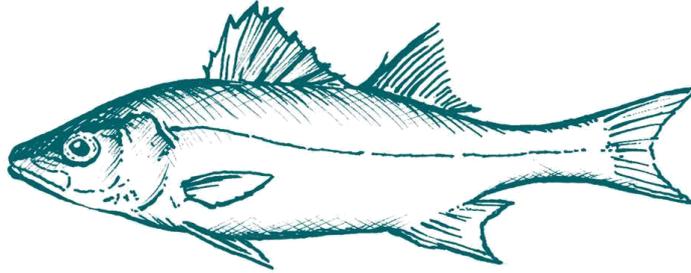


Commercial Fishing for European Sea Bass in 2026



This information summarises national legislation applied to commercial bass fisheries within the district of the Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority.

Bass fishing restrictions

Commercial fishing for bass from the shore is prohibited throughout 2026.

Fishing for bass by UK fishing vessels is prohibited during February and March 2026.

Authorised vessels can only retain and land bass subject to the limits below. Landing limits are not transferable between vessels.

Demersal trawls

For **unavoidable by-catches** of bass not exceeding 10 tonnes per vessel per year and maximum 20% of the weight of the total catches of marine organisms on board caught by that vessel per fishing trip.

Seines

For unavoidable by-catches of bass not exceeding 10 tonnes per vessel per year and maximum 20% of the weight of the total catches of marine organisms on board caught by that vessel per fishing trip.

Hooks and lines

Only where the vessel has recorded catches of bass using hooks and lines over the period from 1 July 2015 to the end of September 2016, not exceeding 8 tonnes per vessel per year.

Fixed gillnets

Only where the vessel has recorded catches of bass using fixed gillnets over the period from 1 July 2015 to the end of September 2016, for **by-catches** not exceeding 5.4 tonnes per vessel per year.

For fishing vessels using more than one gear in a single calendar month, the lowest catch limit as set out above, shall apply.

It is prohibited for fishing vessels to catch and retain bass with any other gears, including nets that drift with the current or are capable of doing so.

Commercial fishing for bass from an unlicensed vessel without an engine is not prohibited at any time of year, except at certain times within a bass nursery area (See BNA information below).

Minimum size for bass

The minimum conservation reference size for European sea bass is 42cm. Any undersized bass must be immediately returned to the sea.

Landing obligation

The landing obligation does not apply to bass. Therefore, where bass is caught using unauthorised fishing gear, or where it exceeds the prescribed catch limit using authorised gear, it must be discarded.

Bass Nursery Areas

Six of the larger rivers and estuaries within the Cornwall IFCA district include areas where fishing for bass from a boat is prohibited, and also where fishing from a boat for any species of sea fish using sand eels as bait is prohibited, at certain times of the year:

Plymouth Rivers

All tidal waters enclosed by a line drawn from the western end of Mountbatten Pier 268°T to the landing beacon at Wilderness Point in the River Tamar

All year

River Fowey

All tidal waters enclosed by a line drawn 270° true from Penleath Point to the opposite shore

May to December (incl.)

Fal Estuary

All tidal waters enclosed by a line drawn 045° true from Weir Point to Turnaware Point

May to December (incl.)

Percuil River

All tidal waters enclosed by a line drawn 151° true from St Mawes Castle to Carricknath Point

May to December (incl.)

Helford River

All tidal waters enclosed by a line drawn 199° true from Rosemullion Head to Dennis Head

May to December (incl.)

River Camel

All tidal waters enclosed by a line drawn 020° True from Stepper Point to Pentire Point.

May to November (incl.)

Any bass caught when fishing from a boat in the specified areas at prohibited times of the year is to be immediately returned to the sea.

For further information on national bass legislation applied in all English waters, please contact the MMO.