



Welsh Government

# **Call for Evidence:**

## **Shore-based Netting in Wales**

### **Summary of Responses**

**Date:** 01 September 2025

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

This document is also available in Welsh.

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## Background

The Sea bass Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for English and Welsh waters was published in December 2023. The plan was developed jointly with the UK Government and complies with the requirements of the Fisheries Act 2020 and the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) 2022.

The aim of the Bass FMP ('the FMP') is to ensure effective management of bass stocks in English and Welsh waters over a 6-year period. The FMP identified 9 goals, each of which has associated actions that focus on domestic evidence and management priorities.

The Wales Sea Bass Advisory Group (WSBAG) was established in January 2024 to advise officials and the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs on the prioritisation and implementation of the FMP actions in Wales. The WSBAG is comprised of a diverse range of stakeholders with an interest in bass fisheries.

Goal 8.1 of the bass FMP includes a commitment to '*review the practice of shallow inshore and shore-based netting to determine whether additional regional or national protections are needed to prevent migratory fish bycatch*'. As part of this commitment, Welsh Government officials worked with the WSBAG to review the current practice of shore-based netting ('the SBN review'):

### [Review of the practice of shore-based netting in Wales | GOV.WALES](#)

The purpose of the SBN review was to open discussions about whether additional regional or national protections may be needed to prevent migratory fish bycatch by shore-based nets in Wales. The review included background information on the need for a review, a description of shore-based netting along with a brief history of shore-based netting activity and its regulation in Wales.

The review highlighted some differences in regulations between North and South Wales and that the legislation does not allow adaptive management. It also noted there is limited data available on catches, including bycatch, and that this information is needed to inform management of shore-based nets and the bass fishery in Wales.

The WSBAG agreed the review highlighted the need to gather more information and data about shore-based netting activity before considering the next steps. A call for evidence and a voluntary catch recording system were both suggested by the WSBAG as appropriate ways of gathering such information.

As a result, the Welsh Government developed a call for evidence to seek information from those directly involved in shore-based netting to better understand the numbers involved, the timing / frequency of the activity, where the activity takes place and the quantities of both targeted and bycatch species caught.

While the call for evidence was designed to gather some information fishers already hold, the Welsh Government are considering the merits of introducing a voluntary catch recording system in order to gather data about catches going forward. Linked to this, to improve our understanding, the Welsh Government is also considering commissioning scientific studies on bycatch and discards. Those who responded to the call for evidence will be given the opportunity to contribute to these studies if they choose.

The call for evidence was not a consultation on developed proposals but a request for input to inform future policy development. The information gathered will be used to consider if additional measures are needed to improve the regulation of shore-based nets in Wales. Any

subsequent proposals to change existing regulations based on this information will be subject to public consultation and any necessary statutory assessments before any changes in management.

### **Call for Evidence Period and Distribution**

The call for evidence commenced on 20 January 2025 and closed on 28 February 2025.

The call for evidence was published on the GOV.WALES website and the Welsh Government 'X' social media account. At the same time the call for evidence was shared with known stakeholders by email, including all members of the Wales Sea Bass Advisory Group (WSBAG), the Welsh Fisherman's Association (WFA) and the Angling Trust. Welsh Government Marine Enforcement Officers also conveyed the message in person to the fishing community.

Respondents were able to respond by filling out an online form, by email, telephone or by providing a written postal response.

### **Responses**

The Welsh Government would like to thank everyone who took the time to respond to the call for evidence. All responses will be considered. In total, 18 responses were received from a range of individuals and organisations who have an interest in shore-netting in Wales. Of these, 13 were received via the Welsh Government website, 4 were received via email and 1 written response was received via post. Of the 13 online responses, 2 were duplicates and another only provided answers for 11 of the 27 questions.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) provided an email response (**Annex 1**) with information on protected species at risk of bycatch, including their distribution, abundance, and periods of greatest risk. The response did not follow the format set out in the call for evidence and could not be analysed alongside other submissions. The information received will, however, be considered with the other responses.

