

# Have your say on the Arran MPA!

## Public Consultation: South Arran Marine Protected Area Proposal

Please complete this 2 page form and hand it in to the Brodick Tourist Information Office (or post to Marine Scotland at the address below). The questions are based on Marine Scotland's public MPA network consultation response form. You can also complete the response form online and find out more about the Arran MPA at [www.arrancoast.com](http://www.arrancoast.com). The public consultation ends on 13 November 2013.

Do you support the development of an MPA network in Scotland's Seas with 3 MPAs in the Clyde? Yes  No

### The following questions are for the *South Arran* possible Nature Conservation MPA

What do you think about the location and size of the proposed South Arran MPA?

Comments

SEE ATTACHED SHEETS.

What should the management measures be for the proposed South Arran MPA?

Comments

SEE ATTACHED SHEETS

What social and economic effects do you think the South Arran MPA will have?

Comments

SEE ATTACHED SHEETS

Any other comments

## **Designation**

In 1984 the government took away the 3 mile limit without consultation, without scientific evidence and without warning. The evidence of the last 30 years has shown that was as big a mistake as we said it was at the time. We need to return to the situation pre 1984 with extra restrictions to account for changed practices and then proceed from there until the Clyde is healthy and the entire food chain including fish stocks has recovered.

I think that the proposed MPA is a start and am prepared to bet that as long as all fishing, trawling and dredging are prevented that the food chain will recover so quickly that demands for more local MPAs will follow.

## **Management Options**

When the minister responded to our objections in the early 1980s he said that the 3 mile limit was impossible to enforce. In re-establishing the 3 mile limit we must create an area that is possible, even easy, to police. For example if all means of fishing, trawling or dredging are prevented then anyone doing so within the area is breaking the law.

At the time of removing the 3 mile limit the minister said that it was impossible to tell whether a vessel was just inside or just outside the limit.

The situation has changed dramatically now. Apart from radar there are two innovations which can monitor a vessel's position.

- 1) DSC radio – this is a standard communication ship to ship, ship to shore, radio carried by all vessels, even RIBs. Every DSC radio has a red button. When this is pressed all details of the vessel including its precise position are broadcast, so that all radio stations within reception range both ashore and afloat receive the position, name, size, colour etc of the transmitting boat. This naturally means that the positions of vessels can be remotely monitored, simply by instructing them to press their red buttons.
- 2) AIS – this is an innovation that has caught on very quickly. It is cheap and easy to fit to a vessel and needs only a 12v or 24v electrical supply. What does AIS do? It broadcasts continuously the salient details of a vessel's speed, course and position to a satellite that sends it to a website easily accessed by any PC, laptop, ipad or other computer connected to the internet. This means that not only the coastguard but all citizens can monitor continuously all vessels. At the moment 250,000 commercial vessels are required to have AIS fitted. For the purposes of managing the MPA the law will have to be extended to include the vessels we wish to monitor. The website is [www.marinetraffic.com/AIS](http://www.marinetraffic.com/AIS)

## **Socioeconomic Assessment:**

In the years that COAST has been in existence a great deal of expertise and knowledge has been built up around the scientific monitoring of the seabed. Support and encouragement of education about this area of our environment and the creation of a road map for other communities wishing to get involved in similar projects are valuable spin offs. In many ways Arran can be said to be in the lead and the creation of the Arran MPA will have an important influence on maintaining that lead and the social and economic benefits associated with it.

In the years up to the removal of the 3 mile limit there was a fleet of rowing boats for hire in Brodick. One of the enduring activities for families, both local and visitors, was to hire a rowing boat and row out over the sand, spotting the giant skate which came and lay placidly on the seabed around spawning time. I remember being fascinated by the size and shark-like appearance of the dog fish cruising unconcerned around

their territory, and for several years in succession I sought out a pair of red gurnards who tolerated my presence to within a few feet.

Of course, as soon as fishing boats were allowed into the bay the skate disappeared. On the fishmongers slab each skate might have been worth £100 but to the boat hirer, the B & Bs, the hotels and the general Arran economy they were worth thousands. Once the 3 mile limit is reimposed we can hope for life to return to the seabed and expect much more informed interest and also more sophisticated means of satisfying it whether diving, dolpin spotting trips, glass bottomed boats, underwater television cameras etc.

For years, decades, even centuries we have treated the oceans as dustbins, even the Arran ferry would discharge its rubbish halfway across the Clyde. For years Glasgow's sewage was dumped off Sannox – it's delineated on Admiralty charts. And for the last thirty years the seabed has been ploughed up and fish stocks remorselessly wiped out.

The time has come, hopefully not too late, to right some of these wrongs. In commissioning the south Arran MPA we will be making a start to returning the marine environment to a state fit to be handed on to our children and grand children. There will be a profound social dividend for not only the people of Arran but of Scotland as a whole. We will walk tall and hold our heads high knowing that by argument, discussion, persuasion and the aggregation of knowledge we have faced down greed, ignorance, apathy, intimidation, rudeness and criminality to leave a bit of the world better than we found it.