



An introduction to UK spearfishing legislation,
regulation, and minimum sizes.

February 2026

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“The BSA is committed to sustainable fishing and maintaining the good reputation of spearfishing within the United Kingdom”

Having a strong reputation for selectivity and sustainability helps protect our sport. As such it is vitally important that we abide by the laws of the land which have been devised to conserve the stocks of fish and shellfish which we hunt. There are rules with UK wide scope, but there are also local bylaws which are specific to certain regions and subregions. It is essential that we research the area where we plan to dive before doing so, so that we are familiar with the local rules and regulations.

This document is a guide on the relevant authorities, how to interpret some commonly used terms and the best approaches to finding out local rules and regulations.

Following Brexit, the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) took over the management of UK inshore fisheries. DEFRA has a number of subsidiary organisations including the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and its sister organisations in the devolved nations, the Marine Directorate in Scotland, the Marine and Fisheries Division in Wales and the Sea Fisheries Policy branch in Ireland, a subsidiary of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

The MMO governs UK wide restrictions – these cover certain species such as bass, pollack and bluefin tuna. Minimum sizes, bag limits and permit restrictions for other species are devolved to regional authorities and subject to local bylaws and guidance. In England the coastal waters (up to 6 nautical miles from land) are divided into ten regions; in these areas the bylaws and policing of fisheries is implemented by Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authorities (IFCA's) - links to their websites are in the footnotes. IFCA's write and approve local bylaws, taking into consideration multiple factors such as local stakeholder views and environmental considerations. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have equivalent local bodies which write and enforce fishery legislation. These bylaws can be found on regional authority websites however sadly these are not always easy to access or navigate. Please see regional breakdown at the end of this document and please contact the author if you have additional local knowledge or suggestions for improvements.

If you are diving near a port, harbour, or estuary, further research is often needed: Port authorities, harbour authorities, and local councils invariably have additional strict bylaws affecting diving, swimming, fishing and therefore spearfishers. Please be aware that regional and national laws are frequently subject to revisions and it is important to check the national and local authority websites regularly for the most up to date information before you dive.

Joining or contacting your local BSA spearfishing club is a good way to clarify any questions you might have.

