

<b>De-Minimis Assessment</b>		
For Self-Certified Measures in Defra		
<b>Title of Measure</b>	Wrasses complex FMP	
<b>Lead Department/Agency</b>	Defra	
<b>Expected Date of Implementation</b>	2027 onwards	
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	May 2025	
<b>Lead Departmental Contact</b>	phil.mcbryde@defra.gov.uk	
<b>Type of Measure (primary/secondary etc)</b>	Other (FMP)	
<b>Cost of Preferred Option</b>		
<b>Total Net Present Social Value</b> £0m	<b>Business Net Present Value</b> £0m	<b>Equivalent Annual Net Direct Cost to Business (EANDCB)</b> £0m
<b>Policy overview, rationale for intervention and intended effects</b>		
<p>The Fisheries Act 2020 places an expectation on the UK's Fisheries Policy Authorities to publish Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)<sup>1</sup>. The Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) 2022<sup>2</sup> sets this out in practice and lists 43 proposed FMPs. The Wrasses complex FMP sets out the road map to manage stocks in English waters and protect the wider environment. Once published, the policies and measures in the FMP will be implemented separately through appropriate mechanisms such as statutory instruments, licensing conditions or voluntary measures. The Wrasses complex Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) has been produced to drive progress towards the sustainable fishing of wrasse species in English waters.</p> <p>Wrasses are primarily targeted commercially via static gear, and recreationally by anglers. Wrasses can be a bycatch species in commercial trawl and net fisheries, the impacts of which are not well understood. There is limited fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data available for wrasse species around the UK, including their use as pot bait in other fisheries. Wrasses play a crucial role as "cleaner fish" in their ecosystems, removing sea lice from other reef species. This trait has popularised their use in salmonid aquaculture. Demand from Scottish salmon farms led to the establishment of live wrasse fisheries in English waters since 2015. Currently, there is little understanding of the impact this fishery has on stock status, population dynamics and the wider ecosystem. Given these challenges, a comprehensive FMP is essential to manage these fisheries effectively.</p> <p>Sustainable management requires appropriate harvesting to protect our diverse stocks and will permit us to achieve our responsibility to support vibrant, profitable, and sustainable fishing industries alongside a healthy and productive marine environment. An FMP will provide the tools to manage fishing activity towards more sustainable fisheries, and is a requirement of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Fisheries Act 2020 ('the Act')</li> <li>• the UK Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) 2022</li> <li>• the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 for England<sup>3</sup></li> </ul> <p>Government intervention is required as fish stocks, including Wrasses, are a common pool resource. This would lead to the classic economic problem of 'the tragedy of the commons', were the government not to intervene. This is because market agents would</p>		

<sup>1</sup> [Fisheries Act 2020](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Joint Fisheries Statement \(JFS\) - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

only consider the benefits of catching, and they would not weigh it against the impact it will have on the stock health, overall, leading to overexploitation of the stock. Government intervention would prevent this overexploitation of fish stocks, and this FMP provides the framework through which government intervention would work. Furthermore, a thriving marine environment has positive externalities to society which would not be captured by the market mechanism. Government intervention is therefore required to ensure that the optimal social benefit is achieved.

### **Policy Options (including alternatives to regulation)**

Option 2 was decided as the preferred way forward, as the government has a legal obligation to produce the FMP under the JFS and the Fisheries Act 2020.

#### **Option 0: Do Nothing - No FMP or related management measures developed.**

- Lack of strengthened / new, evidence-based management would increase the likelihood of stocks being overexploited with insufficient protection for the wider marine environment and be legally non-compliant.

#### **Option 1: Self-regulation - No formal Government FMP. Industry introduces voluntary measures.**

- The introduction of non-regulatory measures, such as voluntary measures developed and introduced by industry, are unlikely to go far enough to ensure stocks are being fished sustainably, and the wider marine environment is protected.
- Voluntary measures are unenforceable so there is no guarantee they would provide increased protection to stocks.
- Industry introduced measures would likely not account for the impact of recreational fishing on these stocks, which can be significant.

