

## **Review of the Marine Spatial Plan**

**Kevin Singleton – 27 August 2024**

I have been a mobile gear fisherman for almost 23 years. I am writing with regards to how the Marine Spatial Plan will affect my fishing business, the wider fishing industry in Jersey. Over the last 10 years I have worked my 10-meter vessel on Jersey's east and southeast coasts, this equates to around 80 percent of all the work I have done. The thing that is most concerning for me as a skipper is the danger of trying to take a small boat designed for inshore use and be forced offshore during winter months due to the proposed bans as opposed to seeking shelter from the prevailing winds inshore. I feel like I will be faced with the choice of going broke or putting myself, the boat and crew in unnecessary danger. Given nearly all accidents that happen on trawlers are fatal this is something I take very seriously as an owner and operator.

I must say that I fully agree with the concept of a Marine Spatial Plan but I am not sure that the best possible approach has been taken with regards to how the mobile fishing industry will be affected. It seems to me very rushed and a blanket ban style of preventing the use of mobile gear has been adopted to get the numbers that the government is looking for originally 27 percent and now 23 percent. It's apparent to me that the marine resources department has concentrated heavily inside Jersey's exclusive 3-mile limit where there will be no opposition from the French Government. I feel as though I should be entitled to grandfather rights and or compensation if this spatial plan is implemented in the way the minister intends. There is no other situation where a person's business can be destroyed by government in this way.

I support the concept of a managed fishery rather than this blanket ban style of conservation. Observing scallop fisheries like the Isle of Man, France and the United States a lot more intensive work is done by scientists to establish sensitive habitats and place protections accordingly without the use of blanket bans. I urge the scrutiny panel to ask the marine resources department exactly what work has been done inside the existing protected areas that were put in place over 10 years ago, in order to validate the benefits of such widespread bans as opposed to a good fisheries management.

The Jersey fleet of mobile gear boats are made up of mainly under 12 metre boats who catch only what they can sell on the given day. We lost our rights to land our fish into France during Brexit negotiations and since been left with a very small summer export season and a limited local market here in Jersey despite the markets in France wanting our catches the External Relations ministers from Jersey government have not even attempted to open dialogue and find a solution for our fisherman. We cannot change metiers to different species like the French fleet does because our own Environment Department will not allow the produce to be exported to the EU, due to a paperwork issue, remembering the species are harvested from the same areas as the French vessels.

The mobile gear boats are the only boats in the fleet that are making money due to an exceptional few years where the scallop stocks have peaked 2/3 times higher than what we usually work to. If this MSP is implemented without considerations for the mobile fleet, then there will cease to be a local fleet post 2030 due to having nowhere safe to fish with our small boats.