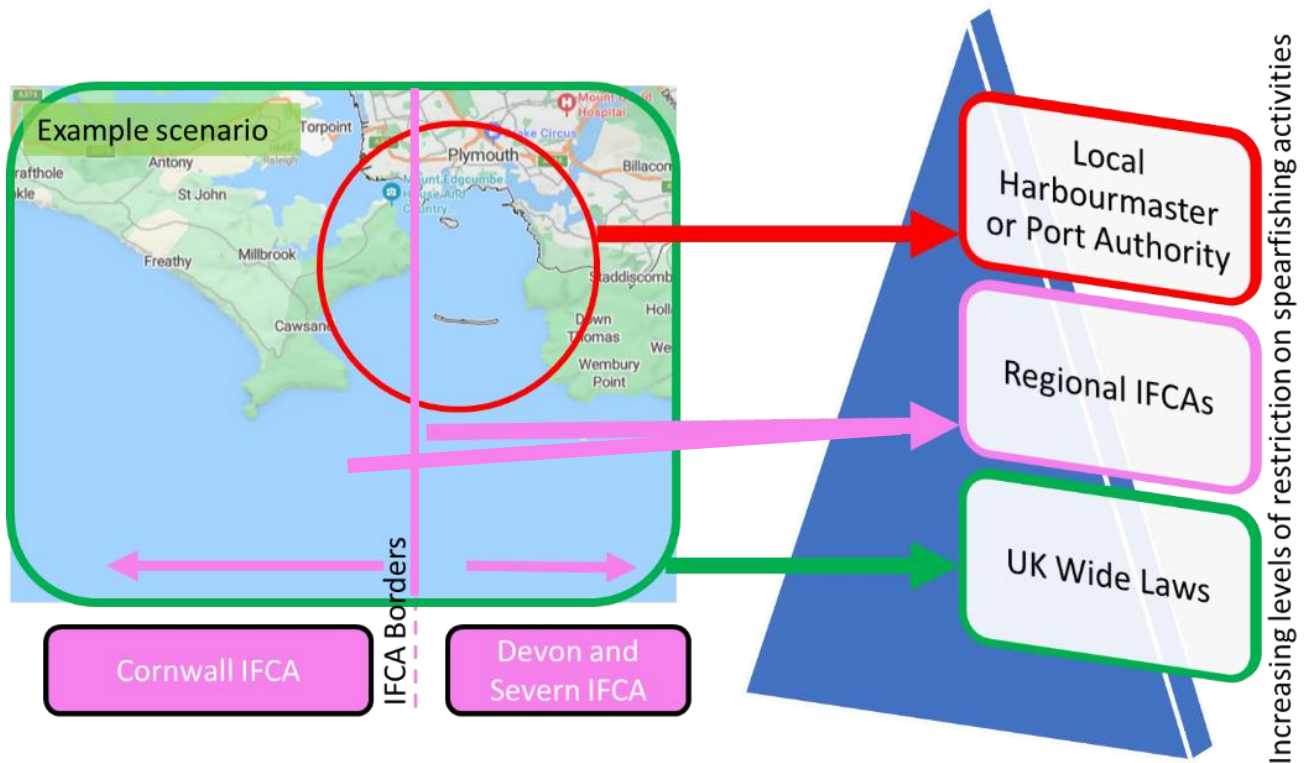


Figure 1 – Example scenario of restrictions in England

Key UK Spearfishing Regulations:

- UK Bass bag limit – 3 per person per day, minimum 42cm in length, 1st April – 30th Jan
- UK Bass closed season – 1st February – 31st March – illegal to land bass in this period
- Freshwater spearfishing is illegal
- Spearfishing on scuba / breathing apparatus is illegal
- Selling speared fish is illegal
- Night time fishing with hand held projectiles is illegal
 - Spearguns, pole spears, and other types of spear are illegal to use after dusk and before dawn.
 - (Using a knife is allowed at night)
- Landing berried lobsters (and spiny lobsters) is illegal
- Landing V-notched lobsters, or lobsters with mutilated/damaged tails is illegal.
- Several species of fish are protected and must not be speared (see page 7.)
- Note: UK Pollack limits are expected to change to 3 per person per day in 2026, probably June, keep an eye on legislation.

Correct ID and minimum sizes

Given spearfishing is invariably lethal to the fish, is essential that you are able to ID any fish accurately before you shoot, to avoid taking illegal or critically endangered species. Bass and many shellfish are subject to legally enforced bag limits and minimum size restrictions: local authorities scrutinise practice here and it is essential to conform to the local or national laws to avoid a fine or prosecution. Other fish species are commonly (but not universally) assigned a “Minimum Conservation Reference Size” or MCRS – this is a guide but not legally binding. The BSA suggest all fishers adhere to the MCRS to help promote sustainable fish stocks. Be aware: when underwater, fish can look substantially bigger (one study found up to a third larger) – this is particularly important when new to spearfishing. It gets easier to judge size with experience and time in the water. It is recommended that you use the following mantra:

"If in doubt, don't shoot"

IFCA's and their equivalent bodies in the devolved nations have the powers to set local MCRS for all species, and some set limits which differ from the national MCRS, either for historic or conservation reasons. Where this is the case, please adhere to the regional minimum sizes. Please see [Table 1](#) MCRS across all UK regions (July 2025). Where no figure is stated for the region, the BSA recommends adhering to the national UK MCRS, if available. Some fish do not have a local or nationally accepted MCRS (e.g. Gilthead bream) – please use discretion here and consider referring to the maturity reference size in [Table 3](#). Some spearfishers may wish to apply more conservative minimum or maximum sizes to promote sustainability (more below). Please see [Table 3](#) on page 9 for more comprehensive data on sexual maturity.

Pollack

In response to changes in ICES model type, pollack were changed from being considered a sustainable to an unsustainable fishery for the Celtic Sea and the English Channel.

