

# **Inshore Fisheries Pilot: Inner Sound of Skye**

**A Consultation**

**January 2019**

## Background and Introduction

The Scottish Government launched the Inshore Fisheries Pilots initiative in July 2017 with the aim of exploring alternative approaches to managing inshore fisheries.

The initiative seeks to explore two approaches to fisheries management:

- a more localised approach where fishing interests are central to the development of fisheries management arrangements; and
- spatial separation of fishing operations, such as static (creeling) and mobile (trawling) within specified areas.

Industry was invited to submit proposals. Seven applications were received with five opened to public consultation between 30 November 2017 and 22 February 2018.

Analysis of the consultation responses concluded that three sites would offer learning opportunities around the above approaches. The following trials have been selected to be trialled over a two-year period:

- a seasonal restriction on mobile gear fishing near Mull;
- a restriction on creel numbers in the Outer Hebrides; and
- zonal fishing management in the waters off Arbroath and Montrose.

The two proposals not taken forward concerned introducing a permanent prohibition on mobile gear fishing in the Inner Sound of Skye and management of the local scallop fisheries in Orkney.

Further information, including the Consultation and Response is available at <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Sea-Fisheries/InshoreFisheries/InshoreFisheriesPilots>.

## 2018 developments

Following the outcome of the 2017 consultation, further representations were made to the Scottish Government calling for the Inner Sound proposal to be reconsidered.

The original proposal was not taken forward for a number of reasons, including the potential economic impact on mobile gear vessels, displacement of effort and health and safety implications.

Through engagement with the North West Responsible Fishing Association Marine Scotland agreed to revisit the original proposal to establish if there were any unique learning opportunities to be explored around testing local fisheries management measures associated with the *Nephrops* fishery in the Inner Sound of Skye.

## 2019 Proposal – Inner Sound of Skye

Marine Scotland wants to hear from those likely to be directly or indirectly impacted by the measures in this revised proposal.

- Marine Scotland would like to hear your views on the potential impacts – both positive and negative – of the overall proposal and individual measures and whether you agree they should be taken forward.
- Please stipulate your views and suggestions relating to all aspects of this consultation.

## Contents of this Consultation Document

1. The parties who have proposed the pilot measures
2. Analysis of fishing activity and suggested eligibility criteria
3. The aims of the proposal
4. How the pilot will be monitored
5. The expected benefits from the proposal
6. Proposed pilot fisheries management measures

## Further Reading

We would recommend that you consider the stock assessments published annually by Marine Scotland Science for background information on stock health. However, it should be noted that stock assessments, where available, are carried out on a larger scale than the area being proposed for this inshore fisheries pilot.

The most recent stock assessment publication is available at <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Publications/publicationslatest/farmedfish/fishandshellfishstocks>.

## Timescales

- The closing date for consultation responses to be received is **Thursday 28 February 2019**.
- If the pilot does go ahead it is intended to be operational from **1 April 2019**.

## 1. The Proposer

The North West Responsible Fishing Association, Torricon and Applecross Fishermen's Association, and Scottish Scallop Divers Association.

## 2. Analysis of Fishing Activity Data

Data collated by Marine Scotland Compliance from sales notes and EU logbooks as well as records from the iFISH database and VMS data from vessels in relation to information on fishing activity has been used in the compilation of the analysis of fishing activity in the Inner Sound of Skye available at **Annex A** of this consultation.

The analysis offers an indication of current fishing activity within the proposed area, including fisheries that may be impacted.

This analysis also provides information to inform the design of eligibility criteria for access to the 'trawl fishing control area' and is set out for your consideration at **Annex B**.

## 3. Aims of the Proposal

The proposal introduces new fisheries management measures in addition to the current six-month prohibition in place on mobile gear fishing within the Inner Sound of Skye with an aim to:

- trial the separation of mobile and static gears in the Proposed Area;
- introduce local management arrangements for the *Nephrops* creel fishery.

## The Restricted Area

Figure 1

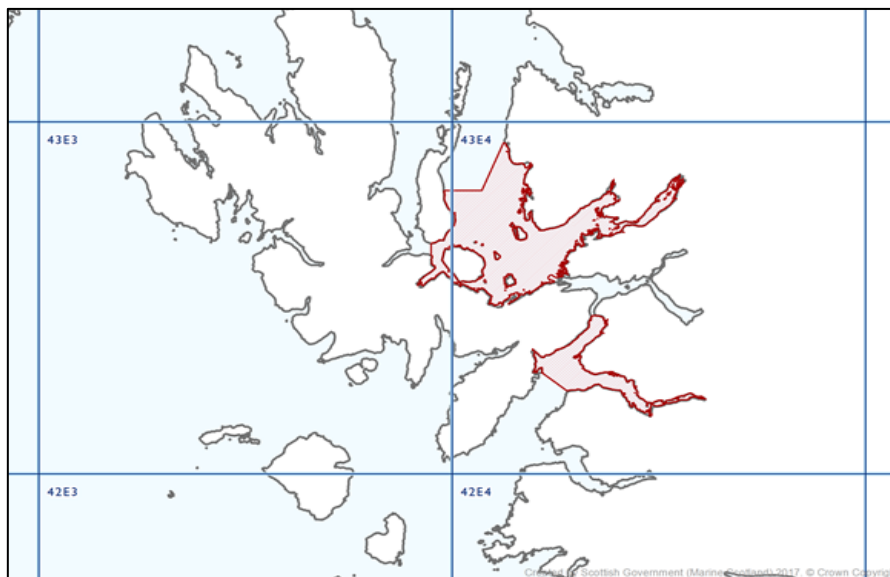


Figure 1 above shows the Southern Inner Sound area, where a six-month prohibition on the use of mobile gear is currently in place from 1 October to 31 March each year<sup>1</sup>.

### 4. Monitoring of the Pilot

An Inner Sound Fisheries Management Advisory Group, will be established to inform the design, implementation and monitoring of the pilot. The group will be representative of those who currently fish in the Inner Sound and be closely aligned with the West Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group.

### 5. Proposed Benefits

The overall goal of the proposal is to develop a more prosperous and low-impact local *Nephrops* fishery in the Inner Sound of Skye that will help to better inform the understanding of different management approaches for the Scottish *Nephrops* fisheries.

The proposers believe that the pilot may demonstrate:

- An increase in revenues generated from the static gear fisheries.
- A decrease in gear conflict.
- An increase in employment.
- Environmental benefits, including a decrease in benthic disturbance, by-catch and discards of non-target species.

<sup>1</sup> The Inshore Fishing (Prohibition of Fishing and Fishing Methods) (Scotland) Order 2015 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2015/435/made>.

- Reduce the pressure on adjacent Marine Protected Areas from creel vessels that are displaced annually when the Inner Sound is open to mobile gear fishing.

## **(1) Consultation Questions – Proposed Benefits**

What is your view on these proposed benefits?

Do you agree that the establishment of a pilot management group is the most effective way of managing and monitoring progress of the pilot and appraisal of the benefits?

## **6. Proposed Pilot Fisheries Management Measures**

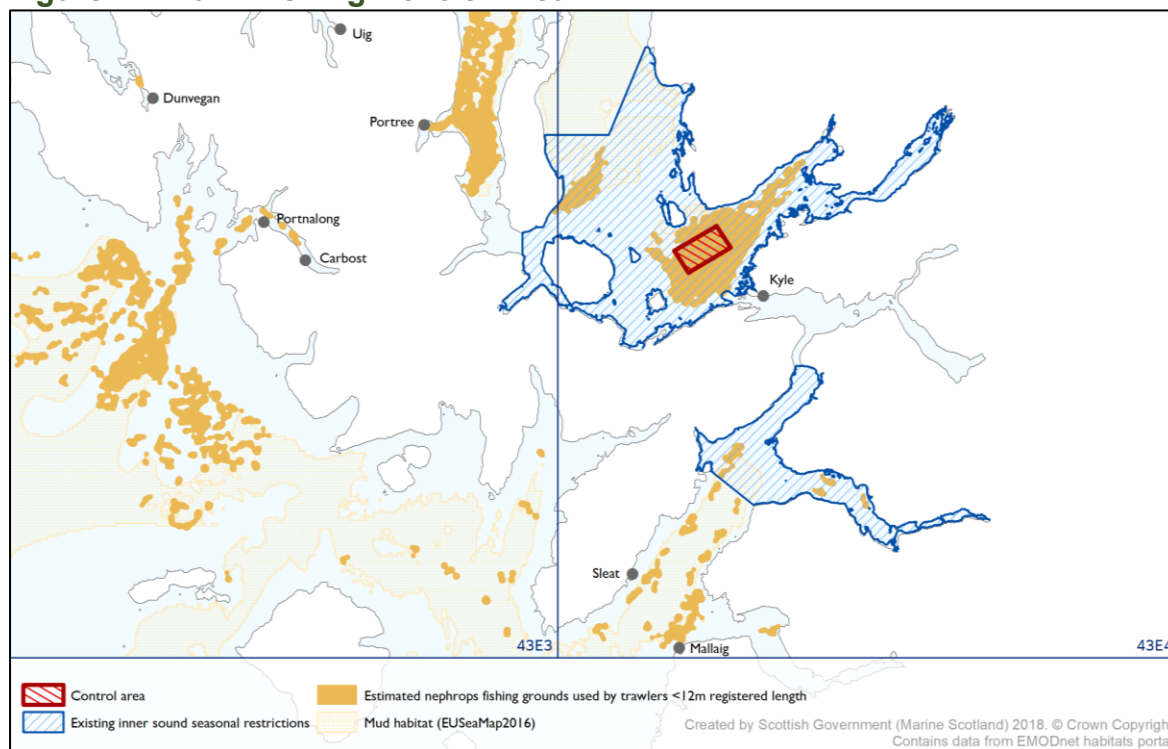
The following management measures are proposed in relation to mobile and static fishing operations respectively. These proposals, which have been suggested by industry stakeholders, will be further explored and agreed by the Inner Sound Fisheries Management Advisory Group before implementation on 1 April 2019.

