An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

INFORMATION NOTE FOR STAKEHOLDERS ON QUOTA BALANCING FOR DEMERSAL (WHITEFISH) STOCKS

- Following a public consultation, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine implemented a pilot quota balancing scheme for Demersal (Whitefish) Stocks on 1st June 2020 for the following five stocks (this is clearly shown in the relevant Fisheries Management Notice(s)):
    - **Haddock in 6a (HAD/5BC6A)**
    - **Hake in 6 and 7 (HKE/571214)**
    - **Monk in 6 (ANF/56-14)**
    - **Monk in 7 (ANF/07.)**
    - **Whiting in 7b-k (WHG/(7X7A)7X7A-C)**
- This quota balancing scheme has been developed at the request of, and with the help of, the Quota Management Advisory Committee (QMAC). The QMAC is made up of fishing industry representatives from the catching and processing sectors, who make recommendations to the Minister on the management of Irish fishing quotas.
- From 1st January 2022, the Minister has decided that an additional four demersal (whitefish) stocks will be subject to Quota Balancing, as supported by the QMAC:
    - **Haddock in 6b (HAD/6B1214)**
    - **Megrim in 6 (LEZ/56-14)**
    - **Megrim in 7 (LEZ/07.)**
    - **Pollack in 7 (POL/07.)**
- Quota balancing means that where a vessel lands more than its allocated catch limit for a stock during a fishery management period (currently one calendar month e.g. August), a deduction will be made from a future catch limit for that vessel (see the **Quick Guide to Demersal Quota Balancing** for information on fishing trips that span more than one fishery management period e.g. August into September).
- In short, for a fishery management period, landings of the stock (as recorded in the Landing Declaration(s) and divided out between two fishery management periods where relevant) will be added together and set against the catch limit for that stock for that month. Any excess landings over the catch limit will then be quota balanced and deducted from a future catch limit for the vessel.
- Quota balancing by the Department is completely separate to any action that may be considered or is being taken by the control authorities.
- A multiplying factor will apply to the excess landings. If you have excess landings more than 10% over the catch limit, a higher level of payback will apply (see Appendix 1)
- As set out in the pilot policy document, additional stocks will be introduced in a phased manner.
- A pilot scheme for pelagic stocks was introduced by the Minister on 1st January 2018, and a settled quota balancing policy for pelagic stocks was signed by the Minister in July 2020, which incorporated any amendments and clarifications since 2018, which continues to be in effect. A copy of the policy & information document, along with Frequently Asked Questions, is available on the Department's website at: https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/4703a-policy-quota-management/
- A **Quick Guide to Demersal Quota Balancing**, which forms part of the policy document, is set out below.

Quick Guide to Demersal Quota Balancing

- After a fishery management period closes, the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) will provide the final quantity of landings (as reported by the Master of the Vessel in the landing declarations) for the relevant demersal stocks to the Department.
- Where a fishing trip has spanned more than one fishery management period (e.g. from August into September), for the purposes of quota balancing, the date of catch as recorded in the operational logbook is used to decide in which period the fish was caught. Where there is any difference between the quantity of catch recorded in the operational logbook and the final quantity of landings in the landing declaration (e.g. in a trip that takes place over two fishery management periods), the difference is divided between these fishery management periods according to the catch data for each period (catch share) recorded in the operational logbook.
- For example, in a fishing trip that spans more than one fishery management period (e.g. from August into September), the operational logbook reports that that 2 tonnes of Hake was caught in August and 3 tonnes of Hake was caught in September. The landing declaration reports that the total final quantity of landings for Hake for that trip was 5.5 tonnes. For the purpose of quota balancing, 5.5 tonnes x 2/5 (2.2 tonnes) of Hake is regarded as caught in August and 5.5 tonnes x 3/5 (3.3 tonnes) of Hake is regarded as caught in September. Where the declared quantity of landings in the landing declarations (as divided out, where relevant) exceeds the catch limit for the period for any relevant demersal stock(s), the Department will commence the quota balancing process for the vessel.
- A provisional quota balancing statement will issue to the Licence Holder. This statement will set down the catch limit (per relevant demersal stock) for the vessel for the period, the declared quantity of landings for the period, the quantity of landings in excess of the catch limit(s) and the balancing adjustment(s) worked out for any excess.
- For landings in excess of permitted catch limits, a multiplying factor will apply (see example below). The Licence Holder will be given a set number of days to query relevant trip/landing data with the SFPA and/or catch limit(s)/ balancing adjustment enquiries with the Department.
- A final quota balancing statement will then issue to the Licence Holder setting out the final balancing adjustments that have been incurred. It will advise that balancing adjustments (quota balancing) will be applied at the earliest possible opportunity.
- An authorisation will issue to the licence holder for a subsequent fishery management period when any balancing adjustments are applied.
- This authorisation will set out the adjusted catch limits for the relevant demersal stocks that have been quota balanced.
- Once an authorisation has been issued to a licence holder, the vessel is only permitted to fish up to the catch limit for any demersal stock(s) set down in the authorisation.
- Fishing activity for all other demersal stocks (i.e. not set down in the authorisation) to be carried out in accordance with the relevant Fisheries Management Notice(s) for that fishery management period.

Appendix 1

Example of application of Multiplying Factor:

Catch Limit *(tonnes)*	**Landings *(tonnes)***	**Landings in excess of Catch Limit *(tonnes)***	**Category**	**Balancing Adjustment *(tonnes)***
10	10.50	0.50	Up to 10% of Catch limit **Multiplying Factor 1.0**	0.50
10	11.50	1.50	Over 10% up to 20% of Catch limit **Multiplying factor 1.2**	1.80
10	13	3	Over 20% up to 40% of Catch limit **Multiplying factor 1.4**	4.20
10	14.50	4.50	Over 40% up to 50% of Catch limit **Multiplying factor 1.8**	8.10
10	16	6	Greater than 50% Catch limit **Multiplying factor 2.0**	12
0	*2*	*2*	*Fishing without a catch/by-catch limit* ***Multiplying factor 2.0***	*4*

Sea Fisheries Policy & Management Division

30th November 2021

For information on the collection, processing and sharing of data for quota management, including quota balancing, please see the most up-to-date version of our data protection statement at https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/4703a-policy-quota-management/

Rannóg Beartais agus Bainistíochta Bia Mara, Ionad Náisiúnta Bia Mara, Clogheen, Cloich na Coillte, Co. Chorcaí, P85 TX47
Seafood Policy and Management Division, National Seafood Centre, Clogheen, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, P85 TX47
T +353 23 59500 |
www.agriculture.gov.ie