish. National policies will also be developed by the fisheries policy authorities to detail the approach taken to reducing unwanted bycatch.

4.2.8.2 Each national fisheries authority can develop appropriate discard exemptions that are appropriate for their respective waters. These exemptions will allow a limited level of discarding for certain stocks, in certain fisheries, in clearly defined circumstances. The introduction of any new exemptions, or modification of any current exemptions, will continue to be based on best available scientific evidence.

4.2.8.3 The fisheries policy authorities commit to the UK applying appropriate TAC deductions, from the UK's share of the TAC, for any exemptions their fleets use in UK or external waters (subject to relevant international arrangements).

4.2.8.4 The national fisheries authorities are committed to working with the fishing industry to meet the ecosystem objective to minimise and, where possible, eliminate the unwanted bycatch and entanglement of sensitive species including cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises), seals, seabirds and elasmobranchs (sharks, skates, and rays). The fisheries policy authorities recognise that bycatch is one of the most significant threats to these species,



and an important part of meeting the sustainability objective is that fisheries activities are environmentally sustainable in the long term.

- 4.2.8.5 The UK Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI) published in August 2022 outlines how the fisheries policy authorities will achieve the ambitions of the ecosystem objective by improving our understanding through scientific monitoring and research, identifying bycatch “hotspots” of high risk, developing and adopting effective mitigation measures, supporting fishers to implement mitigation measures, and working with international partners to reduce the bycatch of sensitive species globally. Actions in the BMI include investing in bycatch monitoring programmes to fill knowledge gaps and diversify monitoring techniques, targeting monitoring and mitigation towards bycatch “hotspots”, scaling up use of effective mitigation measures, and supporting the development of new technologies and approaches where appropriate such as deterrents, technical modification to gears and alternative gears. These policies and actions will also help achieve the scientific evidence objective through the collection and sharing of data relevant to the management of fisheries and basing management decisions on the best available scientific advice. Fisheries policy authorities will set out the next steps towards implementation of the BMI.
- 4.2.8.6 Where necessary, the national fisheries authorities will work with industry and stakeholders to develop and set out broader policies to achieve these objectives or fishery-specific policies within the relevant FMP.

#### 4.2.9. Displacement



- 4.2.9.1 The fisheries policy authorities recognise there are multiple users of the sea, which can result in displacement of fishing activity, and may have negative social, economic and environmental impacts. The fisheries policy authorities will work with sea users, including the fishing industry, to identify and seek to address displacement issues.
- 4.2.9.2 This will include, for example, improving our understanding of where fishing occurs and the specific areas which are of greatest significance to key fisheries, improving consideration of sustainable fishing activities in the spatial planning and use of our seas through marine spatial planning, and wherever possible and appropriate, facilitating co-location of activities at sea; and when impacts are unavoidable seeking to support appropriate adaptation in the fishing sector for the national benefit. This approach will also contribute to the achievement of the sustainability and ecosystem objectives.

## 4.2.10. Marine Spatial Planning



- 4.2.10.1 The UKMPS, along with the marine plans, provide a scientifically evidenced decision-making framework for the national benefit to enable activities in the marine area to be managed in a way that protects the marine environment, whilst supporting sustainable development. An overriding principle of the UKMPS is to promote compatibility between different activities and identify opportunities for co-existence. The Marine Acts<sup>8</sup> require that public authorities must take authorisation or enforcement decisions in accordance with the relevant marine policy documents (defined as the UKMPS and any marine plan that is in effect for the marine plan area), unless relevant considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2.10.2 The fisheries policy authorities will ensure that marine plans include policies that consider fisheries, aquaculture and supporting habitats for fish stocks (nursery or spawning grounds). The marine planning process also gives marine users an opportunity to have a say on how the marine area should be managed by requiring consultation to be carried out on draft marine plans.
- 4.2.10.3 We will consider the relationship between marine spatial planning and fisheries management plans, and how these policies can work in a joined-up way to ensure more effective use of the marine space and resources.

## 4.2.11. Marine Protected Areas



- 4.2.11.1 As part of delivering GES, the fisheries policy authorities will continue to develop the network of protected sites at sea to protect specific habitats and species of national or international importance. The fisheries policy authorities will ensure that fishing activities are managed to enable MPAs, and any future Highly Protected Marine Areas, to achieve their conservation objectives and to maintain the ecological coherence of the network. Sites will be monitored to assess their state, and fisheries managers and other regulators will enforce compliance with any management measures. This will contribute towards the ecosystem, scientific evidence and climate change objectives.

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<sup>8</sup> Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/23/section/9>), Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2010/5/contents>), and Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2013/10/section/1/enacted>)

## 4.2.12. Marine Litter and End of Life Fishing Gear



- 4.2.12.1 The fisheries policy authorities will continue to provide support to the industry to reduce its environmental impact, and also promote initiatives such as 'Fishing for Litter' undertaken by our fishing industry to increase sustainability across the sector and protect and conserve our marine environment. In doing this, the fisheries policy authorities will support the achievement of the sustainability, ecosystem and scientific evidence objectives.
- 4.2.12.2 The fisheries policy authorities will support the growth of the circular economy by aiming to increase the amount of end-of-life fishing gear that is collected and managed sustainably in line with the waste hierarchy. In addition, the fisheries policy authorities will encourage the circular design of fishing and aquaculture gear to prevent gear loss, facilitate lost gear retrieval and reduce the environmental impact in the event of absolute loss, as well as improving wider material reusability, reparability and recyclability. This aligns with, and will support the achievement of, the sustainability, ecosystem and scientific evidence objectives. The fisheries policy authorities have established a co-chaired UK-wide industry expert Steering Group with industry stakeholders in order to inform how we can successfully transition to a circular economy, in a way that supports fishing communities.

