

Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

Rheynn Chymmiltaght, Bee as Eirinys



Isle of Man
Government

Reiltys Ellan Vannin

The Isle of Man Research Contribution (Pilot) Scheme; RCS

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Policy Contact: Fisheries Division, Tel: 01624 685857, Email: fisheries@gov.im

Purpose:

In collaboration with fisheries advisory groups (e.g. the Scallop Management Board; 'SMB'), the overall policy aim is to support and enhance industry-prioritised fisheries science research, without incurring additional financial implications for the Department, by authorising a limited number of 'fishery improvement permits'. The permits would allow vessels to retain and land specified species in excess of the Daily Catch Limit, subject to conditions, including that the proceeds of sale are forgone and contribute to an industry research fund.

Definitions:

"**Scallops**" means the species *Pecten maximus* or *Aequipecten opercularis*.

"**HCS**" means Harvest Control Strategy.

"**HCR**" means Harvest Control Rule.

"**LTFMP**" means Long Term Fisheries Management Plan.

"**The Department**" means the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture.

"**SMB**" means the Isle of Man Scallop Management Board.

"**SMB sub-group**" means a sub-group of the SMB, which includes the Chair, Industry spokesperson, Bangor University, Fisheries Division Officers, and other members by invitation.

"**IFSC**" means Independent Fisheries Science Contractor, appointed by the Department further to section 7 of the Fisheries Act 2012.

"**RCS**" means Research Contribution Scheme.

“**excess scallops**” is the amount of scallops, or other species as specified, landed in excess of the Daily Catch Limit, under the authority of an RCS Permit.

“**Scheme-recipient**” is the individual or organisation receiving the financial payments for excess scallops.

“**RCS-permit**” is the official document issued by the Department that allows a specified vessel to retain and land scallops in excess of the Daily Catch Limit.

“**Territorial sea**” means those waters lying within 12 nautical miles of the baseline from which the breadth of the territorial sea adjacent to the Isle of Man is measured, but not extending beyond a line every point of which is equidistant from the nearest points of such baselines adjacent to the United Kingdom.

“**Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence**” means a licence issued by the Department under Sections 37 of the Fisheries Act 2012.

“**ILV**” means individual licence variation.

Background:

In comparison to the existing long-term scallop fixed-station survey data collected by the RV Prince Madog, which provides an invaluable long-term perspective on stock abundance, the industry-led survey incorporates a higher spatial-resolution *randomised stratified* survey design and sampling gear that is better equipped to detect small (‘juvenile’, or ‘pre-recruit’) king scallops and queen scallops. The enhanced survey data has led to a much more sophisticated and precise approach to spatial management applications, such as Restricted Access Areas (**‘RAs’**) that control fishing effort in high-density areas, and Temporary Closed Areas (**‘CAs’**) that protect areas characterised by juvenile (pre-recruit) populations.

To-date, the industry-led survey has been undertaken using local (Manx registered) fishing vessels, who have been coordinated and funded by the Manx Fish Producers Organisation (**‘MFPO’**), under the direction of survey plans produced in collaboration by Bangor University. The Department’s Fisheries Division has, since 2019, offered varying levels of financial support in order to support the industry-led survey; however, the Department does not have a specific budget for continued support.

The MFPO is the only industry organisation that has contributed to the survey costs to date, despite its membership representing a fraction (approx. 1/3rd) of the overall fleet that benefit from access to the Island’s scallop resource, the status of which is improved as a result of careful management arising from the MFPO-funded survey effort. The MFPO has indicated that it cannot continue to underwrite the costs of the survey on its own, and that if the industry is to continue undertaking the survey without Departmental support, the costs should be borne more equitably across resource-users, or alternatively that there should be some mechanism (scheme) whereby survey funds may accumulate without disadvantaging individuals that voluntarily contribute to the scheme. The industry survey cost varies depending on the extent of the survey effort; however, the optimal survey plan, which covers the entire territorial waters and increases survey effort within the 0-3 NM zone, is expected to cost ~£50,000.

Scope:

The following policy applies to the commercial scallop fisheries, in respect of which the SMB is constituted to advise the Department on management.

Policy:

1. The Isle of Man Research Contribution (Pilot) Scheme aims to facilitate industry-prioritised research and surveys by permitting the landing of *excess scallops* (i.e. scallops over the Daily Catch Limit) subject to the conditions of the scheme.

Legal

2. The Scheme will be administered and authorised by the Department using Fishery Improvement Permits issued under Section 75(1)(b) of the Fisheries Act 2012, the conditions of the Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence (reporting, etc.), and Sea Fisheries legislation (Registration of Buyers and Sellers) continue to apply.

Participation and eligibility

3. Participation in the Pilot Scheme is initially limited to vessels registered in the Isle of Man and Island-based processors.
4. Participation may be extended by the Department following review.
5. In order to monitor the scheme, vessels that voluntarily elect to participate in the Scheme must:
 - a. land 100% of king scallops caught in the territorial sea into a single nominated Island-based processor on the same day as the fishing activity; and
 - b. not undertake any fishing activity outside of the Isle of Man territorial limit (12 NM) on a day when excess scallops are retained.

Limits

6. The Department must limit the maximum volume (kg) of cumulative *excess scallops* that may be landed under the scheme ('Contributions Cap'). The Contributions Cap is that recommended by the Scallop Management Board.

