

News release

4 September 2012

Brand new fishing course at NAFC Marine Centre

A brand new 'Introduction to Commercial Fishing' course got underway at the NAFC Marine Centre last week (Monday 20 August). The three-week course, developed by Seafish, is designed to provide a preparation for anyone interested in joining the fishing industry, as well as providing all the mandatory safety training to ensure their safety. The three-week course has attracted eight students, including two from Orkney, and is fully funded by Seafish through the European Fisheries Fund.

The aim of the course is to give people interested in a career in the fishing industry the opportunity to attain the four mandatory short courses required to work on a fishing vessel – sea survival, fire fighting, first aid and basic health and safety, an introduction to care of the catch and food hygiene, and basic training in other aspects of the job including net mending, rope work, different types of fishing gear, an introduction to wheelhouse equipment and watch keeping.

Lecturer in Maritime Studies and Fisheries, Mark Fullerton, said: "We are delighted to have attracted students of all ages and experiences. This new course goes beyond the four mandatory courses to provide students with a degree of background knowledge to set them off in good stead in their careers.

"At the end of the three-week period, everyone will receive a Seafish 'Introduction to Commercial Fishing' Certificate, as well as evidence that they have completed the required short courses. I'm very pleased that we can play a part in these people's futures."

Alex Nunn-Thompson from Lerwick explained why he joined the course: "I've been interested in a career in the fishing industry for quite a while and I felt that this course was a good place to start. By the end of it I'll have a good introduction to the skills I need, which will help me when I go to sea at some point in the future."

Ryan McGuinness from Dounby, Orkney, added: "I noticed the advert in the local paper and thought it would be a useful course to gain both experience and the necessary courses required to work on a fishing boat. I hope this course leads me to a job once I've completed it."

Jan Rigden, Head of Shetland School of Nautical Studies at the NAFC Marine Centre, added: "We have been preparing to offer this course for some time; it provides valuable

basic training for new entrants, as well as providing a future route into a Modern Apprenticeship in Sea Fishing. It will be invaluable in preparing the fishermen of the future, which is essential to retaining Shetland's premier status in the catching sector. The fact that Seafish have been able to fund these students through EFF is an additional bonus."

The Shetland Fisheries Training Association (SFTA) has been in discussions with several local white fish skippers, encouraging them to offer the candidates a short spell of actual work experience when they have successfully completed the course. This will allow the students an opportunity to see the real life of a working fisherman and put their new found skills into practice, as well as affording the skippers the chance to see for themselves the potential of these new recruits.

ENDS

Image attached to accompany release:

Back row left to right: Billy Williamson (Whalsay), Ryan Galbraith (Lerwick), Arran Hunter (Bressay), Mark Fullerton (Instructor), Caroline Hepburn (Liaison Officer)

Front row left to right: Ryan McGuinness (Dounby, Orkney), Kyle Stirling-Lauder (St Ola, Orkney), Alex Nunn-Thomson (Lerwick), Andy Williamson (Whalsay), Robert Leask (Lerwick)

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Background information:

Seafish was founded in 1981 by an Act of Parliament and aims to support all sectors of the seafood industry for a sustainable, profitable future. It is the only pan-industry body offering services to all parts of the industry, from the start of the supply chain at catching and aquaculture; through processing, importers, exporters and distributors of seafood right through to restaurants and retailers.

Seafish is funded by a levy on the first sale of seafood landed in the UK. Its services are intended to support and improve the environmental sustainability, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the industry, as well as promoting sustainably-sourced seafood. These services include technical research and development, responsible sourcing initiatives, economic consulting, market research, industry accreditation, safety training for fishermen and legislative advice.

www.seafish.org