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Understanding your Isle of Man sea fishing licence

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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1. Requirement to have an Isle of Man sea fishing licence

Commercial fishing access to sea fisheries resources within the Isle of Man territorial sea is prohibited unless a fishing vessel is granted a sea fishing licence by the Department under Section 37 of the Fisheries Act 2012.

A *British fishing vessel* or a qualifying *EU fishing vessel* must not fish for, take or kill sea fish from Isle of Man territorial waters (12 nautical miles) except as authorised by, and in accordance with the conditions of, a valid sea fishing licence.

The legal definition of a British fishing vessel can be found by clicking this [link](#).

The sea fishing licence is an annual licence; the licensing period is 1 April – 31 March.

Applications must be made for a new / to renew the licence, and must be accompanied by the relevant fee. There is also a fee applied for amendment and duplicate licences. Fees are specified [here](#).

2. About the sea fishing licence

The licence includes Sections A to K, which are explained below.

➤ **Section A to F**

This two-page document includes:

- Licence number
- Category of licence
- Membership (for quota purposes) of a fish producer organisation/non-sector
- Vessel details
- Registered owners
- Specific fishery authorisations

➤ Section G

This is the CONDITIONS that specify how your vessel may fish under the authority of the Isle of Man licence. [They may vary by Licence Category \(A, B, C, etc.\)](#).

All sets of conditions are made up of two parts:

Part I is UK conditions that apply in the Isle of Man territorial sea; and

Part II is Isle of Man Government conditions that apply in the Isle of Man territorial sea.

In order to ensure a coherent and sustainable approach to fisheries management throughout British Fishery Limits, a sea fishing licence granted by the Department from April 2023 onwards mirrors – via Part I – some of the conditions applied in the licence issued under your British fishing licence, but only where those conditions;

- relate to areas of sea relevant to the Island's territorial waters, and
- have been agreed, adopted and applied by the Department.

Part I has introduced a range of conditions that are to be observed; such as the requirement to observe quota limits, to specific requirements relevant if you pair trawling or land at undesignated ports, through to the need to report injuries to marine mammals.

Note: It is a condition of the sea fishing licence that *the owner and master* are responsible to ensure that the vessel, to which the licence relates, is operated in compliance with the legislation of the Isle of Man and all Sections and Parts of the licence.

➤ Section H

This is the SCHEDULE that specifies the authority under which you are allowed to fish. Isle of Man Marine Nature Reserve areas and fishing gear restrictions are stated. [The Schedules may vary by Licence Category \(A, B, C, etc.\)](#).

➤ Section I

This is the ANNEXE and includes three parts.

Parts I & II list species that you are not permitted to fish and any catch limits for stocks that you are able to fish and land (as applies to sea Area VII / VIIa). [Parts I and II of the Annexe may vary by Vessel Administration \(Nationality\), Category, and Sectoral affiliation \(Licence Type\)](#).

To help you locate Parts I & II of your licence on the website, this information is grouped by vessel nationality, and then by licence category (Cat A, B, C, A under-10 etc.) and Non-Sector/Producer Organisation.

Part III lists the nature and extent of fishing activities you can undertake in Isle of Man waters, including any catch limits. [It applies to all sea fishing licence holders regardless of their vessel nationality](#).

➤ Section J

This is the GLOSSARY OF TERMS that gives the meaning of words / terms used in any of the licence documents. [It is relevant to all sea fishing licence holders](#).

For example, “**dredge-bar or toothbar**” means a horizontal bar with teeth on the bottom of a scallop dredge.

➤ **Section K**

This is a LEGISLATION INDEX that is a list of legislation relating to fishing activities in the Isle of Man territorial sea. **It is relevant to all sea fishing licence holders.**

3. Licence variations

Change can be made to the Isle of Man sea fishing licence, which is known as a licence variation. This may affect Sections G to K.

When a licence is varied DEFA Fisheries Division sends out advice to read a Notice To Owners & Masters (NTOM) that summaries the change and where to locate online the updated Sections of the licence.

It is a condition of the sea fishing licence that the vessel owner, master / charterer are responsible for being aware of the latest licence information. It is important to check your licence documents are up-to-date before fishing.

For more details, DEFA fisheries can be contacted:

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