

Subordinate legislation - The Sea Fish (Prohibition on Fishing) (Firth of Clyde) Order 2024

Correspondence from Our Seas Coalition, 21 March 2024

Dear Mr. Carson,

The Sea Fish (Prohibition on Fishing) (Firth of Clyde) Order 2024¹ (the Order)

Our Seas is a coalition of over 130 coastal businesses, community groups, fishermen's organisations and environmental NGOs with an interest in the condition and management of Scotland's inshore waters. We would like to make representations regarding the Order which the RAI Committee recently scrutinised.

We are disappointed that the Order continues to apply a blanket ban on all fishing methods. Our coalition supports the principle of preferential access for low impact fishing, and we contend the continuation of fisheries such as creeling and diving in this area is compatible with the spawning protection and stock recovery objectives of the closure. We do not regard there to be sufficient evidence that fishing methods such as creeling and diving have such a material impact on the recruitment of spawning cod as to justify their exclusion.

We note that the Scottish Government has a legal duty to incentivise low impact fishing, ie "(a) the use of selective fishing gear, and (b) the use of fishing techniques that have a reduced impact on the environment," as stipulated by section 25 of the UK Fisheries Act 2020. We were deeply underwhelmed by the Scottish Government's response to questions from members of the Committee querying the science and impact of creeling and diving on spawning cod. We note that a far bigger impact on the health and recruitment of inshore fin-fish populations in areas like the Clyde is the ongoing bycatch of juvenile fish in bottom-trawl fisheries, specifically those which struggle to minimise bycatch such as Nephrops trawling.

More broadly, as the Committee is aware, the 130+ members of the Our Seas coalition support and advocate for the reinstatement of an inshore limit on bottom-trawling and dredging, and preferential access to low impact fisheries via a just transition that fairly incentivises sustainability. It is our coalition's view that Scotland's inshore fish populations and fin-fish fisheries will not recover and commercially prosper until there is wider management of Scotland's inshore zone.

We urge the Committee to keep in focus the broader case for an inshore limit on bottom-towed fisheries. We believe there is ample evidence from the Scottish Government² and others such as the New Economics Foundation³ that the

¹ The Sea Fish (Prohibition on Fishing) (Firth of Clyde) Order 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/exploration-optimisation-modelling-scottish-nephrops-fleet-policy-brief/pages/5/>

ineffective management of trawling and dredging throughout our inshore waters ultimately undermines the future resilience of our fisheries. We contend that this ineffective management regime which currently restricts bottom-trawling and dredging in less than 5% of Scotland's inshore seas is limiting job creation and revenues that could be available if we spatially managed our inshore waters to facilitate more extensive access for lower impact fisheries and other sectors reliant on a healthier marine environment. We note the Committee's commitment on 8th February 2023 - in its consideration of PE1951⁴ to "incorporate consideration of spatial management of inshore fisheries" in its future consideration of the National Marine Plan and await progress on this important work of the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Hayley Wolcott

Coordinator,

Our Seas Coalition

On behalf of the 137 members of the Our Seas Coalition

- 1. Aberdeen Diving Services**
- 2. Angling Trust**
- 3. Argaty Red Kites**
- 4. Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board**
- 5. Argyll Fisheries Trust**
- 6. Arran EcoSavvy**
- 7. Atlantic Diving Services**
- 8. Aquatic Life Institute**
- 9. Ayr Angling Club**
- 10. Beaulieu District Fisheries Board**
- 11. Belfast Lough Sea Angling and Conservation Club**
- 12. Berwickshire Marine Reserve**
- 13. Black House WaterSports Tiree**
- 14. Blue Marine Foundation**
- 15. Blue Planet Society**
- 16. Blue Ventures**
- 17. Captain Paul Watson Foundation**
- 18. Carna Conservation Initiative**
- 19. Cast Away with Katie Tunn**
- 20. Centre for Human Ecology**
- 21. Clean Sailors**
- 22. Click Book Stay**
- 23. Clyde Porpoise**

