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## Chamber and committees

# Question reference: S6W-18244

**Asked by:** Ariane Burgess, MSP for Highlands and Islands, Scottish Green Party

**Date lodged:** 18 May 2023

**Current status:** Initiated by the Scottish Government. Answered by Mairi Gougeon on 19 May 2023

## Question

To ask the Scottish Government whether it will be implementing management measures for the sandeel fishery in Scottish waters for the protection of the marine environment.

## Answer

We recognise that biologically diverse seas and healthy, functioning marine ecosystems are vital to underpin a wide variety of marine industries and interests. It is important that we manage our marine environment in such a way as to ensure sustainable use, allowing future generations to enjoy and benefit from a healthy resource. Therefore, I am pleased to announce that we will be undertaking a public consultation on potential measures to manage fishing for sandeel in Scottish waters, bearing in mind our environmental protection objectives.

Sandeels aid the long-term sustainability and resilience of the marine ecosystem and are an important food source for many species, including marine mammals, seabirds and predatory fish.

Measures to restrict fishing for sandeels in Scottish waters could also deliver benefits to seabirds which have been impacted by Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza as well as providing greater resilience to seabird populations, some of which have faced declines in recent decades.

Launching in summer 2023, this consultation will seek the public's views on potential measures for the sandeel fishery in Scottish waters, to help achieve the Scottish Government's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive and diverse seas which are managed to meet the long term needs of nature and people. This consultation will also seek the public's views on a number of key documents including environmental and business regulatory impact assessments.

This consultation aligns with the overarching Scottish Government position, which is reflected in Scotland's Fisheries Management Strategy, not to support fishing for sandeel in our waters. For this reason, sandeel quota has not been allocated to UK vessels since 2021.

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