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## **PE1386/H**

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Public Petitions Committee TG.01  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011

### **Response by the Marine Stewardship Council to Petition PE1386 by Richard Munday on behalf of the Torridon Nephrops Management Group.**

Dear Committee Members

Thank you for giving the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) the opportunity to comment on the above petition entitled 'Establishment of further static gear only fisheries'. The MSC is an independent, global, non-profit organisation that seeks to deliver a robust, effective and accessible certification program that keeps up with the latest scientific knowledge and industry practices. MSC fishery certification is a voluntary programme open to all wild capture fisheries – whatever their size, type or location.

The MSC's mission is to use its ecolabel and fishery certification programme to contribute to the health of the world's oceans by recognising and rewarding sustainable fishing practices, influencing the choices people make when buying seafood, and working with partners to transform the seafood market to a sustainable basis.

The MSC has developed standards for sustainable fishing and seafood traceability. Both standards are based on independent third-party assessments carried out by accredited independent certifiers. Fisheries certified under the MSC program have gone to great lengths to demonstrate that they meet the MSC environmental standard for sustainable fishing which is based on three core principles: 1) sustainability of exploited fish stocks; 2) maintenance of the ecosystem on which the fishery depends; and 3) effective and responsible management.

The MSC as the standard setter and Moody Marine as an independent certifier, for reasons of conflict of interest, are unable to indicate a specific route forward for a fishery in order to achieve or retain MSC certification. Therefore, in response to this petition, the MSC's role as a standard setter is to reflect on



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the reasons behind the suspension of the Loch Torridon fishery certificate where relevant to the questions within the petition.

Independent certifier, Moody Marine, suspended the MSC certificate for Loch Torridon Nephrops on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011. The suspension came after increased fishing pressure in the area caused by creel-fishing boats being attracted to the fishery with many of the extra boats not signed-up to the voluntary Management Plan Code of Conduct for the fishery. The potential problems that an increased number of extra boats might cause were identified by Moody Marine in the 2009 recertification report which included a condition on effort control within the fishery area. Moody identified that:

*...It is therefore required that TNMG develop, with relevant management bodies, means of achieving appropriate limits on fishing mortality either through effort (input) and/or landings (outputs) within the closed area...*

The fishery client was unable, in the appropriate time frame either by themselves or through working with relevant management bodies, to establish management authority over the fishery that would prevent a further fall in local langoustine abundance. On issuing the suspension, Moody Marine noted that:

*“The main problem to the sustainable management of this fishery is the inability to control the level of fishing effort within the closed area. As long as the area is open to allcomers, with over half the fleet not having signed up to the Management Plan Code of Conduct, it is not possible to respond, via the Torridon Nephrops Management Group (TNMG), to the need to reduce fishing effort to maintain or re-build stock levels.”*

For further details on the recertification and suspension of the Torridon Nephrops fishery I commend the reports on the MSC website at the following link to the Committee <http://www.msc.org/track-a-fishery/certified/north-east-atlantic/loch-torridon-nephrops-creel/reassessment-downloads>.

The suspension of MSC certification for the Loch Torridon Nephrops fishery has demonstrated that there is a need for a robust management framework which can adequately address changes which may occur in the fishery. In the Torridon example a need for demonstrably effective effort control has been shown whether through a statutory framework or otherwise.

Yours faithfully,

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