#### **Option 2 (preferred option): Wrasses complex FMP.**

- The Wrasses complex FMP puts forwards policies designed to synthesise existing measures, information, data and evidence, identifying where there are gaps and highlighting opportunities to fill them. They provide a clear pathway for developing an improved, evidence-based management approach (both regulatory and non-regulatory), in collaboration with industry and stakeholders, and facilitate progress towards establishing a sustainable fishery for these stocks.

### **Description of Novel and Contentious Elements (if any)**

FMPs are internationally recognised as a sustainable way to manage fisheries and are being implemented in the UK with 6 FMPs published already. The broader policy of FMPs is not considered novel; there is however a novel element of this fishery compared to other fisheries that FMPs cover. There is a novel component to this fishery as it encompasses the live wrasse fishery, taking wrasse from English waters for use in Scottish aquaculture as 'cleaner fish'. This FMP is not considered to contain any contentious elements.

### **Assessment of Impacts on Business**

Whilst the Wrasses complex FMP identifies measures that could be introduced post-consultation, these proposed measures will be developed further and do not currently have sufficient detail for a full assessment to ascertain these impacts, if any. When individual measures are specifically implemented, the statutory or non-statutory mechanism through which these will be implemented will have their own impacts assessed in the appropriate manner. The FMP will have no direct monetisable impacts upon publication and therefore will have no direct costs to businesses.

The fishery covered by the FMP lands around 12 tonnes of wrasses worth around £200,000 annually, most of this value based in the western English Channel<sup>4</sup>. The businesses most likely to be affected by any measures will be the businesses involved in the fishery. It is expected that the value of any management measures would be below the de minimis threshold of £10m, given the value of the fishery.

#### **Wider Impacts (Including Assessment of Impact on SMBs and Households)**

When individual measures are specifically implemented, the statutory or non-statutory mechanism through which these will be implemented will have their own impacts assessed in the appropriate manner. At the moment, there are not expected to be wider impacts of publishing the plan, until the measures are brought forward for implementation.

#### **Assessment of Impact on Trade and Investment (Including Internal Market Assessment)**

At the moment, there are not expected to be trade and investment impacts of publishing the plan, until measures are brought forward for implementation. When individual measures are specifically implemented, the statutory or non-statutory mechanism through which these will be implemented will have their own impacts assessed in the appropriate manner.

#### **Assessment of Environmental Impacts**

Alongside the Wrasses complex FMP, an environmental report has been produced to assess the potential positive and negative environmental effects of the FMP's proposals. This report concluded that the current evidence shows targeted wrasse fishing in English waters has a minimal impact on the marine environment.

Targeted wrasse fishing is small, currently limited to a few vessels supplying live wrasse to Scottish salmon farms or recreational sea anglers. Commercial fishing is managed by Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCA) byelaws with the potential impacts in the 0-6 nautical mile zone managed. The impact of fishing in MPAs is managed in the 0-12 nautical mile zone and beyond this management is in development. The contribution of wrasse fishing to climate change issues was also considered.

The assessment of likely negative effects identified a low risk of significant adverse effects on the environment from implementing individual policies and actions, and where appropriate these policies will be developed to avoid potential negative effects which have been identified. The policies and actions will also be monitored to identify unforeseen adverse effects at an early stage, allowing remedial action to be taken.

#### **Rationale for producing a DMA (as opposed to an OA/IA)**

A DMA has been produced because the FMP itself will have no direct monetised impacts and as such, falls below the £10m threshold necessary for an OA / IA. The implementation of specific individual measures, whether by statutory or non-statutory mechanisms, will have their own impact assessments completed separately.

The FMP is not considered to be novel or controversial.

<b>Will the policy be reviewed (yes/no):</b> Yes	<b>Review date if applicable: By 2032</b>
<b>Review Provision Detail and Monitoring and Evaluation Plans.</b>	

<sup>4</sup> [UK sea fisheries annual statistics report 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

The fisheries policy authorities will implement appropriate monitoring against the specified indicators. The effectiveness of the FMP will be regularly assessed, and the results reported at least every three years as part of the JFS report, as required by the Act. These reports will be laid before the UK's legislatures. The report will set out the extent to which the policies contained in FMPs have been implemented and have affected stock levels in the UK

The Fisheries Act 2020 requires the Wrasses complex FMP to be reviewed at least every 6 years to assess the extent to which the policies in the plan have been implemented and how the stocks have been affected.

