



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

DEMERSAL LANDING OBLIGATION

NORTH SEA GUIDANCE 2017

January 2017

1. North Sea

The North Sea area covers EU waters within ICES areas IIa and IV.

2. Species covered

The species included in landing obligation in 2017 are:

- cod
- haddock
- hake
- nephrops
- northern prawn
- plaice
- saithe
- sole
- whiting

However, whether you have to land a species or not will depend on the type of fishing gear you are using, the sea area you are in and potentially your fishing track record. Check the table below to see if you are affected. Please check against all areas you fish in and gears you fish with.

Gear	Species which must be landed	Who it applies to	Exemptions available
Trawls & Seines ≥ 100mm	Cod, Haddock, Whiting, Sole, Plaice, Nephrops	All using the specified gears	No
Trawls & Seines ≥ 100mm	Saithe	Those meeting a catch threshold	No
Trawls and seines 80-99mm	Nephrops, Sole, Haddock	All using the specified gears	Undersized sole must be discarded from <10m vessels operating within 6nm of the coast in ICES area IVc, with a maximum engine power of 180kw, caught in depths of <15 m with a towing time less than one and a half hours. This exemption is in place due to a high survival rate in this fishery. Undersized Nephrops can be discarded. Unwanted Nephrops can be discarded when using a netgrid selectivity device as there is a high survival rate.
Beam trawls ≥ 120mm	Cod, Plaice, Sole, Haddock, Whiting, Nephrops	All using the specified gears	No
Beam trawls 80-119mm	Sole, Haddock, Nephrops	All using the specified gears	Catches of undersized sole can be discarded when using selective trawls in which all meshes in front of the codend are at least 120mm.

Gear	Species which must be landed	Who it applies to	Exemptions available
Gill nets, Trammel nets, Entangling nets	Sole, Cod, Haddock, Whiting, Nephrops	All using the specified gears	Unwanted catches of sole can be discarded by vessels using trammel and gill nets.
Hooks, Lines	Hake, Sole, Cod, Haddock, Whiting, Nephrops	All using the specified gears	No
Pots, Traps	Nephrops, Sole, Haddock, Whiting	All using the specified gears	Unwanted catches of Nephrops can be discarded as they have a high survival rate
All gear types	Northern Prawn	All vessels	No

Relevant catch threshold

If you are affected by the saithe landing obligation you will be informed by the DAERA Sea Fisheries Inspectorate. If you are unsure contact your DAERA Fishery Office or your PO (if applicable) as they will hold a list of vessels subject to the landing obligation.

You will be subject to the saithe landing obligation if your annual average landings of saithe over 2013-2015 were more than 50% of your landings taken in the North Sea. Vessels already notified as being subject to the saithe landing obligation in 2016 will automatically remain subject to the landing obligation in 2017.

3. North Sea Exemptions

In addition to general exemptions there are fishery specific exemptions for the North Sea.

Survivability exemptions:

- Nephrops caught in pots in the North Sea can be discarded. Nephrops should be discarded swiftly and returned in the area where they were caught to maximise survivability. Nephrops should only be released whole.
- Nephrops caught using bottom trawls with a mesh size of at least 80mm and equipped with a Netgrid selectivity device can be discarded. Nephrops should be discarded promptly and returned in the area where they were caught to maximise survivability. Nephrops should only be released whole.

A '[Netgrid selectivity device](#)' means a device consisting of a four panel section inserted into a two-panel trawl with an inclined sheet of diamond mesh netting with a mesh size of at least 200mm, leading to an escape hole in the top of the trawl.

You're permitted to discard undersized sole (less than 24cm) if they're caught:

- by trawls with a mesh size of 80 to 99mm
- within 6nm of the coast in ICES area IVc (meaning south of 53° 30'N)

- by vessels equal to or under 10m, with an engine power below 180kW
- when fishing in waters of less than 15m depth with tow times up to 1.5 hours

You should release undersized sole immediately.

De minimis exemptions:

You are permitted to discard:

- undersize nephrops less than 85mm caught using bottom trawls of mesh size 80-99mm
- unwanted sole caught with trammel and gill nets
- undersized sole (less than 24cm) caught with beam trawls of mesh size 80-119mm with selective trawls in which all meshes in front of the codend are at least 120mm

DAERA will monitor the level of discarding under these exemptions to ensure DAERA stays within its national allowances.

If the national allowance is exceeded the exemption will be removed. You will have to land all catches and they will count against your quota.