



Isle of Man
Government

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Landing Obligation Q & A

What is the Landing Obligation?

The Landing Obligation means that certain catches of fish are no longer allowed to be discarded at sea; it is the correct term for the 'discard ban'. The full Landing Obligation comes into force on 1st January 2019.

Are all fisheries affected?

No, those using pots, traps and creels are unaffected by the new rules and can continue fishing as before.

Does this mean that I have to land everything that I catch?

In general, you have to retain and land all quota species; non-quota species can continue to be discarded. Any fish that may represent a health hazard can be discarded.

Specific optional exemptions to the discard ban also apply to some quota species; these are set out in the regulations. Please read the Landing Obligation General Requirements 2019 or consult DEFA or your local fishery office for further information.

Prohibited species and undersized specimens of non-quota species must be discarded.

Will bass be subject to Landing Obligation rules?

Bass is not subject to the Landing Obligation rules as it is not a quota species and is managed under a general prohibition and must be discarded.

Do catch composition rules still apply?

Catch composition rules no longer apply to any fish for which there is a quota. Vessels must retain and land all quota species caught. However, the current minimum mesh size rules continue to apply.

I fish using scallop dredges, does the 5% bycatch rule still apply?

Vessels fishing for scallops using dredges must now retain and land all quota species bycatch. This applies even if you have more than 5% by weight of fish. All

quota fish must be retained and landed and you will need to find quota to cover your landing.

If you have more than 5% of any species of non-quota fish (e.g. cuttlefish (CTL) and lesser spotted dogfish (LSD)), the 5% bycatch rule still applies.

Are there any other changes I need to know about?

Some specific gear technical requirements are also being introduced in 2019. There are mandatory requirements for some Irish Sea fisheries from 1st January 2019. This requirement will not apply in targeted queen scallop *Aequipecten opercularis* (QSC) fisheries.

Further changes may arise through annual quota negotiations and guidance will be updated to include these as necessary.

What are “choke” species?

In a mixed fishery, it may not be possible to completely avoid unwanted catches. Where a fishing vessel has insufficient quota for species which it must land, it may run out of quota prior to the end of the year. This is a “choke”.

What should I do if I have to land fish for which I do not have sufficient quota?

In general, you should try to take measures to avoid catching fish for which you do not have quota. For example, avoiding areas with high concentrations of those fish or improving gear selectivity. Quota managers and Producer Organisations are working to ensure as far as possible that choke risks are reduced.

How are you going to enforce the Landing Obligation?

The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture will continue to use education as a first step, and provide help and guidance to those unsure of the rules. Current methods of compliance checks such as inspections at sea and on land will be used to check for any non-compliance.