

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority has issued Fisheries Information Notice (FIN) entitled: 'Fishery Measures for Crawfish for Irish Fishing Vessels'.

Legislative Basis

- [SI No. 289 of 2019 Crawfish \(Conservation of stocks\) Regulations.](#)
- [SI No. 232 of 2006 Crawfish \(Conservation of stocks\) Regulations.](#)
- [SI No. 233 of 2006 Crawfish \(Fisheries Management and Conservation\) Regulations.](#)
- [Regulation \(EU\) No 2019/1241 conservation of fisheries resources and the protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures.](#)

Introduction

'Crawfish' means '*Palinurus spp*'; FAO Code: CRW, commonly known as 'Crayfish' and 'Spiny Lobster'. (Figure 1)



Figure 1 Crawfish and a box of landed Crawfish

Crawfish is a specifically protected species under Irish legislation and is listed as vulnerable and decreasing by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In addition, a review of the management of the Irish crawfish fishery took place in 2022 - [Shellfish Stocks and Fisheries Review 2022: an assessment of selected stocks \(marine.ie\)](#).

This fisheries information notice outlines the current regulations within the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in relation to commercial and recreational fisheries for Crawfish.

Crawfish Conservation Measures

- Crawfish may only be retained onboard whole and only be landed whole by Irish fishing vessels.

Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS)

The MCRS for Crawfish taken from International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) sub-areas VI and VII has been established as a carapace size of **110mm**.

- It is **prohibited** for the master or person in charge of an Irish sea-fishing boat to cause or permit the boat or any person to have onboard, land, or tranship Crawfish that fall **below** the MCRS.
- No person **shall** display, sell, offer for sale or store for the purposes of selling any Crawfish that fall below MCRS.

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- Crawfish below MCRS must be handled with care and promptly released back into the sea alive without delay.

Measuring a Crawfish

- To measure the MCRS, the length of the carapace is taken from the tip of the rostrum to the mid-point of the distal edge of the carapace as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2 Measuring a Crawfish

V notched Crawfish and Mutilated Crawfish

“**V notch**” means a marking in the shape of the letter “V” that is cut into one or more of the five flaps of the tail fan or at the posterior edge of the carapace of a Crawfish for the purpose of identification. The apex of the “V” is positioned inwards from the edge of the flap or the edge of the carapace (see Figure 3).

“**Mutilated Crawfish**” means a crawfish that has been altered in a way that could conceal or destroy a V notch.



Figure 3 Examples of V notched Crawfish

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The master or person in charge of an Irish sea-fishing boat shall not cause or permit any V notched and/or mutilated crawfish to be:

- Retained on board the fishing vessel by any person
- Landed or transhipped.

All V-notched and/or mutilated crawfish caught must be carefully handled and returned alive to the sea without delay. It is **prohibited** for any person to buy, handle, tranship, transport, land, process, store or sell any V-notched and/or mutilated crawfish caught by an Irish sea-fishing boat.

Tagged Crawfish

In the years 2019-2022, crawfish were tagged, v-notched and released in outer Tralee Bay and south to the Blasket islands.

The v-notch is positioned on the hardened side of the tail fan, and the tags are coloured T-bar tags inserted into the muscle on the underside of the tail. (see Figure 4)

If you capture a tagged crawfish, please report the capture position (latitude, longitude), tag number and size of the crawfish using the telephone number show on the tag.

The Marine Institute publishes the Annual Shellfish Fisheries Review, which reports on the movement of tagged crayfish.



Figure 4 Examples of Tagged Crawfish. Source: [Marine Institute](#)

Prohibition on use of nets to target Crawfish

It is **PROHIBITED** to fish or attempt to fish, have on board, land or attempt to land Crawfish using nets in certain specified locations off the coasts of Kerry and Galway (Figure 5 Map)

