



Marine
Conservation
Society



Bill must be a lifeline for Scotland's seas

Scotland's environment charities call for tough measures to protect and effectively manage Scotland's seas in the Scottish Marine Bill

Scottish Environment LINK, the coalition of Scotland's environment charities has welcomed today's publication of the Government consultation on a Scottish Marine Bill as an important step towards effective management and protection of Scotland's seas.

Following an initial assessment of the consultation, environment charities are pleased that the consultation includes proposals for:

- A statutory marine planning system
- A marine management organisation (Marine Scotland) although the success of this organisation will depend on its final role and structure.
- Protection of marine wildlife including proposals for marine protected areas, selected on science-based ecological criteria.
- Marine objectives (including marine ecosystem objectives) founded on the five principles of sustainable development^[1]

Calum Duncan, chair of umbrella group Scottish Environment LINK's Scottish Marine Bill campaign and Scottish Conservation Manager for the Marine Conservation Society, said:

'We welcome the scope of the Scottish Marine Bill consultation, in particular the proposed new power to allow Scottish ministers to establish marine protected areas for species and habitats especially important to Scotland. These are urgently needed to help deliver a comprehensive network of sites to which Scotland has committed.'

Calum added:

'There are still some areas where there is significant room for improvement and we will be pushing to ensure that the Scottish Marine Bill is as strong as possible. It is vital that the proposals for marine protected areas are robust enough to ensure that our nationally important marine species and habitats are adequately protected. Of some concern for example, is the proposal that the legislation allows for deselecting a site or amending its boundary in the face of increases in shipping and the development of new industries.'

On the need for Scottish and UK administrations to work together to develop matching legislation, Calum added:

'We are also concerned that, similar to the UK Draft Marine Bill, there are no proposals for joint planning between administrations. Given that Scottish waters encompass the majority of UK seas it is essential that there is integration of plans between administrations and the ability to establish joint planning arrangements on a regional seas basis as well as a commitment from all UK Administrations to work together across political boundaries to achieve truly effective protection of UK seas.'

^[1] Living within environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using science responsibly.

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS

(1) Calum Duncan, Scottish Conservation Manager for the Marine Conservation Society and Scottish Environment LINK Marine Task Force Convenor is available for comment on 0131 226 6360 or 07841 985 595.

(2) To take action in support of a strong Scottish Marine Bill, go to www.savescottishseas.org

(3) Scottish Environment LINK's Save Scottish Seas campaign for a Scottish Marine Bill is a joint initiative by these members:

Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust
Marine Conservation Society
National Trust for Scotland
WWF Scotland

RSPB Scotland
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society

(4) The LINK Marine Bill Campaign is asking for a Scottish Marine Bill that includes:

- Effective protection for our marine wildlife, including a robust network of marine protected areas for marine life important to Scotland, designated using scientific criteria alone.
- A marine planning system founded on sustainable development principles to protect and restore Scotland's marine environment, delivering enforceable local plans.

- A Scottish Marine Management Organisation to ensure Scotland meets tough targets for the sustainable management and recovery of our seas, protects wildlife and resources for future generations and works closely with UK and other governments.

(5) Scottish Environment LINK is the network for Scotland's voluntary sector environmental organisations. LINK has 32 member organisations spanning interests across the natural environment and associated cultural heritage, representing around 500.000 members. Further information on LINK is available at www.scotlink.org

The campaign is funded by grants from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and the Tubney Charitable Trust. For more information visit the campaign website www.savescottishseas.org

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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