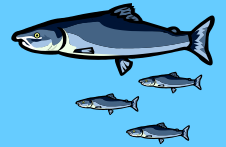


# Fish Skeet



Issue number 17

*Bioys da dooinney as baase da east!*

December 2010

## Isle of Man Queenie Fishery

2010 has been an outstanding year in the fishery, with product quality at an all time high, and catch rates remaining high throughout the year. The initial Marine Stewardship Council accreditation report has now been completed, and is currently being reviewed by independent scientists. We are hopeful that their response will be completed in advance of the 27<sup>th</sup> January, when Isle of Man Queenies will be competing at Billingsgate for their 'Sustainable Seafood of the Year' award.

The Queenie Management Board, comprised of processors and fishermen, met again in October to discuss management of the fishery and minutes of this meeting can be downloaded at <http://www.gov.im/daff/fish/sea/scallops.xml> Consensus at the time was that the very high catch rates seen consistently across the fishing grounds, coupled with the very high

quality of the processed product, gave the Board little cause for concern that the stock was at any risk of an overfish. However, at the same time it was recognised that the situation would need to be carefully monitored, as catches this year have been much higher than the historical long term average, and couldn't increase indefinitely.

As *Fish Skeet* goes to press, members of the Board, pictured below at the first meeting held earlier this year, are considering whether to request that the directed fishery for Queenies in Manx waters be closed temporarily as a precautionary measure. Although there is no current evidence that the stock is under threat of overfishing this measure should give both fishermen, and customers for the catches, the reassurance that the fishery in 2011 should be equally successful.



**Back Row (L-R): Mr Tom Bryan Brown, Mr Robert Quirk, Mr John King, Mr Barry Horne. Front Row: Dr Lee Murray, Mr Peter Winterbottom, Mr Billy Caley**

The Department would like to wish all readers a **Merry Christmas** and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.



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**Isle of Man**  
Government

*Resilvus Ellan Vannin*



# Closed Areas Update

**Niarbyl** - Early this summer divers from Harbours Division were able to sample the scallops moved from Targets to Niarbyl last October. These scallops had an average size of 103mm last October; the sample taken in June averaged 107mm. It is probable that the majority of these scallops are now near to, or over 110mm in size. The 'ranching' work at Niarbyl is on a relatively small scale, but it could still provide good

evidence about the possible returns from scallop ranching undertaken on a commercial basis. The next step in this work is to 'fish down' the scallops within the closed area, monitoring both catch rates and the growth of the scallops, 1000 of which were tagged and measured. However there is no hurry to do this since the scallops are continuing to grow and breed. At some stage in the next year or so the Department

hopes to work with vessels from the MFPO to assess the survival and growth rates of the scallops in this area.

**Ramsey** - Bangor University undertook their annual survey of the scallops in Ramsey Bay in October, as part of their annual scallop survey. Results indicate that recruitment to the stock has been disappointing. However, there were very encouraging signs of a good spatfall over the summer, possibly related to the marked recovery of the 'turf' growing on the seabed, a mixture of algae and small animals such as bryozoans. It will be several years before these juveniles recruit to the fishery but initial observation suggests that as in Port Erin, areas of seabed around the Isle of Man can quickly recover from the impacts of scallop fishing.

**Douglas Bay / Laxey Bay** - Bangor were unable to sample the Douglas or Laxey Bay areas. We are hoping that this work will be undertaken early in the spring, and will pass results to the industry as soon as we are able.



## Scallop Bye-law Update

The New Sea Fisheries (Scallop Fishing) Bye-laws 2010 came into effect on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Although supported by the majority of stakeholders, Marine Scotland requested revisions to the Bye-law. The Department agreed to write to owners of over 221kW scallop vessels, outlining a suggestion from Marine Scotland that would enable access to all Scottish vessels of this class to 'one week on, one week off' in the fishery. This review closed on 17<sup>th</sup> December. It is clear that the majority of respondents are not in favour of this proposal and it is therefore unlikely that a full consultation on this, and other proposed changes, will be undertaken.

As Fish Skeet goes to press, Marine Scotland have recognised that there is not support within their industry for such revisions and have requested that the Department does not progress this further. The current bye-laws can be found at <http://www.gov.im/lib/docs/daff/Fisheries/scallopbyelaw.pdf>

## Crab and Lobster Review

16 responses were received to the consultation on amendments to the crab and lobster bye-law, mainly from individual fishermen. Juan Turner MLC, Member for Fisheries, said "I'd like to thank all those people who took time to consider the proposals and send in their comments.

As would be expected on this issue, we have had a variety of opinions on the proposals. I have been working through the responses and hope to be in a position soon to confirm the content of a new bye-law that will ensure an even balance between the need to protect the fishery, and allow in new entrants to what has been, for many years a closed shop".

# Barrule Update

A few skippers may have noticed a new face aboard the Barrule at the start of this year's scallop season. Local Sea Fisheries officers were accompanied by Philip North who was training to be a UK Fisheries Officer. Philip began his fisheries career studying marine biology at Port Erin Marine laboratory and has since been fortunate to have worked at various ports throughout the UK. He is presently working at the main North Western Office of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) at Blackpool. It is a requirement of his training that he spends some time with other enforcement agencies and because of Philip's connections with the Island he requested that he spend some time with Sea Fisheries officers on the Island.

It may have been a baptism of fire as the week selected was the first week of the scallop season. Blearily eyed he arrived for duty for an early start aboard the Island's fishery patrol vessel the Barrule, departing Douglas in the early hours of Monday morning. Fortunately the weather proved to be a little kinder than last year's start to the season.



Here are a few words from Philip:

*"I was fortunate enough to return to the Isle of Man to work on board the Barrule for the first week of the 2010/2011 scallop season; I've recently left the island to become a fisheries officer in the North West of England and was eager to get back on the rock. Despite the weather being against us, we managed to get out and I got my first taste of 'sea-riding' and it proved to be an experience I won't forget in a hurry; you suddenly feel very small when you've got the bow of a 18m scalloper crashing down on you as you try to get on board in force 6 conditions.*

*The crew on board the Barrule are first rate and have a good rapport with the crew on the fishing vessels, it was a pleasant change to board a vessel to be greeted by a friendly face - something which I think speaks volumes about the close working relationship that the fishing*



*industry has with the fisheries department. Everyone I met - both in the industry and on the Barrule taught me a lot - the week was a very steep learning curve of what I'd call 'real world' knowledge, not the sort of thing you learn in a class-room. One of my philosophies about being a fisheries officer is that you need to know your district well - you need to be out there engaging with your stakeholders and assisting them as much as you can, as often as you can. This is exactly what I saw in my week spent on the island - the work that the fisheries officers both on the Barrule and shore side are doing made me very jealous of what you have - when we boarded a vessel everyone was on first name terms and not once did I encounter any hostility, even when one skipper was instructed to change the mesh size on his dredges.*

*When I wasn't out on the Barrule I was in the office at St Johns, learning about the shore-based side of the fisheries work. It was interesting to see where the Isle of Man's fisheries work parallels ours in England and where it differs. The Manx fishing industry has some big changes ahead of it, with e-logbooks, new bye-laws and registration of buyers and sellers coming into effect but as long as the fishing industry and the fisheries department keep that close working relationship I think it will be for the better. It was good to see that, because of the independence the island has, these bye-laws can be brought in relatively quickly which means that the changes that are needed are felt without delay. With this in mind I hope that the poor start to the scallop season I witnessed in November will be the last one and that the new bye-law, as well as the closed areas, produce healthier and more productive scallop beds.*

*I want to thank everyone in the fisheries department as well as those individuals I met from within the fishing industry for making it such a beneficial week. Next stop for me is sea-riding with our local IFCA's (Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities) and then the Royal Navy. I hope I'll be back out on the Barrule soon, enjoying island life again."*

The Department would like to thank Philip for helping out and hope he enjoyed the experience. We wish him all the best in his career.

# New Faces



## Adam Jarrett:

My name is Adam Jarrett and I have been seconded to DEFA on a short term basis from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in England. My role here is to introduce a Registration of Buyers and Sellers scheme in line with the rest of the UK as well as Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and electronic logbooks for the Manx fleet. I have worked in fisheries (Marine and Fisheries Agency and its predecessor the Sea Fisheries Inspectorate – both part of DEFRA) since 1992; working on the coast in Plymouth for a number of years before transferring to the Operational side in London Headquarters.

Part of my role in London was to introduce and manage the VMS which included the introduction of satellite monitoring devices on all over 15m UK fishing vessels. I was also responsible for introducing and implementing the electronic sales notes submission via the Registration of Buyers and Sellers scheme and electronic logbooks for the UK fishing industry. These roles were transferred from the Marine and Fisheries Agency

with the introduction of the Marine Management Organisation in Newcastle earlier this year. I have been on the Island since July this year and found the Manx way of life most enjoyable!

