



The Rt. Hon. Mark Spencer MP
Minister of State for Food, Farming and Fisheries
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

1 February 2024

Dear Mark,

I have received your letter of 30th January 2024, where you inform of the decision to implement a full ban on sandeel fisheries in English waters.

Such a decision would create severe economic consequences for the Danish fishing sector including the entire value chain. I will once again underline, that the Danish government finds your management measures disproportionate as well as discriminatory against the Danish fishing fleet.

Following my letter of 8th September 2023 and our joint discussion on 19th September 2023, I am deeply disappointed that we did not have the possibility to have an in-depth discussion on the matter again before the decision. However, I suggest we take this discussion now.

This should be seen in the light of the response from The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) on the EU/UK joint request on ecosystem considerations in the provision of single-stock advice for forage fish and the newly completed benchmark on sandeel performed by ICES that will be used in the upcoming advice for sandeel for 2024 as far as I know.

In its response to the joint request, ICES clearly states it does include wide-ranging considerations for ecosystem effects on the assessed stocks. In the assessments, ICES recognises the ecological significance of forage fish species such as sandeel, Norway pout, herring, and sprat as important food sources for seabirds etc. Furthermore, the finalised benchmark gives the most updated information for discussions.

Therefore, I strongly request that we immediately engage in a technical discussion on this basis. I strongly believe that we can collaborate on how to ensure proportionality in the protection of the marine environment. A Danish delegation of officials is prepared to meet with your team in London within the coming days to discuss technical management measures and possible alternatives to a full ban.

I sincerely hope you will accept my suggestion for collaboration. My services are ready to assist in the planning of technical meetings.

Yours sincerely,

Jacob Jensen