

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

Green Party
for the South East of England

Jonathan Shaw MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
DEFRA
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR

March 13th 2008

Dear Jonathan,

I am writing about an apparent loophole in the Conservation of Seals Act, which allows for the salmon aquaculture and salmon fishing industries to shoot seals - including during breeding seasons and in areas protected by Natura 2000 and the EC Habitats Directive.

Evidence suggests that seals are responsible for the consumption of only 2% of fish stocks annually in the North Sea, yet their shooting is justified on the grounds of conservation of fish stocks and in the economic interests of the fishing industries. As the European Commission prepares to bring forth legislation banning seal products from being imported or sold in the EU, largely because of massive public pressure, surely the UK government should not be condoning another threat to the welfare of seals.

I very much hope that DEFRA will introduce legislation that properly protects those seals living around the coast of the British Isles and prevents their slaughter. I look forward to hearing what plans you intend to bring forward to close the existing legal loopholes and bring the UK into compliance with international conservation law.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.