	<b>Name, Role</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Internal Directorate Clearance</b>		
<b>Policy sign off</b>	<b>Phil McBryde, NQS Policy Lead</b>	<b>25/06/25</b>
<b>Senior Analyst sign off</b>	<b>Eve Szczelkun, Economic Advisor</b>	
<b>Central Sign Off</b>		
<b>Better Regulation Unit (Policy) Sign off</b>		<b>25/07/29</b>
<b>Office of the Chief Economist (Central Appraisal Team) Sign off</b>		<b>25/07/29</b>

## Supporting Evidence

### 1. The Policy Overview and Rationale for Government Intervention

#### 1.1 Policy Background

The United Kingdom (UK) government has responsibilities under both national and international law to manage our fisheries in a sustainable way. Meeting our responsibilities will support vibrant, profitable and sustainable fishing industries alongside a healthy and productive marine environment. The UK Government White Paper 2018 on Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations<sup>5</sup> states the objective of 'a more competitive, profitable and sustainable fishing industry across the whole of the UK and setting a gold standard for sustainable fishing around the world'.

The subsequent Fisheries Act 2020 sets out the legal framework governing fisheries in the UK and requires UK Fisheries Policy Authorities to prepare and publish FMPs. FMPs set out the policies designed to restore stocks and maintain them at sustainable levels. The Wrasses complex FMP has been prepared to comply with requirements in the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS), section 6 of the Fisheries Act, to contribute to achieving the eight Act objectives<sup>6</sup>, and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the SEA regulations)<sup>7</sup>. The Act requires the relevant authorities to prepare and publish FMPs in accordance with the list and timetable included in the JFS. Defra is the relevant authority for the Wrasses complex FMP. The FMP applies to fishing of wrasses in English waters of International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) divisions 4b, 4c, 7a, 7d, 7e, 7f, 7g, 7h and 7j.

<sup>5</sup> [Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Fisheries Act 2020](#)

<sup>7</sup> [The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004](#)

The Wrasses complex FMP includes five wrasse species: Ballan, Corkwing, Cuckoo, Goldsinny, and Rock Cook. Wrasses are primarily targeted commercially via pots. Wrasses are also targeted recreationally by anglers. They can also be caught as bycatch in commercial trawl and net fisheries, however the impacts of this are not currently well understood.

Wrasses are middle trophic level species, acting both as prey and predators, and controlling the populations of smaller invertebrates. They also play a crucial role as “cleaner fish” within their ecosystems by removing sea lice from other reef species. This aspect of their life history led to the development of the live wrasse fishery, where southern wrasse from the English Channel have been caught and transported to Scotland for use within the salmon aquaculture farms. This has been mainly focused on Ballan wrasse, though recent increases in Scottish reared wrasse means there has been a reduction in the live wrasse fishery in recent years. Currently there is limited understanding of the impact this fishery has on the status of the stock, population dynamics and wider ecosystem within the English Channel.

ICES do not assess stock status or provide catch advice for wrasse species in English waters. No assessment units or indicators are currently defined for any of the FMP species. Current scientific evidence is insufficient to enable an assessment of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY), for FMP stocks. MSY is the amount that can be continuously taken from a stock without significantly affecting the reproduction process for the stock.

Given these challenges, a comprehensive FMP is essential to manage these fisheries effectively. The first iteration of this plan focuses on filling the large evidence gaps associated with these fisheries, to understand the current state of their stocks and best inform future management needs. Future iterations will strive to account for the variability in life history traits, each species’ vulnerability to fisheries, and assess the effectiveness of current management practices, some of which are voluntary.

## **1.2 Rationale for Intervention**

The government has a legal obligation under the Fisheries Act 2020 and the JFS to produce FMPs which will contribute towards the sustainability of both the fishery and the wider marine environment. Therefore, the government must act to produce the Wrasses complex FMP.

