

SSMO Regulations



REGULATIONS

1. A licence will not be issued in respect of a vessel, nor may that vessel be used to dredge, fish for, or take any of the prescribed species within the area covered by the Regulating Order, if it exceeds 17 metres in overall length (as stated on the vessel's UK Licence to Fish and Registration Document), except where the vessel is used wholly to dredge for scallops, in which case, no vessel size limit applies.
2. Vessels may only be operated by the licence holder, a named deputy or those named on the licence. A licence must not be used to enable or declare landings by a non-licensed person or another fisherman licensed by the SSMO.
3. No vessel which is used to dredge for scallops (*Pecten Maximus*) may use or carry onboard more than two tow-bars with a combined overall length, or a single tow bar with an overall length, of more than 8.80 metres, or more than a total of 10 scallop dredges.

With prior written permission from the Board, a vessel can apply to carry a towbar onboard with more than 10 dredges for use outside the 6-mile limit but only one size of bar can be carried onboard at any one time i.e. either 10 dredges for use inside the 6-mile limit or a larger bar for use outside. The towbar must be lashed and stowed when within the 6-mile limit.

Any vessel that was using more than 10 but not more than 14 dredges, between the 1 January 2001 and the 31 December 2001, and for which log sheets showing the number of dredges in use were submitted to the Organisation during that period, has a dispensation to this regulation to allow them to continue to use their existing tow-bar(s) and dredges. The dispensation granted will not be transferable to any other vessel or licensee and will lapse when the licence is surrendered or the vessel is sold or passed on to a crew member. The vessels to which this applies are M/V Sondra LK 365 and M/V Renown LK 52. (Please see Licensing Policy L5.17)

4. The use of any form of hydraulic or suction dredge, or any similar type of gear, to dredge, fish for, or take any of the prescribed species within the area covered by the Order is prohibited. The use of French dredges to dredge, fish for or take any of the prescribed species within the area covered by the Order is also prohibited. A French dredge means a scallop dredge of the type known as "a French Dredge" incorporating paravanes, diving plates, pressure plates, water deflecting plates or any similar device and having rigid fixed teeth.
5. Licensed fishermen who target queen scallops (*Aequipecten opercularis*) must use a ridged pipe dredge with no more than two dredges per vessel with each dredge having a maximum length of 2.5m. Alternatively, a traditional queen trawl can be used provided it complies with the national regulations set by the Marine Directorate. The catch retained on-board any vessel must be 95% bivalve molluscs. A bycatch of up to and no more than 5 individual king scallops (*Pecten maximus*) per 25kg bag of queen scallops is allowed.
6. No licensed fisherman may dredge, fish for or take scallops (*Pecten maximus*) or queen scallops (*Aequipecten opercularis*), before 0600hrs local time or after 2100hrs local time on any day.

7. There are Closed Areas around the Coast of Shetland. **Please see SSMO Spatial Management Plan SSMO P5.** Within these areas all scallop fishing (including queen scallop fishing) is prohibited.
8. Creel limits are in place, therefore, no vessel may fish with more than 600 creels/pots/traps/cages, of which, no more than 240 may be used to fish for Velvet Crab (*Necora puber*).
9. From 1st February 2023 a limit of 600 buckie pots applies per vessel.
10. All creels/pots/traps/cages must have SSMO numbered tags in place which can be obtained from the SSMO office and should be placed prominently on the creel. If any fisherman is deploying greater than 240 creels in number, each one deployed must have an escape panel fitted and, again, these can be obtained from the SSMO office.
11. The buoys attached to any static fishing gear being used to fish for or take any of the prescribed species within the area covered by the Order must be brightly coloured and clearly marked with the vessel's name and registration number.
12. The landing of berried (egg bearing) velvet crab (*Necora puber*) is prohibited.
13. The landing of soft velvet crab (*Necora puber*) is prohibited.
14. The landing of berried (egg-bearing) lobsters (*Homarus Gammarus*) is prohibited.
15. Electro fishing for razor fish (*Ensis* spp), or any other species, is prohibited.
16. There shall be a compulsory closure period for all vessels that target velvet crab. For 2024 anyone with a historic track record of fishing on the west of Shetland shall cease fishing for, landing, storing or retaining onboard their vessel velvet crab from 1st July until 29th July. Anyone with a historic track record of fishing on the east of Shetland shall cease fishing for, landing, storing or retaining onboard their vessel velvet crab from 15th July until 12th August.
17. The catching, landing, storing or retaining of buckies (whelks – *Buccinum Undatum*) may only take place from 1st February until 30th June inclusive. There is to be no deployment of buckie gear before 1st February each year.
18. The minimum landing size for “buckies” (whelks – *Buccinum undatum*) will be 75mm overall shell length.
19. The minimum landing size for velvet crabs (*Necora puber*) will be 70mm carapace width; to be measured across the broadest part of the carapace, excluding the spines.
20. The minimum landing size for lobsters (*Homarus gammarus*) will be 90mm carapace length; measured parallel to the mid-line from the back of either eye socket to the distal edge of the carapace.
21. The maximum landing size for female lobsters (*Homarus gammarus*) is 155mm carapace length; measured parallel to the mid-line from the back of either eye socket to the distal edge of the carapace.

22. The minimum landing size for brown crab (*Cancer pagurus*) is 140mm carapace width; measured across the broadest part of the carapace perpendicular to the antero-posterior midline of the carapace.
23. The minimum landing size for king scallops (*Pecten maximus*) is 100mm; to be measured across the widest part of the shell.
24. The minimum landing size for queen scallops (*Aequipecten opercularis*) is 50mm; to be measured across the widest part of the shell.

It is the responsibility of the owner of the vessel and/or those named on the SSMO licence to ensure they are familiar with, and abide by, all the regulations in force - both local and national.

ADOPTION OF REGULATIONS

The information below outlines the procedure which is currently followed by the SSMO in considering and adopting new regulations (or revising existing regulations)

- 1.** Proposals for a new regulation may come from a variety of sources.
- 2.** A proposal for a new regulation (or an amendment to an existing regulation) is first considered by the Directors of the SSMO. The Directors take into account a number of factors including whether the proposed new regulation is compatible with the SSMO's legal powers, its likely benefits and effects and its likely practicality i.e. how the proposed new regulation would be implemented and operated.
- 3.** If the Directors agree that the proposed new regulation is desirable and practical the detailed text of the new regulation is drafted.
- 4.** Once the Directors have agreed the detailed text of the proposed new regulation it is put on the SSMO website and sent out to every fisherman licensed by the SSMO, for consultation. A date is set, by which, any responses must be made.
- 5.** If there is significant opposition to the proposed new regulation the Directors will re-consider the proposal, including whether it should be amended to address the concerns raised. Once the Directors are satisfied with the proposed new regulation, and believe that they have done everything possible to address any concerns raised, it will be sent to the Scottish Government for approval.
- 6.** The Scottish Government will consider the proposed new regulation, including whether it is legal under the terms of the Regulating Order and decide whether or not to approve it.
- 7.** When the Scottish Government's approval is received the SSMO will agree the date on which the new regulation will be implemented. A notice of the new regulation will be circulated to all SSMO licence holders and also be put on the SSMO website.