The Outer Hebrides (Landing of Crabs and Lobsters) Order 2015: SSI 2015/183

Thank you for your letter of 28 May 2015 regarding the above named instrument.

The Order was made in accordance with Article 46 of Council Regulation (EC) No 850/98, which authorises Member States to take certain national measures for the conservation and management of stocks. Article 46 also states that these measures can be applied solely to the fishermen of the Member State concerned. While foreign fishing boats are therefore exempted, records show that they do not make landings of edible crab, velvet crab or lobster into the Outer Hebrides.

Regarding the prohibition on landing crippled female lobster, it is believed that local fishermen already return crippled lobster to the sea due to low market demand. By being returned to the sea, they are able to re-grow missing limbs over time and can then achieve full market price if caught again. The IFG wished to formalise this arrangement for female lobster in order to further protect stock numbers and increase the spawning stock biomass.

I hope this information will provide clarity to the Committee on these two issues.

RICHARD LOCHHEAD