

This email is sent to Scotland's coastal communities, policy-makers and decision-makers. To recommend a friend or colleague, please click [here](#).



Welcome to C.O.A.S.T.'s monthly newsletter....

This month's edition features an article outlining C.O.A.S.T.'s position that it is time to democratise and fundamentally challenge the current basis of Scotland's marine management.

It's a little known fact, but in Scots law, there exists a 'public right to fish,' which means that our fisheries belong to the people of Scotland and should be managed for the public benefit. Judging by the drastic decline in fish stocks over the 20th century – the Clyde being a prime example - something has gone very wrong. We hope to champion the rights of coastal communities to shape and influence progressive marine regulation that conserve the marine

OUR PUBLIC RIGHT TO FISH

Legal academic and C.O.A.S.T. co-director [Tom Appleby](#) discusses why C.O.A.S.T. is proposing a fundamental challenge to the way we manage our seas....

Why should C.O.A.S.T. have a say in fisheries management?

This is a fair question. Many fishermen will argue that there is enough regulation of the fishing sector already without coastal community groups of busy bodies sticking their noses in.

So should C.O.A.S.T back off and leave it to the professionals?

Of course not. There are a number of reasons why we think it's important, but here's just at a couple:

Firstly, the Clyde fishery has quite simply and quietly collapsed. This is a tragedy on the same scale as the grand banks collapse off the coast of Canada. The Clyde was once the finest fishery in Europe and it is now all but gone. There are strictly speaking no 'fish' left in the Clyde for commercial capture and the few fishermen left are reduced to scraping the seabed for scallops and prawns, with an underrepresented few using more sustainable techniques like creeling. So much for leaving the management up to the 'professionals'...

environment by pushing for more meaningful representation at policy-making level. Only by listening to C.O.A.S.T. and the many coastal communities around the country will the Scottish Government safeguard the long-term interests of the fishing industry and the many economic activities that depend upon the health of our seas.

Please read on....

What's the other reason?

C.O.A.S.T. have just as much right to comment on fisheries management as the fishing industry. Successive governments have usually been far too close to representatives from the fishing industry and tended to ignore other coastal industries like tourism, diving, angling and static sector fishermen - all which have suffered because of over-fishing and a lack of management by government. This close liaison with politicians has not just been wrong for obvious practical reasons, but has also put the Government onto the very margins of what is permissible in law. Like our public parks or public buildings, the right to fish in the sea belongs to the general public. Simply listening to those with an immediate financial interest in capturing fish does not meet the requirements of good resource management.

Why is C.O.A.S.T. better placed to assist in long-term management?

Organisations like C.O.A.S.T. which represent a range of interests are more likely to give a balanced long term view than those who have a short term financial incentive to capture fish as quickly as possible. So don't be shy; it is after all your fishery.

LOCAL NEWS

Scallop dredger in the NTZ



We regret to report that a scallop dredger was recently witnessed in Scotland's first No Take Zone in Lamlash Bay, Isle of Arran. The west coast dredger was seen dredging alongside the perimeter of the NTZ on 13th May, turning into the protected area following each of its dredge runs. The boat's activities were reported by many local people to Marine Scotland Enforcement (MSE), which said that there was no evidence that the dredging gear was in operation when inside the NTZ. MSE's response was to station a vessel in Lamlash Bay three days later, as usual during the weekend ban on all mobile fishing within the Clyde! However, many locals noted that the MSE's new spotter aeroplane undertook a couple of fly-overs above the NTZ during the following week.

The incident is a sad demonstration that the Scottish Government has gone only half-way towards creating the promised marine conservation site, which should involve a fisheries management area encompassing the whole of Lamlash Bay. [This has not yet happened](#) – and meanwhile the flagship NTZ protects only a small part of Lamlash Bay. The fact that local residents were surprised to see a fishing boat in operation in Lamlash Bay at all highlights the need for greater public awareness that there is still much work to be done.

