

Inshore Marine Protected Area and Priority Marine Features Consultation

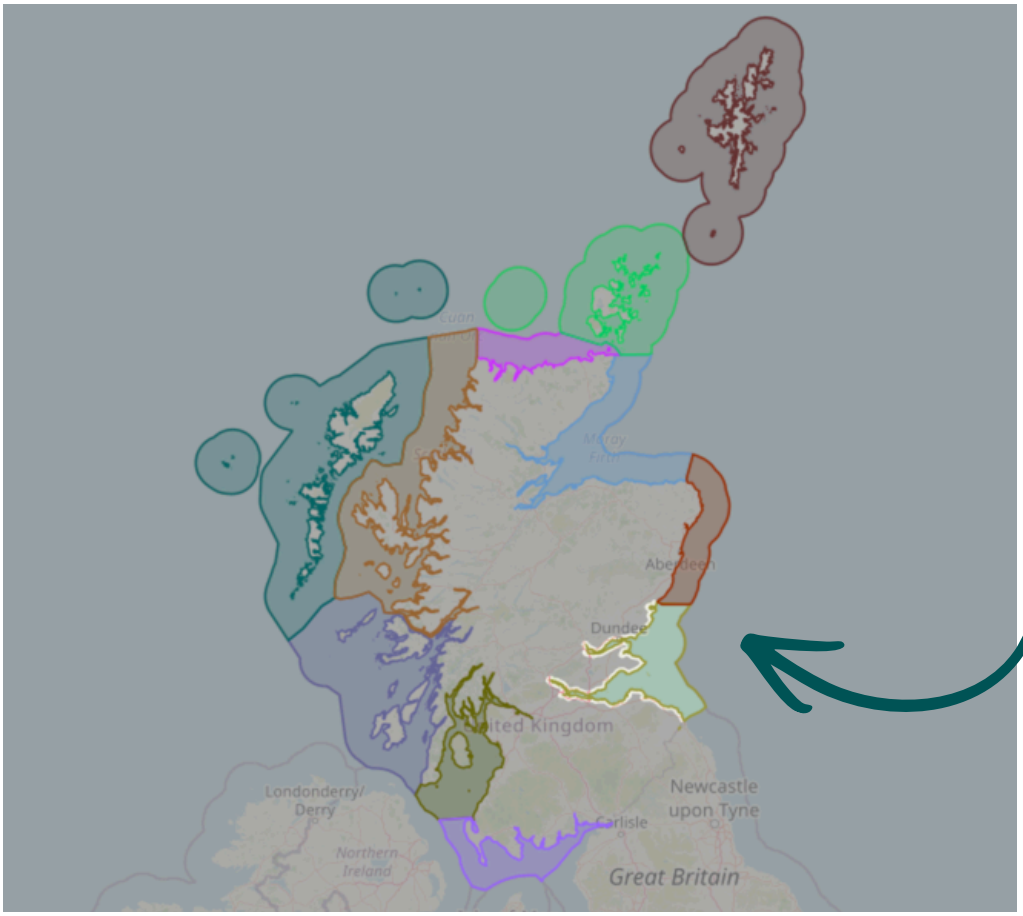
Forth and Tay

11/11/2026

Introduction

Here you will find a briefing manual for the Proposed Fisheries Management Measures for Inshore Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Proposed Priority Marine Feature (PMF) Management Areas within the Outer Hebrides Region.

The Forth and Tay Scottish Marine Region is the most southerly Scottish Marine Region on the east coast of Scotland, stretching from the Scottish border northwards to Montrose.



Forth and Tay Marine Region

The Our Seas Coalition

The Our Seas coalition represents over 170 organisations, each with its own voice for the sea. We are united by a shared vision of greater protection for Scotland's inshore environment, however, individual members bring their own regional knowledge, priorities and perspectives on what that protection should look like. Consequently, our members will have their own individual views on the options presented within the consultation.

Our Seas encourage you to reach out to members in your area to learn more about their individual position.

Click here to be taken to the Members Directory!



The Consultation

After almost a decade of delay, the Scottish Government has finally launched its consultation on the future protection of inshore marine habitats and species. You can view it here.

