

# CAOLAS submission of 15 August 2022

## PE1951/E: Reinstate inshore coastal limit on the use of dredge and trawl fishing gears

CAOLAS (Community Association of Lochs and Sounds) is a member of the Coastal Community Network. CAOLAS also supports the aims of the Our Seas coalition which has over 130 member groups and is a founder member of the Argyll Coast and Islands Hope Spot. CAOLAS is also involved in a native oyster restoration project in Lochaline.

CAOLAS is not against fishing, it is not against other marine stakeholders. CAOLAS would like to focus on the evidence that has been reported in Scotland's Marine Assessment 2020 which lists the challenges facing the marine environment being ocean acidification, climate change and:

*“Pressures associated with bottom-contacting and pelagic fishing continue to be the most geographically widespread, direct pressures across the majority of Scottish Marine Regions and Offshore Marine Regions.”*

CAOLAS, like many other residents and sea users around the west coast, look at the ongoing destruction of the inshore coastal waters and feel completely let down by the Scottish Government. In our view, Marine Protected Areas are lacking in management measures and enforcement. Compliance is low, communities do their bit, voluntarily, collecting abandoned fishing gear, reporting suspicious activity, improving their local areas but we feel that all this effort is diminished when the most destructive fishing practices are allowed to continue in our most ecologically important, sensitive and fragile environments.

Without a healthy productive inshore coastal environment all the activities of the blue economy will be diminished, including fishing. A fixed inshore limit to the most damaging activities would, in our view, be simple to understand and enforce. We believe this could bring benefits for all, and it would help build resilience back into a system that is under tremendous strain from climate change, pollution, and marine plastics.

Why is it not possible to just allow low impact, high value fishing in the inshore waters? Spatial limits have worked all around the world and have benefited all stakeholders, why is this not possible for Scotland?