

Roddie Macpherson submission of 24 August 2022

PE1951/Q: Reinstate inshore coastal limit on the use of dredge and trawl fishing gears

I support the submissions of the Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation in respect of the designation of restricted fishing within a 3 mile limit.

In my view, the continued sanctioning of fishing by dredge in Scottish waters is shameful. Despite the claims of Marine Scotland, Scotland's marine habitats are being wrecked. It's no use comparing current conditions to 30 years ago and saying everything is fine. Thirty years ago, a hundred years ago, the fish stocks and the marine environments were already sorely depleted. There is nothing sustainable about most fishing practices in our seas, and, to me, the Scottish Government's response is neither timeous, adequate, or convincing.

We're not looking for a 'world leading' answer (I wish civil servants and politicians would drop this vacuous phrase). We need practical measures, urgently, to ensure that the next generation has access to healthy fish stocks and a resilient marine environment; this will require a huge step-change from the status quo. There is nothing on the horizon to give confidence that those with powers to act will do so.

The 3 mile limit was disbanded largely in response to the lobbying by the very sector which causes the most damage, the trawling/dredging fleet. It is therefore not surprising that this sector will oppose the restrictions being sought. The question is: Will the Scottish Government support this petition or fall in line with the demands of the trawlermen to continue almost unfettered access to our seas?

I ask the Petitions Committee to do the right thing and support the further consideration of this petition.