Government intervention is required as fish stocks, including wrasses, are a common pool resource. That is, that they are non-excludable, yet rivalrous. Rivalrous here means anyone can catch a fish but once a fish is caught and retained it cannot be caught again. They are non-excludable because it is not possible for one actor to exclude another from catching fish. These characteristics would lead to the classic economic problem of ‘the tragedy of the commons’, were the government not to intervene. This is because market agents would only consider the benefits of catching. They would not weigh it against the impact it will have on the stock health, overall, leading to overexploitation of the stock. Government intervention would prevent this overexploitation of fish stocks, and this FMP provides the framework through which government intervention would work.

Furthermore, a thriving marine environment has positive externalities to society which would not be captured by the market mechanism. For example, a healthy marine environment can capture carbon emissions, helping reduce the impact of climate change for all individuals, which would provide social benefit far greater than the private benefit of an individual taking actions to protect the marine environment. Industry alone would not be able to provide adequate protection of the marine environment as this requires coordination and enforcement that is not possible within markets. Government intervention is therefore required to ensure that this optimal social benefit is achieved.

## **1.3 Policy Objectives and Intended Effects**

The Wrasses complex FMP has been produced with the intention of outlining a pathway to sustainably manage wrasse stocks in English waters, ensuring the long-term social and economic viability of fisheries and the health of the marine ecosystems.

The UK government has responsibilities under both national and international law to manage our fisheries in a sustainable way. The UK government White Paper 2018 on Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations<sup>8</sup> states the objective of 'a more competitive, profitable and sustainable fishing industry across the whole of the UK and setting a gold standard for sustainable fishing around the world'.

The subsequent Fisheries Act 2020 sets out the legal framework governing fisheries in the UK and provides for UK Fisheries Policy Authorities to prepare and publish FMPs, setting out policies designed to restore stocks and maintain them at sustainable level. In addition to meeting the requirements of the Act, the FMP also supports the implementation of wider commitments on protecting the marine environment, restoring biodiversity, and addressing climate change.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the Act, the FMP also supports the implementation of wider commitments on protecting the marine environment, restoring biodiversity, and addressing climate change. In particular, the Environment Improvement Plan 2023<sup>9</sup> restated the commitment to deliver FMPs. The FMP supports commitments under the UK Marine Policy Statement<sup>10</sup>, the UK Marine Strategy<sup>11</sup>, the Marine Wildlife Bycatch Mitigation Initiative<sup>12</sup>, UK Marine Plans<sup>13</sup> and the Climate Change Act 2008<sup>14</sup>.

There is insufficient evidence to determine MSY or a proxy for MSY for wrasse species included within this FMP. This FMP sets out the proposed steps to build the evidence base for these data limited stocks to support progress towards defining and measuring stock status and reporting on stock sustainability.

#### **1.4 Policy Options Considered, Including Alternatives to Regulation**

The Fisheries Act 2020 provides the framework to manage our fisheries as an independent coastal state outside of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. The Act requires the UK fisheries policy authorities (Defra, and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) to prepare and publish fisheries management plans (FMPs) to help deliver our ambition for sustainable fisheries. The plans were decided during the JFS, a collaboration between the UK fisheries authorities.

FMPs are an internationally recognised mechanism to manage fisheries sustainably. Many UK stocks are data poor and lack management. FMPs provide a framework to fill data gaps and introduce management measures to protect stocks now and into the future. Therefore Option 2, publishing the FMP, was selected as the preferred way forward.

##### **Option 0: Do nothing - No FMP or related management measures developed.**

- The Wrasses complex FMP is a legislative requirement of the Fisheries Act 2020 and the JFS, meaning that the UK government must act to introduce the FMP or be legally non-compliant.

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<sup>8</sup> [Fisheries white paper: sustainable fisheries for future generations - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>10</sup> [UK Marine Policy Statement](#)

<sup>11</sup> [UK Marine Strategy](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Marine Wildlife Bycatch Mitigation Initiative](#)

<sup>13</sup> [UK Marine Plans](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Climate Change Act 2008](#)

- The species included within the FMP are commercially and recreationally fished, however the evidence base is extremely limited, meaning that they are at risk of potential over-exploitation if we do not seek to improve our understanding of these stocks.
- Failure to produce an FMP may also risk insufficient protection for the wider marine environment, and potential social and economic harm to coastal communities if the exploitation of the stocks is not sustainably managed.