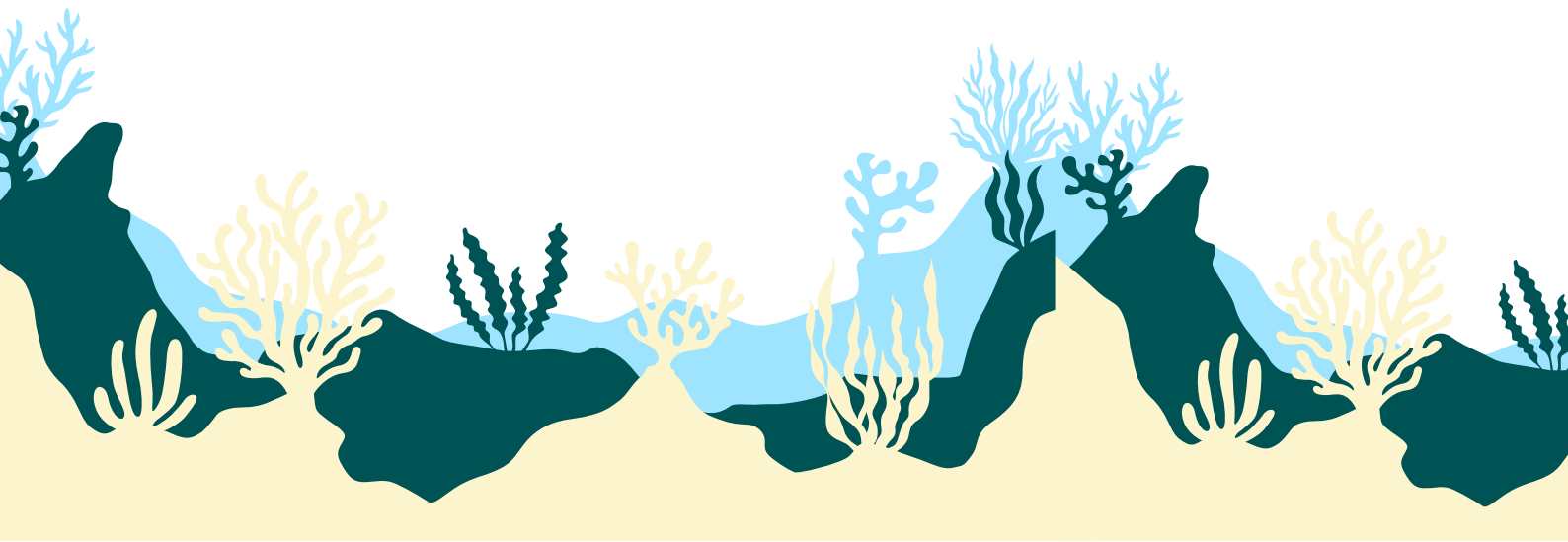
This is the chance for real protection to be implemented in Scotland's inshore waters after over 10 years of simply designation.

Within this consultation, the Scottish Government is asking for the public's opinion on proposed fisheries management measures for both sites and areas, where sites include: NCMPAs, SACs and SPAs and areas include locations where the 11 Priority Marine Features features have been identified outside MPAs.

In the Forth and Tay region, the consultation includes proposed fisheries management measures for:

0 NCMPAs | *3 SACs* | *3 SPAs* | *0 PMF areas*

This briefing will outline the sites that are designated to protect a seabed feature that is threatened by bottom-towed gear, in line with the asks of Our Seas. For more information on other sites in your area, follow this link!