### **Proposed Mobile Fisheries Management Measures**

- A. Allow continued access to a Control Area of the Inner Sound to those trawl vessels which meet an eligibility criteria.
- B. Eligible vessels will require to have a calibrated Vessel Monitoring System on board that accurately and frequently transmits the vessel's location and ongoing fishing activity.
- C. Controls on the fishing effort of eligible vessels; such as days at sea to be considered

***Nephrops* trawling permitted to the Control Area, specified below, identified as containing productive *Nephrops* grounds.**

**Figure 2 - Trawl Fishing Control Area**



Co-ordinate	North Latitude	West Longitude
NE corner	57° 20.00'	5° 46.50'
NW corner	57° 18.85'	5° 50.10'
SE corner	57° 19.00'	5° 45.30'
SW corner	57° 17.85'	5° 48.90'

## **A. Accessing Trawl Fishing Control Area**

**“Allow continued access to a Control Area of the Inner Sound to those trawl vessels which meet an eligibility criteria”.**

Access to the **Trawl Fishing Control Area** will be permitted only to those trawl vessels with a track record of fishing activity in the Inner Sound with landings from ICES rectangle 43E4 as recorded on landing returns submitted to Marine Scotland.

Trawl vessels that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be permitted to fish in the Inner Sound - an appeals process will be established.

The current six-month prohibition on mobile gear fishing in the Inner Sound will continue to apply to all mobile gear.

**Trawling will only be permitted in the Trawl Fishing Control Area to eligible vessels between 1 April to 30 September each year. During this period creel fishing will not be permitted in the Trawl Fishing Control Area.**

## **(2) Consultation Question – Proposed Mobile Gear Management Measures**

Do you agree that testing these proposed mobile gear management measures may provide insight into improving local fisheries management of *Nephrops* fisheries?

### **Eligibility Criteria**

The analysis of *Nephrops* fishing activity in the Inner Sound of Skye (set out in Annex A) suggests a possible criteria in assessing eligibility (presented at Annex B) might be based around establishing where vessels:

- have fished in the Inner Sound of Skye in recent years;
- have a pattern of regularity to their fishing activity in the area; and
- meet or exceed the average catch from the area as a percentage of the total catch by that fleet segment.

## **(3) Consultation Questions – Eligibility Criteria**

Do you agree that continued access for trawl vessels should be determined by a track record of fishing activity as described?

Do you agree with the principle that eligible trawl vessels be restricted to fishing in the Trawl Fishing Control Area?

### **B. Vessel Monitoring and Tracking System (VMS)**

**“Eligible vessels will require to have a calibrated Vessel Monitoring System on board that accurately and frequently transmits the vessel’s location and ongoing fishing activity”.**

Trawl vessels applying to access the Trawl Fishing Control Area will be required to have on board VMS which provides real time information relating to fishing location as well as ongoing activity.

## **(4) Consultation Questions – Requirement for Onboard Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)**

Do you agree that eligible trawl vessels should be required to have on board VMS?

Do you have views on the specification of the VMS?



## **C. Controls on Fishing Effort of Eligible Vessels**

**“Eligible vessels will have their fishing effort controlled to ensure that effort within the Control Area remains comparable with previous years”.**

The Inner Sound Fisheries Management Advisory Group will consider imposing controls on effort to eligible vessels.

### **(5) Consultation Question – Controlling Effort**

Do you agree that there should be a limit on the fishing effort of eligible trawl vessels fishing in the Control Area?

## Static Fisheries Management Measures

- A. Restrict fishing for *Nephrops* by creel in the Inner Sound to those vessels with a demonstrable track record of *Nephrops* fishing activity.
- B. Increase the minimum landing size of *Nephrops* caught by creel in the Inner Sound.
- C. Introduce a quota for the Inner Sound *Nephrops* creel fishery.
- D. Restrict the maximum number of *Nephrops* creels that vessels can deploy in the Inner Sound.

### A. Restrict Access of Creel Fishing

#### **“Restricting fishing for *Nephrops* by creel to those vessels with a track record of *Nephrops* creel fishing activity in the Inner Sound”**

Eligibility to access the *Nephrops* fishery will be based on a track record of landings from ICES rectangle 43E4, as recorded on landing returns submitted to Marine Scotland. Vessels that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be prohibited from fishing for *Nephrops* in the Inner Sound, but will be able to continue to fish for other species by creel.

The Inner Sound Fisheries Management Advisory Group will develop and agree the eligibility criteria. An appeals process will be put in place.

### **(6) Consultation Questions – Track Record of Creel Fishing**

Do you agree that fishing for *Nephrops* by creel should be restricted to those vessels with a track record of *Nephrops* creel fishing activity in the Inner Sound?