## 4.2.13. Coastal and Freshwater



- 4.2.13.1 GES requires us to take an ecosystem-based approach to managing our marine environment in line with the ecosystem and sustainability objectives. As such, the UKMS includes a number of cross-cutting measures that reflect links between marine fish populations, and the management of coastal and riverine environments. It is important to also recognise these interactions in this JFS.
- 4.2.13.2 Coastal habitats and rivers are essential to a healthy marine environment and thriving fisheries. They are important to the life stages of a wide range of fish species of commercial and recreational value to our seafood sector. For example, tidal saltmarsh and estuaries provide nursery and rearing habitat for bass, seatrout and some flatfish species. Migratory species such as salmon, seatrout and European eel also require unhindered passage within river systems to complete critical parts of their life cycles. Good water quality is critical in maintaining healthy coastal habitats and aquaculture production in estuaries and coastal areas.
- 4.2.13.3 The fisheries policy authorities recognise the programme of measures in the UKMS and River Basin Management Plans that are needed to manage our

coastal and riverine freshwater environments and their impacts on the health of our marine environment. These will contribute towards the sustainability and ecosystem objectives. They could include, for example, improvements to water quality which would help address downstream issues within MPAs and shellfish farms, actions to support the migration of diadromous species and consideration of marine fish species that are considered as sensitive under UKMS in coastal management.

#### 4.2.14. Climate Change



- 4.2.14.1 Responding to climate change within the seafood sector requires consideration of both how the sector can mitigate climate change and how the sector can adapt to climate change.
- 4.2.14.2 Mitigation of climate change needs to be considered across the supply chain. The national fisheries authorities will work towards understanding the different steps of the supply chain's carbon contribution. Identifying feasible technological, behavioural and managerial changes to mitigate and reduce emissions across the fisheries supply chain is vital to support the transition towards a net zero carbon emissions future and help to achieve the climate change objective.
- 4.2.14.3 The fisheries policy authorities will work together to support innovative solutions to realise carbon savings from engine upgrades (where these do not increase fleet capacity beyond sustainable levels), gear choices and green technology, as well as identifying opportunities for vessel emission reductions through alternative fuels. These measures will reduce the contribution of fisheries activities to climate change and will therefore help to meet the climate change objective. We will also support innovation to reduce seabed abrasion, thus contributing to the ecosystem and scientific evidence objectives.
- 4.2.14.4 All nations in the UK agree that nature-based solutions are important to tackling climate change and averting its impacts. The fisheries policy authorities recognise that the protection, restoration and sustainable management of blue carbon habitats provides a nature-based solution that can support adaptation and resilience to climate change, alongside benefits for carbon sequestration and biodiversity.
- 4.2.14.5 The national fisheries authorities will work together with the scientific community to identify gaps in the UK's blue carbon evidence base, and work to address them, including through the UK Blue Carbon Evidence Partnership established in 2022. The fisheries policy authorities will also conduct research into the impact of fishing activities and aquaculture on blue carbon habitats and take this into account in future policy and decision making, recognising that this will also

help to meet the ecosystem, scientific evidence, precautionary and climate change objectives.

- 4.2.14.6 To help achieve the climate change objective, the fisheries policy authorities will also support and encourage voluntary industry initiatives to decarbonise and improve the production and marketing of low-carbon seafood. We will seek to support industry innovation and a circular economy.
- 4.2.14.7 We acknowledge the positive role that aquaculture, in particular, can play in addressing climate change through providing sustainable sources of low-carbon and high-quality protein, the potential role of aquaculture sub-sectors such as seaweed and shellfish aquaculture in carbon capture, and the positive contribution aquaculture makes to the blue economy. As with all sectors, the aquaculture sector will be expected to adapt to environmental and climate change.
- 4.2.14.8 The seafood sector must adapt to the impacts of climate change to ensure the long-term success of the sector and alignment with our climate commitments. Climate change is already having an impact, with evidence of changes in fish communities in UK waters, linked to the appearance of warm-water species and local declines of some cold-water species.
- 4.2.14.9 The national fisheries authorities will continue working to understand and address the impacts of changing climatic conditions on marine species, habitats and fisheries, as highlighted by the [Climate Change Committee's Climate Risk Independent Assessment](#), through mechanisms such as the Marine Climate Change Impacts Partnership. We will also ensure the findings are accessible to affected stakeholders and incorporated into our decision-making processes. Where relevant, we will use our international partnerships, including the International Alliance to Combat Ocean Acidification, to support that work.
- 4.2.14.10 The fisheries policy authorities will work in partnership with the seafood sector to support their adaptation to the impacts of climate change and co-develop climate-adaptive management techniques to support sustainable fishing of stocks and aquaculture impacted by climate change, thereby contributing to meeting the climate change objective.
- 4.2.14.11 The fisheries policy authorities will seek to collaborate to take advantage of the opportunities and address the challenges which may arise from climate change, such as the developments for new capture fisheries or diversification of aquaculture. Such opportunities should only be pursued where doing so is compatible with achieving GES and international commitments, and there is a market for the end product.

#### 4.2.15. Aquaculture



- 4.2.15.1 Aquaculture is important at the UK level, and the fisheries policy authorities will work together to support sustainable growth, an ecosystem-based approach, and our climate change objectives.
- 4.2.15.2 As such, the fisheries policy authorities support balanced, industry-led, sustainable growth of each aquaculture sub-sector based on the best available science relating to that sub-sector, and related industries which are diverse, economically viable and contribute to food security whilst also contributing to the ecosystem, climate change and sustainability objectives. We acknowledge that the various sub-sectors of aquaculture, found in the different nations of the UK, operating through various cultivation methods, can interact to varying degrees with their host ecosystems and users of a shared environment. As such, any development and expansion of any part of the aquaculture sector will be undertaken using the best available evidence, in line with the relevant regulations and strategic management frameworks, such as marine planning, and within environmental limits.
- 4.2.15.3 The fisheries policy authorities will collaborate on aquaculture where relevant to achieve common goals, and will work together to maintain the high standards of aquatic animal health and animal welfare already adopted.

#### 4.2.16. Recreational Sea Fishing



- 4.2.16.1 The fisheries policy authorities will continue to work together - where possible, practicable and appropriate - to ensure recreational sea fishing is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, and therefore contributes to the achievement of the sustainability objective. We will aim, where possible, to take account of recreational sea fishing in wider fisheries management.
- 4.2.16.2 This will continue to be underpinned by encouraging data collection on catches, economic impact, and species-specific data across the recreational sea fishing sector, and ensuring recreational interests are part of relevant stakeholder engagement processes. In doing so, we will contribute to the ecosystem and scientific evidence objectives.

