

## PRESS RELEASE

### Children wowed by exotic displays of local marine life

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May saw the first schools visit to the NAFC Marine Centre schools pilot “Seas around us” project with a visit from Scalloway primary school classes four and five.

The colourful and exotic displays are full of local marine life which has been collected by the NAFC fishing vessel *Atlantia II* and by creels set around the NAFC rock armour. The displays contain everything from minute squat lobsters to cod, skate and tope as well as exotic colourful mixes of sea anemones, octopus, local ballan and goldsinny wrasse. Some tanks are dedicated to larger fish while some contain a variety of shellfish including crabs and scallops. Smaller tanks contain organisms like squat lobsters and fish you would expect to find in the ebb.



NAFC staff; Kenny Gifford and Saro Saravanan, who have been responsible for preparing the displays helped the twenty pupils and their teachers to identify the many organisms in the exhibits. During their visit the pupils were given a booklet produced by Saro and Kenny containing colourful photographs of sealife and pages for colouring, puzzles and quizzes which the children can use to help remind them of the animals they have seen during their visit.

Kenny Gifford, Aquaculture Lecturer commented: *“Its natural for children to be interested in creatures around them. One of the advantages of this project is that children can see many of the local species from the sea without the danger of falling in! They will also see species they wouldn’t normally see in the ebb, such as cod, thornback ray, lemon sole, prawns and octopus.*

*Occasions such as these will stay in the memory for years to come and may foster a more serious interest in marine biology. Shetland depends on its marine environment for its*



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*income and jobs and the opportunity to work with schools to encourage children from a young age to follow careers in the area of marine science is to be fostered"*

Beryl Smith, Enterprise Development Co-ordinator for SIC Education Services said: *"I'm impressed with this excellent new resource for Shetland schoolchildren. Everything is purpose built at a suitable height, with health and safety in mind. This is an opportunity for them to see the sea life from around our shores. It's a chance for many to see these animals for the very first time"*.

Although this project has been devised with school pupils in mind, NAFC will have an Open Afternoon on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May from 2pm till 4.30 when members of the public are invited to pop along and see the animals in the tanks for themselves.

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**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.*