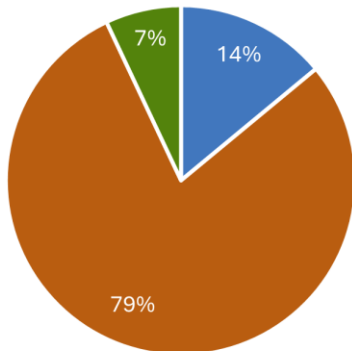
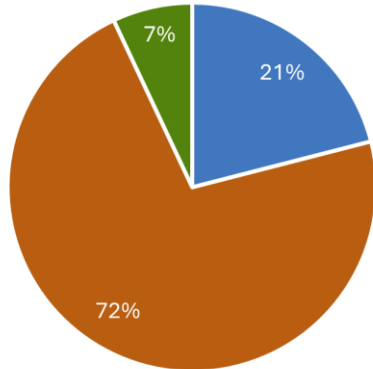
The 14 full responses are summarised below.

## Consultation questions

The call for evidence consisted of 27 individual questions. All 14 full respondents provided their name (Q1), address (Q2), postcode (Q3) and email address (Q4). All were resident in Wales and responded as individuals not organisations (Q5).

A summary of the responses is provided below:

<b>Question 6</b>	Please indicate whether you are a Sole Trader, Partner or Limited Company.													
<b>12 (86%)</b>	Respondents were commercial shore-netters and <b>sole traders</b> .													
<b>2 (14%)</b>	Respondents were commercial shore-netters and <b>limited companies</b> .													
<b>0 (0%)</b>	Respondents were <b>partners</b> .													
<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Business Type</th><th>Count</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Sole trader</td><td>12</td><td>86%</td></tr><tr><td>Limited company</td><td>2</td><td>14%</td></tr><tr><td>Partner</td><td>0</td><td>0%</td></tr></tbody></table>			Business Type	Count	Percentage	Sole trader	12	86%	Limited company	2	14%	Partner	0	0%
Business Type	Count	Percentage												
Sole trader	12	86%												
Limited company	2	14%												
Partner	0	0%												
<b>Question 7</b>	Do you have a commercial fishing vessel? Yes, No.													
<b>10 (71%)</b>	Respondents said <b>yes</b> to owning a commercial fishing vessel.													
<b>4 (29%)</b>	Respondents said <b>no</b> to owning a commercial fishing vessel.													
<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Response</th><th>Count</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Yes</td><td>10</td><td>71%</td></tr><tr><td>No</td><td>4</td><td>29%</td></tr></tbody></table>			Response	Count	Percentage	Yes	10	71%	No	4	29%			
Response	Count	Percentage												
Yes	10	71%												
No	4	29%												

