

Ben Bradshaw  
UK Fisheries minister  
Defra  
Noble House  
17 Smith Square  
London

09 May 2006

Dear Minister,

**Re: Reduction of bycatch**

I am writing to express my concerns about the bycatch of non-commercial species - in particular small cetaceans- in UK/EU waters, a number of which are washed up on the South coast of England every year.

I welcome wholeheartedly the attempts which have already been made by the UK Government to reduce the problem of the bycatch of cetaceans, including the 2004 request made to the European Commission to impose a six month emergency closure of the sea bass fishery in the Channel and the ban introduced in December 2004 on the use of pair trawls for sea bass in the western Channel by UK vessels (as well as the subsequent attempt to apply the ban to French and Belgian vessels). It is indeed unfortunate that neither the closure nor the application of the 2004 ban to French and Belgian vessels was supported by the Commission.

In view of this lack of progress on reducing bycatch, I would be keen to know how the UK Government intends to proceed in tackling this issue, and what actions are planned, in terms of regulation, research and the promotion of responsible fishing. Here I would urge the UK Government to ensure that the impact of fishing on non-commercial species of *all* kinds; including fish, sharks, turtles, birds and marine mammals is considered. Additionally, I would be interested to hear what response the UK received from other Member States regarding their attempts to address this issue (as outlined above), and whether there is any scope here for working more closely with other Member States.

It is essential that the UK Government insists on the sustainable management of UK and EU fisheries, and this includes ensuring that the impact of commercial fishing on all non-commercial species is investigated and reduced.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Caroline Lucas  
Green Party MEP for South East England

