



PRESS RELEASE

NAFC helps put Monkfish back on the shelves

NAFC Marine Centre are delighted with the decision of the Marine Conservation Society to take monkfish from Northern Stocks off its "Fish to Avoid" list.

This move follows a recent meeting at which NAFC Marine Centre staff Dr Chevonne Laurenson, Fisheries Biologist and Mr Leslie Tait, Fishing Lecturer and Chairman of the Shetland Fishermen's Association took part in a meeting with representatives of the Scottish whitefish fishing industry and the MCS to discuss the sustainability of the monkfish fishery.

Dr Laurenson was able to provide scientific evidence based on recent and ongoing progress in terms of management and research including the Industry-Science Partnership monkfish project and the monkfish tallybook scheme, both of which are led by FRS Aberdeen with NAFC Marine Centre participation. The evidence suggests there has been a significant increase in Northern Stock abundance over the last five years and there are no biological indicators to suggest that monkfish is being exploited at unsustainable levels. Results have shown there has been widespread recruitment into the fishery since 2001 and all evidence indicates that the stock is continuing to increase in abundance at the present time.

Earlier in the year Dr Laurenson and Mr Tait were part of a delegation which met with ASDA's sustainable and ethical sourcing manager, Chris Brown to provide an overview of the latest information on the status of the stock in Scottish waters and its importance. ASDA had placed a ban on selling monkfish in its stores. It is now hoped that the move by MCS to take monkfish off its list of "fish to avoid" list will see ASDA returning monkfish to its shelves in the near future.

Leslie Tait who is also Chairman of the Shetland Fishermen's Association said *"Monkfish is very important to the local whitefish sector and we very much welcome the decision by MCS to remove monkfish from its "fish to avoid" list. This demonstrates the value of open and honest discussion between scientists, industry representatives and conservation groups to resolve issues."*



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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.