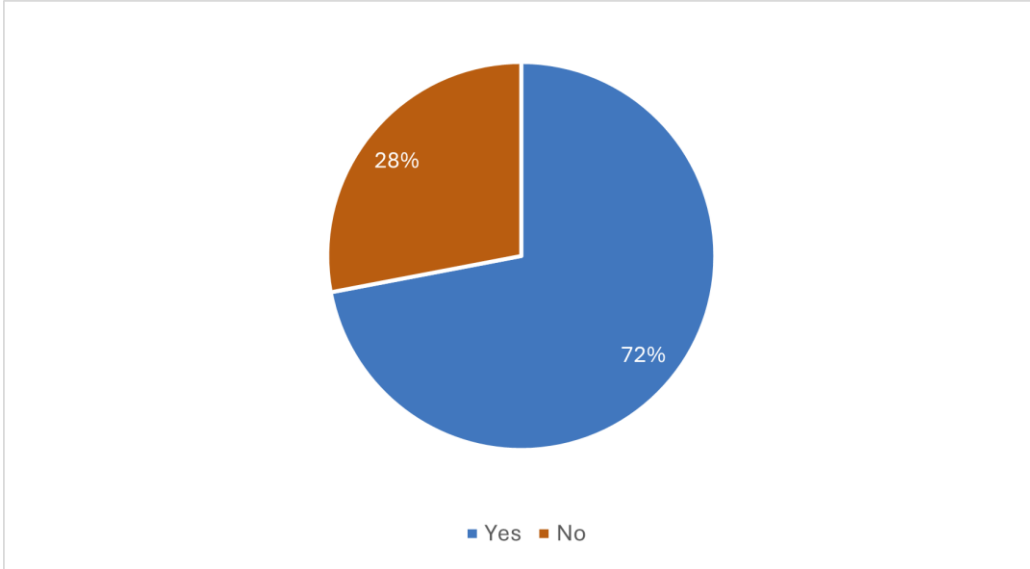
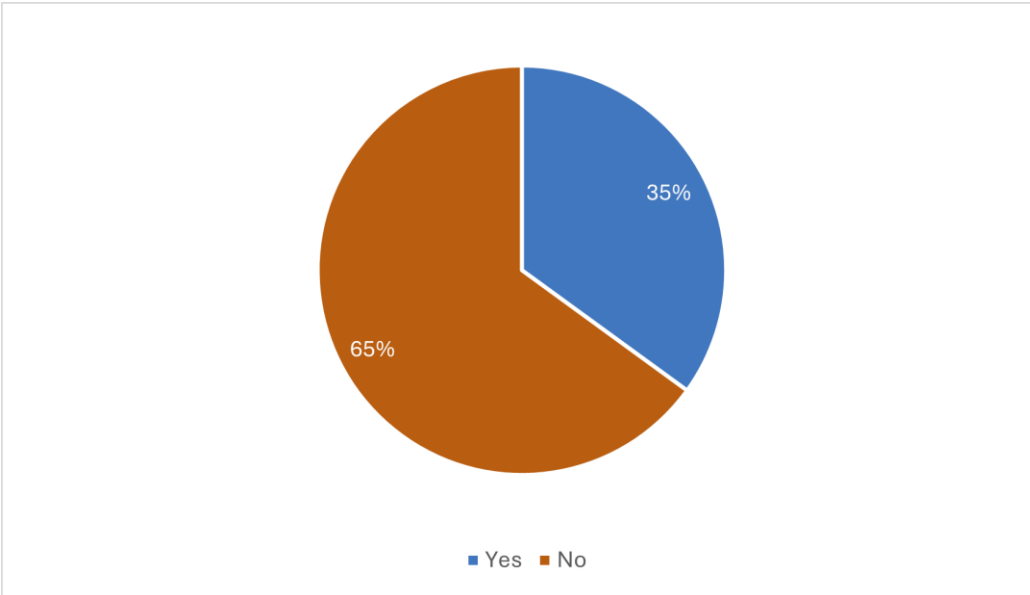
<b>Question 8</b>		Are you a recreational shore-netter? Yes, No.												
2	(14%)	Respondents said <b>yes</b> to being a recreational shore-netter in Wales.												
11	(79%)	Respondents said <b>no</b> to being a recreational shore-netter in Wales.												
1	(7%)	Respondent gave <b>no response</b> .												
<div><table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Count</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>Yes</td><td>2</td><td>14%</td></tr><tr><td>No</td><td>11</td><td>79%</td></tr><tr><td>No response</td><td>1</td><td>7%</td></tr></table></div>			Response	Count	Percentage	Yes	2	14%	No	11	79%	No response	1	7%
Response	Count	Percentage												
Yes	2	14%												
No	11	79%												
No response	1	7%												
<b>Question 9</b>		Have you observed shore-netting (please answer questions 24 & 25)? Yes, No.												
3	(21%)	Respondents said <b>yes</b> to being an observer of shore-netting in Wales.												
10	(72%)	Respondents said <b>no</b> to being an observer of shore-netting in Wales.												
1	(7%)	Respondent gave <b>no response</b> .												
<div><table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Count</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>Yes</td><td>3</td><td>21%</td></tr><tr><td>No</td><td>10</td><td>72%</td></tr><tr><td>No response</td><td>1</td><td>7%</td></tr></table></div>			Response	Count	Percentage	Yes	3	21%	No	10	72%	No response	1	7%
Response	Count	Percentage												
Yes	3	21%												
No	10	72%												
No response	1	7%												
<b>Question 10</b>		Which months of the year did you fish with shore-based nets each year in the period 2021-2024?												
The following responses were received:														
6	(43%)	<b>January</b>												
5	(36%)	<b>February</b>												

