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Media Release

Angling in Marine Protected Areas – a Win-Win-Win for anglers, the environment and society

The European Anglers Alliance (EAA) is encouraging policy-makers to take a positive approach to recreational angling in marine protected areas (MPAs) in a new position paper published this week.

The publication follows a very successful conference held in the European Parliament in 2017 during which a panel of international speakers discussed the sustainable management and benefits of recreational angling within MPAs.

In the new paper EAA supports MPAs for the protection of marine habitats which create or restore ecosystems increasing biodiversity and biomass, as well as for the protection of spawning aggregations and juvenile fish.

EAA believes that the objectives for an MPA should include both environmental as well as societal objectives to achieve a win-win-win situation for conservation and recreational activities which have a low impact on the environment and provide very significant employment and economic benefits to coastal communities, as witnessed in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary in which 400,000 recreational fishers generate over \$274m a year.

The creation of ‘multi-use’ MPAs that take into account socio-economics and the needs of local communities has the potential to contribute to many EU conservation and blue growth policies by providing significant socio-economic benefits to coastal communities many of which are ‘lagging’ or suffering from deprivation and a lack of other industries or employment opportunities.

EAA supports the US approach and model of designating MPAs where conservation is a primary goal but where many were also established to encourage recreational uses where members of the public fishing recreationally become ‘ocean stewards’ and teach others how to care about the oceans and take part in conservation projects such as working with fisheries scientists and contributing to citizen science partnerships.

David Mitchell, Chairman of the EAA Sea Sub-Group, said: “Evidence from the USA and elsewhere shows that including public access to recreational angling in marine protected areas, in a sustainable way, engages people in the protection of the marine environment in way that wouldn’t be possible otherwise. In addition to which there’s very little evidence to suggest that angling is a limiting factor in achieving favourable conservation status in Europe’s Natura 2000 MPAs. As a result, we encourage policy makers across Europe to see recreational angling as an activity that is compatible with the objectives of most, if not all, MPAs.”

Jan Kappel, Secretary General of EAA, said: “Last month the EU Commission announced the financing of five new projects to promote “*off-season tourism and thus extend the opening times of businesses; they will attract travellers to new, lesser known areas, thus reducing pressures (environmental and social) at traditional destinations...*”; and they will above all promote the shared values of the various European destinations and encourage a responsible and sustainable behaviour on the part of travellers – all core principles of the EU’s Strategy for Coastal and Maritime Tourism.”

Recreational angling delivers on exactly what the EU Commission promotes above and parts of the EU Strategy for Coastal and Maritime Tourism, which has it that: “*Growing public interest in water-based sports, such as recreational fishing, boating, wind surfing and diving, creates potential and can help address seasonality because these activities do not depend on peak seasons.*”; “*The EU’s Natura 2000 network protects vulnerable coastal and marine habitats which, if managed well, can provide significant recreational opportunities and contribute to sustainable growth and employment.*”

In fact a sixth project to promote and boost sustainable recreational angling tourism, and sustainable recreational angling within MPAs would make a lot of sense.”

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Notes for editors:

- To view the position paper click [here](#)