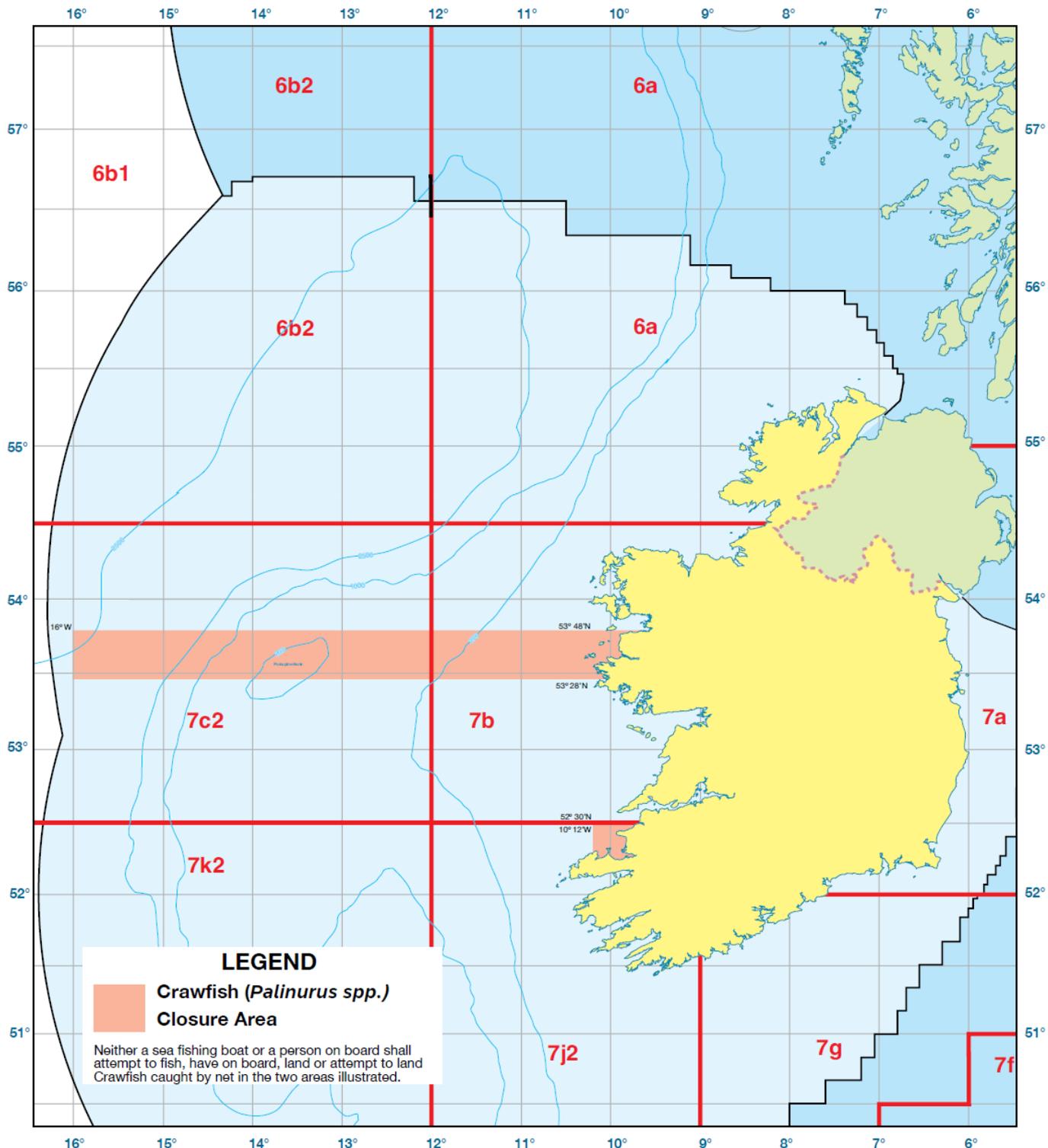


Figure 5 Map of Geographic areas where it is prohibited to fish or attempt to fish for Crawfish by means of nets.

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Fisheries Information Notice 02-2023

Fishery Measures for Crawfish for Irish Fishing Vessels



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Table of co-ordinates of the Geographic areas where it is prohibited to fish or attempt to fish for Crawfish by means of nets (Figure 5 Map)

<p>Area A: Within the geographical area bounded by the following co-ordinates:</p> <p>The point on the west coast of Ireland at latitude 53° 48' 00" N</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- latitude 53° 48' 00" N, longitude 16° 00' 00" W,- latitude 53° 28' 00" N, longitude 16° 00' 00" W, to- a point on the west coast of Ireland at latitude 53° 28' 00" N	<p>Area B: Within the geographical area bounded by a straight line between the following points:</p> <p>The point on the west coast of Ireland at latitude 52° 30' 00" N</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- latitude 52° 30' 00" N, longitude 10° 12' 00" W- latitude 52° 13' 30" N, longitude 10° 12' 00" W- latitude 52° 13' 30" N, longitude 9° 44' 2300" W, to the point first mentioned
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This Fisheries Information Notice was published on the **21/04/2023** and replaces FIN 03-2011 Crawfish minimum size and restriction on use of nets in specific areas.

Contact Details

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