17 April 2014

Dear Rob,

I am writing to advise you of the imminent implementation of fisheries management measures in the Lochs Duich, Long and Alsh Special Area of Conservation (SAC) by means of a licence condition. Lochs Duich, Long and Alsh SAC was designated for sub-tidal rocky reefs, and there is a statutory requirement to take measures to prevent deterioration.

Marine Scotland has recently identified fishing activity which can cause deterioration has been taking place within the site. It is therefore necessary to put management in place to prevent any further risk of deterioration and to allow the reefs to recover. There has been considerable dialogue with industry over the last few weeks to ensure that the measures are fit for purpose.

The licence condition will come into force at midnight on 20 April 2014, and will require mobile gear to be lashed and stowed while a vessel is within the relevant area. There will be an exception in the case of existing mobile gear fishing areas in the centre of Loch Alsh (for scallop dredgers and under 12m Nephrops vessels) and Loch Duich (for under 12m Nephrops vessels only). The co-ordinates of the area covered by the licence condition and the two existing mobile gear fishing areas are detailed in the separately attached map.

My intention is to replace the licence condition with measures made under the Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act 1984. The measures under the 1984 Act will also consider the management requirements of the overlapping possible Marine Protected Area, should I designate it later this year.

RICHARD LOCHHEAD