

Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU) Catch Certificates: Information for importers

Contents	Page
Combatting IUU	2
Import Controls	2
Products subject to import checks	2
Products requiring a Catch Certificate	2
Products not requiring a Catch Certificate	2
Composite products	3
Import conditions	3
Pre-notification	3
Failing to comply with the requirements	3
Additional Guidance	3
Documents Required	4
Catch Certificate(s)	4
Processing statement ("Annex IV")	4
Storage document	4
Commercial documents	4
Checks We Conduct	4
Documentary check	4
Identity and physical checks	4
Satisfactory checks	4
Unsatisfactory checks	4

Portsmouth Port Health Authority

Border Control Point

Portsmouth International Port

Mile End Road

Portsmouth

PO2 8BP

+44 (0)23 9268 8653

porthealth@portsmouth.gov.uk

www.portsmouth.gov.uk/port-health

BCP Code: GBPTM14

Updated: January 2026

Combatting IUU

Illegal fishing has environmental, social, and economic impacts. It directly impacts the sustainability of fish stocks and efforts to manage fisheries as a sustainable resource. Indirectly, local fishers and communities dependent on fish stocks for their own consumption and livelihood are affected.

The controls aim to remove the UK as a market for illegal fishery products. They are separate to sanitary and phytosanitary controls (CHED-P). The controls have applied to imports from the EU since 1 January 2021.

To prove that a consignment imported into Great Britain is compliant with regulations, documents must be provided as outlined in this guidance.

Checking Catch Certificates at the border is the responsibility of Port Health Authorities (PHAs). We work with the Marine and Management Organisation (MMO) and Defra (the overall policy holder) to ensure that controls are properly applied.

Import Controls

Products subject to import checks

The IUU Regulation applies to imports of marine caught fishery products. Freshwater and farmed (aquaculture) fish are all out of scope of the Regulation, as are marine fish imported for ornamental purposes. See [assimilated Regulation \(EC\) No 1005/2008, Annex I](#). You can also [Look up commodity codes - GOV.UK](#); this site gives an indication as to whether the product is subject to IUU controls.

Products requiring a Catch Certificate

- Fishery products listed in [Chapters 03](#) and Tariff headings 1604 and 1605 (subject to exclusions/exemptions)
- Composite fishery products (Chapter 03 and tariff headings 1604 and 1605)
- Sample cartons (if CN code is within scope of legislation)

Products not requiring a Catch Certificate

- Aquaculture products
- Freshwater products
- Fishing without a vessel (e.g. standing on the shoreline with a fishing rod)
- Oysters, mussels, clams, scallops (including queen scallops)
- Snails (other than sea snails)
- Sea cucumbers
- Abalone
- Jellyfish
- Fish sauce (CN code 1603)
- Glucosamine (CN code 2932)
- Livers, roes, tongues, cheeks, heads and wings (ex Chapter 3 and ex 1604)
- Stuffed pasta products with CN code 1902 (may require Binding Tariff Information)
- Soup products with CN code 2104
- Seasoning/Stock with CN code 2103

Squid is largely covered by the IUU legislation. The 'ex' in front of the CN code means only certain products under that CN code are excluded, not everything under that CN code.

Composite products

Products made up of fish and other ingredients may be covered by the Regulation. If the product falls under CN Code 03, 1604 or 1605, a Catch Certificate will be required. This applies where there is any wild caught fish content.

You may be asked to provide written confirmation of the commodity code for your goods from the [HMRC Tariff Classification team](#).

Import conditions

Products in scope of the Regulation can only be imported when accompanied by a Catch Certificate issued for the consignment by the country that manages the fishing vessel(s).

If the import has come to the UK via another country (i.e., not the country where the vessel is registered) then additional documentation will be required from this country detailing the information about the storage or processing of the fish.

The import conditions apply to imports from all countries, including imports from the EU, EEA, and EFTA countries. Each EU member state is considered a separate country for IUU purposes.

If a consignment does not require catch certification, the importer will need to provide a written statement quoting the consignment details and explaining why a Catch Certificate is not required (e.g., the fish are farmed).

Pre-notification

The legislation requires that importers notify the PHA of the expected arrival of the consignment. The notification must be made **at least 2 hours in advance** of estimated arrival for imports by road (which includes Roll-On Roll-Off ferries). Failure to meet this deadline will result in additional charges being incurred (see [our website](#)).

You must prenotify us via IPAFFS. You need to ensure the documents are clearly legible and that each certificate is in a separate document.

We do not use PHILIS. If you are a new customer, please see the 'fees' section of our website. Please also see [our website](#) for the tariff.

Failing to comply with the requirements

It is an offence to import fishery products without a validated Catch Certificate. Where required documents have not been submitted, Port Health Authorities may take action to hold or refuse entry to the consignment, or it may be confiscated and destroyed.

Any enforcement taken will be in line with our [Enforcement Policy](#).

Additional Guidance

[Importing or moving fish to the UK - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Documents Required

Catch Certificate(s)

- **These need to be supplied in full and the UK importer must complete the importer declaration.** Where multiple catch certificates are submitted, a [signed summary document](#) can be provided. The certificates provide assurance that the imported fish is caught legally and must be validated by the flag state of the catching vessel.

Processing statement ("Annex IV")

- **Required when the fishery product(s) are processed (before export) in a country that is different from the flag state of the catching vessel.** This document shall be endorsed by the competent authority of the processing country. Processing includes filleting, packing, canning, freezing, smoking, salting, cooking, pickling, or preparing fish for market in any other manner.

Storage document

- **Required when the fish is stored (before export) in a country that is different from the flag state of the catching vessel and/or processing country.** This should consist of documented evidence or a specific form, to show that the product was stored and remained under the surveillance of the competent authority in that third country.

Commercial documents

- Bills of lading / CMR, invoice, packing list.

Checks We Conduct

Documentary check

All imports are subject to a documentary check to ensure they relate to the consignment, are valid and authentic. More detailed checks may be undertaken on a risk basis which might include checking the format of the document, assessing whether stamps and signatures match those of the government that created it, and checking catch areas and conservation management rules in place. Vessels will also be checked against the list of known IUU vessels.

Identity and physical checks

Where there is any discrepancy between the certification submitted and any documentation, an assessment of the product and packaging may be carried out.

Satisfactory checks

Upon satisfactory completion of the IUU checks, we will endorse the document and return it to the agent/importer. The agent/importer may need to submit a copy of the endorsed Catch Certificate to HMRC, to enable the consignment to be released.

Unsatisfactory checks

Where significant breaches of the legislation are discovered, or other concerns raised, a referral will be made to MMO. The law also provides for legal notices to be served, which can be appealed. Products failing to satisfy import conditions may be re-exported to a country outside the UK (provided the receiving country competent authority agrees). If the consignment is deemed to have been fished illegally it could be confiscated or destroyed.