



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Victoria Prentis MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Minister for Farming, Fisheries and Food

Seacole Block
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

T 03459 335577
defra.helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Sir William Cash MP
Chair European Scrutiny Committee
14 Tothill Street
House of Commons
London
SW1H 9NB

10 June 2021

Dear Sir William,

Conclusion of UK-EU fisheries negotiations

As an update for the Committee, I am writing to confirm that the UK and the EU have concluded bilateral annual fisheries consultations and reached an agreement on Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for 70 fish stocks and other fisheries management measures for 2021. This letter supplements the recent letters sent on 21 May 2021 covering earlier bilateral negotiations and marks the conclusion of the annual fisheries negotiations for 2021.

The negotiations between the EU and UK were challenging, and we were in uncharted territory. Throughout the negotiations we have worked closely as a UK team with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish Governments to secure a balanced and positive outcome for the whole of the UK.

Although it has taken longer to conclude than I had hoped, the resulting deal is one which reflects the UK's new status as an independent coastal State. The agreement provides much needed stability for the UK industry and sets a good platform for our future relationship with the EU on fisheries management. For example, the agreement includes commitments by the UK and EU to work together via the new Specialised Committee on Fisheries across a range of issues, including the challenges presented in the Celtic sea mixed fishery and on combined TACs and deep sea species.

Value and sustainability

The total value of fishing opportunities for the UK in 2021 across the 70 agreed EU-UK TACs is approximately 160,000 tonnes, worth approximately £333 million. For these stocks, the UK fleet will have available around 26,000 tonnes more quota than that which was allocated in 2020, estimated to be worth about £27m in additional value.

As in previous years, the UK negotiated this year's TACs and quotas taking full account of sustainability principles. Scientific advice on catch opportunities provided by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) relates to 66 of the 70 TACs



negotiated. Our preliminary assessment shows that the UK expects 35% (23 out of the 66 TACs) to be in line with this advice.

In relation to maximum sustainable yield (MSY) advice, our preliminary assessment of the negotiated outcome for 2021 shows that of the TACs which relate to MSY advice, 50% have been set consistent with MSY (16 out of 32 TACs). These figures are a preliminary assessment and subject to change once further analysis of catches by third countries has been completed.

As an independent coastal State, the UK has undertaken an independent review of the method used to assess if TACs have been set consistent with MSY. As a result of this more rigorous assessment, this year's results are not comparable with previous years. A more detailed report will be published shortly outlining the revised assessment method and a comparison of this year's negotiated outcomes against previous years.

Quota exchanges

Exchanges of quota with the EU, as part of annual negotiations, was not possible this year. However, the agreement includes a commitment with the EU on the principle of exchanging fishing quota on an interim basis ahead of a longer-term exchange system to be decided by the Specialised Committee on Fisheries. The UK expects that quota exchanges would be part of future annual negotiations, as provided for in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

Non-quota stocks

On non-quota stocks, due to the late conclusion of negotiations this year and the need to provide our respective industries with clarity, the UK and EU agreed that, exceptionally, tonnage limits would not be applied in 2021. The UK and EU agreed to exchange data to monitor the uptake of non-quota stocks in line with the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement and agreed to work together through the Specialised Committee on Fisheries to develop multi-year strategies for non-quota stocks as a priority.

We have also agreed changes for 2021 on management measures for seabass to reduce wasteful discarding without increasing fishing mortality.

A copy of the agreement will shortly be available on gov.uk. I will also ensure the clerks receive a copy to pass on to you and committee members.

Yours sincerely,



VICTORIA PRENTIS MP