



Isle of Man
Government

Reillys Ellan Vannin

Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

Rheynn Chymmyltaght, Bee as Eirinys

Mr. F. Ewing, MSP,
Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy
And Connectivity,
Scottish Government,
St. Andrew's House,
Regent Road,
EDINBURGH
EH1 3DG

11th December 2017

Dear Fergus

Isle of Man king scallop fishery

Thank you for your letter of 4 December 2017 referring to my Department's continuing efforts in its proactive management of the Isle of Man king scallop fishery.

The Department and its scientific advisors have been working in close collaboration with the Isle of Man Scallop Management Board to gather and consider all the available data for this valuable yet vulnerable fishery before making reasoned decisions on its management, based on valid, accurate and up to date information.

I would like to reassure you that all management decisions are taken in order to best protect scallop stocks under threat, protect the habitat and importantly, protect the long term future of those that fish in Isle of Man waters. The most recent decision to reduce the daily catch limit for vessels was a precautionary step recommended by the Scallop Management Board to ensure there are sufficient fishing opportunities for the fleet for the duration of the season.

You will be aware of Section 5 of the Fisheries Management Agreement 2012 which allows DEFA to impose 'additional conservation measures' by either legislation or by licence condition, 'for the purpose of managing fisheries'.

The use of licence conditions to manage the Isle of Man queen scallop fishery was first introduced in 2014 following a consultation process which determined that of those who responded, 79% were in favour of the principle of fishery management by licence condition and variation. Having consulted on this management initiative previously and bearing in mind the UK Government's consultation principles (2016) there was no necessity for further consultation on the use of the same management tool for the king scallop fishery and indeed there has been no objection to the management of the queen scallop fishery by this process of licence condition and variation for the past 4 years.

Minister

Hon. G. Boot, MHK

Corporate Services Division,
Thie Slieau Whallian,
Foxdale Road,
St. John's,
Isle of Man, IM4 3AS

Tel no.

Fax no.

Email:

www.gov.im

Our Ref: GB/

The Isle of Man is taking an active approach in working towards achieving sustainable fisheries and I must emphasise that I am strongly of the opinion that the Isle of Man is in full compliance with the FMA. To expect this Department to seek the views of each of the UK Fisheries Administrations in advance of each proposed variation of a licence condition proposed in order to actively manage a fishery does not seem justified.

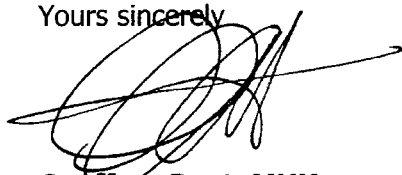
The reasons for the use of a daily catch limit have been explained previously to Marine Scotland officers in letters to Mr Allan Gibb dated 20 October 2017 and 2 November 2017. I can also assure you that Marine Scotland's views on the daily landing restriction and the possible impact on larger vessels have been noted, however DEFA remains firmly of the opinion, based on its knowledge of the fishery, that a weekly limit has the potential to be more damaging to stock and habitat. Furthermore, as explained, DEFA does not have the resource to effectively administer and monitor a weekly catch limit.

The Scallop Management Board was established in May 2017 to replace the previous Isle of Man Queen Scallop Management Board and has the important remit to advise DEFA on appropriate measures for the protection, conservation and management of king and queen scallop stocks within Isle of Man waters.

Board members with relevant knowledge and expertise have been selected from the scallop catching and processing sectors and from most of the UK jurisdictions. DEFA is committed to involving relevant industry representatives in the co-management of the fisheries they have a relevant interest in in order to secure a balanced view of the fishery on which to make appropriate management decisions. If you see little benefit in continuing with the existing Scottish representation on the Board or would like to recommend alternative representation then I would certainly be willing to consider this.

In closing, I would like to assure you that the Isle of Man's continuing efforts to manage its fish stocks is to the significant benefit of both the environment and industry and your recognition of this would be appreciated. I would welcome the opportunity to personally discuss our fisheries management policies with you and would like to extend a warm invitation for you to visit the Island.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Geoffrey Boot', written over a circular stamp or seal.

Geoffrey Boot, MHK
Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture