

## Fisherman fined for taking undersized Manila Clams

At Southampton Magistrates Court, on the 5th of May 2015, Mr Shaun Howland pleaded guilty to retaining manila clams below the minimum size of 35mm in contravention of Article 19 (1) of Council Regulation (EC) 850-98. With fines and costs Mr Howland was ordered to pay £5,515.

On Wednesday 18th December 2013, Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) from the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority intercepted Mr Howland's vessel El Barco (P936). The inspection revealed some 60% of the catch of the clams were below the minimum legal size of 35mm. The Skipper Mr Howland and the crew of the fishing vessel El Barco P936 were cautioned and interviewed on the scene by the officers.

This species of clam was introduced into England in the 1980s and has since naturalised and is now found extensively in the Solent and wider area. The minimum size which is an EU wide measure, is in place to ensure that the clams can reproduce and clams beds can sustain harvest. Fishery officers of the inshore fisheries and conservation authority enforce the legislation to ensure that the clam stocks can support a sustainable fishery.

The owners of the vessel El Barco, Viviers UK limited were also issued a written warning from Southern IFCA in relation to the incident.

Commenting on the case Neil Richardson, IFCA Deputy Chief Officer, said "The minimum size legislation supports an important local commercial fishing industry. Southern IFCA is committed to protecting the fishery to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry. By taking these offenders to court we aim to support a sustainable local fishery and ensure healthy seas."