

DSIFCA 14_25 – Retention of egg-bearing lobster

On 11th June 2025, D&S IFCA Officers were conducting a premises inspection at Brixham fish market. While conducting catch inspections of the shellfish in the market, an officer identified a berried lobster (*Homarus gammarus*) in an unmarked fish box. In addition to this single lobster, there were also three male edible brown crab (*Cancer pagarus*). As the fish box was not labelled at the time indicating which vessel had landed the catch, officers asked a member of Brixham Trawler Agent's staff to determine which vessel had landed it. The staff member informed the officers which vessel had landed the catch, and that it had additionally landed dover sole (*Solea solea*). The officers measured the crab, which were all compliant with national and D&S IFCA minimum conservation reference size (MCRS).

On completion of checking the remainder of the shellfish, the officers seized the berried lobster and took photographic evidence of it. They then left the market floor with the seized lobster placed a V-notch, a conservation method used to distinguish a breeding female, in the left uropod of the lobster and then released the animal into the sea.

The officers could not ascertain if the vessel had been fishing within the D&S IFCA District and therefore referred to national legislation.

Relevant Legislation:

The Lobster and Crawfish (Prohibition of Fishing and Landing) (Amendment)(England) Order 2017, section 4a which prohibits the landing of egg bearing (berried) lobsters.

Offences to consider:

- The vessel did land one lobster (*Homarus gammarus*) that was egg bearing, which is prohibited under section 4A(a) of the Statutory Instrument 874/2000 - The Lobster and Crawfish (Prohibition of Fishing and Landing) Order 2000, as amended by 899/2017.

Outcome

The Authority reviewed the case and was satisfied that the evidential test has been met. The Authority considered the public interest in this case and, in line with the Authority's Compliance and Enforcement Strategy, an Advisory Letter was issued for the offence.