



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Proposed Celtic Sea and Western Channel Pelagic Fisheries Management Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment Environmental Report - Non-technical Summary

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Version: public consultation



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Non-technical Summary

The draft Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) has been prepared to meet the requirements of the [the Fisheries Act 2020](#). The plan covers five species: anchovy (*Engraulis encrasicolus*), greater silver smelt (*Argentina silus*), herring (*Clupea harengus*), horse mackerel (*Trachurus trachurus*), and pilchard, hereafter referred to by its common name, sardine (*Sardina pilchardus*). It sets out the policies and proposed actions Defra and Welsh government will use to manage fishing activity, so stocks are harvested within sustainable levels. Alongside these actions, the draft Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic FMP also sets out management to help support wider social, economic and environmental aspects of the fishery.

This Environmental Report has been produced in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (SEA Regulations 2004 and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Wales) 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

This assessment focuses on how the policies and actions in the 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 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 Marine Strategy, 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 Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic FMP.

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

This report considers and acknowledges the existing environmental effects of targeted anchovy, greater silver smelt, herring, horse mackerel and sardine fishing. Fishing methods for these stocks vary between stock and country (details provided in the stock-specific sections in the FMP). The following gear types are considered within this FMP: pelagic trawls, ring-nets, purse seines, drift nets and static nets. It is important to note that while some of the stocks in the FMP are occasionally caught as bycatch in demersal trawls this gear type isn't considered part of the target fishery, so have not been scoped into the FMP and supporting assessments. These gears have been 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 Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic FMP policies and proposed actions alone and in-combination have also been assessed.

This report concluded that beyond the direct impact on the five target stocks, the fishery has an impact on the marine environment in two specific areas:

- through bycatch of unwanted species, this includes species with various levels of protection like cetaceans and seabirds
- through reducing food availability by impacting on prey species on these protected species

The contribution of fishing related litter, often related to the loss of fishing gear, is also identified as a potential impact associated with pelagic fishing. Demersal trawls also land non-target pelagic species. While not part of this assessment these demersal trawls pose a risk to seafloor integrity.

The draft Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic 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 as 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 Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic 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 Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic FMP should consider the following additional points:

1. Future iterations of the draft Celtic Sea and Western Channel pelagic FMP should consider how to develop the cultural heritage of each fishery and how fisheries management can contribute to reducing potential negative interactions with marine heritage assets.