

Importing fishery products or bivalve molluscs

Guidance on safely importing fishery products or bivalve molluscs into GB, controls at point of entry and information on identification marking.

There are strict rules for the commercial import from outside GB of fishery products, bivalve molluscs and products that contain them.

The following organisms are defined as fishery products:

- crustaceans - prawns, lobsters, crayfish, crabs and shrimps
- cephalopods - octopus, squid and cuttlefish
- aquaculture products - farmed salmon, trout, prawns, shrimps
- fish oils - for human consumption
- Tunicates - sea squirts
- Echinoderms - sea urchins and sea cucumbers
- Gastropods - whelks, winkles and abalone

Bivalve molluscs are oysters, mussels, clams, cockles and scallops.

Bivalve molluscs are filter feeders, which means they are at risk of ingesting dangerous bacteria. Because of this risk these species can only be commercially harvested from approved production areas. These areas are monitored to ensure they meet the toxin and microbiological criteria set out in [Regulation 852/2004](#).

If you are importing a product of animal origin (including fishery products and bivalve molluscs) you should check that the exporting country and establishment is authorised.

Defra has [guidance regarding imports and exports of live aquatic animals not for direct human consumption](#).

Imports from approved countries

Imports must meet the following conditions:

- come from an approved country
- be accompanied by appropriate signed health certification
- come from an approved fishery product establishment, premises or approved bivalve mollusc production areas
- enter GB through an officially designated Border Control Post (BCP) where veterinary/hygiene checks are carried out by an Official Fish Inspector
- all consignments must be pre-notified to the BCP prior to arrival
- public health conditions for the production and placing on the market of fishery products and bivalve molluscs are outlined in

Some approved countries are only allowed to export either fishery products or bivalve molluscs. It is therefore important to know under which category your product falls, see [Regulation 2019/626](#).

Controls at point of entry into GB from approved countries

When bringing goods into GB from outside, importers must notify the BCP beforehand. Imports arriving are subject to veterinary checks, this includes documentary, identity and physical checks at the BCP.

A charge will be made for all mandatory random checks required by the legislation, which the importer must pay.

Failure to comply with regulations may result in goods being returned to the exporting country or destroyed - at the cost of the importer.

Bivalve molluscs

In [Regulation 853/2004](#) bivalve molluscs are defined as filter feeding lamellibranch molluscs. These products are filter feeders which means they are at risk of ingesting dangerous bacteria. If humans eat these fish products carrying dangerous bacteria, it could be dangerous to their health.

Because of this risk these species can only be commercially harvested from approved production areas. which are monitored to ensure they meet the toxin and microbiological criteria.

If your importing products of animal origin, you should check that the exporting country is authorised.

Identification marking

Under Regulation 853/2004, it is a requirement that consignments of fishery products and bivalve molluscs display an identification mark in accordance with Annex II, which applies to most products of animal origin.

It is the responsibility of food business operators to ensure that products do not pose a health risk to the public. The destination food business operator (the UK-based food premises), at its own discretion, will carry out a system of its own checks under a predefined HACCP (food safety management) plan to meet required hygiene standards.

Illegal fishing

Fish imports are subject to new rules under the Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Imports require certification detailing when the fish was caught and that the vessel was acting legally. For further information please see the [Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs \(DEFRA\)](#).

Imports of scallops from the United States

Imports of live, frozen or processed bivalve molluscs, echinoderms, tunicates and marine gastropods for human consumption from the United States are only permitted from Washington State and Massachusetts.

However, food business operators may import the adductor muscle from pectinidae (scallops) of non-aquaculture origin, completely separated from the viscera and gonads.

Legislation on fish imports

[Regulation 2019/626](#) - establishing the lists of third countries and territories from which imports of bivalve molluscs, echinoderms, tunicates, marine gastropods and fishery products are permitted.