MPA Sites Proposed Options

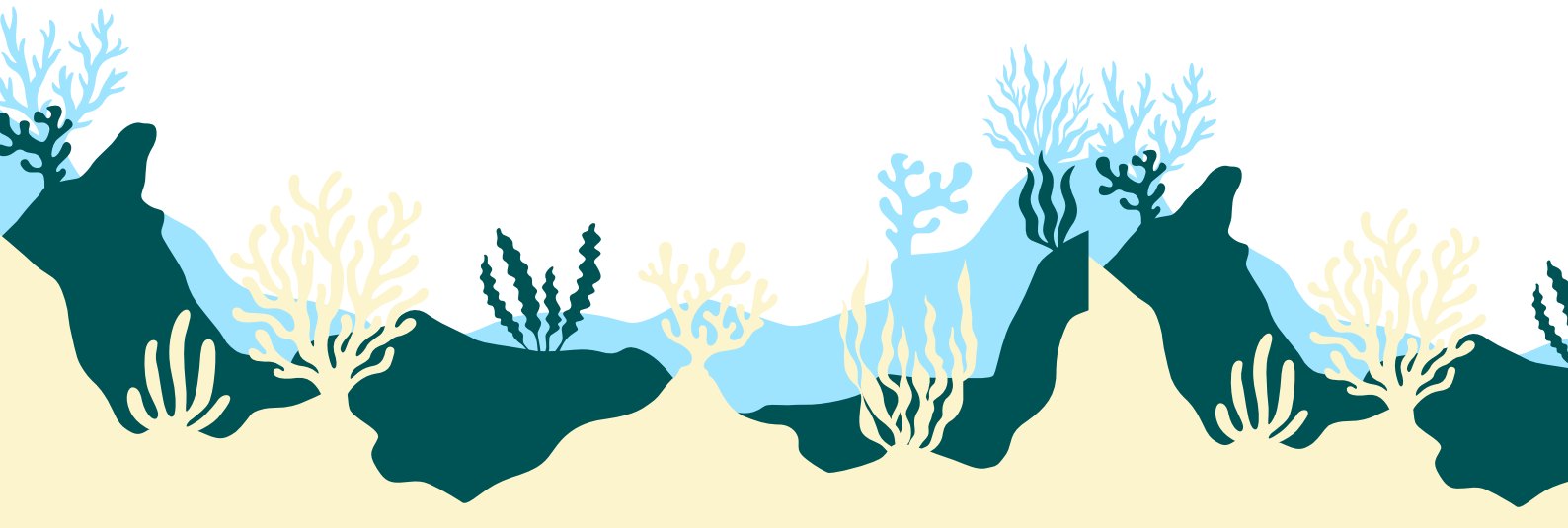
For the majority of the **MPA sites**, 2 options will be proposed. In some cases, only 1 option is proposed due to the conservation objectives of that site.

Option 1 - Zonal measures: Rules for specific fishing gears that may apply seasonally or to vessels above a certain engine power.

Option 2 - Full site measures: Rules on specific fishing gears that apply across the whole site all year round.

Other: If you disagree with both options, you can select 'Other' and explain your reasons in the comments box.

Relevant Questions in this Region: Sites: Q148 - 156



Our Seas Coalition's Position

MPAs

Protect all seabed MPAs from bottom trawling and dredging to support healthy marine ecosystems, coastal communities and sustainable livelihoods.

If you agree, you should submit a response, as follows;

- Support **Option 2** for all the MPA seabed sites that propose a **full site closure to all bottom towed fishing gear**. This would mean that more damaging fishing practices such as bottom trawling and scallop dredging will not be allowed in sites designated to protect the seabed, allowing seabed habitats to recover.

- There are 3 sites that have a seabed feature designated which do not propose full site closure to all bottom towed gear, and Our Seas will be calling for stronger protections for these sites in the form of full site closure to all bottom towed gear. These are, Clyde Sea Sill NCMPA, Moine Mor SAC and North East Lewis NCMPA.

Why?

Because the sedbed should be protected. Bottom trawling and dredging physically disturb the seabed, damaging species and reducing the abundance and diversity of marine life. Closing seabed MPAs to bottom-towed fishing allows seabed habitats to recover and provides the **strongest protection** for the features the MPAs were designated to conserve.

What protection can look like...

On the Isle of Arran, Scotland's only No Take Zone and wider South Arran MPA show how effective marine protection can be, with bottom trawling and dredging restrictions helping to protect and restore the seabed.

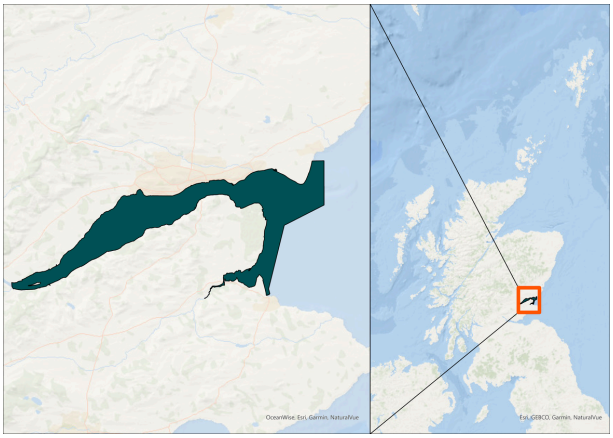
Research has found increases in king scallop and lobster numbers, greater marine biodiversity and healthier habitats, while supporting local communities through activities such as diving, snorkelling and commercial scallop diving. Go to COAST's website to read more.



