

Press Release – For immediate release 30/11/2017

What's your view on current Diving Permit regulations?

From the 1st of December, Devon & Severn IFCA are inviting interested parties to provide feedback on existing regulations within our Diving Permits for Crab, Lobster and Scallop fishing for Stage One of our two-part consultation period.

Our consultation process involves this first 'open consultation' phase providing stakeholders the opportunity to give feedback on whether they feel the current conditions require changes, and if so, what changes and why. On completion of Stage One (12th January), feedback is discussed by the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee in preparation for Stage Two, starting in June 2018. This second phase of the consultation offers a more 'focussed' consultation highlighting potential areas for change, based on feedback received in Stage One and Committee overview.

"Whether you are a commercial, resident or visiting recreational diver; an individual interested in diving, marine life, conservation or local issues - we'd like to hear what changes, if any, you feel are needed. The key objective of our consultation process is to reach a representative outcome if changes are to be made to future permit conditions. To do this, we need as much feedback as possible from all interested parties." Neil Townsend, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer at Devon & Severn IFCA, said.

Some key conditions of current permit restrictions include the amount of shellfish which can be caught; limited to two Lobsters, three crabs and up to fifteen scallops per day for recreational divers; 'closed season' from July to September for commercial divers; evening curfew (7pm to 7am) with no closed season for recreational divers.

The Diving Permit Byelaw is separated into two categories; Recreational Divers and Commercial Divers. This allows different conditions to be applied, focussed on each category's specific needs. The permits that are issued include flexible conditions, allowing D&S IFCA to react swiftly, if required, to changing circumstances such as conservation issues or in response to national legislation. The consultation process is part of a statutory three-year review, which provides a flexible and adaptive local regulatory approach to manage shellfish diving through Permit issue.

For more information, please see our website www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk and submit your comments on Phase 1 by January 12th, 2018 to: consultation@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk

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If you would like further information, images or an interview with a D&S IFCA Officer, please contact:

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Editors Notes:

- D&S IFCA website links to relevant documents:
Current Diving Permit Byelaw:
https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/15340/sitedata/4E/Diving_Permit_Byelaw/Diving-Permit-Byelaw.pdf
Present Diving Permit Conditions:
https://secure.toolkitfiles.co.uk/clients/15340/sitedata/4E/Diving_Permit_Byelaw/diving-technical-permit-cond.pdf
- D&S IFCA was established under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries. The duties, responsibilities and powers for all IFCA's are clearly set out in this Act of Parliament.
- The D&S IFCA is the largest of ten separate IFCA districts and has two sea boundaries. The D&S IFCA District covers an area of 4522 Km²
- The D&S IFCA is funded through its constituent local authorities by an annual levy. That levy is supported by central Government to enable the Authority deliver on national management objectives. The local Authorities funding the IFCA are: Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council, Torbay Council; Somerset County Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Bristol City Council.
- The D&S IFCA manages the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district and seeks to ensure that the conservation objectives of any Marine Conservation Areas in the district are furthered.
- D&S IFCA's vision is to: "lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry".
- Devon & Severn IFCA: office@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk or www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk