

# Clyde Cod



Scottish Government  
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**marine scotland**

Sea Fish (Prohibition on Fishing) (Firth of Clyde) (No. 2) Order 2022 (SSI 2022/35)  
the Firth of Clyde cod spawning closure -  
14 February to 30 April

# Monitoring and Compliance

- *Previous Surveillance*
- In 2020 there were two boardings conducted in the Clyde area that is affected by the 2022 Cod closure. These boardings were conducted on Nephrop trawlers working in the area and there were no infringements detected in the area.
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- In 2021 there were no boardings conducted in the area within the time frame.
- In general, before the introduction of the new measures, the restricted areas were seen as a low risk issue with assets utilised on higher risk priorities.

# Operation Galene Operational Summary

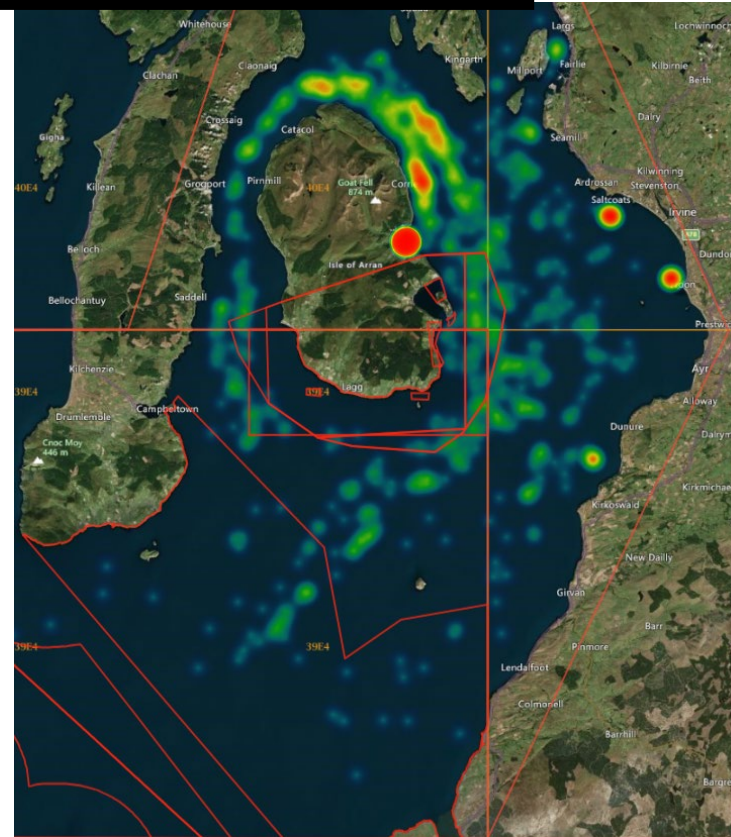
## 2022 operational coverage.

During the closure there has been a concerted effort to have a presence in the Clyde area to deter any breaches of the restricted areas.

The Inshore Rhib and MPV Minna were the primary vessels utilised for the period of closure.

Additional coverage was also given to monitor activity during the period in order to maintain monitoring levels.

VMS was also utilised throughout this period.

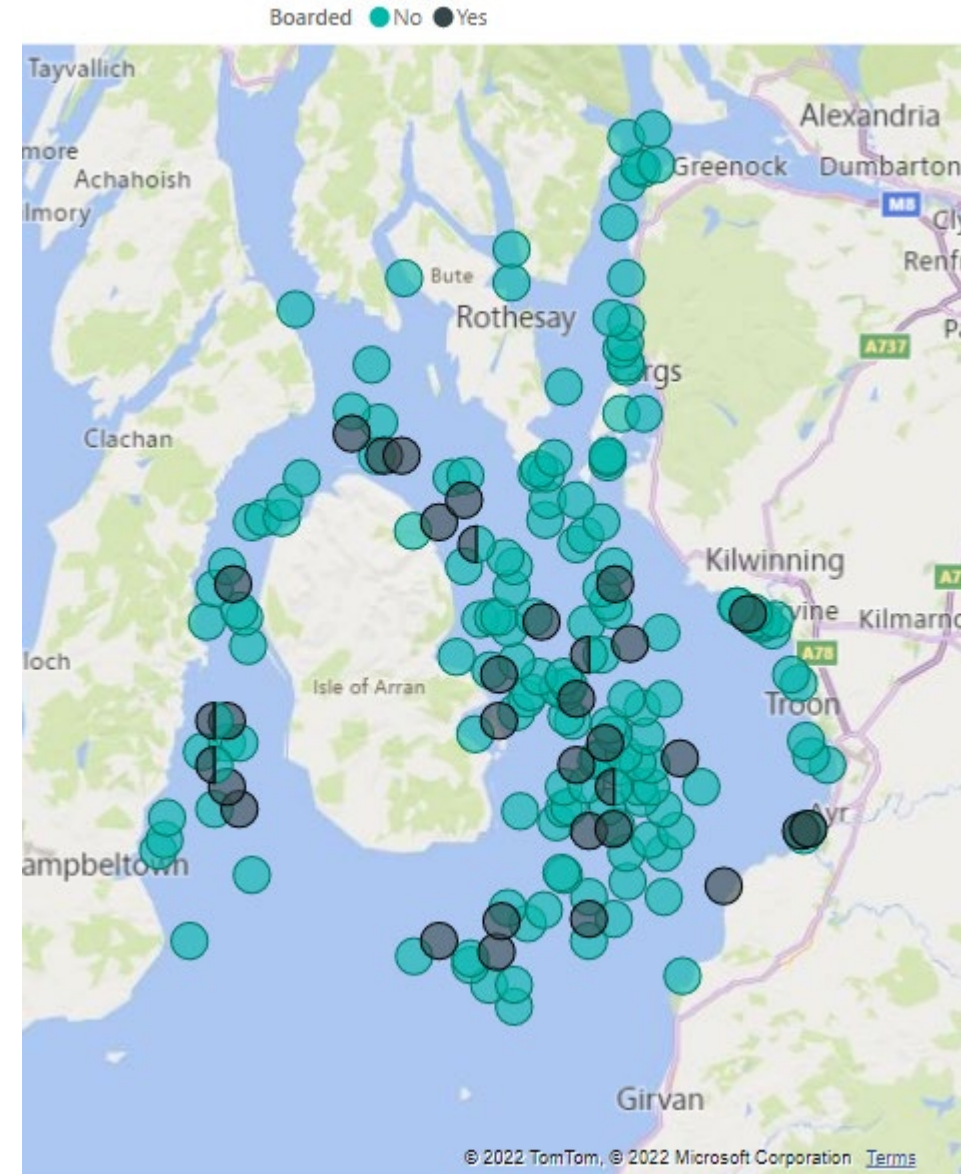


*MPV VMS coverage during the period of restrictions*



During the period of the closure in 2022 there have been 34 boardings conducted, with 197 vessels sighted, over a range of static gear, hand divers and demersal trawlers.

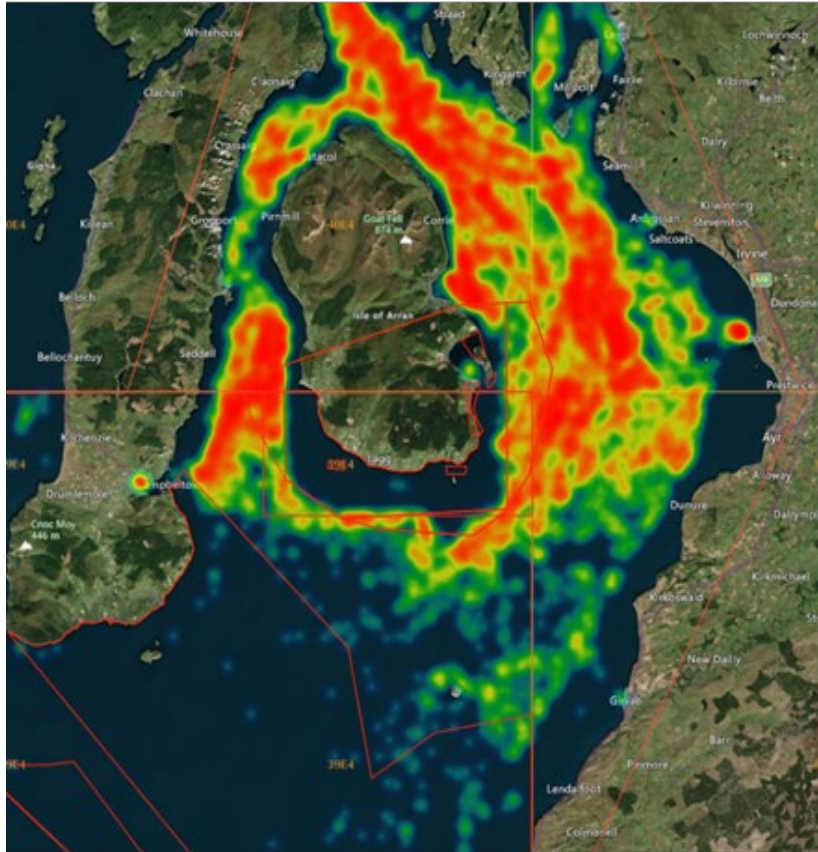
The main focus was on the demersal trawlers as they are a main fishery in the restricted area, and also the sector which would most likely show indicators of the levels of Cod within the Clyde area.



