

**Chairman's New Year Message,
January 2014.**

During the coming year, Marinet is seeking to become independent of Friends of the Earth.

We believe this will not only be a significant event, but also a huge opportunity. Via its independence, Marinet will be able to become a forthright campaigning organisation in its own right.

This means we will be able to develop our own voice, to publicise our thinking and campaigns directly ourselves, and to take a principled and independent stand on marine issues. We have always focused on integrity, but we want now to move beyond single issues and to tackle a larger canvas with those who are willing to work with us. We want to focus not just on the nature of the change that is needed to genuinely and permanently protect the seas and oceans, but also how to secure this change. This means being clear headed, committed and dedicated to the task.

As important, an independent Marinet will be your organisation. It will belong wholly to its Members, no one else, so where Marinet goes is where **you** want Marinet to go. It will be a marine campaigning organisation run on a not-for profit basis, belonging to you and representing you.

In addition to evaluating the results of EU Common Fisheries Policy reform and the need to rebuild fish stocks for food security, Marinet intends to develop campaigns during the coming year on:

- The Sea Bass fishery in the English Channel and Celtic/Irish Seas. This fishery has been outside the CFP management regime and now, as stocks of other fish dwindle, fishing of sea bass has begun to reach punishing and near disastrous levels. To avert its imminent collapse, we are planning to work with the Bass Anglers Sportfishing Society (BASS), the Angling Trust, and the Inshore Fisheries and Conservations Authorities (IFCAs) in order to secure protection for the stock from the UK and the EU.
- The severe mortality caused to fish stocks and marine life by offshore dredging for sand and gravel (aggregate) can be avoided. A **Marinet member** has developed new technology which will reduce substantially the adverse impact of this dredging, so protecting marine life both at the dredge sites and in adjacent fish spawning and nursery grounds. This work intends to involve the RSPB and academics in order to build understanding and support, and the intention is to hold a national seminar, thereby influencing and reforming both the terms of licences and actual practices.
- Development by a **Marinet member** of a new paradigm for the legal management of the planet's seas and oceans. This new paradigm starts from the premise that all the assets of the seas and oceans, from their natural resources to their ecosystems, must have sovereignty. It therefore follows that the natural resources of the oceans are no longer "open for exploitation". As a result no human activity can happen – be it fishing, oil extraction, aggregate dredging or whatever – until the activity is explicitly licensed and can demonstrate its necessity and respect for the oceans and their ecosystems. Thus conservation and marine protection become the default position. The baseline shifts permanently to conservation, and exploitation has to prove it is benign. This will involve a new legal basis for the United Nations Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and we will be developing this new paradigm, publishing it, looking for allies and finding the path and means that will secure its adoption by the United Nations

We believe this is a strong agenda to launch us on our potentially inaugural year of independence. We value your support. Let us know what you think, along with your own campaigning suggestions.

Best wishes for 2014, David Levy, Marinet Chair, email: levy@dr52.fsnet.co.uk