What are your suggestions for how a track record should be determined?

### B. Increase Minimum Landing Size

#### **“Increase the minimum landing size of *Nephrops* caught by creel in the Inner Sound”.**

A minimum landing size provides juvenile animals the opportunity to grow and reproduce before becoming commercially harvestable. Increasing the minimum landing size would extend these opportunities, and could potentially improve the yield and biomass of the local *Nephrops* stock in the long term.

The minimum landing size of *Nephrops* on the west coast of Scotland is currently 70 mm in overall length, 20 mm for carapace length and 37 mm for tail length.

## **(7) Consultation Questions – Creel Caught *Nephrops* Minimum Landing Size**

Do you agree that the minimum landing size of *Nephrops* caught by creel in the Inner Sound should be increased?

What are your suggestions on what the minimum landing size should be increased to?

### **C. Introduce a quota for the Inner Sound *Nephrops* creel fishery.**

**“Introduce a quota for the Inner Sound *Nephrops* creel fishery”.**

A total allowable catch for *Nephrops* in the Inner Sound will be determined based on the recorded landing activity of creel vessels operating in ICES rectangle 43E4.

The Inner Sound Fisheries Management Advisory Group will develop and agree the allocation method to individual vessels.

## **(8) Consultation Questions – Annual Quota for *Nephrops* Creel Fishing**

Do you agree that an annual quota should be established for *Nephrops* creel fishing in the Inner Sound of Skye?

What are your suggestions on how an annual quota should be determined?

### **D. Restriction on Creel Numbers**

**“Restrict the maximum number of *Nephrops* creels that vessels can deploy in the Inner Sound”.**

Restricting creel numbers could help prevent an increase in effort and may offer mitigation for static-on-static gear conflict.

The proposers have suggested that a maximum number could be set at 1,600 *Nephrops* creels per vessel.

## **(9) Consultation Questions – Individual Vessel Creel Limits**

Do you agree that *Nephrops* creels deployed by individual vessels in the Inner Sound should be restricted?

What are your suggestions on what a maximum number of *Nephrops* creels per vessel should be set at?

# ANNEX A

## ESTIMATION OF FISHING ACTIVITY IN THE INNER SOUND

The analysis contained within this annex offers an indication of current fishing activity within the proposed area, including fisheries that may be impacted.

Data forming part of this analysis has been collated by Marine Scotland Compliance from sales notes and EU logbooks as well as records from the iFISH database and VMS data from vessels in relation to information on fishing activity.

### ***Nephrops* caught by demersal single trawl**

The proposed management measures for mobile gear fishing in the Inner Sound would have the greatest impact on those 12 metre-and-under registered length vessels that target *Nephrops* by trawl from 1 April to 30 September each year when fishing of this type is permitted (and, to a lesser extent, vessels targeting scallops by dredge during the same period).

The closed area covers ICES statistical rectangles 43E3 and 43E4, with the majority of the area lying within 43E4. Figure A.1 shows the estimated area of fishing activity by trawl vessels under 12 metres in length with a Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) within these ICES rectangles.

