

**Summary of Joint Response from English Nature and the
Countryside Council for Wales to Defra's consultation on measures
to increase the number and size of bass available to commercial and
recreational fishermen.**

1. We strongly support an increase in the Minimum Landing Size (MLS) of bass to that of above average size at maturity.
2. We support the adoption of Option 2, but with additional measures included to maximise the potential for the objectives of the proposal to be met. These include:
 - a) The MLS should apply to all bass removed from the sea regardless of method used and by all sectors.
 - b) The issue of higher discards will need to be addressed, and particularly in regard of towed gear fisheries. There should be equity across fisheries sectors.
 - c) Further management measures are required for any of the options to attain the objective of the proposal, including MLS and bag limit restrictions for recreational anglers.
3. We would like to see further research on the size selectivity of enmeshing nets, as 105mm appears too small to support the proposal objectives in light of the CEFAS data.
4. The issue of increased enmeshing net Minimum Mesh Size (MMS) negatively impacting salmonids will need to be addressed prior to the implementation of the measure.
5. Concern has been raised on the inability to regulate the MLS of vessels of other member states. This should be seen as something on which other Member States should be engaged, rather than a reason not to proceed with highly appropriate management measures.
6. We have some concern that this is a single species management measure and that this proposal should consider any impacts on associated species and habitats. In this regard, the displacement of fishing effort to other, vulnerable fisheries that could occur by the implementation of measures in this proposal needs consideration.

English Nature
February 2006