NATIONAL NEWS

Scottish media ignores bad news

Sometimes we don't know whether to laugh or cry. A recent study which publicises the dramatic decline in UK fish stocks due to poor fisheries management over the past century was largely ignored by the Scottish press. The findings of the report were detailed in [The Times](#), [The Mirror](#), [Nature](#), [The Independent](#), [The Guardian](#) and [The Telegraph](#) to name but a few. However, it was a very

different story north of the border, covered only by [The Scotsman](#) which gave ample column space to a source from the Seafish Industry Authority who attempted to discredit the study with accusations of 'dodgy data.' One conclusion is clear – the Scottish press don't like bad news stories about the fishing industry.

The surfaced again in a mildly concerning comment following a debate at the Fishing 2010 Expo, during which Glasgow Bertie Armstrong, CEO of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, criticised the environmental lobby for 'hype' and 'oversimplification.' The same accusation could easily be levelled at the SFF's own spin-machine which [consistently promotes the very minor recovery of North Sea cod stocks](#) in comparison to cod stocks of just 15-20 years ago. The collapse of fish stocks in the Clyde is also conveniently ignored. And yet a simple acknowledgement of the Clyde's demise by Marine Scotland and the SFF would be a start.

[Aquaculture policy has paid 'lip-service to biodiversity'](#)

A recent article in the [The Atlantic Salmon Trust](#) has called upon the Scottish Government to commit to greater leadership in tackling the many problems facing the country's fish-farming industry. Authored by Fiona Cameron, who has extensive experience in the field, the article 'Salmon farming in Scotland: economic success or ecological failure?' notes that there was a 'fairly substantial failure to see the problems which were likely to arise' in the roll-out of fish-farming across Scotland. Whilst recognising its important economic role, the article criticises the concentration of ownership in the Scottish aquaculture industry and says 'successive Scottish governments have paid lip-service to protecting our country's biodiversity.' [Click here to read the full article.](#)

Fishy plan – developing a market in a threatened species

On the face of it a recent application to gain a Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) for Scottish Wild Salmon seems like a good idea. The quality of wild salmon is surely something to celebrate and protect in a market now flooded with increasingly cheap farmed salmon. But is the Scottish Salmon Net Fishing Association's application the best way to go about it? COAST has been contacted by a couple of concerned anglers who believe the PGI could add pressure to the already [fragile stocks of wild salmon](#) in Scottish waters by promoting an international and unsustainable market in the species. As the application itself states: 'Over the centuries fishing has been an important industry for Scotland. Scotland's freshwater fish populations and communities are of international natural heritage value. Despite declines in catches in recent years, Scotland's salmon fishery remains of international importance. They are the basis for fisheries of global renown.' If you want to add your shilling's worth to the debate, then you can respond to the [consultation run by Scottish Government's Food and Drink Industry Division](#),

OVERSEAS NEWS

'Sustainable' krill decision draws MSC criticism

A fishery that will remove hundreds of thousands of tonnes of krill from the Antarctic has sparked controversy after it was recently certified as 'sustainable.' [Critics warn that the judgement ignores scientific evidence](#) and has cast increased doubt over the accreditation requirements of the Marine Stewardship Council. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. Other recent eco-label accreditations have raised more than just eyebrows as a whole raft of fisheries with dubious ecosystem health (see the dedicated blog [MailScanner has detected a possible fraud attempt from "arrancoast.us1.list-manage.com" claiming to be www.fishyfellow.blogspot.com](#)) have received the green light from the MSC.

Dr. Sally Campbell, vice-chair of C.O.A.S.T., explores some of the emerging problems with this new trend of 'sustainable' labelling in her article ['Fishy branding - the ecosystem behind the label.'](#)

European fisheries Commissioner encourages work of C.O.A.S.T.



