



COAST response to the National Marine Plan Consultation

Introduction

The Community of Arran Seabed Trust's vision is for healthy seas around Arran and the Clyde. Our purpose is to ensure shared responsibility for the protection and restoration of the marine environment around Arran and the Clyde and the diversity of life it supports. In 2008 after over a decade of campaigning by Arran residents led by COAST, Scotland's first No Take Zone was created in Lamlash Bay. The NTZ is only one of three in the UK and won the Observer Ecover Ethical Award in 2008. The NTZ is a major feature of interest for visitors to Arran and a source of pride for residents. It is managed by the Lamlash Bay Implementation Group, which includes COAST, Marine Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage and The Clyde Forum. Research survey work, instigated and hosted by COAST, and led by York University PhD student Leigh Howarth, comparing the NTZ to areas outside the zone has produced the following results:

1. Scallops - These are larger and more plentiful in the NTZ.
2. Biodiversity - More individuals and a wider variety of species in all habitat types within the zone.
3. Lobster - All lobsters over 110mm have been found inside the NTZ.
4. Seafloor - Animals and plants that attach to the seafloor are twice as abundant in the NTZ.

The creation of the NTZ combined with effective community-led management and monitoring show that spatial marine conservation and restoration measures in the Clyde have the potential to gradually improve the marine environment. It also illustrates how spatial measures can bring benefits to fishermen (due to the spill over effect) and drive marine tourism. COAST's proposal for a South Arran Marine Protected Area is currently being considered by Marine Scotland and the Scottish Government. COAST expects the South Arran MPA to be designated within the next 6 months.

Consultation Questionnaire

Q1. Does the NMP appropriately guide management of Scotland's marine resources?

No. (see comments below).

Q2. Does the NMP appropriately set out the requirement for integration between marine planning and land use planning systems?

Yes, but it is essential coastal communities and marine NGOs have a real say and a vote within Regional Marine Planning Partnerships. These partnerships must be accountable for achieving MSFD and WFD good ecological and environmental status. They should not be allowed to become glorified forums supporting the status quo.

Q3. Does the NMP appropriately guide development of regional marine planning? What, if any, further guidance is required for regional marine planners in terms of implementation and how to interpret the NMP?

Local partnerships and planners must be given clear targets for achieving good environmental status in line with MSFD descriptors and the High Level Objectives. The Scottish Government has a duty to achieve GES in Scottish waters by 2020 and the partnerships must be tasked with achieving these medium term objectives.

Q4. The Marine Regional Boundaries Consultation proposed that in addition to regional marine planning, further integrated management of key marine areas would be achieved by designating the Pentland Firth; the Minches and the mouth of the Clyde as Strategic Sea Areas.

Should the NMP set out specific marine planning policies for Strategic Sea Areas?

Yes. In the Clyde these should recognise the degraded state of the Clyde sea bed and loss of commercially viable white fish stocks and the need for immediate restorative action.

Q5. Are the objectives and policies in the NMP appropriate to ensure they further the achievement of sustainable development, including protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of the health of the sea?

The health of the marine environment must be the top priority of the national marine plan. Without a healthy and productive marine environment there can be no sustainable marine-based industries.

Q6. Chapter 3 sets out strategic objectives for the National Marine Plan and Chapters 6 – 16 sets out sector specific marine objectives.

Is this the best approach to setting economic, social and marine ecosystem objectives and objectives relating to the mitigation of and, adaptation to climate change?

This seems a reasonable approach to setting out objectives but ultimately objectives and workplans must be integrated so that our seas are managed in a way that delivers healthy and productive seas. Each sector has to realise it has a part to play in achieving these wider objectives and no sector

or vested interests should be given special concessions.

Q7. Do you have any other comments on Chapters 1 – 3?

Scotland's Marine Atlas does not draw enough attention to the degraded nature of the Clyde Ecosystem.

There needs to be a far greater commitment to recovering degraded ecosystems, habitats, species and fish stocks. While it is not possible to define what pristine conditions might have been in the past it is possible to set targets for recovering the health of our marine ecosystems.

General Planning Policies

Q8. Are the general policies in Chapter 4 appropriate to ensure an approach of sustainable development and use of the marine area? Are there alternative policies that you think should be included? Are the policies on integration with other planning systems appropriate? A draft circular on the integration with terrestrial planning has also been published - would further guidance be useful?

Gen 1. The precautionary principle must apply where an activities sustainability status is uncertain. Industries such as aquaculture, bottom trawling for prawns and scallop dredging must provide Environmental Impact Assessments before being given permission/ licences to operate and/or land fish.

Gen 5. In many circumstances 'multiple use' is desirable and achievable, however there are activities where this will not be possible. Dredging and trawling for instance are incompatible with many conservation and restoration objectives and should certainly not be allowed in marine protected areas. COAST recommends these activities are excluded from inshore waters within 3 miles of the coast in favour of more sustainable methods such as creeling and scallop diving.