📷*Howard Wood - COAST: A before and after of the seabed once protection came into place*

Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SAC

FORTH AND TAY



Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SAC covers the waters between Carnoustie in the north and Crail in the south, including the Eden estuary and the Tay estuary running inland to Perth.

Protected Features



Intertidal mudflats and sandflats
Mudflats are found in the most sheltered areas, within the upper reaches of estuaries, sea lochs and voes.

THREATS
Bottom towed fishing practises that damage the seabed and their habitat.



Estuaries
Estuaries are highly dynamic and sensitive ecosystems,

THREATS
Use of bottom towed fishing gear can disturb sediments and alter hydrodynamic conditions



Harbour Seal
A common, friendly species of Seal yet numbers are declining in Scotland for unknown reasons.

THREATS
Pollution and entanglement in fishing gear to name a few



Subtidal Sandbanks
An important habitat of submerged sand that contributes to nursery grounds for fish.

THREATS
Bottom towed fishing practises that damage the seabed and their habitat.

Firth of Tay and Eden Estuary SAC

CONTINUED

Our Seas recommends:

OPTION 1

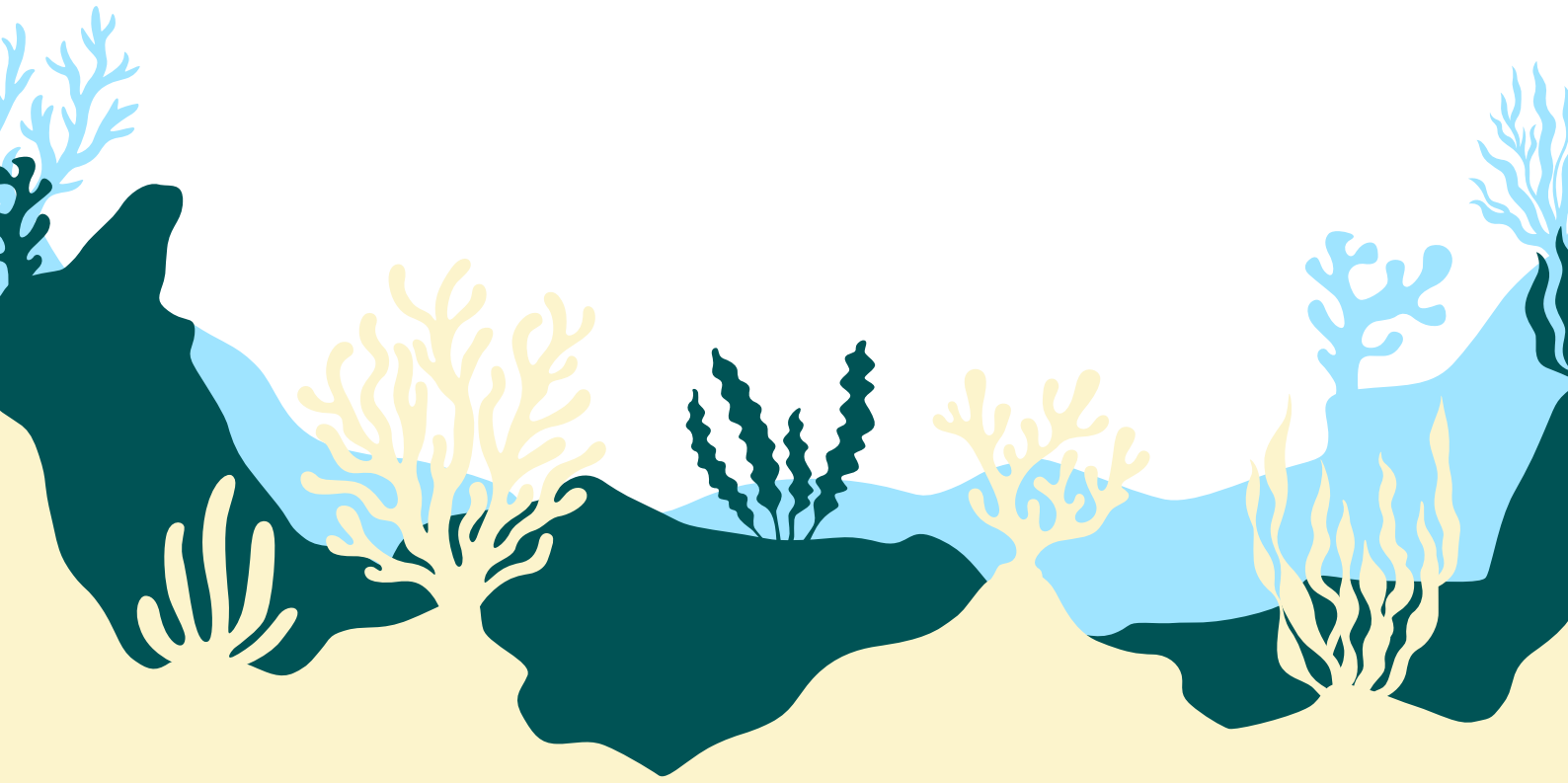
For this site

Only one option is being proposed for this site due to the conservation objectives. It includes full site closure to all bottom towed fishing practises that could damage the seabed and the use of pelagic seine and set nets that could harm harbour seals.

Have your say!

Read more about this site and the other option here

Respond by email by filling in the form on our website answering Q.148 - Q.149 and emailing it to **marine_biodiversity@gov.scot**



Isle of May SAC

Forth and Tay



The Isle of May lies at the entrance to the Firth of Forth on the east coast of Scotland. The site is the largest east coast breeding colony of grey seals in Scotland and the fourth-largest breeding colony in the UK, contributing approximately 4.5% of annual UK pup production.

Protected Features



Grey Seal
One of the rarer seal species worldwide, its entire population is around 400,000 individuals.