- Arising from UK-EU negotiations, recreational Pollack fishing is set to implement new limits “as early as practicable” in 2026.
- Current estimates for implementation are for June 2026, but we recommend checking before fishing.
- New limits, according to the negotiations, will be a maximum of three per fisher per day. There was no mention of an updated MCRS, so this is expected to remain constant.
- Prior to implementation, it is still considered an unsustainable fishery, and you may wish to consider similar limits on a voluntary basis.

How to measure fish:

Most fish are measured from tip of head to end of tail. The exception to this is rays which are sometimes measured from wingtip to wingtip. Check with your local fishery authority for guidance on measuring rays in your area.



Figure 2. – Measuring fish

How to measure shellfish:

Edible Crab – measured as the maximum width of the carapace measured perpendicular to the midline. The same method is used to measure velvet swimming crab.

Lobster / Spiny Lobster – measured as the length of the carapace, parallel to the midline, from the back of either eye socket to the distal edge of the carapace.

Spider Crab – measured as the length of the carapace, along the midline, from the edge of the carapace between the rostrums to the posterior edge of the carapace.

Scallop – measure diameter across the largest cross-section of the shell.



Figure 3. – Measuring shellfish

Fish Regulations

Fish minimum sizes (cm)	National MCRS unless otherwise specified	Cornwall	Devon and Severn	Southern (Dorset/Hampshire)	Sussex	Kent and Essex	Eastern	Illes of Scilly	North Eastern	North Western	Northumberland	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Bass <i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>	UK law: Minimum size 42cm, maximum 3 fish per diver per day, no bass to be speared in February or March.													
Bream (Black) <i>Spondyliosoma cantharus</i>	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23	23
Cod <i>Gadus morhua</i>	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35
Dover sole <i>Solea solea</i>	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
Flounder <i>Platichthys flesus</i>	No national MCRS	25		27						25				
Goldspot mullet <i>Chelon parsia</i>	No national MCRS			36										
Grey Mullet (thin + thick lipped) <i>Chelon labrosus / Chelon ramada</i>	No national MCRS	20		42						20				
Mackerel <i>Scomber scombrus</i>	30 N. sea, 20 other areas	20	20	20	20	30	30	20	30	20	30	20	20/30	20
Plaice <i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
Pollack <i>Pollachius pollachius</i>	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	Expected new legislation mid-2026 (3/day)													
Wrasse (Ballan) <i>Labrus bergylta</i>	No national MCRS			18										

Table 1. Minimum conservation reference sizes (MCRS) by region for fish commonly targeted by spearfishers – Regional MCRS takes precedent over any nationally stated MCRS. Where not specified by the local authority website, the national MCRS has been listed in red. Please note legal restrictions for bass in particular. **For link to up-to-date national MCRS data please see footnotes.**

Illegal / Prohibited fish

It is illegal spear any of the following in the UK: Angel shark (*Squatina squatina*), Silver eel (*Anguila anguila*), Salmon (*Salmo salar*), Sea Trout (*Salmo trutta*), Sunfish (*Mola mola*), Basking Shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*), Tope (*Galeorhinus galeus*), Shad (*Alosa alosa & Alosa falax.*), Skate (*Rajidae sp.*), Sturgeon (*Acipenser sturio*) and Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*).

Shellfish Regulations

The MCRS for shellfish varies significantly between regions and is usually governed by strict local bylaws which apply to recreational fishers and are legally enforced- it is important to familiarise yourself with local regulations. Most shellfish are subject to minimum size restrictions, many areas have a daily bag limit and some have closed seasons (eg no summer collection of scallops in Wales). Particular attention should be drawn to the **Devon and Severn, Northumberland and North Eastern IFCA's**, where a recreational shellfish permit is required ([see regional advice](#)).

Berried (egg carrying) shellfish: female lobsters and spiny lobster must always be returned to the water unharmed, ideally by placing them back to the hole from which they came. This is essential for preserving healthy stocks for the future. Berried female crab are protected in certain jurisdictions (N.Ireland) but it is good practice to return them in all areas to preserve stocks.

