



**PRESS RELEASE, EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 WEDNESDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2022**

## **More data and better management needed to *fix our fisheries***

- **Updated Good Fish Guide ratings show more data is needed for better management of UK fisheries**
- **The charity is calling for strengthening and protection of the Joint Fisheries Statement, due to be released in November**
- **New *Seafood Checker* tool helps identify sustainability of seafood**

The [Marine Conservation Society](#), the UK's leading ocean charity, has released its latest [Good Fish Guide](#) ratings, painting a picture of ocean health and the sustainability credentials of seafood available in the UK.

November will mark two years since the UK Fisheries Act (2020) passed into law, setting in motion a new legislative framework for managing UK fisheries. The next step in the process, the *Joint Fisheries Statement* (JFS), is due to be finalised in November and has been identified by the charity as a key moment to fix our fisheries.

**Kenneth Bodles, Head of Fisheries & Aquaculture at the Marine Conservation Society said:** "With environmental laws recently under attack, we cannot afford to let the Joint Fisheries Statement be derailed. Early signs show some promising outcomes in the JFS, such as Fisheries Management Plans for bass and flatfish, but the devil will be in the detail.

"The UK Government and devolved administrations must underpin future fisheries policies and decision-making with strong scientific evidence and robust data. This is crucial for achieving sustainable fisheries and protecting and restoring our marine environment."

The Marine Conservation Society is calling for all governments of the UK to hold strong on their promises in the JFS at a time when deregulation threatens to undermine existing marine conservation laws. The charity wants to see the JFS deliver an 'ecosystem-based approach' to fisheries management – taking a holistic view of how catching fish will affect the wider environment.

Fisheries management body, Natural Resources Wales, have shown the effectiveness of this approach, with Dee estuary cockles being green rated on the Good Fish Guide. The fishery adopts the principles of an ecosystem-based approach by protecting vulnerable habitats and ensuring enough cockles are left in the sea to keep local seabird populations healthy. The charity would like to see more of this best practice across the UK.

The Marine Conservation Society is currently working alongside WWF and RSPB, forming the *Future Fisheries Alliance*, to campaign for better data to be collected on boats at sea, using Remote Electronic Monitoring with cameras (REM). More data would allow scientists and governments to make informed decisions about how much seafood to catch, to reduce overfishing and put measures in place to reduce bycatch.

**Charlotte Coombes, Good Fish Guide Manager, said:** "Many of the ratings on the Good Fish Guide are negatively affected by a lack of data. If we knew more about what's going on at sea, measures could be put in place to protect wildlife, and ensure we have a healthy ocean and a sustainable UK fishing industry."

Around half of seafood produced in the UK is farmed\*. Farmed seafood has fared well in the latest Good Fish Guide update, with GLOBALG.A.P. certified Norwegian farmed halibut moving from an amber rating to green due to stricter requirements for sourcing fish feed. Meanwhile, wild halibut still appears on the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) list of threatened species and is red rated on the Guide.

**Dawn Purchase, Aquaculture Programme Manager, said:** "It's a common misconception that farmed seafood is not as responsible a choice as its wild-caught counterpart. However, this season's update to the Good Fish Guide has shown that for some species it is often a more ocean-friendly option."

Farmed shellfish, including oysters, are green rated on the Guide, while their wild alternatives are often red or amber rated.

Find the latest sustainable seafood advice for wild-caught and farmed seafood on the Good Fish Guide, downloadable to your phone from [www.mcsuk.org/goodfishguide](http://www.mcsuk.org/goodfishguide).

The Good Fish Guide is constantly updating. It's latest tool, launched this month, is the 'Seafood Checker', a new tool to guide shoppers through to a sustainability rating. Asking questions such as 'where was your fish caught' and 'does your fish have an ecolabel', the step-by-step tool shows what to look out for on packaging to make sustainable choices easier. Try the new Seafood Checker [here](#).

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## Images

Please find a selection of high-res images linked in this [Dropbox folder](#).

Please let us know if you would like to use any of our species illustrations featured on the Good Fish Guide.

## Press Contact

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## Notes to Editors

You can read more about REM in the Future Fisheries Alliance's latest report - TransparentSea [here](#).

\* <https://www.fao.org/publications/sofia/2022/en/>

## Ratings overview

The Good Fish Guide has around 650 ratings for over 100 different species of fish and shellfish. A proportion of these ratings are reviewed during each update, which happens in April and October. Each rating is specific to a species, living in a certain area, caught or farmed by a certain method, and, if applicable, certified to a recognised standard.

In this ratings update, 186 ratings were reviewed: 9 farmed ratings and 177 wild-caught ratings. 26 ratings were deleted due to irrelevance in the UK market and 11 new ratings were added.

**The Marine Conservation Society** campaigns for clean seas and beaches, sustainable fisheries, and protection of marine life. Through education, community involvement and collaboration, the charity raises awareness of the many threats that face our seas and promotes individual, industry and government action to protect the marine environment. The Marine Conservation Society provides information and guidance on many aspects of marine conservation and produces the Good Fish Guide as well as involving thousands of volunteers in projects and surveys such as Beachwatch. [www.mcsuk.org](http://www.mcsuk.org).

The Marine Conservation Society's [Good Fish Guide](#), is the charity's flagship tool for identifying sustainable seafood. The Guide uses a simple traffic light system to help consumers and businesses make sustainable seafood choices depending on where and how it's caught or farmed. Covering seafood sold or produced in the UK, green are the 'Best Choice' most sustainable options, amber shows improvements are needed, and red indicates unsustainable 'Fish to Avoid'. Updated biannually, ratings are carefully researched and rigorously reviewed by scientists using a transparent methodology. See all the latest ratings and download the Guide at [www.goodfishguide.org](http://www.goodfishguide.org).