



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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New Fisheries Management and
Marine Enforcement Regime in Wales



In April 2010, the Welsh Assembly Government will assume full responsibility for the management and enforcement of sea fisheries in Wales, and a new management and enforcement regime will commence. This is part of a longer term project to improve fisheries management and marine enforcement in Wales, which will include a review of all existing legislation and the development of a new enforcement strategy.

This leaflet explains the reasons behind the change and how the new structure will work.

In practice, there will be very little evidence of change from day one – enforcement responsibility will simply transfer from Sea Fisheries Committees (SFCs) to the Welsh Assembly Government.

What is changing?

As of April 2010, the functions of the South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee, the Welsh portion of the North Western & North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee and the Welsh Assembly Government Fisheries Unit will amalgamate to create one unit responsible for fisheries policy, management and marine enforcement.

The role of the Environment Agency Wales (EAW) in the management of migratory fish will not change, and we are working with the EAW to determine the future of its role in estuaries.

A Welsh Zone will also be established, extending Welsh Assembly Government fisheries competence from 12 nautical miles out to the median line with the Republic of Ireland to the west, to the Isle of Man in the north, and to a small area in the southwest. This will provide a more consistent and integrated approach to sea fisheries management in Wales.

In the future, the new fisheries management team will also take on new marine enforcement responsibilities under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, which may include enforcement in Marine Conservation Zones.



Why are these changes occurring?

Inshore fisheries are important to communities in Wales; indeed they make up the majority of the Welsh fishing industry, which is why closer Welsh Assembly Government management is so important.

The restructure is also an important step towards securing the aim of the Wales Fisheries Strategy, of a sustainable, financially viable and effectively regulated fishing industry in Wales.

How will these changes happen?

The Welsh Assembly Government is running a project to manage the change effectively, in partnership with SFCs, EAW, Countryside Council for Wales and union representatives, with a target date of April 2010.

The powers to make these changes in Wales are provided by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, which recently gained Royal Assent.

The Welsh Assembly Government will use the funds currently given to local authorities for SFCs to fund the work of the transferring staff and their functions.



How will current regulations be affected?

Current regulations in the inshore area in Wales will become statutory instruments and remain the same but will be enforced by the Welsh Assembly Government.

After April 2010, the Welsh Assembly Government will undertake a full review of legislation, in consultation with stakeholders, to ensure we have all the right measures in place to properly manage fisheries in Wales.

The existing Regulating Orders operated by SFCs in Wales will continue to operate. The Welsh Assembly Government has recently consulted on a number of options for the management of shellfish in these areas and will announce the succession arrangements in the near future.

Will SFC staff be retained?

The SFC officers have a wealth of experience in the inshore region and have established a close working relationship with the fishermen. They will form an important part of the new single team within the Welsh Assembly Government and help to maintain continuity.

Why not IFCAs?

Different fisheries require different management systems and, whilst Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) may be the best solution for England, the Minister for Rural Affairs has determined that an in-house model is the best approach for Wales.

Welsh Ministers will, in addition to their current fisheries powers, also be able to draw upon the equivalent powers afforded to IFCAs in England.

How will stakeholder input be assured?

The Minister for Rural Affairs is keen to develop local and national stakeholder input as a vital part of policy formulation and fisheries management. The Minister has asked a Stakeholder Advisory Group to design this new model for ensuring local and national input in the future. We are now consulting on the details of this model. See www.wales.gov.uk/consultations

Where can I get more information?

For more information on the new fisheries management and marine enforcement regime in Wales, email fisheriesmailbox@wales.gsi.gov.uk.