

The following licence conditions are made by the Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority pursuant to the provisions of article 5 of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery (No.2) Order 2024.

TIME AND EFFORT CONDITIONS

1. The Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will for the period of the licence specify fishing periods when licence holders may dredge, fish for and take cockles (referred to in these terms as fishing operations) within the area of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024. The Authority from time to time may vary the specified fishing periods. The details, including variations when these are made by the Authority, of specified fishing periods will be provided to each licence holder.
2. Cockle harvesting is prohibited:
 - (a) outside of a specified harvesting period notified to the licence holder by the Authority;
 - (b) within a specified harvesting period once the maximum number of specified harvesting trips as notified to the licence holder by the Authority have been undertaken.

SPATIAL CONDITIONS

3. The Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will for the period of the licence specify harvesting areas where licence holders may dredge, fish for and take cockles (referred to in these terms as fishing operations) within the area of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024. The Authority from time to time may vary the specified harvesting areas. The details, including variations when these are made by the Authority, of specified harvesting areas will be provided to each licence holder.
4. Cockle harvesting is prohibited:
 - (c) outside of a specified harvesting area notified to the licence holder by the Authority;
 - (d) within a specified harvesting area once the maximum number of specified harvesting trips as notified to the licence holder by the Authority have been undertaken.

GEAR CONDITIONS

Harvesting Equipment Construction

5. The cockle harvesting equipment must incorporate a riddle which is at least 1750 millimetres in length and which shall be designed and operated so that the retained cockles are in contact with the riddle for its full length.
6. The cockle harvesting equipment which is in contact with the seabed must have an opening aperture, blade or rake measuring no more than 760 millimetres in width.
7. No more than one piece of cockle harvesting equipment which is in contact with the seabed may be used at any time or carried on board
8. Subject to sub-paragraph (9), all surfaces of the cockle harvesting equipment acting to retain the catch must consist of parallel bars, where the bars are spaced at least 16 millimetres apart ("the minimum bar spacing").
9. Sub-paragraph (8) does not apply to pipes or other means used to convey cockles from the seabed to the vessel.
10. The Authority may by notice to the licence holder change the minimum bar spacing for the purposes of sub-paragraph (8) to 14 millimetres if the criteria outlined in the KEIFCA Cockle Fisheries Management Plan are met.
11. The Authority may give written consent for the use of instruments or fishing gear, otherwise prohibited by paragraph (10), to all licence holders for a specified area and for a specified period of time for specific purposes including the thinning of overpopulated stock, removal and thinning of cockles which have not shown good growth or for the purposes of relaying.

Consent will only be given where the Authority is satisfied that the quality of a bed would be enhanced by the removal of cockles.

12. When operating within Harvesting Areas 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5a described in Part I of the Schedule and shown for illustrative purposes only on the map in Part II of the Schedule, no person shall operate equipment used for the purpose of riddling, sorting or grading cockles unless all surfaces acting to retain the catch be constructed of parallel bars with an average space between bars of no less than 16 millimetres and no more than 16.5 millimetres.

Damage rates

13. No licence holder shall operate any instrument or fishing gear for the purpose of taking cockles from within the area of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024 unless the instrument or fishing gear, when operating at a representative speed over the ground, results in less than 10% of the cockles which are being returned to the sea, measured by weight, being damaged. Damage rate will be assessed by a KEIFCA officer taking a representative sample of cockles taken by the fishing operation.
14. For the purpose of paragraph (13) cockles will be considered to be damaged when on visual examination it is seen that there are visible cracks, chips or other damage to the shell.

Cockle Containers and Bags

15. Cockles must not be carried on board or landed from the named vessel unless within containers which:
 - (a) are of the specified volume, which is 1.13 cubic metres
or
where the container is larger than the specified volume, are clearly marked with a load line at the level of the specified volume in sub-paragraph (a) above which cockles may not be loaded
 - (b) have been checked and marked by an officer of the Authority before use; and
 - (c) are clearly marked on two sides with the words 'TECFO 2024' and the vessel name and PLN.
16. In addition, the full catch capacity at the bag load lines may be cross-checked by means of transferring a bagged catch of cockles into a straight-sided container in the presence of an officer of the Authority who will measure the volume of the container. The volume of cockles loaded into the container will be calculated by the Authority officer and any error in the position of the load line marking on the bags will be adjusted to arrive at an approved load line. As the cockles loaded into the straight-sided container will not have settled as they would have done in the bags of the vessel, an additional allowance of 0.4 cubic metres will be added, making a total container volume of 14.00 cubic metres.

