

# NWIFCA TSB Quarterly Meeting: 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026

REPORT NO.  
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## REVIEW OF BYELAW 4: WHELK FLEXIBLE PERMIT CONDITIONS

**Purpose:** To provide a review of the whelk flexible permit conditions.

- Recommendation:**
- 1) Receive the report.
  - 2) To re-open the application process for whelk permits for 2 months between March and April.
  - 3) To issue 2500 pots to new permit holders, with an initial target of 500 pots for 5 vessels. Should more applications be received, consider the viability of sharing pots between vessels or adding additional eligibility criteria to the application process to assign permits.
  - 4) Maintain the entitlement of the vessels who established track record of 1000 pots.
  - 5) Increase the entitlement of the vessel with 400 pots to 500 pots.

### **BACKGROUND**

Byelaw 4 – Potting Permit Byelaw (2019) came into force in June 2022. As part of the byelaw Flexible Permit Conditions (FPC) were introduced, including the introduction of pot limits for fishing with whelk pots depending on track record, a stage increase to the minimum conservation reference size of whelks, as well as technical measures for other pot fisheries within the district, such as the edible crab and lobster fishery.

Research into the size-at-maturity of whelks in the district was completed in February 2025 with the MCRS being set at 65mm.

Since the introduction of the byelaw and FPC, NWIFCA has been receiving returns data from permit holders. This has been analysed along with responses to the whelk permit review consultation open between November 2025 and January 2026, to review the parts of the flexible permit conditions which allocate and set pot limits and inform the recommendations.

The full report is provided as an appendix to this agenda item.

*Jon Haines, Acting Head of Science, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026*  
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