

Watch out for non-native lobsters and crabs

Defra, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) would like to encourage fishermen to report catches of lobsters and crabs which aren't native to the UK.

It's illegal to release non-native species into our seas, but American lobsters (*Homarus americanus*) and Dungeness crabs (*Metacarcinus magister*) were released near Brighton in June 2015. Fishermen have also reported catching American lobsters in Cumbria and North Cornwall.



There's a risk that such non-native species could spread quickly, establishing populations. These could threaten native lobsters and crabs by out-competing them for



food and shelter; by introducing diseases to which they have little resistance; or by compromising genetic integrity of our stocks through cross-breeding. Any loss of our native lobsters and crabs could seriously affect commercial stocks and local businesses and disrupt the wider marine ecosystem.

If you catch non-native lobsters or crabs anywhere around the UK, please don't release them back into the sea (regardless of size) – it's illegal. They can be landed but not be re-immersed – unless held in facilities which are compliant under the Lobsters (Control of Deposit) Order licence.

Please report the catch (where and how many caught, species and sex) to your [local MMO office](#) or to the Fish Health Inspectorate on 01305 206 700 or by email to fhi@cefas.co.uk. You can find out more [here](#). See also detailed [identification](#) guidance for American lobsters.