**Option 1:** Self-regulation - No formal Government FMP / Industry introduces voluntary measures.

- Reliance on voluntary measures developed and introduced by industry would unlikely go far enough to ensure stock are being fished sustainably and the wider marine environment is protected, especially due to the data limitations within the fishery. For example, there is currently no quantitative data on the use of wrasse as pot bait, nor their presence as bycatch in commercial trawl and net fisheries, and the impacts of these on the stocks are not well understood.
- Voluntary measures can be challenging to enforce, particularly in the recreational sector and with regards to the commercial use of wrasse as pot bait, so there is no guarantee they would provide increased protection to stocks.
- Industry introduced measures would be unlikely to fully account for the impacts of recreational fishing on these stocks, such as the levels of post-release mortality, and therefore do not provide the robust protection required.

**Option 2 (preferred option):** Wrasses complex FMP.

- The Wrasses complex FMP will focus on filling the significant evidence gaps associated with these fisheries in order to understand the current state of their stocks and best inform future management needs
- Future iterations will strive to account for life history trait variability, species individual vulnerabilities and the effectiveness of existing management practices  
By addressing these factors, the FMP will look to ensure the long-term sustainability of wrasse populations, balancing ecological needs with the demands of the fishing industry

## 2 Expected Level of Business Impact

### 2.1 Summary of Preferred Option

As the FMP itself will not implement any measures upon its introduction, there will be no direct impacts on businesses through its adoption. Whilst the Wrasses complex FMP identifies measures that could be introduced post-consultation, these proposed measures will be developed further and do not currently have sufficient detail for any economic analysis to be completed. As detailed costs and benefits cannot be provided in this DMA, background figures to understand the potential scale of impact and scope have been provided below. When individual measures are implemented, the statutory or non-statutory mechanism through which these will be implemented will have their own impacts assessed in the appropriate manner.

Data from 2016 to 2023 indicates that between 50% and 68% of wrasses landed (by total annual live weight), are by vessels that only earn less than 5% of their total income from this fishery. This means that most of wrasses landed is not landed by vessels that are economically dependent on it. Those vessels that did generate the majority of their income from wrasse, only contributed between 8% and 16% of annual total wrasses landed (by live weight) from 2020 to 2023. All 117 vessels catching wrasse in the scope of this FMP were registered in England. The vessels most reliant on wrasses were predominantly under 10

metres in length, aligning with those fishing for live wrasse using pots and traps in inshore waters<sup>15</sup>.

Over 2016 to 2023, average of 17 tonnes of wrasses were landed in scope of the FMP per year. This equates to an annual average value of £220,000 and includes landings of both live and dead wrasse<sup>16</sup>. This is a very small proportion of the UK fleets landings from UK waters of £980m. The wrasse landed in the FMP is predominantly caught in the Western English Channel (area 7b), where over 99% of the value of wrasses landings, the western English Channel is a prominent part of the UK for fishing, wrasses made up only a small part of this with landings from the English EZZ section of area 7b being worth £90m in 2023.

## 2.2 Benefits

There are potential benefits to the introduction of an FMP for wrasses. For example, evidence gathering to better understand their status and location could lead to a stock assessment that allows for the sustainable management of these fisheries. Improved knowledge of the impacts of fishing on niche wrasse populations would also provide insight into the long-term viability of the live fishery and ensure that wider ecosystems are not being negatively impacted.

Wrasses are a recreationally important species, and a well-managed stock could also benefit coastal communities through increased levels of angling, drawing individuals to areas where the stock can be caught.

## 2.3 Indirect Costs and Benefits

The majority of the policies within the FMP will be focused on what occurs within the fishery and therefore are likely to only have impacts on those working directly within the fishery. That said, some of the proposals will include measures designed to support the sustainability of the wider environment, such as coastal communities and species, so some indirect benefits may be observed.

No sensitivity analysis has been produced for this DMA, as there are no quantified impacts of producing an FMP at this stage.

## 2.4 Risks and Unintended Consequences

There are no direct risks stemming from the introduction of the FMP. The implementation of future measures may potentially have risks, those will be considered in assessments if sufficiently large.

