Thank you for providing the Government’s response to our report, Sustainable Seas, HC 980. There is an outstanding issue that we wish to raise with you.

The response claimed that the Government has surpassed Aichi target 11; viz. that by 2020, ten per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscape and seascape.

We recognise and welcome that the UK has established a protected area network that covers 24 per cent of its sea area. However, during our inquiry we heard that these areas were not being “effectively managed” and very few had restrictions on bottom trawling. The UK’s sixth national report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity on the Aichi targets stated that “continued management is necessary to ensure the full recovery of protected habitats and species in the UK”.

Is the Government able to demonstrate that measures are in place to manage over ten per cent of the UK’s marine protected areas, and that monitoring has shown that conservation objectives have been met in these areas? If so I would be grateful if you could direct me to the source of that information.

I would be grateful if you could respond to me on this matter by 10 May.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Creagh MP
Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee