



PRESS RELEASE

Farmed Herring? – NAFC Marine Centre finds silver darlings in its nets!

The NAFC Marine Centres has recently harvested four boxes of herring from one of its experimental fish farm sites in Clift Sound Shetland.

Farm Manager, Stewart Sales explained that while changing nets in 2005 a shoal of over 100 small herring was inadvertently caught in the nets. Workers initially thought they were sprats when they were seen feeding on pellets at the waters surface. The last batch of salmon from this growth cycle was harvested earlier this month. The staff were pleasantly surprised to see that some very fat herring had survived and thrived well amongst the salmon.

“The herring have grown from 5 cm to full size in a period of eighteen months and they looked in extremely good, healthy condition and were completely free of parasites. They tasted fattier and oilier than wild herring but they were still good.”

Hanne Irvine, a PhD student at NAFC Marine Centre studying pelagic fish movements in the North Sea, commented: *“Generally herring are filter feeders using combs on their gills called “gill rakers” to filter particles out of the water. However, they do have the ability to switch to a biting and capturing method of feeding which is more efficient at removing non-mobile prey such as fish eggs and pellets in this case.”*



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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.