THREATS
Pollution and entanglement in fishing gear to name a few



Reefs
Rocky areas that rise from the seabed and provide a home for many marine animals and plants.

THREATS
Bottom towed fishing practises that damage the seabed and thus the reef.

Our Seas recommends:

OPTION 1

For this site

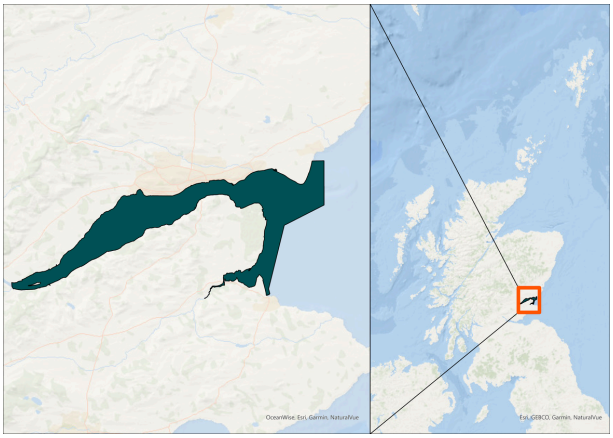
Only one option is being proposed for this site due to the conservation objectives. It includes full site closure to all bottom towed fishing practises that could damage the reefs and the use of pelagic seine and set nets that could harm grey seals.

Have your say!

Read more about this site and the other option here

Respond by email by filling in the form on our website, answering Q.151 - Q.152 and emailing it to **marine_biodiversity@gov.scot**

Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC FORTH AND TAY



The Scottish portion of Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC covers an area of rocky coast starting east of Dunglass and extending to the border with England.The SAC is one of the most varied coastlines in the UK, stretching from Alnmouth to north of St Abbs head, spanning both Scottish and English waters.

Protected Features



Grey Seal
One of the rarer seal species worldwide, its entire population is around 400,000 individuals.

THREATS
Pollution and entanglement in fishing gear to name a few



Reefs
Rocky areas that rise from the seabed and provide a home for many marine animals and plants.

THREATS
Bottom towed fishing practises that damage the seabed and thus the reef.

Our Seas recommends:

OPTION 2

For this site

This option fully closes the site to bottom towed fishing practises and secures the strongest protection for the designated features and the wider ecosystem.

Have your say!

Read more about this site and the other option here

Respond by email by filling in the form on our website, answering Q.154 - Q.156 and emailing it to **marine_biodiversity@gov.scot**

PMF Areas Proposed Options

For the majority of **PMF areas**, 2 options will be proposed, in some cases, only 1 option is proposed.

