

## Amendments to Category One Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions

### Officers' Recommendations

1. That the Category One Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions are amended (as set out in the Officers Paper) to close Area C of Annex 5a.
2. That the changes to the Category One Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions become valid on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026.

### Background

At the October 2025 B&PSC meeting, Members were informed about a potential closure of an area known as “the Corridor” that is set out on the Inshore Potting Agreement Area (IPA Chart).

The IPA Chart is discussed each year by the IPA Committee, and any changes to the chart, in terms of opening and closing areas where trawling and scalloping vessels can operate, are decided by the Committee Members at the annual meeting.

The B&PSC were informed that the IPA Committee would be discussing access to an area known as “the Corridor” which is typically open during the month of March each year for demersal mobile fishing vessels.

The IPA Committee meeting took place on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025. The IPA Committee made the decision to close “the Corridor” during 2026. The IPA Chart for 2026 has already been issued by the Marine Management Organisation and includes the closure.

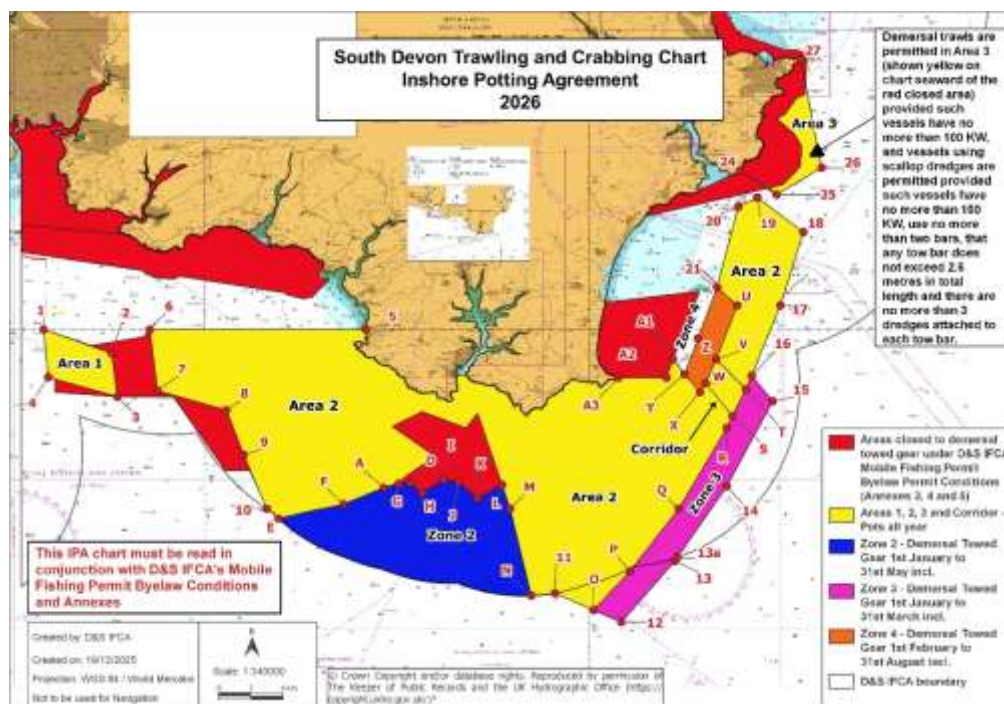


Figure 1 - South Devon Trawling and Crabbing Chart - Inshore Potting Agreement (IPA) Area Chart 2026 showing the Corridor is open to pots all year (closed to demersal towed gear).

The Category One Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions work in combination with national legislation and align with the South Devon Trawling and Crabbing Chart Inshore Potting

Agreement (IPA) which is a Commercial Fishing Licence Condition. The “Corridor” is identified as Area C (Annex 5a) within D&S IFCA’s Category One Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions. Having anticipated the outcome of the IPA Committee meeting regarding the closure, B&PSC Members were informed that D&S IFCA would need to act. D&S IFCA’s management measures cannot be less restrictive than national legislation, therefore the Permit Conditions would need amendment.

### Action by D&S IFCA

B&PSC Members were informed about two ways that D&S IFCA could act to close Area C. One option was reliant on the new Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw 2022 (MFPB 2022) being confirmed in early 2026. The MFPB 2022 includes an amended review process for changes to the Permit Conditions. Where national legislation necessitates an amendment to D&S IFCA’s Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions, it will become possible for D&S IFCA to make the required changes without formal consultation. Instead of formal consultation, D&S IFCA will notify fishers of the required changes to the Permit Conditions.

In late January 2026, the Byelaw was still not confirmed, and Officers had to instead follow the current review of permit conditions process to make changes to the Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions. Although the outcome is inevitable, D&S IFCA had to formally consult on the change, potentially undermining what a meaningful consultation should be.

