



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

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# **DEMERSAL LANDING OBLIGATION**

## **NORTH WESTERN WATERS (Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, West of Scotland) GUIDANCE 2017**

January 2017

## 1. North Western Waters

The North Western Waters covers EU waters within ICES areas: Vb, VI and VII (West of Scotland, west of Ireland, Celtic Sea and Irish Sea).

## 2. Species covered

The species included in the landing obligation in 2017 are:

- Haddock
- Megrin
- plaice
- nephrops
- hake
- pollack
- sole
- whiting

However, whether you have to land these 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.

Area	Gear	Species which must be landed	Who it applies to	Exemptions available
Vb and VI	Trawls Seines	Haddock, Sole, Plaice, Megrin	Those meeting a catch threshold	No
Vb, VI and VII	Trawls Seines	Hake	Those meeting a catch threshold	No
Vb, VI and VII	Gill nets, Trammel nets, Hooks, Lines	Hake	All using the specified gears	No
Vb, VI and VII	Trawls, Seines, Pots, Traps, Creels	Nephrops	Those meeting a catch threshold	Unwanted catches from pots and creels can be discarded as they have a high survival rate. Unwanted catches from trawls can be discarded.
VIIa	Trawls, Seines	Haddock	Those meeting a catch threshold	No

Area	Gear	Species which must be landed	Who it applies to	Exemptions available
VII d	Beam trawls	Sole	All using the specified gears	Unwanted catches can be discarded when using trawls in which no mesh forward of the codend is less than 120mm
VII d	Trawls less than 100mm	Sole	Those meeting a catch threshold	Undersized sole must be discarded from under 10 metre vessels operating within 6nm of the coast with a maximum engine power of 180 kilowatts, caught in depths of less than 15 metres with a towing time not exceeding one and a half hours. This discarding is allowed as there is a high survival rate
VII d & e	Gill nets, Trammel nets	Pollack	All using the specified gears	No
VII b-k	Gill nets, Trammel nets	Sole	All using the specified gears	Unwanted catches can be discarded
VII b-k	Trawls, Seines	Whiting	Those meeting a catch threshold	Unwanted catches can be discarded
VII b-k (excluding VII d)	Beam trawls	Sole	Those meeting a catch threshold	Unwanted catches can be discarded when using trawls in which no mesh forward of the codend is less than 120mm

### Relevant catch thresholds

If you are affected by the landing obligation as a result of meeting a catch threshold 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.

Vessel track records over 2014 and 2015, will be used to calculate whether you meet a catch threshold. Any vessel that was subject to the landing obligation in 2016 will continue to be subject to the landing obligation.

You cannot get your vessel track record transferred or altered. If you have purchased a vessel and intend to pursue a different fishery to the one the vessel targeted in 2014-2015, and to which the landing obligation does not apply or is different, you need to apply to the DAERA to get your vessel's track record disregarded. Your application will have to be endorsed by your PO and DAERA may choose to apply certain conditions to the license. This is at DAERAs discretion.

### 3. North West Waters Exemptions

In addition to general exemptions there are specific exemptions which apply to the North Western Waters.

#### Survivability exemptions:

- Nephrops caught in pots in areas VIa and VII can be discarded. Nephrops should be discarded promptly and returned in the area where they were caught to maximise survivability.
- Undersize sole caught by under 10 metre vessels operating within 6nm of the coast with a maximum engine power of 180 kilowatts, caught in depths of less than 15 metres with a towing time not exceeding one and a half hours can be discarded.

#### De minimis exemptions:

You're permitted to discard undersize:

- sole less than 24cm caught in trammel nets or gill nets in areas VIIb to k
- whiting less than 27cm caught in bottom trawls in areas VIIb to j
- nephrops less than 70mm caught by trawls and seines in areas VIa and VII
- sole less than 24cm caught with beam trawls where no mesh in front of the cod end is less than 120mm in areas VII b-k

DAERA will monitor the level of discarding under these exemptions to ensure it remains 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.