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Fish farm poses threat to ‘place of wonder and amazement’

I have recently discovered that Kames Fish Farming Ltd, having – justifiably – been knocked back on their proposal to site a fish farm in the Sound of Jura have now applied for permission to put one in a secluded bay on the unspoiled west coast of the island of Jura.

I believe this to be perhaps the least suitable place for any such venture and should under no circumstances be allowed. The risk of long-term environmental damage to this pristine area is too great.

Some learned sage once said: ‘The economy is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the environment, not the reverse.’

And here we are again – the economy versus the environment.

I’ve sailed the waters off the west coast of Jura and it truly feels like a last wilderness. With its rugged cliffs and hardly accessible beaches standing sentinel against the wild Atlantic, there is a sense of time slowing while the modern world recedes.

I’ve watched tribes of wild goats dining on seaweed, next to rookeries of common and grey seals hauled out, warming on the shoreline. Overhead, golden eagles and sea eagles wheel on the westerly winds, dwarfing the myriad gulls that pepper the skies. Gannets circle, watching, and, in a blink, sheath their scimitar wings and fall from the sky like living lightning bolts to pierce the waters.

I have encountered the lumbering bulk of basking sharks with their great, gaping maws pushing slowly through the plankton-rich water while far behind the pendulum of tail rhythmically scythes the surface. I’ve witnessed the sleek, arching back of Minke whales roll through the swell, and the graceful play of dolphins and porpoises are not uncommon in this stretch of ocean. I believe, once, I even caught a glimpse of the weird and wonderful tropical sunfish before it sank into the gloom.

This coast is a place of wonder and amazement, visited by and home to some of the Earth’s iconic creatures and it is unique in its glory. Are we really prepared to jeopardise all this for profit? To ship some plastic-wrapped, unnaturally produced protein halfway round the globe because the newly enriched Chinese market demands it?

Please, no. I urge all with even the slightest regard for our natural heritage to object in the strongest terms possible and to sign the petition at <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/stop-proposed-fish-farm-on-west-coast-of-jura>.

Andy Grant,

Achnamara.