

Dear Mr Oldham

Thank you for supplying background information relating to the Draft Sea Fisheries (Bag Limits) (Jersey) Regulations, and for inviting comment on them.

I trust that comment in e-mail form will be admissible.

I write as a low water fisherman of now more than 50 years experience. I have enjoyed the whole gamut of set, draw, and trammel netting, prawning, ormering, lobster 'houling' and potting, sandeeling and boat angling.

I have never fished for monetary or other material gain, but on the other hand when good fortune (occasionally) comes my way, I have the greatest pleasure in sharing my success with others. I suspect that this is the usual aim and experience of the typical Jersey amateur fisherman. My fishing has been almost entirely confined to the Jersey East Coast and to the Minquiers. I share the ownership of one of the Maitresse Ile baraques and stay there for some days each summer.

I have to object to these proposals because they seem basically ill thought through. If I understand it correctly the objective of these regulations is to protect professional fishing licence holders from a small number of quasi amateurs 'back dooring' their catches to the financial detriment of the former. I think that this is a reasonable aim. However, the method proposed is poorly - indeed badly - and confusingly argued and worse still, ridiculously heavy handed in its suggested implementation. If the aim is to prevent unlicensed sale of fish then surely this can be regulated through the inspection of hotel and restaurant purchase books and possibly the inspection of licensed fishermen's sales records.

The proposals appear to have aggregated a number of knee jerk demons, non-verifiable 'facts' and frankly irrelevant arguments to bolster the case.

For instance, as the Scrutiny panel clearly demonstrated, the idea that conservation of bass stocks is threatened by once a month or less rod-and-line fishermen, who observe strict specimen size anyway, when pair trawlers can net 5 tonnes a day, is laughable.

Again, vague threats of what the EEC may wish to regulate seem to be remote. As far as current practice is concerned it is clear from personal observation that bag limits of bass by French anglers certainly have been seen to exceed 2 per angler at the Minquiers. I saw 13 large bass in a French RIB some years ago.

The assertion that ormers are of no commercial value is incorrect. I have seen a large pile of these for sale at the Carrefour supermarket, St Malo, over a neap tide marked, "Provenance Atlantique Nord Est". I fear that I wondered whether that meant "Plongé aux Minquiers" but didn't feel brave enough to ask!

With regard to the specific species limits:

- Bass. Personally, I have never caught more than 4 on rod and line anyway, but others might and in the context of the strict amateur a once in a lifetime bonanza should not be punishable. Conservation is threatened by the professional and not the amateur, and you may not know but the real specimen fish, which will be a prime reproducing creature, caught only by the expert amateur, is most likely to simply be weighed and returned to the sea anyway.
- Ormers. The catch is severely restricted by regulation already, although not so strictly in Guernsey, I think. The chance of getting a catch at all depends as much as anything on pure luck and being at just the right place and the right time. If a bag exceeded 20 then I see little harm being done to stocks. In proportion to total ormer population a larger bag taken by one or two fit young men is neither here or there, but such a reward is only going to be shared a little wider, and give a lucky few a remembrance of the pleasures of temps passé.
- Lobster. It is admitted that stocks are healthy. I pot at the Minquiers to feed my friends when staying there. After all there are no shops to go to! I set less than 10 pots which

are (compulsorily) of inkwell type and inherently less efficient than parlour pots used elsewhere round the Island. A daily haul of 2 or 3 lobsters is usual, but I would be unhappy to think that a rare better haul would have to be penalised. After all it is not being taken for gain or profit, and spread amongst company 5 lobsters hardly constitutes gluttony. For this reason the idea of a boat limit is unfair because it depends on how widely the catch is to be shared.

I see no reference in the papers to set and trammel netting. I conclude therefore that these forms of fishing will continue to be allowed within the terms of current fishing regulations.

I subscribe to the view that these proposals are ill judged, bureaucratic, ridiculously heavy handed and attempt to tackle a perceived problem in quite the wrong way. All they will do is to alienate and irritate a law abiding and traditionally minded section of the public without being certain of successfully addressing the matter in question.

Yours sincerely

John Le Gresley