

## News Release

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2010, for immediate release

### **MARINE BILL: PARLIAMENT VOTES TO PROTECT SCOTLAND'S MARINE ENVIRONMENT**

Following a decade of campaigning by members of Scottish Environment LINK [1] the Scottish Parliament today passed legislation to ensure the future protection of Scotland's seas.

In the weeks leading up to today's vote, well over six thousand emails and letters were sent to MSP's by members of the public calling for the Bill to be strengthened leaving them in no doubt that their constituents demanded a strong Marine Bill. The legislation puts in place a planning system to help manage Scotland's marine environment in a sustainable way, a requirement for environmental targets to be incorporated into marine plans, a duty to set up a network of marine protected areas in Scottish inshore waters that also contributes to a UK network and a general duty on Scottish Ministers to protect and improve the health of Scotland's seas.

Convenor of Scottish Environment LINK Marine Task Force, Calum Duncan said:

"After almost ten years of campaigning, it is great that the Scottish Parliament has passed a bill that will improve the health of Scotland's seas. We particularly welcome the duty to protect and enhance our seas, a marine planning system that includes environmental targets and a duty to deliver a network of marine protected areas. As the sea knows no boundaries, future management must also join-up with the UK Marine Act and EU legislation. Now we look forward to helping implement the bill, improving the health of our seas for the long-term benefit of marine wildlife, coastal communities and all who enjoy the food, recreation and energy it provides."

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#### ***Contact details***

For more information please contact

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## ***Editors' Note***

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[1] Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment organisations. We have over 30 member bodies representing a range of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society. <http://www.scotlink.org/>

[2] The Scottish Environment LINK Marine Task Force is comprised of the following organisations: Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust, Marine Conservation Society, National Trust for Scotland, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society and WWF Scotland.

[3] Calum Duncan is Scottish Conservation Manager for the Marine Conservation Society.