

The landing obligation – Seafish activities

The issue

Discarding is the practice of returning unwanted catches to the sea, either dead or alive, either because they are too small because the fisherman has no quota, or because of certain catch composition rules. The revised Common Fisheries Policy provides regulations to prevent discarding through the introduction of a landing obligation (LO). This change in regime serves as a driver for more selectivity, and will provide more reliable catch data. To allow fishermen to adapt to the change, the LO is being introduced gradually, between 2015 and 2019 for all commercial species (quota species, or species with minimum sizes) in European waters.

Under the LO all catches have to be kept on board, landed and counted against quotas. Undersized fish cannot be marketed for human consumption. The LO is being applied according to target species and gear type in the transitional period up to 2019. Details of the implementation are included in multiannual plans or in specific discard plans when no multiannual plan is in place. These details include the species covered, provisions on catch documentation, minimum conservation reference sizes, and exemptions (for fish that may survive after being returned to the sea, and specific de minimis discard allowances under certain conditions).

On 1 January 2015 the LO was applied to pelagic and industrial fisheries in all European Union waters, and for cod in the Baltic. For demersal species, the LO will come into force in phases from 1 January 2016, with full implementation by 1 January 2019.

Seafish work programmes relating to the landing obligation

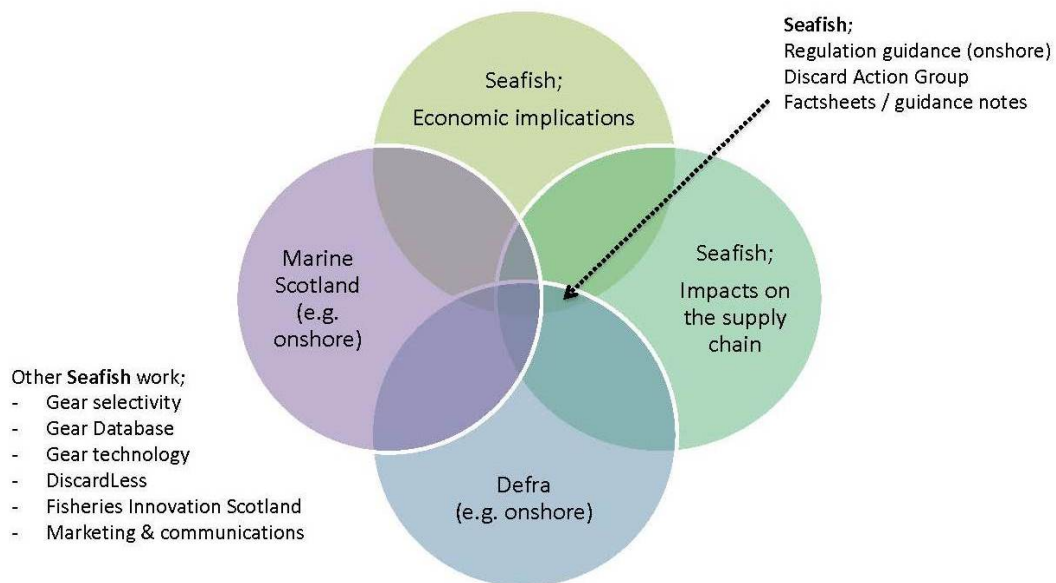
Seafish work on the LO is diverse and cuts across a number of our work streams. We are providing valuable services to industry and government and our co-ordination role about ongoing projects limits duplication of work.

This paper summarises our recent, current and future activities. These activities have been agreed by Seafish's three Sector Panels and demonstrate a commitment to help industry meet the challenges of the LO.

Key work areas for Seafish

- Economic impact assessment
- Additional Seafish projects including 'Assessment of the impact of the LO on the UK supply chain' project
- Gear selectivity
- Seafish Discard Action Group
- Briefings and guidance
- Sectoral support and regulatory guidance
- Marketing and communications

Seafish work programmes



Economic Impact Assessment (EIA)

This Seafish project provides, for key sectors of the UK fleet, a comprehensive Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) of a move from status quo fisheries management measures to various potential scenarios under the new LO. Outputs will also include analysis of implications for processors. The project is part funded by Marine Scotland and Welsh Government, and is supported by Defra.

There are different aspects to the EIA project:

- Seafish completed a [case study review](#) of the potential economic implications of the proposed LO on the Irish Sea *Nephrops* trawl fleet, the North Sea mixed whitefish fleets and *Nephrops* fleet in January 2014. This focused on choke species. [See](#)
- [Interim Report One: Choke analysis](#) was published in March 2015. The main purpose is to illustrate, if the LO obligation had been implemented in 2013, what impact the LO might have had on the activity of different fleet segments. The report assumes that fleets will have to stop fishing when they run out of quota for any fish stock or 'choke' on their primary choke stock. [See](#)
- [Interim Report Two: Scenario analysis](#) was published in August 2015. It looks at the difference in outcomes for the UK fleet based on applying various LO policy levers. The analysis focuses on what difference quota uplift, exemptions and flexibilities

could make to the choke point and, as a consequence, the activity and business performance of UK fleet segments. [See](#) Further scenarios are now being modelled using alternative assumptions. There is also analysis to show the impact of policy levers on the under 10m fleet and the potential impact on the *Nephrops* fleet of assumed improvements in catch selectivity.

- Due for publication autumn 2015, the third phase of the project will consider the potential economic impacts of the LO on the [onshore](#) sector.
- [Seafish individual vessel choke analysis tool](#). As part of the EIA on the fleet, Seafish developed a choke analysis tool to be used by Marine Scotland when talking with individual vessel owners. The tool shows possible outcomes for fishing under different LO scenarios for individual vessels, based on their quota holdings, anticipated quota leasing and recent catch rates per day at sea for species subject to the LO.

Contact [Hazel Curtis](#) for further information.

Additional Seafish projects

[Assessment of the impact of the LO on the UK supply chain](#)

Seafish was asked by the Devolved Administrations to analyse the issues faced by the UK supply chain and the potential consequences for individual sectors in meeting the challenges of the LO.

The analyses will be mainly qualitative, evaluating potential changes in activity of one sector in response to changed activities and outputs of other sectors. The project will also identify novel work required to facilitate an informed and proactive approach to tackling issues. This project started in April 2015, and a report is due to be published in November 2015. The project will provide an understanding based on existing information (written and oral opinions); gaps in information identified by this work could be addressed in subsequent project(s).

Contact [Marcus Jacklin](#) for further information.

[Seafish Strategic Intentions Survey](#)

This pilot survey investigated the impact of the LO on demersal and *Nephrops* vessel owners' strategic intentions for their businesses. This study aims to identify and analyse the different strategies vessel owners' intend to adopt and the factors influencing their decisions to do so. Seafish will publish a report on the pilot phase of the survey in spring 2016.

Contact [Kirsten Milliken](#) for further information.

[DiscardLess Project](#)

[DiscardLess](#) is a large EU project to help provide the knowledge, tools and technologies to achieve the gradual elimination of discarding. The first focus is on preventing the unwanted fish from being caught, and the second focus is on making best use of the unavoidable unwanted catch.

The DiscardLess project started in March 2015. Seafish are part of the consortium.

Contact [Hazel Curtis](#) for further information.

Gear selectivity

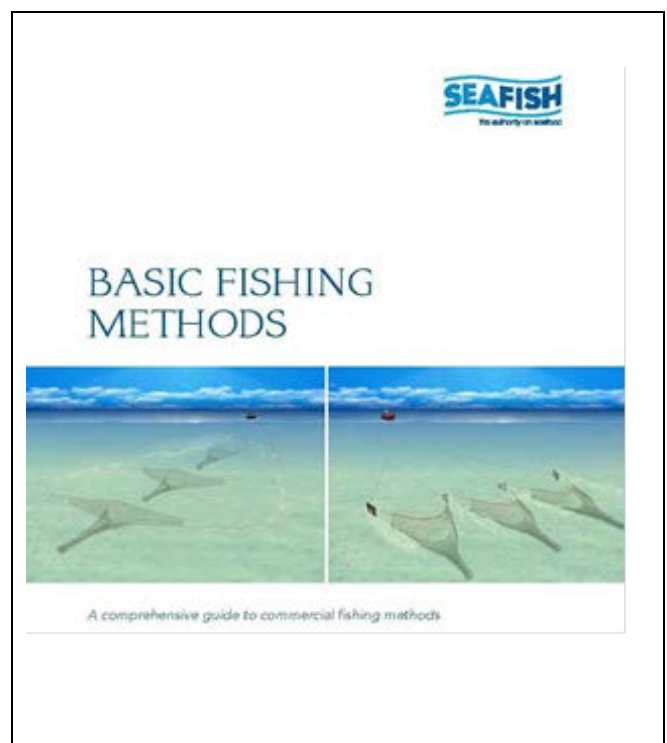
Basic Fishing Methods (BFM) Handbook

Seafish, along with the fishing industry, has been developing new selective technologies and net-based fishing activities for many years to reduce unwanted bycatch. Seafish gear trial work over the last 15 years is increasingly relevant and outputs of this research have influenced gear now being used in commercial fisheries. The new handbook was published in May 2015 and contains illustrations and descriptions of commonly used fishing methods, gears and rigs. It covers UK fisheries, with reference to other fisheries throughout the world that supply wild-caught fish and shellfish into the UK markets. The publication also provides some basic knowledge of how fish are caught using a range of fishing methods.