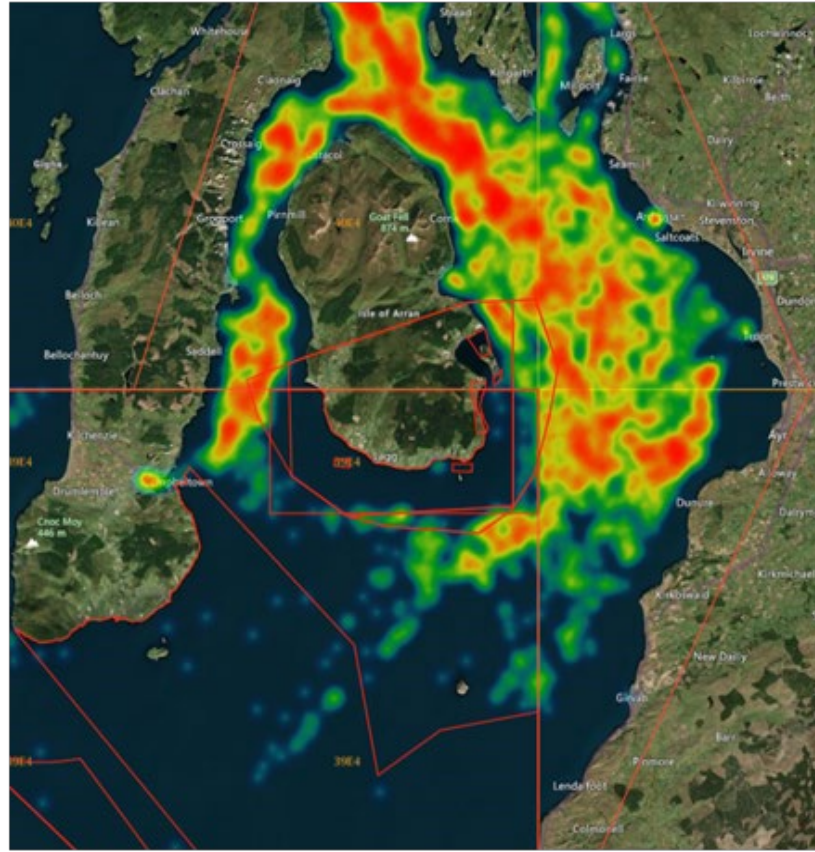
*Location of Sightings and boardings*

# Distribution of effort

2021 fishing activity



2022 fishing activity



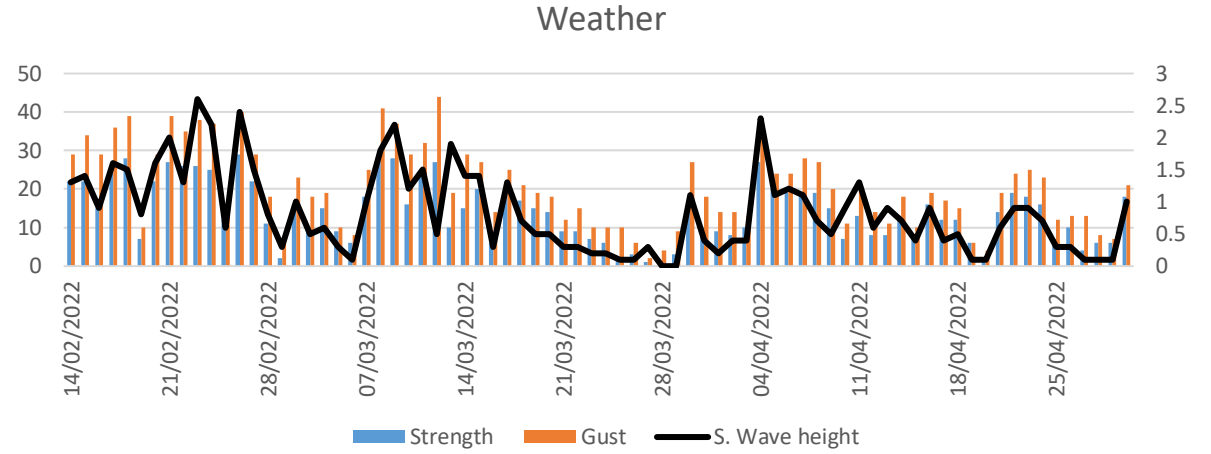
Fishing effort was predominately in the Northern parts of the Clyde in 2022 with little effort to the South and West of SAMPA

*VMS activity at vessels operating at speeds indicative of fishing*

# Other Factors to Consider

## Weather

The weather at the start of the closure created a period where fishing activity in the Clyde was restricted to the Northern parts of the Clyde. This possibly had an effect on the decision making of the visiting Nephrop fleet to operate in the Clyde.



## Fuel

The increased fuel prices also has had an effect on the activity in the area with Increased fuel prices driving decision making on areas of operation.

## Crew

There has been a difficulty in some vessels getting crew which has lead to operational difficulties during the restriction.



# Evidence of Cod

34 boardings conducted

10 boardings/hauls indicated evidence of cod present

All evidence of Cod was found in Nephrop trawls with SMPs and strengthening bags fitted.

The estimated average weight of the hauls that contained evidence of Cod was 154 kgs.

Nephrops made up approximately 86% of the haul weight

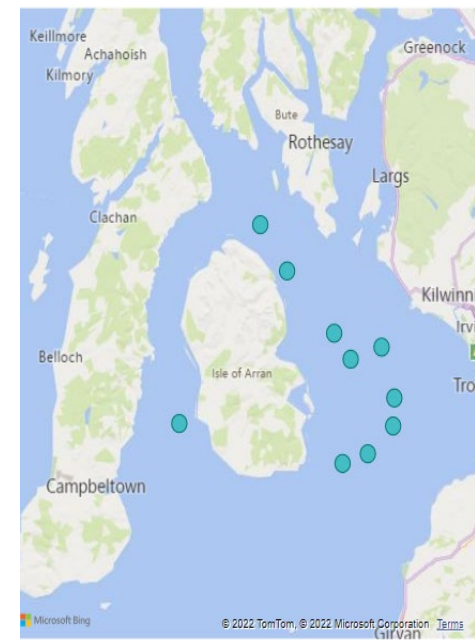
The average tow length was just under 3 1/2 Hours

