



DEFA Rheyenn Chymmyltaght, Bee as Eirinys
The Department of Environment, Food
And Agriculture

DEFA Response to the views put forward in response to the consultation on the draft Isle of Man Fisheries Statement

The Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture of the Isle of Man Government ('the Department') would like to thank those organisations and individuals that submitted their views on the draft Isle of Man Fisheries Statement.

The responses submitted have been considered and will inform the development of the final text of the Isle of Man Fisheries Statement, which the Department expects to be present to Tynwald later this year.

The responses received were, on the whole, largely supportive of the content of the draft Isle of Man Fisheries Statement. This document highlights some specific concerns and views that were presented in the consultation responses, and provides the Department's view in response to some of the suggestions and concerns raised by consultees.

Theme 1: Prohibition of commercial fishing

Some responses to the consultation raised a view that commercial fishing, of any description, should be prohibited in the territorial waters of the Island through a "blanket ban" approach. The Department's view is that such an extreme change in policy is both unwarranted and unnecessary, particularly given that commercial fisheries offer the potential for a sustainable, low-carbon source of protein to the Island and further afield, as well as generating valuable jobs at sea and ashore. The Department's view is that sustainable fisheries are part of the solution to food security, the climate emergency and the biodiversity emergency.

Theme 2: Marine Nature Reserves and "30 by 30"

Some responses raised the view that the Department, as part of the Isle of Man Fisheries Statement, should include a commitment to designate 30% of the territorial sea as fully protected and managed Marine Nature Reserves by the year 2030 ('30 by 30'), citing that this would be in line with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Currently, just over 10% of the Island's territorial waters are designated as Marine Nature Reserves, all of which exist within the coastal zone inside the three nautical mile limit. This equates to just over 50% protection within the 0-3 nautical mile area. These designations meet the Department's [Biodiversity Strategy](#), which aimed to have at least 10% of the marine environment under statutory protection by the year 2020.

Moving forward, the Department will continue to place a significant emphasis on preserving and enhancing protections in the marine environment through statutory designations. However, the Department recognises that such protections have the potential to cause significant displacement

effects on fishing activity with unforeseen consequences, particularly in the context of other designations and developments in the territorial sea.

A commitment to achieve 30 by 30 is therefore best considered as part of a more holistic marine spatial plan for the Island's territorial sea, which must necessarily include considerations wider than that of fishing activities, as well as involve a broader range of stakeholders and Government Department's than has been the case in the development of the Isle of Man Fisheries Statement.

The Department will however commit to working constructively with all stakeholders and across Government to ensure that the territorial sea is managed effectively and sustainably, and in a way that meets those international obligations that are extended and applied to the Island.

Theme 3: Mobile (Demersal) Fishing Gear

Some responses made note of the potential impacts that mobile demersal fishing gear (trawls and dredges) can have on the marine environment, and called for greater restrictions on this type of fishing gear in particular. The Department recognises that this form of fishing can have significant impacts on the integrity of the seabed and the marine ecosystem. The Department's approach to managing the impacts of these fishing methods are best considered through individual long-term management plans for specific fisheries, such as with the Long-term Management Plan for King Scallops, which shall at all times seek to achieve or more towards the Fisheries Objectives, including the *ecosystem objective*.

Theme 4: Recreational Fishing

Some responses noted the absence of the consideration of recreational fisheries within the Isle of Man Fisheries Statement. The Department recognises the value of recreational fisheries and aims to establish a separate and dedicated strategy to support recreational fisheries (including both coastal and inland waters).

Theme 5: Support for the Sector

Industry stakeholders who responded to the consultation raised the concern that the seafood sector, as a whole, has comparatively less support compared to UK competitors, and that this would need to be addressed in order for the industry to be competitive and meet future challenges and shared objectives. In particular, this was highlighted in the context of the "Net-zero objective", the "Ecosystem objective", and the "Displacement objective". There was also a suggestion that strategic targeted investment around storage and logistics would be highly beneficial for the sector, as well as a review and overhaul of the existing Agriculture & Fisheries Grant Scheme. The Manx Wildlife Trust raised the question of whether any lessons learnt from the Agri-Environment Scheme, which provides area-based payments to the Agricultural sector based on conservation outcomes, could be incorporated into future support for the seafood sector in a way that recognises fishers as custodians of the marine environment and helping to facilitate more MNRs outside the three-mile area.

The Department recognises and accepts the view put forward by consultees that support for the sector needs addressing both in terms of the level and type of support available. Accessing additional funding from public revenue is challenging in the current climate; however, the Department will commit to working with stakeholders to identify solutions that address the existing disparity and efficacy of support for the seafood sector.

Next Steps: Final Text of the Isle of Man Fisheries Statement

In addition to consideration of the above themes, the Department is considering the full suite of responses and views submitted by consultees. This consideration will inform any amendments and revisions made to the draft Isle of Man Fisheries Statement, which will be included within the final text.

The Department aims to present the final text of the Isle of Man Fisheries Statement before Tynwald later this year.

