



Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust

Clyde Report Highlights Need for Increased Protection of Inshore Fisheries

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Campaigners working to promote the sustainable management of Scotland's inshore waters have welcomed a Government-backed report which provides hope for the future of the Clyde.

A study by Marine Scotland into the state of the Clyde estuary, stretching from the Mull of Kintyre in Argyll round to Corsewell Point in Dumfries and Galloway, has admitted the eco-system has been altered by human activity but suggests there is hope for recovery.

The [Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust](#) (SIFT) is calling on the Scottish Government to use the report as an important 'start point' for a process of recovery for the Firth of Clyde and the creation of a sustainable economic future for communities up and down the coast.

SIFT represents a coalition of community and maritime interest groups working to replace unfair, short-termist fisheries policies with a mix of sustainable and resilient practices which support existing jobs and create new ones.

The charity is designing a model sustainable fishery on the Firth of Clyde. This will be in the form of a large reserve which bans trawlers but would still allow traditional creel fishing and line fishing. SIFT believes such a move will help the Government to achieve its twin aims for the Clyde as a test area for sustainable fishing and demonstrate leadership in terms of ecosystem restoration.

Robert Younger, Chairman of SIFT, said: "The Scottish Public will be concerned to learn that the Firth of Clyde fin fishery, an historic and significant public asset, has been rendered commercially worthless because of bad fishing practice and they will want reassurance that the Scottish Government will not hesitate to take all the necessary restoration measures.

"We agree there is a very good chance of recovery for the Clyde using local restoration measures and believe this is vital as the ecosystem is extremely degraded. The once great white fish, herring and recreational fisheries are now closed or a minute fraction of their former state.

"Recent changes to legislation have had a profound effect on the fishery, in particular the decision to allow trawling within three nautical miles of the coast. The Scottish Government should re-establish the successful coastal reserve areas that were abolished in the late 20th century in order to enable the recovery of the Clyde. These will stop prawn trawlers and scallop dredgers from harming fish nurseries on the sea bed and catching larger fish as by catch."

Scotland's inshore waters are important. They extend 12 nautical miles from Scotland's 18,000km of coastline, cover over half of the country's territorial area and were historically a rich source of wealth for coastal communities.

Despite their importance management has been neglected. Over-fishing and the use of fishing gears which damage habitats have not only been permitted but promoted. As a consequence the inshore ecosystem has been degraded and valuable fin-fish stocks have collapsed to the point that coastal communities no longer enjoy a mixed and vibrant economy.



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SIFT promotes fisheries policies which conserve and restore the diversity of the marine ecosystem. The charity aims to assist the return of a more lucrative, sustainable and mixed economy featuring revived fin-fisheries, recreational sea angling, traditional shell fish creeling and scallop diving as well as leisure activities which rely on a healthy sea such as wildlife tourism.

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