

## **MANIFESTO – SCOTTISH FISHERMEN'S FEDERATION HOLYROOD ELECTIONS 2026**

### **“STAND UP FOR FISHING”**

#### **Our Asks:**

- Continued support for the Scottish Fishing Safety Group, working to ensure that fishermen's safety is prioritised. Every fisherman should come home safe, every time.
- Commitment to securing the best possible fishing opportunities for Scotland's fleet through annual negotiations and international agreements.
- A practical, pragmatic and workable future catching policy that enables the sector to meet the objectives of the Fisheries Act and the Fisheries Management Plans.
- A moratorium on any further consents for offshore wind development until the impacts on our sector are addressed in full, including financial compensation for losses to ensure that the fleet remains viable and profitable.
- Fisheries management measures in inshore MPAs and Priority Marine Features following the model of the offshore MPAs – balancing conservation with sustainable harvesting.
- All fishing to be properly recognised and protected through development of Scotland's new National Marine Plan.
- Investment in science and research needed to prepare for the future – our seas are changing and fish stocks are changing – investment in science is needed now to ensure we have the right data to underpin decisions and management in future.

## Fishing in Scotland - Facts and Figures:

- The UK is an island nation, and other than the land border with England, Scotland is quite literally, surrounded by sea.
- Scotland's land mass is around 77,900 km<sup>2</sup>, accounting for 32% of the UK.
- At 462,315 km<sup>2</sup>, Scotland's sea area is six times larger than our land area, and accounts for 63% of the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone.
- It is estimated that Scotland has almost 19,000 km of coastline and around 100 inhabited islands.
- It's no surprise then that Scotland accounts for the largest part of the UK's fishing industry, generally accounting for around 60% of total UK landings both by tonnage and value.
- Fishing is important to Scotland's rural and coastal economies. It is a key part of Scotland's food and drink economy and provides employment all around the coast.
- Polling carried out for SFF earlier this year showed that 86% of the public agreed that food production from Scotland's seas is as important as energy production, and that Scotland's fishing sector should be protected in our ever-more crowded seas.

## Economics

- The Scottish Government's Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics show that the Scottish fishing industry value in 2024 was £756 million. This is the highest value (adjusted to 2024 prices) of the last ten years.
- Scottish fishing vessels landed 561,000 tonnes of fish and shellfish in 2024, the greatest tonnage of the last ten years. In summary:
  - Scottish vessels landed 561,000 tonnes of fish and shellfish in 2024, an increase of 12% compared to 2023 and an increase of 41% compared to 2020.
  - Scottish vessels landed £756 million of fish and shellfish in 2024. Adjusted to 2024 prices, this is an increase of 5% compared to 2023, and of 31% compared to 2020.
- In 2024, 3,735 fishermen were working on Scottish vessels. Although employment in the fishing fleet is a small percentage of total employment, it accounts for a higher percentage in island communities (Shetland 3%, Orkney 14% and Na h-Eileanan Siar 2%).

- In 2022 the most recent figures available show that fishing accounted for £335 million approximate Gross Added Value (aGVA) – an increase of 45% over the ten year period from 2013. Fishing generated 7% of Scotland's marine GVA in 2022 - the same as aquaculture - and seafood processing which depends on raw material, generated £441 million aGVA. By comparison, coastal and marine tourism generated around £663 million aGVA and shipbuilding £403 million aGVA.

Scottish fish and shellfish is in demand both at home and abroad, so as well as supporting the Scottish economy and providing a sustainable source of high quality healthy protein with far lower emissions than most other forms for food productions, it contributes to Scotland and the UK's successful food and drink exports.

## **Fishing – Part of Scotland's Identity - Past, Present and Future**

Fishing has been integral to Scotland's society, culture and economy for hundreds of years – it's often called a traditional industry and it's part of our national identity. But fishing is not just part of Scotland's heritage – it is always looking to the future. Our fishing industry is modern, efficient, professional and globally recognised.

It provides food, jobs and is the essential bedrock for so many businesses that are part of Scotland's seafood production chain. Yet as we enter the second quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, our fishermen – and Scotland's ability to produce renewable, healthy food from our seas - are under threat as never before.

The combination of ever-more complex and often restrictive policies, 'spatial squeeze' from offshore wind developments and sites protected for conservation alongside the drumbeat of negativity about fishing from some eNGOs undermines our industry's core purpose – producing food, providing jobs and contributing to food security and the economy.

We ask candidates standing for election to Holyrood to **'Stand Up for Fishing'**. Show your support for fishing as an integral part of Scotland's food sector, producing healthy, renewable, sustainable and climate-smart seafood contributing to local and national economies, to food security and to healthier diets.

We want all candidates standing for election to the Scottish Parliament to stand up for Scotland's fishermen. Blue food is part of Scotland's greener future and with the right policy agenda and support from government, our industry is uniquely positioned to provide it.

## What do we need?

There is rightly a very clear policy focus on fish stocks and the environment, but often insufficient focus on fishermen: perhaps they are more at risk than some of Scotland's protected species? What do Scotland's fishermen need to survive and thrive?

Our industry was failed badly by the UK Government through the UK-EU reset, giving away 12 years of access to waters for nothing in return. We were then failed again when the £360 million Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund 'consolation prize' was allocated through Barnett rules, leaving Scotland with less than 8% of the Fund, despite accounting for 60% of the catch.

Like all businesses, fishing businesses need certainty and a stable business environment. Whilst many fiscal measures affecting business confidence are reserved, most fisheries management is devolved, alongside nature conservation and marine planning, so we look to the incoming administration in the Scottish Parliament to drive policy that supports our fishing industry and provides that stability for business confidence.

## We need:

- **A Government that supports, values and protects what fishing provides – renewable healthy protein, food security to meet a growing need, good jobs at sea and ashore enabling fishing businesses to contribute to Scotland's marine economy and to Scotland and UK exports**
- **Policy and regulation that supports fishing – enabling rather than restricting**
- **Commitment from government for no further policies or measures that undermines the industry and the economies of the coastal & rural communities that rely on fishing for work and financial security**
- **Space at sea for fishing – fishing cannot and must not be a casualty of offshore wind expansion – Scotland needs renewable energy and renewable food**
- **Nature conservation policies that balance environmental protection with sustainable use.**
- **A diverse fleet – Scotland's fishing industry is successful due to its diversity which brings resilience and investment over a range of different scales.**

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