Mary Creagh MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Mary,

Thank you for your letter of 24 April in response to the AICHI Target 11 figures we provided for your report on Sustainable Seas, HC 980. 

Our response stated that the UK had surpassed the AICHI Target 11 and you asked whether the Government is able to demonstrate that measures are in place to manage over 10% of the UK’s Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), and whether monitoring has shown that conservation objectives have been met, in these areas.

Effective management of fisheries is hugely important to ensure that our marine ecosystems are healthy and resilient. In UK waters there are currently 314 MPAs. Further, there are currently 72 MPAs in English inshore waters alone where trawling and/or all methods of shellfish dredging are restricted. In offshore waters, we will shortly submit proposals to the European Commission along with the Netherlands and Germany that will restrict the use of bottom-towed gears in the Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation. In total, over 22% of MPAs have measures in place to manage the most damaging types of fishing.

The Government has an ambitious ongoing monitoring programme for all sites to better understand the impact management measures are having. It is too early to draw conclusions about the impact of management measures on the achievement of conservation objectives, especially for sites designated in the last tranche (2016) which have only recently had measures implemented. However, the UK’s sixth national report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity on the AICHI targets stated that, in the opinion of the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies, we are on course to meet the target.

Once the UK leaves the European Union, we will accelerate the introduction of fisheries management measures in protected areas and beyond using the proposed new byelaw powers for the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) contained in the Fisheries Bill. These powers will enable the MMO to implement robust management measures much more quickly both inside our MPAs and across our Exclusive Economic Zone.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

DR THERESE COFFEY MP