

## OPINION

# A Jersey marine park would boost tourism, increase biodiversity and be economically beneficial for fishermen

The Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site is worth £111 million per year to Dorset and Devon, writes the Blue Marine Foundation's Charles Clover

LAST week's suggestion of a marine park around Jersey, advocated by Economic Development Minister Lyndon Farnham, has received a mixed reaction.

I have sympathy for the fishermen who have expressed concern about the idea.

Their concerns are understandable given the circumstances of French vessels operating within Jersey waters under the Granville Bay Agreement, the current review of which by the government we support as it is in the interests of good fisheries management.

The idea of a marine park around Jersey, however, would not only be good for the Island's tourism, by increasing biodiversity, but we can point to evidence that it could be economically beneficial for fishermen.

Indeed, fishermen in Lyme Bay off the Dorset and Devon coast, with whom the Blue Marine Foundation has been working for many years, are now actively advocating the creation of a marine park.

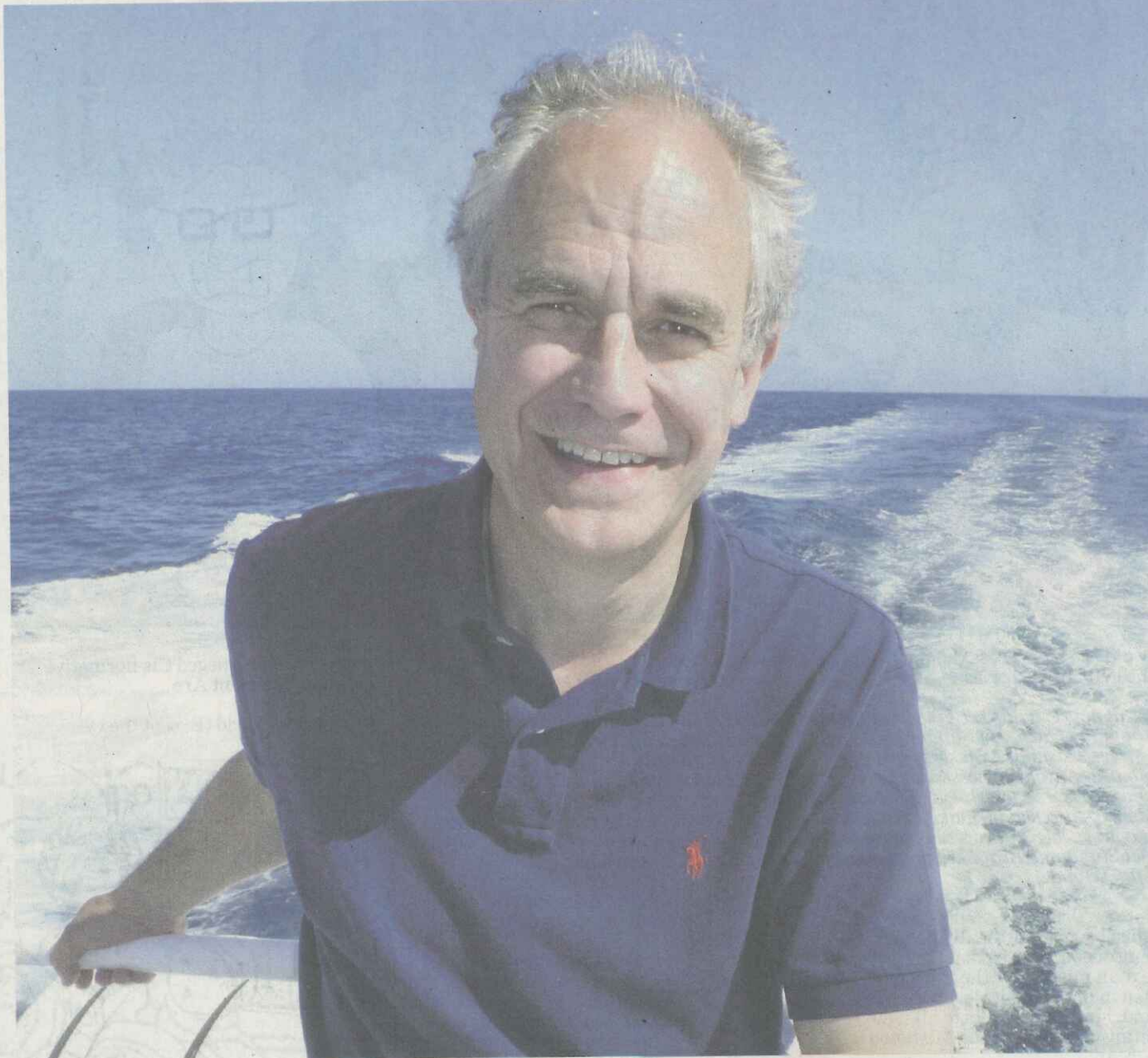
Jersey has an extraordinary marine estate which supports a great abundance and diversity of life. Its waters – with seagrass, kelp forests and maerl beds – showcase some of the best shallow marine habitats in the British Isles.

Marine parks are a vehicle to engage the general public with the ocean, provide wellbeing and increase economic opportunities for coastal communities.

National parks on land are proven to be good for the economy. The economic benefits of Jersey Marine Park could be considerable. Over one third of England's food with a protected-name status is produced in national parks.

BLUE has helped to prove the commercial value of local seafood through the 'Reserve Seafood' label in Lyme Bay. There is potential to develop Jersey Marine Park brands, selling seafood to tourists at higher prices than those at which it is currently exported from Jersey.

There is considerable economic



■ Charles Clover supports plans to create an Emerald Ring around the Island

potential in a marine park or parks for the Island as a whole. For instance, the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site is worth £111 million per year to the Dorset and Devon economy. Revenue from spending along the South West Coast path continues to raise in excess of £400 million per year. In the Solent, recreational events bring in a lot of people and finance – Cowes week on the Isle of Wight, for example, can generate over £6 million of income to the local economy.

So I have some sympathy for fishermen who think they may be displaced into waters that are currently fished unsustainably, but that is a separate

problem with a separate solution.

The fishermen who fish within the proposed Emerald Ring of seagrass, kelp and maerl have nothing to fear from a multi-use marine park in which fishermen could play a part in fisheries management on the Lyme Bay model. Indeed, our research shows that satisfaction levels among fishermen involved in Lyme Bay are high because they are involved in collaborative management and more in control of their lives. They work less and catch more. Biodiversity increases and, as it grows, so does their catch.

The route currently being pursued by the government, the Société Jersiaise and

the Blue Marine Foundation is to identify marine areas rich in biodiversity, as has already been done with fishermen in making the Ecréhous and the Minquiere protected areas.

This is an evidence-based process, which will take a while, and it is fully intended to consult fishermen through on how these areas should be managed. It is work that will bring benefits to the Island, during which all the issues can be fully considered.

● Charles Clover is the executive director of Blue Marine Foundation, a charity dedicated to creating marine reserves and establishing sustainable models of fishing.

**BONTOUR**

**ANDRÉ RIEU WORLD TOUR**  
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