



View over No Take Zone
image courtesy of
Howard Wood COAST

No Take From Lamlash

IT'S NOT often we get the chance to report good news but after more than 10 years of campaigning and dogged determination the Isle of Arran community has finally secured a 'no take zone' at Lamlash Bay. I think all the hard working people who have contributed to this success should be congratulated.

They have shown that it is possible to take on the might of the Government and the fishermen and, by convincing them of the benefits to everyone - not least the environment, that this is the way forward.

I have every confidence this will be a success and hopefully lead to more 'no take zones'. With a bit of luck and some determined arguing we might just save the marine environment and the fishing industry too. Well done!

This will be Scotland's first fisheries No Take Zone (NTZ), and the UK's first community and fishermen-led Marine Protected Area. Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, visited the Isle of Arran to make the announce-

ment about the Lamlash Bay project.

Following an enquiry by the Scottish Parliaments' Environment and Rural Development Committee, the Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST) has been in discussions with the Clyde fishermen, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Govern-

ment. These discussions have now concluded, with a proposed joint scheme that combines nature conservation with benefits to fishermen by giving scallop spat somewhere to settle and develop.

The proposed NTZ is planned for the north end of Lamlash Bay. The remainder of the bay will be a marine conservation area where potting and sea angling will be allowed but the harvesting of scallops by diving or dredging will be controlled.

An NTZ is an area of sea and seabed from which no marine life can be removed by any fishing method whether it is recreational, and yes that means divers, or commercial.

In Lamlash Bay, this will protect

maerl beds and help promote natural regeneration of all marine life. This will be beneficial not only to commercial fishermen, who will gain with bigger and better catches in the neighbouring overspill area, but also to the local economy by attracting more visitors and divers to Arran.

Maerl is rare and an ecologically important fragile pink coral-like seaweed that grows slowly on the seabed. The maerl in the northern entrance to Lamlash Bay is among the best in the Clyde.

Many marine animals either lay their eggs or the young settle amongst the maerl, safe from predators. Both the eggs and young hide in the nooks and crannies of the maerl before moving off into the surrounding sea. Queen scallops, juvenile Cod, Saithe and Pollack are important commercially and begin life right here. Tragically though, once a maerl bed is damaged, as happens with towed dredging equipment, it is lost forever.

Scientific evidence from New Zealand shows that NTZs work and are not only good for the marine



Norwegian Lobster (Scampi). Image courtesy of Sean Ferris COAST



Queen Scallop covered in sponge - image courtesy of Sean Ferris COAST

life. Cape Rodney district council, in the area of New Zealand's first NTZ, states that the local economy benefits to the tune of \$25 million NZ dollars per year from the Leigh NTZ, an area approximately the same size as the Lamlash Bay site. Therefore the future looks positive for both the marine life in Lamlash Bay and the local economy

The only dark cloud on the horizon is that, just when the news of this groundbreaking project is being announced, there has been a proposal by Marine Harvest, the giant Norwegian-owned multinational, to North Ayrshire Planning Department, for permission to build one of Scotland's largest fish farms. The proposed Fish Farm would sandwich the NTZ between the proposed new fish farm and an existing fish farm, and would be in an area required for scientific monitoring of scallops dispersal from the new project.

COAST has produced two DVDs which were filmed in Arran waters. 'Caught in Time' highlights the years of campaigning to establish the NTZ in Lamlash Bay. It is a snapshot of the lessons to be learnt from the past and the issues COAST continue to face to save our seas for future generations.

'The Bay' is a beautiful film of the natural history of Lamlash Bay. This is suitable for all ages. It will impress everyone with the sheer diversity of life under the waves, which still exists in some places, despite the ravages of our modern age. Both were reviewed last year in **SCOTTISH DIVER** and

are thoroughly recommended, they are available from COAST.

As well as working towards the establishment of the proposed NTZ, COAST also endeavours to:

- Educate others, especially children, on the need for marine conservation through local, national and international events;
- Improve the marine environment in our own 'backyard', and determine success through monitoring;
- Help sustain the livelihood of those dependent on fishing and tourism;
- Increase the popularity of the area as both a diving site and tourist destination;
- Reverse the dramatic decline of local fish and shell fish stocks.

Subject to a 12 week consultation and Parliamentary processes, the NTZ will be statutorily underpinned by an Order made under the Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act 1984. Readers should make sure that they respond positively to the consultation (see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Consultations/Current>).

The fisheries management zone will focus

primarily on scallops. On receipt of an application, and subject to consultation and the terms of The Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967, the fisheries management zone will be implemented by a Regulating Order, the grantee of which will be an organisation made up of COAST and the Clyde Fishermen's Association.

COAST is funded by: Scottish Natural Heritage; the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation; and Director General, Fish at the European Union in Brussels. To find out about how COAST's Seasearch activity contributed and an update on the wider marine conservation debate in Scotland, see the Marine Conservation Society update on page 36.

Jack Morrison



sunset over Lamlash Bay - image courtesy of Lesley Wood

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