

LOBSTER SELF-SAMPLING SCHEME

We are now ready to begin the lobster self-sampling scheme and are looking for willing volunteers. It is hoped that the scheme will initially run for a 1 year period.

I think you are all aware that the reason for implementing this scheme was down to the responses received from fishermen when we consulted on bringing in a maximum landing size for lobsters – it appeared that the data being collected as part of the stock assessment and what the fishermen were reporting in their area did not match up. This scheme will allow fishermen to report on a regular basis and provide us with a much greater set of data from around Shetland.

As part of the scheme you will be provided with 2 different sized sets of stainless steel calipers, waterproof paper, clipboards and mechanical pencils. You will be asked to measure the lobsters and note the sex and whether or not they are berried. You will not be expected to weigh them nor measure any undersized (just note the number of undersized you put back as usual). Any data you collect can be sent into the office with your logsheets.

If data is collected like this then there will be no need for NAFC staff to be measuring lobsters in keep creels or when you are packing them at Christmas time, which is a busy time of year for you.

Marine Scotland are currently consulting on landing controls for the Scottish crab and lobster fisheries which includes bringing in a maximum landing size of 145mm for male lobsters and decreasing the maximum landing size of female lobsters to 145mm. We feel that the more data we have on our lobster stocks the better able we will be to successfully approach Marine Scotland to keep Shetland separate from any national legislation which may be brought in.

Please get in touch with either the SSMO office or with Kathryn Allan at the NAFC Marine Centre if you are willing to take part in this scheme.

Thank you.