

# Bring back the fish counters

Sainsbury's and Tesco cut back their fresh fish counters to tackle the hoarding demand for other groceries at the start of the lock down. It is time to bring them back. Indeed, it is time to open more and reverse the trends of recent years. where some retailers were closing fresh fish and meat counters anyway.

The UK fishing industry had become very dependent on the catering trades and on export for its fish sales. Retailers are busily importing packaged fish. The Covid 19 policy assault on the hospitality industry, and the end of the Common Fisheries Policy, provides an ideal time for a re think.

The aims of getting control of our fishery back is twofold. We both wish to catch less to allow stocks to rebuild from the damage of the CFP, and greatly increase the proportion of the catch to be landed in the UK so we can eat more of our own fish. This is not difficult given the huge amount of fish taken by other countries every year under the CFP.

So now is a great time for the supermarkets to work with the fishermen and women to offer contracts for more UK fish to be sold direct to customers in shops. It is ridiculous that this island nation set in a sea of fish has major supermarkets that do not allow us to buy fresh fish from the UK. I trust the government rejects any idea of giving much of our fish away in some new deal after we have properly left the EU in December. This provides commercial opportunities for the fishing industry and for retailers. Decent contracts from major retailers would allow the UK fishing industry to borrow to invest, to expand its capacity to serve the local market.