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PFA and Cefas maximise collaboration through signed MoU

THE HAGUE (NL) / LOWESTOFT/WEYMOUTH (UK)

Today's fishing landscape requires close cooperation between commercial fishing industries and scientific organisations, as sharing data between the fishing sector and scientists is crucial in achieving the common goal of managing fish stocks responsibly and keeping them sustainable.

To further maximise this approach, the Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association (PFA) and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU outlines how both organisations will work together to benefit from their mutual interests in scientific surveys, stock assessment and ecological research of pelagic stocks and its application to sustainable fisheries management.

This collaboration marks a new significant step forward in combining industry-leading data with world-leading scientific marine research:

- Knowledge sharing on pelagic science issues and priorities - so that options on how the industry and Cefas can work together to address them can be considered.
- Identifying and developing new collaborative research – engaging in research initiatives that are consistent and mutually beneficial with respect to PFA scientific aspirations, Cefas and PFA knowledge and Cefas' Science & Evidence Strategy.
- Fostering continuous improvement in pelagic fish stock data gathering, data analyses and assessment – application of new data, knowledge and development of future methods.

PFA Chief Science Officer Dr. Niels Hintzen stresses the importance of good collaboration between the fishing industry and scientists:

"This MoU is a way to show that we want to build a strong working relationship between the pelagic industry and Cefas in sharing data and information. As PFA, we know how important the data and insights of fishers at sea are for research programmes. Fishers, by nature, have a first-hand understanding of fish stocks and, in collaboration with scientists, can share this insight for the benefit of scientific research. We are therefore proud to be recognised once more as a solid partner when it comes to providing knowledge on the marine environment and data on fish and fisheries."

On behalf of Cefas, Dr Richard D.M. Nash says he looks forward to further and intensified cooperation with the pelagic sector:

"Collaboration between industry and scientific research laboratories is very important for being able to gain new insights into the biology, ecology, assessment, and advice for pelagic fish stocks. This MoU provides an exciting opportunity and way forward for the PFA and Cefas to work openly and collaboratively together on enhancing our knowledge and understanding of pelagic fish stocks."

Phil Haslam, Managing Director of North Atlantic Fishing Company (NAFCO), and a member of the PFA from the UK, highlights the benefits of the commitment the pelagic industry is making to professional scientific collaboration:

“As a responsible operator in the pelagic catching sector, we are reliant upon accurate and well informed scientific data to assure that the evidence provided to underpin fisheries policy and management decisions is the best available. We recognise that we can contribute to this endeavour with our comprehensive catch data and we are delighted that the MoU has been signed to ensure that we can continue to provide high quality, sustainable, low CO₂ pelagic fish for human consumption while operating within environmental limits.”

About the PFA

The Pelagic Freezer Trawler Association (PFA) represents the interests of 8 pelagic freezer trawler companies from six countries across Europe, operating a combined fleet of eighteen vessels. The PFA is committed to maintaining a sustainable fishery for pelagic fish stocks, and collaboration with science and research is integral to achieving this aim.

About Cefas

Cefas, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Science, is an Executive Agency of Defra (the UK Government’s Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Through innovative solutions and world leading applied science we work to ensure a sustainable future for our rivers, seas and the ocean, supporting healthy and productive marine and freshwater ecosystems. For more information visit www.cefas.co.uk or linktr.ee/cefasgovuk for our social media, blogs, newsletter and more.

About NAFCO

North Atlantic Fishing Company Limited was established in the UK in 1984. With a home port of Hull in the North East of England, they operate a fleet of three British registered pelagic freezer-trawlers.

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Information not for publication

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