

By email  
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06/08/2015

**Draft Marine Conservation Orders made under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 for Wester Ross MPA, South Arran MPA, Loch Sunart to Sound of Jura MPA (inc. Firth of Lorn SAC) and Small Isles MPA**

The Scottish Wildlife Trust is pleased to offer its backing to proposals on the management of fishing within the boundaries of inshore Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas and Special Areas of Conservation. Protected areas remain at the centre of global efforts to conserve species and habitats on land and at sea. Well-managed protected areas that halt and reverse the degradation of natural resources provide a wide range of benefits, and it is becoming clear that they are one of the smartest investments that Governments can make for our long-term prosperity.

The Trust considers that the fisheries management proposals are a proportionate response to the need to protect our most important marine biodiversity from potentially damaging activity. We are extremely encouraged by the unequivocal support given by so many members of the public towards well-managed MPAs in Scotland via both the "Planning Scotland's Seas" public consultation of 2013 and the fisheries management consultation that concluded earlier this year.

We are proud to have contributed to a greater understanding of the distribution of maerl beds within the Wester Ross MPA. We are committed to improving the public understanding of the marine environment of the wider North West Highlands through our 'Living Seas' project that will run initially to Spring 2018. We intend to conduct further seabed surveys during this summer and over the coming year will kick-start other citizen science activities that will build knowledge of the natural heritage of this spectacular coastal region.

The Trust has contributed to and endorses the specific comments made on the draft MCOs in the [submission made on behalf of the Scottish Environment LINK Marine Taskforce](#).

Yours,

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