

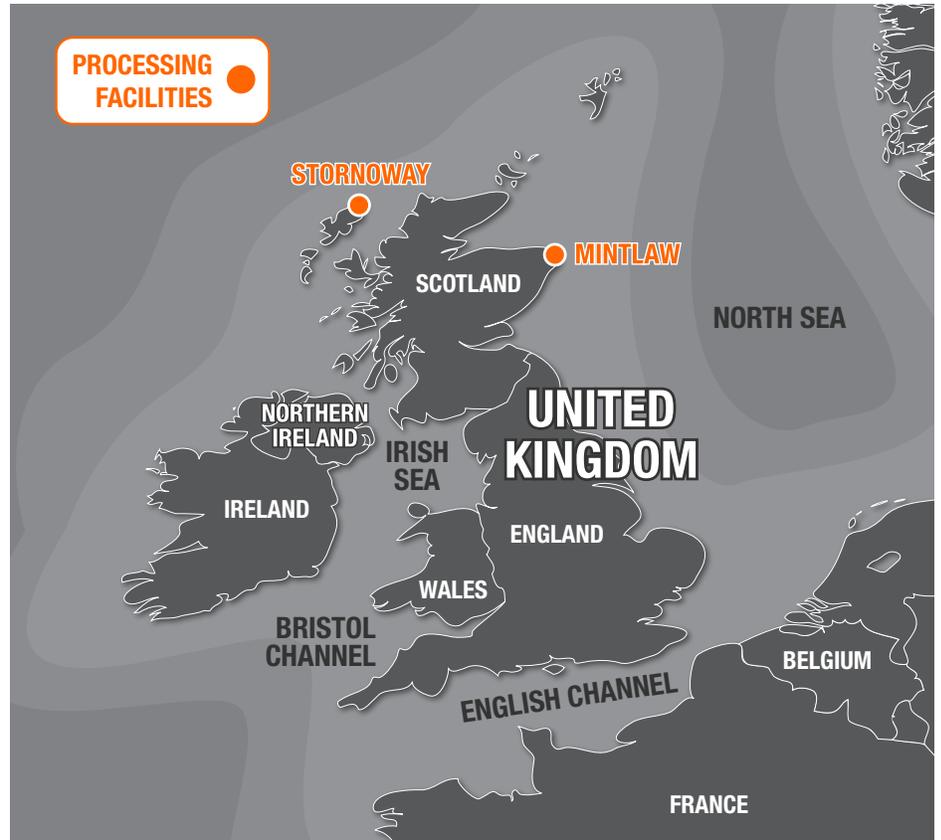
whelk

Supplied by Clearwater's UK Division, Macduff Shellfish



Species Name: *Buccinum undatum*

Harvest Area / Season: Whelks are procured year-round from inshore English waters of FAO Area 27 (Atlantic Northeast). They are predominantly found in four key stock areas: North Sea (ICES Area IV), Irish Sea (ICES Area VIIa), English Channel (ICES Area VIId/e), and Bristol Channel (ICES Area VIIf).



Fishing Method and Gear Type: Whelks are caught by small vessels that leave port and return within a single day, commonly referred to as 'day boats.' Baited pots are deployed in strings between 20-100 pots (depending on size of vessel) that are allowed to soak on the sea floor for between 1 and 3 days, after which time the boats will return to collect the whelks and refresh the bait. Whelk pots are either purpose built plastic designs or recycled 25 litre plastic containers. Both designs have an entrance and means to secure the bait. Many also have escape hatches.

Similar to other pot fisheries, the bottom impact is minor, with only the area directly underneath the pot affected. Scientific studies in other pot fisheries have shown that species displaced by the pot return to the area after the gear is removed.



Sustainable Removals: All United Kingdom whelk harvesters must hold a valid fishing licence. Macduff procures whelk landings from over 50 boats that participate in the fishery.

Most fisheries are within 12 nautical miles of shore, and are under the management of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (ICFAs) within 6 nautical miles of the English coast. Inshore fisheries management is very localized and specific technical requirements differ between areas. Examples of measures required by some ICFAs include annual permits, pot limits, pot tags, pot escape holes, larger minimum sizes than required by EU and UK regulation, and data collection responsibilities. In addition there are a number of limited offshore fisheries under the authority of government management authorities.

Assessing Stock Health: The UK management authority has signaled that they will uphold the EU commitment to aim for maximum sustainable yield (MSY) in UK commercial fisheries within realistic timeframes. Fisheries dependent data for whelk suggests stable stocks dispersed around the coastline.

Conservation & Management Measures: European Union regulations impose a Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) of 45 mm on whelks which will be retained upon the UK leaving the EU. Some ICFAs have put additional management measures in place to manage the whelk stock specific to that area.

Monitoring Catch: The whelk fishing fleet is subject to at-sea inspections and dockside monitoring. Daily logbook recording, landing declarations, and sales notes are mandatory for vessels over 10m in length and there are requirements that target catch and interactions with non-target species are reported.

Managing Bycatch: The whelk fishery has very limited amounts of bycatch due to the nature of the fishing gear. Baited pots passively select for whelks and other crustaceans, resulting in minimal finfish bycatch. Each pot has an escape hatch that retains whelk but permits other species to escape. All undersized whelks are returned to the sea, where survivability is very high.

Traceability: Whelks are purchased directly from harvesters and are transported to processing facilities located in Scotland, owned and operated by Clearwater's Macduff Division. Our internal systems and documentation allow us to trace a product to the purchase and production date, as well as to the port of landing.