<b>6</b>	<b>(43%)</b>	<b>March</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>(93%)</b>	<b>April</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>(93%)</b>	<b>May</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>(86%)</b>	<b>June</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>(86%)</b>	<b>July</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>August</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>September</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>November</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>(79%)</b>	<b>December</b>
<b>Question 11</b> Where did you fish with shore-based nets each year in the period 2021-2024 (please be as specific as possible)?		
The following responses were received:		
<b>9</b>	<b>(64%)</b>	<b>Cefn Sidan</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>(28%)</b>	<b>Pembrey</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>(21%)</b>	<b>South Wales beaches</b> ( <i>including Cefn Sidan, Llanelli and Pembrey</i> )
<b>2</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	<b>Abersoch</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Llanelli</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Pwllheli</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Nefyn</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Criccieth</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Hells Mouth</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Penllech</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Tywyn</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Porthor</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Llanbedrog</b>
<b>Question 12</b> How many days did you fish with shore-based nets each year in the period 2021-2024?		
The following responses were received:		
<b>2</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	<b>No records kept</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	<b>Most tides when I can get out on the fishing boat</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>10 tides per month</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Weather and beach activity dependent</b>
Of the remaining responses, the maximum <b>exact</b> figures received from an individual were:		
<b>2021:</b> 27 days in a month.		
<b>2022:</b> 28 days in a month.		
<b>2023:</b> 31 days in a month.		
<b>2024:</b> 45 days in a month.		

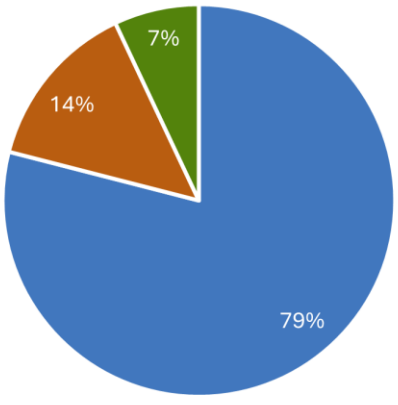
Question 13	What was your target species whilst using shore-based nets in the period 2021-2024?
The following responses were received:	
13	(93%) Mullet
11	(79%) Sole
11	(79%) Flounder
7	(50%) Turbot
7	(50%) Smooth hound
4	(28%) Mackerel
3	(21%) Dog fish
2	(14%) Whiting
1	(7%) Cod
1	(7%) Bass
1	(7%) Plaice
Question 14	How much bycatch of bass did you take with shore-based nets each year in the period 2021-2024 (kilograms)?
The following responses were received:	
2	(14%) No records kept
1	(7%) No bycatch
1	(7%) As per permitted levels
The remaining 10 responses indicated the highest and lowest values for each year in the period 2021-2024 were:	
2021	
Highest declared individual bass bycatch: 500kg	
Lowest declared individual bass bycatch: 50kg	
2022	
Highest declared individual bass bycatch: 500kg	
Lowest declared individual bass bycatch: 10kg	
2023	
Highest declared individual bass bycatch: 500kg	
Lowest declared individual bass bycatch: 20kg	
2024	
Highest declared individual bass bycatch: 500kg	
Lowest declared individual bass bycatch: 35kg	
Question 15	What other species did you observe whilst using shore-based nets in the period 2021-2024 including fish, mammals and birds?
The following responses were received:	
5	(35%) No response
4	(28%) Dog fish
3	(21%) Mackerel
2	(14%) Smooth hound

