



**A MANIFESTO FOR
RECREATIONAL SEA ANGLING:
ACHIEVING WORLD-CLASS
RECREATIONAL FISHERIES**



The Angling Trust want sea anglers in the UK to experience unforgettable fishing supported by flourishing fisheries, thriving coastal communities and a restored marine environment. This manifesto sets out the key actions we believe are needed to achieve **world-class recreational fisheries** and sustainable seas for all.

Now that **recreational sea fishing is finally recognised as a stakeholder in UK fisheries management under the Fisheries Act (2020), we believe that it is time for the government to deliver for sea angling;** to invest in the high social and economic value the angling sector brings to coastal communities; and to establish world-class recreational fisheries by **transitioning to ecosystem-based fisheries management** and **prioritising recreationally important species.**

Recreational sea anglers have more opportunities than ever before to steer the future direction of our sector and UK fisheries. **Sea angling significantly contributes to the UK economy, particularly to often marginalised, disadvantaged and economically deprived coastal communities.** As a sector, **sea angling directly supports an estimated 15,000 jobs** such as through tackle shops, angling guiding and coaching, charter boats and the tackle trade, which are all supported by the **£1.5 billion sea anglers are estimated to spend each year.** Sea angling also directly supports our coastal communities by supporting local businesses like hotels and restaurants, often out of season, **generating a direct impact of up to £847 million annually.**

Today, our seas are a shadow of what they once were. Overfishing, pollution, climate change, habitat loss and invasive species threaten our marine environment. **Anglers are the eyes and ears for our**

seas. They are on the frontline of our changing ocean and coastal environments. Working collaboratively with the sea angling community is integral to safeguarding the future of our marine environment and coastal communities. **But for far too long, anglers have been out of sight and mind for the UK government.** Since recognising sea angling under the Fisheries Act (2020), we are beginning to see a difference in treatment toward our community by the government. But it isn't happening fast enough.

The UK government—and devolved governments—must invest in sea angling now, maximising its social and economic benefits to coastal communities and placing it at the heart of sustainable fisheries management.

It's time for the government to deliver on their promises to sea anglers by prioritising the needs of entire coastal communities, not just the commercial fishing industry, and to take ambitious action to recover our fish stocks to sustainable levels.

To achieve world-class recreational fisheries, we are calling on the UK government to:

- **Invest in sea angling**
- **Recognise and prioritise recreational species**
- **Empower recreational sea anglers**

This manifesto sets out the actions we believe are needed to capitalise on the socio-economic value of recreational sea angling to coastal communities, invest in recreational sea angling infrastructure to inspire the next generation of sea anglers and rewrite fisheries management to support an ecosystem-based approach that recognises and prioritises recreationally important species.

If sea angling is to thrive, it depends on a healthy marine environment, prosperous coastal communities and investment in our sector. We cannot sit back and let them all deteriorate any longer.



1

INVEST IN SEA ANGLING

Better access, improved infrastructure and more opportunities to get into fishing

Recreational sea angling offers an avenue to **level up and regenerate our coastal communities, stimulate local economies, and address the mental health and nature connectedness crises.**

Through investing in the promotion and development of recreational sea angling, angling tourism can become a bigger economic driver for deprived coastal communities up and down the country.

- We need **public investment in recreational sea angling infrastructure, such as piers, jetties, and fish cleaning stations, across the country to develop world-class recreational sea angling venues.**
- **More government funding opportunities must be available to the recreational sea angling community, enabling** bottom-up community projects

and partnerships **without barriers that are inequitable and marginalise applicants.**

- **Anglers must feel welcome and respected within their communities.** Safe and improved access for recreational sea angling must be created along our coasts with signage to promote sea angling, show how to fish responsibly, and highlight recreationally important species. **We must stop the decline of access to key sea angling venues and marks.**



2

RECOGNISING & PRIORITISING RECREATIONAL SPECIES

Getting the best value for coastal communities from our fish stocks

The UK's departure from the European Union offers a **once-in-a-lifetime opportunity** to lay out a foundation that delivers sustainable seas for all. While the government's commitments in the Fisheries Act (2020) and accompanying Joint Fisheries Statement and Fisheries Management Plans are a positive step forward, **we need the government to do more for recreationally important species.**

World-class recreational fisheries depend on healthy seas. Recreational sea anglers spend a lifetime chasing prized specimen fish. **With more and bigger fish swimming in the sea, recreational sea angling's value to coastal communities would rise dramatically.** Not only will creating better fishing opportunities attract more new anglers, generating the known positive benefits of angling, but it will also help conserve our seas.

- **Government must adopt ecosystem-based fisheries management** to improve the wider marine environment.
- We need the **establishment of protected recreational-only fishing areas** and the **designation of recreationally important**

species. For species like bluefin tuna, bass and mullet that deliver huge recreational socio-economic benefits, the best way of generating natural capital benefit is to **prioritise recreational fishing opportunities** for these species.

- Government **must end destructive industrial-scale fishing and damaging gear types like gillnetting, bottom-trawling and dredging that have** devastating consequences for our seas, especially in the UK's Marine Protected Area network.
- Fisheries management decisions must be **fair, transparent** and **equitable**, recognising that livelihoods depend on recreational fishing too.
- **Enforcement must be a higher Government priority**, and the **government must stamp out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.**
- **Government urgently needs to disincentivise bycatch and reduce discarding**, particularly for endangered, threatened and protected species.



3

EMPOWERING SEA ANGLERS

Giving the Guardians of Our Seas a bigger voice

Through spending years by the coast and at sea, **recreational sea anglers are natural conservationists**. Their special connection with our seas makes anglers ideal environmental stewards. Recreational sea anglers are passionate about restoring our seas and recovering fish stocks to their former abundance.

But for recreational sea anglers to engage effectively, we need the Government to do more. Collaboration is the future for recreational fisheries, and we cannot achieve our vision for world-class recreational fisheries alone. We must all work together to reverse the decline of our seas, safeguard coastal communities, and protect the future of recreational sea angling—and the **Government must work with us**.

- Formal Government recognition of the conservation role of recreational sea anglers and the **power of angling to deliver nature connectedness across society** through relevant marine and fisheries policy.

- Further investment into **collaborative partnerships with the recreational sector on data collection** to support fisheries policy such as Fisheries Management Plans and to better evidence the recreational sector and its socio-economic value.
- **Supporting recreational sea angling clubs and community-led projects to improve the state of our marine environment.**
- **Embedding recreational sea angling within environmental decision-making** by ensuring that local sea anglers are **properly represented** in local decision-making.

For further information or meetings about the Angling Trust's Manifesto for Sea Angling please contact:

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