**Velvet Crab Public Consultation – Overview of Submissions Received**

**Dates of consultation: 11th November - 9th December**

**Number of submissions received: 54**

**Submissions from:**

* Fisherman: 44
* Shellfish buyer/processor: 4
* Fisherman’s association: 5
* Trade association:
* Environmental NGOs:
* State body: 1
* Political representative:
* Member of public:
* Other:

**Submissions per region:**

* Leinster: 0
* Munster: 49
* Connaught: 4
* Ulster: 1
* Other:

**Responses:**

Question 4: Do you catch Velvet Crab?

* Yes: 46
* No: 5

Question 5: Do you target velvet crab or is it a by-catch of lobster fishing?

* Target: 36
* By-catch: 34

Question 6: Do you grade the catch prior landing?

* Yes: 44
* No: 2

Question 7: Is grading difficult?

* Yes: 4
* No: 44

Question 8: Do you supply different grades to buyer/market?

* Yes: 47
* No: 1

Question 9: Have you noticed any recent increase in mortality of velvets in pots, store boxes or holding tanks?

* Yes: 0
* No: 45

Question 10: How would you describe trends in the fishery in the past 10 years?

* Improved: 30
* Stable: 30
* Declined: 3
* Cyclical: 2
* No pattern: 0
* Collapsed: 0

Question 11: Which policy option for velvet crab do you recommend?

* 65mm size: 12
* Voluntary/market size: 40

Question 12: Would you like to see any changes to minimum legal sizes in other species?

* Yes: 6
* No: 43

**Figures to note:**

* 54 submissions received via post, email & online survey
* 84% of respondents were fishermen
* 90 % from the Munster region
* 77% of respondents favoured a voluntary/market size
	+ The opinion behind this appears to be that there is no demand for small velvet crabs so the market regulates itself. The remainder wanted to introduce a minimum landing size of 65mm or even 70mm as well as returning berried velvets to the sea.
* The vast majority caught Velvet Crab
* Several respondents indicated that they both targeted velvet crab and caught it as a by catch
* Nearly all graded prior to landing
	+ Three grades identified by many respondents (at least 15) => small, medium & large, 4-6, 6-8, 8-12 per kg. Grading was not thought of to be difficult however a few did have some difficulty.
* No respondent had noticed any recent increase in mortality of velvets.
* Improved/stable seems the be the trend in the fishery in the past 10 years, however 3 fishermen thought the industry had declined

Other Comments:

* Six fishermen said that they would like changes to minimum sizes in other species namely brown crab