

UK Government and Devolved Governments seek views on the Joint Fisheries Statement

The UK Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland have launched a public consultation on the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS).

A key component of the Fisheries Act 2020, the Joint Fisheries Statement sets out the legally binding policies the UK Government and Devolved Governments will follow, at a UK level and individually, as they work together to deliver world-class sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management.

The consultation, running from 18 January to 12 April 2022, will welcome views from industry and environmental stakeholders, the public and all those interested and affected by the proposed policies.

The Joint Fisheries Statement sets out policies from the respective governments for achieving, or contributing to achieving, the eight objectives outlined in the Fisheries Act 2020 which will help to achieve the UK's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse oceans and seas.

In line with the Fisheries Act's objectives and international obligations, the Joint Fisheries Statement sets out how the UK will adopt an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and includes a commitment to mapping and protecting our blue carbon resources.

It recognises the importance of fishing and aquaculture, and the benefits it provides to all parts of the UK as a source of employment and identity for our coastal communities. To support this, the Joint Fisheries Statement includes policies to help the industry thrive, including commitments to upskilling industry and succession planning, and promoting the consumption of locally sourced seafood.

The Joint Fisheries Statement sets out three main areas to deliver our ambition:

Protecting and, where necessary, recovering our fish stocks; Reducing the effects of fishing on the marine and coastal environment; and Supporting a modern, resilient, and environmentally responsible fishing industry.

Environment Secretary George Eustice, said:

The Fisheries Act has given us the powers to implement our own independent fisheries policy, improve our marine environment and make decisions based on the health of our fish stocks and not vested interests. Today, we are setting out our shared vision for a

sustainable fishing industry that delivers for our fishermen, the environment and the whole Union.

We have taken back control of our waters, and a year on from the Trade and Cooperation Agreement a positive picture is emerging for our fishing industry. We have seen an increase in quota that will amount to around £146 million by 2026 and we are investing £100M into coastal communities so that they can benefit from better infrastructure, new jobs and investment in skills.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Malcolm Offord said:

We are committed to delivering world-class sustainable fisheries and aquaculture management. I welcome this publication and the joint working taking place across the UK to ensure we maximise the economic and social benefits for our communities of becoming an independent coastal state.

Mairi Gougeon MSP, Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands, said

I am pleased to launch the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS) which respects the devolution settlement on fisheries management and is clear about the limits and extent of its role in terms of devolved powers and responsibilities. This document is the result of careful work by officials from across the UK and demonstrates what can be achieved through meaningful and purposeful engagement.

The Joint Fisheries Statement will help us use our devolved powers to secure a sustainable future for the Scottish fishing industry, onshore and offshore, within the context of tackling the twin crises of climate and biodiversity and our commitment to achieve and maintain good environmental status for all of Scotland's seas.

The UK Government and Devolved Governments are committed to working closely with industry and are seeking views from stakeholders to ensure the Joint Fisheries Statement works with the needs of our industry and marine environment. The consultation document can be found <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/sustainability-devolution-and-legislation-team/jfs/> .

The UK Government and Devolved Governments will be organising joint information sessions to help stakeholders understand the document, in order to aid them in drafting their consultation responses.