

The UK Fisheries Bill and sustainable Fisheries – where are we and what needs to happen now?



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WWF chairs the Greener UK marine and fisheries work pillar. Greener UK is a coalition of 14 major environmental organisations united in the belief that leaving the EU is a pivotal moment to restore and enhance the UK's environment. Greener UK is working in partnership with the New Economics Foundation, Oceana and EDF. Main documents published to date have also had the support of Environment LINKs UK and Sustain.

GREENER UK



Working with



Some key asks of the



Commitment to manage fisheries sustainably as part of wider marine management

Commitment to setting sustainable fishing levels

Commitment to using clear and transparent criteria to allocate fishing opportunities

Commitment to effective monitoring and control



What happened to UK Fisheries Bill in 201



Not a great deal given the political landscape

Prorogued illegally in September and then legally in October.



Meanwhile



Report after report told a story of how we are failing our oceans (11 of 15 indicators for Good Environmental Status failed) and highlighted the importance of our oceans for climate resilience and planetary health

Countries around the world declared a climate emergency including here in UK

Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity identified overfishing as the biggest human impact on our ocean

Cod stocks in the north sea plummeted to critically low levels, losing MSC certification, and ICES recommending quota cut of 70%



New Political



In December, the political landscape changed dramatically

Conservative Party manifesto:

Promise to deliver “the most ambitious environmental programme of any country on Earth”

“We will establish a new **£500 million Blue Planet Fund** to help protect our oceans from plastic pollution, warming sea temperatures and overfishing, and **extend the Blue Belt programme** to preserve the maritime environment. We will continue to lead diplomatic efforts to **protect 30 per cent of the world’s oceans by 2030.**”

“There will be a **legal commitment to fish sustainably** and a legal requirement for a plan to achieve maximum sustainable yield for each stock”

“We will crack down on the waste and carelessness that destroys our natural environment and kills marine life.”

“We will invest in nature, helping us to reach our Net Zero target with a £640 million new Nature for Climate fund.”

Current



Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) has been transposed into UK law with Statutory Instruments laid making it operable

Fisheries Bill – as laid before Parliament was low on ambition and timescales

Environment Bill proposes Office for Environmental Protection & targets but marine jurisdiction ambiguous



Response needed to climate and nature emergencies



Commitment to making fisheries climate and nature positive

Climate - contributing to net zero target

- decarbonising the fleet
- Spatial management of fishing to protect key carbon storage habitats as well as habitats that absorb carbon such as seagrass
- include climate management as criteria for access to fishing opportunities

Nature - clear strategy for tackling the bycatch of non target species and marine wildlife, minimum impact gear, effective spatial management to benefit species and habitats



Challenges

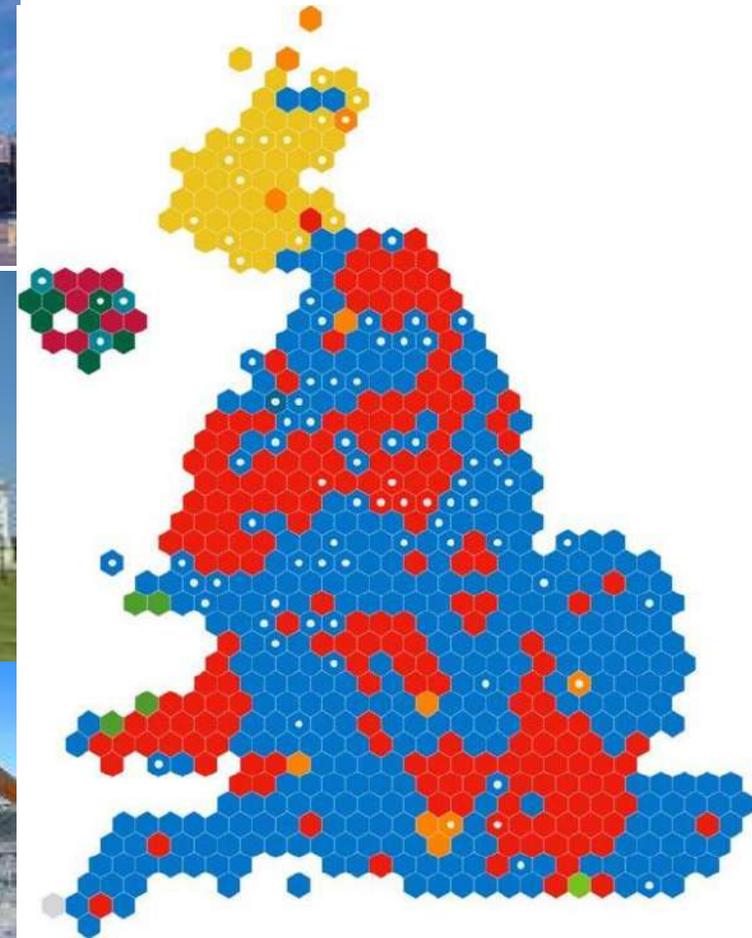


Fisheries are a devolved management responsibility with around 60% volume and value of landings in Scotland

There is no such thing as the 'fishing industry' – there are many different business models and interests across the sector

Time is of the essence – need to improve levels of ambition and timeframes for system change. Political will essential

Effective finance is essential and Treasury needs to be convinced



Opportunities



UK has opportunity to demonstrate global leadership as independent coastal state – COP26 being hosted in Glasgow

Commitment to ocean recovery and manage fisheries as part of the solution in delivering climate resilience and nature recovery. Sustainable management will have positive impacts economically, socially and environmentally.

Use technology positively – widespread adoption of cameras for improving data for fisheries management, delivering compliance, underpinning sustainable practice, positive marketing

Applying UK standards to set condition of access to UK waters – drive change at European level



Conclusions

It is clear that we need to change the way we manage fisheries if we are to deliver ocean recovery and help adapt to, and tackle, climate change.

If we looked at fisheries management through a climate lens it would not look like it does now – we need to transition.

There are real opportunities for the Fisheries Bill to address climate and nature emergencies with clear commitments from governments to deliver climate and nature positive fisheries.



Thank you



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