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## RSPB Scotland

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28 May 2008

Dear Mr Brown

### **Consultation on a Proposed Marine Reserve in Lamlash Bay**

RSPB Scotland welcomes the publication of this consultation on the creation of a Marine Reserve in Lamlash Bay and I am writing to offer our support for the proposal.

Scotland's seas and diverse coastline are home to a wealth of wildlife including over 45% of the EU's breeding seabirds. Our marine environment is also an important economic resource, supporting both extractive industry and many of Scotland's tourism businesses.

RSPB Scotland strongly supports the introduction of a system of marine spatial planning and the development of a comprehensive network of marine protected areas, which we hope will be implemented through Marine Act for both Scotland and the UK. We believe the proposed Marine Reserve is a welcome trial of one type of marine protected area (one that would fall into the "community-led" category in paragraph 36 of the recent SSTF paper on marine nature conservation, SSTF(08)21), which could be used to inform the future development of this type of marine site protection. While welcoming and supporting this scheme as an example of this type of marine protected area, it is important that the Scottish Government recognises, and maintains, its commitment to delivering, through a Marine Bill and other measures, the other types referred to in SSTF(08)21 – namely, Natura sites, the OSPAR network and other nationally important marine areas.

We would like to offer the following responses to the three consultation questions:

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

RSPB Scotland agrees with the proposal to create a Marine Reserve in Lamlash Bay. We believe this proposal has the potential to positively benefit both the marine environment and the local community on Arran.

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

**(a) Positive implications**

RSPB Scotland believes the proposed Marine Reserve will have positive impacts on the biodiversity within the Reserve Area through the management of fishing to achieve biodiversity benefits, and also has the potential to benefit the fishing industry by enhancing fish stocks.

In addition to the local benefits to the seas in and around Lamlash Bay, we believe this is a valuable trial of creating a Marine Reserve. The findings from Lamlash Bay will provide useful information to inform the creation of other marine protected sites in the future – particularly those that would fall into the “community-led” category in paragraph 36 of the recent SSTF paper on marine nature conservation, SSTF(08)21. In particular, we believe the monitoring of the Marine Reserve and control areas will provide useful data on the impacts of reduced fishing efforts.

The marine environment is extremely important to Arran as a basis for its tourism economy and we believe that a measure designed to protect and enhance marine wildlife will also be beneficial to the local economy. The popularity of outdoor pursuits on Arran and the success of the Isle of Arran Wildlife Festival demonstrate how fundamental a healthy environment and abundant wildlife is to the island’s tourism market.

**(b) Negative implications**

We do not foresee any negative implications of a Marine Reserve in Lamlash bay. However, it is important that dialogue with local fishing communities is maintained to ensure that any misunderstandings or perceived negative implications are addressed.

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

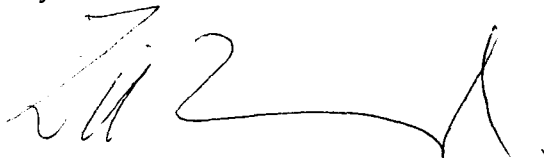
We note that substantial community support for the proposal has been demonstrated by COAST and is evidenced by their membership on Arran. We believe the commitment of the local

community to protecting and enhancing their local environment should be welcomed and supported.

A group chaired by the Firth of Clyde Forum has developed this proposal and we welcome this cross-sectoral approach and the involvement of a variety of interest groups and marine users. The Forum aims to encourage a partnership approach to marine management, in line with the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management and we note the important contribution the Forum has made during development of this proposal. As such, we would be very disappointed if the proposal was amended significantly as a result of this consultation – unless there is clear evidence presented for the need for change, and would urge the Scottish Government to implement the proposal and regulations as soon as possible.

I hope these comments are useful but please contact me if you have any queries on our response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zoë Clelland', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Zoë Clelland  
Senior Conservation Officer