

# Marine Scotland

Scottish Inshore Fisheries Strategy 2015



marinescotland

## SCOTTISH INSHORE FISHERIES STRATEGY 2015

Fishing communities are an important and integral part of Scottish rural life. Fishing makes a valuable contribution to Scotland's economy and is woven into Scotland's culture and heritage. Fisheries is at the heart of the Scottish Government's aims to create more, better paid jobs in a strong sustainable economy, build a fairer Scotland through tackling inequalities and empower people and communities.

***Our vision is to support the development of a more sustainable, profitable and well-managed inshore fisheries sector in Scotland. We aim to do this by modernising the management of our inshore fisheries in Scotland and reaping long-term sustainable rewards for the inshore sector, the marine environment and our coastal communities.***

Since the 2012 Inshore Fisheries Strategy there have been many developments in fisheries management and its role in management of the wider marine environment has been redefined through the National Marine Plan. Marine Scotland wants management decisions based on sound evidence with input from fishermen and other stakeholders.

The three key elements of the 2012 strategy - improving science and data required for more effective management; improving engagement with fishermen; and supporting the Inshore Fisheries Group network - are still central to our strategic approach but we believe there now needs to be a greater focus on integration with the marine planning system.

The 2015 inshore strategy will therefore focus on:-

- Improving the evidence base on which fisheries management decisions are made;
- Streamlining fisheries governance, and promoting stakeholder participation; and
- Embedding inshore fisheries management into wider marine planning.

### Strategy Outcomes

#### *A fresh legislative framework*

A strong scientific base, together with effective compliance arrangements and an appropriate management framework based on engagement with industry and non-industry stakeholders are the foundations for sound fisheries management. There are clear links between healthy fish stocks, resilient communities and good governance.

The Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment has made clear that 21<sup>st</sup> century fisheries management needs 21<sup>st</sup> century tools. If we are, for example, to facilitate spatial management measures, devolve local management and give greater responsibilities to coastal communities, or tackle long standing management

challenges, then the current inshore fisheries legislation as embodied in the 1967 and 1984 Fisheries Acts requires updating.

*OUTCOME 1: Marine Scotland will address the barriers to good governance and explore options to bring forward an updated legislative framework by 2020 that will support sound fisheries management.*

#### *An improved evidence base*

Delivering a robust comprehensive evidence base for all commercial stocks in inshore waters will be challenging, especially given the geographical scale and the often remote nature of our fisheries. Improving the foundations of sound management through enhanced data collection, reporting and evidence of activity are key to improving management of our fisheries and their interactions with other marine users. Any reporting requirements placed on fishermen should be proportionate and provide added value.

*OUTCOME 2: Marine Scotland will implement an appropriate form of vessel monitoring to provide good quality information on the footprint of inshore fishing by 2020, in line with the goal of prosecuting fishing at Maximum Sustainable Yields.*

#### *Better governance*

Inshore Fisheries Groups are key to involving local fishermen in decision-making. The formation of fewer regional Inshore Fisheries Groups on the mainland and the introduction of appropriately supported local sub groups will provide more efficient and effective governance arrangements while also aiding delivery of improved local engagement and participation. Crucially, these arrangements should provide a future framework for the provision of effective inshore fisheries advice to the marine planning regions when they are established.

*OUTCOME 3: Marine Scotland will ensure that there are clear governance arrangements with effective streamlined structures and support in place for the important role that the new regional fisheries groups will need to play in the marine planning process. The new regional bodies will become the authoritative voice on inshore fisheries matters in mainland marine regions.*

#### *Responding to our national and international obligations*

Marine Scotland will make provision for complying with international fisheries obligations under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), moving towards Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) for key shellfish stocks by 2020 and managing our fisheries in line with MSFD and other marine conservation initiatives.

Key commercial stocks will be scientifically assessed and those that are at risk of over exploitation will be effectively managed. We will emphasise the need for better data collection (landings and effort) to allow for enhanced management at a local level and for meeting MSFD obligations.

*OUTCOME 4 (linked to outcome 2): Our inshore waters will be managed in a way which is environmentally sustainable and their potential will be maximised to the benefit of coastal communities. The management of our fisheries will be congruent with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. By 2020 effective assessment methodologies will be in place for fishing at Maximum Sustainable Yield, achieving Good Environmental Status and maintaining compliance with other marine conservation initiatives such as the Natura Directive and the development of Marine Protected Areas.*

#### *Improved data*

The network of Marine Protected Areas has helped bring into focus particular management challenges in inshore waters. Baseline habitat and stock data for the MPA sites, along with a clear understanding of the fishing footprint, is important in considering changes to fisheries management in and around these sites.

*OUTCOME 5: A baseline of data will be developed to understand the fishing footprint and the interactions between sustainable fishing, other activities in the marine environment and the needs of marine environmental protection to ensure that an appropriate balance between these interests is maintained in management decisions.*

#### *Maximising support from European funding*

We will support the modernisation of inshore fisheries through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and help facilitate fisheries accreditation schemes where it is appropriate to do so. We will seek European resources to support the implementation of this Inshore Strategy, including in the areas of vessel monitoring, technical support for IFGs, technical innovation and diversification to alternative fishing methods. We will also work creatively with our partners within and out with industry to scope innovative approaches to longer-term data collection, including with the involvement of fishermen, in order to make efficient use of limited resources.

*OUTCOME 6: We will fully utilise the funding opportunities available via the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and meet its obligations under the small scale fleet action plan within that Fund. We will seek opportunities to maximise value throughout the supply chain and to help facilitate accreditation ambitions for inshore fisheries where appropriate.*