Ministry of Economic Affairs,
Agriculture and Innovation

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Fisheries Supply Chain

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Contact

Date 27 MAART 2012
Re Exemptions on ban for recreational ('hobby') fishing with commercial gear along the Dutch coast.

Our ref.
263646

Dear Mr. H

Thank you for your letter of 13 January 2012, in which you voiced concerns about the risk of excessive catches of protected species such as salmon and brown trout, as a result of the reintroduction of recreational set nets in Dutch marine waters.

This issue concerns me, too. The subject of recreational set net fisheries along the Dutch shore was also recently discussed in the Dutch Parliament, hence my delay in responding to your letter.

Stricter conditions
I do inform you that stricter conditions will apply than prior to 2011. Before 2011 there were no limitations on recreational set net fisheries along the North Sea shoreline. The conditions that will now apply include a limit of one net per person and obligatory registration with the municipality. Also, only the simplest gill nets may be used (i.e. no trammel nets, or entangling nets), with a maximum length of 50 metres. And most importantly, the net may *not* be placed below the low-tide line.

In 2012 recreational set net fisheries will once again be permitted in both the estuarine Wadden Sea area and the Western Scheldt (the South). However, here too, strict limitations will be enforced on net length (100 metres or 30 metres, depending on the area). Fishing locations are also more limited because on-board transport of nets to banks is now prohibited.

At the municipal level
Furthermore, a municipality may impose stricter limits where appropriate. Some municipalities have already decided not to allow set nets at all. Should excessive use or unintentional side effects occur, for instance excessive catches of salmon or trout, then I am willing to discuss this with the local authorities.
A monitoring scheme for marine recreational fisheries in the Netherlands has been started, following EU-regulations. Special attention will be paid to salmon and trout catches.

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Other relevant legislation
With regard to commercial set net fisheries, I would like to inform you that the *effort* (days at sea) and fishing capacity of the vessels concerned has been ring-fenced since 2010. For vessels over 10 metres in length, the capacity and effort are regulated in accordance with EU legislation; for vessels under 10 metres, Dutch legislation has imposed a strict cap on the total amount of effort and net length for this fleet segment.

In addition, as a result of the Dutch N2000 'Harbour-porpoise protection plan', a programme is being developed to increase the monitoring schemes on by-catch in commercial set net fisheries. This programme will soon be implemented, in consultation with the fishing industry.

Conclusion
For these reasons, I am confident that excessive catches of salmon and trout can be avoided.

I hope that my answer has addressed your concerns. Please contact me again should you have further questions.

Henk Bleker
Minister for Agriculture and Foreign Trade