



for birds  
for people  
for ever

# SCOTLAND'S SEAS



## Safeguard our sea life

**It may seem incredible, but the seas around the UK currently have no legal protection.**

Unlike on land, there are very few protected areas in the marine environment. This means that some of our most precious wildlife, including dolphins, basking sharks, corals, seahorses and turtles, and spectacular seabirds such as gannets, shearwaters and puffins, is at risk from over-exploitation and the damaging effects of development. Tell-tale signs of ecological stress are showing in our marine environment. Escapes and pollution from fish farms, destruction of deepwater corals, radioactive hotspots, littered beaches and sewage pollution make regular news.

**RSPB Scotland is campaigning alongside other wildlife organisations for new laws to safeguard our seas.**



Gannets, Bass Rock

### Who is responsible?

Responsibility for the seas around Scotland lies with both the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood and with the UK government at Westminster, so **BOTH must deliver new laws to protect our seas and coasts.**

### A Marine Act for Scotland

Westminster has already brought out a White Paper – a first step towards gaining a UK Marine Bill.

**Now the Scottish Executive must deliver a Marine Act for Scotland so that Scotland's waters can gain the protection they desperately need.**

## The solution

**RSPB Scotland** is a keen advocate of marine spatial planning — a planning system for the sea. We believe that this will improve protection of the marine environment through better management of activities. However, it should tackle more than wildlife protection.

Based on experience of planning on land, the RSPB believes that **marine spatial planning** should help wildlife AND people, by helping to avoid planning conflicts and protecting the livelihoods of coastal communities.

Healthy and abundant seas are vital for Scotland's economy. We are Europe's number one wildlife watching destination, and yet we offer little protection to those marine species and habitats which put Scotland on the map. A Marine Act for Scotland should also create **marine protected areas** for those 'Scottish specialities' which visitors from all over the world come to our shores to see.

Scotland has the longest and most diverse coastline, largest seabird colonies, best fisheries, richest marine life, and some of the most innovative marine industries in the UK. Yet we've the dubious honour of running last in the race to protect these valuable resources.

The European Commission is developing European legislation, and already Westminster has detailed plans for new laws, most of which will stop at the border. Recently, the Scottish Executive received recommendations from the full spectrum of marine stakeholders, RSPB Scotland included, describing new Scottish legislation that both industry and environmentalists alike believe is vital to manage our seas sustainably for the future.

Election campaign commitments to a Marine Bill for Scotland from all the parties are welcomed but the new parliament must pick up the baton and keep up the pace of the EU and Westminster. To fall behind in developing a Marine Act for Scotland could endanger Scottish jobs, the marine environment and new opportunities for tourism and leisure.

Eider



Puffins



Gannetry, Bass Rock



Kittiwakes



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RSPB Scotland is part of The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - the UK charity working to secure a healthy environment for birds and all wildlife, helping to create a better world for everyone.

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