



DEFRA Marine and Fisheries Directorate
c/o Mr Patrick Cotter
Area 2D Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London, SW1P 3JR
United Kingdom

Pelagic RAC
Treubstraat 17
PO Box 72
2280 AB Rijswijk
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 (0)70 336 9624
Fax: +31 (0)70 399 3004
E-mail: info@pelagic-rac.org
<http://www.pelagic-rac.org>

Date: 3 December 2007
Our reference: PRAC07.50/AC
Subject: Consultation on measures to protect marine biodiversity in Lyme Bay from the impact of fishing with dredges and other towed gear.

Dear Mr. Cotter,

Thank you for requesting the Pelagic RAC to comment on your consultation document on measures to protect marine biodiversity in Lyme Bay from the impact of fishing with dredges and other towed gear. The Pelagic RAC agrees that Lyme Bay is identified as a Sensitive Marine area and it may be one of the five most significant areas of biodiversity round the English coast

There are no directed pelagic fisheries in the Lyme Bay area, and as such the three options you propose to protect marine biodiversity in Lyme Bay will have no direct effect on pelagic fisheries. However the Pelagic RAC is concerned that in your proposed options all types of towed gear are to be excluded irrespective of whether or not these towed gears have any impact on the pink sea fan populations.

Pelagic fishing is conducted above the bottom and will not damage the seabed habitat. The very last thing a pelagic vessel wants to do is put its gear onto the bottom, especially if it is hard bottom and in particular coral.

In accordance with our previous recommendations on Special Areas of Conservation, the Pelagic RAC requests, should you decide to exclude towed gear from the Lyme Bay area, that pelagic vessels fishing mid water (as is the norm for pelagic vessels) are not included, in the area covered by the proposed exclusion.

Yours sincerely,

c/o

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized letter 'A' followed by a horizontal line that extends to the right and then curves upwards.

Mr Iain McSween
Pelagic RAC Chairman