## Alistair Hamilton:

Alastair Hamilton has joined the department on a fixed term contract. Age 48 and from the north of Scotland Alastair has a varied background that has included fishing, working as a consultant to the petroleum tanker fleet and latterly as the owner of a string of seafood restaurants.

Alastair will be working with the fleet to assist them to gain accreditation under the Responsible Fishing Scheme; working with the processors to gain quality accreditation for their factories and working on the marketing of produce to maximise the value of the catch on the island.

Alistair may be contacted on: **07624 375515**.



## Logsheet Update

We have noticed a considerable improvement in the quality of your logsheets, thank you! There has been a noticeable decrease in the number of errors over the last couple of months, however there are still a few areas where improvements are needed, including; ports, times and sometimes the types of gear used.

**Please also remember to fill the Landing Declaration section under the thick black line, informing us of the total catch landed.**  
Remember that all sections of the logsheet have to

be completed. We do understand they are not intentional mistakes but the legal requirements have to be met.

We will do our utmost to assist you, so if you are still having any difficulties with the logsheets please contact 685837 otherwise we may have to put you on the naughty list –

**Happy Christmas!**



# Innovative Manx fishermen lead the way in Marine Nature Reserve selection – Dr. Fiona Gell

The Manx Fish Producer's Organisation has been working closely with DEFA to develop an exciting proposal for the Isle of Man's first Marine Nature Reserve to be established in Ramsey Bay, combining excellent opportunities to support fisheries recovery with the protection of important seabed habitats.

John Shimmin MHK, Minister for DEFA said:

*"The Manx Fish Producers Organisation has proposed a 40km<sup>2</sup> section of Ramsey Bay and the Ballacash Channel as an area to be closed to scallop dredging and queenie trawling. This, in turn, has been supported by the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture as a suitable area to develop plans for a Marine Nature Reserve. This positive and proactive move by the Manx fishing industry is a fantastic development in the sustainable management of Manx seas. By working together to protect Ramsey Bay we can ensure the long-term future of our fisheries and at the same time the spectacular marine life of the area."*

Ramsey Bay is particularly suitable as a Marine Nature Reserve because it will allow the Isle of Man to protect areas of diverse marine habitats including maerl beds, eelgrass meadows and kelp forests. A large additional area around the Ballacash Channel which is home to an extensive horse mussel reef will also be protected. These habitats are important because they are home to numerous species of plants and animals, they stabilise the seabed, keep our seas clean and also store carbon like tropical rainforests. Maerl habitats are also known to play an important role as a nursery ground for commercially important species such as cod and queenies. Protecting these special habitats effectively will also help Manx fisheries achieve Marine Stewardship Council accreditation as sustainable fisheries, a standard increasingly demanded by supermarkets and other seafood outlets.



**Horse mussel reef in the Ballacash Channel – the horse mussels are embedded in the seabed and provide a home for soft corals, sponges and many other animals and plants (Photo Rohan Holt, CCW)**



***Some of the 100,000 young scallops that were used to reseed Ramsey Bay in October. The scallops were tagged so that their progress and survival can be monitored by scientists. Fishermen from the Isle of Man Fish Producer's Organisation advised the Department on the exact placement of these scallops, to ensure that they have been put in areas where they will thrive, and in time provide planktonic larvae that will enhance the fishery in surrounding areas (Photo Laura Hanley, DEFA).***

Tom Bryan-Brown, Chief Executive of the Manx Fish Producers said: "The fishermen of this organisation have proposed that this area of Ramsey Bay should be shut down to scallop and queenie fishing. This will hopefully help the stocks of scallops and queen scallops but will also by association, fulfil the Island's obligation to the protection of particular marine species & habitats. The fishermen are pleased to be taking a proactive role in the creation of this Marine Protected Area."