There were 77 individual Cod identified and measured

Average size was 27.9cm with a range of 15-56cm

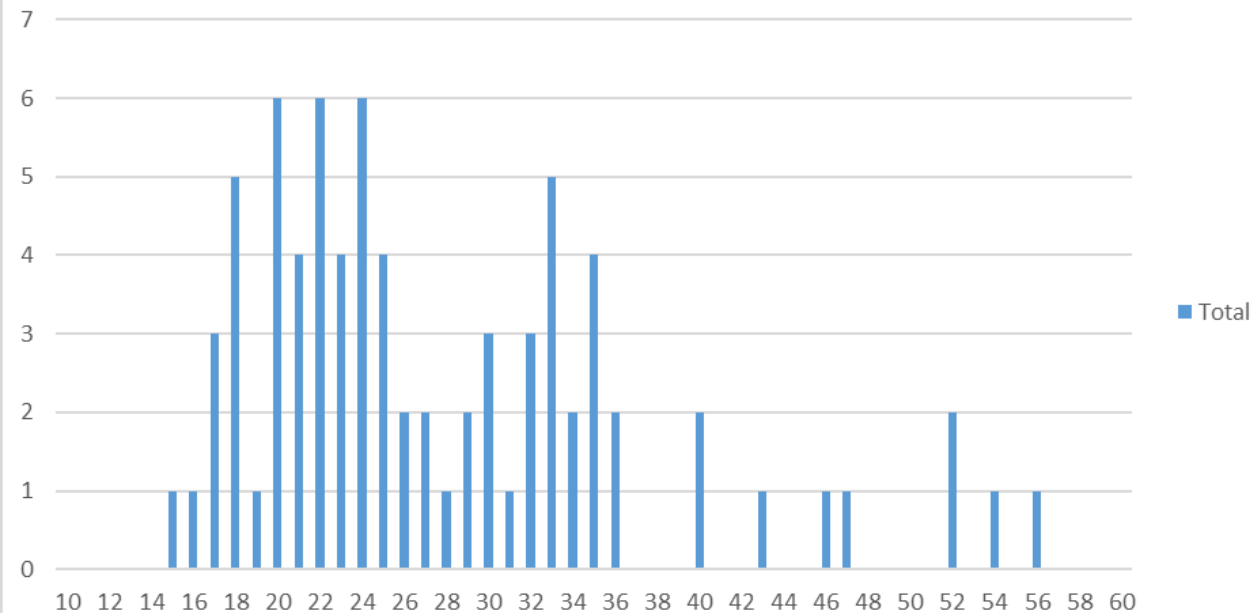
Of the 77 fish, 9 ( 11%) were above the size that would be expected to have reach spawning maturity.

The bycatch indicated that the other main species of fish present in the fishery are Haddock, Whiting and Hake with the average volume of bycatch being approximately 20 kgs the majority of this being of Juvenile sizes.



Location of Boardings with COD present

Number of Observed Cod by Length





# Operation Galene - Conclusions

- Excellent compliance from fishermen
- Bad weather pragmatic action for retrieval of gear at the start of the closure
- Redefined closure area maps the habitat and excluded areas where cod are not likely to be spawning
- Reassured that the areas defined in the closure meet the policy objective to protect spawning cod

# Key findings

***Note: Data for 2022 is still not complete, there is a lag in the data and a couple of months before Marine Scotland has accurate figures for the restriction period in 2022. As such the below is subject to change.***

It is not possible to robustly assess the impacts based on sales and landing data alone, but these figures can help give an indication

- Early findings suggest a decrease in Nephrops landings across Scotland since February.
- The decrease in Nephrops landings since February by vessels estimated to be affected by the Clyde cod closure is broadly mirroring the national average.
- It's difficult to disentangle whether the decrease in landings is the result of fuel prices, increased restrictions or other factors i.e. weather
- Early data suggests higher prices for Nephrops has resulted in nominal value landed staying roughly constant this year since February as compared with last year.
- Displacement effects seen, significant reduction in landings from the ICES rectangle with Clyde Cod since February compared with the previous year, but only a slight decrease in landings from other areas. *(much less of a decrease than seen in the national average, so can be seen as an 'increase' in fishing effort in other areas)*
- The change since February in landings of the restriction affected vessels is very uneven, some vessels seen to land more, some a lot less.

# Feedback from Stakeholders

# Fisheries Management Strategy

- contains a range of actions which are intended to support more sustainable and responsible fisheries management in Scotland.
- Policies, such as the **Future Catching Policy** and the introduction of Remote Electronic Monitoring to key parts of the fishing fleet, will support increased sustainability of practice, and will increase accountability and confidence that we are fishing at sustainable levels.
- We are currently consulting on both of these policies and will be progressing them over the course of 2022 –**Consultations close on 7 June 2022**



# Highly Protected Marine Areas

- September to December 2022 – consultation on policy framework and ecological site selection guidelines
- Spring 2023 – publication of policy framework and ecological site selection guidelines
- 2023 to 2024 – iterative site selection process with ongoing stakeholder consultation
- 2025 – consultation on final site proposals
- Early 2026 (before March) – designation of sites

# Next steps

- Summarising today's discussion for Ministers
- Will proactively share that information and today's presentation which will hopefully negate any FOI/EIR requests.