



Specific Fishery Authorisation Re-allocation
2024 Guidance Document
Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

1.0 Background

Under Section 5 of the Fisheries Act 2012, the Department is responsible for the supervision and protection of sea fisheries in the territorial sea, and for fostering the establishment and development of such fisheries.

The Department manages the fisheries within the Isle of Man territorial sea through a combination of regulations, byelaws and also through the conditions associated with the Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence.

Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licences are issued by the Department under Sections 37 of the Fisheries Act 2012 (the Act). The Act enables the Department to grant conditional and limited authority to licences, and to vary the authority of a licence if it appears to the Department to be necessary or expedient for the regulation of sea fishing.

Variations to the Isle of Man Sea Fishing licence may relate to the 'Specific Fishery Authorisations' (**SFAs**), which are part of the Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence and allow limited and conditional commercial fishing activity by the specified vessel in relation to specific fisheries. Authorisations are specified in Section C of the licence. Currently, SFAs are allocated in respect of king scallop, queen scallop, crab and lobster, and whelk fisheries.

Engaging in fishing activity without the required SFAs is prohibited by a condition of the Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence. The extent and nature of the authorised fishing activity may also be further restricted by regulation, and by licence condition with reference to the Isle of Man Sea Fishing Licence.

The administration of SFAs is undertaken in line with established policy (SF/03/2022).¹

The Department aims to undertake an annual re-allocation round of latent SFAs (subject to the number of latent SFAs available at the start of the licensing period, 01st April). Guidance will be published annually in April which set out the number and type of SFAs available, and the eligibility and application process.

¹ <https://www.gov.im/media/1358247/specific-fishery-authorisations-policy-sf032022.pdf>

2.0 Latent SFAs

Occasionally, SFAs become latent. SFAs become latent when a licence-holder does not renew their sea fishing licence or leaves the fishery (see policy SF/03/2022 for more details). As of 01 April 2024, the following number of SFAs are latent and held by the Department.

SFA type	Number Latent
King scallop	13
Queen scallop	10
Crab and Lobster	4
Whelk	3

Please note that the above figures does not include any SFAs that have been withdrawn from licence-holders as a result of policies that actively reduced latency in certain fisheries, or policies which sought to reduce the capacity in certain fisheries, and which were removed from licences on the basis of the vessels track-record.

The above figures only include SFAs which were previously allocated to vessels that met the track-record criteria for participating in a fishery, but which have since left the fishery². SFAs that were actively removed from vessels are not being made available for re-allocation and are permanently held by the Department.

2.1 Re-allocating latent SFAs

In determining whether to make latent SFAs available, the Department has sought advice from Bangor University on the current status of the fisheries concerned.

At this present time, the recent trends in the **crab and lobster fishery** and the **whelk fishery** coupled with the relatively undeveloped management frameworks mean SFAs for those fisheries will **not** be made available for full re-allocation. The Department will however consider applications for small amounts of pots for crab and lobster (<30 pots) on an ad-hoc basis for vessels which do not have access to/limited access to quota for other fisheries. Full allocations for crab and lobster (500 pots) or whelk (1000 pots) are not being considered at this time.

The king scallop and queen scallop fisheries, on the other hand, have more comprehensive management frameworks. However, fleet capacity in both of these fisheries has been too high in the past, and the Department has deemed it necessary to remove SFAs from the fishery on the basis of track-record in order to reduce vessel numbers in recent years.

Whilst the Department considers the current number of SFAs to be appropriate to achieve long-term sustainability, a precautionary approach has been adopted in terms of re-allocating latent SFAs.

² Vessels leave the fishery when their owners relinquish their authorisations, do not renew their vessel fishing licence, or fail to find a replacement vessel. Further information on how authorisations become latent can be found in the SFA policy.

Under this precautionary approach, some latent SFAs will be permanently removed from administration, and **the following number of SFAs are available for re-allocation.**

SFA type	Number available for re-allocation
King scallop	5
Queen scallop	5

2.2 Eligibility (king scallop and queen scallop)

The Department may now receive applications from eligible persons for king scallop and queen scallop SFAs using the application form provided (see Appendix 1).

