



## **Press Release**

### **ASDA's Decision to Ban Sales of Monkfish - Show us the Evidence !**

The NAFC Marine Centre today challenged ASDA to make public any scientific evidence that it has to justify its recent decision to ban sales of monkfish.

Expressing its support for the Shetland Fishermen's Association and the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, the Centre expressed surprise that ASDA appeared to have ignored the most recent scientific evidence on the state of monkfish stocks.

NAFC has been at the forefront of research on this species for the last decade and its' staff have participated in a number of collaborative monkfish research programmes with the FRS Marine Laboratory in Aberdeen and other European research institutes. Commenting on ASDA's decision NAFC Director, Peter Dryburgh, stated that *"It is disappointing that ASDA has chosen to ignore the growing body of scientific evidence that, far from declining or being threatened, monkfish stocks are actually healthier now than they were five years ago"*.

Mr Dryburgh reminded ASDA that in 2006 the European Commission's Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) recommended a 10% increase in monkfish quotas, something they would hardly have done if there was any threat to monkfish stocks. *"Almost every assertion that ASDA have made about monkfish stocks and the monkfish fishery appears to be contrary to the scientific evidence"*, he continued. *"If ASDA have any scientific evidence to support their decision to ban sales of monkfish we would like to see it"*.

Mr Dryburgh also pointed out that, contrary to the impression given by ASDA, only a small proportion of the UK monkfish catch - and virtually none of the Scottish catch - was actually caught with beam trawls.

While NAFC fully supports the principle of sustainable fisheries, as does the fishing industry itself, it believes that ASDA and other retailers should base decisions on what species to sell on scientific evidence, rather than on unsupported assertions and innuendo.

Like the Shetland Fishermen's Association, NAFC has invited representatives of ASDA to visit Shetland to meet local monkfish fishermen, and also some of the scientists who have first-hand experience of the state of monkfish stocks.

**NOTE:** For further editorial information please contact Christena Irvine, Tel: 01595 772207. E-mail: [christena.irvine@nafc.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:christena.irvine@nafc.uhi.ac.uk)

**NOTE TO EDITORS:**

*In view of the increasing range and scope of the work being undertaken by NAFC, the decision was taken in September 2005 to change the institute's name from the North Atlantic Fisheries College to the NAFC Marine Centre.*

*Please note our correct title is now 'NAFC Marine Centre'. The 'NAFC' in our title identifies us with, and provides continuity from, our previous name – North Atlantic Fisheries College. In conversation 'NAFC' should be spelt out as 'N-A-F-C'. Similarly, we are no longer just a 'college', but a marine centre - providing education, research and commercial services to the marine sector.*