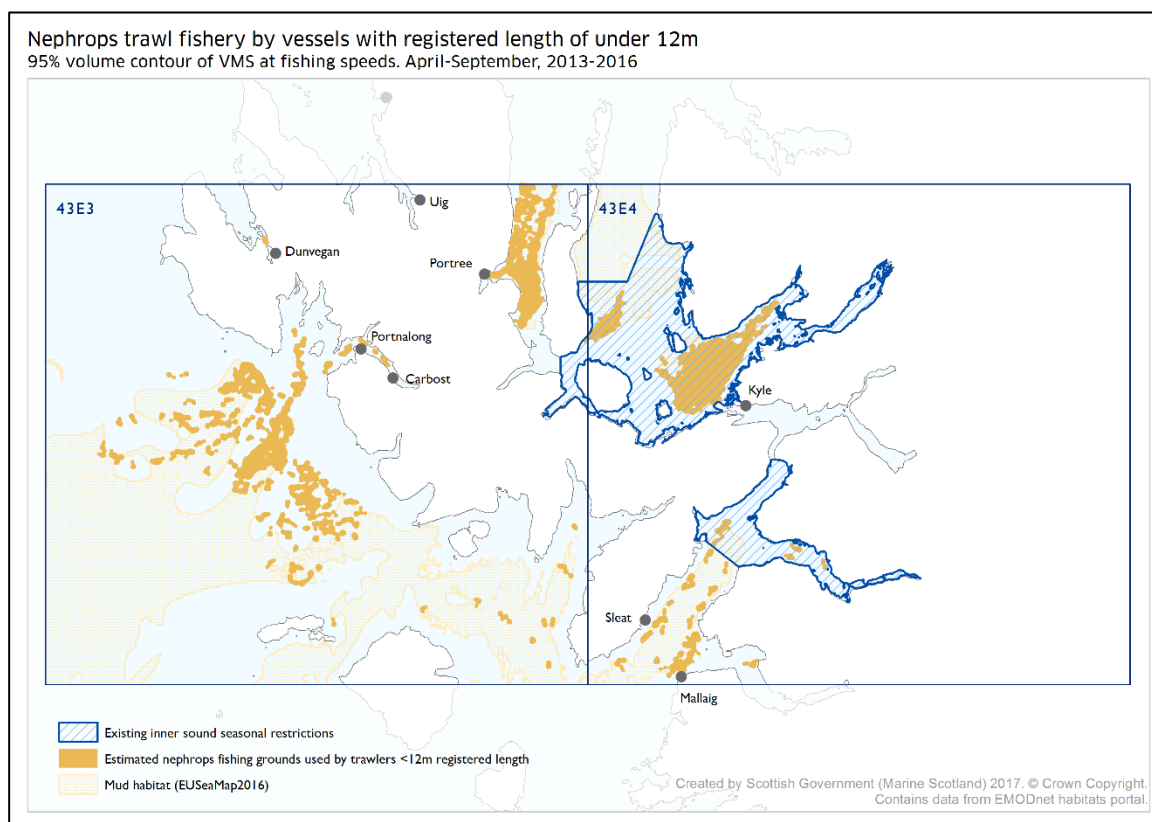


Figure A.1: *Nephrops* trawl fishing activity by vessels with a registered length of under 12 metres (95% volume contour of VMS at fishing speeds, April to September 2013-16)

It highlights that important *Nephrops* trawling grounds in 43E4 are located inside the closed area. It also indicates that, where voyages had VMS-indicative effort in 43E4 and landed into Kyle or Portree, 90% had fishing activity exclusively within the proposed area.

It is important to note that not all 12 metre-and-under vessels are equipped with VMS. We are reliant on recorded landings data for vessels without VMS as an indicator of the spatial distribution of their fishing activity. Trawl landings by under 12 metre vessels into Kyle and Portree from 43E4 are used as an estimate of the landings by these vessels from the proposed management area.

Within the proposed pilot area, there were no recorded landings by trawl vessels from 43E4 into other local ports (Broadford, Applecross or Carron) during the relevant period. Data held by Marine Scotland also indicates that activity within the proposed area by vessels landing into Mallaig was very limited.

### Estimated value of fishery

During the period 2011-17, **22 vessels** with a registered length of under 12 metres recorded voyages with demersal trawls in 43E4 between the months of April to September and landed into Kyle and Portree. As Figure A.2 shows, the number of trawl vessels fishing each year has steadily increased – from four vessels in 2011 to 11 vessels in 2017.

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Vessels	4	5	3	6	7	9	11

Figure A.2: Number of mobile vessels targeting *Nephrops* in the Inner Sound (2011-17)

The relative importance of the Inner Sound to these vessels can be highlighted by looking at the number of years fished in the area. As Figure A.3 shows, out of the 22 vessels that recorded landings during 2011-17, 10 fished in only one of the seven years in question. Of the 12 other vessels, the majority fished in either two or three years, with only three fishing in four or more years.

Years fished	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Vessels	10	5	4	2	0	1	0

Figure A.3: Number of years that mobile vessels targeting *Nephrops* in the Inner Sound have fished in the area (2011-17)

The tonnage landed from the Inner Sound by these vessels is shown in Figure A.5. This shows that the tonnage varies throughout the 2011-17 period – decreasing from 2011-13 but increasing in subsequent years, with a significant increase in 2017.

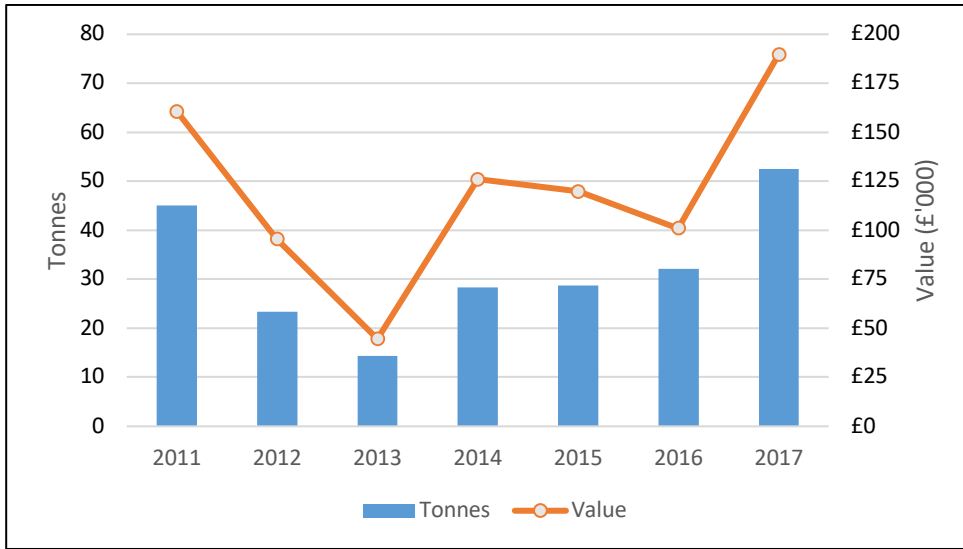


Figure A.5: *Nephrops* landings by mobile vessels from 43E4 into Kyle and Portree (tonnage and value 2011-17)

To understand the relative importance of the closed area to this group of vessels, Figure A.6 compares the above against *Nephrops* landings made by these vessels during 1 April to 30 September each year from outside 43E4. It shows that *Nephrops* from the Inner Sound do not exceed 15% of this group's total catch from April to September during the 2011-17 period.

