

Amendments to the Netting Permit Conditions – Proposal (3)

Officers Recommendation

That Members agree to amend the Category One Netting Permit Conditions as proposed in the formal public consultation, and set out below, with the changes to apply from 1st July 2026.

Proposal 3 - Limits on number and length of net.

A Category One Netting Permit Condition will be introduced that will limit the amount and length of nets that can be fished by a Category One Netting Permit Holder operating a non-powered vessel. The proposed Permit Condition is as follows (or similar wording):

A Category One permit holder or named representative operating a non-powered vessel at sea is only authorised under this permit to use:

- a) a maximum of two fixed nets not exceeding 200 metres in length;
- b) a maximum of one drift net not exceeding 260 metres in length; and
- c) a maximum of one seine net not exceeding 50 metres in length.

The proposal is to apply new gear restrictions to Category One Netting Permit holders operating non-powered vessels. The number and length of nets were considered appropriate by the B&PSC, recognising the capabilities of vessels (rowing boats) with no mechanical assistance and the fishing gear required to participate in the coastal heritage herring fishery near Clovelly.

Response:

Eight responses commented on proposal (3). Responses were all from organisations.

Support:

The Angling Trust, Devon Wildlife Trust and Wembury Advisory Group all supported the proposal.

Qualified Support:

Qualified support for proposal (3) was provided by British Divers Marine Life Rescue, the Seal Research Trust, and the Environment Agency. These three organisations had the view that the amount of net being proposed for use by non-powered vessels was excessive, with alternative suggestions made by the Seal Research Trust and the Environment Agency (EA). The EA suggested that **only one seine net, and no other nets**,

should be used by a non-powered vessel. The Seal Research Trust had the view that **three nets**, rather than a maximum of four, are acceptable for use by non-powered vessels, but the lengths of the fixed and drift nets be **reduced to 100 metres**.

Objection:

There were no objections to proposal (3)

Consideration by B&PSC:

The intention of the B&PSC was to restrict the level of netting that can be used by a non-powered vessel to amounts more suited to that type of vessel (rowing boat).

In doing so the B&PSC also recognised that some fishers engage in an historic coastal herring fishery near Clovelly. The suggestion by the Environment Agency would end the use of non-powered vessels in this fishery. The proposal from the B&PSC represents a significant change from having no maximum limit on the net lengths nor the number of nets that can be operated (from a non-powered vessel with a D&S IFCA Category One Netting Permit), to a maximum of four nets with length restrictions applying to the various types of nets. Further restrictions on where and when the nets can be used already apply to all Netting Permit holders e.g. coastal netting restrictions.

The length of net proposed by the B&PSC recognises the length of nets already being used¹ by some operators of non-powered vessels (in particular those involved in the drift net fishery near Clovelly), as presented in the Officers' paper at the B&PSC meeting in February 2026.

It is the Officers' view that although there were suggestions for more restrictive measures to be applied to non-powered vessels the B&PSC should proceed with the changes as proposed. The Permit Conditions can be amended and circulated to apply from 1st July 2026.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers

B&PSC Papers and meeting minutes ([Section B of D&S IFCA Website Resource Library](#)) and Agenda Item 6 (Annex A) – A summary of Response from the Formal Consultation

¹ Declared by fishers for potential use