

17. Do you have any comments on the case for designation, management options and socioeconomic assessment for the *North-west sea lochs and Summer Isles* possible Nature Conservation MPA?

Designation:

Yes No

Comments This area is surely one of the most significant on the list for potential MPAs. I would be astonished if it did not make it to the final list, since the surrounding landscape is highly designated and the waters are an integral part of the ecological, cultural and economic history of the area. I believe it should also include Loch Gairloch and surrounding area, however.

Management Options:

Yes No

Comments There is currently little cohesion between the various stakeholders. The MPA would be a welcome start to rectifying this problem. At the moment, each 'faction' continues to operate according to its needs and with little obligation to consider other businesses or individuals. There is no single group/organisation/agency to act as a forum where discussion and debate of all marine issues can take place. I hope the MPA would provide that structure.

Socioeconomic Assessment:

Yes No

Comments Currently there is an imbalance between larger businesses, which seem to have both the ear and the financial backing of Edinburgh, and smaller businesses and individuals. The latter group often have to negotiate a minefield of seemingly conflicting stakeholders, government agencies and designations alone. An MPA would give the smaller stakeholders a voice, and force some of the less scrupulous stakeholders to abide by some universal principles. I believe there would be a considerable social benefit to an MPA, in terms of both economic gain and a wider cultural acknowledgment of the importance of the marine environment. It is crazy that the laws, regulations and initiatives that are so stringent and so numerous on land in Wester Ross have no equivalent in the surrounding waters. We need to start to promote the waters around the sensational Wester Ross landscape as keenly as we do the land, to tourists, to local people and to responsible businesses.

All of the above:

Yes No

Comments

Sustainability Appraisal

34. Do you have any comments on the Sustainability Appraisal of the MPA network as a whole?

Yes No

Comments Sustainability must be at the heart of the entire MPA project across Scotland. Too many decisions are currently taken that are short-term, and cause long-term difficulty for one stakeholder, while benefitting another. The restoration of some of the constraints that were part of the 3-mile limit, abolished in 1985, would be a great place to start. Wester Ross has had much damage inflicted on it by short-termism, and I hope that the MPA would have strategic short, middle and long-term goals for the benefit of local businesses, individuals and – most importantly – local ecosystems.

Final Thoughts

35. On the basis of your preferences on which pMPAs should be designated, do you view this to form a complete or ecologically coherent network, subject to the completion and recommendations of SNH's further work on the 4 remaining search locations?

Yes No

Comments I am not fully qualified to answer this question. I can only say that I think it is highly unlikely that, in its first attempt, SNH has successfully identified all areas/facets/habitats of Scotland's coast that deserve MPA status.

36. Do you have any other comments on the case for designation, management options, environmental or socioeconomic assessments of the pMPAs, or the network as a whole?

Yes No

Comments I consider MPAs to be of vital importance to the long-term survival of communities and habitats in Wester Ross. If a case for an MPA cannot be made in the North-West Sea Lochs and Summer Isles – with its countless other land-based designations – then the entire notion of MPAs cannot succeed.