



Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust

MEDIA COVERAGE

THE SCOTSMAN 25 10 2018



# Attenborough demands MSPs protect vital kelp beds

● Impassioned plea is broadcaster's first foray into Scottish politics

By KATRINE BUSSEY

Renowned naturalist Sir David Attenborough has insisted it is "absolutely imperative" that action is taken to protect kelp in Scotland's waters.

The Blue Planet broadcaster made what is thought to be his first intervention into politics north of the Border to call on MSPs to "take the necessary action" to preserve the marine habitats.

He made the plea as Holyrood prepares to vote on new legislation, which if passed, would ban dredging for kelp in Scottish waters.

Green MSP Mark Ruskell successfully amended the

Scottish Crown Estate Bill to ban the removal of entire kelp plants, allowing harvesting only where the plant could recover.

Sir David stressed it was "absolutely imperative that we protect our kelp forests", saying they provide a vital habitat for a "wide array of species".

He spoke out after the first application for industrial scale dredging of the seaweed in Scotland sparked a petition signed by more than 14,000 people.

A special Help the Kelp campaign was also set up by the Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust (SIFT).

Ayr based firm Marine Biopolymers reportedly wanted to harvest 30,000 tonnes of kelp each year off the west coast by specially adapted boats.

But Sir David, who is the vice president of the conservation



↑ Sir David Attenborough has called for action to preserve marine habitats PICTURE: JANE BARLOW/PA

group Fauna and Flora International (FFI), said dredging in this way would be a "wholly short-sighted measure that risks the wholesale devastation of our kelp beds".

He said: "Charles Darwin was one of the first people to recognise just how important kelp forests are for our oceans, comparing them in diversity to rainforests.

"These kelp forests - which can be found right here,

around the coast of the British Isles - not only form an important part of the food chain, but also act as a vital habitat for a wide array of species.

"Their thick foliage offers food and safety from predators, and provides a nursery ground where juvenile fish can mature in safety.

"Look closely among the intricate stems and fronds of kelp, and you will find a range of fascinating sea life, from

invertebrates such as sea stars, anemones and limpets, to mammals such as sea otters.

"Many of the fish species, such as cod, that are so important to us economically and culturally are also found here."

He added: "For these reasons and many more (carbon storage being just one), it is absolutely imperative that we protect our kelp forests."

COMMENT, PAGE 30

Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust

5 Rose Street, Thorn House, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR

Registered Scottish Charity (No SC042334), Company No. 399582

T 0131 2432 749



Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust

THE SCOTSMAN Thursday 25 October 2018

SCOTSMAN.COM @THESCOTSMAN

# Attenborough demands MSPs protect vital kelp beds

● Impassioned plea is broadcaster's first foray into Scottish politics

By **KATRINE BUSSEY**

Renowned naturalist Sir David Attenborough has insisted it is "absolutely imperative" that action is taken to protect kelp in Scotland's waters.

The Blue Planet broadcaster made what is thought to be his first intervention into politics north of the Border to call on MSPs to "take the necessary action" to preserve the marine habitats.

He made the plea as Holyrood prepares to vote on new legislation, which if passed, would ban dredging for kelp in Scottish waters.

Green MSP Mark Ruskell successfully amended the

Scottish Crown Estate Bill to ban the removal of entire kelp plants, allowing harvesting only where the plant could recover.

Sir David stressed it was "absolutely imperative that we protect our kelp forests", saying they provide a vital habitat for a "wide array of species".

He spoke out after the first application for industrial scale dredging of the seaweed in Scotland sparked a petition signed by more than 14,000 people.

A special Help the Kelp campaign was also set up by the Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust (SIFT).

Ayr based firm Marine Biopolymers reportedly wanted to harvest 30,000 tonnes of kelp each year off the west coast by specially adapted boats.

But Sir David, who is the vice president of the conservation



↑ Sir David Attenborough has called for action to preserve marine habitats

PICTURE: JANE BARLOW/PA

group Fauna and Flora International (FFI), said dredging in this way would be a "wholly short-sighted measure that risks the wholesale devastation of our kelp beds".

He said: "Charles Darwin was one of the first people to recognise just how important kelp forests are for our oceans, comparing them in diversity to rainforests."

"These kelp forests - which can be found right here,

around the coast of the British Isles - not only form an important part of the food chain, but also act as a vital habitat for a wide array of species.

"Their thick foliage offers food and safety from predators, and provides a nursery ground where juvenile fish can mature in safety.

"Look closely among the intricate stems and fronds of kelp, and you will find a range of fascinating sea life, from

invertebrates such as sea stars, anemones and limpets, to mammals such as sea otters.

"Many of the fish species, such as cod, that are so important to us economically and culturally are also found here."

He added: "For these reasons and many more (carbon storage being just one), it is absolutely imperative that we protect our kelp forests."

COMMENT, PAGE 30

Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust

5 Rose Street, Thorn House, Edinburgh, EH2 2PR

Registered Scottish Charity (No SC042334), Company No. 399582

T 0131 2432 749