

South Arran Marine Protected Area Proposal

This is taken from Appendix D- Consultation Questions in response to the Marine protected Areas Network proposals Consultation . (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/07/2072/downloads>)

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you support the development of an MPA network in Scotland's Seas?

Yes ✓ No

Undoubtedly. MPA networks are not a recent development. Countries worldwide have implemented MPA networks (New Zealand, USA and Australia to name a few) and stakeholders have benefited from a variety of changes, from improved populations in marine life to a boost in marine tourism.

It was estimated that over 20 years, a network of MPAs in Scottish waters could generate in the region of £6.3billion-£10 billion, now although we may never be able to fully quantify the worth of Scottish Seas, a coherent MPA makes environmental, social and economic sense.

Individual possible Nature Conservation MPAs

22. Do you have any comments on the case for designation, management options and socioeconomic assessment for the *South Arran* possible Nature Conservation MPA?

Designation:

Yes ✓ No

The proposed South Arran MPA covers a large proportion of the Isle of Arran's inshore waters. Scotland's inshore waters are home to vulnerable marine species and the Marine Priority Features that would benefit from the proposed Arran MPA include maerl beds, seagrass beds and herring spawning grounds.

Stretching out to 3nm, the MPA would encompass a large proportion of delicate substrates which take significantly longer to recover and settle after fishing disturbances. Such substrates include mixed sediments and reef.

Along with the Clyde Sea Sill and the Loch Fyne & Loch Goil proposed MPAs, the South Arran MPA could be the start of an effectively managed and ecologically coherent network of MPA which are so necessary with Scottish waters, let alone the Clyde.

Management Options:

Yes ✓ No

Having read COAST's proposed management options, I agree that all bottom towed trawls, dredgers and hydraulic gear should be excluded from fishing within the proposed MPA.

Following academic and government publications (including the Clyde Ecosystem Review, 2012; Heath & Speirs, 2011), the Firth of Clyde gained considerable media attention after it was identified as one of the most degraded marine environments in the UK, primarily due to over a century of overfishing and ineffective management.

Despite this acknowledgement, other than Scotland's first No Take Zone (NTZ) (2.65 km²) in Lamlash Bay, no permanent marine spatial measures have been implemented in the Clyde with the sole purpose of protecting fish stocks. Legislation for the Firth of Clyde's cod closure states that bottom trawling is prohibited except for trawling for Norway lobster within the cod closure box. This management measure fails to prevent bottom trawling.

Prohibiting the use of mobile gear within the proposed MPA would be a step towards fish stock recovery within the Clyde Sea area. Fishing methods such as creeling, shellfish diving and angling should be allowed within the MPA yet it is vital that they are properly managed. The Lamlash Bay NTZ is a fantastic example for showing that restricting gear has the potential to improve and restore the Clyde's marine environment.

Socioeconomic Assessment:

Yes No

A healthy and productive sea is vital to the economy of coastal communities around the Clyde.

Figures have shown that the main fisheries in the Clyde are for nephrops and scallops. These species are low tropic level species which fetch a low economic value. Encouraging the protection, and thus restoration of one abundant fin fish species such as cod, haddock and herring would see catch value increase.

Data collected by the Scottish Government has clearly shown a decline in fishermen and fishing vessels actively fishing in the Clyde. Implementing and enforcing MPAs would benefit commercial fishermen.

Sea angling is a long established leisure activity in the Clyde and the area once had a reputation of being one of the best sea angling destinations in the UK. Due to the decline in catchable fish, the Clyde is no longer a hotspot for this economic driver and the angling charter fleet has now gone and angler numbers are much reduced.

Increased biodiversity and productivity in could lead to increased job opportunities for fishermen and promote key economic drivers, both of which will benefit coastal communities whose livelihoods relies so heavily upon the state of the marine environment.

All of the above:

Yes ✓ No

The proposed Clyde MPAs are a great step towards a successful Clyde 2020 project and will assist the Scottish Government with their legal obligation to achieve good environmental status in Scottish waters by 2020. In addition it will also assist the Government to demonstrate a well-managed network of MPAs by the end of 2016.

Some sectors in the UK have shunned the idea of MPAs. MPAs should not be put in place to ban all activity from occurring within them, they need to be used to encourage sustainable activities by taking an ecosystem approach. Implementation of MPAs are increasingly important given the unknown effects of climate change or acidification upon the marine environment. MPAs are required not only for species recovery but also for species resilience to the predicted changes in marine habitats.

Scotland's seas have enough 'paper parks'. What they need now is effective, fair and realistic management.