

Fisheries Resource Education Programme: Business of Fishing



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Scottish fishermen dive into science – with a Royal flavour

The cream of Scotland's fishing fleet – young and old alike – have taken the plunge to learn more about fisheries science and management.

25 of Scotland's talented fishermen gathered at the Thainstone House Hotel in Inverurie near Aberdeen on the 12th- 14th June to meet and learn more about how their fisheries are measured and managed. The course was honoured with a Royal visit as HRH The Prince of Wales- who takes a great personal interest in the importance of helping fishermen understand the science of sustainability – dropped by to see how the course was going and to talk to the fishermen about their experiences.

The training course – called the Business of Fishing – was developed by representatives of the Scottish fishing industry under the guidance of international consultants and other partners. It is the first of its kind to run in the UK, and following such a successful pilot, there is demand for the course to run again in 2018. The concept and delivery was managed by the charity Fishing into the Future, whose remit is to build prosperous and sustainable UK fisheries. The project is funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund – administered by Marine Scotland – and Sainsbury's.

Mike Park, Chief Executive of the Scottish White Fish Producer's Association said "Fishermen of tomorrow will require a wider understanding of the business of fishing. Husbandry and stewardship of our fish stocks and wider marine ecosystems are now key components of being a professional and successful fisherman. This course provides a great foundation for delivering the key components of knowledge and understanding."

Those who attended rubbed shoulders with government officials, leading scientists and internationally renowned leaders in their field as they wrestled with cornerstone concepts of fishery management such as Maximum Sustainable Yield and the practicalities of stock assessments. They came as skeptics and left more supportive of science and management, thanks to a new understanding of the 'behind the scenes' working of other players in the UK's fisheries sphere.

Jim Masters, Executive Director of Fishing into the Future, underlined how important new, well-informed, champions for a sustainable fishing industry are, saying "Fishing relies on hunting a wild resource. It seems crazy that within this perilous profession fishermen can steam out of port without knowing more about the fish they are catching, or the ecosystems where they live. We hope that through training courses like this we can help build a confident, professionalised industry that is wholly supportive of a sustainable approach to fishing, which makes both financial and environmental sense."

Ian Fletcher, a scallop fisherman from Oban, commented: “My views about scientific stock assessment have changed, from being skeptical to more understanding of why scientists do it the way they do”.

The Scottish fishing industry has taken many knocks, has seen some hard-times in the recent past, but with stocks rebuilding and management improving, the industry will benefit from a new generation of fishermen who have the tools, language and insights to participate in, and confidently engage with, fisheries science and management.

****ENDS****

Additional quotes and images on request. Please contact: Jim Masters, Executive Director of Fishing into the Future, jim.masters2015@outlook.com, 01803 659219.

Notes for Editors

- Fishing into the Future is based in Brixham, Devon (see contact details below)
- Find out more: www.fishingintothefuture.co.uk
- The project has been funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), and Sainsbury's
- Project partners include:
 - Marine Scotland
 - Marine Scotland Science
 - Scottish White Fish Producer's Association (SWFPA)
 - Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)
 - Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association (SPFA)
 - University of Aberdeen
 - Marine Institute – Ireland
 - RSPB
 - Young's Seafood
 - International Sustainability Unit (ISU)
 - Seafish
 - Gulf of Maine Research Institute (GMRI)

