

Nature in brief

Inshore Fisheries Management



Fishing is the most **widespread** human activity throughout Scotland's marine environment, much of which takes place within 12 nautical miles of the coast — known as the 'inshore' fishing sector.

Inshore fisheries can impact the marine environment in different ways, the most significant of which are:

- **overfishing** that depletes fish stock levels
- **'bycatch'** which is the unintentional capture and death of non-target species
- **physical damage** to marine habitats by certain fishing methods, such as bottom trawling
- **entanglement** and potential death of animals in fishing gear
- **'ghost fishing'** which is the entanglement or death of species by lost, discarded or abandoned fishing gear
- **marine litter**, including microfibers from damaged and worn fishing gear

Scotland's fisheries legislation is effective at managing activities within the fishing industry, such as regulating fishing gear and introducing size limits, but fails to consider the impact fishing activity has on marine ecosystem health.

Scotland's Marine Protected Areas provide protection to important habitats and species, but to improve the status of the marine environment as a whole, management must incorporate and mitigate against the impacts of damaging fishing practices.

To secure success for the inshore fishing industry, as well as a healthy future for Scottish seas, sustainable management must focus on long-term productivity and stability rather than short-term gain.

The Scottish Wildlife Trust believes that to effectively manage Scotland's inshore fisheries in a sustainable manner that benefits Scotland's fishing communities, its environment and economy, we need to give priority to:

- Increasing monitoring effort, ensuring compliance and improving enforcement;
- Taking decisions on the management of fishing activities on the basis of robust evidence;
- Avoiding irreversible changes to our marine resources by identifying and operating within environmental limits;
- Taking account of the ecological impacts of fishing activities on the marine environment (an 'ecosystem based' approach);
- Taking a spatial approach to marine management through marine regional partnerships.

For further information please contact:

Dr Samuel Collin, Marine Planning Officer
E. scollin@scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk