

Devon and Severn IFCA News

New Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw 2022

The new Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw 2022 is confirmed by Defra and comes into force on 18th March 2026

On 4th March 2026, D&S IFCA received a signed copy from Defra of the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw 2022. The new Byelaw comes into force on 18th March and this concludes over seven years of work by Officers and Members of D&S IFCA's Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee (B&PSC). The new Byelaw can be viewed on D&S IFCA's website by clicking [here](#).

The Byelaw was "made" by B&PSC Members on 20th October 2022, which explains why 2022 is in the title. The Byelaw was formally advertised between 25th November 2022 and 20th January 2023 in accordance with Defra's Byelaw making guidance. D&S IFCA's approach to advertising and formal consultation exceeded Defra's guidance. How D&S IFCA formally consulted on the Byelaw, and the findings of the formal consultation can be read in a report available on D&S IFCA's website by clicking [here](#).



On 17th May 2023, the Byelaw was provided to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) for quality assurance. On 4th September 2025, after the MMO completed their quality assurance, the byelaw package was submitted by the MMO to Defra with a recommendation that it was confirmed.

What does the new Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw 2022 contain and how does it function?

The new Byelaw remains the legal framework for D&S IFCA to manage mobile fishing in the District. The Byelaw enables D&S IFCA to issue Category One (at sea) and Category Two (estuaries) Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions to manage mobile fishing activity (typically trawling and scallop dredging) at sea and limited mobile fishing activity in two estuaries (Exe Estuary and Salcombe Harbour).

There are some restrictions set out with a Schedule (2) in the Byelaw (for sand eel trawling); however, the majority of management measures for fishers operating at sea, and limited mobile fishing activity in estuaries, are set out in the Category One and Category Two Permit Conditions. The Permit Conditions (and Annexes) can be viewed on D&S IFCA's website by clicking [here](#).

- The Permit Conditions that function with the Byelaw have been circulated to fishers free of charge. There are no additional restrictions for fishers compared to the Permit Conditions issued in February this year that are now being replaced.

The Byelaw includes new wording and is set out differently to the old Mobile Fishing Byelaw that was introduced in 2014. There are new interpretations, different provisions, a different structure, and its scope is wider so that Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) could be introduced as a permit condition in the future.

The Byelaw includes an amended review process for changes to the Permit Conditions and the administration fees for a permit. The Byelaw allows D&S IFCA to consult on changes to the Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions, and where national legislation necessitates an amendment to D&S IFCA's Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions, it will be possible for D&S IFCA to make the required changes without formal consultation. Fishers will still be notified of changes and the reasons why. It is envisaged that the amended review process will save time and reduce any potential confusion relating to what is meaningful consultation and what is not.

The Byelaw includes an exemptions clause that means that mobile fishing vessels can be operated in the District without a permit but only when a person is acting in accordance with a written authorisation by the Authority for maintenance, scientific, stocking or breeding purposes.

The Byelaw includes two Schedules, one of these lists the closing lines for each estuary in the District, to separate a Category One Permit (at sea) from a Category Two Permit (estuaries). Schedule Two is only relevant for operators of vessels under seven metres in length that wish to undertake sand eel trawling. Schedule 2 sets out the restrictions for these small vessels that can undertake sand eel trawling without a Permit. A separate booklet relating to Schedule 2 is available on request and can be viewed on D&S IFCA's website by clicking [here](#).

An Impact Assessment was made to accompany the making of the Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw 2022 which is also available on request or can be viewed on D&S IFCA's website by clicking [here](#).

Permit Fees

There has been an increase in the administration fees for a permit from £20 for a two year period, to £40 for a two year period. The increase in administration fees is only relevant for new applicants and when permits expire and are replaced with a new permit. New application forms, with amended privacy notices, are now being prepared as well as required changes on D&S IFCA's online permit application facility.

What is next?

Although new Mobile Fishing Permit Conditions (valid 18th March 2026) have now been issued, circumstances change and potential amendments to the Category One Mobile fishing Permit Conditions are already being considered.

On 26th February 2026 the B&PSC actioned formal consultation on proposals to make amendments to the Category One Permit Conditions. Details of the proposals will be circulated to all D&S IFCA's stakeholders when the formal consultation begins.

If you have any questions relating to the new Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw and the associated Permit Conditions, then please contact D&S IFCA.

Office@devonandsevernifca.gov.uk

01803 854648

18th March 2026