



going overboard

actually change anything and end up maintaining the status quo. So don't expect the Marine Bill to offer much in the way of protection for the marine environment.

As it stands there are enough loopholes to allow commercial interests to carry on as they are now destroying that which the bill seeks to protect. Let's hope the government will take a wider view and look at what is happening elsewhere. There is overwhelming evidence from around the world that we can reverse the decline in fish stocks by setting up marine protected areas and no-take zones. One example close to home is the Isle Of Man which has led the way in regenerating scallop beds by setting aside areas where dredging and diving for scallops is banned.

After reluctant acceptance from fishermen they are now lobbying for more zones to be set up they are so successful. I believe if we really are serious about conservation then we, recreational divers, should take the lead

and set an example. The St. Abbs and Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve have shown how successful voluntary action can be. We should follow their lead and identify other areas; areas we know from observation will be breeding grounds for scallops, lobster, crawfish and even white fish species.

Fishermen have the perception that we are the ones who are clearing out scallop beds so if we, on a voluntary basis, say we will not take anything from certain areas we can then demand they agree to leave the same areas unfished. We know that stocks in the surrounding areas will increase quickly thereby increasing their catches and consequently their income.

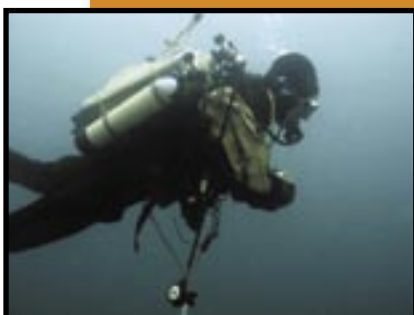
I don't know about you but I want to dive in a healthy sea with an abundance of marine life and if that means giving up my right to take a few scallops in certain areas then I for one am prepared to do that. What about you?

Jack Morrison
EDITOR

I RECENTLY sent in a response to the Draft Marine Bill Scotland. The draft bill is not exactly what many of us were hoping for. The stated aims sound very grand and worthy. They make much of words like 'sustainability' and 'protection for our unique marine environment'. Governments, all governments, are by nature conservative. They all claim to be radical but when in power they don't

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