

# Brexit's impact on the British fishing industry

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## The Environment

As a member of the European Union, Britain has been obligated to adhere to various EU treaties that inadvertently govern British laws. These include a wide range of topics, such as the environment. These treaties, for many decades, have ensured that Britain implemented certain policies that would be in line with EU law and would also be beneficial to the environment. The unravelling of these laws would take decades to put into place, and only then would Britain be able to enact its own environmental policies in the future. The ECHA (European Chemicals Agency) is a great example of how the EU has been able to regulate the environmental policies of Britain and to also guarantee that the environment is protected from the use of harmful chemical substances. If the UK decides to leave the EU, it would be removed from these EU institutions which governs the use of chemicals, water quality, and air quality and would instead end up making its own environmental rules, which could take decades to enact. Until then, there will be no environmental obligations on the part of the UK until they are able to implement their own policies.



The fishing industry is an important source of employment in Devon with approximately 1,200 fishermen



This is a crucial time for the fishing industry in Devon, particularly in Plymouth because Brexit requires a complete re-negotiation of fisheries rights. With the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union, there will undoubtedly be changes in social attitude concerning commercial fishing due to its environmental implications.



Approximately 80% of the UK's wild caught seafood is exported with 66% going to Europe

## Brexit

One of the main reasons as to why many Brits voted to leave the EU was due to the detrimental effects European Union law had on the fishing industries in the United Kingdom. Essentially, Britain became stripped of its fishing rights when it entered the EU, and this led to laws which dictated where and how Britain would be able to fish within its domestically controlled waters. In the wake of Brexit, it has become evident that Britain will now be able to exercise its full domestic rights within its own shores. However, the economic benefits of Britain forming their own fishing rights could impact its economic future if Brexit fails to negotiate a deal made within the year of 2019. Access to the single market is of utmost importance for the UK if they are to maximise as much profits as possible, through the selling of fisheries to various countries within the EU. The lack of access to the single market could affect Britain's fishing industries by not allowing them to make favourable quota deals with the EU and this could lead to less negotiating power for those who are hoping to influence any future EU laws, pertaining to fishing. The lack of access to the single market could lead to an economic downturn for the fishing industries of the UK if the European market remains closed off to their exports.



## Plymouth, England

Characterized as Devon's most prominent coastal community and the United Kingdom's capital of fishing, Plymouth has a population of about 250,000 people. This port city's fishing industry has played a major role in developing its social and cultural history.

Plymouth's port has the highest landings by weight than any other port in England.

## Drivers of Change

### Marine Strategy Framework Directive –

providing the environmental 'pillar' of the EU Integrated European Maritime Policy, the aim of this directive is to achieve Good Environmental Status in European seas by 2020.

### Common Fisheries Policy –

providing an overarching context to UK fisheries legislation, the CFP allows all EU member states equal access to fisheries in European waters, seeking to manage fish stocks as a common resource. The most recent review introduces measures to:

-  Move towards a ban on discards
-  Legal commitments to fish at sustainable levels – with target of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY)
-  Decentralise decision making
-  Establish a Marine Fisheries Fund



### Marine and Coastal Access Act –

a wide ranging piece of legislation that established the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs). It also introduced:

-  A new designation, Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), and a requirement to establish a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) – 14 MCZs were recommended for Devon.
-  A requirement to develop marine plans for English waters by 2021 there is currently a process under way, managed by the MMO, to develop plans for inshore and offshore areas between Folkstone and the Dart estuary.

## The EU



The EU accounts for 44% of exports and 53% of imported goods from the UK during the year of 2015, which makes it a great concern for many, if Britain does end up leaving the single market. Also a matter of concern for many farmers is the fact that being thrown out of the single market could lead to a lack of exports and the making of trade agreements that places Britain's agricultural sector at a competitive disadvantage.

## The UK



To deal with the issue of the natural environment, the UK has decided to enact the Great Repeal Bill, which authorizes the UK to incorporate EU laws into British laws on a permanent basis, once the Brexit negotiations are over. The UK also plans to ensure that laws are passed to guide not only the protection of the environment, but to also make rules as to the boundaries of what farmers can and cannot do, so that the environment does not become permanently harmed by those seeking to use it for financial gains. Farming and agriculture accounts for 71% of lands throughout Britain and any future laws that are made must ensure the protection of lands and animal habitats according to environmental standards.

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