Closed Season Review

Rationale

* Short term aim of the bass FMP to review the bass fishery’s closed season. The review must be underway within 2 years of publication for this target to be met.
* The purpose of this group is to review the timings and duration of the bass fishery’s closed season to determine if the current closed season is the most suitable in order to optimise the protection of spawning bass stocks.
* The current closed season for bass fisheries in the UK is February to March.

Objective

* Short term objective:
	+ Goal 7 “Ongoing protection of juvenile and spawning bass stock”.

Considerations

* Does the current evidence suggest that the closed seasons should move or stay the same?
* What further evidence may be needed in this area?
* What would the effect on fishermen be if the closed seasons were changed?
* How do we balance accessibility to the fishery with sustainability?
* Should there be different closed seasons for different parts of the UK?

Role of the BMG

The bass management group will be responsible for deciding the composition and size of the task-and-finish working group, ensuring all viewpoints are represented.

Possible representatives within the task-and-finish group:

* Defra
* Marine Management Organisation
* Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
* Commercial Fishers
* Environment Agency
* Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
* Natural England/Joint Nature Conservation Committee
* Recreational Fishers
* Welsh Government
* Wider Supply Chain

Do you have any further suggestions for the membership of the group?

Next steps

The task-and-finish group should meet as and when required to review evidence on closed seasons within bass fisheries and discuss the option of moving the closed seasons. These meetings will be organised and chaired by a selected individual, either from within the bass management group or externally. These meetings should also focus on how the bass management group and the task-and-finish group can address the medium-and long-term bass FMP goals.