V-notched lobster - In many areas the commercial potters (and some experienced recreational potters and spearfishers) “V-notch” berried females by cutting a wedge from a tail flap (see figure 4). This marks them as a breeding female and will remain in the shell through two moulting cycles – it is illegal to land a V-notched lobster, or a lobster with a damaged tail, and these must also be returned unharmed. Do not attempt to V-notch a lobster unless you have been trained to do so as you may cause it harm.



Fig.4 V-notched female lobster tail

Removing Claws – research has shown this practice to be associated with a very high mortality rate. It is illegal to take home the dismembered parts of a crab or lobster in many areas and the BSA strongly discourages this practice in general.

Spiny lobster / crawfish

The numbers of this species have declined across England over the last 20 to 30 years, but there are some signs that populations may be starting a slow recovery. They have been identified as a priority conservation species nationally and therefore we have to be very careful about what we take.

Shellfish minimum sizes (cm)	National MCRS	Cornwall	Devon and Severn	Southern	Sussex	Kent and Essex	Eastern	Illes of Scilly	North Eastern	North Western	Northumberland	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
King Scallop	10 /11*	10	10 (max25)	10/11	11	11	10	10	10	11	10	11	10 (Max 6)	11
Lobster	9	9	9	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	9	8.7	8.7	8.7	9	8.7 E.coast 9 W.coast	8.7
Brown Crab	16	16M 15F	16M 15F	14	14	14	11.5	16M	14	13	13	14	15	15
Spider Crab	13M 12F	13	13	13M 12F	13M 12F	13M 12F	13M 12F	13M 12F	13M 12F	13M 12F	13M 12F	13M 12F	13M 12F	12
Spiny lobster	9.5	11	11	11	11	9.5	9.5	11	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5

Table 2. Minimum conservation reference sizes for shellfish in different IFCA's/UK regions. Where it was not possible to find regional bylaws, the national MCRS has been stated in red. Please use caution here and consider contacting the local authority for clarification if you plan to target these species. *Unless superseded by regional MCRS, the national MCRS for scallops is 10cm for all regions except for Irish sea (ICES VIIa north of 52o 30' N) where it is 11cm.

Fish and shellfish sexual maturity and planning for the future

A much discussed and debated topic among spearfishers when talking about sustainability:

“ When is a fish big enough, and when (if ever) is it too big to take for food? “

Most people seem to agree that to maintain sustainable stocks, an animal should have had a chance to reproduce at least once before it is targeted for food. Sexual maturity itself is not a clear-cut point as fish can mature quicker in different areas and under different conditions. Moreover, the reproductive potential or fecundity of many species (bass, black bream and lobster or example) often increases exponentially with size, meaning the fecundity of an older fish/crustacean can far exceed that of a younger sexually mature individual. Many rod and line anglers advocate for returning larger fish for this reason and voluntary schemes exist in some areas to return larger fish- an example being Sussex (Kingmere MCZ) where anglers are encouraged to only retain black bream between 23-40cm, to allow the larger, more fecund fish to remain in the breeding stock. In some legislatures there are maximum as well as minimum sizes – for example in the Republic of Ireland lobster with a carapace smaller than 87mm or larger than 127cm must be returned.

Clearly in spearfishing catch and release of fish is not possible (although many people are now videoing underwater scenes and taking fewer fish as a consequence). It is an area of healthy debate in our community whether or not to take the biggest fish and shellfish. Our footprint is much smaller than other fishing methods but please try to be respectful of each other's views. The only thing which is not subject to debate is those species with minimum sizes and bag limits which are enforced by law (bass, crab, lobster, spiny lobster and many molluscs). The BSA expects that all members adhere to all UK wide and regional laws and will take action if members are known to be breaching them wilfully or repeatedly. The BSA also asks members to adhere to the MCRS where available and take necessary measures to avoid causing harm to undersized fish or reputational damage to spearfishing. If, through an error of judgement, you do spear a fish below the MCRS please do not share images of it online and try to learn from the mistake. It is illegal to retain an undersized bass (less than 42cm) so please bear this in mind. BSA competitions invariably set minimum sizes substantially bigger than the MCRS in order to avoid accidental harm to undersized fish. The exact figures for each competition vary by location and are set by the local organising club.

