

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

1. Do you support the development of an MPA network in Scotland's Seas?

Yes

The John Muir Trust supports the development of a network of nature conservation Marine Protected Areas in Scotland's Seas. A well-designed network of MPAs, with appropriate management, has the potential to make a huge contribution to recovering the health of Scotland's Seas. We also strongly support the Scottish Government's commitment to a science-based approach to selection, designation and management of the MPA network.

The Trust is a member of Scottish Environment LINK and is a signatory to its detailed submission. In addition we wish to comment on the possible Small Isles MPA.

Individual possible Nature Conservation MPAs

2. Do you have any comments on the case for designation, management options and socioeconomic assessment for the *Small Isles* possible Nature Conservation MPA?

Designation:

Yes

The Trust is a major landowner on Skye and our Strathaird estate includes coastline around Loch Slapin and Loch Scavaig. The community centred around Elgol and Kirkibost are important stakeholders. However, the Trust is not in a position to represent the views of those living and working in the area. As a wild land charity we support the protection of the environment and believe that economic activity should be based on sustainable development principles. A healthy marine environment is a key requisite of a sustainable community in this area of Skye and legislation and best management practice should underpin this objective.

It is in this context that the Trust supports the idea in principle of extending the boundary of the Small Isles MPA to include the south Skye sea lochs. We appreciate that more biological evidence is required to justify designation at this stage and therefore in the short term at least a Research and Development MPA should be considered to help facilitate greater understanding of the value of the area and its relationship with the adjacent proposed MPA.

Management Options:

No

Comments

Socioeconomic Assessment:

Yes

More protection and a greater understanding of the marine ecosystem will have a positive outcome on both the (sustainable) fishing and marine wildlife tourism industries based at Elgol. Both require a healthy marine ecosystem to thrive.

Final Thoughts

- 3. 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?**

No

The Trust believes that the proposal as it stands does not represent a fully coherent ecological network but it is an important and welcome step in the right direction.

- 4. 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

The Trust is concerned that the socioeconomic data presented concentrates on established extractive industries such as fisheries and oil and gas. There is a strong case to be made for a more balanced assessment that includes the many benefits of non-extractive industries such as eco-tourism. Assessment should also be made of the costs of not designating MPAs.