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STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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**2020 No. 152**

**SEA FISHERIES**

**The Edible Crabs (Conservation)  
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

Made - - - - 22nd July 2020

Coming into operation 22nd August 2020

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs <sup>M1</sup> makes the following Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred on it by section 124(1) and (2) of the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966 <sup>M2</sup>.

**Marginal Citations**

- M1** Formerly the Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland; see [S.I. 1999/283 \(N.I.1\)](#), Art 3(4); and [2016 c. 5 \(N.I.\)](#), [Article 1\(2\)](#).
- M2** [1966 c.17](#), [Section 124](#) was substituted by [S.I. 1981/227 \(N.I.7\)](#), [Article 6](#) and amended by [S.I. 2002/790](#), [Article 6](#) and [2001 c. 4 \(N.I.\)](#), [section 1](#)

**Citation and commencement** **N.I.**

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Edible Crabs (Conservation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and shall come into operation on 22nd August 2020.

**Interpretation** **N.I.**

2. In these Regulations—

“the Act” means the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966;

“berried edible crab” means a female edible crab which is bearing eggs;

“edible crab” means crab of the species *Cancer pagurus*;

[<sup>F1</sup>“foreign fishing boat” has the same meaning as in the Fisheries Act 2020 (see section 52 of that Act);]

“size” means the maximum width of the carapace measured perpendicular to the antero-posterior midline of the carapace and shall be measured as shown in the Schedule to these Regulations;

[<sup>F2</sup>“soft-shelled edible crab” means an edible crab which has recently cast its shell;”]

“stock cage” means a containment device used to store crabs at sea or in the waters of a port or harbour.

#### Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in [reg. 2](#) substituted (31.12.2020) by [Fisheries Act 2020 \(c. 22\)](#), s. 54(3)(a), [Sch. 2 para. 35\(2\)](#) (with s. 50, [Sch. 4 para. 31](#))
- F2** Words in [reg. 2](#) inserted (10.2.2023) by [The Edible Crabs \(Conservation\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2023 \(S.R. 2023/5\)](#), regs. 1, [2\(2\)](#)

#### Edible crabs **N.I.**

**3.—(1)** Where an edible crab less than [<sup>F3</sup>150mm] in size is brought on board a sea-fishing boat, it must be immediately returned to sea, as near as possible to the place from which it was taken.

(2) The retention of an edible crab less than [<sup>F4</sup>150mm] in size in a stock cage is prohibited.

#### Textual Amendments

- F3** Word in [reg. 3\(1\)](#) substituted (10.2.2023) by [The Edible Crabs \(Conservation\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2023 \(S.R. 2023/5\)](#), regs. 1, [2\(3\)\(a\)](#)
- F4** Word in [reg. 3\(2\)](#) substituted (10.2.2023) by [The Edible Crabs \(Conservation\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2023 \(S.R. 2023/5\)](#), regs. 1, [2\(3\)\(b\)](#)

#### Berried edible crabs **N.I.**

**4.—(1)** The retention on board a sea-fishing boat, the bringing to land or the landing of a berried edible crab is prohibited.

(2) Where a berried edible crab is brought on board a sea-fishing boat, it must be immediately returned to sea, as near as possible to the place from which it was taken.

(3) The removal of eggs from a berried edible crab is prohibited.

(4) The retention of a berried edible crab in a stock cage is prohibited.

#### [<sup>F5</sup>Detached crab claws **N.I.**

**4A.** The retention on board, the bringing to land on or the landing from a sea-fishing boat of a detached edible crab claw is prohibited.]

#### Textual Amendments

- F5** [Reg. 4A](#) inserted (8.1.2022) by [The Edible Crabs \(Conservation\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2021 \(S.R. 2021/336\)](#), regs. 1, [2\(2\)](#)

#### [<sup>F6</sup>Soft-shelled edible crab **N.I.**

**4B.—(1)** The retention on board a sea-fishing boat, the bringing to land, the landing, having in possession, selling, exposing for sale, buying for sale, or consigning to any person for the purpose of sale, of a soft-shelled edible crab is prohibited.

(2) Where a soft-shelled edible crab is brought on board a sea-fishing boat, it must be immediately returned to sea, as near as possible to the place from which it was taken.]

#### Textual Amendments

- F6** Para. 4B inserted (10.2.2023) by The Edible Crabs (Conservation) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023 (S.R. 2023/5), regs. 1, **2(4)**

#### [<sup>F7</sup>Exemptions **N.I.**

5.—(1) The obligations and prohibitions imposed by regulations [<sup>F8</sup>3,4,4A and 4B] do not apply to any person operating under the authority of, and in accordance with a permit granted under, section 14 of the Act.

(2) The obligations and prohibitions imposed by regulations [<sup>F9</sup>3,4,4A and 4B] do not apply in relation to sea-fish caught by a foreign fishing boat in waters lying outside British fishery limits.]

#### Textual Amendments

- F7** Reg. 5 substituted (31.12.2020) by Fisheries Act 2020 (c. 22), s. 54(3)(a), **Sch. 2 para. 35(3)** (with s. 50, Sch. 4 para. 31)
- F8** Words in reg. 5(1) substituted (10.2.2023) by The Edible Crabs (Conservation) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023 (S.R. 2023/5), regs. 1, **2(5)**
- F9** Words in reg. 5(2) substituted (10.2.2023) by The Edible Crabs (Conservation) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023 (S.R. 2023/5), regs. 1, **2(6)**

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020.

L.S.  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and  
Rural Affairs

*Claire Vincent*  
A senior officer of the

SCHEDULE **N.I.**

Regulation 2

MEASUREMENT OF THE SIZE OF AN EDIBLE CRAB

*Carapace width*



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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

*(This note is not part of the Regulations)*

These Regulations provide for obligations and prohibitions in relation to edible crabs less than 140mm in size and berried edible crabs in Northern Ireland.

Regulation 3 requires an edible crab less than 140mm in size brought on board a sea-fishing boat to be immediately returned to the sea and prohibits the retention of an edible crab less than 140mm in size in a stock cage.

In relation to berried edible crabs, regulation 4 prohibits their retention on board a sea-fishing boat, bringing to land, landing, retention in a stock cage or the removal of their eggs. Regulation 4 also requires a berried edible crab brought on board a sea-fishing boat to be immediately returned to the sea.

Regulation 5 of these Regulations provides for an exemption for foreign fishing boats or a person granted a permit under section 14 of the Fisheries Act (Northern Ireland) 1966.

**Changes to legislation:**

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the The Edible Crabs (Conservation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.