#### 4.2.17. Production, Marketing and Consumption of Seafood



## **Resilient industry and communities**

- 4.2.17.1 The seafood sector is an essential source of employment in some parts of the UK, particularly coastal communities, where there is often a rich heritage of fishing, producing and processing high-quality seafood. Domestic production of food is also an important way of creating national resilience in an uncertain world.
- 4.2.17.2 The fisheries policy authorities will aim to ensure coastal fisheries, and the communities that benefit from them, are able to adapt to the current and future needs of the seafood sector and associated support industries, recognising the differing, yet often complementary, local dynamics with other industries. The potential of the fishing industry to secure and improve livelihoods in coastal communities is acknowledged.

## **Workforce – skills and working standards**

- 4.2.17.3 The fisheries policy authorities will work with seafood sector stakeholders to encourage entry to the industry at all stages of a career, with certifiable training, succession planning and improved working conditions and standards to aid the development of an attractive career path. The fisheries policy authorities will seek to improve the general public's perception of the industry as a place to work and prosper, and to encourage new entrants into the industry. This will include working with the sector to support career progression and development opportunities. To contribute to that end, the fisheries policy authorities will work together to support the health, safety, wellbeing and, in particular, the safety at sea of all those associated with the seafood sector.
- 4.2.17.4 The fisheries policy authorities will work with the seafood sector to understand and promote the most suitable and fair remuneration practises to encourage new entrants.
- 4.2.17.5 The fisheries policy authorities will encourage the sector to take measures to increase the attractiveness of roles and thereby secure a supply of domestic labour available to work in the seafood sector, and for all those working in the sector to be treated equitably.

## **Supply chain**

- 4.2.17.6 The fisheries policy authorities will seek to build the resilience of the seafood sector supply chain by:
- Encouraging collaboration and innovation across the supply chain to help with future proofing and response to the opportunities or challenges of the ever-dynamic food market - for example, encouraging opportunities to create efficiencies by sharing knowledge on best practice and the benefits of collaboration.

- Highlighting the positive benefits of eating seafood from domestic markets, while balancing the economic benefit of international trade.
- Encouraging transparency and traceability through the use of Sustainability and Quality Indicators to market distinctive fisheries and their products.

### **Processing our products**

4.2.17.7 The fisheries policy authorities will encourage the processing sector to be both responsive to the fishing and aquaculture industry and consumer behaviour changes, and more sustainable and resilient by seeking opportunities to change and innovate in advance of industry developments. The fisheries policy authorities will continue to provide support for seafood imports, recognising these are important for the fish processing sector.

### **Markets – selling and marketing our products**

4.2.17.8 The fisheries policy authorities will promote that locally sourced seafood, from both wild-capture and aquaculture, can be a healthy, low-carbon and sustainable protein source; and will encourage better consumer awareness to make informed choices, increasing the consumption of UK seafood as a healthy option and a successful domestic market for UK seafood. Recognising the impact of consumer marketing, and particularly digital marketing and innovation, the fisheries policy authorities will, where possible, work with industry to support activities that effectively promote locally caught, sustainable seafood.

4.2.17.9 The fisheries policy authorities will work with the seafood sector to support a prosperous, resilient UK market which encourages, through appropriate education and marketing channels, the consumption of fish farmed in the UK and caught by UK vessels, highlighting the UK's responsible approach to sustainable, ecosystem-based fisheries management and aquaculture practices.

4.2.17.10 The national fisheries authorities will seek to facilitate the development of robust labelling and traceability systems which can support accreditation and are understandable to the consumer and, through this, will promote seafood.

4.2.17.11 Working collaboratively where possible, the fisheries policy authorities will aim for a prosperous, international market which ensures the best return and added value for the industry while respecting the sustainability and climate change objectives.

4.2.17.12 The national fisheries authorities will continue to work together to ensure the seafood sector can utilise the best possible markets for their products, whether these are new or existing markets.



4.2.17.13 The national fisheries authorities will work with the seafood sector to monitor the capacity and facilitate the induction or training of Certifying Officers to enable international trade.

4.2.17.14 Through these policies the national fisheries authorities will contribute to the achievement of the 'national benefit objective' in the Act by providing for an economically viable fishing industry and seafood sector that supports UK seafood businesses.

### **Growth, diversification and innovation**

4.2.17.15 The fisheries policy authorities will support opportunities to diversify to promote resilience and enable communities to become adaptable to the current and future needs of the seafood sector and associated support industries, whilst recognising local dynamics.

4.2.17.16 The fisheries policy authorities recognise coastal communities' ambition for development and to encourage diversification to enable and maximise opportunities for the benefit of the seafood sector.

4.2.17.17 The fisheries policy authorities will encourage collaboration between industry, academia and government to find innovative opportunities for sustainable economic success and diversification, including new approaches that support a transition to a lower-carbon industry, thus supporting the climate change objective.

## **5. Fisheries Management Plans**



### **5.1. Introduction**

5.1.1 The Act defines a FMP as a document that sets out the policies designed to restore one or more stocks of sea fish to, or maintain them at, sustainable levels. Each plan will specify the stock(s), type of fishing and the geographic area covered.

5.1.2 This section sets out the overall purpose of FMPs, including their link to the fisheries objectives and the wider framework for fisheries management. Annex A sets out the list of planned FMPs with their proposed publication dates.

5.1.3 The fisheries policy authorities will determine what FMPs are required and who will prepare those plans, working with their relevant delivery bodies and stakeholders to implement the policies set out in a FMP.

- 5.1.4 A FMP will consider all fishing activity affecting the target stock(s) specified in the plan. The fisheries policy authorities will seek to engage stakeholders with an interest in the target stock(s) when preparing the FMP.
- 5.1.5 All FMPs will be subject to public consultation prior to being formally published.

