

## South Arran Marine Protected Area Proposal

This is taken from Appendix D- Consultation Questions in response to the Marine protected Areas Network proposals Consultation

[.\(http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/07/2072/downloads\)](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/07/2072/downloads)

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

Yes

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

I agree wholeheartedly with the designation of the south of Arran as an MPA. It is an important area for marine wildlife with complex zones of seabed ecology providing a range of habitats that contribute to the overall biodiversity of the area. I am confused as to why Black Guillemot has not been included as a priority feature in this area as they breed and feed within the proposed MPA. I would like to see an MPA that aspires to protect and promote wildlife- not just maintaining the status quo, but also encouraging regeneration and increasing biomass and biodiversity in the area. Ideally the MPA should be extended around the entire coast of Arran to protect areas to the north as well, including even more breeding black guillemots.

Management Options:

Yes

The MPA should exclude mobile fishing of any kind throughout its boundaries, but could allow sustainable fishing practices such as creeling and angling that support the local community through tourism and small scale fishing. I'm completely opposed to allowing any dredging or trawling of any kind within the MPA. Selective management options that protect only small areas of the MPA would lead to relic features, and not encourage the recovery of biodiversity in the area. Many of the zones within the MPA are poorly understood, and their vulnerability to damage from mobile fishing gear is unknown. The danger of unwitting damage to seabed substrates whose role in the ecology of the area is not understood is of genuine concern. I would hate to see an "MPA light" with only small isolated patches within it protected from further damage, when we at last have the opportunity to protect a complex area of demonstrable importance, in its entirety.

I feel that an over emphasis has been placed on the sensitivities of fishing interests, to the detriment of the environment, and the benefits to the local community, against a background of limited research and assumptions

based on lack of data.

Socioeconomic Assessment:

Yes

The South Arran Marine Protected area is a small percentage of the Firth of Clyde and as such presents a limited loss of area to commercial fishing interests. Such interests tend to be focussed on short term financial gain rather than long term sustainability- this has been demonstrated by decades of over fishing in the area, despite warnings from marine biologists and collapse of specific stocks.

The South Arran MPA presents a fantastic opportunity to refocus the management plans to encompass sustainable practices, and promote the interests of the communities that live alongside the area. Creeling and angling have the potential to support local businesses that will directly benefit Arran. It is currently very difficult for tourists to buy seafood caught around Arran's waters. In the past Arran has had angling festivals that have boosted tourism.

I write this as the owner of a successful local business that depends on the on-going health natural environment of Arran for economic success. ([www.arranwildwalks.co.uk](http://www.arranwildwalks.co.uk)) I'm a wildlife guide who has clients who come to the island to enjoy the diversity of marine wildlife such as seals, otters, black guillemot, porpoise, gannets, and red throated divers. Otter watching is particularly popular and the features within the MPA such as seagrass beds are important feeding areas for these protected mammals.

My business depends on the health of the ecosystem, but I also see huge potential in future for all island businesses, as a destination for wildlife tourism that rivals anywhere in the world. Elsewhere, communities have benefitted from the increased revenue that nature-based tourism brings such as through scuba diving, snorkelling and wildlife watching boat and vehicle tours. The natural environment is cited as a significant factor in the decision making process for visitors to Arran. Opportunities to protect and improve this should not be overlooked. These are long term economic benefits for remote communities that are sustainable and far reaching.

Any Other Comments:

I'm concerned about how the MPA will be policed. If the entire area receives full protection from dredging and trawling, it will be relatively straightforward to police. Should only small features be protected, it will be very difficult for this to happen. Furthermore, as has been shown with the NTZ in Lamlash Bay, even in a clearly defined area, it is difficult to prove an infringement has taken place, even when it is obvious to all observers that it

has. Boats conceal their numbers, come in at night, and have to be caught in the act. For the MPA to be a success, it needs to be large, simple and easy to police. Any other option is likely to result in a “paper park”, with no enforcement and little protection.