



Sussex IFCA Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc) Byelaw 2021

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Sussex IFCA introducing this new byelaw?

This Byelaw introduces minimum retention sizes for commonly caught species of fish and shellfish (fish, crustacea and mollusc) for both commercial and recreational fisheries. This is a basic and a widely recognised way to support sustainable marine populations and fisheries. The byelaw combines a number of existing minimum size measures and introduces new minimum sizes for certain species. The byelaw introduces prohibitions for the removal from the fishery, retention on board, transshipping, landing, transport, storage, sale, display or offering for sale of undersized marine organisms.

Why are the minimum sizes different for each species?

There are different minimum sizes for different species as some grow and mature relatively quickly within a few years (for example mackerel and herring), whilst others take far longer to reach their breeding age and are subsequently much more at risk of being caught before they mature (for example turbot). By allowing fish and shellfish species to reach a defined minimum size, this enables animals to mature and reproduce before capture. Allowing enough fish to reach maturity and reproduce is essential to sustaining healthy populations of marine fish species, a functioning ecosystem and sustainable fisheries.

Who does the minimum size byelaw apply to?

With the exception of UK licensed fishing vessels, where existing legislation is applied for species listed in Schedule 1b, the minimum sizes in this byelaw apply to **all** fishery participants and throughout the onward supply chain. This includes commercial licensed fishers, non-licensed fishers, recreational fishers, transporters and merchants in the fishing industry who remove from a fishery, retain on board, transship, land, transport, store, sell, display or offer for sale any fish species specified in the Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc) Byelaw 2021. The byelaw will not apply to any catch that is subject to Article 15 of Regulation (EU) 1380/2013 (transposed into UK law) that requires fish to be retained and landed in order to prohibit discarding at sea, commonly referred to as the 'Landings Obligation'.

Do the minimum sizes in the byelaw only apply to fish and shellfish caught in the Sussex IFCA district?

The species in the byelaw are broken down into two schedules: 1a and 1b.

The minimum size for those species listed in schedule 1a are applied only when caught from within the Sussex IFCA district. In general, these sizes are more restrictive than for fisheries outside of the district. You can view the limit of the Sussex IFCA district here: <https://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/about-us>

The minimum sizes for species listed in schedule 1b are applied no matter where they were caught.



Why do the prohibitions applied to species in schedules 1a and 1b differ?

Species listed in Schedule 1b are already subject to minimum size regulations including Statutory Instruments and the Landing Obligation, which requires certain species to be landed if caught by licensed fishing vessels. The prohibitions listed under paragraphs (4) and (5) of the Byelaw ensure that existing legislation is not duplicated or contradicted by this byelaw. The minimum sizes for species listed in Schedule 1a are more restrictive than existing legislation and therefore the prohibitions listed in paragraph (3) are applied to all persons.

What should I do if I catch an undersized fish or shellfish?

Any such species measuring below the stated minimum size must be returned immediately to the sea.

Does the byelaw mean that I have to put back dead fish?

The byelaw means that you should avoid catching undersize fish. If you catch an undersize fish, then you must put it back, even if it is dead, unless you are a commercial fisher and the species is subject to the landing obligation.

Does the byelaw mean that undersize fish can be seized?

Yes. If an Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer conducts an inspection, and you are found to have illegal undersize fish, then those fish can be seized. Further enforcement sanctions may then be applicable.

What does the exemption for pelagic species mean?

Paragraph 6 of the byelaw provides an exemption for certain pelagic species. For the shoaling pelagic species (sardine, anchovy, herring, horse mackerel and mackerel) that are caught in large quantities, up to 10% of the total catch weight may be below the minimum size, as reflected in current UK/EU regulations.

How do I measure fish and shellfish to comply with the Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc) Byelaw 2021?

- Diagrams are provided in the byelaw to show how each species should be measured. Fish species shall be measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail fin
- Bivalve mollusc species or a whelk (*Buccinum spp.*) shall be measured across the longest part of the shell
- Whole skate or ray (*Rajidae spp.*) shall be measured between the tips of the wings
- Skate or ray (*Rajidae spp.*) wing shall be measured as the maximum dimension of a wing when it is detached from the body of a skate or ray
- Lobster (*Homarus gammarus*) shall be measured as the length of the carapace, parallel to the midline, from the back of either eye socket to the distal edge of the carapace
- Crawfish (*Palinurus spp.*) shall be measured as the length of the carapace, parallel to the midline, from the tip of the rostrum to the midpoint of the distal dorsal edge of the carapace
- Spinous spider crab (*Maja squinado*) shall be measured as the length of the carapace, along the midline, from the edge of the carapace between the rostrums to the posterior edge of the carapace
- Edible crab (*Cancer pagurus*) or a velvet crab (*Necora puber*) shall be measured as the maximum width of the carapace measured perpendicular to the antero-posterior midline of the carapace.

Where can I read the full byelaw?

The full byelaw can be found on our website www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk.



What should I do if I don't understand the byelaw or any information?

In the first instance refer to our web pages for information, at www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk , and if you still require help then call and speak to one our enforcement officers on 01273 4544407.

How do I report non-compliance?

You can report non-compliant fishing activity for this byelaw or any Sussex IFCA byelaw via phone (01273 454407) or email (admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk). When reporting non-compliance, please include the following information:

1. Who is conducting the activity?
2. What activity is occurring?
3. When is the activity occurring?
4. Where is the activity taking place?
5. How are they carrying out the activity?