Llyr Gruffydd MS
Gweinidog Cabinet dros Wydnwch Gwledig a Chynaliadwyedd
Cabinet Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Number: WG54731

10 July 2026

Dear Stakeholder,

CONSULTATION ON THE CLOSURE OF THE CONWY BAY AND ESTUARY MUSSEL FISHERY

The Conwy Bay and Estuary mussel fishery was closed on 1 September 2025 and remains closed until the 31 August 2026, for fisheries management purposes, pursuant to Byelaw 13A of the former North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee ("NWNWSFC").

As you may be aware, this fishery falls within areas that have been designated under the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC), namely the Y Fenai a Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Special Area of Conservation, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Aber Afon Conwy Site of Special Scientific Interest, to protect vulnerable species and habitats that are present in that area.

In consideration of the protected nature of these sites, the Welsh Government has sought scientific advice regarding the appropriate level and nature of exploitation at this Mussel Fishery. The Welsh Government has, consequently, received scientific advice that the Conwy Bay and Estuary Mussel Fishery should only be subject to very limited and restricted mussel gathering and that, in general terms, the fishery should otherwise remain closed (with a maximum of only 22 authorised fishermen permitted to operate in the area in a particular way).

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

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Before the Welsh Government can close a fishery in accordance with Byelaw 13A of the former NWNWSFC, they must (in addition to receiving the scientific advice described above) undertake a consultation of such persons or bodies as appear to them to represent local cockle or mussel fishermen.

Accordingly, please consider this letter as a formal consultation on the closure of the Conwy Bay and Estuary Mussel Fishery. We would be grateful for any comments or views you may have on this closure.

Please send any views on this matter to us, via email at fisheries@gov.wales by 11th August 2026, for us to consider fully prior to any such possible use of this closure power.

For information, the Welsh Government has received scientific advice that, provided:

a. the level of fishing activity at the Conwy Bay and Estuary Mussel Fishery does not exceed 22 gatherers; and

b. those gatherers operate from boats only when there is at least 1 metre of water beneath the boat; and

c. the gathering is undertaken using a hand-held rake of not more than one metre in width.

The proposed fishery will not have a significant effect on the Y Fenai and Bae Conwy/ Menai Strait and Conwy Bay Special Area of Conservation and will have no effect upon the Aber Afon Conwy Site of Special Scientific Interest.

To permit a mussel fishery of that restricted nature, the Welsh Government is proposing to issue written authorisations pursuant to the former Byelaw 13A (3) of the former NWNWSFC. Byelaw 13A provides that no person may fish within an area which is closed under the said Byelaw 13A unless that person has written authorisation of the Welsh Government.

For the avoidance of any doubt, commercial mussel gathering activity is prohibited at this site unless a person is operating in accordance with a permit (and any conditions attached to the same) issued pursuant to Article 6 of the Cockles and Mussels (Specified Area) (Wales) Order 2011 or by methods detailed in Article 3(2). Fishing in breach of that prohibition is an offence contrary to section 190 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and any person found guilty of such an offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £50,000. In addition, the Court may order the forfeiture of any fishing gear used in the offence, and any sea fisheries resources in respect of which the offence was committed, or a sum of money representing the value of that fishing gear or resources. The

Court may also disqualify an individual from holding Permits under the 2011 Order for such period as the Court thinks fit.

We would be grateful for any comments or views you may have on the further closure of the Conwy Bay and Estuary Mussel Fishery for the period 1 September 2026 to 31 August 2027.

Llyr Gruffydd MS
Gweinidog Cabinet dros Wydnwch Gwledig a Chynaliadwyedd
Cabinet Minister for Rural Resilience and Sustainability