

Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

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Cornwall IFCA Crab and Lobster Pot Fishing (Restricted Vessels) Emergency Byelaw 2022

I am writing to you today about a proposed Emergency Byelaw for the management of fishing effort for edible crab and lobster within the Cornwall IFCA District.

The information below summarises the evidence in support of this proposed byelaw and the byelaw itself is included with this letter.

1. Background information

We have just conducted a detailed review of the data collected through our Shellfish Permit Byelaw monthly returns submitted by permit holders from 2016 - 2021. This review has shown that the Cornwall IFCA district is experiencing a significant change in fishing effort, in terms of volumes of shellfish removed from the district and LPUE (landing per unit effort, measured in kg/100 pots hauled) by over 12 metre potting vessels targeting lobsters and edible crab, particularly those with vivier tanks on board, due to their overall size and fishing capacity

In comparison, under 10 metre potting vessels operating in the same areas are showing a far smaller increase in lobster landings and LPUE and a significant decline in crab landings and LPUE.

Between 2016 and 2021, over 12 m vessels showed:

- 211% increase** in pots hauled
- 146% increase** in lobster landed
- 20% decrease** in lobster LPUE (kg/100 pots hauled)
- 154% increase** in crab landed
- 18% decrease** in crab LPUE (kg/100 pots hauled)

Between 2016 and 2021, under 10 m vessels showed:

18% decrease in pots hauled

4% increase in lobster landed

29% increase in lobster LPUE (kg/100 pots hauled)

69% decrease in crab landed

65% decrease in crab LPUE (kg/100 pots hauled)

During the winter, because of their size and capability, these larger vessels can be more active than under 10 m vessels. This is shown in the activity data where it is estimated that in terms of pots hauls between Jan and March 2021, the over 12m vivier vessels' effort was 720% more than in the under 10 metre sector in the same area.

The number of over 12 m vivier vessels working in the Cornwall IFCA district has increased **from 5 to 8 from 2016 -2021, an increase of 60%**. In the same period, the number of under 10 m vessels has shown a **decrease of 13%, from 327 to 283**.

2. Need for a byelaw

Analysis of Cornwall IFCA's shellfish permit data has highlighted changes in fishing activity within the district, particularly where vivier vessels are increasing in number. Many of these vessels can fish in the Cornwall IFCA district as they are less than the 16.46 m maximum length as prescribed by the Cornwall Sea Fisheries District Shellfish Boats Byelaw. It is believed that further vivier vessels of a similar capability are planned or under construction.

Although not all over 12 m vivier vessels are active in the district throughout the entire year, there is a considerable latent capacity within that sector at a local level as well as from further afield. At the moment, there is no mechanism to prevent any vessel under 16.46 m from fishing for shellfish within the district providing it is registered and licensed.

3. Purpose of Emergency Byelaw

The emergency byelaw is a way for Cornwall IFCA to rapidly introduce appropriate management to address the increasing effort by over 12 m vivier vessels in its district.

4. Consultation

Emergency byelaws do not require the same process of formal consultation as a standard IFCA byelaw. However, as this byelaw will have an impact on fishing activities and businesses, we are writing to you today **to ask for your comments**. Please send them to Cornwall IFCA by email to enquiries@cornwall-ifca.gov.uk or by post to Cornwall IFCA, Office 2, Chi Gallos, Hayle Marine Renewables Business Park, Hayle, Cornwall TR27 4DD, or to the MMO at lfcabylaws@marinemanagement.org.uk **by 17:00 on Friday 16 December 2022**.

The members of our Authority are also being consulted on this proposed byelaw and they will decide whether this byelaw is made or not.

5. Next steps

If the byelaw is made, from 2 January 2023, over 12 m vivier vessels will no longer be allowed be able to fish for fishing for crabs and lobsters within the district. There will be a period of ten consecutive calendar days, during which these vessels may haul and remove their pots from the district.

The emergency byelaw will be in place for 12 months, during which time we will be working on a permanent byelaw to replace the emergency byelaw, addressing this issue in the district.