Gear Database

The Seafish gear database is a [web based tool](#) providing information on all fishing methods in regular use in the UK and EU, and easy access to in depth information on fishing gear and accurate selectivity data. It was launched in July 2015. It gives a full description and illustration of each gear, as well as a list of the species that are caught by each one. It also lists the selectivity and discard reduction methods commonly applied to each gear, with links to more detailed descriptions and explanations of each device. There is also an assessment of how effective

each selectivity method is in targeting only specific species, or size of fish. This is supported by details of all scientific trials that have been undertaken, and all the reports that have been produced for each of the selective gears in the UK in the last 20 years.



Gear Technology

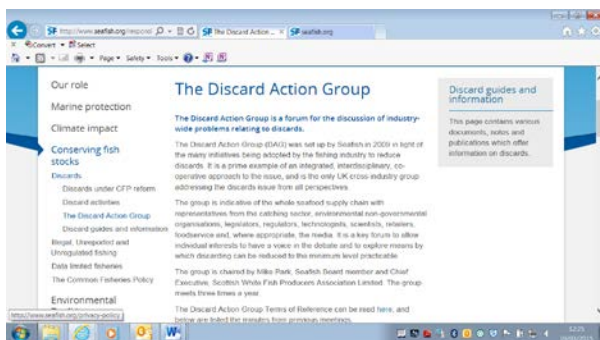
The syllabus of the Seafish Gear Technology Training courses at Hirtshals flume tank has been modified to include a greater emphasis on gear selectivity to give fishermen an increased understanding of what selectivity devices are available for use in the gear they use. Seafish ran a series of courses for fishermen from Northern Ireland who studied 40 different selectivity devices, and discussed them in relation to the gear that they use. Mike Montgomerie also supported a group of Scottish twin rig skippers in developing a new design of *Nephrops* trawl to minimise gadoid

bycatch. This included constructing a model of the new trawl design and a two day workshop at Hirtshals Flume tank in March 2015 to refine the design further. This work is ongoing.

Once the European Maritime Fishery Fund (EMFF) becomes available this format of course will be made available to fishermen in other areas of UK. This funding will also be applied for to support courses going forward.

Contact [Mike Montgomerie](#) for further information.

Seafish Discard Action Group (DAG)



The group is an integrated, interdisciplinary, co-operative forum and is the only UK cross-industry group addressing the discards issue from all perspectives, with representatives from the catching sector, retailers, processors, foodservice environmental non-governmental organisations, legislators, regulators, technologists and scientists. We hold three meetings per year typically attended by 30-40 stakeholders. News alerts are circulated at least twice a month to a circulation list of over 200. [See](#)

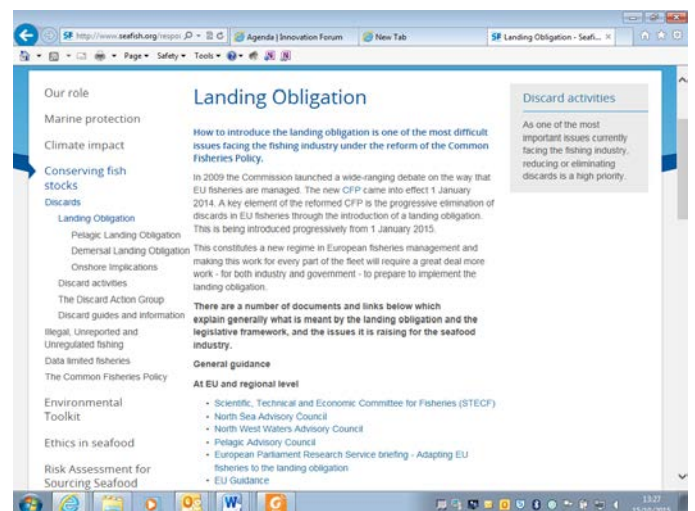
Associated with DAG, we have completed two projects which were initially commissioned by Defra. These are; [Discards](#)

[in Bulk Uses](#) and [Use of Discards in Bait](#) (the latter part funded by Seafish). These aimed to inform policy makers on the potential onshore utilisation of discards. There is a [Discards](#) section on our website with subsections covering; The LO, discard activities, Discard Action Group minutes and presentations and discard guides and information.

Contact [Karen Green](#) for further information.

