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Subject: Consultation on Seal Haul-Out Sites
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Consultation on Seal Haul-Out Sites

from
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While I wish to respond as Individual, I am co-owner with my husband of a day charter boat from Oban, operating for more than 20 years, and I was Secretary of the Argyll Charter Boats Association for 7 years until 2006. I am familiar with the Oban area, and have limited my responses to my local area only.

Elaine Lauder

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

General questions

Question 1: Do you consider that the overall number of seal haul out sites proposed at national/regional/local level represent a reasonable balance between seal conservation and other sustainable activities around the Scottish coastline?

Comments

no – not enough attention has been paid to local tourism businesses depending on seal viewing for their livelihoods

Question 2: Do you consider that additional sites should be included at national/regional/local level and, if so, why, how many additional sites and which sites?

Comments

Simply choosing those sites with the largest numbers of seals is too simplistic and does not accurately reflect the importance of smaller seal colonies to local tourism providers

There are several well advertised and well supported small day charter boats running regular visits several times a day each to seal colonies around the north west of Kerrera. Other sites up and down the Sound of Kerrera are visited depending on where seals have been displaced on any particular day according to any number of local conditions.

– see attached note provided by charter skipper from Oban.

Details of tourism operators providing this type of service to visitors in Oban can be found on lots of websites and directory listings - for instance on the Argyll Charter Boats Association website at www.acba.org.uk; the Oban and Lorn Tourism Association website at www.olta.org.uk - amongst others.

I think it reflects very badly on Marine Scotland, Sea Mammal Research Unit, Scottish Natural Heritage and Marine Scotland Science in compiling this consultation that they have not recognised the strategic importance and value of these activities in our local area.

Question 3: Do you consider that fewer sites should be included at national/ regional/local level and, if so, why, how many fewer sites and which sites?

Comments

not at the expense of threatening livelihoods dependent on attracting business based on having healthy continuing populations of seals available

Question 4: Do you agree that existing Special Areas of Conservation for seals should be added to the list of seal haul out sites being considered for possible designation?

Comments

Question 5: Do you consider that particular national or regional level activities might represent a potential risk of harassment to seals on haul out sites in general?

Comments

Wildlife tourism operators are well aware of the potential to harass seals; and codes of conduct to prevent this are by and large well adhered to.

Inevitable conflict arises where commercial fin fish farming is permitted in areas previously known to have seal colonies present.

Question 6: Do you consider that particular local activities might represent a potential risk of harassment to seals on particular haul out sites included on the list?

Comments

I can't comment on any sites other than those I am familiar with (which you have missed out!) but locally around Oban there are growing numbers of sailing visitors and sea kayakers who do not impact on the existing seal colonies.

Wildlife watching tourism and all types of outdoor sports and leisure and watersports activities are continuing to grow across Scotland.

Question 7: Do you have any views on whether the boundaries of particular haul out sites included on the list might be revised ?

Comments

Equality assessment

The Scottish Government must ensure that any policies that it implements do not unduly discriminate against persons defined by age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, race and religion and belief. We would welcome your views on whether you believe that any of the propositions set out in this consultation paper will unduly impact on any of these groups mentioned.

Comments

Document attached

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Seal Haul Out Sites

Author ; Ron Stevenson. Charter boat skipper Oban

There are several haul out sites within the Firth of Lorne S A C for which I will not include latitude and longitude since they are well documented i.e. ; Greag Islands, Appin Rocks and Lismore West.

Follows a list of areas where I frequently see seals both common and grey hauled out Basking

Sound of Mull

Tobermorry Bay Calve Island

N 56' 37 39
W 06 02 75 +

N 56 37 29
W 06 02 89

Eilean Rubha an Ridre

N 56 30 33
W 05 41 95

Islands and skerries

N 56 30 05
W 05 41 64

Glass Eilean

N 56 29 80
W 05 42 81

Scallastle

N 56 29 48
W 05 43 40

Firth of Lorne

Rubha Cronn

N 56 29 37
W 05 35 71

Bernera Island

N 56 29 51
W 05 34 95

Bernera Isle North

N 56 29 91
W 05 34 50

Lady Rock

N 56 26 94
W 05 36 98

Loch Donn		N 56 25 65 W 05 38 70
Grass Point		N 56 24 90 W 05 39 10
Eilean Gamnha (Kerrera)		N 56 24 99 W 05 32 27
Sgeir Dhonn		N 56 25 21 W 05 31 32
Ottir Mhor		N 56 24 93 W 05 31 56
Cutter Rock		N 56 22 79 W 05 32 28
Rubh Garbh Ard (West Ardmucknish)		N 56 28 46 W 05 27 55
Eilean Beag		N 56 27 67 W 05 25 61
Sgeir an Eitich	(Ganavan)	N 56 26 23 W 05 29 04
Drying Rock	+	N 56 26 16 W 05 28 74
Loch Creran		
Glas Eilean		N 56 32 10 W 05 25 68
Dearg Sgeir		N 56 32 23 W 05 25 17
North Shian		N 56 32 04 W 05 23 64