

BROWN CRAB WORKING GROUP (BCWG)

Terms of Reference

The Brown Crab Working Group (BCWG) will review the management of brown crab fisheries in Ireland and recommend to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine management options that will aim to support the future sustainability of these fisheries.

Having regard to the legal and policy frameworks governing fisheries management in Ireland, the BCWG will:

- Examine the effectiveness of current monitoring programmes for brown crab stocks;
- Analyse current scientific assessments of brown crab stocks in the Irish EEZ and in adjoining jurisdictions;
- Assess the effectiveness of national and EU management measures currently in place for brown crab fisheries, including those in other Member States and jurisdictions;
- Develop proposed management options that will support the future sustainability of brown crab fisheries in Ireland;
- Consider the impacts of proposed management options on related crustacean and whelk fisheries;
- Take account of potential constraints (legal, scientific, policy, enforcement, administrative etc.) on the implementation of proposed management options.

The BCWG will report to the Minister, providing recommendations for management options that will aim to support sustainable crab fisheries in Ireland. The report of the BCWG will be submitted to the Minister no later than 31 December 2024.

The BCWG, in carrying out its work, may consult with the Brown Crab Fishery Improvement Project or others with relevant expertise. The BCWG will strive for consensus when developing recommendations for the Minister. In instances where consensus cannot be achieved, the BCWG recommendations will note any dissenting views.

In developing its recommendations for management options, the BCWG will need to:

- Consider the practicalities of implementing the options under consideration;
- Ensure that the options recommended:
 - Are compatible with the current legal and policy frameworks for managing sea fisheries in Ireland;
 - Can be managed and administered, where necessary, by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) within existing resources;
 - Can be monitored, assessed and enforced effectively by the marine agencies and control authorities within existing resources.

Once the BCWG has submitted its recommendations, the Minister will determine which recommendations, if any, will be implemented. Depending on the nature of the recommendations, the Minister may choose to hold a public consultation prior to making his determination.

Membership & Structure

The seafood Producer Organisations, the National Inshore Fisheries Forum, the Regional Inshore Fisheries Forums and the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association will be invited to nominate representatives to the BCWG.

The BCWG will also include representatives from Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), the Marine Institute (MI), the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and DAFM. In addition, BIM will chair the BCWG and provide secretariat support.