## **5.2. What is a Fisheries Management Plan?**

- 5.2.1 FMPs set out the policies to secure the long-term sustainability of our fish stocks for current and future generations. They will place binding obligations on the national fisheries authorities, which seek to deliver these goals.
- 5.2.2 Each FMP will identify what measures will be used to deliver its policies. Such measures may include both existing or new regulations, statutory instruments, technical measures, or non-statutory routes such as research plans, voluntary agreements, or codes of conduct. The precise mechanisms used will depend on the policies set out in the plan and, where appropriate, will be enforced by the relevant national fisheries authority.
- 5.2.3 National fisheries authorities will work with stakeholders to consider different approaches to preparing FMPs, monitor their effectiveness and use the statutory review cycles to evaluate progress. FMPs may need to look quite different according to the fishery or area covered and could, for example, cover a single species or adopt a defined geographic area.
- 5.2.4 FMPs are required to specify whether there is sufficient evidence to assess a stock's MSY. Where there is insufficient evidence, the FMP must specify the steps (if any) that the relevant authority or authorities propose to take to obtain the scientific evidence necessary to enable an assessment of a stock's MSY. If no steps are proposed, the FMP will explain the reasons for that, and how sustainable limits or alternative proxies will be established.
- 5.2.5 Each FMP must specify the relevant indicator(s) that fisheries managers will use to assess the effectiveness of the plan. These indicators will help to monitor the effectiveness of the FMP and how it is contributing to those fisheries objectives relevant to the plan. Where appropriate, these indicators will be linked to timebound targets that relate to the goals and management targets of the FMP.
- 5.2.6 How a fisheries policy authority uses FMPs to achieve their ambitions will be reflected in the policies set out in each FMP. The prime focus of all FMPs will be achieving the long-term, sustainable harvesting of our stocks. However, the scope of a FMP may be extended to consider wider fisheries management issues covering environmental, social and economic concerns. Any management intervention would apply to all vessels in that fishery, taking note of the obligations towards other UK vessels under the equal access objective. A

fisheries policy authority should include timebound targets to achieve their goals where appropriate.

## 5.3. Determining the stocks included in FMPs

5.3.1 The fisheries policy authorities have collectively identified those biological stocks in UK waters that plans could cover based on information from ICES, international agreements and using data on landings into the UK. The list covers both internationally shared quota and non-quota stocks, plus those species that exist entirely within UK waters and whose management is not shared.

5.3.2 Fisheries target a range of species around the UK. Whilst some species have significant economic and cultural importance, there are many species that are rarely targeted, if at all. The fisheries policy authorities used the following criteria to determine whether a stock should be considered for inclusion in a FMP:

- Where there is a risk of significant over-exploitation without management action, including where recovery plans may be required, or where current management measures are outdated or not meeting the management goal.
- The economic value of the stock and its fisheries social and economic contribution to coastal communities.
- Wider social and economic importance of the stock and its associated fisheries, considering factors such as employment levels, local income, recreational fishing interest, contribution to coastal communities, legal, governance and regulatory structures.
- Ecosystem significance of the stock, including factors such as its fisheries' impact on the ecosystem and interactions with non-target species including protected species.

5.3.3 The stocks shown in the list of FMPs in Annex A met one or more of the criteria set out in 5.3.2 and were judged appropriate for inclusion within a FMP. Sections 5.3.4, 5.3.5 and 5.3.6 set out why stocks are not included in the list of FMPs.

5.3.4 Stocks not included in the list were judged not to meet these criteria. The fisheries policy authorities will keep the stocks not currently included under review, and should a stock's circumstances change, consider adding it to an existing FMP or develop a new FMP.

5.3.5 Some key stocks of concern such as deep-sea stocks, tuna species covered by ICCAT, and species such as sandeel and Norway pout that are targeted by industrial fisheries are already managed through existing conservation management measures and are not covered by FMPs. The fisheries policy authorities will continue to regularly review the efficacy of these existing

measures, including whether preparing a FMP would add further value to managing fishing activity for such stocks.

- 5.3.6 New or expanding fisheries for stocks not covered by FMPs will be assessed using the approach described above. Where appropriate, the stock(s) will be included within an existing or a new FMP to ensure the fishery is appropriately managed to mitigate environmental risks and ensure the fishery is sustainable. Where data are lacking, policy will be developed in line with the precautionary approach.
- 5.3.7 Where appropriate, the fisheries policy authorities will prepare and publish FMPs for key internationally shared commercial stocks of interest to the UK. The plans will focus on the biological stock as defined by scientific bodies such as ICES rather than the existing management units.
- 5.3.8 For the stocks where the UK shares management responsibility with other coastal States, FMPs will help set the UK's negotiating objectives for those stocks, whilst recognising that the UK cannot by itself deliver on the objectives of the FMP.

## **5.4. How FMPs relate to Fisheries Objectives?**

- 5.4.1 The fisheries policy authorities prepared the list of FMPs in Annex A for the purposes of meeting the obligation set out in section 2(1)(b) of the Act.
- 5.4.2 The design and structure of FMPs directly relate to the sustainability, precautionary, scientific evidence, ecosystem and equal access fisheries objectives by delivering sustainable fisheries, the collection and use of scientific evidence and application to all vessels fishing in the area covered.
- 5.4.3 FMPs may also address wider issues in fisheries management depending upon the specific goals or targets of each plan and may contribute to one or more of the remaining fisheries objectives.

## **5.5. Relationship between FMPs and Existing Management Plans**

- 5.5.1 EU Multiannual Plans (MAPs) (as retained or amended in UK law) continue to apply to various sea basins or to species types and, where sufficient scientific advice exists for the relevant listed species, set out approaches to managing exploitation.
- 5.5.2 Each fisheries policy authority will continue to operate fisheries management regimes covering their waters using existing legal powers alongside any new powers from the Act. There are management plans under these provisions that already deliver management of some stocks and fishing activities.

Consequently, there is no requirement to convert any such plans to a FMP at this time.

- 5.5.3 The fisheries policy authorities will consider which elements, if any, of EU MAPs could be retained and amalgamated into FMPs. Once FMPs are published, EU MAPs will be amended or repealed, where necessary, to avoid any future conflict with the policies set out in the FMPs.
- 5.5.4 The fisheries policy authorities will seek to align, where possible, the development of FMPs with Multi-Year Strategies (MYSts) agreed with the EU under the terms of the TCA. They will ensure FMPs, at a minimum, avoid conflict or legal risk. FMPs could apply more stringent or ambitious policies than agreed in a MYSt to reflect the UK's intent to address wider management issues relating to the environment, evidence gathering and governance of our fisheries.