Briefings and guidance

We produce regular briefing documents and guidance notes, and keep the Seafish web pages up-to-date. Briefing notes include an [Industry briefing note on the landing obligation](#), and a briefing note on the [pelagic landing obligation](#).



Contact [Karen Green](#) for further information.

Sectoral support and regulatory guidance

Conflict with other Regulations

The reformed CFP specifies that undersize fish - fish under the Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) - cannot go to direct human consumption uses, but can go to indirect human consumption or non-human consumption uses. This means fish that is fit for human consumption is legally not permitted to directly enter the food chain. This fish now falls within the scope of the Animal By-Products Regulation (ABP) which not intended for this situation.

Seafish has been working with Defra to resolve some of the conflict. This has resulted in the agreement that undersized fish landings will come under food safety law, which removes the need for all landing sites to be approved for handling ABP. Seafish and Defra have worked together and assured guidance is being drafted by Seafish to assist with the practical ways to comply and to ensure consistency of enforcement between landing sites.

This fish also falls within the Buyers and Sellers Regulation meaning that records must be submitted on the first transfer of ownership, in the same way as for fish for human consumption. Seafish already have guidance on compliance with the Buyers and Sellers regulation but are discussing simplification with the Marine Management Organisation. This fish is also subject to Seafish levy on the first sale of fish. Levy is payable when the first payment is made and if it remains a fish product.

Contact [Fiona Wright](#) for further information.

Assisting Government

Seafish works closely with the Devolved Administrations, providing assistance to publicise consultations and meetings on the Seafish website; providing a portal for key information; and disseminating information.

Contact [Karen Green](#) for further information.

Defra Groups

We attend meetings of both the Defra Onshore Task Force and the Defra CFP Stakeholder Implementation Group to gather information and disseminate it to the DAG circulation list. The Implementation Group enables Defra to advise industry and other stakeholders of their current work in support of the LO. The Onshore Task Force aims to capture issues from the onshore sectors.

Contact [Karen Green](#) for further information.

Assisting Seafood Scotland/Scottish Seafood Partnership

The urgent need to involve the onshore sector in LO work has been highlighted in Scotland in particular, as the majority of the domestic landings from the whitefish sector come into, and are processed, in Scotland.

Seafish has been consulting with interested parties, and sharing the results of the Seafish work with regards to the assessment of the impact of the LO on the UK supply chain, and the EIA.

Contact [Jess Sparks](#) for further information.

Fisheries Innovation Scotland

Seafish is a key supporter of Fisheries Innovation Scotland (FIS) which recently held a conference titled 'Working with the landing obligation'. The conference highlighted the latest advancements in understanding and working with the complexities of the LO, and included examples of progress made internationally. Following on from this conference FIS has commissioned projects that include exploring relative stability, quota management and the LO.

Contact [Tom Pickerell](#) for further information.

Seafish Strategic Investment Fund

The Seafish Strategic Investment Fund has selected projects that aim to directly address the LO issues. The Seafish Strategic Investment Fund provide us with a flexible, 'light touch' means of commissioning research and development, helping us to deliver our 2015/2018 Corporate Plan high level objectives. Accordingly we have commissioned a 'Disruptive Technology Workshop' to develop new and truly disruptive technology solutions for the catching sector move beyond modifying existing systems to re-imagine an entirely new and technology platform for 'selective catching'.

Contact [Phil MacMullen](#) for further information.

Fisheries Innovation Scotland

Seafish is a signatory to Fisheries Innovation Scotland (FIS); a legally constituted, non-profit-distributing organisation, with the remit of bringing together government, scientists, industry and other key stakeholders within a formal structure to lead an on-going programme of research, knowledge exchange and education. Seafish is represented both on the FIS Board and the Technical Advisory Committee (Stephen Parry and Tom Pickerell respectively).

[FIS](#) is currently funding two relevant projects: FIS 005 - Reconsideration of European Relative Stability Quota Shares and Implications for the Landings Obligation; and FIS 006 - Mapping and modelling the incentives for a landing obligation in demersal fisheries.

Our support of FIS remains and we will continue to commit necessary resources.

Contact [Tom Pickerell](#) for further information.

Marketing and Communications

Seafish ongoing marketing activities seek to highlight the abundance of delicious, fresh seafood on offer across the UK, much of which is under-utilised, and highlight the versatility of this original superfood. The [Fish is the Dish](#) website has all campaign details.

Contact [Heather Middleton](#) for further information.

Origin Way, Europarc, Grimsby DN37 9TZ

t: 01472 252300 f: 01472 268792

e: seafish@seafish.co.uk w: www.seafish.org

Supporting a profitable, sustainable and socially responsible future for the seafood industry.