



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

Mairi Gougeon MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
Scottish Government

30 October 2025

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Scientific advice on 2026 catch limits

You will be aware of the recent publication of scientific advice by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) which has recommended cuts to catch limits in 2026 for species such as Northeast Atlantic mackerel and North Sea cod as a result of estimated stock health.

Given the economic importance of these species to the Scottish fishing industry, and noting the significant concerns highlighted by many industry stakeholders in recent news reports, the Committee would welcome further information on the Scottish Government's response to the ICES advice, including:

1. What discussions it has held with the UK Government, at both a ministerial and official level, regarding the UK's position in international negotiations on catch limits and quota shares;
2. How the Scottish Government is engaging with fishing stakeholders to understand the potential impact of quota reductions for key stocks; and
3. If it is considering any financial support packages for impacted vessels depending on the outcome of international negotiations.

On behalf of the Committee, I request a response by 27 November.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Finlay Carson MSP
Convener

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