

Comment: Government Marine Protection Announcement, 21 Jan 08

For immediate release

Environment groups welcome marine protection announcement

Scottish Environment LINK (LINK), the coalition of Scotland's major environment groups, welcomes the announcement by Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment Richard Lochhead that statutory protection will be given to an area of Lamlash Bay on the Isle of Arran.

Calum Duncan, Convenor of LINK's Marine Task Force and Scottish Conservation Manager for the Marine Conservation Society, said:

'We welcome today's ground-breaking announcement by the Cabinet Secretary to protect Lamlash Bay, the first time a marine area has been protected as a result of proposals developed by local representatives.'

'The Community of Arran Seabed Trust are to be particularly commended for their tireless work in developing their proposals: surveying Lamlash Bay, raising awareness of Arran's marine environment, and working with local stakeholders, environment groups, SNH and the Scottish Government to provide the momentum leading to today's announcement.'

The announcement comes during a week when an important new group to decide on the future of Scotland's seas and the direction of a Scottish Marine Bill first meets.

Calum continued:

'Today's announcement reflects the strong community support, across all interest groups, for protecting areas of Scotland's seas. It is in the interests of all the people of Scotland that a Scottish Marine Bill results in better management and improved protection for marine wildlife, including a network of Nationally Important Marine Areas.'

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Scottish Environment LINK (LINK) is the network for Scotland's voluntary sector environmental organisations. LINK has 34 member organisations spanning interests across the natural environment and associated cultural heritage, representing around 500.000 members. Further information on LINK is available at www.scotlink.org

2. LINK's Marine Task Force consists of the following environmental NGO's, working together on marine issues in Scotland:

Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust	RSPB Scotland
Marine Conservation Society	Scottish Wildlife Trust
National Trust for Scotland	Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society
	WWF Scotland

3. LINK is campaigning for a Scottish Marine Bill that includes:
- Proper protection for Scotland's marine wildlife, including identification, designation and protection for Nationally Important Marine Areas
 - An effective new planning system for Scotland's seas
 - A Marine Management Organisation to take charge of planning, licensing and enforcement at sea
 - Clear targets to measure the recovery of our seas

The campaign is funded by grants from the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and the Tubney Charitable Trust.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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