# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Welsh Whelk Fishery Statutory Instruments** |
| **DATE**  | **26 June 2019** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs** |

In December 2018, I made a statement about a package of management measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Welsh whelk fishery. I am pleased to announce I am introducing new Welsh legislation to raise the minimum size at which whelk can be retained and landed, from 45mm to 65mm. This increase will occur in two parts with an immediate increase to 55mm from the date the Order comes into force, moving to 65mm a year from the date the Order comes into force. This will ensure the protection of immature whelks and enable them to develop and, in time, recruit to the fishery. This measure will apply to all UK vessels fishing within Welsh waters.

A separate piece of legislation will introduce caps on the quantity of whelk which can be fished by UK vessels. Following my December 2018 statement, concerns were raised about the period over which caps on landings would be applied and some potential unintended consequences. I have given this consideration and I will be amending the period over which the caps on landings will be applied. These measures include:

* A cap on the allowable total quarterly landings of 60 tonnes of whelk per vessel, from January to September each year. This measure will apply to all UK vessels fishing in Welsh waters.
* A cap on the quarterly landings of 15 tonnes of whelk per vessel, during the biologically sensitive period from October to December each year. This lower cap will provide additional protection for the breeding whelk stocks. This measure will apply to all UK vessels fishing in Welsh waters.

This package of measures will work towards ensuring the adequate protection of Welsh whelk stocks and the long-term sustainability of the whelk fishery and the communities it supports. The changes to minimum size will take effect in the summer of 2019 and, following the proposed amendments to the cap on landings, those measures will be introduced in autumn 2019.