If you are after a “one stop shop” for MCRS which will be safe to take anywhere in the UK, see table 3 on the next page, which has the largest of all the UK MCRS figures listed.

Maturity Length

For those who are interested, table 3 also includes some figures from the Angling Trust website which endeavour to give a clearer idea of when fish reach sexual maturity – these are found under the column heading “Angling Trust Maturity Length”. These figures are often considerably larger than the MCRS. According to their website “[*The Angling Trust*] have reviewed available scientific data regarding maturity sizes and we have selected the point at which 50% of the population of a particular species is reported to be mature and hence capable of having bred at least once. We have listed those sizes in the column-headed Maturity.” The Angling Trust have a more exhaustive list of UK fish, including those less commonly encountered by spearfishers and some great additional resources. For further info [click here](#).

Largest (nationally accepted) MCRS for UK and Maturity Length:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Largest National MCRS (mm)</u>	<u>Angling Trust Maturity Length (mm)</u>
Bass <i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>	420	480
Bream – Black <i>Acanthopagrus butcheri</i>	230	240
Bream - Gilt Head <i>Sparus aurata</i>	None	400
Brill <i>Scophthalmus rhombus</i>	300	410
Bull Huss <i>Scyliorhinus stellaris</i>	None	800
Coalfish <i>Pollachius virens</i>	350	700
Cod <i>Gadus morhua</i>	350	600
Conger eel <i>Conger conger</i>	580	1000
Dab <i>Limanda limanda</i>	230	250
Dog fish <i>Scyliorhinus canicula</i>	None	600
Flounder <i>Platichthys flesus</i>	270	300
Garfish <i>Belone belone</i>	None	450
Gurnard – Grey <i>Eutrigla gurnardus</i>	None	250
Gurnard - Red <i>Chelidonichthys cuculus</i>	None	280
Gurnard – Tub <i>Chelidonichthys lucerna</i>	None	300
John Dory <i>Zeus faber</i>	None	350
Mackerel <i>Scomber scombrus</i>	300	340
Monk Fish <i>Lophius piscatorius</i>	None	700
Mullet – Goldspot <i>Chelon parsia</i>	360	470
Mullet - Grey (Thick and Thin Lip) <i>Chelon labrosus / Chelon ramada</i>	420	470
Mullet – Red <i>Mullus barbatus + surmuletus</i>	150	240
Plaice <i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	270	350
Pollack <i>Pollachius pollachius</i>	300	500
Pouting <i>Trisopterus luscus</i>	None	250
Sole (Dover) <i>Solea solea</i>	240	350
Sole (Lemon) <i>Microstomus kitt</i>	250	300
Scad <i>Trachurus trachurus</i>	150	300
Ray – Blonde <i>Raja brachyura</i>	450	1000
Ray – Cuckoo <i>Leucoraja naevus</i>	450	600
Ray – Starry <i>Amblyraja radiata</i>	450	870
Ray – Stingray <i>Dasyatis pastinaca</i>	450	630
Ray - Thornback <i>Raja clavata</i>	450	850
Ray – Undulate <i>Raja undulata</i>	78 nose to tail	Return
Trigger Fish <i>Balistes capriscus</i>	None	200
Turbot <i>Scophthalmus maximus</i>	300	460
Wrasse – Ballan <i>Labrus bergylta</i>	180	300

Table 3: The largest MCRS for the UK (allowed everywhere) and “Maturity Length” as per data from the Angling Trust (to give an idea of sustainability) – for more information [click here](#)

