

## Notice of early closure of the 2025 Squid (Winter) fishery

2 October 2025

### Background

The Squid (Winter) fishery (for *Doryteuthis gahi*, commonly known as ‘Loligo’), operated under the X-licence, is open for a period of a maximum of 70 calendar days starting on the last Sunday in July. This period allows for a maximum of 64 fishing days, the remaining 6 calendar days are to allow for compensatory days, to be utilised in circumstances such as bad weather or mechanical breakdown. The period the fishery is open for is referred to as a season.

The winter Loligo season is primarily managed on the basis of seeking to ensure that the minimum biomass of Loligo in the designated Loligo fishing area (known as the ‘Loligo Box’) is above 10,000 tonnes at the end of the season, *as set out in the [2025 licensing advice](#), which states: “If in-season depletion models project that calamari biomass will fall below 10,000 tonnes, the fishery may be suspended or stopped before the scheduled end date of the season”*. As this squid species lives only one year, the goal is to maintain a population large enough to reproduce and replace itself.

The Fisheries Department carries out a pre-season survey prior to both the summer and winter Loligo seasons to estimate the total Loligo biomass in the Loligo Box. The estimate also includes figures for lower and upper confidence boundaries. The estimated biomass is used by the Fisheries Department to determine whether the fishery should open.

During the season, the Fisheries Department continues to produce regular updates of the estimated biomass based on catch and effort data. These estimates are used to take management decisions related to the fishery, alongside other factors such as the maturity and size of Loligo being caught.

### Relevant legislation

Under section 11 of the Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance 2005, the Director of Fisheries (the Director of Natural Resources) may set sustainability measures for a stock, taking into account the effects of fishing on the stock, existing controls and the natural variability of the stock. Measures may include changing the total allowable effort or catch, the size/sex/state of stock allowed to be taken, the areas from which stock may be taken, the methods by which stock may be taken, and the period for which fishing may take place in a fishery.

For the purposes of the Loligo fishery, in practice this allows the director to take measures including closing part of the Loligo Box to fishing, temporarily closing the fishery, issuing a final closure notice for a season, or not opening a season at all.

Section 12 of the ordinance requires that prior to setting or varying a sustainability measure, the director (so far as is reasonably practicable) must consult with the Fisheries Advisory Committee and other persons or organisations that it would be desirable to consult with, who are representative of persons having an interest in the stock or effects of fishing. For the Loligo fishery, in practice this means the Loligo Producers Group.

However, section 12 also allows the director to set or vary measures without carrying out the aforementioned consultation in cases of urgency.

Should the director take any decisions, section 12(3) requires them to publish the reasons for their decision as soon as reasonably practicable.

### **2025 Squid (Winter) season**

In 2025 the last Sunday in July fell on 27 July, giving a season end date of 5 October. However, no vessel in the fishery is granted a licence for more than 64 days, meaning in practical terms the fishery was due to close on 28 September, unless compensatory days had been allowed.

The pre-season survey estimated the total biomass at 21,695 tonnes (95% credible interval 17,568 to 31,591 tonnes). This resulted in the season opening on the defined date.

According to model results produced on 5 August, the 95% lower credible limit of the estimate fell below 10,000 tonnes. As a result, a rolling 48-hour notice of closure was issued on 6 August. However, as biomass estimates increased shortly thereafter, the notice was extended and effectively revoked on 18 August, though it was noted at the time that the risk of an early closure remained.

The Fisheries Department provided regular updates on biomass estimates to the Loligo Producers Group thereafter.

### **Closure decision**

On 18 September 2025 a 24-hour notice of closure of the season was issued to Loligo Producers Group members (including the relevant ITQ Holding and Qualifying Companies) stating that it would close at 23:59 on 19 September.

### **Rationale**

The closure notice was issued as the biomass estimates had dropped significantly over the previous two days, with the lower credible limit dropping close to the 10,000 t limit (the 95% lower credible interval on 18 September was 10,280 tonnes). Given the daily rate of catches, the director took the decision to close the season for reasons of stock conservation and long-term sustainability of the fishery. The recent issues in the winter Loligo season (early closure in 2023 and non-opening in 2024) were also taken into consideration, with the director determining that these issues required taking a precautionary approach to the fishery.

This decision was taken without consultation with Fisheries Advisory Committee or Loligo Producers Group on the basis that an urgent decision was required given the biomass being so close to the threshold and any consultation would significantly increase the risk of the biomass falling below the threshold. However, the Loligo Producers Group had been warned on both 16 and 17 September through regular updates that a closure could be imminent.

### **Post-closure note**

The biomass estimate at the close of the season was 13,600 tonnes, with the 95% lower credible limit at 9,974 tonnes.