



PRESS RELEASE

No: 222/2018

Date: 19th April 2018

Closed Season for Common Octopus

Following on from last year's successful implementation of a temporary fishing ban on Common Octopus in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters (BGTW), the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Climate Change (DEHCC) will be implementing a temporary ban from the 19th April to the 31st May 2018, both dates inclusive. The measure has been discussed and agreed in consultation with the Fishing Working Group set up under the Marine Protection Regulations, where all the fishing associations are represented. This year's initiative extends the prohibition to six weeks and introduces a new conservation measure whereby the maximum catch limit will also be restricted to 5 kilograms per person or vessel per day for a period of 2 weeks after the fishing prohibition ceases. The maximum catch restriction will therefore be enforced from the 1st June to the 14th June 2018.

The objective of the temporary prohibition is to protect Common Octopus at a time when they are laying eggs, and so improve breeding success. The measure builds on the introduction in 2014 of a minimum weight (1.5kg) for Common Octopus caught in BGTW. Scientists from the Department expect that the measure will result in an increased number and size of Common Octopus found in Gibraltar's coastal waters.

The Department's Environmental Protection and Research Unit will be regularly patrolling Gibraltar's coastline to ensure the prohibition is adhered to. Other species, including Grouper species and the Common Sea Bass, will also be subjected to similar conservation measures, in consultation with the Working Group, as part of the DEHCC's wider Marine Conservation Strategy for BGTW.