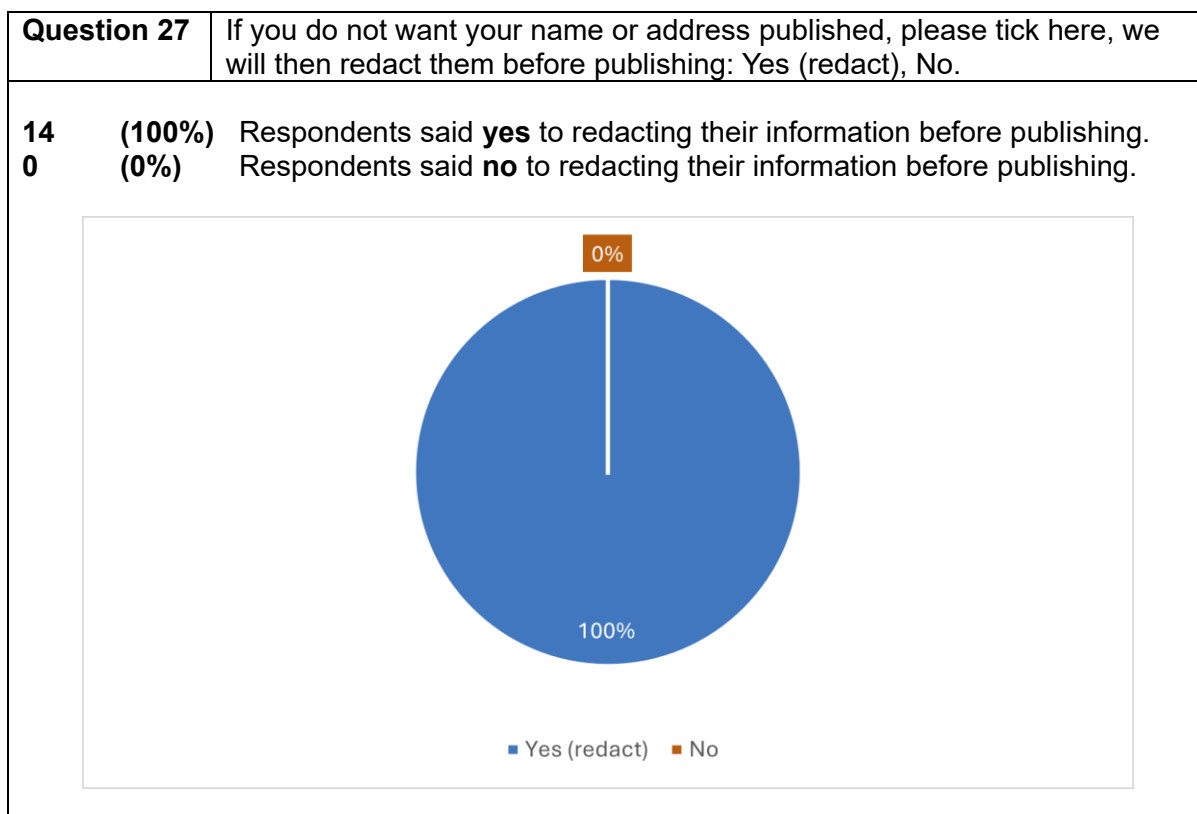


<b>2</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	<b>Dabs</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	<b>Rays</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	<b>Mullet</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	<b>Seals</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Bull huss</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Turbot</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Flounder</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Plaice</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Black bream</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Sole</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Spider crab</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Sea birds</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Otters</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Tope</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>Nothing</b>
<b>Question 16</b> What length (metres) were the nets you used?		
The following responses were received:		
<b>11</b>	<b>(79%)</b>	<b>200m</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>85-270m</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>50 yard (45m)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>50m</b>
<b>Question 17</b> What mesh size (millimetres) did you use?		
The following responses were received:		
<b>5</b>	<b>(35%)</b>	<b>4.5 inch (114mm)</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>(28%)</b>	<b>100mm</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	<b>108mm</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>115-125mm</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>4 inch (102mm)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>4.2 inch (107mm)</b>
<b>Question 18</b> How many nets did you use/set at any one time?		
The following responses were received:		
<b>12</b>	<b>(86%)</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>6 maximum</b>
<b>Question 19</b> How did you use (method/configuration) the shore-based nets?		
The following responses were received:		
<b>5</b>	<b>(35%)</b>	<b>Rise and fall</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>(28%)</b>	<b>Anchored</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>(28%)</b>	<b>Fixed nets</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>(7%)</b>	<b>50m length, 30 mesh deep, floating</b>

<b>Question 20</b>	Did you record your shore-based netting activity (when, where, catches) in the period 2021-2024? Yes, No.										
<b>10</b> <b>4</b>	<b>(72%)</b> <b>(28%)</b>	Respondents said <b>yes</b> to recording their shore-based netting activity. Respondents said <b>no</b> to recording their shore-based netting activity.									
 <p>A pie chart illustrating the responses to Question 20. The chart is divided into two segments: a large blue segment representing 'Yes' at 72%, and a smaller orange segment representing 'No' at 28%. A legend below the chart identifies the blue color with 'Yes' and the orange color with 'No'.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>10</td> <td>72%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>4</td> <td>28%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Response	Count	Percentage	Yes	10	72%	No	4	28%
Response	Count	Percentage									
Yes	10	72%									
No	4	28%									
<b>Question 21</b>	If yes, would you be willing to share your records with us? Yes, No.										
<b>5</b> <b>9</b>	<b>(35%)</b> <b>(65%)</b>	Respondents said <b>yes</b> to sharing their fishing records with us. Respondents said <b>no</b> to sharing their fishing records with us.									
 <p>A pie chart illustrating the responses to Question 21. The chart is divided into two segments: a blue segment representing 'Yes' at 35%, and a larger orange segment representing 'No' at 65%. A legend below the chart identifies the blue color with 'Yes' and the orange color with 'No'.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>5</td> <td>35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>9</td> <td>65%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Response	Count	Percentage	Yes	5	35%	No	9	65%
Response	Count	Percentage									
Yes	5	35%									
No	9	65%									
<b>Question 22</b>	Going forward, would you be prepared to voluntarily share future catch return data in relation to shore-netting activities i.e. through a voluntary catch recording system? Yes, No.										
<b>14</b> <b>0</b>	<b>(100%)</b> <b>(0%)</b>	Respondents said <b>yes</b> to sharing future catch return data with us. Respondents said <b>no</b> to sharing future catch return data with us.									

