
IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE SOLENT BIVALVE FISHERIES

This letter has been developed by Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) in order to provide information to members of the bivalve industry regarding the regulations around the bivalve fisheries in the Solent for 2020 and 2021.

The Temporary Closure of Shellfish Beds Byelaw

Following consideration of the best available evidence, which indicates severe depletion of the native oyster beds in the Solent, a decision was made at the meeting of the Authority in September 2020 to apply the Temporary Closure of Shellfish Beds Byelaw ('Temporary Closure Byelaw') to all native oyster beds in the Solent, Southampton Water and Portsmouth and Langstone Harbour for the forthcoming 2020/2021 season. The extent of the temporary closure can be seen in Annex 1 which accompanies this letter.

The temporary closure will be in place between the 1st November 2020 and the 28th February 2021, in order to support the recovery of the native oyster stock. It is the intention of the Authority to continue to work with industry and other partners to rebuild oyster stocks and develop the fishery for the future.

Please note that the Temporary Closure Byelaw is not applicable to Chichester Harbour, which, including that area which lies within the Southern IFCA district, is managed by Sussex IFCA. For information on Chichester Harbour please contact Sussex IFCA.

Other Southern IFCA Byelaws of relevance

Please note that further to the application of the above-named Byelaw, The Solent Dredge Fishing Byelaw, The Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw 2016 and The Oyster Closed Season Byelaw also apply. Copies of these can be found on the Southern IFCA website. These byelaws continue to provide a season and curfew for the use of shellfish dredges within the Southern IFCA district, as well as set out areas closed to bottom towed fishing gear.

Shellfish Classification

When harvesting other bivalves in the Solent, fishers should ensure they are familiar with the shellfish health classifications. If you have any questions regarding this matter please contact the relevant Local Authority who, in conjunction with the Food Standards Agency are responsible for shellfish classification. For reference, maps of the classified areas can be found in the following location: <https://www.cefas.co.uk/data-and-publications/shellfish-classification-and-microbiological-monitoring/england-and-wales/classification-zone-maps/>

Update on The Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw

The Solent Dredge Permit Byelaw was made by Southern IFCA in December 2018 and is currently awaiting confirmation by the Secretary of State. Once confirmed, it is intended that the Byelaw will come into force on the 1st November 2021. Southern IFCA will begin a programme of re-engagement with the Solent fishing community in early 2021 in order to disseminate information regarding the new measures for introduction under the Byelaw.

Oyster Recovery Plan

Southern IFCA continue to work in partnership with other organizations on an oyster recovery plan for the Solent. If fishermen would like to participate please contact the Authority.

If you would like any further information on any of the above, please contact the Southern IFCA Office using the contact details provided.

Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

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Annex 1: **TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF SHELLFISH BEDS BYELAW**

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to the above Regulation.

Temporary Closure of the Solent, Southampton Water, Portsmouth and Langstone Harbour native oyster fisheries, prohibiting the removal of native oysters (*Ostrea edulis*) for the 2020/21 season, 1st November 2020 to the 28th February 2021.

All other byelaws and spatial closures will still apply.

The Western boundary of the closure will be from Hurst Point to Fort Albert on the Isle of Wight. The Eastern Boundary of the closure will be from 001° 05.880'W 50° 42.380'N at Seaview, to St Helen's fort at 001° 05.02'W 50° 42.31'N, to 001° 03.900'W 50° 43.07'N, to 000° 58.969'W 50° 46.975'N on Hayling Island.

