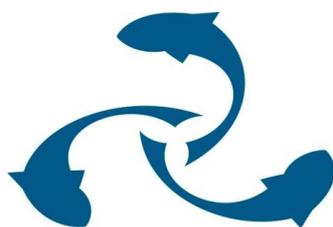


ANGLING TRUST

UK SEA FISHERIES POLICY POST-BREXIT



**ANGLING
TRUST**



Members of the public fishing recreationally spend over £1bn per year fishing for publicly-owned fish stocks

"Recreational fisheries offer a great opportunity to boost coastal economies and sustainability of fish stocks.

The Angling Trust's campaign needs to be listened to by Ministers as they plan a post Brexit system for managing fish stocks"

Former Fisheries Minister and Angling Trust Ambassador Richard Benyon.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Angling Trust is the national representative and governing body for all anglers and has nearly 1,700 affiliated angling clubs with nearly 400,000 members. The Trust believes that when formulating post-Brexit fisheries policy it is essential that the government considers adopting the following overall objectives and recommendations laid out in this document. Underpinning this is a recognition of the potential social and economic contribution to a post-Brexit UK of a vibrant recreational fishing sector.

IN SUMMARY:

- Recognition that because fish stocks are a public resource, members of the public who fish recreationally, who spend £1.2bn and contribute over £2bn annually to the UK economy, employing 24,000 people, should be closely involved in fisheries policy development;
- Future management objectives must fully reflect that the public fishing for pleasure are direct user-stakeholders;
- Recognition that restoring fish stocks requires reducing, limiting or capping fishing mortality;
- Ending political short-termism in fisheries management: rather than aiming for a barely or just functioning fishery all policy should be underpinned by the objective of stock recovery;
- Aim to turn the UK into a world leader in fisheries and marine conservation management.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Policy is underpinned by the principle of delivering optimal fish stocks as a publicly owned asset thus ending political short-termism in fisheries management;
- Rebuilding stock and managing it sustainably, based on scientific evidence, leading to setting clear targets and time frames for stock recovery and in partnership with the EU;
- Responsible allocation of opportunities based on science and include a legal obligation to follow that scientific advice;
- Develop new UK policy adopting best practice from overseas;
- Include a pledge to distribute quotas fairly and proportionately to fishing methods which are more sustainable – for instance to the Under 10 m fleet;
- Commit to maintain a quota system based on the scientific evidence;
- Maintain public access to fisheries resources;
- Introduce specific management objectives to drive participation in recreational angling increasing the socio-economic benefits to coastal communities;
- Large stock strategy for recreationally important species;
- Maintain landing obligations, technical conservation measures and effective enforcement.

RECREATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL MARINE FISHERIES: HOW THE FIGURES STACK UP

Commercial fisheries are much more important than recreational angling, surely? Let's see how the figures stack up.



884,000

The number of recreational sea anglers in England.



£1.2 BILLION

The amount spent every year by recreational sea anglers in England.



£58 MILLION

The total value of all fin-fish landings by English vessels into English ports in 2015.



24,000

The number of FTE jobs supported by recreational sea angling in England.



6,420

Number of registered commercial fishermen in England and Wales.

INTRODUCTION

The Angling Trust, as the representative and national governing body for all angling, wants to ensure that a new UK Fisheries Bill delivers opportunities for the UK to become a world leader in sea fisheries management by recognising and harnessing the potential social and economic contribution to a post-Brexit UK of healthy fish stocks and a vibrant recreational fishing sector. The principles of public access to publicly-owned sea fisheries resources, and the need for the public to be involved in a new policy on how their sea fisheries resources are managed, need to be fundamental elements of the new post-Brexit UK Sea Fisheries Bill.

The government's own report, 'Sea Angling 2012', concluded that members of the public fishing recreationally in England in 2012 spent over £1.2bn and contributed to a total overall spend of over £2bn annually, employing nearly 24,000 people. These enormous economic and employment impacts are derived from a limited number of species that only generated £31 million first sale value to English commercial landings in 2016.

