

Jersey Inshore Fishermen's Association.

Hello,

I see you have asked for some opinions regarding the effect of the new Brexit deal on Jersey fishing boats.

I represent the smaller size commercial fishing boats that fish within the 3-mile limit, While they are the smaller boats in numbers, they make up around half of the Jersey fishing fleet, but take far less than half the annual catch.

Now the Bay of Granville agreement (which was a good agreement at the time) has gone Jersey can take control of in its own waters and will now be able to implement control measures to conserve fish stocks without the French blocking it.

Or at least I very much hope this will be the case, as Jersey has not been able to look after our own fish stocks as carefully as Jersey fishermen would like to for many years now.

French boats fishing alongside Jersey boats in Jersey waters, are able to be much bigger than the Jersey boats, as Jersey has a maximum 12-meter size to help control/reduce fishing effort. It is not just the number of boats that controls how much is caught, the size of boats makes a big difference.

French boats have no such size limitation and therefore can bully the smaller Jersey boats preventing them from fishing the offshore ground.

A lot of evidence exists to show that French boats take at least 75% of the annual fish caught in Jersey waters and that fish is landed directly into France with no benefit to Jersey.

While smaller boats do not fish alongside the French boats, they do feel the effects as the Jersey boats that are unable to fish offshore then have to fish the inshore areas as they cannot compete with the larger French boats, increasing the fishing pressure on the inshore areas.

Also, the small Jersey boats land their catch to local merchants to be exported as they do not catch enough to make direct landing into France viable.

This in turn creates employment and sustains Jersey/local business.

However, the Jersey Shellfish Merchants are struggling,

as the amount of shellfish being caught from the inshore areas and landed locally is reducing.

If the Jersey shellfish Merchants were to close, most of the smaller Jersey fishing boats would also disappear as they would not have an all-year round market to sell their catch.

The shellfish Merchants also supply potting bait which is imported by 1000kg frozen pallets, it would not be viable for the smaller boats to purchase and store pallets of frozen bait.

While no one expects all French boats to stop fishing in Jersey waters,

If a French boat can show a track record of fishing in Jersey waters, then they should be able to continue until they retire.

However, Jersey waters should be fished and managed for the benefit of Jersey.

Therefore, the Jersey boat exclusive 3-mile limit is usually taken from the lowest drying rock,

This would make Les Echrehous and the Minquiers reefs exclusively for Jersey boats.

These offshore reefs are important fishing areas for Jersey boats and I do not see why they should be shared, France does not share the French reef of Chausey with Jersey boats, yet it used to be part of Jersey?

This would improve the catches for Jersey boats and increase the catches landed to local shellfish merchants, the Jersey fleet may even be able to expand?

Plus Jersey could decide on and apply conservation measures to both Jersey and French boats fishing in Jersey waters equally, as Jersey has unsuccessfully tried to do.

If the Jersey fish stock is able to sustain the current level of fishing there is nothing to stop a French boat setting up business and relocating to Jersey to become part of the Jersey fleet and continue to fish Jersey waters, but with an economic benefit to Jersey.

The short-term difficulties of exporting to France is a price worth paying, if French fishing effort is reduced allowing Jersey boats a chance to be successful.

I send you these views on Behalf of the,
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