



Department  
for Environment,  
Food & Rural Affairs

# **Proposed Wrasse Complex Fisheries Management Plan**

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report - Non-technical Summary**

February 2026

Version: public consultation



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# Non-technical Summary

The draft Wrasse complex Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) has been prepared to meet the requirements of [the Fisheries Act 2020](#). It sets out the policies and proposed actions that Defra will use to manage wrasse fishing activity, so stocks are harvested within sustainable levels. Alongside these actions, draft Wrasse complex FMP also sets out management to help support wider social, economic and environmental aspects of the fishery.

This environmental report (ER) has been produced in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations 2004). The following issues (from Schedule 2, paragraph 6 of the SEA Regulations 2004) were scoped into the assessment:

- biodiversity
- fauna
- flora
- geology and sediments (soil)
- water
- climatic factors
- cultural heritage
- landscape and seascape

This assessment focuses on how the policies and actions in draft Wrasse complex FMP are likely to give rise to both significant positive and negative environmental effects. The findings of this assessment have been used to inform the development of the FMP.

The assessment was conducted against a baseline that primarily used existing evidence on the state of the marine environment set out in [updated UK Marine Strategy \(UK MS\) Part 1](#), published in 2019. Additional sources of evidence were used to establish the status of the environment in relation to issues not covered by the UK MS, such as climatic factors and cultural heritage. The historical impact of fishing activity on the marine environment has been considered part of the baseline. Our assessment used the best available evidence to reach a suitable judgement on the environmental effects of the draft Wrasse complex FMP.

This report sets out those plans, programmes and environmental protection objectives, both international and domestic that Defra consider relevant to the draft Wrasse complex FMP.

This report considers and acknowledges the existing environmental effects of targeted wrasse fishing using pots, traps, and rod and line on those issues scoped into this assessment, in relation to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), the UK Marine

Strategy descriptors and the wider environment. The potential positive and negative environmental effects of the draft Wrasses complex's FMP policies and proposed actions alone and in-combination have also been assessed.

This report concluded that current evidence shows that targeted wrasse fishing in English waters has a minimal impact on the marine environment. Wrasses are spatially discreet, inshore species which are primarily found on seagrass and rocky reef habitats. Targeted wrasse fishing is small, currently limited to a few vessels supplying live wrasse to Scottish Salmon farms or recreational sea anglers. Commercial wrasse fishing is managed by IFCA byelaws, with any potential impacts from 0-6 nautical miles managed. The impact of fishing in MPAs is managed in the 0-12 nautical miles zone in English waters. Management in MPAs beyond the 12 nautical mile limit is in development. The contribution of wrasse fishing to climate change related issues were also considered.

The draft Wrasses complex FMP has considered these impacts and sets out proposals to monitor, and where required, introduce mitigation to address these impacts.

The assessment of likely negative effects identified a low risk of significant adverse effects on the environment from implementing individual policies and actions. The policies and actions, will, where appropriate, be developed to avoid any potential negative effects identified by the assessment progress. The environmental effects of implementing the draft Wrasses complex FMP policies and actions will also be monitored to identify unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage, so appropriate remedial action can be undertaken.

This assessment recommends the draft Wrasses complex FMP should consider the following additional points:

1. Future iterations of the FMP should consider how to develop the cultural heritage of each fishery and how fisheries management can contribute to reducing potential negative interactions with submerged prehistoric landscapes or seascapes.