

Thirty new marine protected areas declared in Scotland

July 25 2014



This morning, Fauna & Flora International (FFI) received the welcome news that the Scottish Government has announced the designation of 30 new marine protected areas (MPAs) in its waters.

Among them is the South Arran MPA which is located on the Isle of Arran in the Firth of Clyde, west Scotland. As Scotland's first community-led MPA, this protected area received an extraordinary level of support from the public.

The designation of this MPA is due, in large part, to the great work of FFI's partner, the Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST) which

campaigned hard for its inclusion in the network.

Protective layers

The new South Arran MPA will encompass Scotland's only no-take zone in Arran's Lamlash Bay, helping to build on the recovery in fish and shellfish stocks already being seen there. COAST was also the driving force behind the establishment of this no-take zone, which was designated following 13 years of campaigning by the organisation and its supporters.

In the five years since it was established, the no-take zone (which is completely closed to fishing) has begun to show signs of recovery, with sealife more abundant and diverse inside the reserve than outside.

While certain fishing activities will be allowed in the new MPA, it will ensure better management and protection of the waters surrounding the no-take zone, thus amplifying the benefits.

Shortly after receiving the good news, COAST manager Andrew Binnie said, "COAST is delighted the Scottish Government has designated the South Arran MPA.

"This is a real testament to the people of Arran and our supporters and partners further afield. They have shown once again that coastal communities can play a powerful role in regenerating their marine ecosystems.

"It is encouraging to see the Government beginning to show the sort of leadership the Clyde has long needed. Marine Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage deserve praise for designating the Arran MPA as part of the Scottish MPA network."

However, there is still much to be done, as Andrew explains.



Lamlash Bay, Isle of Arran. Credit: COAST.

"Clyde-wide measures are required to rejuvenate and revive our waters. The management measures envisaged by the government for the South Arran MPA look likely to allow scallop dredging to continue over many fragile habitats within the MPA. This will undermine the MPA's potential to contribute to a healthier more productive Clyde."

Throughout the designation process, COAST and the Arran community have advocated the complete exclusion of scallop dredgers and bottom trawlers from the MPA in favour of more sustainable fishing methods such as scallop diving and creeling.

In light of today's announcement, COAST will campaign to ensure that the entire South Arran MPA is well protected against these kinds of damaging activities to ensure that it can meet its full potential to deliver environmental, social and economic benefits to coastal communities on Arran and around the Firth of Clyde.

Provided by Fauna & Flora International

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