³ <https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/Griffin-Nephrops-latest.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.parliament.scot/get-involved/petitions/view-petitions/pe1951-reinstate-inshore-coastal-limit-on-the-use-of-dredge-and-trawl-fishing-gears>

24. Coastal Connection
25. Coast to Coast Surf School
26. Community Association of Lochs and Sounds (CAOLAS)
27. Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST)
28. Conor Ryan Photography
29. Craignish Restoration of Marine and Coastal Habitat (CROMACH)
30. Dive and Sea the Hebrides
31. Earth in Common
32. East Neuk Seaweeds
33. Eigg Environmental Action Group
34. Ellon Sub Aqua Club
35. Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust
36. Ethical Seafood Research
37. Fairlie Coastal Trust
38. Fauna & Flora International
39. 58°North Scottish Seaweed
40. Findhorn District Salmon Fisheries Board
41. Findhorn Nairn and Lossie Fisheries Trust
42. Firth of Forth Lobster Hatchery
43. Fish Legal
44. Freedom Diving
45. Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore
46. Friends of the Sound of Jura
47. Frogfish Photography
48. GalGael Trust
49. Heart of Argyll Wildlife
50. Hebrides Cruises
51. Highlands and Islands Environment Foundation
52. Isle Martin Trust
53. James Curley Fly Fishing
54. Johnson and Loftus Boat Builders
55. Kayak Summer Isles
56. Kilchoan Estate
57. Kilmarnock Sub Aqua Club
58. Knoydart Foundation Ranger Service
59. Little Loch Broom Marine Life
60. Loch Laxford Shellfish Ltd
61. Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association
62. Loch Visions
63. Lochaber Environmental Group
64. Lochnell Oysters
65. Low Impact Fishers of Europe
66. Mara Fish Restaurant and Deli
67. Marine Conservation Northern Ireland
68. Mikiety Ltd Shellfish Merchants
69. Mull Charters

70. Narwhal Expeditions
71. National Trust for Scotland
72. The Nature Library
73. Northern Ireland Federation of Sea Anglers
74. Northern Ireland Fly Fishing Association
75. Nourish Scotland
76. Oban Sea School
77. Oceana
78. Ocean Breeze Marine Services
79. Ocean Gives
80. Ockran Oysters
81. Open Seas
82. Orkney Skate Trust
83. Otter Lodge B and B
84. Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust
85. Pam van de Brug
86. Patagonia
87. Phyllis restaurant
88. Plastic at Bay
89. Project Baseline
90. Project Media
91. Project Seagrass
92. Puffin Dive Centre
93. River Eachaig Fisheries Syndicate
94. Salmon Aquaculture Reform Network Scotland
95. Saltwater Life
96. Save Kintyre Seas
97. Scotland the Big Picture
98. Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation
99. Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers
100. Scottish Salmon Think Tank
101. Scottish Scallop Divers' Association
102. Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network
103. Scottish Sub Aqua Club
104. Sealife Adventures
105. Seawilding
106. Sea Change
107. SeaDog Charters
108. Sea Freedom Kayaks
109. Sea Kayak Argyll and Bute
110. Sea the Change
111. Shark Guardian
112. Shark and Skate Citizen Science Scotland
113. Shellfish Safaris
114. Skye and Lochalsh Environment Forum
115. Skye Communities for Natural Heritage]

- 116. Skye Scallop Divers**
- 117. Snorkel Wild**
- 118. South Skye Seas initiative**
- 119. Staunch Industries**
- 120. SubSeaTV**
- 121. Sunny Side Ocean Defenders**
- 122. Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust**
- 123. Terra Mare**
- 124. That's Yer Dinner**
- 125. The Majestic Line**
- 126. The Ullapool Sea Savers**
- 127. The Wilderness Foundation UK**
- 128. University of Stirling Marine Conservation Society**
- 129. Ullapool Charters**
- 130. Ullapool Outdoors**
- 131. West Coast Matters**
- 132. West Sutherland Fisheries trust**
- 133. Wild Argyll**
- 134. WildFish**
- 135. Wild Rose Escapes**
- 136. Wreckspeditions**
- 137. WRASFB - Wester Ross Area Salmon Fishery Board**