## **5.6. Assessing Sustainable Fisheries**

- 5.6.1 Available fishery data and advice will determine the targets and catch limits applied to each stock. Where possible, these limits would include the MSY for data-rich stocks where biomass fluctuations can be tracked. Alternative proxies and precautionary approach advice will be used for more data-limited stocks that only detect biomass fluctuations.
- 5.6.2 Not all stocks currently have sufficient evidence to establish MSY-type reference points and limits. It will not be scientifically feasible or economically viable to collect such evidence for some species. In these cases, FMPs will include the steps the authorities will take for developing the necessary approaches to ensure the stock is harvested sustainably.
- 5.6.3 FMPs will recognise the importance of the sustainable use and conservation of the sea's natural assets and the ecosystem services they provide when setting out policies to manage fishing activity. FMPs will make best use of available evidence, be subject to scientific evaluation, and consider the environmental risks associated with the fishing activity managed through the FMP.
- 5.6.4 FMPs may form part of the UKMS programme of measures for achieving GES and may include actions, where appropriate, focused on risks to particular ecosystem components or pressures to support the achievement of GES.
- 5.6.5 Managing fishing activity sustainably through FMPs will directly contribute to securing the continued availability of seafood products as an important food source within the UK food supply chain.
- 5.6.6 The UK will need to discuss generic and specific approaches to establishing sustainable limits for internationally shared stocks whilst developing FMPs and seek to agree appropriate targets through international negotiations. FMPs will

help inform the UK's negotiating position, not least by clearly setting out our ambition to achieve sustainable stocks.

## **5.7. Monitoring and Review of FMPs**

- 5.7.1 The fisheries policy authorities will implement appropriate monitoring against the specified indicators. The effectiveness of the FMPs will be regularly assessed, and the results reported at least every three years as part of the JFS report, as required by the Act. These reports will be laid before the UK's legislatures. The report will set out the extent to which the policies contained in FMPs have been implemented and have affected stock levels in the UK.
- 5.7.2 Each FMP will be reviewed at least every six years or sooner if relevant evidence, international obligations, or wider events require a change in the policies set out in the FMP.

## Annex A: List of planned FMPs

The table below lists the Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) the UK Administrations will prepare and publish. This table sets out the information required under section 2 of the Fisheries Act 2020. An explanation of each column heading is provided as follows:

- **FMP title:** The chosen name of the FMP.
- **Timetable for preparation and publication:** The timeline over which the FMP will be prepared and published.
- **Stock(s):** The stock(s) covered by the FMP – either a single stock or multiple stocks.
- **Fishing area (ICES subarea and division):** The broad geographical area(s) covered by the plan. ICES subareas and divisions provide a reference to the statistical areas which are used by ICES when providing fisheries management advice (see [www.ices.dk/data/maps/pages/default.aspx](http://www.ices.dk/data/maps/pages/default.aspx)).
- **Joint plan?:** Whether the FMP is a joint plan between fisheries policy authorities.
- **Authority or Authorities responsible for preparation and publication of plan:** The authority or authorities which are responsible for preparing and publishing the plan. There can be up to four fisheries policy authorities acting jointly in a plan.
- **Coordinating Authority:** The fisheries policy authority which will coordinate the preparation and management of the plan on behalf of the other fisheries policy authorities acting jointly.
- **Reason if not joint:** The reason why the plan is being prepared individually by a single authority.

FMP title	Timetable for preparation and publication	Stock(s)	Fishing area (ICES subarea and division)	Joint plan?	Authority or Authorities responsible for preparation and publication of plan				Coordinating Authority	Reason if not joint
					DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Government		
North Sea Cod Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Cod	North Sea and Eastern Channel (4, 7d)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
West Coast of Scotland Cod	2022-2024	Cod	West Coast of Scotland (6a)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	

FMP title	Timetable for preparation and publication	Stock(s)	Fishing area (ICES subarea and division)	Joint plan?	Authority or Authorities responsible for preparation and publication of plan				Coordinating Authority	Reason if not joint
					DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Government		
Fisheries Management Plan										
Atlantic Cod Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Cod	Rockall, North East Atlantic (6b)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Haddock Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Haddock	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland (4, 6a)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
Atlantic Haddock Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Haddock	Rockall, North East Atlantic (6b)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
West Coast of Scotland Whiting Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Whiting	West Coast of Scotland (6)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
North Sea Whiting Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Whiting	North Sea and Eastern Channel (4, 7d)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Saithe Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Saithe	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland (4, 6)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
Northern Shelf Hake Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Hake	Northern Shelf (4, 6, 7a 7d, 7e, 7h, 7g, 7j)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Monk/Angler Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Monk	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland (4, 6)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
North Sea and West Coast of Scotland Megrin Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Megrin	North Sea and West Coast of Scotland (4a, 6a)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
Northern Shelf Ling Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Ling	Northern Shelf (UK waters of 2a,4a,5b, 6)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
North Sea Nephrops Fisheries Management Plans	2022-2024	Nephrops	North Sea (4)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	



FMP title	Timetable for preparation and publication	Stock(s)	Fishing area (ICES subarea and division)	Joint plan?	Authority or Authorities responsible for preparation and publication of plan				Coordinating Authority	Reason if not joint
					DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Government		
West Coast of Scotland Nephrops Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Nephrops	West Coast of Scotland (6)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
Northern Shelf Mackerel Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Mackerel	Northern Shelf (UK waters of 2a, 4, 5b, 6, 7a 7d, 7e, 7h, 7g, 7j, UK waters of 12b)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
Atlanto Scandian Herring Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Herring	North Sea and Arctic (4a; UK waters of 2a)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
North Sea Herring Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Herring	North Sea and Eastern Channel (4, 7d)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
West Coast of Scotland (and Clyde) Herring Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Herring	West Coast of Scotland (5b, 6)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
North Sea Greater Silver Smelt Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Greater silver smelt	North Sea (2a, 4)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
West of Scotland Greater Silver Smelt Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Greater silver smelt	West Coast of Scotland (5b, 6a)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
Northern Shelf Blue Whiting Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Blue whiting	Northern Shelf (UK waters of 2a, 4, 5b, 6, 7a 7d, 7e, 7h, 7g, 7j, UK waters of 12b)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
Bass Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2023	Bass	English and Welsh waters (4b, 4c, 6a, 7a, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7h, 7g, 7j)	Yes		Yes		Yes	Defra (England)	
Cockles Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Cockles	English waters (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7h, 7g, 7j)	No		Yes			Defra (England)	Applies to authority's own waters
Cockles Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2028	Cockles	Welsh waters (7a, 7g, 7f)	No				Yes	Welsh Govt.	Applies to authority's own waters