VESSEL CONDITIONS

17. No licence holder shall harvest cockles using a vessel which exceeds 14 metres in overall length.
18. No licence holder shall harvest cockles using a vessel which is not fitted with a Vessel Monitoring System of a type approved by the Marine Management Organisation.

CATCH AND LANDING CONDITIONS

Prohibition on the removal of small cockles

19. No licence holder shall, without the written consent of the Authority, remove from the regulated fishery cockles of which more than 10% by weight, of a representative sample, will pass through a space 16 millimetres in width. A representative sample will consist of no less than 200 kilograms of cockles. Small cockles rejected as a result of the requirements of this Regulation shall be returned immediately to the sea.
20. The Authority will give written consent for a specified area and specified period of time to all licence holders to permit the removal of cockles otherwise prohibited by this licence condition, when written consent has been given by the Authority under the licence condition relating to the Construction of Instruments and Fishing Gear.

Limitation on the maximum quantity of cockles that may be removed from the fishery

21. No licence holder shall, within any fishing operation under authority of this licence carry on board or land more than 13.6 cubic metres. When calculating the quantity of cockles on board or landed no allowance shall be made in respect of the quantity of any dead shell, sand, other species or debris mixed with the catch.
22. For the purpose of this term, 13.6 cubic metres of cockles is deemed equivalent to 500 baskets, at 6 gallons of cockles per basket.
23. The quantities specified in paragraphs 20 and 21 may be varied as required for fishery management purposes and such variations shall be notified to licence holders in writing.

Regulation of fishing operations

24. Licence holders dredging, fishing for or taking cockles from within the area of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024 must land their catch before commencing another fishing operation under the authority of this licence during another specified fishing period.
25. No cockles shall be carried on board a fishing vessel at the time of commencement of a fishing operation under authority of this licence within the area of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024.
26. When a vessel is engaged in, or has during a specified fishing period, been engaged in a fishing operation under authority of this licence within the area of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024 all cockles carried on board or landed shall be considered to have been taken from within the area of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024.

Reporting of cockle landings

27. All licence holders landing cockles taken from within the area of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024 must give at least 2 hours notice of landing.
28. Notice of landing shall be given either directly to an appointed officer of the Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority or by providing notification in another manner as prescribed to licence holder.
29. Details of the appointed officer, or officers, of the Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority and any other acceptable forms of notification will be provided to each licence holder.

30. The licence holder must submit to the Authority no later than the following Tuesday of each week a completed daily fishing activity log form for each fishing trip carried out the previous week. Such a form shall be provided by the Authority and shall contain such information in regard to fishing effort, impact of fishing operations, catches, landings and outputs from cooking and processing for the previous week as the Authority may require.

Limitation on the maximum number of landings per specified fishing period

31. No licence holder shall make more than a specified number of landings of cockles removed from the area of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery Order 2024, during any one specified fishing period.
32. A list specifying the maximum number of landings that licence holders may make per specified fishing period will be provided to each licence holder.

VESSEL MONITORING SYSTEM CONDITIONS

33. The named vessel may be required to have fitted at the owner's expense a remotely accessed electronic reporting device which is in compliance with KEIFCA or MMO requirements and transmit the required information at the specified reporting intervals.

BIOSECURITY CONDITIONS

34. Prior to the start of fishing during any annual period, a licence holder must undertake the following process:
- (a) The named vessel must be cleaned of cockles and all other debris by the washing and scrubbing of such equipment with fresh water, using a pressure washer, and allowed to dry. This will include the hold, deck and all spaces which may contain cockles, cockle shell and debris.
 - (b) The cockle harvesting gear must be cleaned of cockles and all other debris by the washing and scrubbing of such equipment with fresh water, using a pressure washer, and allowed to dry. This will include the dredge head and riddle and all cockles, cockle shell and debris shall be removed.
 - (c) The pipework and pumps of the vessel will be cleaned by pumping through sea water until the water runs clear and then for a period of time up to five minutes to ensure no debris remains in the pipes or solids-handling pump system.
 - (d) The vessel will be submitted for inspection at a notified location where an inspection of sub-paragraphs (a) to (c) will be carried out.
35. All cockle bags used by licence holders to transport or land cockles will be;
- (a) new, previously unused cockle bags.
- or
- (b) used bags which must be cleaned, disinfected and dried, prior their use in the permitted cockle fishery, using the following process:
 - i. Bags will be turned inside out and all cockles and debris removed

- ii. The bags will be hung up and pressure washed using fresh water
- iii. The bags will be immersed in a solution of sodium hypochlorite made up to a suitable concentration.
- iv. The bags will be allowed to dry and then stored away from cockle material