

Swedish Natura 2000: Greenpeace notification of intent to carry out the placement of fishing obstacles

Greenpeace today (26 February 2009) submitted a notification of intent to the Swedish Environment Ministry to carry out the placement of fishing obstacles in two marine NATURA 2000 sites located in Kattegatt, North Sea (map: <http://mkbstenar.wordpress.com/karta-over-fladen-och-lilla-middelgrund/>).

The two areas, Fladen and Lilla Middelgrunden are home to a number of important habitats and species threatened by destructive fishing practices such as bottom trawling. The notification of intent was accompanied by an environmental impact assessment for each of site.

Greenpeace is currently developing plans to protect these areas physically from the negative effect of bottom trawling by placing trawling obstacles in the form of stone boulders on the sea bottom. Even though this activity will not require a license, Greenpeace has decided to carry out a thorough environmental impact assessment, and has established an on-line forum for comments from experts and stakeholders. Greenpeace will further carry out public hearings and conduct further at sea research in order to perfect the methodology of the planned activities.

Swedish government authorities have so far failed to ban fishing in these areas, despite the clearly identified threat that it represents, and despite the official designation of the areas in the NATURA 2000 network of conservation sites of Community importance.