

Question 1. Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to establish a Marine Reserve in Lamlash Bay?

AGREE.

Question 2. Do you think there would be any (a) positive or (b) negative implications should a Marine Reserve be established in Lamlash Bay?

I think there would be huge positive implications for biodiversity should a Marine Reserve be established in Lamlash Bay. My research for my MSc on the historical impacts of fishing in the Firth of Clyde show that we have systematically fished out the top predators and have worked our way down the food web over the last 120 years. Biodiversity has declined and fisheries have suffered. This has weakened the resilience of the marine environment to future impacts and the Firth of Clyde fishing fleet is now mostly dependent on Norway Lobster and other invertebrates. Should these stocks collapse then there is little else left to fish.

Fully protecting Lamlash Bay will enable resilience to build up and biodiversity to increase. Fish stocks will also improve within the reserve, creating benefits for anglers and fishermen outside of the reserve after a few years as spillover of adults and export of larvae and eggs to nearby fishing grounds occurs. This has been shown by the Lundy No-Take Zone, where lobsters have increased in size and abundance, and spillover is now starting to occur into adjacent areas, benefiting fisheries.

It is likely that economic benefits will also be brought to Arran through the creation of a Marine Reserve through tourism.

Question 3. Are there any other points which you would like to make in relation to the proposed Lamlash Bay Marine Reserve?

It is vital that parts of the sea begin to be protected from extractive activity. We are currently fishing at unsustainable rates. From an historical perspective, vast changes have occurred in the Firth of Clyde marine ecosystem, and it is now at the point of collapse. The creation of a marine reserve will have benefits for the fishing community and the community of Arran. The benefits of full closures have been proven at Lundy after just a few years, and there are more benefits to come.

Lamlash Bay Marine Reserve MUST happen, and the proposed marine protected areas must also

be closed to mobile fishing gear permanently. This will have much greater benefits throughout the whole protected area, including for static gear fishermen and anglers.

Thank you

Ruth Thurstan

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