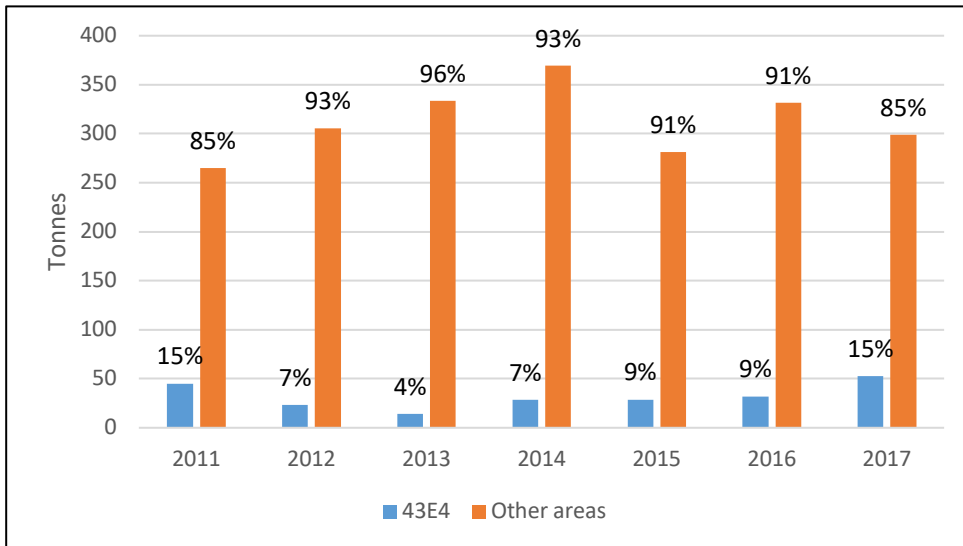


Figure A.6: Comparison of *Nephrops* landed from 43E4 by mobile vessels against *Nephrops* landed elsewhere by these vessels (tonnage, April to September 2011-17)

### Estimated value of *Nephrops* caught by creel

To estimate the value of creel landings from the relevant area, all landings recorded as being made from 43E4 into Portree and harbours within the closed area (Applecross, Broadford, Carron, Kyle) have been included (as above with demersal trawls).

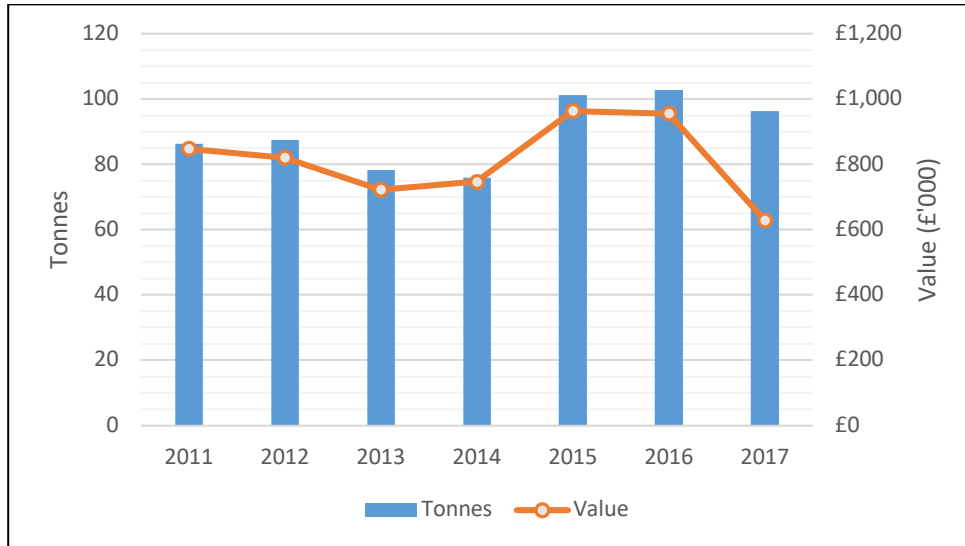


Figure A.7: *Nephrops* landed by creel from 43E4 into relevant ports (tonnage and value 2011-17)

A total of **67 vessels** recorded landings of creel-caught *Nephrops* from 43E4 during the period 2011-17 when mobile fishing is permitted from 1 April to 30 September. Figure A.7 and shows that tonnage has generally increased from 2014, but with a marked drop in value in 2017.

