



[REDACTED]

20/06/2020

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[RE: Angling Trust CHART Proposal](#)

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to you on behalf of the Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers (SFSA) as their Vice President. The SFSA is the governing body for Sea Angling in Scotland and is focused upon preserving Sea Angling as a valuable resource for all people in Scotland.

The SFSA would like to inform you of our strong support for the Angling Trust's (AT) and Bluefin Tuna UK's recent submission for the creation of a FLOY tagging programme for Blue Fin Tuna (BFT) within the U.K. (attached for reference). The recent ICCAT rule changes and the existence of other similar tagging programmes in other countries show a clear international desire for this type of research.

We believe that this proposal conveys a detailed and justified rationale for the creation of a programme which could eventually lead to much needed significant economic and social benefits for our coastal communities in Scotland. Communities which are continually struggling to realise new economic opportunities and have limited resources which they can leverage.

One resource which our coastal communities can utilize is our rich and diverse sea angling. The experience of Sea Angling in Scotland is recognised throughout the U.K and across the world as being of the highest quality, with anglers local, national and international enjoying the experience every year.

However, our angling industry is always competing with other options available around the world. The opportunity for a Scottish Recreational Catch & Release BFT fishery has the potential to provide both a much needed social resource for our anglers in Scotland and a new and exciting economic opportunity for our coastal communities.

Although there is a long history of Blue Fin Tuna in Scottish waters, the last 5 years have shown a significant increase in sightings, particularly around the Outer Hebrides. This has sparked a great deal of interest amongst local charter operators with a desire to establish a new and sustainable industry which could support the local economy at a time when it is particularly hard hit.

Therefore through Harris Development Limited (HDL), local charter boat operators in the Outer Hebrides have been campaigning to undertake the required

scientific research to underpin the rationale that would incentivise the relevant government agencies in Scotland and the U.K. to pursue a recreational catch and release BFT fishery.

This led in 2019 to a tie up between HDL and the Thunnus UK tagging programme. This programme being led by the University of Exeter with the following aims:

- 1. To collate information on the presence and abundance of Atlantic bluefin tuna in UK waters using scientific and citizen science methods*
- 2. To undertake a tagging programme with state of the art electronic tags to collect evidence on the seasonal migrations and behaviour of bluefin tuna caught in UK waters*
- 3. To provide information and advice to stakeholders*

This tie up was greatly appreciated by HDL and SFSA and resulted in one tagging expedition with one boat in October 2019 in the Outer Hebrides. Although no BFT were tagged during the trip undertaken in the Outer Hebrides, a large number were sighted by scientists on the trips, showing the potential of the area and the need to gather more information on BFT in this area.

Unfortunately it is our understanding that there will be no further tagging efforts under the Thunnus programme in Scottish waters with the remaining resources being targeted at the waters of South West England.

Although we support the work of Thannus and believe that the data collected from South West England will have useful information for the entire U.K., we feel that this will leave significant gaps in our understanding of BFT stocks in Scottish waters.

This is why in addition to supporting HDT and others in their pursuit of alternative means to gather the required scientific data in a Scottish context, we are also highly supportive of a UK wide tagging approach as detailed in the AT submission referenced previously.

In particular we are supportive of utilizing our charter fleet to deploy relatively inexpensive FLOY tags to compliment the data derived from the expensive Thannus PSAT tags. This methodology has been used for several years in Ireland, Sweden and Denmark, which all have the same zero quota status as the U.K for BFT. The tagging programmes in these countries have utilized dozens of boats and hundreds of anglers (several actually travelling from Scotland to participate) due to their low cost of deployment compared to PSAT tags and have collect large and useful data sets which can guide their countries BFT strategies.

We believe that a U.K. wide approach combing the Thannus data with a larger scale FLOY programme would be the most efficient use of our resources and create the most holistic and informative data set to inform the U.K's future BFT strategy. Thus giving us the best chance of realising a new and sustainable industry which

can generate economic and social benefits in our coastal communities and for all anglers in Scotland and the U.K..

We therefore ask that you endeavour to support and enable the requests made in the AT submission as quickly as may be possible. The annual migration pattern of BFT in the North Atlantic means that they are expected in Scottish waters from August through to October. Therefore a decision to proceed with a tagging programme would be greatly appreciated in advance of this period. This would allow resources to be adequately prepared and deployed and hopefully a valuable and informative data set to be collected in 2020.

Should you wish to know any more about the SFSA, our thoughts on BFT or if we can provide you with any assistance, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alasdair Campbell', written in a cursive style.

Alasdair Campbell  
Vice President – Scottish Federation of Sea Anglers

[Alasdair.campbell101@gmail.com](mailto:Alasdair.campbell101@gmail.com)