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for Environment,
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Baroness Sheehan
Chair of the Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee
House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW

24 March 2026

Dear Chair,

Publication of statutory report on the Joint Fisheries Statement

I am writing to let you know that today we are laying in the House and publishing the first statutory report on the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS), as required by Section 11 (3) of the Fisheries Act 2020 (the Act). The report can be found at the link below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/report-on-the-joint-fisheries-statement>

Background

The JFS was published in November 2022 and sets out the UK's ambitions for delivering sustainable fisheries management. Section 11 of the Act requires Defra and the Devolved Governments to report every three years on the extent to which policies in the JFS have been implemented, and the contribution this has made to achieving the Act's eight fisheries objectives. The report must also set out the extent to which the policies contained in fisheries management plans (FMPs) have been implemented, and the effect those have had on levels of stocks of sea fish.

Defra and the Devolved Governments have jointly prepared the first of these reports, which provides a high-level, factual account of what has been implemented between November 2022 and November 2025. The report does not announce any new policies or make changes to any existing or funding schemes.

The report highlights the collaborative working between the fisheries policy authorities over the reporting period and the significant amount of work done to implement the JFS policy ambitions. This work includes:

- preparing, consulting on and publishing FMPs
- progressing the implementation of the goals and measures from those published FMPs
- improving the quality and use of data and best available scientific advice to increase the UK's fishing opportunities
- improving monitoring and enforcement of fishing activity in UK waters
- developing the UK Marine Protected Area network

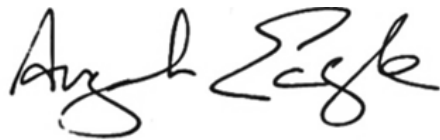
As fisheries management is devolved, rates of progress differ between administrations depending on their own priorities. However, the report clearly sets out that progress has been made by all administrations against each of the JFS policy themes.

The UK has made a demonstrable contribution to the achievement of the fisheries objectives over the last three years. However, these are long-term objectives which will require ongoing effort to achieve. To give a sense of what that means in practice, the report sets out some of the work Defra and the Devolved Governments have planned over the coming months and years. It is important to show that whilst a significant amount has been achieved, there is still much more to be done.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the House libraries and have written on similar terms to Alistair Carmichael MP in his role as Chair of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, and Toby Perkins in his role as Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee.

I am happy to answer questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Angela Eagle'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Angela' and the surname 'Eagle' clearly distinguishable.

DAME ANGELA EAGLE DBE MP