IFCA's in England by region

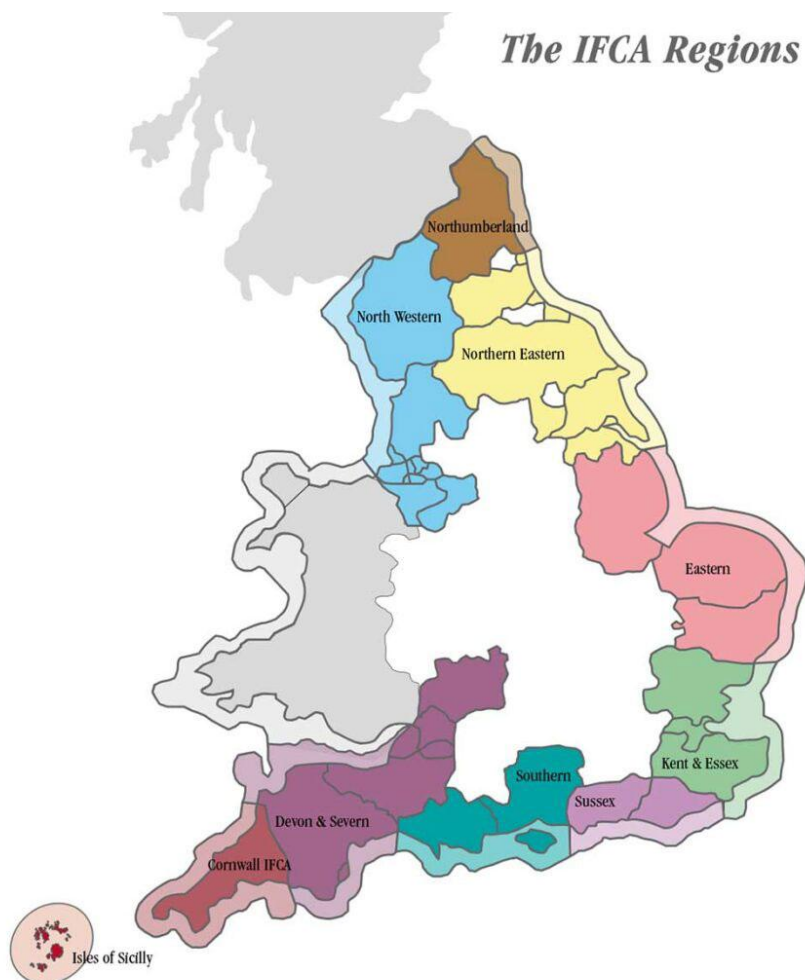


Figure 5. Map of IFCA regions in England – taken from Association of IFCA website, with permission.

IFCA region	Website
Cornwall	www.cornwall-ifca.gov.uk
Devon & Severn	www.devonandsevernifca.gov.uk
Eastern	www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk
Isles of Scilly	www.scillyifca.gov.uk
Kent & Essex	www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk
North Eastern	www.ne-ifca.gov.uk
North Western	www.nw-ifca.gov.uk
Northumberland	www.nifca.gov.uk
Southern	www.southern-ifca.gov.uk
Sussex	www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk
Southern	www.southern-ifca.gov.uk

Table 4. Website resources for IFCA regions in England

Specific Area advice:

This section is work in progress, with the help of the regional BSA clubs and other volunteers. It contains general advice on the region, including notable restrictions for spearfishers, landowner requests, and voluntary no-take zones. Please note: it is not comprehensive and whilst we will endeavour to update this resource annually, local laws are liable to change. It is the responsibility of BSA members to check their local IFCA resources and regional bylaws before diving. If you are unsure or struggling to make sense of restrictions in a location, please consider speaking to your local BSA club or contact your local IFCA who are always happy to help.

Cornwall

If diving from a boat, a maximum of 5 shellfish can be taken per day, from the species of lobster, crawfish, edible crab and spider crab, with no more than two of these five being from the lobster and crawfish species combined. Only registered and licenced fishing boats with a permit are allowed to take more.

The land around Porthkerris Cove is privately owned, and the land owners have banned access to the water for people carrying spearguns. They do not own the water, and you can legally spearfish the cove if you swam or boated from elsewhere. The cove is a scuba diving training hotspot however, and can be busy, so the BSA advises against diving there for safety reasons and to avoid potential conflict.

There is only one MPA (marine protected area) that is of concern to spearfishers in Cornwall. This is the MPA surrounding the Manacles, in which it is prohibited to take Spiny Lobster.

A list of handy IFCA pages can be found here:

[Minimum sizes for Cornwall](#)

[Full list of minimum sizes, including commercial](#)

[Bass fishing](#)

Isles of Scilly

This Isles of Scilly are renowned for their unique coastal habitats and consequently spearfishing should be practiced in a sensitive manner. As with all spearfishing, take only what you need and adhere to local minimum size restrictions and bag limits. The Isles of Scilly IFCA identifies spiny lobster as a priority conservation species.