### Estimated value of catch by mechanical dredge

Based on VMS data linked to logbook data, **17 vessels** recorded voyages with mechanical dredges in the proposed area during the 2011-17 period. These data can be used to provide an estimate of tonnage of scallop landings from the area, as shown in Figure A.8 below.

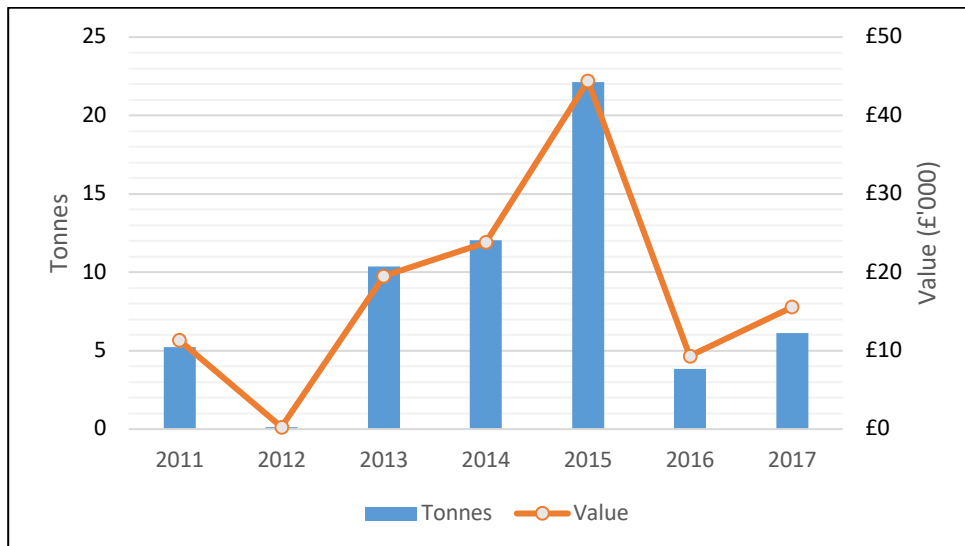


Figure A.8: Scallops landed by dredge from proposed Inner Sound pilot area (tonnage and value 2011-17)

To give an indication of the relative importance of landings from the closed area by those 17 vessels that have been active within the area in recent years, Figure A.9 compares the tonnage landed within and outwith the proposed area by these vessels. Please note that it only covers landings made between 1 April and 30 September of each year.

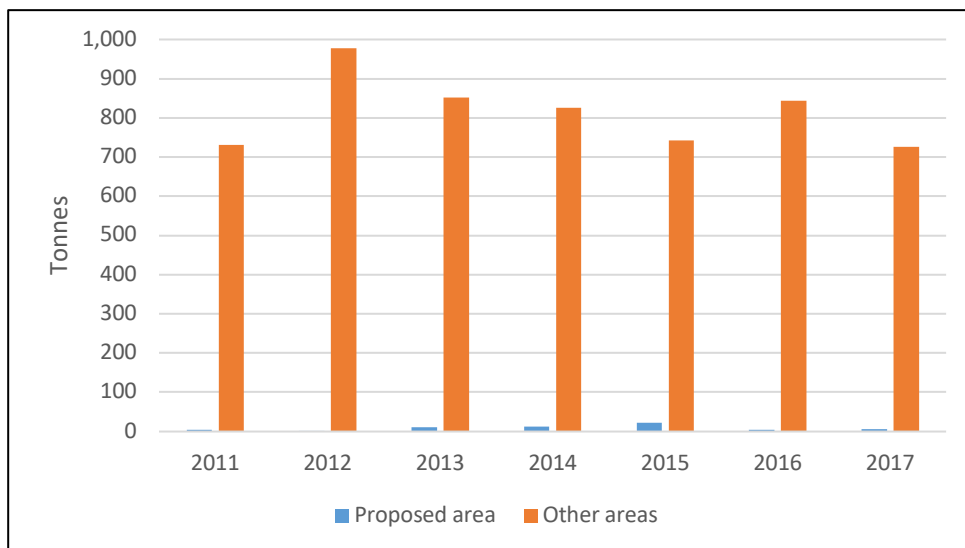


Figure A.9: Comparison of scallops landed from proposed Inner Sound area by dredge vessels against scallops landed from other areas by these vessels (tonnage, April to September 2011-17)



## Estimated value of scallops caught by hand-diving

As with creel fishing, landings recorded as being made from 43E4 and landed into Portree and harbours within the closed area (Applecross, Broadford, Carron, Kyle), have been included to estimate the value of the hand-dived fishery.