In order to be eligible to apply for king scallop and queen scallop SFAs, the applicant must have experience of working in the fishing industry.

The Department will accept and consider applications from new entrants who do not yet own a registered or licensed fishing vessel.

The Department will accept and consider applications from vessel owners irrespective of whether they have a 'scallop entitlement' on their UK sea fishing licence.

Applicants should note the Economic-link requirement as set out in the SFA policy, which requires applicants to commit to landing at least 70% of the catch taken in the SFA fisheries into the Island in each licensing period.

Applications must be submitted to the Department by 5pm on Friday 19th April 2024.

2.3 Consideration of applications (king scallop and queen scallop)

The Department will consider applications for king scallop and queen scallop SFAs using the information provided by the applicant in the form provided.

In the application form, applicants must set out detail on:

- their fishing vessel (or in the case of new entrants, their plans to acquire a fishing vessel)
- their fishing plan (including landings plan)
- the economic-benefits to the Island;
- any other relevant details.

Applications will be reviewed and scored by the Sea Fisheries Policy Manager, taking into account wider considerations if appropriate. SFAs will be offered to the applicants who submit the strongest applications.

Applicants are encouraged to provide a personal reference from an appropriate person involved in the fishing industry. The Department aims to consider applications and re-allocate SFAs by the end of April.

SFAs that are made available to new entrants will be kept 'on hold' with the Department pending the acquisition of a fishing vessel.

3.0 New SFAs (Nephrops – creel)

Following a consultation on the management of fisheries in the Western Irish Sea Mud-belt, which sought views on the management of a Nephrops creel fishery, new SFAs are being created for the Nephrops creel fishery. Once SFAs have been allocated, the Isle of Man sea fishing licence will prohibit targeting Nephrops using creels to all vessels who have not been allocated an SFA.

The Department aims to establish this fishery under a precautionary approach. Therefore, the number of Nephrops-creel SFAs that are being made available at this time is **7**, each of which will be limited to 400 creels.

This precautionary approach will be reviewed ahead of the 2026 SFA re-allocation round.

3.1 Eligibility (Nephrops – creel)

The Department may now receive applications from eligible persons for Nephrops-creel SFAs using the application form provided (see Appendix 1).

In order to be eligible to apply for Nephrops-creel SFAs, the applicant must –

- already hold an Isle of Man sea fishing licence
- have an appropriate vessel that is capable of fishing for Nephrops using creels on the western Irish sea mud belt (approx. 6 nautical miles west and southwest of the Island)
- hold either a Category A (including 10m-and-under and over-10 m) or Category B Isle of Man sea fishing licence;
- verify access to NEP/07 quota (either in the non-sector or as part of a sectoral group).

Applications must be submitted to the Department by 5pm on Friday 19th April 2024.

3.2 Consideration of applications (Nephrops – creel)

The Department will consider applications for Nephrops-creel SFAs using the information provided by the applicant in the form provided.

In the application form, applicants must set out detail on:

- their fishing vessel
- their fishing plan (including landings plan)
- the economic-benefits to the Island;
- whether they have a track-record of targeting Nephrops using creels in the territorial sea;
- any other relevant details.

Applications will be reviewed and scored by the Sea Fisheries Policy Manager, taking into account wider considerations if appropriate. SFAs will be offered to the applicants who submit the strongest applications.

Applicants are encouraged to provide a personal reference from an appropriate person involved in the fishing industry. The Department aims to consider applications by the end of April and re-allocate SFAs thereafter.

4.0 If your application is not successful

If your application is not successful, the Department will write to you and let you know. The Department may advise on where your application could be strengthened for future application rounds.

If you think that your application has not been properly considered, you may request a review of the decision within 5 working days, which will be undertaken by the Head of Fisheries. The Head of Fisheries may either then overturn the decision, or will uphold the decision. Either way, the Department will formally write to you.

If, after receiving the outcome of the review, you feel that your application has not been considered in a fair and reasonable way, you may request a stage 2 review. This review will be undertaken by the Director of Environment. The Director may either overturn previous decisions, or may uphold those decisions. The Director's decision is final.

If you are unsuccessful on this occasion, this does not prejudice you submitting applications in future years.

