



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Number: WG51343

Welsh Government Consultation Document

COCKLE MANAGEMENT MEASURES 2025 CONSULTATION

Proposed changes to the cockle permit fee, daily catch limits, cockle sacks and introduction of identification tags 2025-2026

Date of issue: 17 March 2025

Action required: Responses by 31 March 2025

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd / This document is also available in Welsh
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh

Overview

Under the provisions of The Cockle Fishing Management and Permitting (Specified Area) (Wales) Order 2024, [The Cockle Fishing Management and Permitting \(Specified Area\) \(Wales\) Order 2024 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#) the Welsh Government is able to introduce adaptive management measures to help conserve the Welsh cockle fishery and to charge a permit fee. We are proposing to amend the management of cockle fisheries in the specified area in the 2025/26 permit period and to increase the permit fee as follows:

1. **Cockle permit fee increase** - an increase in the annual cockle permit fee from £250 to £350 to ensure full cost recovery.
2. **Standard daily catch limit** - introduction of a 300kg daily catch limit on the total amount of cockle each permitted gatherer may take from the specified area. [Cockle fishing specified area map: Wales | GOV.WALES](#). This will be the standard daily catch limit applied to all beds when they open and may be varied, up or down, for fisheries management purposes during the permit period subject to consultation where reasonably practical.
3. **Standardisation of cockle sacks** – a requirement for cockle gatherers to use sacks of a standard size when gathering cockle in the specified area measuring 52cm x 85cm (approximately 50kg of cockle). Gathered cockle must be carried in these sacks to the point of landing on the perimeter of the specified area : <https://www.gov.wales/cockle-fishing-specified-area-maps>. It is a requirement that all permit holders must be present to verify their catch at the point where their cockle is removed from the vessel transporting their catch to shore and identify their cockle accordingly. Loading onto a vessel on the cockle beds does not constitute landing, any permit holders not present on landing may be subject to enforcement action.

Therefore, *linked to 2 above*, when the daily catch limit of 300kg applies permitted gatherers may take up to 6 sacks of cockle of this dimension each day, however, if the daily catch limit is varied as described in 2 above, where reasonably practicable permitted gatherers will be consulted.

4. **Tags on sacks** - a requirement that any sack a permitted gatherer uses in 3 above to carry cockle will have a tag (issued by the Welsh Government) securely attached to draw string of the sack clearly displaying the gatherer's individual permit number.

The two-week consultation with permit holders and other relevant stakeholders will be held between 17 March and 31 March 2025.

How to respond

We would welcome email responses to be sent to fisheries@gov.wales.

When emailing please include the phrase 'Cockle Consultation 2025' in the subject box.

There is also provision for hardcopies to be requested by anyone that would prefer to respond to us using the hardcopy. If you will prefer a hardcopy of the document, please contact via this email: fisheries@gov.wales

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

Contact details

For further information:

Fisheries Division
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

This document is also available in Welsh.

UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

The Welsh Government will be data controller for Welsh Government consultations and for any personal data you provide as part of your response to the consultation.

Welsh Ministers have statutory powers they will rely on to process this personal data which will enable them to make informed decisions about how they exercise their public functions. The lawful basis for processing information in this data collection exercise is our public task; that is, exercising our official authority to undertake the core role and functions of the Welsh Government. (Art 6(1)(e))

Any response you send us will be seen in full by Welsh Government staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about or planning future consultations. In the case of joint consultations this may also include other public authorities. Where the Welsh Government undertakes further analysis of consultation responses then this work may be commissioned to be carried out by an accredited third party (e.g. a research organisation or a consultancy company). Any such work will only be undertaken under contract. Welsh Government's standard terms and conditions for such contracts set out strict requirements for the processing and safekeeping of personal data.

In order to show that the consultation was carried out properly, the Welsh Government intends to publish a summary of the responses to this document. We may also publish responses in full. Normally, the name and address (or part of the address) of the person or organisation who sent the response are published with the response. If you do not want your name or address published, please tell us this in writing when you send your response. We will then redact them before publishing.