FMP title	Timetable for preparation and publication	Stock(s)	Fishing area (ICES subarea and division)	Joint plan?	Authority or Authorities responsible for preparation and publication of plan				Coordinating Authority	Reason if not joint
					DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Government		
Crabs & Lobsters Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2023	Crabs, lobsters	English waters (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7h, 7g, 7j)	No		Yes			Defra (England)	Applies to authority's own waters
Crabs & Lobsters Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2026	Crabs, lobsters	Welsh waters (7a, 7g, 7f)	No				Yes	Welsh Govt.	Applies to authority's own waters
King Scallop Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2023	Scallops	English and Welsh waters (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7h, 7g, 7j)	Yes		Yes		Yes	Defra (England)	
Whelks in English waters Fisheries Management Plan	2021-2023	Whelks	English waters (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7h, 7g, 7j)	No		Yes			Defra (England)	Applies to authority's own waters
Whelks in Welsh waters Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2027	Whelks	Welsh waters (7a, 7g, 7f)	No				Yes	Welsh Govt.	Applies to authority's own waters
Queen Scallop Fisheries Management Plan	2023-2024	Queen scallop	English waters (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7h, 7g, 7j)	No		Yes			Defra (England)	Applies to authority's own waters
Irish Sea Demersal Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Plaice, cod, haddock, sole, whiting, Nephrops	Irish Sea (7a Northern Irish, Welsh and English waters only)	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	DAERA (Northern Ireland)	
Irish Sea Pelagic Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2023	Herring	Irish Sea (7a Northern Irish, Welsh and English waters only)	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	DAERA (Northern Ireland)	
Northern Ireland Inshore Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Edible crab, velvet crab, lobster, king scallops and queen scallops	Inshore area within Northern Ireland zone (7a, 6a)	No	Yes				DAERA (Northern Ireland)	Applies to authority's own waters

FMP title	Timetable for preparation and publication	Stock(s)	Fishing area (ICES subarea and division)	Joint plan?	Authority or Authorities responsible for preparation and publication of plan				Coordinating Authority	Reason if not joint
					DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Government		
Celtic Sea and Western Channel Demersal Fisheries Management Plan	2023-2025	Monkfish/anglerfish, cod, haddock, plaice, thornback ray, sole, blue ling, deep water sharks, saithe, small eyed ray, round nose grenadier, red seabream, skates and rays, shagreen ray, blonde ray, sandy ray, spotted ray, cuckoo ray, Megrim, four-spotted megrim, pollock, nephrops, whiting	Celtic Sea and Western Channel (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h: Welsh and English waters only)	Yes		Yes		Yes	Defra (England)	
Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic Fisheries Management Plan	2023-2025	Herring, pilchard, greater silver smelt, horse mackerel, anchovy	Celtic Sea and Western Channel (7e, 7f, 7g, 7h Welsh and English waters only)	Yes		Yes		Yes	Defra (England)	
Southern North Sea and Eastern Channel Mixed Flatfish Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Plaice, sole, turbot, witch, Brill, lemon sole, sole, dab, flounder, halibut	Southern North Sea and Eastern Channel (4b, 4c, 7d)	No		Yes			Defra (England)	Applies to authority's own waters
North Sea Horse Mackerel Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Horse mackerel	North Sea and Eastern Channel (4, 7d)	Yes		Yes	Yes		Marine Scotland (Scotland)	
North Sea and Channel Sprat Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2024	Sprat	North Sea and Channel (4, 7d, 7e)	Yes		Yes	Yes		Defra (England)	
Black Seabream Fisheries Management Plan	2023-2025	Black seabream	English waters (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7h, 7g, 7j)	No		Yes			Defra (England)	Applies to authority's own waters
Wrasses complex Fisheries Management Plan	2023-2025	Goldsinny wrasse, ballan wrasse, wrasse species complex, corkwing wrasse, rock cook	English waters (4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7h, 7g, 7j)	No		Yes			Defra (England)	Applies to authority's own waters

FMP title	Timetable for preparation and publication	Stock(s)	Fishing area (ICES subarea and division)	Joint plan?	Authority or Authorities responsible for preparation and publication of plan				Coordinating Authority	Reason if not joint
					DAERA	Defra	Marine Scotland	Welsh Government		
Southern North Sea Non-Quota Demersal Fisheries Management Plan	2023-2024	Red gurnards, tub gurnards, cuttlefish, squid, octopus, John Dory, surmullet, lesser spotted dogfish, grey gurnards	Southern North Sea (4b, 4c: English waters only)	No		Yes			Defra (England)	Applies to authority's own waters
Channel Non-Quota Demersal Fisheries Management Plan	2022-2023	Red gurnards, tub gurnards, cuttlefish, squid, octopus, John Dory, surmullet, lesser spotted dogfish, grey gurnards, Lemon sole, brill, smoothhound, bib and turbot.	Channel (7d, 7e)	No		Yes			Defra (England)	Applies to authority's own waters
Southern North Sea and Channel Skates and Rays Fisheries Management Plan	2023-2024	Thornback ray, blonde ray, undulate ray, skates and rays, small-eyed ray, spotted ray, cuckoo ray, starry ray	Southern North Sea and Channel (Subarea 4b, 4c, 7d, 7e – English waters only)	No		Yes			Defra (England)	Applies to authority's own waters

# Annex B: Glossary

## **Aquaculture**

As defined by section 52 of the Fisheries Act 2020: the breeding, rearing, growing or cultivation of (a) any fish or other aquatic animal, (b) seaweed or any other aquatic plant, or (c) any other aquatic organism.

## **Aquaculture activities**

As defined by section 52 of the Fisheries Act 2020 means any of the following (whether or not carried out in the course of a business or employment): (a) aquaculture; (b) harvesting aquaculture organisms; (c) operating vessels for harvesting or processing aquaculture organisms; (d) storing or transporting aquaculture organisms; (e) loading and unloading aquaculture organisms; (f) processing aquaculture organisms.

## **Biodiversity**

The variety of all life on earth, including the diversity within and between all plant and animal species and the diversity of ecosystems.

