

To all vessels included in the SFSAG MSC Certification Group

The announcement below was sent to all vessels last year informing them of a voluntary closure at the Fladen Grounds.

This will stay in place until such time as formal MPA management measures are brought in by Government.

All SFSAG vessels (list available at <http://scottishfsag.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/MSC-Saithe-and-haddock-Master-250717xlsx.pdf>) must abide by this voluntary code.

It will be continuously monitored by Marine Scotland Compliance and any fishing activity reported to SFSAG and we will be expected to ensure that the vessel moves on from the voluntary closed area.

SFSAG will have no option but to remove any vessel, repeatedly fishing in the area, from the MSC list resulting in that vessel not being able to land any catches as MSC certified.

All

You will be aware that the Scottish Fisheries Sustainable Accreditation Group (SFSAG) entered North Sea Cod into the MSC certification programme last year. It has proceeded well and now reached the penultimate stage with the final report about to be released. It will be certified immediately after.

Before this can happen we have an issue which we need to resolve regarding the protection of tall sea pens.

The area of sea pens falls within a designated offshore MPA at the Fladens although it will be the early part of next year before the management measures are finalised and introduced. This leaves the sea pens vulnerable to damage during the early part of our certification, which under the applied scoring system would deliver a fail.

As a solution to the problem SFSAG have agreed to introduce a self-imposed restriction for the interim period between the granting of full certification and the introduction of the MPA. We are fortunate that little fishing takes place within the area, which means that very little disruption to fishing should occur.

This approach has the support of Marine Scotland who has agreed to monitor the area and report any fishing activity to the group.

We ask for your cooperation in this matter and request that you refrain from fishing in the area contained within the following coordinates.

58° 59.248' N 000° 08.373' W

58° 58.226' N 000° 04.475' E

58° 55.440' N 000° 05.816' E

58° 51.311' N 000° 06.539' E

58° 49.143' N 000° 00.170' W

58° 49.819' N 000° 09.843' W

Best Regards
Mike Park

Chair
SFSAG