Gen 7. Marine planning should aim to achieve GES under the WFD and MSFD.

Gen 8. Stakeholder involvement on an equal basis is very important. This has not been the case in the past and stakeholders such as sea anglers, creelers and community groups have not been allowed to participate on an equal basis in marine planning. On the other hand dredgers and trawlers have had an effective veto on management measures. This amounts to regulatory capture by one sector.

Gen 9. Consultations should be real and not just a box ticking exercise. Too often 'awkward' views which do not chime with the status quo are ignored. Consultations need to be far more user friendly. The current raft of

consultations is a case in point. References to 'associated downloadable documents' mean nothing to most people for example. There must be more effort to make consultations relevant and engaging. Further the public should be actively engaged in planning at all stages. It is not enough to give them a small window of time to put forward their ideas. People on Arran and around the Clyde have made it clear they want MPAs. Their democratic voice must be listened to.

Gen 10. Given the disastrously poor management of our seas to date, the precautionary approach must apply at all times. The best scientific evidence available should be used to make well-informed management decisions. However, gaps in scientific research and knowledge should not be used as a way of prolonging the status quo in favour of vested interests. (COAST notes that there is already an attempt to reject the scientific evidence supporting the Arran MPA which has already been independently assessed.)

Gen 11. The MSFD must be fully implemented in line with the 11 Descriptors for GES.

Gen 12. The word 'significant' should be removed. There are a number of slippery phrases in this document allowing opt outs for damaging activities. This is one of them. MPAs, NTZs and other spatial measures are important in terms of the conservation and restoration of species and habitats but must also be regarded as fisheries management measures which can contribute to improved fish stocks and ecosystem resilience. It is a major failing of the Marine Scotland 2010 Act that MPAs have been divorced from fisheries management. This is another example of regulatory capture.

Gen 13. Many important wreck sites have been lost due to bottom active gear which has torn apart wooden wreck sites, destroying their historic and recreational dive value. It is important remaining sites are protected.

Gen 14. It is easy for us to take our scenery for granted. COAST accepts that our sea and landscapes are working landscapes. We agree that new developments must be considered carefully in terms of their visual impact. Poorly thought-out or located developments devalue areas for residents and visitors reducing their sense of well being.

Gen 18. It is notable that the Clyde is currently failing to meet GES under the WFD. This is due to the abrasive action of bottom gear on the seabed and their impact on infaunal benthic communities, important for nutrient recycling and a functioning marine ecosystem.

Gen 19. We welcome the stated intention of restoring and recovering habitats such as seagrass and saltmarsh beds important to carbon capture and for mitigating climate change. We also note that improved marine biodiversity and resilience will help to mitigate some of the effects of climate change.

Q9. Is the marine planning policy for landscape and seascape an appropriate approach?

See above

Q10. Are there alternative general policies that you think should be included in Chapter 4?

The public's democratic right to fish and the Government's duty to manage our waters for the benefit of all should be a general policy. Within this context all fisheries must be managed within maximum sustainable yields and should not impact detrimentally on other fisheries.

Guide to Sector Chapters

Q11. Do you have any comments on Chapter 5?

Are there other sectors which you think should be covered by the National Marine Plan?

No

Sea Fisheries

Q12. Do you have any comments on Sea Fisheries, Chapter 6?

It is not clear how the national marine plan, regional marine planning partnerships, Inshore Fisheries Groups and the achievement of the WFD and the MSFD will be integrated. How these relationships will work in practice needs to be fully developed.

We have particular concerns about the IFGs. As currently constituted these are dysfunctional and unrepresentative of legitimate stakeholders such as creelers, sea anglers and coastal communities. At present they can only be considered as a form of institutionalised regulatory capture. The English IFCAs are a better model.

At present the IFG management plans lack commitment to the MSFD descriptors and high level objectives.

Displacement

Much is made about the potential for displacement, particularly with regard to MPAs and fishing effort. However COAST notes that nationally only 2% of fishing activity will be effected. Displacement is a function of over capacity, poor practice and bad management, not of marine conservation and restoration. The national marine plan must address the issue of

potential displacement activity by seeking to reduce unsustainable fishing effort and by managing our waters as a whole.

Q13. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included

A key objective for fisheries should be to end the impact of bottom active gear on inshore waters by excluding dredging and bottom trawling from within 3 miles of Scottish shores. The Scottish Government should look to Scandinavia for examples of best practice in this regard.

Aquaculture

Q14. Does Chapter 7 appropriately set out the relationship between terrestrial and marine planning for Aquaculture? Are there any planning changes which might be included to optimise the future sustainable development of aquaculture?

All fish farms which have not undergone Environmental Impact Assessments should be required to complete EIAs within 12 months.

Q15. Do you have any comments on Aquaculture, Chapter 7?

