

P-05-697 Objection to the Current Proposals for the Designation of SAC's for Porpoises.

This petition was submitted by Stephen De-Waine, having collected 109 signatures.

Text of the Petition

We call on the National Assembly for Wales to urge the Welsh Government to change the way in which the current boundaries of the proposed SAC's for Porpoises have been established to include science to support the physical and biological factors essential to the life cycle of the Porpoise, to include where feeding and calving takes place, and not to be established with just a population of 10%, established from mapping which is artificial science.

As you are probably aware the UK is currently under threat of legal action, to designate further SAC's under the Habitats Directive for the protection of Harbour Porpoises.

This objection has been established from the fact that at present it is impossible to quantify the future impact on the fishing industry that a newly designated SAC may have, and to question the science used to establish the proposed areas.

Additional information

The existing European Habitats Directives have proven that under Article 6(3) Habitats Regulation Assessment if used indiscriminately can have a devastating impact for some members

of the coastal communities, which depend on fishing for their livelihoods.

Existing designated SAC's, have restricted fisheries, bringing hardship amongst coastal communities, and at times without sound scientific evidence being in place to support Government decisions, but instead with the use of the precautionary principle.

And even though it has been established that Porpoises are already well protected, the designation of new SAC's which will be overlaid over existing SAC's, may perhaps in the future allow individuals to make a stronger case to the E.U Directorate General for the Environment to implement further restrictions to protect the marine environment at the cost of coastal communities.

The size of the sites suggests that the boundaries have been established using the precautionary principle, rather than science, modelling is effectively artificial science, which is used when facts are limited, and are wholly reliant on the data, which is fed in to the system.

It would be better to establish the physical and biological factors essential to the life cycle of the Porpoise, and where feeding and calving takes place, not just populations of 10% to establish boundaries of the newly proposed SAC's.

The majority of fishermen are no different from the environmentalists, they to enjoy the marine environment that they work in, and take great pleasure from witnessing marine mammals, whilst out fishing.

We are in danger of over regulating the seas around our coast with environmental legislation, which could lead to social exclusion of traditional activities, which coastal communities rely on.

The problem begins when SAC's form the main mechanics to stopping activities, following individuals and organizations misusing legislation in orchestrated appeals to the E.U Directorate General for the Environment, without reliable science to restrict activities, causing the precautionary principle to be used to close fisheries or restrict activities, which in turn lead to serious hardships amongst coastal communities.

It is extremely important that the area is relative and designated based on solid scientific evidence.

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Preseli Pembrokeshire
- Mid and West Wales