## **Blue carbon**

Carbon captured by the world's oceans and coastal ecosystems. Blue carbon habitats are the habitats where it is stored.

## **Bycatch**

Defined in section 52 of the Fisheries Act 2020 means (a) fish that are caught while fishing for fish of a different description, or (b) animals other than fish that are caught in the course of fishing.

## **Climate change**

Referring to human-induced climate change driven by greenhouse gas emissions. It includes global warming, warming oceans, greater risks of flooding, droughts, and heat waves.

## **Co-existence**

Where multiple developments, activities or uses occur alongside or in close proximity to each other in the same area or at the same time.

## **Crown Dependencies (CDs)**

Self-governing jurisdictions of the Crown; the Bailiwick of Guernsey, the Bailiwick of Jersey, and the Isle of Man.

## **Displacement**

The changes in fishing behaviour and patterns that could occur in response to new management measures and other spatial uses including offshore wind farms.

## **Diversification**

Diversification in fisheries facilitates adaptation to change and is one way the fishing industry can increase its sustainability, response to changing markets, and resilience to climate change. Diversification includes changes within the fishing sector, for example, new fishing techniques and gear that alter how or what species are targeted, or within the processing and fish value chain, for example, direct sales or marketing that adds value to fish products. Diversification also includes the industry undertaking multiple activities; for example, in addition to generating income from fishing, complementary activities such as tourism, for vessels where this is appropriate, can represent diversification into other sectors.

## **Ecosystem**

A biological community which consists of all the organisms and the physical environment with which they interact.

## **Ecosystem-based approach**

Defined in section 1(10) of the Fisheries Act 2020 as an approach which (a) ensures that the collective pressure of human activities is kept within levels compatible with the achievement of good environmental status (within the meaning of the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 (S.I. 2010/1627)), and (b) does not compromise the capacity of marine ecosystems to respond to human-induced changes.

## **Ecosystem services**

The benefits people obtain from ecosystems. The classification of ecosystem services adopted by the UK National Ecosystem Approach categorises services as follows: regulating, provisioning, cultural and supporting services.

## **European Union (EU)**

Union of 27 member states that are located primarily in Europe.

## **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)**

An exclusive economic zone is a sea zone provided for by the UNCLOS, extending up to 200 nautical miles from a coastal State's territorial sea baselines, over which that State

has special rights regarding the exploitation and management of natural resources, including fisheries.

## **Fish**

Marine and estuarine finfish and shellfish, including migratory species such as European eel and salmon.

## **Fish activities**

As defined by section 52 of the Fisheries Act 2020 means any of the following (whether or not carried out in the course of a business or employment): (a) catching fish; (b) operating vessels for catching or processing fish; (c) transporting fish or fish products; (d) loading and unloading fish or fish products; (e) processing fish.

## **Fisher**

A person who catches fish for a living or for recreational activity.

## **Fisheries**

The commercial or recreational capture of wild marine organisms (fish and shellfish); commercial fishing can use a variety of mobile and static gear, vessels and locations.

## **Fishing and aquaculture sectors**

Individuals or businesses undertaking any of the following activities (a) catching fish (b) operating vessels for catching or processing fish; (c) undertaking aquaculture activities; (d) transporting fish or fish products; (e) loading and unloading fish or fish products; and (f) processing fish.

## **Fisheries Management and Support Framework Memorandum of Understanding (Fisheries Framework MoU or FFMoU)**

An agreement between the four Administrations of the UK which sets out the principles by which the four fisheries policy authorities will collaborate on fisheries management. It includes governance structures and ways of working. It forms part of the UK Fisheries Management and Support Framework (the Fisheries Framework).

## **Fisheries Management Plan (FMP)**

A document, prepared and published under the Fisheries Act, that sets out policies designed to restore one or more stocks of sea fish to, or maintain them at, sustainable levels.

## **Fisheries policy authorities**

As defined by section 52 of the Fisheries Act 2020, “fisheries policy authorities” means (a) the Secretary of State, (b) the Scottish Ministers, (c) the Welsh Ministers, and (d) the Northern Ireland department.

## **Fishing industry**

The economic activity concerned with catching fish for food or sport.

## **Food webs**

The natural interconnection of food chains and a graphical representation of what-eats-what in an ecological community.

## **Forage species**

Small, planktivorous species found at intermediate trophic levels of marine food chains, which are preyed on by larger predators for food. Also known as prey fish or bait fish.

## **Good Environmental Status (GES)**

A qualitative description of the state of the seas that the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010 requires authorities to achieve or maintain by the year 2020. Achieving GES is about protecting the marine environment, preventing its deterioration, and restoring it where practical, while allowing sustainable use of marine resources.

## **Innovation**

A new method, idea, or product.

## **Inshore**

0 to 12 nautical miles from the UK's territorial sea baselines.

## **Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCAs)**

IFCAs are responsible for the management of fishing activities in English coastal waters out to six nautical miles from territorial sea baselines. The 10 IFCAs have a shared 'vision' to lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries.

## **International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)**

Coordinates and promotes marine research on oceanography, the marine environment, the marine ecosystem, and on living marine resources in the North Atlantic.

## **Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS)**

As defined by section 2(1) of the Fisheries Act 2020, a document which sets out the policies of the fisheries policy authorities for achieving, or contributing to the achievement of, the fisheries objectives in the Fisheries Act 2020.

## **Marine and aquatic environment**

Includes (a) the natural beauty or amenity of marine or coastal areas, or of inland waters or waterside areas, (b) features of archaeological or historic interest in those areas, and



(c) flora and fauna which are dependent on, or associated with, a marine or coastal, or aquatic or waterside, environment.

### **Marine litter**

Any solid material which has been deliberately discarded or unintentionally lost on beaches, on shores or at sea. The definition covers materials transported into the marine environment from land by rivers, draining or sewage systems or winds. It includes any persistent, manufactured or processed solid material (OSPAR).

### **Marine Management Organisation (MMO)**

An executive non-departmental public body in the United Kingdom established under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, with responsibility for planning and licensing of activities in English waters from 0-200nm, save fisheries activities within 0-6nm which are the responsibility of the IFCAs. The MMO also has some UK responsibilities.

