

Angling Trust Recommended Retention Sizes

For Sea Angling Matches and Competitions

The following recommended retention sizes have been set at, or above, the highest regional minimum size set by any one of the Inshore Fishery and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs). Following these recommendations will ensure that anglers and clubs are not in contravention of any local bylaws set by the IFCAs. For more information and guidance on minimum landing sizes visit

<http://www.anglingtrust.net/page.asp?section=163§ionTitle=Legal+Minimum+Landing+Sizes+For+Sea+Fish>

Species	Recommended Retention Size*
Anglerfish (<i>Lophius piscatorius</i>)	7kg
Bass (<i>Dicentrarchus labrax</i>)	45cm
Bream - Black (<i>Spondyliosoma cantharus</i>)	24cm
Bream - Gilthead (<i>Sparus aurata</i>)	24cm
Brill (<i>Scophthalmus rhombus</i>)	35cm
Coalfish (<i>Pollachius virens</i>)	35cm
Cod (<i>Gadus morhua</i>)	35cm
Common skate (<i>Dipturus batis</i>)	45cm
Conger eel (<i>Conger conger</i>)	Boat – 120cm/Shore – 91cm
Dab (<i>Limanda limanda</i>)	23cm
European Eel (<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>)	None (See note 1)
Flounder (<i>Platichthys flesus</i>)	27cm
Garfish (<i>Belone belone</i>)	38cm
Gurnard - Grey (<i>Eutrigla gurnardus</i>)	28cm
Gurnard - Red (<i>Chelidonichthys cuculus</i>)	28cm
Gurnard - Tub (<i>Chelidonichthys lucerna</i>)	28cm
Haddock (<i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>)	Boat – 35cm/Shore – 30cm
Halibut (<i>Hippoglossus hippoglossus</i>)	Boat – 10kg/Shore – 3kg
Herring (<i>Clupea harengus</i>)	20cm
Horse mackerel (<i>Trachurus trachurus</i>)	25cm
John Dory (<i>Zeus faber</i>)	Boat – 33cm/Shore – 25cm
Lesser Spotted Dogfish (<i>Scyliorhinus canicula</i>)	Boat – 46cm/Shore – 38cm
Ling (<i>Molva molva</i>)	72cm
Mackerel (<i>Scomber scombrus</i>)	30cm
Megrim (<i>Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis</i>)	25cm
Monkfish/Angel Shark (<i>Squatina squatina</i>)	(see note 4)
Mullet - Grey, thick-lipped (<i>Chelon labrosus</i>)	33cm

Mullet - Grey, thin-lipped (<i>Liza ramada</i>)	33cm
Mullet - Golden Grey - (<i>Liza aurata</i>)	33cm
Mullet – Red - (<i>Mullus surmuletus</i>)	15cm
Plaice (<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>)	28cm
Pollack (<i>Pollachius pollachius</i>)	30cm
Poor Cod (<i>Trisopterus minutus</i>)	18cm
Pouting (<i>Trisopterus luscus</i>)	Boat – 25cm/Shore – 18cm
Ray - Blonde (<i>Raja brachyuran</i>)	45cm
Ray - Cuckoo (<i>Raja naevus</i>)	45cm
Ray - Small-eyed (<i>Raja microocellata</i>)	45cm
Ray - Spotted (<i>Raja montagui</i>)	45cm
Ray - Starry(<i>Amblyraja radiata</i>)	45cm
Ray - Stingray (<i>Dasyatis pastinaca</i>)	45cm
Ray - Thornback (<i>Raja clavata</i>)	45cm
Ray - Undulate (<i>Raja undulate</i>)	(see note 2)
Rockling - Five Bearded Ciliata <i>mustela</i>	18cm
Rockling - Shore (<i>Gaidropsarus mediterraneus</i>)	18cm
Rockling - Three-bearded (<i>Gaidropsarus vulgaris</i>)	18cm
Shad- Allis (<i>Alosa alosa</i>)	(See note 3)
Shad- Twait (<i>Alosa fallax</i>)	(See note 3)
Shark - Angel (<i>Squatina squatina</i>)	(See note 4)
Shark - Blue (<i>Prionace glauca</i>)	Boat 23kg/Shore 18kg
Shark - Bull Huss (<i>Scyliorhinus stellaris</i>)	58cm
Shark - Mako (<i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i>)	Boat 23kg/Shore 18kg
Shark - Porbeagle (<i>Lamna nasus</i>)	(See note 5)
Shark - Smoothhound (<i>Mustelus asterias</i>)	51cm
Shark - Spurdog (<i>Squalus acanthias</i>)	(see note 6)
Shark - Thresher (<i>Alopias vulpinus</i>)	Boat 23kg/Shore 18kg
Shark - Tope (<i>Galeorhinus galeus</i>)	(See note 7)
Sole - Dover (<i>Solea solea</i>)	25cm
Sole - Lemon (<i>Microstomus kitt</i>)	25cm
Trigger fish (<i>Balistes capriscus</i>)	30cm
Turbot (<i>Scophthalmus maximus</i>)	Boat 41cm/Shore – 35cm
Whiting (<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>)	27cm
Witch (<i>Glyptocephalus cynoglossus</i>)	28cm
Wrasse - Ballan (<i>Labrus bergylta</i>)	23cm

1. An Environment Agency byelaw prevents anglers from retaining the European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*). However, they can be retained for weighing or measuring but must be returned alive to the water they were taken from on completion of fishing. For the Angling Trust's policy on retaining European eels click [here](#)
2. Undulate ray are classified as endangered. We recommend that all fish are returned alive
3. Shad are now protected under the EU (- Berne Convention) and all fish must be returned.
4. Angel sharks (Monkfish) are listed under UK Wildlife and Countryside Act and will be protected against killing, injuring or taking (section 9(1)) on land and up to 3 nautical miles (nm) from English coastal baselines.
5. Porbeagle are critically endangered in the Northeast Atlantic. We recommend that all fish are returned alive
6. Spurdog are classified as critically endangered in the Northeast Atlantic and we recommend that all fish are returned alive
7. Anglers should be aware that there is a national restriction on landing tope caught from a boat, which includes kayaks, by rod and line. Any boat-caught tope are legally required to be released as soon as possible after capture. Details of the Tope (Prohibition of Fishing Order) 2008 can be found [here](#)

*Should there be any dispute on the measurement of a fish the Match Organisers Master Measure will be the deciding measure. All fish are to be measured from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail fin, except Skates and Rays which are to be measured wing tip to wing tip. All sizes are in centimetres or kilograms where indicated.

Clubs operating catch & release matches may, of course, set size limits below these recommendations and include species which we recommend be returned. In such circumstances it is the individual anglers responsibility to ensure that fish are returned alive to the water from which they were taken.

The information above was correct at the time of publishing and should be used as guidance only. The Angling Trust accepts no responsibility for changes to its accuracy by 3rd parties. We recommend that anglers and clubs check with their local IFCA for any changes to the information provided above.

Angling Trust
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