We'd like to thank Tom Bryan-Brown, the MFPO and the fishermen who have been actively involved in the development of this proposal. A formal consultation process on the proposed Marine Nature Reserve will begin before Christmas and DEFA Marine Biodiversity Officers will be talking to all users of the Ramsey Bay area and gathering more information that will assist in the management of the area to support sustainable fisheries and thriving marine life. All registered fishermen will be contacted directly about the consultation process but if you'd like more information please contact:

Fiona Gell, Senior Marine Biodiversity Officer, Fisheries Directorate, DEFA  
Tel: **01624 695738** or Email: [fiona.gell@gov.im](mailto:fiona.gell@gov.im)



# Registration of buyers and sellers & Electronic Logbooks

– Adam Jarrett

January 2011 sees the introduction, initially on a voluntary basis, of a Registration of Buyers and Sellers scheme for first sale fish in the Isle of Man. The purpose of this scheme is to ensure that consumers know that the fish and shellfish they are buying come from a traceable source and at the same time support their local fishing industry. Furthermore it aims to ensure that legitimate fishermen achieve the market price for their catches. The UK has had such a scheme in place since 2005 and was broadly welcomed by the fishing industry on its introduction. It has since helped to ensure fishermen realise best prices for their catches as well as contributing towards the reduction in illegal or 'black fish' landings.

The sale of first sale fish is defined as 'fish being marketed for the first time'. A buyer is defined as 'someone (an individual, partnership, company or corporate body) who buys first sale fish direct from a vessel or agent'. There is

no cost to register and vessel owners will not fall under the scheme ("Sellers" are in effect auction sites). A sales note providing details of all fish bought is required for each landing, to be provided by the buyer. The scheme will be launched on a voluntary basis in January with legislation requiring compulsory registration coming in from April 2011. If you think you are affected by this or wish to talk about this then please contact me on 01624 685857.

Similarly, DEFA are looking to introduce a combined electronic logbook and VMS reporting system to be in place and operational from July 2011. This will become compulsory for at least all fishing vessels 12m and over (to be in line with the new Control Regulations coming into force throughout the EU on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012) and for ALL fishing vessels targeting King Scallops and Queen Scallops. Again, if you think you are affected by this or wish to talk about this then please contact me on **01624 685857**.

## King Scallop Research Update

- Natalie Horton, PhD Student, Bangor University

Research into the connections between different scallop beds around the Isle of Man has been ongoing this year with two different projects. Firstly, work on the genetic structure of the different scallop populations has reached an exciting stage with results imminent for the New Year. In order to answer questions such as "Do spat from inside the Port Erin closed area help seed commercial beds?" brand new genetic tools had to be developed. This work culminated in the genetic code for nearly half a million sections of scallop DNA being sequenced. This has allowed over 80 new genetic markers to be designed. These markers are sections of the DNA that can vary between different breeding populations, allowing us to discern how often genes are shared from one population to another. These markers are currently being tested to ensure they work consistently and provide useful information. In the New Year, those that are successful during the testing stage will be used, not only to gain information about

the populations around the Isle of Man, but to compare the genetics of the Isle of Man scallops with those from other locations around Europe.

The second project has looked at the variation in gonad (egg and sperm) development at different locations around the Isle of Man. Scallop gonad development was assessed in both June and October in 2009 and 2010 on most of the commercially fished sites. Interestingly, results show that the maturation stage within a single site is usually fairly similar for all individuals but can vary considerably between different sites. This variation occurs over fairly short distances such that scallops at neighbouring sites could be spawning at different times. At the start of the closed season scallops were either just starting to fill or had already filled their gonads in preparation for the next spawning event. In October, Some sites had just had a spawning event with gonads which were empty, whereas others still had full gonads and appeared to be almost

ready to start spawning. Spawning at this late time in the season

was unexpected as previous work in Port Erin in the 1950s showed that spawning was usually completed by early September. The reasons for, and the implications of this later spawning are currently being considered. Is the spawning season now longer than it was previously or has it just shifted to later in the year? Will scallop larvae, spawned at such a late date, survive the winter water temperatures and lower food availability? Is this late spawning event important in terms of recruitment or are spawning events earlier in the year more important? The answers to these questions and understanding the breeding patterns are very important to ensuring sustainability and continued high levels of recruitment of spat into adult populations.



# The Seafood Development Partnership

– Alistair Hamilton

The Seafood Development Partnership is a unique collaboration between the government, the fishermen and the fish processing companies ensuring that every fish landed is of the highest quality standard possible. It is now underway under the supervision of Alastair Hamilton.

The project aims to drive quality upwards and has three main projects:

## ***Training and Certification of the catching sector***

We offer a mentoring service for skippers and crew that want to work towards accreditation under the Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme. This scheme confirms that fishing is being done in an environmentally sustainable way by qualified crew and that the product is being treated in line with today's food hygiene standards. Around 50% of the UK catch now comes from boats that are within the scheme and there is evidence of processors and supermarkets starting to demand that produce is caught to this standard.

