

# POLITICAL PODIUM

Viewpoints from across the political spectrum. This week: the Labour MP for East Hull

## ‘WILFUL NEGLECT AND DISCRIMINATION’

**W**HEN I BECAME MP for East Hull in 2010, one of the few hopes for the local economy was the fishing industry in the city. Although it was greatly reduced from its heyday, when small fishing vessels provided work for thousands of men and women across the city, it was still one of the economic icons of the Humber region.

Even now, fishing, and not least distant-waters fishing, has a cultural and social importance to Hull that many politicians in Westminster find it difficult to understand. This is especially true of the current Tory administration which, despite all its grand promises of post-Brexit ‘seas of opportunity,’ has wilfully neglected, and in fact discriminated, against our local fishers – many of whom can trace their fishing heritage back



By **KARL TURNER MP**

for generations.

The facts are cruel, and they speak for themselves. Until very recently, UK Fisheries operated three trawlers from my patch, at King George Dock. Now, as a direct result of persistent government failure to negotiate a fair quota deal with the Norwegians, they are down to just one vessel, the Kirkella. Some 72 skilled and experienced crew have been

laid off, because there simply isn’t any work for them.

This of course has had a massive and immediate impact not only on those crew and on their families, but it also means that the local businesses that have traditionally supported UK Fisheries in supply and distribution are also suffering. For every job created at sea, as many as 10 are created on land, bringing major benefits to Hull and the region.

In her compelling piece opposite, UK Fisheries CEO Jane Sandell lays bare her frustration at seeing a tiny section of the UK fishing industry benefit massively from post-Brexit quota deals struck by Defra under a succession of Tory fisheries ministers, while the vast majority of the industry has to make do with scraps – or, in the case of the Kirkella, try to get by on fishing opportunities that government actions (or inactions) have halved.

The government’s claim that it is seeking to achieve a ‘balanced’ settlement for all parts of the fishing industry is just another broken promise on a long list that includes everything from bringing down illegal immigration to resolving labour disputes and properly resourcing our NHS.

But unlike some of these other failings, fishing quotas wouldn’t cost Rishi Sunak a penny to fix. All the

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Defra negotiators need to do is to enter the autumn round of talks with the Norwegians (and others) with a clear commitment to stop consistently striking deals that benefit only a tiny handful of vessels, none of which operate in the North East.

It’s not clear why it must always be the few that benefit at the cost of the many, but if we are to have anything left of this once-proud industry in Hull, then the ships that bring home cod and haddock for our national dish must have their quotas in Norwegian waters returned to where they were before 2019. Fishing means

far more to Hull than just its economic impact – it’s part of the history and identity of our proud city, and once it’s gone, it’s gone.

My colleague Ruth Jones, the shadow environment minister, recently described Defra’s negotiators as ‘naïve and amateurish’ compared to their skilled and seasoned Norwegian counterparts. As devastating as that criticism is, I would rather believe that than the only alternative interpretation, which is that Defra is deliberately discriminating against Hull trawlermen, for reasons we can only guess at.



▲ **Karl Turner (third from right) onboard the Kirkella, with fellow Labour MP and shadow fisheries spokesman Daniel Zeichner (second from left).**

## Research identifies climate change ‘winners’ and ‘losers’

Cefas modelling predicts shifts by 2060 for 49 commercial species

**P**ROJECTED IMPACTS OF climate change on commercially important UK fish species have been mapped in a new report from Cefas.

The effects of climate change on marine habitats for 49 different species were investigated. This enabled scientists to identify likely ‘winners’ that will see an increase in suitable habitat, and ‘losers’ that will witness a decrease.

The results suggest that northwestern European waters are likely to become more

By **PAUL SCOTT**

suitable for species including black seabream, European seabass, sardine, red mullet, pouting, anchovy, sole and John Dory, but less suitable for species including saithe, Atlantic wolffish, starry ray, halibut, ling, lemon sole, Atlantic cod, haddock and megrim.

The research was undertaken by Cefas scientists in collaboration with the Met Office and Plymouth Marine Laboratory, and used high-

resolution climate model outputs to generate information specific to waters around the British Isles. Previous studies have tended to use lower-resolution global climate model data, making it more difficult to anticipate and understand fish movements at specific locations.

A total of 3,185 model runs were performed to provide a more accurate understanding of impacts. For each of the 49 species, five biological models were applied, and 13 different future climate scenarios were tested.

Under all scenarios, the majority of the species examined were projected to shift northwards around the UK by 2060, in particular sardine,

anchovy, red mullet, pouting and European squid.

John Pinnegar, lead advisor on climate change and director of the International Marine Climate Change Centre at Cefas, said: “This study builds on previous Cefas research which shows that warmer seas are already having an impact on fish stocks around the UK with an increase in warm-water species, such as anchovy, bluefin tuna, squid and red mullet, and a retreat of cold-water species, such as wolffish and Atlantic cod.

“However, a novel aspect of this research is that we have used high-quality, locally relevant climate data to provide a much more detailed understanding of future comings and goings of different species caught around the UK.

“As UK consumers typically prefer to eat a very limited variety of fish, namely the ‘big five’: cod, haddock, tuna, prawns and salmon, this report suggests that both consumers and the fishing industry may need to

adapt quickly to reflect the changes we are seeing in our marine environment.”

The seas around the British Isles, and in particular the southern North Sea, have been identified as one of 20 sites globally that have warmed fastest over the past 50 years.

In 2022, through its network of WaveNet buoys, Cefas recorded some of the highest sustained seawater temperatures ever recorded around the British Isles (*Fishing News*, 20 October, 2022, ‘New data shows record-breaking sea temperatures’).

Met office data shows that UK sea temperatures have already reached new highs in 2023, with Cefas recording a similar trend from its buoys located in the west (*Fishing News*, 29 June, ‘North Sea sees unprecedented temperatures’).

The full report, ‘Climate change projections of commercial fish distribution and suitable habitat around northwestern Europe’, can be accessed at: [bit.ly/3D7vNii](https://bit.ly/3D7vNii)