Devon and Severn

The Devon and Severn IFCA has a number of regulations to be aware of. The minimum landing sizes for lobster and crab are bigger than many other regions (see table). It is also necessary to **purchase a recreational diving permit** (Category 2) to take crab, lobster and scallops. This allows the permit holder to take a) a total of two lobsters, however comprised, from the species of lobster and spiny lobster, and b) a total of three crabs, however comprised, from the species of edible crab and spider crab and c) a total of 25 scallops per day for personal consumption only. At the time of writing a Category 2 permit costs £20 for 24 months and is available from [the DSIFCA website here](#).

Additional Local Bylaws:

The DSIFCA has a number of bylaws which [can be found here](#).

No spearfishing is allowed around Lundy Island and the collection of shellfish is highly restricted.

In addition to the DSIFCA bylaws there are a number of other local bylaws – take care to research river mouths and areas in close proximities to harbours in particular. For example, [Salcombe](#) estuary is subject to two bylaws which are enforced by the South Hams District Council. No spearfishing is permitted within the nature reserve and the Salcombe Harbour Authority need to give express permission for diving in the outer reaches of the estuary – something which historically has not been granted. [Both bylaws can be read here](#).

Mothecombe – the Erme is a popular fly fishing river and Mothecombe estate owners are very hostile to spearfishers. They do not allow access to the Erme Estuary via the estate.

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ's)

Devon has 15 Marine Conservation Zones. These include estuary site on the rivers Tamar, Erme, Avon, Dart, Axe and Otter, as well as North Devon sites Bideford to Foreland Point, Hartland Point to Tintagel, Morte Platform, Lundy and North West of Lundy. Sites off the South Devon coast include Torbay, East of Start Point and Skerries Bank & surrounds. There is a final offshore site in the South West Approaches to the Bristol Channel, off the north coast of Devon and Cornwall. MCZ's do not necessarily prohibit spearfishing but please research these areas before you dive. Spearfishing and the gathering of shellfish is strictly prohibited in much of the waters off Lundy Island.

Wembury Voluntary Marine Conservation Area – this is a **voluntary “no take zone”** encompassing the waters to the landward side of a line linking Fort Bovisand, Shagstone, Little Mewstone and Gara Point. The BSA has a longstanding agreement not to hold spearfishing events in this zone but it is up to individual divers to choose whether they spearfish there or not. Please treat this area sensitively and interact respectfully with the local conservationists who are very passionate and trying to safeguard the area from overfishing and over potting.

Southern (around Dorset and Hampshire)

It is important to remember that the minimum size for mullet in the Southern IFCA is larger than the rest of the country.

Portland harbour is able to be spearfished, however there are numerous restrictions. [More information is available here.](#)

Kimmeridge bay is problematic for spearfishing. Although there are no laws against it, the land owners do not like spearguns on their property and you may be asked to leave.

Scallop minimum sizes varies, with 110mm in ICES area VIId (East of St Albans Head), and 100mm in ICES area VIIe.

No spearfishing under Swanage pier.

Note on safety: Portland Bill is prone to dangerously strong currents, we advise seeking expert advice before attempting to dive there.

Sussex

Spearfishing is prohibited in Brighton Marina and around the Marina arms

There is a voluntary code of conduct for spearfishing in Sussex, with a maximum of ten fish per person per day, and slightly larger minimum sizes for some species. [It is available here.](#)

It is important to note that despite their rarity nationally, there is a healthy silver eel population under Brighton pier. Despite their name, they usually look brown. These are illegal to take, and subject to large fines.

Kingmere reef has been divided into four zones by the Sussex IFCA: Zones 1 and 2 spearfishing and foraging is not allowed 1st April - 30th June, in Zones 3 and 4 you may not retain bream from 1st April - 30th June. [For more information see here.](#)

Kent and Essex, Eastern and North Western IFCA's

We have no local knowledge of these areas outside of the published information online. Please refer to the relevant IFCA websites. If you are local to these areas or spearfish here regularly please get in touch if you would like to contribute to this article.