4.1 If you're successful

If your application is successful, the Department will write to you and let you know. If you accept the offer of an SFA (together with any associated conditions), the Department will work with you to re-issue a sea fishing licence incorporating your SFAs.

4.2 Questions and queries

If you have any questions or queries about SFAs and the 2024 re-allocation process, please contact the Fisheries Division.

Telephone: 01624 685 857
Email: fisheries@gov.im

Appendix 1 – Application form

Section 1 – GDPR and Personal Information

The personal information supplied in this form is used and retained as follows:

Legal basis	The Data Subjects' details are retained and processed to administer SFAs under an Isle of Man sea fishing licence under the Fisheries Act 2012.
Shared with	Details are shared within the Fisheries Division, and may be shared further in accordance with the privacy notice.
Privacy Notice	The Fisheries Division privacy notice is online at https://www.gov.im/about-the-government/departments/environment-food-and-agriculture/environment-directorate/fisheries/privacy-notice
Retention Period	Personal details provided by application are retained for the application year plus six years.
To enquire about personal data uses, contact the DEFA Data Protection Officer on 01624 686781, email DPO-DEFA@gov.im , or to make a complaint contact the Information Commissioner, visit https://www.inforights.im	

In order for us to process your application, you must provide consent for your personal information to be processed and/or shared.

I agree that the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture may process my personal information in accordance with the privacy notice (please tick).	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Section 2 – Your details

Please provide us with your details.

Applicant name	
Applicant address	
Contact number	
Email address	

Section 3 – SFAs being applied for

Please indicate which Specific Fishery Authorisations this application is made for (✓).

Please use a separate application form if you are applying for more than one SFA.

King Scallop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Queen Scallop	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nephrops (creel)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crab and Lobster	NOT AVAILABLE
Whelk	NOT AVAILABLE

Section 4 – Vessel details

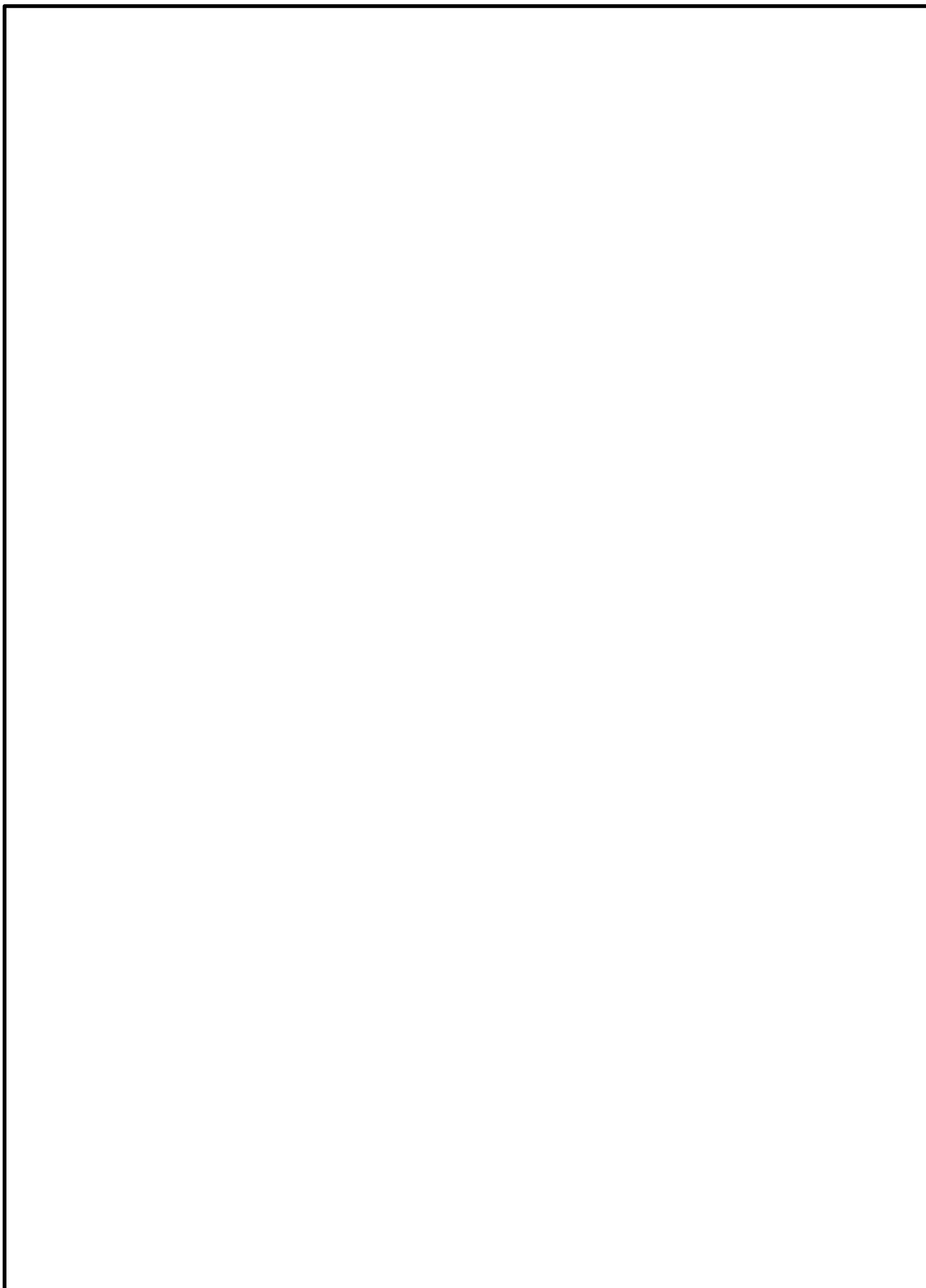
Please tell us about the vessel that you would want the SFAs to be allocated to. Please write 'TBC' against any technical details you do not know.