You should also be aware of our responsibilities under Freedom of Information legislation and that the Welsh Government may be under a legal obligation to disclose some information.

If your details are published as part of the consultation response, then these published reports will be retained indefinitely. Any of your data held otherwise by Welsh Government will be kept for no more than three years.

Your rights

Under the data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data held about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection

For further details about the information the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you want to exercise your rights under the UK GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer:
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ
e-mail: dataprotectionofficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information
Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Tel: 0303 123 1113
Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>

Cockle Permit Fee

The Welsh Government set out its intention to charge a fee for cockle permits in The Cockle Fishing Management and Permitting (Specified Area) (Wales) Order 2024. This reflects the costs of administering and managing the fishery, including stock assessment surveys, but excluding enforcement.

Recovering costs incurred by the Welsh Government in managing the cockle fishery is in line with the principles of Managing Welsh Public Money 2016.

Methodology to determine Cockle Permit Fee

In the first permit period, the Welsh Government charged a cockle permit fee of £250 estimated from historic permitting and management activity. During the first permit period 2024/25 officials accurately recorded costs alongside the introduction of a new digital permitting system to improve efficiency to enable full cost recovery.

During the 2025-2026 permit period the Welsh Government will continue to ensure the costs are accurately calculated and proportionate. We will be seeking full cost recovery, whilst also looking to identify efficiencies and minimise costs to fishers.

The increase in the permit fee from £250 to £350 has been calculated to reflect the costs of administering and managing the fishery, including stock assessment surveys. This calculation assumes that 229 permits will be issued in the 2025/26 permit period, similar to the 2024/2025 permitting period.

Future fees will be calculated based on demand and costs and will be adjusted accordingly.

Daily Catch Limit (DCL)

The DCL is the total amount of cockle an individual permitted gatherer may take in one day. The purpose of the DCL is to conserve the cockle stock and prevent over-exploitation to ensure the fishery is sustainable.

DCL for 2025-2026 Permit Period

A DCL of 300kgs will apply on all open cockle beds unless advised otherwise by Welsh Government officials.

We are proposing to introduce a daily catch limit of 300kg for all cockle fisheries through permit conditions to reduce the risk of over-exploitation. Linked to this, we are also proposing to require cockle gatherers to use sacks of a standard size to assist in compliance checking. Whilst it is intended 300kg will be the 'default' daily catch limit, it may be varied, up or down, for fisheries management purposes to control the rate at which the harvestable surplus is taken to ensure compliance with The Habitat Regulations Assessments. In addition to standard sacks, MEOs have requested a means of identifying each individual gatherers catch to ensure compliance.

Standardisation of cockle sacks

We propose to adopt standardised sack sizes and amounts for all permit holders in 2025. Having a standard bag would standardise approach for every fisher in Wales. This would assist enforcement officers in checking compliance with the daily catch limit to ensure the harvestable surplus is not exceeded in line with Habitats Regulation Assessment.

We are recommending gatherers use woven carrot sacks size 52cmx85cm, to transport gathered cockle with up to 50kgs of cockle per sack. Therefore, alongside the implementation of a 300kg daily catch limit, we recommend that each gatherer take up to 6 sacks (52cmx85cm) of cockle each day.

Enforcement officers will be able to identify weight of catches to support daily catch return data. This will assist enforcement of the daily catch limit, as gathered amounts will be easily identifiable from the number of sacks filled. Furthermore, if the daily catch limit needs to be changed, the number of sacks a gatherer can take will be varied through permit conditions.

Tagging of cockle sacks

We are proposing to adopt a tagging system where each permit holder will attach a tag to their cockle sacks on the cockle beds, with their permit number clearly marked on the sack. Currently cockle sacks are piled up on the beds which make it difficult for our enforcement officers to identify to whom the cockle belongs. By attaching a tag this will make identification much simpler and will enable our enforcement officers to identify to whom each cockle bag belongs. The tags will be provided by Welsh Government and the cost included in the permit fee.

How to respond

We would welcome email responses to be sent to fisheries@gov.wales.

When emailing please include the phrase 'Cockle Consultation 2025' in the subject box.