

SCOTTISH DIVER

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COVER PHOTO

Diver in a Gully
(St Abbs)

Image courtesy of
Mike Clark

A FEW years ago along with our colleagues at the British Sub Aqua Club, the Scottish Sub Aqua Club submitted a complaint to the EU about the Scottish Executive's failure to implement aspects of the European Habitats Directive with regard to the protection of rocky reefs in the Firth of Lorne Special Area of Conservation. There is a precautionary principle inherent in the directive which basically says that the authority responsible for implementation should stop any activity that may damage the designated area.

Basically we wanted a ban on scallop dredging in the Special Area of Conservation. Any diver who has dived, after a scallop dredge has been over an area, will know what sort of damage they inflict on the seabed. It cannot in any way be described as a sustainable way of fishing.

I'm pleased to say the executive have finally imposed a ban on scallop dredging in the Firth of Lorne SAC. The bad news is it is a temporary ban for two years during which they will carry out research into whether scallop dredging does damage the rocky reefs. There are concerns over just how rigorous this research will be as it looks like they are going to appoint their own scientists to peer review the research.

The fishermen's associations mounted a last minute attempt to overturn this decision but were defeated.

On another conservation issue the Community Of Aran Seabed Trust, COAST, has been in touch. Howard Wood of COAST has just sent me a



going overboard

DVD they have produced to promote their campaign to have Lamlash Bay made a no-take zone. I have not had time to watch it all yet but I will be reviewing it in the next magazine.

What I have seen looks fantastic and I'm looking forward to watching it in full. Meanwhile you can visit their website www.arrancoast.co.uk to order a copy. For more information on the Firth of Lorne

visit www.hebrideanpartnership.org

I rather like the quote from John Muir on the front of COAST's DVD:
"When one tugs at a single thing in nature he finds it attached to the rest of the world."

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