

Important updates for hobby fishermen

The Isles of Scilly IFCA will be introducing a new byelaw that will ensure improved fishing practices for hobby fishermen. The byelaw will require all hobby fishermen to have a tag on their marker buoy. This new byelaw was agreed by the Committee in 2016 as a sensible and proportionate measure for all resident and visiting recreational fishermen. The aim is for us all to have a more informed understanding of all fishing that is taking place around the islands and ensure a sustainable future for all commercial and hobby fishermen.

Over the next two months we are keen to hear about any questions or concerns that you may have about how it may affect you. We are also open to ideas about how this new requirement is implemented.

How will the tags work?

Marker tags will be issued by the IFCA to all hobby fishermen which they will be required to attach. Tags will be attached close to the pick-up buoy so visual inspections and monitoring can be carried out.

When will the system start?

Scilly IFCA intends to have a system in place and operational for the 2020 season. We will ask hobby fishermen to register with us and pay a small administrative fee, before being issued with a numbered tag. We will introduce this new requirement gradually and will provide as much help as possible.

Existing legal requirements

All hobby fishermen need to adhere to minimum landing sizes for fish and shellfish. We have provided some of the more common shellfish and fish minimum sizes below:

1. Lobster 90 mm from the back of the eye socket to distal edge of the carapace (upper shell)
2. Crawfish 95 mm back of the eye socket to distal edge of the carapace (upper shell)
3. Edible crab male 160 mm, female 140mm
4. Spider crab male 130 mm, female 120 mm

Under national law, 'berried' (egg bearing) female lobsters and crawfish must be returned to the sea so that those eggs can be carried until they are ready to hatch.

Code of practice

As a reminder - In addition to these legal requirements there is also a code of practice in place which are an important part of ensuring fishing is safe and sustainable.

1. Maximum of 10 pots per fisherman
2. No shooting of pots on transit marks or commonly used boating routes
3. Clearly marked end buoys preferably with a flag
4. Deep water gear not to be shot in shallow water

5. Leaded rope used to pick up buoys

Voluntary 'V' notching of berried lobsters is a common local practise by commercial fishermen. When a female carrying eggs is caught, a 'V' is cut into the inside tail flap and then it is returned so that the eggs can be spawned. Please return these fish as they are breeding females. This will help towards sustainable fishing for future generations.

Research

If you are interested in taking part in work to measure and record your catches, please get in touch.

FAQ's

1. Will I be able to mark my own pots without using tags?

No, all hobby fishermen will be required to use the tagging system.

2. What do I do if I lose my pot end with the tag?

You will be issued a new tag to put on your pots and we will amend our records accordingly.

3. What will happen to untagged pots?

We will introduce this scheme gradually, provide support and get in touch with hobby fishermen as far as is possible. Warning notices will be attached to untagged pots and if they have not been tagged within a reasonable time frame they will be removed by the IFCA.

4. Will I have to record my catch?

No, there is no need to record what you catch.

5. Will I be able to sell my catch?

No, you still require a licence to sell your catch unless it is from a vessel with no engine or is caught from the shore.

Anything else?

Our website www.scillyifca.gov.uk has more information about fishing recreationally or call us on 01720 424588 or 01720 424411

As a hobby fisherman who would like to be kept informed of meetings and updates please forward your email address to Ricky.Pender@Scilly.gov.uk