### Formal Consultation

Officers prepared background information to include in the formal consultation that began on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and ended on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026. The formal consultation information made it clear to all readers that although D&S IFCA would collate any responses, these responses, potentially in favour or against the closure of Area C, could have no bearing on the decision making of the B&PSC.

Officers used Mailchimp and direct notification including email to reach 2,307 people, including all D&S IFCA permit holders.

### Responses

Five responses were received by the closing date.

Ref	Interest Group	Summary of Response
01	Category Two (recreational) Diving Permit Holder	Supportive of the closure. Raised concern about the make-up of the IPA Committee having no representation from marine scientists and the recreational fishing sector.
02	Unknown (as did not state)	No objection to the closure
03	Category One Mobile Fishing Permit Holder	Objects as the corridor is a safe viable way to transit between two fishing grounds safely. The potting areas are growing larger with excessive storage of gear in areas in trawling ground. It is a one sided decision only for the benefit of potters.
04	Wembury Marine Conservation Area Advisory Group (WAG)	Supportive of the closure and have a preference that it is permanently closed. WAG stated that mobile fishing gear inevitably damages and removes important components of the ecosystem. WAG have the view that opening and closing the area will have adverse effects. In the view of WAG, it is imperative that all Marine Protect Areas and Marine Conservation Zones are fully protected from demersal mobile fishing gear.

05	Devon Wildlife Trust (DWT)	Supportive of the closure. DWT are concerned about repeated opening and closure of the site in the Skerries Bank and Surrounds MCZ. DWT stated that this pattern creates uncertainty, weakens long-term recovery, and risks undermining confidence in site-based management. They recommend a permanent closure. DWT raised concern regarding the make-up of the IPA Committee, and highlighted that decision making relating to MPA areas should not be driven by a single sector (the fishing sector), and other representation should be included in decision making – conservation organisations and independent scientific experts.
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## Amendments to Permit Conditions

In preparation for the required change in management that must apply from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026, Officers have prepared amended Category One Permit Conditions and Annexes that function under the current Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions.

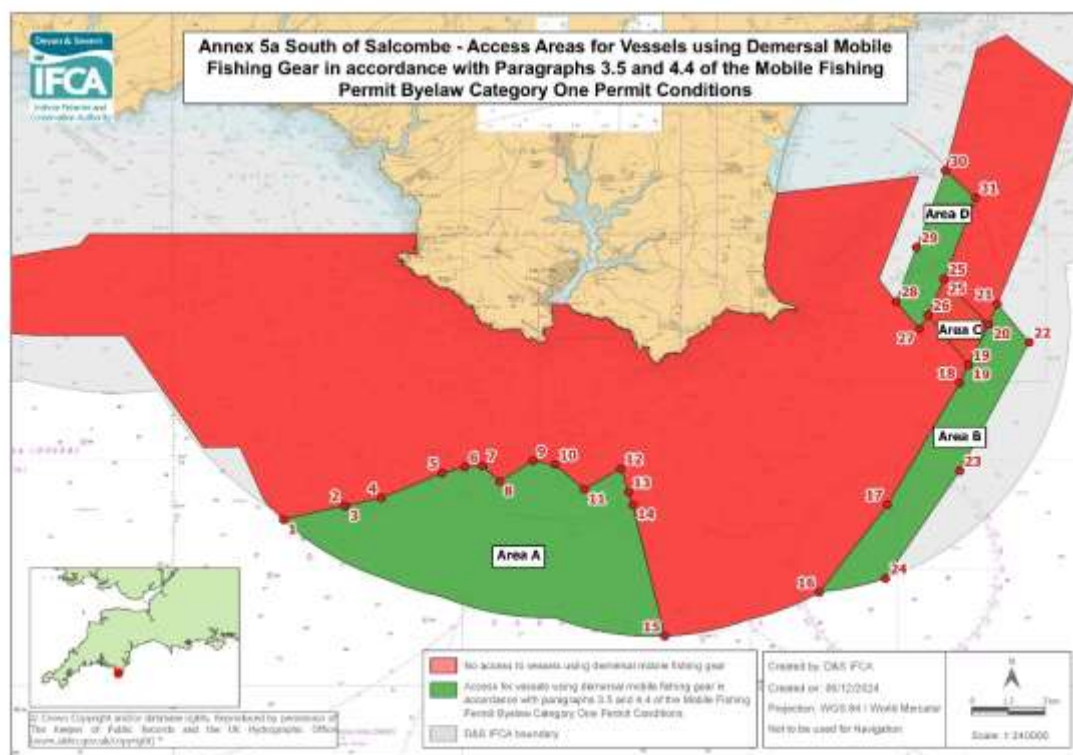


Figure 2 Annex 5a South of Salcombe showing no access to vessels using demersal mobile fishing gear in Area C

Officers have also prepared new Permit Conditions and Annexes that will function with the new MFPB 2022.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

## Background papers

B&PSC Papers & Minutes – [Section B of D&S IFCA website Resource Library](#).