As currently operated fin fish farms cannot be regarded as sustainable and should therefore not be a part of Scotland's marine planning or development objectives.

Q16. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

Fin fish farms decrease the resilience of our inshore waters and are highly susceptible to disease. Rather than promoting an industry which produces an unsustainable and inferior product that has a detrimental impact on wild salmonids the Scottish Government must concentrate on improving the health and productivity of our inshore waters and salmon rivers, particularly on the west coast.

Wild Salmon and Migratory Fish

Q17. Do you have any comments on Wild Salmon and Migratory Fish, Chapter 8?

COAST fully supports efforts to restore wild salmon stocks and the quality and productivity of Scotland's salmon rivers.

Q18. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

There should be presumption in favour of wild salmon and migratory fish over farmed fin fish.

Oil & Gas

Q19. Do you have any comments on Oil and Gas, Chapter 9?

No comment

Q20. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

Comments

Carbon Capture & Storage (CCS)

Q21. Do you have any comments on Carbon Capture and Storage, Chapter 10?

Naturally occurring carbon sinks must be protected and enhanced through management measures which protects them whether or not they are in protected areas.

Q22. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

Comments

Offshore Renewable Energy

Q23. Should the NMP incorporate spatial information for Sectoral Marine Plans?

No comment

Q24. Do you have any comments on Offshore Renewable Energy, Chapter 11?

No

Q25. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

Comments

Recreation and Tourism

Q26. Do you have any comments on Recreation and Tourism, Chapter 12?

The impact on this sector (particularly sea angling and marine wildlife cruises) due to over fishing and continuing damaging practices such as scallop dredging is enormous. A healthy and productive marine environment underpins sustainable fishing but is also a huge attraction for recreational sea anglers, kayakers, yachtsmen and eco tourism ventures. Following the collapse of white fish stocks in the Clyde sea angling festivals have ceased and marine life tour operators have not developed to the same extent as elsewhere in Scotland. As one of the most accessible and beautiful sea areas in the UK the Clyde will always have the potential to draw visitors. If marine life is allowed to recover there will wide ranging economic benefits based on increased use of the Clyde for recreation and tourism. Chapter 12 does not mention the importance of recovering biodiversity in areas such as the Clyde and should place more emphasis on marine health and productivity.

Q27. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

We note that most recreational activity occurs within 3 miles of the shore. By excluding dredgers and bottom trawlers from this area it would be possible to improve the productivity of these waters and increase their attraction to a wide variety of recreational users including sea anglers.

Transport (Shipping, Ports, Harbours & Ferries)

Q28. Should the NMP specifically designate national significant ports/harbours as described in Chapter 13: Marine Planning Policy Transport 2?

No comment

Q29. Do you have any comments on Transport, Chapter 13?

Shipping and transport have a role to play in ensuring biosecurity. This is particularly important in areas such as the Clyde which are already subject to many diverse pressures.

COAST supports the development and improvement of ferry routes and schedules to Arran, other islands and areas such as the Kintyre.

Q30. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

Comments

Telecommunication Cables

Q31. Do you have any comments on telecommunications, Chapter 14?

No comment

Q32. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this chapter?

Comments

Defence

Q33. Do you have any comments on Defence, Chapter 15?

No comment

Q34. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

Comments

Aggregates

Q35. Do you have any comments on Aggregates, Chapter 16?

No comment

Q36. Are there alternative planning policies that you think should be included in this Chapter?

Comments

Business and Regulatory

Q37. Please tell us about any potential economic or regulatory impacts, either positive or negative, that you think any or all of the proposals in this consultation may have.

Only if our seas are managed properly and in line with achieving the Scottish Government's vision will the marine environment continue to

provide the ecosystems services we all rely upon. The short term business interests of commercial stakeholders should not be allowed to undermine marine health either locally or nationally. Marine Scotland and the Scottish Government must show real leadership in marine planning. Where power is devolved to marine regional planning partnerships responsibility for achieving MSFD Descriptors and High Level Objectives must also be devolved and these bodies held to account.

Equality

Q38. Do you believe that the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan discriminates disproportionately between persons defined by age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, race and religion and belief?

No

Q39. If you answered yes to question 23 in what way do you believe that the creation of a Scottish National Marine Plan is discriminatory?

Comments

Sustainability Appraisal

Q40. Do have any views/comments on the Sustainability Appraisal carried out for the NMP?

We have the following comment on the Non Technical Summary.

17. SEPA in its RBMP identifies mobile gear as the main pressure on Clyde waters failing to meet 'Good' status. This section should be amended to reflect this.

COAST 13.11.13

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CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Please identify the main area of interest you identify with :

Nature Conservation

Fisheries

Industry/Transport

Energy

Aquaculture

Recreation/tourism

Academic/scientific

Local authority

Community group

Public sector/Regulatory body

Local Coastal Partnership

Other (Please state)

Comments