

DEFRA Fisheries

Written Answer

Sarah Wollaston Chair, Health and Social Care Committee, Chair, Liaison Committee (Commons)

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment his Department has made of the (a) location and (b) scale of bycatch in inshore fisheries; and when he plans to publish that assessment.

George Eustice The Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

The Government funds the UK bycatch monitoring programme which provides essential observer data on incidents of bycatch. Bycatch levels are broken down by gear type and area. We do not have information on the exact numbers of bycaught individuals in inshore fisheries but estimates derived from observer data can be found [here](#)

The Sea Mammal Research Unit has undertaken work to identify potential marine mammal bycatch hotspots in the UK and the viability of the deployment of acoustic deterrent devices in the southwest of England. This report will be published following peer review.

We are currently working with stakeholders to develop a UK Cetacean Bycatch Strategy to address the issue of unintentional capture of dolphins, whales and porpoises. The Strategy will focus on implementing practical solutions in areas where there are high levels of bycatch, initially focussing on the southwest of England.

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