Both options restrict bottom-towed fishing gear. The consultation is about the size of the area where these restrictions will apply.

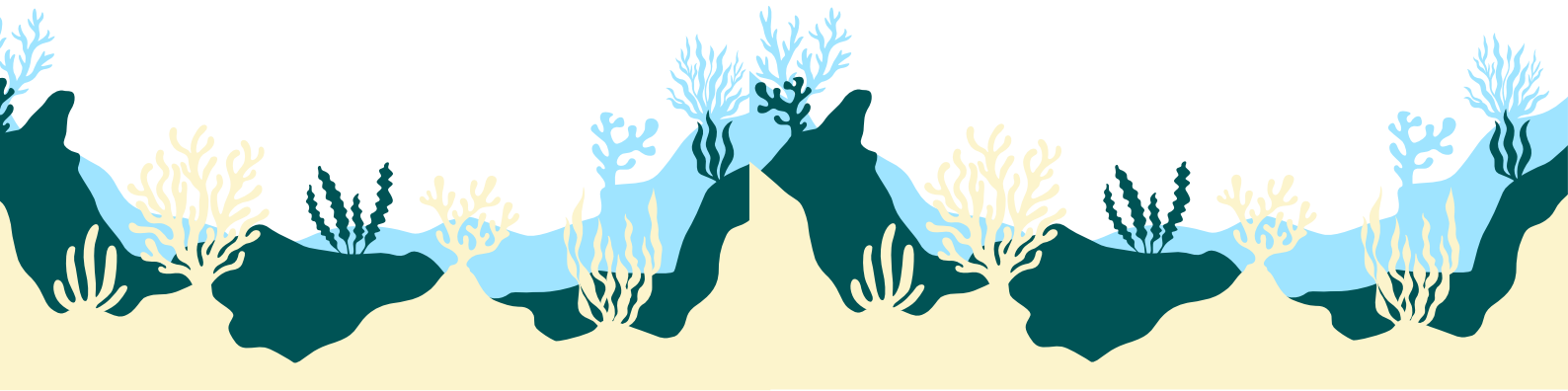
Option 1 - Smaller protected area

Option 2 – Larger protected area: Includes a buffer around the PMF, although the difference from Option 1 is small.

Other: If you disagree with both options, you can select ‘Other’ and explain your reasons in the comments box.

Both proposed options for are not adequate because:

- The areas are **not large enough** to provide real protection that is truly enforceable.
- Many populations of the 11 PMFs are **found outwith the proposed areas and therefore have no protection.**



How to Protect the Forth and Tay

While there are no PMF management areas in the Forth and Tay, there should still be a level of protection implemented to protect our marine environment alongside the MPAs.

If you agree, you could submit a response, as follows;

- In reference to questions 3 and 4 (general questions) and any other questions asking about specific PMFs you should:

- Support Option 2 at a minimum. We then encourage you to also ask for at least 30% of Scotland's inshore waters to be protected from the more damaging fishing activities like bottom trawling and dredging, in line with the coalition's ask of a modern inshore limit adapted to the needs of each Scottish Marine Region.

- If you want to go into more detail, Our Seas suggests this could look like:
    - In the West Highlands Marine Region no dredging or trawling within 3 nautical miles of shore.
    - In the Outer Hebrides Marine Region no dredging or trawling within 1 nautical mile of shore.
    - As Shetland has it's own Regulatory Order, leave it to to resolve it's own protection.
    - **Throughout the rest of the Scottish Marine Regions, including the North East, no dredging or trawling within 1 nautical mile or waters shallower than 45/50m.**

Regional Members List

Aberdeenshire
- Ellon Sub Aqua Club
- OpenRoad Ltd
- Project Media
- Saltwater Life
- Shark and Skate Scotland

Angus
- Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust

Argyll & Bute
- Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board
- Argyll Fisheries Trust
- Carna Coast and Communities
- Coastal Connection
- Community Association of Lochs and Sounds (CAOLAS)
- Conor Ryan Photography
- Craignish Restoration of Marine and Coastal Habitat (CROMACH)
- Eda Frandsen Sailing Ltd.
- Friends of the Sound of Jura
- Heart of Argyll Wildlife
- Kilchoan Estate
- Kyles Coastal Community
- Loch Visions
- Lochaber Sub Aqua Club
- Lochnell Oysters
- Majestic Line
- Mull Charters
- Oban Sea School
- Ocean Gives
- Puffin Divers
- Save Kintyre Seas
- Sea Freedom Kayaks
- Sea Kayak Argyll and Bute
- SeaTrek Scotland
- SeaWilding
- Sealife Adventures
- Tighnabruaich Sailing School
- Wild Argyll
- Wreckspeditions

