Sea life soars after Arran bans fishing

Populations of king scallops and lobsters have quadrupled over the past decade in the first area of Scotland's seas where fishing has been banned (Ellie Forbes writes).

Experts have found a dramatic increase in marine life off the Isle of Arran, twelve years after fishing was outlawed.

Fishing in Lamlash Bay was banned by the Scottish government in 2008, after years of overfishing.

The zone, the first of its type in Scotland, was enforced following years of campaigning by the Community of Arran Seabed Trust (Coast), which had been charting declines of fish stocks around the isle.

Now a study by the University of York has revealed there are nearly four times as many king scallops inside the 2.67 sq km site than in 2010. In 2010 the density of king scallops in the zone was 6.17 per 100 sq m and by 2019 this had increased to 23.

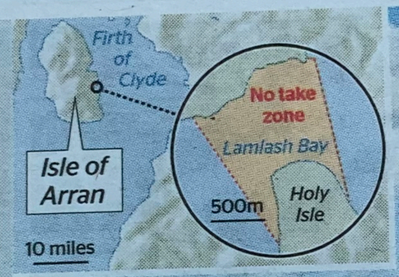
Bigger adult scallops have also been found and more juveniles.

Lobsters have benefited, with an increasing percentage of larger specimens.

The project has won awards and its success was key to a larger conservation zone being set up south of Arran.

Howard Wood, co-founder of Coast, said that the project's success was "underpinned by ten years of science".

Dr Bryce Stewart, of the University of York, said: "The lesson from Arran is that, with community support, strong science and political will, we can recover our seas."



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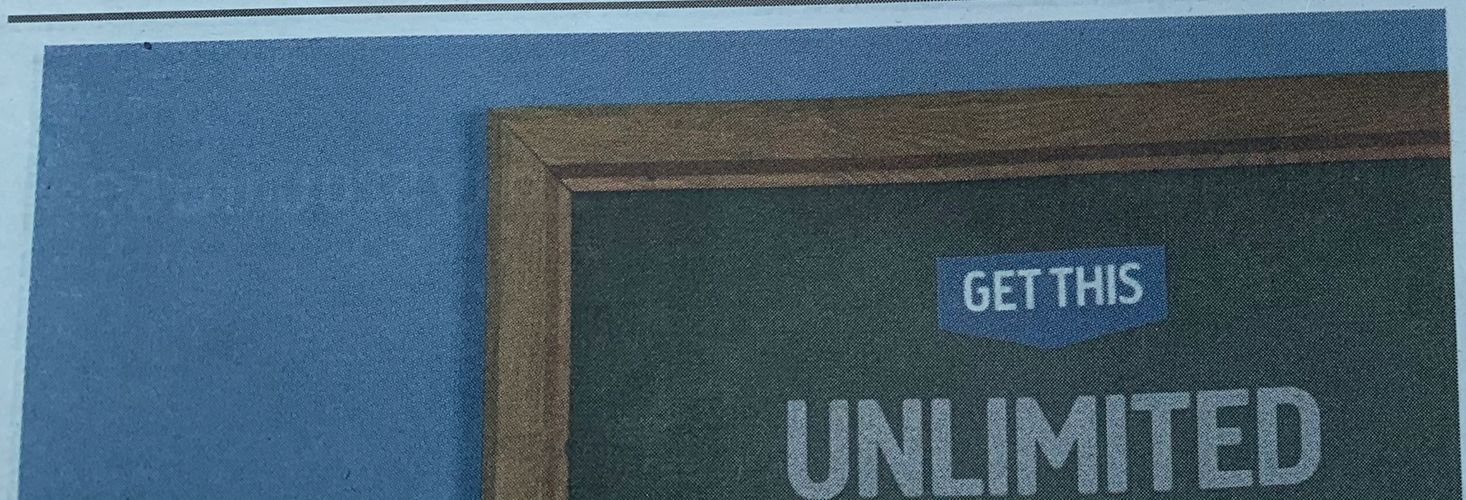
Lamlash Bay was made a marine protected area in 2008 after years of campaigning



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Rhys Blakely Science Correspondent

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