Are you the current owner of the vessel?	YES / NO
Are there any other owners?	
Vessel Name and PLN	
Overall Length	
Engine Power (kW)	
UK licence number	

Use this space to provide other technical details about the vessel to support your application.

Section 5 – Fishing Plan

Please describe your fishing plan associated with this application in more detail.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the user to describe their fishing plan in detail.

Section 6 – Economic-link

Please describe the expected economic contribution (economic-link) to the Isle of Man resulting from the authorised activity being applied for. You may wish to consider employment, sales, revenue, and spending that would benefit the Isle of Man economy.

Section 7 – Other Details

Please use this section to describe the potential benefits of the Department allocating you an SFA. You should describe your specific circumstances, and explain how an SFA would benefit you or your business (e.g. whether it would enable diversification, operational continuity (e.g. continued employment), new-entrants or career development). You should also use this section to describe whether you would be willing to work with the Department and scientists to improve the performance of the fishery by collaborating on projects. You may also include references from previous employers / industry representatives as a separate document.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for the user to provide details regarding the potential benefits of an SFA allocation and their willingness to collaborate with the Department and scientists.

Section 8 – Declaration

I declare that the information provided is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Name	
Signed	
Date	

Next Steps

The Department aims to process the SFA applications within 2 weeks of the closure of the applications window.

Applications will be assessed by the Sea Fisheries Policy team in DEFA. Following assessment, officers will make recommendations to the Head of Fisheries on the allocations of SFAs that are available.

If your application is unsuccessful, you may request a meeting with the Sea Fisheries Policy Manager to discuss why your application wasn't successful.

If you think that your application has not been properly considered, you may request a review of the decision within 5 working days, which will be undertaken by the Head of Fisheries. The Head of Fisheries may either then overturn the decision, or will uphold the decision. Either way, the Department will formally write to you.

If, after receiving the outcome of the review, you feel that your application has not been considered in a fair and reasonable way, you may request a stage 2 review. This review will be undertaken by the Director of Environment. The Director may either overturn previous decisions, or may uphold those decisions. The Director's decision is final.

Although your application may be unsuccessful on this occasion, you may submit applications in future SFA rounds.

If you are successful, officers will work with you to administer the SFAs in line with policy. Please note that even if you are successful, SFAs may be offered that are subject to certain conditions or limitations that the Department considers necessary or expedient for the regulation of sea fishing.

