

MPA 10042

22/10/13

1st October 2013



Dear sir

This is an individual response to the Planning Scotland's Seas MPA Consultation.

I am a birdwatcher. Not a twitcher who drops everything to go and see rare birds but an ordinary lover of birds who goes out at weekends to walk and enjoy seeing birdlife and who goes to the north and north-west of Scotland and particularly the islands on holiday twice a year to pursue the same activities – walking and birdwatching. My husband and I have been to Arran, Islay, Colonsay, Tiree, Coll, Mull, Skye, all the Small Isles, all the inhabited Outer Hebrides and many of the islands of Orkney and Shetland and we feel very strongly about the need to protect Scottish seabirds.

Q1 Do you support the development of an MPA network in Scotland's seas?

Yes. It is crucial that the 'ecologically coherent' network includes all animals and marine wildlife and that includes birds which are far more visible than many and generate a huge amount of benefit to Scottish ecotourism. Already we visit sites which in the guides purport to have thousands of certain species and struggle to see what we're expecting. Already bird life is being seriously affected by lack of protection.

Q2 Clyde Sea Sill; Q3 East Caithness Cliffs; Q6 Fetlar-Haroldswick; Q13 Monach Isles; Q19 Papa Westray; Q21 Small Isles

We've visited most of these sites and the protection of the black guillemot there is imperative. Without this bird the attraction of the areas would be seriously diminished.

Q28 & Q29 Firth of Forth proposed MPA

Seabirds and sandeels are a major presence in this area. No sandeels means birds travelling many miles for food while their young may be dying of starvation and open to predation for increasingly longer periods of time. Every breeding failure means a blow to the bird population for the future.

Q35 Is the proposed network complete?

Without protection for seabirds, NO. How can the network be complete without one of the dominant animals within it? Going back to a previous response, while I hate to think of animals such as dolphins being frightened away by the undersea noise of wind turbines and other such disturbances, they at least are not constantly seen and observed. Birds are present either all the time or all the time seasonally and to lose this would be devastating to that part of the tourist industry that accommodates and feeds people like me who journey somewhere specifically to see them.

Quite apart from the areas highlighted in the questions, we journey regularly to the Solway coast for the same purpose so you get a flavour of how important seabirds are to us and people like us. They're also an important part of the food chain. Ignore them at our peril!

Please include seabirds in your MPA proposals.

Yours faithfully