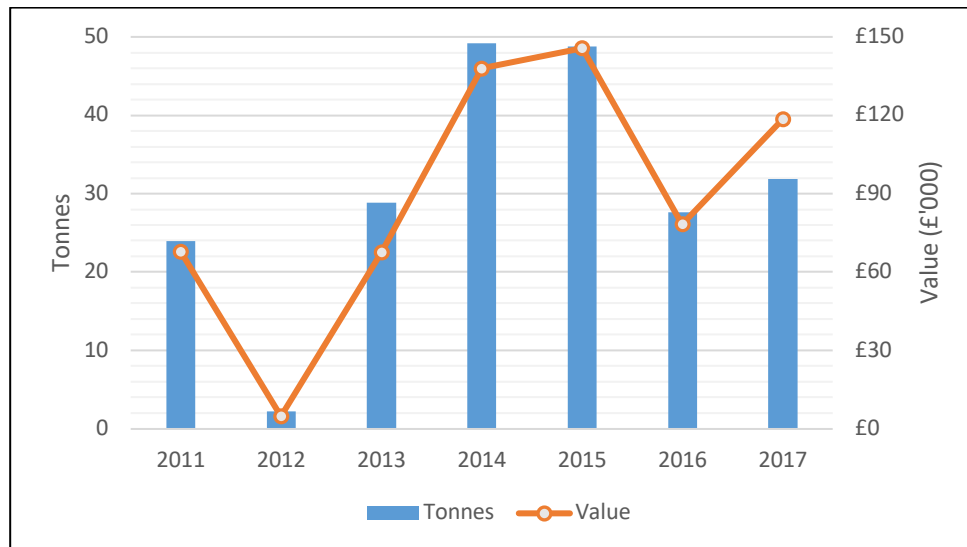


Figure A.10: Scallops landed by hand-diving from 43E4 into relevant ports (tonnage and value 2011-17)

A total of **11 vessels** recorded landings of hand-dived scallops from 43E4 when mobile fishing is permitted from 1 April to 30 September during the period 2011-17. Figure A.10 shows how the tonnage of landings fluctuates throughout the period.

## ANNEX B

### SUGGESTED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR ACCESS TO THE TRAWL FISHING CONTROL AREA

Based on the analysis of the Inner Sound *Nephrops* trawl fishery in Annex A, criteria for access to the 'trawl fishing control area' might be built around establishing that eligible vessels:

- have fished in the Inner Sound in recent years;
- have a pattern of regularity to their fishing activity in the area; and
- meet or exceed the catch from the area as a percentage of the total catch from 1 April to 30 September (see Figure A.10).

Based on these conditions, eligibility criteria for access to the trawl fishing control area could be set as follows:

- at least 15% of a trawl vessel's *Nephrops* catch from 1 April to 30 September must come from the Inner Sound in two or more years during the three-year period 2015-17.

Applying the above criteria would mean that **five vessels** – out of 16 that fished in the Inner Sound during 2015-17 – would be eligible to access the control area. To illustrate the relative importance of the Inner Sound to these 16 vessels, the below chart compares the *Nephrops* catches of eligible and ineligible vessels.

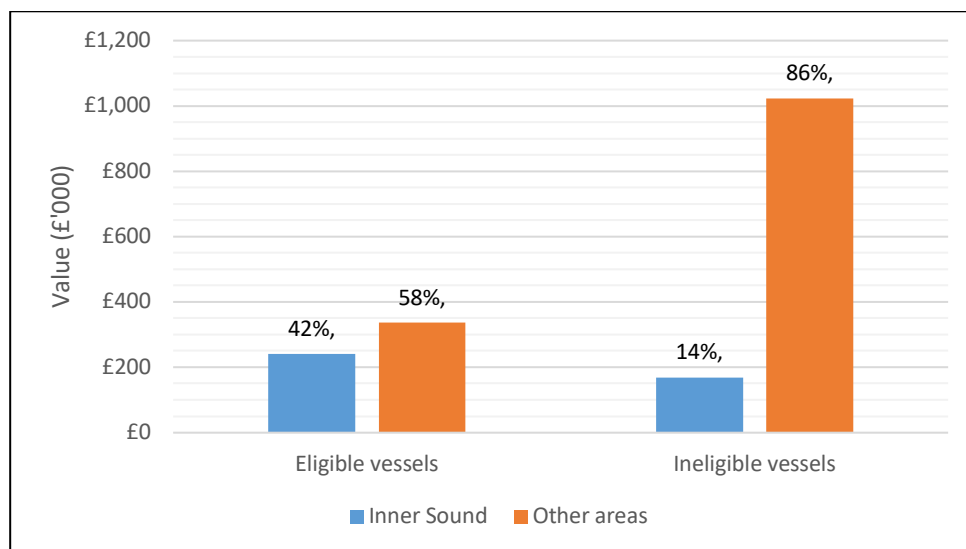


Figure B.1: Comparison of *Nephrops* landed from Inner Sound and other areas by eligible and ineligible trawl vessels (2015-17)

For the five vessels that meet the suggested eligibility criteria above, *Nephrops* landed from the Inner Sound make up **42%** of their total catch from 1 April to 30 September during 2015-17.

By contrast, Inner Sound *Nephrops* landed by ineligible vessels only make up **14%** of their total *Nephrops* catch.



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