

Consultation on New Management Measures for Crab and Lobster Landings into Orkney – Outcome Report

BACKGROUND

Marine Scotland issued the *Consultation on new Management Measures for Crab and Lobster Landings into Orkney* on 20 February 2015. This ran for 12 weeks and closed to responses on 15 May 2015. A copy of the consultation document can be found at: www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/02/9445.

The consultation sought views on new management measures for lobster, velvet crab and green crab landed into Orkney. These were:

- increasing the minimum landing size (MLS) for velvet crab landed into Orkney from 65 mm to 70 mm carapace width
- increasing the MLS for lobster landed into Orkney from 87 mm to 90 mm carapace length over a three year period
- introducing a MLS for green crab landed into Orkney of 70 mm carapace width
- prohibiting the landing of berried velvet crab caught in the six nautical miles around Orkney
- new restrictions on carriage in the six nautical miles around Orkney to accompany these measures

The measures are intended to help improve the sustainability of Orkney's shellfish fisheries through the regulation of harvesting controls. They were developed and proposed by Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd, which is part of the Inshore Fisheries Group network.

OVERVIEW OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 46 responses were received, with the majority coming from individual Orkney fishermen. Most organisation responses were from the Orkney fishing industry, with others coming from Shetland and Outer Hebrides based organisations with an interest in local fisheries management. Respondents can be broken down as follows:

Group Type	#	%
Private individuals	37	80
Fishermen's associations	5	11
IFGs / Inshore management bodies	3	7
Catchers / Processors	1	2
TOTAL	46	100%

A full list of the respondents who gave permission for their name to be published is provided at the end of this document.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

A majority of respondents supported the proposed measures, with over 80% in favour of each proposal:

Q1. Do you support increasing the MLS for velvet crab landed into Orkney from 65 mm to 70 mm carapace width?

	Individuals	Organisations	Total
Yes	31 (84%)	9 (100%)	40 (87%)
No	5 (14%)		5 (11%)
Don't Know	1 (3%)		1 (2%)

Q2. Do you support increasing the MLS for lobster landed into Orkney from 87 mm to 90 mm carapace length over a three year period?

	Individuals	Organisations	Total
Yes	33 (89%)	8 (89%)	41 (89%)
No	3 (8%)	1 (11%)	4 (9%)
Don't Know	1 (3%)		1 (2%)

Q3. Do you support introducing a MLS for green crab landed into Orkney of 70 mm carapace width?

	Individuals	Organisations	Total
Yes	33 (89%)	7 (78%)	40 (87%)
No	3 (8%)	1 (11%)	4 (9%)
Don't Know	1 (3%)	1 (11%)	2 (4%)

Q4. Do you support prohibiting the landing of berried velvet crab caught in the six nautical miles around Orkney?

	Individuals	Organisations	Total
Yes	35 (95%)	9 (100%)	44 (96%)
No	1 (3%)		1 (2%)
Don't Know	1 (3%)		1 (2%)

Q5. Would you support new restrictions on carriage in the six nautical miles around Orkney to accompany these measures?

	Individuals	Organisations	Total
Yes	34 (94%)	8 (89%)	42 (93%)
No	2 (6%)	1 (11%)	3 (7%)

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Introducing or increasing a minimum landing size can prevent the landing of juvenile shellfish and allow a greater number the opportunity to reproduce before being harvested. Prohibiting the landing of berried (egg-bearing) shellfish can temporarily protect reproductive females. Over the long term, these measures can potentially decrease fishing mortality and increase long term yield and biomass.

Excerpts from individual responses to the consultation highlight the desire among the majority of respondents toward improving the management of Orkney's shellfish fisheries by implementing these measures:

- *“OFA members are unanimous in their wish to see these minimum landing sizes implemented. Our members’ current practice is to land at those sizes in preference to keeping aboard smaller or berried animals so for them this would be a welcome legal consolidation of the quality stock management practices they already habitually employ voluntarily.” (Orkney Fisheries Association)*
- *“With the increased fishing on... velvet crab the MLS size is very welcome, as the largest vessels are targeting this species all year round in the inshore sector.” (Local fisherman)*
- *“Leaving smaller lobsters on the grounds will increase stock biomass and result in higher economic returns for fishermen in future years.” (Western Isles Fishermen’s Association)*
- *“I support the MLS of green crab because in the past certain vessels have prosecuted this fishery down to size 30 mm, which has destroyed certain fishing areas.” (Local fisherman)*
- *“A ban on landing of berried females [velvets] is likely to be the single most effective measure for protection of egg production in the velvet crab stock. Given the inshore nature of the fishery, the prohibition is likely to be very effective in its coverage of the overall stock.” (Fisheries scientist)*

Following the conclusion of the consultation, the Scottish Government will now proceed to legislate on these measures, with the following caveats:

- A number of respondents, including the Orkney Fisheries Association, argued that the MLS for lobster should either be increased to 90 mm immediately or over a shorter timescale (e.g. one year instead of three years). Following discussion with industry, Marine Scotland has agreed an immediate increase to 88 mm, and then to 90 mm one year later.
- At this point Marine Scotland will not introduce a restriction on the carriage of non-compliant shellfish. However, this option will be kept under review and Marine Scotland will explore its implementation in the future if deemed necessary.

Marine Scotland expects these management measures to come into force from early 2016.

CONSULTATION RESPONDENTS

Groups/Organisations

Orkney Creel Fishermen's Organisation
Orkney Fisheries Association
Orkney Fishermen's Society Ltd
Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd
Outer Hebrides IFG
Shetland Fishermen's Association
Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation
Western Isles Fishermen's Association
Westray Processors

Individuals

Adam G Tulloch
Douglas Sinclair
Gary Norquoy Kirkpatrick
George W B Costie
Ian Spence
Ian Stevenson
Jack Hay
Jimmy Dakin
Kate Rydzkowski
Michael Bell
Neil Cameron
Robert A P Hutchison
Ronnie Norquoy
Sean Dennison
Seun Ayrone
Thomas G Tulloch
Tristan Southall



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