### **Marine Protected Areas (MPA)**

Areas of the sea protected by law for nature conservation purposes.

### **Marine Spatial Plans (MSP)**

Area based marine plans produced in accordance with the UK Marine Policy Statement. Commonly referred to as marine plans.

### **Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)**

Defined in the Fisheries Act 2020 as the highest theoretical equilibrium yield that can be continuously taken on average from a marine stock under existing environmental conditions without significantly affecting the reproduction process.

### **Multiannual Plans (MAPs)**

Plans under the EU Common Fisheries Policy (now to some extent part of UK law as retained EU law) for important fish stocks and fisheries which set out goals for fish stock management over a period of years and may also include other specific conservation rules.

### **National fisheries authorities**

As defined by section 25(4) of the Fisheries Act 2020, these are (a) the Secretary of State, (b) the Marine Management Organisation, (c) the Scottish Ministers, (d) the Welsh Ministers, and (e) the Northern Ireland department. The term 'national fisheries authorities' differs from 'fisheries policies authorities' in including the MMO.

### **Natural capital**

The elements of nature that produce value to people, for example, ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, soils, minerals, our air, and our seas. A 'natural capital approach' is one

that values the benefits we receive from the natural environment, such as food provision, clean air and water, flood protection, and opportunities for recreation, including appreciation of wildlife, that support health and well-being.

### **Non-quota stocks (NQS)**

Species that are not managed through TACs (quota limits). They include some finfish, most commercial shellfish species, and various other species.

### **Northern Ireland Protocol**

An agreement between the UK and the EU that sets out the arrangements to address the unique circumstances on the island of Ireland introduced by the UK's departure from the EU.

### **Offshore**

12 to 200 nautical miles from the UK's territorial sea baselines.

### **Precautionary approach to fisheries management**

Defined in section 1(10) of the Fisheries Act 2020 as an approach in which the absence of sufficient scientific information is not used to justify postponing or failing to take management measures to conserve target species, associated or dependent species, non-target species or their environment.

### **Processing**

As defined by section 52 of the Fisheries Act 2020: in relation to fish or any other aquatic organism, includes preserving or preparing the organism, or producing any substance or article from it, by any method for human or animal consumption.

### **Recreational sea fishing**

An umbrella term for a variety of recreational activities including recreational sea angling recreational netters and charter boats.

### **Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO)**

A multilateral international body or agreement set up to manage and conserve fish stocks in a particular region.

### **Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM)**

Integrated on-board systems that may include cameras, gear sensors, video storage, and Global Positioning System units, which capture comprehensive videos and are used to monitor fishing activity with associated sensor and positional information.

## **Resilience**

The ability of an ecosystem, species, habitat, or industry to respond, recover or adapt to either changes or disturbances within a reasonable timeframe without permanent loss or damage.

## **Sensitive species**

As defined in section 52 of the Fisheries Act 2020, sensitive species means: (a) any species of animal or plant listed in Annex II or IV of Directive 92/43/EEC of the Council of the European Communities on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna (as amended from time to time), (b) any other species of animal or plant, other than a species of fish, whose habitat, distribution, population size or population condition is adversely affected by pressures arising from fishing or other human activities, or (c) any species of bird.

## **Shellfish**

As defined in section 52 of the Fisheries Act 2020, shellfish includes molluscs and crustaceans of any kind found in the sea or inland waters.

## **Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF)**

A joint forum for discussion of fisheries matters between the UK and the EU under the TCA.

## **Sustainable Development**

As defined by the Brundtland report (1987), sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## **Sustainable fishing**

In the JFS, sustainable fishing means environmental, economic and social considerations are appropriately balanced when managing our fisheries to benefit present and future generations. It means ensuring that fish stocks can be fished, commercially and recreationally, both now and in the future. In doing so, the fisheries policy authorities will carefully consider both the short-term and the long-term impacts of decisions on fish stocks and the fishing industry before acting; short-term socio-economic decisions should not significantly compromise the long-term health of the marine environment. These decisions will need to recognise the cultural importance of fishing through maintaining and, where possible, strengthening coastal communities and livelihoods alongside the requirement for fish stocks to reach and maintain sustainable levels.

## **Territorial sea**

The waters under the jurisdiction of a state, defined by UNCLOS as up to 12 nautical miles from the baseline or low-water line along the coast.

## **The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR)**

An international agreement for cooperation for the protection of the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic. Work under the Convention is managed by the OSPAR Commission, made up of representatives of the Governments of 15 Contracting Parties and the European Commission, representing the European Union. Work to implement the OSPAR Convention is taken forward through the adoption of decisions, which are legally binding on the Contracting Parties, recommendations, and other agreements.

### **Total Allowable Catch (TAC)**

The total allowable catch (TAC) is a catch limit set for a particular fishery or stock, generally for a year or a fishing season. TACs are usually expressed in tonnes of live weight equivalent but are sometimes set in terms of numbers of fish.

### **Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA)**

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the one part, and the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community of the other part. This agreement governs the relationship between the UK and the EU. It was signed in December 2020, applied from 1 January 2021 and was ratified (in a slightly amended form) in April 2021.

### **UK Marine Policy Statement (UKMPS)**

The UK policy framework for preparing marine plans and taking decisions that affect the marine environment in the UK.

### **UK Marine Strategy (UKMS)**

The UK Marine Strategy provides the framework for delivering marine policy at the UK level and sets out how we will achieve the vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse oceans and seas.

### **UK Overseas Territories**

Also known as the British Overseas Territories, 14 territories with a constitutional and historical link to the UK. Whilst they do not form part of the UK, they have the British Monarch as head of state.

### **UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

The international legal instrument for the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources. The post-2020 global biodiversity framework, containing the latest set of global goals and targets, is currently under negotiation and is due to be agreed and adopted at the fifteenth Conference of Parties (COP15) to the CBD in December 2022.

## **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**

A multilateral international agreement that lays down a comprehensive regime of law and order in the world's oceans and seas, establishing rules governing all uses of the oceans and their resources. It was signed in 1982 and came into force in 1994.

## **UN Sustainable Development Goals**

17 United Nations goals 'to transform our world' and promote prosperity whilst protecting the planet. Goal 14 is to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

## **Water quality**

A measure of the condition of water and its suitability to sustain a range of uses for both biotic and human benefits.