Monitoring landings of excess scallops by participating vessels

7. The cumulative total of *excess scallops* landed under the Scheme must be monitored using the NESTFORMS Electronic Daily Catch Return ('eDCR') system. An eDCR must be completed daily by the master of the vessel as a requirement of the Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence.
8. eDCR-compliance will continue to be monitored using quayside checks, electronic logbooks, and Sales Notes, cross-checked by DEFA Officers.
9. The Department reserves the right to revoke permits issued under the Scheme if a vessel does not accurately report using the eDCR.
10. The Department must revoke all permits issued under the Scheme when eDCR submissions indicate that the Contributions Cap is reached.

Monitoring payments for excess scallops by participating processors

11. The nominated processor is responsible for making sufficient payments to the Scheme-recipient (MFPO) for landings of *excess scallops*.
12. Payments for *excess scallops* must be based on the Live Weight recorded on Sales Notes at the price per kg indicated on the Fishery Improvement Permit.

13. Nominated processors may make batched payments for *excess scallops* on a monthly basis, with payments made no later than one month in arrears (e.g. payments for excess scallops landed in January must be deposited in the Scheme-recipient's account by the end of February).
14. DEFA Fisheries will assess payments received by the Scheme-recipient by cross-checking Sales Notes and eDCR records with the Account Statement produced by the Scheme-recipient.
15. Where there has been insufficient payment to the Scheme-recipient based on the agreed price for excess scallops, the Department must notify the processor.
16. The Department reserves the right to revoke all permits associated with an individual processor.

Monitoring expenditure of Research Funds by the Scheme-Recipient

17. The Scheme-recipient must produce expenditure proposals for the SMB sub-group prior to making any expenditures under the Scheme.
18. The Scheme recipient must not make any payments using the Research Funds until the Departmental representatives of the SMB sub-group confirm that the expenditure proposals are *relevant and reasonable* in the context of the SMB Research priorities. Subsequent to the research being undertaken and completed (annually), the Scheme-recipient must provide a final Account Statement, and a financial report of income and expenditure of the scheme, to the SMB prior to the SMB setting any parameters for the Scheme to be established in subsequent fishing seasons.
19. The SMB, having been satisfied by the research outputs and the financial report produced by the Scheme recipient, may establish the parameters and objectives of future Research Contribution Schemes.
20. The Department, having been satisfied with the administration, enforcement, and outputs of the Scheme, may issue permits to facilitate future Research Contribution Schemes.

Roles and Responsibilities

21. The Scheme-recipient is responsible for planning, coordinating, and undertaking the SMB-prioritised research, and providing all associated data and results to the Department and the SMB.
22. During the policy-pilot period, the Scheme-recipient is the MFPO.
23. The Scheme-recipient must work with the SMB through a 'sub-group' in order to ensure efficient utilisation of research funds generated through the scheme.
24. The Scheme-recipient must continue to receive support from Bangor University in delivering the analysis and presentation of results from the high-resolution survey.
25. Research Contribution Scheme Permits, issued and authorised by the Department, must specify the following named persons:
 - a. Master of the participating vessel;
 - b. Manager of the participating processor (to be nominated by the Master); and,
 - c. The Scheme-recipient (MFPO).
26. It is the responsibility of all the above named persons to ensure compliance with the Scheme.

Scheme Conditions

27. If, at any time, there is a failure to comply with the conditions of the Permit, the Department may revoke any or all Scheme Permits associated with the named persons deemed to be non-compliant.
28. The Department reserves the right to revoke a Permit at any time.
29. The Department reserves the right to revoke all Permits and close the Scheme.
30. The Permit authorises the master of the nominated fishing vessel to retain and land quantities of king scallops in addition to the Daily Catch Limit ('DCL') specified in the Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence

(*excess scallops*), subject to the conditions and requirements of the Research Contribution Scheme outlined in the Permit.

31. The conditions of the Scheme are:

- i. The Master of the vessel is responsible for fishing activity associated with the capture of excess scallops, which must be undertaken in accordance with the Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence issued to the vessel, including the conditions (Section G), schedule (Section H), and annexe (Section I) of the Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence;
- ii. The totality of fishing activity is undertaken within the Isle of Man 12 NM territorial limit on the day that excess scallops are landed;
- iii. All scallops (including all DCL and excess quantities) are landed to the nominated processor on the same day that the fishing activity took place;
- iv. All *excess scallops* that are landed must be freely given to the nominated processor by the master of the vessel;
- v. Payments for excess scallops are paid to the Scheme-recipient no later than the end of the month subsequent to the month of landing, and are based on a set price agreed between the Scheme-recipient and the processor ('Research funds') and stated in this permit;
- vi. Research funds are paid into a bank account held by the Scheme-recipient, which is used solely for the purpose of the Research Contribution Scheme ('the Account');
- vii. The Scheme-recipient must provide a Statement of the Account within three working days of a request being made by the Department; and,
- viii. The Scheme-recipient uses the totality of the funds held within the Account to undertake the high-resolution survey of scallop stocks within Isle of Man waters in accordance with survey plans developed in collaboration with Bangor University. All data collected must be shared with the Department and the Department's independent scientific advisors (Bangor University).

32. All permits are revoked and the Research Contribution Scheme ceases when;

- a. the Isle of Man king scallop fishing season ends (31st May); or
- b. the specified Contributions Cap is reached; or
- c. the funds held in the Account reach £50,000, whichever is sooner.

Related information:

The Fisheries Act 2012 can be found [here](#).

Information on the Department's policies can be found [here](#).

Forms:

Frequently asked questions:

Version History:

<i>Version No.</i>	<i>Date issued</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	01.01.2022	Original policy document

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