



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Government Marine Environment Policy Creates Increasing Abundance of Marine Life**

The Opposition's memory is getting progressively worse as the years their party was in power fade away into the distance. It is incredible that they should have the audacity to criticise the present Government on fishing when they introduced an illegal agreement which was broken as soon as it was made and allowed all and sundry to fish in our waters totally unregulated. They were also the Party that took the eye off the ball, which resulted in Spain declaring BGTW as a Spanish nature reserve!

HM Government of Gibraltar has made tremendous progress in improving the state of the marine environment. Its habitat creation programmes, including reefs and seagrasses, its re-introduction programmes, including oysters, and the introduction of other initiatives such as continuous monitoring of marine life by underwater camera and diving have brought marine conservation in Gibraltar to a level never before dreamt of. Users of the sea recognize that this is the case and see the increasing abundance of marine life for themselves. Among other things, the Government has stopped the large numbers of non-resident anglers and spear fishermen who used to take up the majority of our shoreline.

On the commercial fishing front, incursions are very much reduced on the numbers of past years. Government reiterates the answer given to press questions on 19 August that the Ministry for the Environment is working with GONHS and other relevant agencies to investigate ongoing incidents with the aim of stopping all illegal fishing in BGTW. The agencies include the Fishing Working Group, which was set up last year to advise on and discuss all matters relating to fishing and marine conservation and on which all stakeholders are represented.