



Reference: EIR-756

Request:

I am a researcher at the University of Portsmouth working on a project investigating the gathering of shellfish from intertidal areas in the UK. These types of activities are usually conducted on foot and without the use of mechanised tools. Whilst these fisheries are often substantive and valuable, they are frequently data limited in terms of their extent, environmental impact and sustainability. The extraction of bivalves can also create public health concerns, if sold into the human food chain. I hope to bring much needed attention to these often-overlooked fisheries by creating estimates of their extent and value.

I am particularly interested in any records you have of hand gathering activities occurring within your jurisdiction. It is from these data, and that sought from other authorities, that I hope to create regional and UK estimates. I am especially interested in:

1. Information about the number of people partaking in these activities.
2. The species being targeted (e.g., clams, cockles etc).
3. The locations and habitat types that are targeted by gatherers.
4. The numbers or amounts, per species, being extracted by gatherers.
5. If possible, the dates on which this information was recorded, who recorded it and how the information was gathered.

In addition, as I am sure you are aware, the management of these fisheries can be challenging. I would therefore greatly appreciate information on your experiences such as:

6. Barriers to effective management.
7. Local environmental impacts.
8. Local public health concerns created by these activities.
9. The legal aspects and prosecution of those selling bivalves illegally.

I would greatly appreciate it if you can provide any of the requested information or if you have any other information you wish to share pertaining to this subject.

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Once this information is collated, I hope to write a scientific paper of the findings, which I would be happy to share with you.

Response:

No information is held by the Authority relating to questions 1-4.

5. Not applicable

6. Not applicable

7. Not applicable

8. The Authority would be concerned about:

Algal blooms, toxins and heavy metals associated with the harvesting locations for shellfish. Classification zones are available on the Food Standards Agency website.

9. Food businesses (restaurants/ takeaways/ market stalls etc) are subject to food safety legislation that includes programmed inspections. There is a legal requirement to provide traceability information and if concerns are found during an investigation the food can be detained/seized. Intelligence can then be passed on to the relevant enforcement agency where this activity is taking place or where the known supplier is located.