Any fisheries management intervention will result in a range of social, economic and biological impacts. When implementing a new management measure, there is a statutory requirement to estimate the anticipated wider national benefits (for example, improved stock status of target species), as well as the likely impacts on stakeholders, and how negative impacts can be mitigated. Broader impacts on local communities, and economic, social and human rights impacts, will be analysed in associated impact assessments, which will be required as part of the development of measures.

## 3 Wider impacts

There are expected to minimal impact on the wider society as the impacts are likely to be specific to those involved with the fishery. However, indirect benefits are assumed from the measures which support wider environmental sustainability such as for coastal communities and species.

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<sup>15</sup> Information provided by the MMO for the Wrasses FMP

<sup>16</sup> [UK sea fisheries annual statistics report 2023](#)

In addition to the impacts to potentially impacts to UK business mentioned earlier there could be, impacts to non-UK business such as EU vessels that land wrasses from the fishery. The impacts to non-UK vessels would likely be less than the impacts to UK business as they landed less value from the fishery. Proportionally higher landings were from UK vessels relative to EU vessels, with UK vessels accounting for 12.6 tonnes (73%) of the annual average landed live weight and EU vessels the remaining 4.7 tonnes (27%). UK vessels account for almost all of the landed value of wrasses, £210,000 (98%)<sup>17</sup>. Landings of UK vessels were substantially greater value per tonne than of EU vessels. This is likely driven by the live wrasse fishery which has historically been of much greater value. A further breakdown is available in the annex.

### **3.1. Assessment of Impact on Small and Micro Businesses**

The primary focus of the legislation is on the fishing industry, which is predominantly composed of small and micro businesses defined by the Better Regulation Framework as being 10-49 employees or 0-9 employees respectively<sup>18</sup>. Within the catching industry in 2024, 94% of employers were micro-businesses, 6% were small, and there were no medium or large employers, all of which gives an indication of the scope of businesses liable to be impacted by the introduction of the FMP<sup>19</sup>. As all businesses in scope sit within the small or micro business bracket, it would mean the policy would be ineffective if they are exempt from the FMP.

### **3.2 Impacts on Households**

The Wrasses complex Fishery Management Plan is not expected to have a direct impact on households. If implemented, certain measures proposed in the FMP could have some impact on households. Any potential impacts will be assessed in future De Minimis Assessments. The direction and scale of the impacts will depend on the specific measures adopted and their scope.

The group most likely to be impacted by any changes to fishing regulations are those that derive all, or part, of their income from capture fisheries. Households that work in industries that are downstream to the fishery, such as aquaculture business, or other fisheries that use wrasses as bait could also be partly affected, though likely to a lesser extent than those directly involved in the fishery. Also, if the measures are sufficient in scale to change the price of fish, households that consume fish could be affected.

### **3.3 Assessment of Impact on Trade and Investment (Including Internal Market Assessment)**

The Wrasses complex FMP will not have a significant impact on trade and investment on publication. Though if measures proposed in the FMP are implemented later, if the scale of impact on trade and investment is higher enough a Trade and investment assessment will be conducted. Though it is not expected that there will be major trade and investment impacts as most wrasses is sold within the UK.

### **3.4 Assessment of Environmental Impacts**

The policies and actions included within the FMP are developed with due regard to the relevant Environmental Principles, however there is still potential for some negative environmental impacts as and when the policies are finalised and implemented.

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<sup>17</sup> [Fisheries Dependent Information - European Commission & UK sea fisheries annual statistics report 2023](#)

<sup>18</sup> [Better regulation framework guidance 2023](#)

<sup>19</sup> [UK business: activity, size and location - Office for National Statistics](#)

Potential future management measures such as introducing a national Minimum Conservation Reference Sizes (MCRS), the minimum size a fish has to be to be legally landed. This could lead to increased discards and an increase in effort to try and cover any financial shortfall arising from this.

There is limited mixing of populations, even those within close proximity of each other, meaning individual populations of wrasses may be vulnerable to overexploitation if fishing effort were to increase.

Additionally, removing wrasse from their habitats could impair their role in controlling ectoparasites in reef ecosystems. Future potential management to reduce opportunities could lead to spatial changes in fishing effort, increasing the pressure elsewhere.

