

Clyde 2020

A sustainable future for
Scotland's largest inshore fishery



Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust

The 2020 targets

The European Union has, through the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, set 2020 targets which apply to the Clyde. Through those targets, Scottish Ministers are required to put in place a programme of measures which would bring the Clyde back to "Good Environmental Status", and the Scottish Government has committed to a research programme to support this effort.

The state of the Clyde

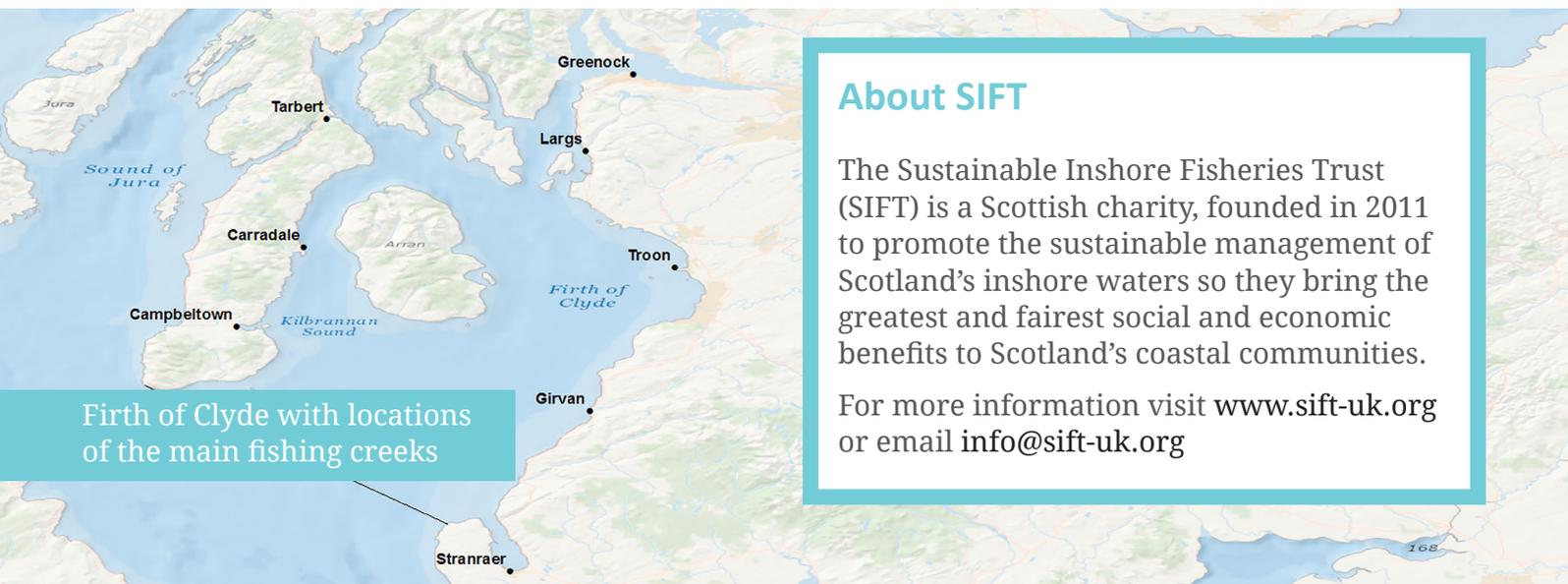


The Firth of Clyde covers 3700km² of 'inland sea', bounded by Ayrshire in the east, Kintyre in the west, the Irish Sea to the south and the Argyll sea lochs in the north.

It has suffered serious economic and ecological losses since towed fishing gears were allowed into its close inshore waters in the 1960s. The Clyde's once-great commercial fin-fisheries have collapsed, with takes down by around 95%, and its world class recreational sea angling has all but disappeared. The Clyde fishery is now 'a fishery of last resort', with the industry forced to focus on scallops and prawns.

The Clyde suffers from

- Over-dependence upon shellfish. Shellfish now comprise more than 99% of Clyde landings, unlike the diverse industry the Firth supported in its heyday;
- Gear conflict between mobile gear (trawl and dredge) and static gear (creel) fisheries. Gear conflict is economically costly (fishing gear cannot be insured) and socially divisive;
- Continuing damage by fishing gears to seabed habitats. Continued use of heavy mobile gears disrupts the marine environment and hinders the recovery of vital fin-fish stocks;
- Poor sea angling opportunities. The absence of large 'trophy' fish and the sea angling business that depends on them has damaged the region's tourism.



Firth of Clyde with locations of the main fishing creeks

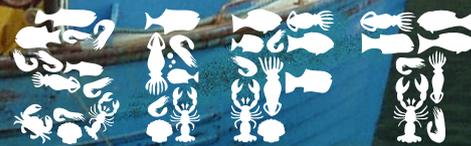
About SIFT

The Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust (SIFT) is a Scottish charity, founded in 2011 to promote the sustainable management of Scotland's inshore waters so they bring the greatest and fairest social and economic benefits to Scotland's coastal communities.

For more information visit www.sift-uk.org or email info@sift-uk.org

Clyde 2020

A sustainable future for
Scotland's largest inshore fishery



Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust

Opportunities from renewal

The evidence of the recent past is that the Firth of Clyde can support a much more diverse and sustainable fishing industry, including very valuable recreational angling and fin fisheries, both now almost non-existent.

The current management regime undermines and limits the industry, but there are ways to bring all the relevant stakeholders together and design a new management system for the Clyde to protect it economically and environmentally for the long term. The restoration of fish stocks on the Clyde will not just ensure the European Union's targets are met: it is also essential for an economically thriving Clyde fishery.

How this renewal can be delivered

To achieve these objectives, SIFT supports the introduction of a Regulating Order under the 1967 Sea Fisheries Act to establish the Clyde Fishery Management Organisation (CFMO) as a non-profit organisation for key stakeholders: mobile gear fishermen, static gear fishermen, sea anglers, local authorities and government agencies. The CFMO would then manage the existing shell-fishery and work to restore a healthy mixed fishery.

The CFMO would be advised by an independent scientific trust to provide the sound science on which fishery management decisions can be made. The trust's remit will include identifying ecosystem baselines, collating commercial fisheries data to assist management, and the monitoring of fisheries performance.

Possible measures to manage the Clyde

- Mobile gear zones, located over areas of less sensitive seabed, for trawling and dredging;
- Static gear zones exclusively for creeling, angling and other low-impact fishing;
- Small protection zones, located in areas with the greatest capacity to support biodiversity;
- Effort control measures such as licences to keep fishing effort at sustainable levels;

Economic research

SIFT is working with The EU Program of Environmental Defense Fund and an independent economic consultancy to evaluate the benefits of fisheries management options for the Firth of Clyde. The work is focussing on the economic benefits of restoring the Clyde's mixed fishery, recovering the marine environment and protecting existing shell fisheries.