

Annex 2: Proposed changes to the current list of exemptions

Cefas ref	Species	Article and (EU) Discard Plan	ICES area	Gears	High survivability (HS) or De minimis (DM)	What do we want to do about this exemption?	Why do we want to do this?
9	Plaice	6c, NWW (North Western Waters)	7a and 7d-k	BT2 beam trawls with flip up or benthic release 80-119mm	HS	<p>Continue and modify gears required for exemption to apply in English waters. Require reporting of catches. Remove reference to area 7k. Gears required for exemption to apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Square section: 300mm - Lower panel: 180mm - Batings: 180mm - Sleeve (location of Flemish panel): 160mm - Cod end: 106mm 	<p>Cefas recommend modifying gear conditionality to improve selectivity. In addition, they recommend effective monitoring and reporting of catches are made a condition of an exemption to improve stock assessment information. We did not progress with the changes advised for 2022 implementation as there was insufficient time to consult and fully assess the impact of changes. We would now like to progress with this modification, in consultation with stakeholders.</p>

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10	Plaice	6d, NWW	7a and 7d-k	BT2 beam trawls within 12 nm and tow <90 mins	HS	<p>Continue and modify gears required for exemption to apply in English waters. Require reporting of catches. Remove reference to area 7k. Gears required for exemption to apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Square section: 300mm - Lower panel: 180mm - Batings: 180mm - Sleeve (location of Flemish panel): 160mm - Cod end: 106mm 	<p>Cefas recommend modifying gear conditionality to improve selectivity. In addition, they recommend effective monitoring and reporting of catches are made a condition of an exemption to improve stock assessment information. We did not progress with the changes advised for 2022 implementation as there was insufficient time to consult and fully assess the impact of changes. We would now like to progress with this modification, in consultation with stakeholders.</p>

Cefas ref	Species	Article and (EU) Discard Plan	ICES area	Gears	High survivability (HS) or De minimis (DM)	What do we want to do about this exemption?	Why do we want to do this?
15	Sole	8c, NWW	7d, e, f, g, h	Beam trawls plus Flemish panel; 80-199mm	DM	<p>Continue and modify gears required for exemption to apply in English waters.</p> <p>Gears required for exemption to apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Square section: 300mm - Lower panel: 180mm - Batings: 180mm - Sleeve (location of Flemish panel): 160mm - Cod end: 106mm 	We previously modified the DM amount as recommended but did not implement gear conditionality changes given insufficient time for consultation and impact analysis. We would now like to progress with the gear modifications in consultation with stakeholders.

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19	Sole	8g, NWW	7a, j, k	Beam trawls plus Flemish panel	DM	<p>Continue and modify gears required for exemption to apply in English waters of areas 7a and j (area 7k falls outside English waters).</p> <p>Gears required for exemption to apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Square section: 300mm - Lower panel: 180mm - Batings: 180mm - Sleeve (location of Flemish panel): 160mm - Cod end: 106mm 	<p>Cefas note there is a relatively low risk of overfishing in relation to this exemption. Cefas recommend modifying gear conditionality to improve selectivity. We did not progress with the changes advised for 2022 implementation as there was insufficient time to consult and fully assess the impact of changes. We would now like to progress with this modification in consultation with stakeholders.</p>

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21	Boarfish	8i, NWW	7d-j	Bottom trawls	DM	<p>Continue and modify gears required for exemption to apply in English waters.</p> <p>Gears required for exemption to apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Square section: 300mm - Lower panel: 180mm - Batings: 180mm - Sleeve (location of Flemish panel): 160mm - Cod end: 106mm 	As recommended, we previously expanded the areas covered by the exemption but did not implement gear conditionality changes given insufficient time for consultation and impact analysis. We would now like to progress with the gear modifications in consultation with stakeholders.

Cefas ref	Species	Article and (EU) Discard Plan	ICES area	Gears	High survivability (HS) or De minimis (DM)	What do we want to do about this exemption?	Why do we want to do this?
41	Whiting and Cod <MCRS	10e, NS (North Sea)	4c	Trawls and seines	DM	Discontinue.	Cefas advise there is a high risk of overfishing without effective monitoring in place. There is a risk that DM exemptions can provide an incentive for vessel operators to continue discarding. Whiting discard rates estimated around 60% relative to DM amount of 6% in 2021. In the absence of effective monitoring, it is advised to discontinue this exemption and replace the whiting part with 42b.
42	Whiting <MCRS	10f, NS	4a, 4b	Trawls and seines	DM	Discontinue in area 4b (area 4a falls outside English waters).	There is a risk that DM exemptions can provide an incentive for vessel operators to continue discarding. Whiting discard rates estimated around 30% relative to DM amount of 6% in 2021. The disparity between these figures indicates close monitoring is required to prevent overfishing. Cefas recommended this exemption is replaced the whiting exemption with 42b.

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42b	Whiting<MCRS	10fa, NS	4a, 4b	Trawls and seines	DM	Discontinue in area 4b (area 4a falls outside English waters).	We introduced this exemption in 2022 to cover whiting but Cefas recommend discontinuing in the absence of effective monitoring as there is a moderate risk of overfishing given the disparity between discard rate and DM amount. DM amount accounts for a small proportion of unwanted catches so improving selectivity will be most effective way to reduce handling costs.
51	Mackerel, horse mackerel, herring, whiting	3a, NS	4b, c south of 54 degrees north	Pelagic trawlers	DM	Discontinue in English waters.	Cefas note there is no quantitative evidence on either disproportionate costs or difficulties to improve selectivity available for evaluation, nor is there evidence of demand for this exemption. It was recommended to discontinue however there was insufficient time for consultation and analysis to implement changes in 2022. We would now like to pursue discontinuing this exemption in consultation with stakeholders.

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13	Whiting	8a, NWW	7b-k	Bottom trawls and seines and BT2 beam trawls	DM	Discontinue in English waters of areas 7b-j (area 7k falls outside English waters).	Cefas advise there is a substantial risk of overfishing this stock without further monitoring and management of DM uptake. They indicate discard rates are substantially higher than the DM amount. Increasing uptake of more selective bottom trawls will have benefit, but in the absence of more effective monitoring this exemption should be discontinued.
52	Mackerel, horse mackerel, herring, whiting	3a, NWW	7d	Pelagic trawlers	DM	Discontinue	Cefas note there is no quantitative evidence on either disproportionate costs or difficulties to improve selectivity available for evaluation, nor is there evidence of demand for this exemption. It was recommended to discontinue however there was insufficient time for consultation and analysis to implement changes in 2022. We would now like to pursue discontinuing this exemption in consultation with stakeholders.

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53	Albacore tuna	3a, NWW	7	Midwater pair trawls	DM	Discontinue in English waters.	There is not sufficient evidence to support this exemption, therefore Cefas recommend discontinuing. We did not discontinue previously as there was insufficient time for consultation and analysis. We would now like to pursue discontinuing this exemption in consultation with stakeholders.
16	Haddock	8d, NWW	7b-c and 7e-k	Bottom trawls and seines and beam trawls	DM	Discontinue in English waters of areas 7b-c and 7e-j (area 7k falls outside English waters).	Cefas note discard rates are substantially higher than DM amount and there is a high risk of fishing mortality exceeding agreed catch limits. Modifying gears necessary but in absence of effective monitoring this exemption should be discontinued. We would like to consult on discontinuing.

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35	Turbot	8, NS	4	Beam trawls	HS	Discontinue in English waters.	Cefas recommend discontinuing in the absence of any survival evidence supporting this exemption. Further evidence is expected, and if further research demonstrates survivability of turbot, we may seek to continue this exemption. However, in the absence of further evidence in support of the survivability of turbot we would like to consult on discontinuing this exemption.