It is therefore in the national interest of the UK to ensure that that future management objectives within a new UK Sea Fisheries Bill must fully reflect that the public fishing for pleasure and for their own consumption are direct user-stakeholders of UK sea fisheries resources and that for some stocks public access to recreational fishing delivers the optimal economic, employment and social benefits from our publicly-owned sea fisheries resources.

Recognition that restoring stocks to their maximum potential productivity requires reducing, limiting or capping fishing mortality one way or another. The Angling Trust's view is that, while the EU quota system has led to many EU stocks being overfished this is more a function of pressure on policy makers from the fishing industry to exceed scientifically-advised catch limits than a failing of the quota system in itself. For instance, in 2016 the EU Council of Ministers set 54 per cent of Total Allowable Catches (TACS) above levels advised by independent scientists.

There is a danger of a lack of ambition from the government to realise fully the opportunities that the UK has to develop a new way of thinking about the optimum utilisation of our sea fisheries resources. Instead many fear the UK will simply do 'just enough' to ensure a functioning UK sea fisheries policy is rolled over on exiting the EU in 2019. This approach is at odds with the promises made to realise the potential of the UK's sea fisheries once unencumbered by the constraints of the EU. The following recommendations set out the Angling Trust's vision for the future of UK sea fisheries policy.

OBJECTIVES

The UK government must consult with the public and decide on clear objectives it wants to achieve for the management of publicly-owned fisheries resources. Failure to identify objectives will hamper the ability to construct coherent policy. The core objectives should be underpinned by the principle of delivering the optimal utilisation of UK sea fisheries resources through restoring and managing stocks sustainably and allocating fishing opportunities to sectors based on a matrix of environmental, economic and social criteria delivering the optimal long-term utilisation of sea

fisheries resources for everyone, not just commercial concerns. Fish stocks are a publicly-owned asset and the nation's natural renewable 'capital', as defined by the UN FAO, and any new policy should be underpinned by this principle.

AMBITION

In developing policy, the UK should be ambitious and strive to be a world leader in sea fisheries management. Failures have historically dominated EU fisheries management and even mediocrity has been celebrated. A new cultural ambition for excellence is required and is deliverable if there is the will to endorse evidence-based decision making instead of short term political appeasement of commercial fisheries interests.

The UK needs to commit to a long-term investment to restore fish stocks in order to maximise the long-term benefits which are in the UK's national interest. This means ending political short-termism in fisheries management decision making and working towards a strategic long-term vision.

The government should be proactive and open in adopting the best fisheries management practice from elsewhere such as the U.S.A Magnuson–Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) which is the provision for promoting optimal exploitation of U.S coastal fisheries.

The government must set clear targets and timeframes for rebuilding stocks. Given that an overwhelming number of stocks are shared with at least one EU Member State it makes sense for this to be done in negotiation with the EU.

Any new UK policy should include a legal obligation to follow scientific advice on fishing and the UK should remain a member of the International Council for Exploration of the Seas (ICES) in order to inform management advice.

FUTURE UK FISHING OPPORTUNITIES

FREEDOM TO MANAGE

The UK must give notice that, on exiting the EU, it is free to manage fishing opportunities and is not bound by the 'reasonable expectation' to maintain the distribution of fishing opportunities based on the former beneficiaries of EU quota. This will allow the UK the freedom to distribute fishing opportunities to other sectors, such as the under 10 m fleet or the public fishing recreationally, who may deliver a better return to the UK as the exploiter of the resource.

QUOTA SYSTEMS

The UK must commit to maintaining a quota system rather than an effort-based system in order to fish at sustainable levels and successfully manage stocks shared with the EU and other member states which operate existing quota-based systems. The available evidence strongly suggests that an effort-based system, such as days at sea, would be disastrous both environmentally and economically.

ZONAL ATTACHMENT

Exiting the EU could give the UK the opportunity to renegotiate relative stability and quota allocation based on the principle of Zonal Attachment – a system which already underpins quota negotiations between Norway, the Faroe Islands and the EU. Such a system would allow the UK to negotiate quota based on the time stocks spend in UK territorial waters rather than on a track record of landings; a system which has disadvantaged the UK and lead to perverse outcomes. Zonal attachment would also allow for changing distribution of stocks due to climate change and other factors.