Arran and Ayrshire
- Arran Eco Savvy
- Ayr Sea Angling Club
- Clyde Porpoise
- Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST)
- Fairlie Coastal Trust
- Kilmarnock Sub Aqua Club
- Mara Deli and Fish Restaurant
- Nature Library
- River Eachaig Syndicate
- Scottish Sea Angling Conservation Network
- Terra Mare

Berwickshire
- Berwickshire Marine Reserve
- Firth of Forth Lobster Hatchery
- Sea The Change
- Snorkel Wild
- The Scottish Coastal Cleanup

East Lothian
- Coast to Coast Surf School
- Lawson Wood Photography
- Ocean Vertical

Edinburgh
- Black House Water Sports
- Blue Marine Foundation
- Cycle For The Seas
- Earth in Common
- Fauna & Flora
- Fish Legal
- National Trust for Scotland
- Nourish Scotland
- Open Seas
- Pam van de Brug
- Project Seagrass
- Scotland The Big Picture
- Scottish Sub Aqua Club
- Staunch Industries
- Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust
- Young Sea Changers Scotland

Fife
- East Neuk Seaweed
- Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers

Glasgow & Inverclyde
- Centre for Human Ecology
- Click Book Stay
- Clyde Charters
- Ecodrama
- Ethical Seafood Research
- Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore
- GalGael Trust
- Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association
- Sunny Side Ocean Defenders
- That's Yer Dinner

Inverness
- Beauly District Fisheries Board
- Heavy Metal Munchies
- Highlands and Islands Environment Foundation
- Keltic Seafare
- Lochaber Environment Group
- Old Town Fish & Chips
- Sauna Ostara
- Wild Rose Escapes
- WildFish

Moray
- Burghead Sub Aqua Club
- Findhorn District Salmon Fisheries Board
- Findhorn Nairn and Lossie Fisheries Trust
- Gordon Castle
- Spey Fishery Board

Orkney
- Kraken Diving
- Orkney Skate Trust

Outer Hebrides
- MARA
- Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust
- Wild Harris

Perth
- Morven Stewart

Skye and Lochalsh
- All Things Cuillin
- Cast Away with Katie Tunn
- Dive and Sea the Hebrides
- Hayley Wolcott Art
- Islandeering
- Knoydart Foundation Ranger Service
- Raasay House
- Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation
- Skye and Lochalsh Environment Forum
- Skye and Lochalsh Rivers Trust
- Skye Communities for Natural Heritage
- Skye Scallop Divers
- Skye Seas Survey Initiative
- Skye to Sea

Stirling
- Argaty Red Kites
- Freedom Diving

Wester Ross
- 58° North Seaweeds
- Ali Mac Candles
- Applecross Sea Rangers
- Atlantic Diving Services
- Isle Martin Trust
- James Curley Fly Fishing
- Johnston and Loftus Boat Builders
- Kayak Summer Isles
- Little Loch Broom Marine Life
- Loch Laxford Shellfish
- Mikytin Ltd
- Ockran Oysters
- Plastic at Bay
- Seaful
- Sea Change
- Shellfish Safaris
- Ullapool Charters
- Ullapool Outdoors
- Ullapool Sea Savers
- West Sutherland Fisheries Trust
- Wester Ross Area Salmon Fishery Board

Outside Scotland

England
- Angling Trust
- Blue Ventures
- ClientEarth
- Frogfish Photography
- Maryport Coast Aquarium
- Oceana UK
- Patagonia
- Project Baseline
- Sea-Changers
- Shark Guardian
- Source to Sea
- SubSeaTV
- Transform Bottom Trawling Coalition
- Wilderness Foundation

Northern Ireland
- Belfast Lough Sea Angling and Conservation Club
- Marine Conservation Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Federation of Sea Anglers
- Northern Ireland Fly Fishing Association

International
- Aquatic Life Institute
- Blue Planet Society
- Captain Paul Watson Foundation UK
- Clean Sailors
- Low Impact Fishers of Europe