North Eastern

If you plan on taking shellfish, a Limited Shellfish Permit is required. This is free and can be obtained here: [Limited Shellfish Permit : North Eastern IFCA \(ne-ifca.gov.uk\)](#). The application process is quick and easy.

Northumberland

To gather shellfish, a recreational shellfish permit is required. A recreational permit holder may not take more than 2 lobsters and 5 edible or velvet crabs, 20 whelks or 5 prawns per day. Permits cost £10 per annum and can be purchased here: [Permits - NIFCA](#)

Wales

The Welsh government recreational fisheries resources are of poor quality and hard to navigate! There are currently two sets of bylaws which cover north and south Wales respectively. These should be read with caution as some are not up to date with more recent UK wide law such (in one bylaw the minimum size for bass is incorrectly stated as 37.5cm!). There is a separate Welsh bass fishing policy – however the laws are the same across the whole of the UK – a maximum of three bass per person per day outside of the months of February and March. Bass must be at least 42cm in length. There are very few other legally binding restrictions on fish size. The Welsh government shares the UK national MCRS figures for fish and does not appear to stipulate regional differences.

Scallops: Minimum size of 11cm and summer gathering is prohibited: Closed season from 1st May – 31st October – no scallops should be gathered in this period.

Skomer MCZ – At the time of writing this is the only MCZ in Wales and subject to strict bylaws and a voluntary code of conduct for spearfishers. The gathering of scallops is prohibited all year around and this is legally enforceable. Spearfishing and the collecting of crabs and lobster is against the codes of conduct for the MCZ and the BSA and South Wales Spearfishing Club ask that spearfishers respect this.

Scotland

The Marine Scotland website is extremely difficult to navigate. The Marine Directorate (Sea fisheries division) is the Scottish equivalent of the MMO and has enforcement vessels but these are much more focussed on policing commercial activity. Much of the Scottish spearfishing is self-enforced and common-sense rules apply. Only 6 scallops can be taken per day under recreational diving restrictions. A maximum of 5 crabs and one lobster can be taken per day. If multiple divers are on the same boat then allowance is for one recreational diver only i.e. 6 scallops, 5 crab and 1 lobster can be landed by that boat on any given day!

Be aware of protected water, such as the no take zone in Lamlash Bay (which includes shellfish).

Northern Ireland

The regulatory bodies enforcing fisheries in Northern Ireland are the DEARA and the Loughs Agency.

It is prohibited to land berried (egg-carrying) crabs, detached crab claws and soft-shelled edible crabs. A maximum of one lobster and 5 crabs can be landed per diver per day, or per boat per day irrespective of the number of divers on board.

It is illegal to dive within the territory of harbours in Northern Ireland – the BSA suggests researching locally to confirm the limits of the local harbour authority.

There is a no-dive zone on Strangford Lough which is a conservation area – the extent of this [can be found here](#).

Useful links:

[Government guidance on minimum landing sizes for certain fish.](#)

[The local bylaw development process and how to get involved as well as roles of DEFRA, IFCA's and MMO's.](#)

[IFCA further information and resources.](#)

List of BSA Clubs:

Please see BSA website for membership and contact information.

Cornwall
Dorset
Exe Spearfishing Club
Jersey Dive Team
London International Club
Scottish Spearfishing Club
Southwest Wales Club
Southsea & Sussex Spearfishing Club
Forces Spearfishing Club

Table 5. UK Spearfishing Clubs – [see British Spearfishing Association \(underwaterfishing.co.uk\)](http://www.britishspearfishing.co.uk)

Glossary of Terms

DAERA - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (N.Ireland)

DEFRA – Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

FMP – Fisheries management plan

IFCA - Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (England)

Marine Directorate- Sea fisheries division (Scotland)

Marine and Fisheries Division (Wales)

MCRS – Minimum Conservation Reference Size

MCZ / MCA – Marine Conservation Zone / Area

MMO - Marine Management Organisation

MPA – Marine Protected Area

ICES - The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

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(apologies to anyone missed! Thank you)