<div><div><div></div><div>0%</div></div><div><div></div><div>100%</div></div><div><div>■ Yes</div><div>■ No</div></div></div>		
Question 23	Would you be willing to participate in a scientific study on bycatch by shore-based nets? Yes, No.	
14 0	(100%) (0%)	Respondents said <b>yes</b> to participating in a scientific study on bycatch. Respondents said <b>no</b> to participating in a scientific study on bycatch.
<div><div><div></div><div>0%</div></div><div><div></div><div>100%</div></div><div><div>■ Yes</div><div>■ No</div></div></div>		
Question 24	Where and when have you observed shore-based netting activity in Wales whilst fishing or as an observer in the period 2021-2024 (please be as specific as possible)?	
The following responses were received:		
6 4 1 1 1 1 1	(42%) (28%) (7%) (7%) (7%) (7%) (7%)	Cefn Sidan Pembrey Llanelli Hells Mouth Penllech Tywyn Porthor

1	(7%)	Aberdaron												
1	(7%)	Porth Neigwl												
1	(7%)	Nefyn												
1	(7%)	Pwllheli												
1	(7%)	Llanbedrog												
1	(7%)	Not observed shore-netting in other areas												
1	(7%)	No response												
<b>Question 25</b>														
		For each of these locations given in question 24, what is the maximum number of shore-based netters you have observed fishing at any one time?												
<p>The maximum number of shore-netters observed by an individual at each location on a single day were:</p> <p><b>Cefn Sidan:</b> 5  <b>Pembrey:</b> 10  <b>Llanelli:</b> 10  <b>Hells Mouth:</b> 1  <b>Penllech:</b> 4  <b>Tywyn:</b> 4  <b>Porthor:</b> 4  <b>Aberdaron:</b> 4  <b>Porth Neigwl:</b> 4  <b>Nefyn:</b> 4  <b>Pwllheli:</b> 4  <b>Llanbedrog:</b> 4</p>														
<b>Question 26</b>														
		Do you consent to the Welsh Government Fisheries Division using your details to contact you for further information/discussions on this topic? Yes, No.												
11	(79%)	Respondents said <b>yes</b> to being contacted in the future.												
2	(14%)	Respondents said <b>no</b> to being contacted in the future.												
1	(7%)	Respondent gave <b>no response</b> to being contacted in the future.												
 <p>A pie chart illustrating the distribution of responses to Question 26. The chart is divided into three segments: a large blue segment representing 'Yes' at 79%, an orange segment representing 'No' at 14%, and a small green segment representing 'No response' at 7%. A legend at the bottom identifies the colors: blue for 'Yes', orange for 'No', and green for 'No response'.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Response</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>11</td> <td>79%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>2</td> <td>14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No response</td> <td>1</td> <td>7%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Response	Count	Percentage	Yes	11	79%	No	2	14%	No response	1	7%
Response	Count	Percentage												
Yes	11	79%												
No	2	14%												
No response	1	7%												



## Next steps

The data gathered through the call for evidence provides a valuable insight into shore-based netting in Wales, significantly contributing to our understanding of the activity. This data will help identify key patterns, practices, and locations, enabling us to build a more comprehensive picture of the fishery.

Our next steps will include a detailed assessment of the data gathered by the call for evidence. Based on the strong support shown by respondents to participate in a voluntary catch recording system and scientific studies on bycatch and discards, we will also engage with the Wales Sea Bass Advisory Group to consider the development and implementation of these systems.

These additional, longer-term data gathering exercises will strengthen the evidence base, inform policy development, and will help to determine whether additional measures are needed to improve the regulation of shore-based netting in Wales.