



# It's all a muddle

BASS member Shaun Sorenson opens up the bass MLS debate

**E**ver the optimist, I am still not sure an increase in the minimum landing size (MLS) for bass to 48cm will be introduced in the foreseeable future.

The political pressures for and against and the numerous pages of scientific research published on the subject make me think we have reached decision time. As UK citizens we have the right to question our elected leaders and for them to react – we still live in a democratic society don't we?

I know I have simplified the whole process, but being a realist I do understand the difficult decisions all parties involved have created for the policy-makers.

As anglers we assume a change from one MLS to another would be a simple step, but there are a lot of hoops to go through in the name of consultation, policy formulation and drafting of amended regulations, and all the Statutory Instruments and other such paraphernalia.

Yet we are already in a ridiculous position of having more than one MLS for bass, depending on your locality, ranging from 36cm (the EU baseline) to 43cm. Confusing and downright inconsistent. We BASS members are hoping for a

change, ideally to 48cm, which is scientifically justified and will harmonise the MLS for bass throughout the UK. However, an overall decision is needed for the UK because we cannot continue with this muddle. No decision is worse than the current position.

The point is, a lot of people are putting an enormous amount of time and effort into the subject of MLS, which is important to a minority (bass anglers), while the majority of the population is oblivious to the issue because it doesn't affect them.

To bass anglers it is the most important item on the agenda. It's not a panacea for the many issues confronting bass management, but it is a big first step towards real sustainability of the species.

Unfortunately the UK is in a minority, with the Republic of Ireland, the Isle of Man, and soon Northern Ireland each breaking away from the 36cm baseline and setting their own, based on their own science and long-term economic value of the bass.

## Making inroads

One positive change I have witnessed over the last year has been the

quality of responses received from my correspondence with a number of MPs and government departments who have an interest in this subject. It's a massive change from being ignored a few years ago.

Campaigns, such as Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's Fish Fight, show that the subject of fish stocks can be brought to the national agenda, which is very important with a review of the European Fisheries Policy underway.

Within BASS the Restoration Team continues to educate and campaign at local and national level for the restoration of bass stocks and their sustainable management. It is this work and the work of people like Mr Fearnley-Whittingstall that gives us hope for the future.

The people on the Restoration Team are a formidable group of dedicated bass anglers. They are:

Malcolm Gilbert – long-time conservationist and past angling business owner, with specific involvement in south-west issues on commercial overfishing, catch regulations and effect on

recreational sea angling.

Danz Griffin – expert in the machinery of government and ways of making campaigns far more effective.

Geoff Hancock – experienced in the BASS campaigns, with a broad knowledge of recreational sea angling issues.

Nigel Horsman – head of the Restoration Team and front man for the campaign for an increased MLS; from a successful background in business.

Steve Pitts – angler, author and long-serving member and contributor to BASS; experienced in negotiating with government departments and agencies.

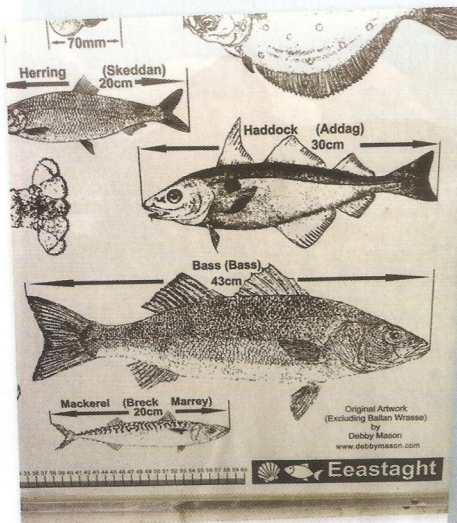
## Support us

To support the Restoration Team and like-minded people, individual anglers need to maintain the pressure. We need to ensure at every opportunity our thoughts and feelings are communicated to those with the influence to change the policies associated with our fish stocks.

If you have an interest in the future of bass fishing, you can help by writing to or emailing your local MP, whose details are on [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com). Tell your MP that you support an increase in the MLS for bass to a point above the minimum spawning size of 42cm, ideally 48cm, which is under discussion in the Southern IFCA.

BASS cares about your fish stocks and would welcome others joining us and becoming part of a respected force in species restoration, as well as being a UK-based club for bass anglers. Joining could not be easier, just call our membership secretary Lee Campbell, tel: 01446 741783 or email [campbelll002@gmail.com](mailto:campbelll002@gmail.com). You can also join online by visiting the Bass Anglers Sportfishing Society web page.

**Two different approaches - left, the Isle of Man, right, the Irish way**



**TÁ DOINGEAN FAOI CHOSAINT AN DLI**  
**BASS ARE PROTECTED BY LAW**

**Aire!**

- Ní cheadaítear tógáil nó róbairt ar bheithíní níos mó ná 2 dhéagaire a réamh-bheithíní 24 uair.
- Seiceáil Ceitheamh 15 Beithíní go dtí 15 Meitheamh.
- Tá cead ar dhéagaire a dhéir.

**Attention!**

- C'est interdit de pêcher ou de faire plus de 40cm en longueur.
- Les pêcheurs sportifs ne sont autorisés à pêcher que deux bass sur une période de 24 heures.
- Il y a une période de fermeture annuelle pour les pêcheurs de leur qui dure du 15 mai au 15 juin.
- La vente du leur est interdite.

**Uwaga!**

- Wzrost rybactwa musi być mniejszy niż 40cm.
- Limit drzewce nie więcej niż 2 rybaki musielni.
- Okres ochronny od 15 maja do 15 czerwca.
- Zakaz sprzedaży rybki musielni.

**Aufgepasst!**

- Das Mindestmaß für einen Wobblerhaken ist 40cm.
- Angler dürfen innerhalb von 24 Stunden maximal zwei gefangene Flusche behalten und verkaufen.
- Die Schonzeit geht vom 15. Mai bis zum 15. Juni.
- Der Verkauf eines Wobblerhaken ist verboten.

**Aandacht!**

- Gevangen zandbaars dienen langer dan 40cm te zijn.
- Elang maximal 2 gevangen zandbaars behouden binnen een periode van 24 uur.
- Er geldt vangst- en verkoopverbod voor zandbaars van 15 mei tot 15 juni.
- De verkoop van zandbaars is verboden.

**Irish text:** Iscuidín Iritire Éireann Inland Fisheries Ireland  
Eolas agus comhairle / Information and advice [www.fishingireland.info](http://www.fishingireland.info)  
Tuarascáil póitseáil agus truailliú / Report poaching and pollution (24hr) 1890 34 74 24