

Administrations must work together to stop seas unravelling

For immediate release: Friday 3rd August 2007

As part of a joint marine campaign, Scotland's leading marine environment groups are calling on close collaboration between all UK administrations to ensure the UK Marine Bill makes it into the November Queen's speech, so that Scottish and UK Marine Bills can be taken forward in tandem.

Calum Duncan, convenor of the Scottish Environment LINK Marine Task Force said *"UK sea life does not recognise political boundaries. Equally, many human activities straddle political boundaries and would benefit from a UK-wide approach to marine management. A sustainable future for our seas requires demonstrable collaboration between all administrations within the UK."*

Around Scotland, most activities out to 12 nautical miles (nm) including renewable energy, fisheries, aquaculture and marine conservation, and some to 200nm - including fisheries management and some responsibilities with regard renewable energy - are devolved to the Scottish Government, whereas shipping and oil & gas throughout all UK waters (from 0 to 200nm in Scotland), marine conservation from 12 to 200nm, and some other matters around Scotland, are controlled by the UK government.

Calum concluded *"Both Scottish and UK Marine Bills are clearly needed to provide the seamless delivery of marine management. We need all UK administrations to clearly demonstrate that they are working closely together to deliver the streamlined, 21st Century laws our seas are crying out for."*

For further details:

Calum Duncan, convenor of the Scottish Environment LINK Marine Task Force and Scottish Conservation Manager, Marine Conservation Society 0131 226 6360 or 07841 985 595

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. Scottish Environment LINK (LINK)

LINK is an umbrella body for Scotland's voluntary environmental organisations representing approximately half a million members throughout Scotland. LINK's Marine Task Force consists of the following environmental NGOs working on marine issues in Scotland:

Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust
Marine Conservation Society
National Trust for Scotland

RSPB Scotland
Scottish Wildlife Trust
Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society
WWF Scotland

LINK has just employed a Marine Bill Research Officer and Marine Bill Campaigns Officer to lobby for delivery of a Marine Act for Scotland that delivers proper protection and management for Scotland's seas. **We are very grateful to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and Tubney Charitable Trust for funding these new posts.**

2. Scottish Marine Bill

On 19th June, the LINK Marine Task Force welcomed the announcement by Environment Cabinet Secretary Richard Lochhead that the new Scottish government intends to introduce a Scottish Marine Bill (see www.scotlink.org > Work Areas > Marine).

We urge that the proposed Scottish Marine Bill implements the AGMACS recommendations and that they are incorporated into a UK marine policy statement coming out of a UK Marine Bill (see 3.). We would like to draw attention to our particular support for the following AGMACS recommendations (paraphrased and with LINK emphasis in **bold**):

- **There should be a Scottish Marine Management Organisation with a remit of national coordination of ICZM and Marine Spatial Planning delivery and a local dimension with powers that can be delegated as required**
- There should be a **statutory** system of **Marine Spatial Planning** carried out by the Scottish MMO
- The Marine Spatial Planning system should be based on **3 tiers**: the top level should be UK level, **ensuring connection to regional seas**; the middle level should be "Scotland" in some sense; and the bottom level should be local.
- Consideration should be given to the Scottish MMO having responsibility for Marine Nature Conservation and Fisheries to 200nm
- Scotland's system of marine nature conservation should follow a **3-pillar approach**, based on objective scientific guidance, with specific measures for species conservation, policy, and site protection.
- A Scottish set of **Marine Ecosystem Objectives** (MEOs) should be drawn together, with full stakeholder engagement, during 2007.

3. UK Marine Bill

Scottish Environment LINK responded to the UK Marine Bill White Paper supporting proposals for establishing Marine Planning throughout UK waters, delivered according to an overarching UK Marine Policy Statement. We would urge the Scottish Government and UK Government to work closely together, along with the Welsh and Northern Irish administrations, to produce the UK Marine Policy Statement.