**Consultation on mussel minimum landing size**

Background

At the Technical Science and Byelaw meeting held on the 10th of May 2022, the Authority was asked to consider a reduction to the current minimum landing size (MLS) of mussels (*Mytilus edulis*) in the District from 45 mm to 40 mm. Further information with regards to this request can be found in Agenda Item 8. Agenda Item 8 has been provided in hard copy as part of this consultation, and can be found online here, at: <https://www.nw-ifca.gov.uk/app/uploads/Agenda-Item-8-Mussel-MLS.pdf>.

At the meeting, it was resolved that an informal consultation of Byelaw 3 permit holders and relevant members of industry will be undertaken to determine the wider view of industry on this matter.

Purpose of this questionnaire

The purpose of this consultation questionnaire is to determine the thoughts of Byelaw 3 permit holders and relevant members of industry on a potential reduction in the MLS of mussels from 45 mm to 40 mm. It also offers the opportunity for industry members to provide any additional information they believe to be relevant to this matter. The information gathered here will be presented to the Technical Science and Byelaw Committee and used to determine a further course of action.

Please note, the purpose of this questionnaire is to gather feedback on this matter at this early stage. Some of these questions will be followed up by further consultation or investigation, and the answers given here will not result in an immediate change in regulation.

Information for permit holders

Please fill out the consultation questionnaire and return it to the Authority by the **17th of July.**

You can return a hard copy of the questionnaire to:

Science

North Western IFCA

1 Preston Street

Carnforth

LA5 9BY

Or, by email to science@nw-ifca.gov.uk.

If you have any queries regarding the questionnaire, please contact the science office on 01524 727970 or email at science@nw-ifca.gov.uk

**Questionnaire**

Please provide your name and permit number (if applicable)

Name: ……………………………………………………………………………..

Permit no (if applicable): …………………………………………………………………………….

Question 1:

**1a**: Do you commercially fish mussels in the district?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes |  | No |

If you answered no – please proceed to question 2. If you answered ‘yes’, please answer the following questions:

**1b**: How do you fish mussel?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Hand gathering **size** mussel  |  | Hand gathering **seed** mussel (when authorised) |  | Seed dredge |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

If you commercially fish mussel via seed dredger – please proceed to question 2. If you are a commercial hand gatherer, please answer the following questions:

**1b**: On average, how often do you target mussel?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Rarely |  | Frequently |  | Regularly |  |
|  | (less than once per month) |  | (1 to 4 days a month) |  | (more than 5 days a month) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

**1c**: On average, how much mussel do you land per month?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 0 to 1000kg |  | 1000 to 2000kg |  | 2000 to 3000kg |  Over 3000kg |  |   |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**1d**: Do you rely on mussel as a significant source of income?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes |  | No |

**1e**: Do you own a purification facility?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes |  | No |

**1f**: What is the main market you sell your mussels to?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Purification plants |
|  |  |
|  | Relaying |
|  |  |
|  | Live markets (local) |
|  |  |
|  | Live markets (EU) |
|  |  |
|  | Cooking plants |
|  |  |
|  | Other |
|  |  |

If ‘Other’ please specify:

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Question 2:

Please **rank** in order of preference (1 = most in favour, 4 = least in favour) the following options:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | No change to the current MLS (45mm) anywhere in the district |
|  |  |
|  | A district wide reduction in MLS from 45 mm to 40 mm |
|  |  |
|  | A reduction in MLS from 45 mm to 40 mm for *specific* mussel beds in the district |
|  |  |
|  | A *temporary* reduction in MLS to 40 mm of *specific* mussel beds subject to biological factors (such as biomass of stock or growth rates). |

Question 3:

What is the reasoning for your answer to question 2? (You may select multiple options):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | I am concerned that a reduction in the mussel MLS will result in over fishing |
|  |  |
|  | A reduction in MLS will increase the commercial opportunities for fishermen in the District |
|  |  |
|  | I have difficulty obtaining sizable mussels at 45 mm |
|  |  |
|  | I do not have difficulty obtaining sizeable mussel at 45 mm  |
|  |  |
|  | Mussel at 45mm and over is often unmarketable or unprofitable due to the presence of pearl and/or barnacle |
|  |  |
|  | Mussel of 40 mm is not suitable for my target market |
|  |  |
|  | I am concerned a reduction in mussel MLS will have implications on other fisheries |
|  |  |
|  | Other |

If you have selected ‘Other’, or wish to provide further information regarding your answer, please provide it here:

**………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………**

Question 4:

Please provide any further information on this matter that you wish to share with the Authority:

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………