WORLD LEADER

Fishing opportunities should be based on a combination of clearly defined social, economic and environmental criteria. This includes public access to recreational fishing as well as access to non-UK commercial vessels if this delivers the results that are most beneficial to the UK. While the CFP's objective is to reach Maximum Sustainable Yield the UK's additional objective – in taking best practice from around the world and becoming a world-leader in fisheries management – should be also to achieve the highest employment and income through the optimal exploitation of UK sea fisheries.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO PUBLIC FISH STOCKS

THE PUBLIC AS STAKEHOLDERS

Access to fish stocks and recognition of members of the public fishing recreationally as direct user-stakeholders must be enshrined in a new UK Sea Fisheries Bill. Management objectives for recreational fishing differ from those of commercial fishing, which is only interested in the total number of tonnes of fish that can be harvested. **Key drivers for members of the public to fish and spend money in coastal communities are abundant, localised, inshore populations of adult, mature, fish.**

DRIVING PARTICIPATION

No such measures have been adopted by the UK while a member of the EU. The Common Fisheries Policy has failed to recognise recreational fisheries as a legitimate stakeholder and the objective of the CFP has focused exclusively on the commercial objective of Maximum Sustainable Yield. The new UK Fisheries Bill presents an opportunity to redress this with specific management objectives which drive participation in recreational angling and the resultant and widely-documented socio-economic and employment benefits that follow.

DELIVERING MORE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFIT

A credible and workable new UK Fisheries Policy needs to recognise that the public fishing recreationally delivers socio-economic benefits to the UK and to coastal communities which are

comparable to, or in excess of, those delivered from commercial fisheries. There are approximately 6,000 commercial fishermen in England compared to approximately 12,000 employed directly (rising to 24,000 including indirect jobs) servicing the recreational angling sector. For species of interest to both sectors (excluding, for instance, hake, megrim and monkfish) the public fishing recreationally contributes over £1.2bn directly to the English economy (rising to over £2bn in total economic impact) compared to only £31m first sale value of the same species landed commercially (rising to £58m, including those of no interest to anglers, landed into English ports).

LARGE STOCK STRATEGY

This would involve recognising additional, or alternative, management objectives to MSY such as adopting a 'large stock' strategy for recreationally important stocks. A 'large stock' strategy would bring many benefits including: greater stability in the catch by buffering annual recruitment volatility; much less annual variation needed in catch and effort levels; much lower probability of stock decline and reduction in the risk of drastic management intervention. In addition, the mean age, and hence size, of fish and price are also increased.

THE LANDINGS OBLIGATION, TECHNICAL CONSERVATION MEASURES AND ENFORCEMENT

In maintaining an obligation to land all catches (a ban on discarding) the UK must refocus the objective on eliminating unwanted, over-quota and undersized catches through increased selectivity and technical measures. The EU Landings Obligation has become riddled with exemptions and its implementation delayed by the vexed, and as yet unresolved, issue of 'choke' species.

Technical conservation measures must be maintained to ensure sustainable levels of fishing and to ensure management objectives are met. This should include protection of juvenile, spawning and migrating stocks and the habitats these stocks utilise during these vulnerable lifecycle stages. Fishing methods which damage habitats, such as beam trawling, should be discontinued or managed spatially. All vessels fishing in UK waters should be subject, in any new UK policy, to the UK's measures.

Measures within the new UK Fisheries Bill must be backed up by effective and properly resourced enforcement by whoever takes responsibility for the management of UK waters. Current levels of enforcement are inadequate and illegal fishing hinders sustainable management of stocks. Similarly, all commercial landings must be recorded and reported to avoid unregulated and unreported landings hindering sustainable management of stocks.

ANGLING TRUST

JULY 2017

Angling Trust Ltd.
Eastwood House
6 Rainbow Street
Leominster
Herefordshire
HR6 8DQ

admin@anglingtrust.net

www.anglingtrust.net

01568 620447