

Key update with the 2023 stock assessment - The revised protocol for processing individual length samples to estimate size composition of landings now allows samples with missing landings data to be included, which is thought to enable a more representative estimate than if these samples were totally excluded. For some stocks this has led to a change in the estimates of annual size composition.

Tables 1 & 2. Exploitation rate of crab and lobster stocks across each of the CFUs and LFUs from the latest Cefas stock status reports (published in 2019 and 2023). The status of some English crab and lobster stocks are currently unknown due to insufficient data to carry out a length-based assessment. In the 2023 assessment some exploitation rates aren't graded (e.g. medium, high).

Crab Fishery Units			
Region	Exploitation rate 2019	Exploitation rate 2023	Changes since last assessment
Central North Sea	Moderate. Below maximum reference point limit for females, males are at the limit	Between the MSY and reference point limit for males and females.	Stock status has decreased due to recent decrease in spawning stock biomass for both sexes. Increasing fishing mortality for females is the result of the loss of the largest sizes from catches. Expansion of the fishery (pot numbers and area) may be masking the scale of declines in stock.
Southern North Sea	High. Above the maximum reference point limit for males and females.	High. Above the maximum reference point limit for males and females.	Stock status has not changed. Expansion of the fishery (pot numbers and area) in the last 5 years may be masking declines in stock.
Eastern English Channel	Unknown	Unknown. Data insufficient for assessment.	Landings generally declining. No increase in effort.
Western English Channel	Moderate. Around target level required to achieve MSY for females	Between limit and target reference point required to achieve MSY for females.	Stock status has not changed. Recent expansion of the fishery (increase in vivier vessels) may be masking the scale of declines in the stock. Upward trend in size distribution and declining landings may suggest recruitment has been lower recently.
Celtic Sea	Moderate. Close to target level generating Maximum Sustainable Yield.	Moderate. Between target and limit levels to achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield.	Stock status has not changed. Spawning biomass of females has been declining.

Lobster Fishery Units			
Region	Exploitation rate 2019	Exploitation rate 2023	Changes since last assessment
Northumberland and Durham	High. Around maximum reference point limit for males, above for females.	High. Between the MSY and limit reference point limit for females, above the limit reference point for males	Stock status has improved. Change in status is largely due to revisions to the input data. Regardless of this, the estimate of exploitation for females in 2022 is substantially lower than the revised estimate for 2018.
Yorkshire Humber	High. Above the maximum reference point limit for both males and females.	High. Around the limit reference point for males and between the MSY and limit point for females.	Stock status has improved. Recent expansion of the fishery may be masking declines in stock - exploitation of previously unfished grounds with larger lobsters is occurring.
East Anglia	High. Above minimum reference point for males and female.	Unknown. Data insufficient for assessment.	Landings and effort (days at sea) have fluctuated. Landings from the >10m sector have been gradually increasing.
Southeast South Coast	Moderate. Above rates consistent with MSY but below maximum reference point limit for males and females.	Unknown. Data insufficient for assessment.	No change in stock status. Length data lacking for 2020 – 2022. Landings from <10m fleet increased 2020-2022.
Southwest	Moderate. Above rates consistent with MSY but below maximum reference point limit for males and females.	Above rates consistent with MSY but below maximum reference point limit for males and females.	Stock status has improved. Spawning biomass has increased for both sexes. Landings increased, mostly from within the <10m vessels.