

## **NWIFCA Prospecting Policy for Byelaw 3 Permit Holders**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures and regulations for Byelaw 3 permit holders who wish to prospect closed cockle beds within the NWIFCA district to assess cockle quantities, quality and size prior to a potential fishery. This policy ensures that all prospecting activities are conducted legally and sustainably, in compliance with Byelaw 3. It includes the necessary steps for notification, the required information to be provided, and the conditions under which samples may be taken.

Adherence to this policy means that Authority officers will then be willing to consider whether any such prospecting activities can be exempted from the prohibition of fishing closed cockle beds under Byelaw 3. Failure to follow all aspects of this policy may result in the Authority determining that the individual(s) concerned were in breach of Byelaw 3 and, if so, appropriate enforcement action may be taken.

### **2. Notification Requirements**

Byelaw 3 permit holders must notify the Authority at least two working days prior to conducting any prospecting activities on closed cockle beds. Notifications can only be made using the designated form available on the Authority's website [here](#). Phone calls or emails to the Authority will not be accepted as form of notification.

For those wishing to prospect but not remove any cockle samples from the closed bed, no prior authorisation is needed from the Authority prior to undertaking the prospecting. However, if the individual(s) concerned wish to take a sample from the closed bed then prior approval is required (see Section 4 below), and individuals should consider submitting their request earlier than the required two working days to give officers time to consider this request.

### **3. Required Information**

The following information must be included in the notification:

- **Prospecting Date and Time:** The specific date, tide and time when prospecting is intended to take place. No prospecting during darkness, on weekends or on Bank Holidays will be allowed unless through prior approval.

- **Number and name of persons:** Persons involved in prospecting must only be those holding a current permit under Byelaw 3. All individuals involved in the prospecting activity must be named in the notification, and must all be Byelaw 3 permit holders.
- **Location and Cockle Bed:** The precise location and name of the cockle bed to be prospected.
- **Access and Egress Points:** The intended access and egress points for entering and leaving the cockle bed.

#### **4. Sample Collection**

Samples may only be collected with prior written approval from the Authority. Ordinarily, a sample of a maximum of 1kg of cockles will be approved by the Authority; requests for sample sizes greater than 1kg will need strong justification and will only be approved by exception.

Within two working days of the prospecting activity, the authorised fisher must provide the Authority with details of the sample size collected and the GPS location of where it was collected.

Authority officers may place other conditions on approved prospecting activities as they see fit.

#### **5. Movement Documents**

All samples approved for collection that are over 5kg in size must have the relevant movement documents in place. Movement documents can be obtained from relevant Environmental Health Authorities.

#### **6. Use of Vehicles**

Prospectors may use of vehicles as a method of transport to and from the prospecting area. Where relevant, they must obtain a Beach Access Permit from the appropriate local authority to legally use a quad bike on the beach.

#### **7. Permitted Equipment**

A Byelaw 3 permitted fisher who is prospecting may carry a rake or jumbo and a GPS device during prospecting. Any other equipment used or carried during the prospecting may be considered as being in contravention of Byelaw 3, and, if so, appropriate enforcement action may be taken.

## **8. Compliance**

Failure to comply with this policy, including the notification requirements, sample collection limitations, and equipment restrictions, may result in enforcement actions under Byelaw 3.

All prospectors are expected to adhere to the terms of this policy to ensure the sustainable management of cockle beds within the NWIFCA District.

*North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority*

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