

// INSHORE FISHERIES



MALLAIG HARBOUR

Introduction

Scotland's inshore waters extend from the coast out to 12 nautical miles (nm), with the majority of fishing taking place within 6 nm.

Two-thirds of the Scottish fleet – over 1,400 vessels – fish primarily in inshore waters. These are typically smaller boats which are 8 to 10 metres in length and have a one or two-man crew, quite often working part-time.

The inshore fleet is diverse, ranging from trawlers to creelers, dredgers to netters, divers and hand gatherers. The majority of their catch is shellfish – brown and velvet crab, lobster, scallops and *Nephrops* (langoustines).

The inshore fishing industry makes an important contribution to Scotland's rural economy, landing up to £90 million on average each year, helping to sustain employment in many of Scotland's most fragile coastal communities.

Types of inshore fishing

Fishing in Scotland's inshore waters is mainly carried out by one of two methods:

- **Static gear fishing** involves placing gear – typically pots or creels – on the sea bed.



CREELS STACKED AT ANSTRUTHER HARBOUR

These are baited and left for fish to be lured and trapped, then recovered at a later time. Fish species caught using this method include brown and velvet crab, lobster and *Nephrops*.

- **Mobile gear fishing** involves towing gear behind a vessel while it is at sea. Fish species caught using this method include *Nephrops* (with trawled nets) and scallops (with dredges).

Governance

Marine Scotland has a number of legal powers to enable it to manage fishing in inshore waters.

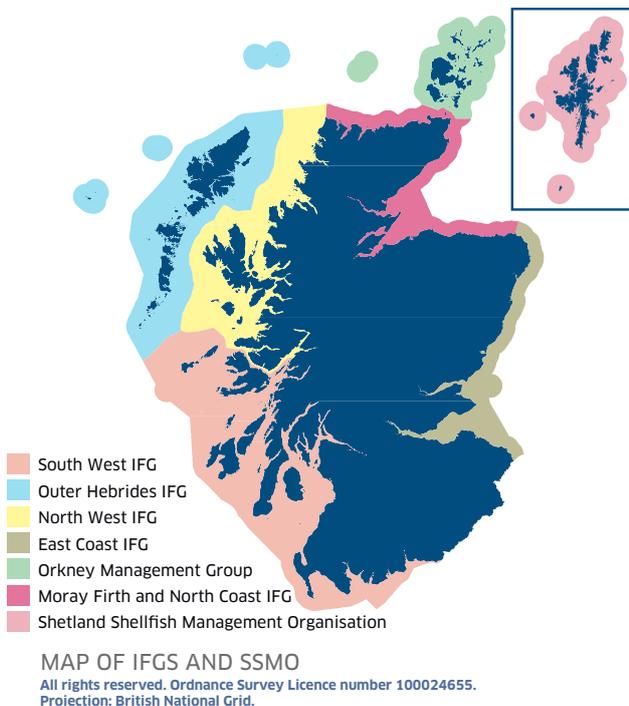
- **The Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967** allows commercial fishing to be regulated by specifying the size of fish that can be landed, controlling what fishing gear can be used, and restricting the fishing for, or landing of, any species.
- **The Sea Fish (Shellfish) Act 1967** allows shellfish fisheries to be managed and regulated at a local level through the granting of Regulating Orders and Several Orders to individuals or organisations.
- **The Inshore Fishing (Scotland) Act 1984** allows all fishing in Scotland's inshore waters to be

regulated by restricting what can be fished, what methods can be used, what vehicles can be used – or any combination of these – in any area.

Inshore management

A number of organisations are active in the management of Scotland's inshore fisheries at a local and national level:

- **The Inshore Fisheries Management and Conservation group (IFMAC)** is made up of industry, environmental NGO and government representatives, and is responsible for resolving issues and developing policies that are of national importance to the inshore sector.
- **Inshore Fisheries Groups (IFGs)** are six non-statutory bodies that have been set up around the coast with the aim of putting local fishermen at the heart of inshore fisheries management and giving them a strong voice in wider marine planning developments.
- **The Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO)** directly manages and regulates Shetland's



inshore shellfish fisheries through a Regulating Order, giving it the powers to introduce its own regulations and control entry via license permits.

Supporting the inshore sector

Since 2012, Marine Scotland has been delivering on a strategy for inshore fishing to ensure that the sector is sustainable, profitable and vibrant. So far:

- Over £2.5 million has been invested, including funding IFGs with £750,000 to deliver management proposals and undertake local projects, and using £1.4 million from the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) to improve the science and data needed for effective fisheries management.
- Steps have been taken to tackle long standing issues that undermine sound fisheries management, such as creel limits, gear conflict, hobby/unlicensed fishermen and new controls for the king scallop fishery.
- Industry engagement has been improved through the formation of the IFMAC group, and establishing an annual Inshore Fisheries Conference to bring the sector together and encourage active involvement in inshore fisheries management.

Next steps

The Inshore Fisheries Strategy has laid the foundations for tackling the challenges and grasping the opportunities in the inshore sector. Marine Scotland is now looking ahead to the issues that will shape the future of inshore fisheries management.

Improving the evidence base on which management decisions are made, streamlining governance, and embedding fisheries input into marine planning are just a few of the areas which the strategy may need to give greater focus to in the years to come.