

Lyme Bay Reserve Management



Scenario 1 – Crab Sizes

Government 1: We want to increase the minimum catch size of brown crab by 1cm. This will help improve crab stocks and the increased size will mean a higher price.

Fisherman 1: No way! You can't increase minimum size by 1cm. I'd lose 30% of my catch in the first year. That is not sustainable. I can't lose that much money in year 1 and be able to recover. I'd go out of business!

Blue Marine foundation: Well a 1cm increase seems reasonable to us. It would definitely increase stocks and would increase retail price in the long term for all crab fishermen.

Blue > Fisherman 1: We want to support you as part of this partnership so that you don't lose out in the short term. Are you sure you would lose 30% of your catch? How about we ask the guys from Plymouth university to look at the data from their potting survey that you were involved in and we can check the crab sizes you have been catching.

Plymouth University: The data from the potting survey shows that 95% of your brown crab catch is currently at least the new minimum catch size or bigger.

Fisherman 1: So it's not 30% it is only 5% of my catch that I'd lose in the first year? I think I can make up for a 5% loss in year one when offset against the gains in future years. Thanks Plymouth for putting my mind at rest. Government I am happy with the new minimum catch size now.

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Scenario 2 – Thornback Rays

Fisherman 2: I am currently catching lots of thornback rays but I am unable to sell them as part of the Reserve Seafood Scheme as they are on the MCS (Marine Conservation Society) fish to avoid list. So even though I can sell them at market I am losing out as I cannot sell them as part of the scheme and have the benefit of a higher price.

Government 2: Well in North Devon there is a voluntary scheme that the fishermen have signed up to which has been recognised by the MCS. They have agreed to a minimum catch size of 45cm. maybe we could introduce a similar thing here? Would you be willing to meet a 45cm minimum catch size?

Fisherman 2: The rays we are landing are that size or bigger at the moment so we would be more than happy to add that minimum catch size to our code of conduct.

Blue Marine Foundation: We'll take the evidence of thornback ray abundance and your agreement to a minimum landing size to the MCS and see what they say.

Later at the next meeting...

Blue Marine Foundation: After a long email discussion and passing on of evidence of the abundance of Thornback rays, our code of conduct and your willingness to agree to the minimum landing size the MCS have agreed to put a special exclusion to their fish to avoid list so that Thornback rays from Lyme Bay can be sold through the Reserve Seafood Scheme.

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Scenario 3 – Accreditation Scheme

SeaFish: This is our Accreditation Scheme. This assures catch quality and fishing standards. The voluntary Codes of Conduct that each fisherman adheres to and the science which measures the results of fishing efforts in Lyme Bay informs the sustainability of the product. Each vessel is also fitted with iVMS (inshore Vessel Monitoring System), which guarantees the traceability of each catch.

Fisherman 3: We don't really like this scheme. It is very expensive for what it is and it is too general. You are clumping us together with industrial fishermen. Some of these are trawlers which are banned in the Reserve. You can't put us together under the same scheme.

Blue Marine Foundation: We would really like to try and make this work. Being accredited is good for you all and it is good for the Reserve. We'll pay for it initially and see how it goes.

Fisherman 3: OK if you pay we'll give it a go.

18 months later...

SeaFish: We have changed our Accreditation Scheme. We have introduced some new regulations even though they don't apply to you as an inshore fleet and as a result of this the costs have increased and instead of payment every 3 years it will be yearly.

Fisherman 3: No! We will not agree to this. These changes or not applicable to us, why should we be made to pay for them!?

Blue Marine Foundation: You need to be accredited in order to be able to sell your fish under the Reserve Seafood Brand.

Fisherman 3: We don't think that it is fair to punish us like this. This scheme is not applicable to us and these are valid concerns. Is there not anyway we can have a separate scheme that is just for inshore fisheries?

Blue > SeaFish: Is there a possibility of making the scheme fairer by splitting it into a 2 tier system. One for offshore industrial fisheries and one for small inshore fisheries?

SeaFish: No sorry this is the scheme we are offering.

Blue Marine Foundation: We will have to come up with a solution that means that our fishermen are accredited for the excellent work they do in terms of fishing sustainably but we cannot support a scheme that is very expensive and ties our fishermen to regulations that have no relevance to the way in which they fish.

Blue Marine Foundation: We are looking at setting up our own regional accreditation scheme that will be monitored by Dorset Wildlife Trust and will be relevant to the small inshore fisheries in the area who use static gear. This should make for a more affordable scheme that will make everyone happy.