

Did Brexit Affect Our Fishing Economy?

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Written Article 11-14 years

Scotland is known for its fishing of salmon and trout and Scottish fish makes up 62% of the UK's fish landings. Scotland is also the 5th best country to go fishing in, according to boatinternational. But why is fishing so important? and why is it a topic to debate?

Fishing helps the medical side of our world but fishermen take advantage of this (overfishing). In the Greater north sea 50% of stock were outside the safe biological limits. We also have problems with inland fishing. The main issues of our fisheries are: bycatch, when fish are caught unintentionally: greenwashing, when fisheries add misleading or false information to their products or websites. This could be by saying it's 'eco-friendly' or 'sustainable': illegal fishing, where you fish without permission in the waters.

With our recent exit from the EU our fishing economy has dropped massively. When exiting, the fishing industry didn't get all that they wanted. The government promised massive amendments to help the industry take back control of the UK waters and increase shares (while minimising trade impacts) which hasn't happened; despite statements that the UK fishermen would have thousands of extra catch, researchers estimate that the increase will only reach 107,000 per year.

For Scotland Brexit meant selling overseas was made much more difficult since the UK is no longer in the customs union (The customs union made it easier for European countries to trade goods with each other). The Brexit deal meant that exporting seafood will cost more. Customers were lost due to the time it now takes to get the fish to them. An example of this was when the lorries were stuck at the UK border for days and all the fish went off, losing millions of pounds. Many fishermen voted to leave the EU after being promised power over their own waters but now they feel like they have been taken advantage of. They were told that they would have more control in the fishing rights, all they have gotten is a declined income.

"UK has the largest wave, tidal and offshore wind resources in Europe" This could hurt our fishing economy by the fish getting caught in these machines. UK waters are the main source of fish even to non-UK fishermen. An agreement was made on access to the UK waters by the EU. Some say the UK did not secure the access to its own fishing waters that it should have done. The Scottish government criticised the UK government for their lack of planning which harmed the Scottish fishing industry.

Overall the Scottish fishing industry has been harmed during the recent exit over the EU. This all happened due to the lack of planning from the British government when leaving. Forcing fishermen to early retirement after feeling betrayed by their own country. The laws in place should have been given more thought due to the UK's massive fishing industry. Which when tampered with could affect our economy.

Websites used:

Openseas.org.uk, Gov.scot, heardscotland.com ,york.ac.uk ,indyposterboy.scot ,boat international.com