In recent correspondence with C.O.A.S.T., the EU's new fisheries Commissioner Maria Damanaki has commended this organisation's activities as 'important for the conservation and protection of the marine environment' and suggested that we continue to represent community interests by participating in the EU's new Regional Advisory Councils. Commissioner Damanaki was also quick to point out that it is our own national government that has responsibility for all fishing activities within the 12 nautical mile limit. In short, we should also be pushing for our own government to implement the fisheries policies necessary to conserve the marine resource. The present government's readiness to blame the EC for all the fishermen's (and the environment's) woes highlights a government unwilling to take its responsibilities seriously.

Local MSP condemns Faroese dolphin cull



The Isle of Arran's local MSP for Cunninghame North has demonstrated his continued interest and support for marine conservation by [lodging a motion](#) in the Scottish Parliament urging fellow MSPs to condemn the traditional culling of Calderon dolphins by certain communities in the Faroe Islands. The traditional Faroese practise of slaughtering dolphins has received international approbation via online petition sites in recent months. [Click here for more background.](#)

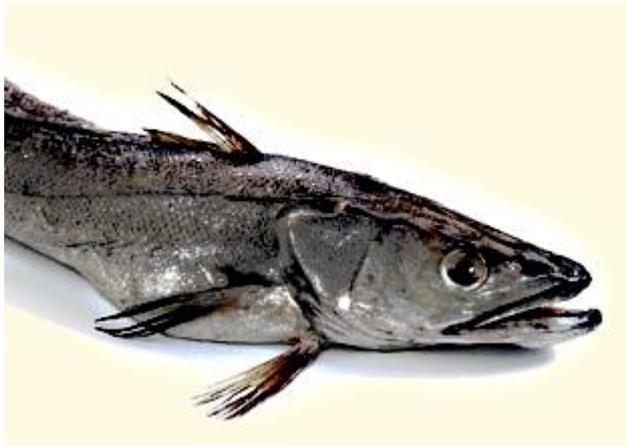
A FEW FISHY FACTS FOLKS SHOULD KNOW

- Scotland accounts for 66% of fisheries landings in the UK
- In 1937, at the peak of the UK's fishing industry, the catch was 14 times what it is now
- The number of dead zones in coastal waters around the world has doubled every decade since 1960
- In the Arctic, there are areas where concentrations of mercury in beluga whales are between two and four times higher than 25 years ago

FISH OF THE MONTH

[In a recent and embarrassing revelation, the Scottish Government has failed in its bid to halt the decline in biodiversity by 2010.](#) As part of C.O.A.S.T.'s continued efforts to raise awareness of Scotland's marine biodiversity, this newsletter features another little-known creature from our coastal waters....

Hake is a family of predatory, cod-like fish of which there are many different species. With a sleek body and a mouthful of sharp teeth, the European Hake can still occasionally be found off the shores of Scotland. Once common in the deeper waters of the Clyde, it has now gone like the rest of the white fish species. It has been heavily over-fished and so is now comparatively rare in the rest of Scotland.



Scientific name: Merluccius merluccius

Normal Size: 1m-1.8m

Weight: Up to 25lbs

Diet: Small hake feed on krill. Adult fish feed on squid and fish as well as a smorgusboard of crustaceans.

Habitat: Scottish hake are usually found in deeper water (50m-500m+) on the lower continental shelf or in the Western sea lochs, but move to shallower waters in the warmer summer months. Hake spawns from April to October off the west coast of Scotland and although the eggs and larvae are pelagic, they may drift into shallow inshore nursery areas.

THANKS

If you have enjoyed reading this newsletter and feel supportive of C.O.A.S.T.'s work, please get in touch. Like all community organisations, we are run by a small group of dedicated volunteers. If you would like to offer any financial support, you can [donate via the website](#).

Alternatively feel free to contact us at info@arrancoast.co.uk.

Thank you for reading COAST's second newsletter. We hope you are looking forward to the next month's edition already.

Coming in the next newsletter:

- the invasion of **carpet sea squirt**: a colonial marine species that has the potential to decimate aquaculture on Scotland's west coast

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