

DSIFCA 17_25 – Retention of undersized and berried lobsters and edible crabs

On Friday 4th July 2025, D&S IFCA officers boarded a small commercial fishing vessel operating pots within the District.

The individual operating the vessel identified themselves as the named representative on a valid D&S IFCA Potting Permit. Consent was given for officers to board and carry out a catch inspection.

During the inspection, officers identified multiple breaches of the D&S IFCA Potting Permit Conditions. These included the retention of three lobsters (*Homarus gammarus*) that were below the Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) of 90mm, one egg-bearing (berried) lobster with a mutilated tail, and two female edible crabs (*Cancer pagurus*) that were under the MCRS of 150mm. The undersized and berried catch was seized by officers, photographed for evidence, and subsequently returned to the sea.

When cautioned, the individual accepted the findings and acknowledged that the gauge used on board measured accurately against the officers' equipment. It was confirmed that the fishing activity took place within the D&S IFCA District.

Relevant Permit Conditions and Regulations

D&S IFCA Potting Permit – Paragraphs 1.2(a) and (b), and 1.3 (a) and (e):

1.2 “A permit holder or named representative is not authorised under this Permit to remove from a fishery within the District:

- a) any ‘V’-notched or mutilated lobster;
- b) any berried lobster or berried edible crab.”

1.3 “A permit holder or named representative is not authorised under this Permit to remove from a fishery within the District:

- a) a female edible crab less than 150mm measured across the broadest part of the carapace;
- e) a lobster less than 90mm measured as the length of the carapace, parallel to the midline, from the back of either eye socket to the distal edge of the carapace.”

Offences to Consider

- Retention of one berried and mutilated lobster, contrary to condition 1.2 of the D&S IFCA Potting Permit and Paragraph 2 of the D&S IFCA Potting Permit Byelaw, and Section 163 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.
- Retention of three undersized lobsters and two undersized edible crabs, contrary to condition 1.3 (sections a and e) of the D&S IFCA Potting Permit

and Paragraph 2 of the D&S IFCA Potting Permit Byelaw, and Section 163 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

Outcome

The Authority reviewed the evidence collected in the case and was satisfied the evidential threshold had been met. The Authority considered the Public Interest in this case and in line with the Authority's Compliance and Enforcement Strategy as an alternative to formal prosecution for three offences, a Financial Administrative Penalty of £500 for the offence of retention of 3 undersized lobsters was offered. This offer was accepted, and the case was closed.