

SUSTAINABILITY

As a fishery that has hardly changed for generations, catching shellfish in Cornwall is regarded as one of the most sustainable forms of fishing, with shellfish often travelling less than a mile from pot to plate.

In Cornwall crabs and lobsters are protected by laws set by the Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee, making it illegal to land shellfish that are too young or too small. One of most highly regulated of all UK fisheries, the minimum sizes are higher than in the rest of the UK and make sure that only adults, in good condition, are landed. Immature shellfish are returned unharmed to the sea to grow on.

Using information that has been handed down from generation to generation, fishermen and scientists are working together to protect these valuable stocks for the future.

Lobsters are tagged to track their movements. Female lobsters carrying eggs have their tails notched and are put back in the sea, or taken to the National Lobster hatchery in Padstow. After the eggs have hatched both the females and the baby lobsters are returned to the wild.

The pots used to catch shellfish us natural bait such as mackerel to attract curious crabs and lobsters when they are hungry. [When the water gets colder and the weather deteriorates, the shellfish scuttle under the rocks and rarely come out to feed.]**

Fishermen, shellfish merchants, fish processors and fisheries officials have applied for accreditation from the highly respected Marine Stewardship Council. This will recognise the fishery as sustainable, environmentally responsible and one of the best managed in the world. Any Cornish shellfish that carry the MSC logo can be traced back to the waters where it was caught.