There are currently five of the island's boats in the process of being certified. The Department are subsidising the cost by both providing the mentoring and sharing the cash cost of certification.

They are encouraging all skippers to become involved.

## ***Quality Assurance within the Fish Processing Sector***

The supermarkets and restaurants that we supply place ever increasing demands on processors to have in place business systems and checks that allow them to underwrite the quality, sustainability and origin of their product. The SDP is working with the processing companies on the Island to ensure that these standards are met.

## ***Developing the Market***

The Isle of Man has a premium product in the quality of its seafood. We are working to present that product at the top of the market, yielding a high return for those in the industry and developing a perception of Isle of Man Seafood as a product that is sought after.

If you want to contact Alastair please call **07624 375515**.



## **Market Update** – Tim Croft, Island Seafare

The scallop fishery is now well underway after a weather interrupted start. The quality in most areas is now improving allowing us to offer a respectable product to market. The factories are going full tilt to ensure all customers' demands for Christmas are satisfied. The market for queen scallops has seen some increase in demand mainly due to a production shortage in South America, we are now using this opportunity to strengthen our product placing and brand to make sure we retain the market when their fishery improves.

The dates are set for the 2011 Queenie Festival are 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> July and the trawler race will take place, weather permitting on July 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Would you believe Island Seafare is 20 years old in February next year? It's a long time since we set up in Peel at Moore's kipper house with supplies from Billy, Melvin and Chris Crossman. I believed in the industry then and still do today, whilst directions and regulations have changed I feel it is much more united through fisherman, processor and government and can only go from strength to strength.

# Satellite monitoring / VMS terminals

There have been a number of vessel purchases / sales in the past year and a few more in the pipeline. The following articles are reproduced (with permission) from the AST newsletter (Applied Satellite Technology Ltd.).

Please note it is a currently a legal requirement for all vessels over 15m and any vessel wishing to fish for scallops or queenies within the Isle of Man Territorial Sea, to be fitted with an operational satellite tracking device.

## Change of vessel ownership

We have recently been experiencing problems keeping track of ownership when vessels are being sold. Without up to date information and accurate records you may receive invoices that do not belong to you or backdated invoices that you were not expecting.

In the event of the sale or purchase of a vessel please can you follow the below procedure (as described in your Agreement for Vessel Monitoring System (VMS)):

### When Selling a Vessel

Please notify AST (*and the Department*) in writing as soon as a date of sale is agreed. The letter should be addressed to 'AST Marine Sciences' at the address shown below. To assist in speeding up the change-over process the letter should contain:

- Vessel Name
- Vessel PLN number
- Current Owner's name
- Date of sale
- New owners name, address and contact telephone number

A faxed copy of the letter is sufficient, but it must contain the signature of the current owner or their nominated representative.

### When Purchasing a Vessel

Please notify AST (*and the Department*) to obtain a new Agreement for Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and direct debit Mandate for the vessel you have purchased (assuming the original owner has informed us of the sale). Both documents should be completed, signed and returned to the Department who will forward them to AST Marine Sciences, as soon as possible.

PLEASE NOTE: the original owner of the vessel remains liable for any airtime charges until the forms are received back by AST Marine Sciences.

To Contact AST please call 01493 440011

## Powering Down VMS Terminals & Correct Use of In-Port Button

The VMS Unit must be powered down correctly when the vessel is in port or it will enter 'Sleep Mode' and continue to report every 2 hours until the vessel sails again, which may result in higher than usual airtime bills.

### The correct power-down sequence is as follows:

When in port, press and hold the green 'In-Port' button' for 5 seconds, wait 5 minutes, then power down the VMS Unit.

The VMS Unit should be installed on its own circuit breaker and should be powered down separately each time the vessel comes into port. If the VMS Unit is not powered down following the above sequence the unit will enter 'Sleep Mode' and start to report every 2 hours until the correct power down sequence is followed, or until the vessel sails again.

### For the VMS Unit to operate and report correctly it must be powered on again before sailing:

Please Note: If the VMS Unit is powered down while at sea the unit will send a 'power-down' report and will then continue to report every 2 hours.

## MOB Guardian

If your vessel is due to be out of the water for long periods of time please contact the RNLI and advise them. This will help the RNLI Operations room identify why your vessel is not generating reports and save them from contacting you unnecessarily. If any of your contact or emergency numbers change, or the vessel has been sold with the MOB Guardian kit onboard, please advise the RNLI to enable them to update their records, please call 01202 66314