Conversely, there is also potential for positive impacts stemming from the development of the Wrasses complex FMP. The use of live fish to control ectoparasites<sup>20</sup> reduces reliance on organophosphates<sup>21</sup> that decrease water quality. The introduction of potential management measures could lead to reductions in post-release mortality and contribute towards a sustainable fishery. Introducing an MCRS could also benefit the wider ecosystem by increasing juvenile population size which in turn supports food webs and biodiversity.

#### **4. Monitoring and Evaluation**

##### **4.1 Review**

To remain effective, the FMP will be regularly reviewed and updated, ensuring it responds to new evidence and practical experience. In line with the legislation outlined above it will also be reviewed and, if necessary, revised at least once every six years.

When new measures are introduced and result in new or changed regulation, Defra will complete a monetised impact, or de-minimis assessment for the specific measures, depending on the monetised cost to business.

The results from the individual FMP assessments will contribute to the formal report on the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) that will be published every three years. The JFS reports will be laid before the UK's legislatures. The report will set out the extent to which the policies contained in FMPs have been implemented and have affected stock levels in the UK.

##### **4.2 Monitoring**

Delivery of the actions for this FMP will be monitored by Defra with possible assistance from Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs) in the collection of data.

There is insufficient evidence to determine MSY or a proxy for MSY for the species included within this FMP. This FMP sets out the proposed steps to build the evidence base for these data limited stocks to support progress towards defining and measuring stock status and reporting on stock sustainability. An increase in the available evidence to define and measure stock status will be an indicator of the effectiveness of this plan for these stocks.

Other indicators to measure the effectiveness of the policies for restoring, or maintaining these stocks at sustainable levels are:

- A baseline of FMP species data produced to identify evidence gaps and support future assessment of stocks.
- Increased available evidence to improve understanding of the ecological and biological aspects of FMP species.

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<sup>20</sup> [ECTOPARASITE definition and meaning | Collins English Dictionary](#)

<sup>21</sup> [ORGANOPHOSPHATE | English meaning - Cambridge Dictionary](#)

- Identification guides produced for all FMP species to increase species-specific reporting in English waters.
- An introduction of voluntary commercial and recreational fishery guidelines for to increase post-release survival.
- Increased available evidence on the social and economic importance of to both the commercial and recreational sector, as well as coastal communities within the FMP area.
- Increased evidence under existing programmes indicating that fisheries do not impede the achievement of Good Environmental Status for UK Marine strategy descriptors.
- Precautionary management implemented where necessary for FMP species.
- Management of FMP species do not interfere with the conservation objectives of the features designated of Marine Protected Areas with which they interact.

Further reviews may also be required if new opportunities present themselves to improve the effectiveness of the plan. The FMP will take advantage of future social datasets to be developed as set out in section 3.2.10 of the JFS, which outlines that a range information will be gathered, including scientific, technical, economic, and social data. The monitoring and evaluation framework for the FMP will continue to be developed and supported by the independent programme evaluation of the FMP programme, which will produce a framework for evaluation of individual FMPs.

## Annex

Table 1: The consistent trend in EU landings value in the fishery, and the growth in of the fishery to UK vessels in 2016/17, then levelling out from there. Value of Landings (£) of wrasses by UK + Crown Dependency and EU vessels in the area covered by the FMP<sup>22</sup>.

Year landed	EU27	UK+CD	Total
2013	5,344	6,343	<b>11,687</b>
2014	5,206	4,854	<b>10,061</b>
2015	4,532	2,911	<b>7,443</b>
2016	4,761	22,034	<b>26,794</b>
2017	3,459	109,134	<b>112,593</b>
2018	4,363	367,989	<b>372,353</b>
2019	3,273	355,732	<b>359,005</b>
2020	2,135	182,261	<b>184,396</b>
2021	2,442	217,532	<b>219,974</b>
2022	2,631	275,821	<b>278,452</b>
2023	5,320	175,959	<b>181,280</b>

<sup>22</sup> [Fisheries Dependent Information - European Commission](#) & [UK sea fisheries annual statistics report 2023](#)