

## MSC Audit Success

Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO) is pleased to announce that they have been successful in passing their annual Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification audit for their Brown Crab and King Scallop fisheries. These audits are carried out by independent assessors.

This sustainability accreditation is the only one for these fisheries in Europe so SSMO is considered nationally to be a leader in Inshore Fisheries Management – a big achievement for a small organisation.

This would not have been possible without the excellent scientific advice given by the NAFC Marine Centre in Scalloway. The scientists there carry out annual stock assessments upon which the SSMO Board of Directors base their decision making.

The NAFC Marine Centre stock assessment process has been audited by peer review this year – both by Dr Oliver Tully and Dr Guillermo Martin who are based at the Marine Institute of Ireland and by Dr Mike Bell, Heriot Watt University. Both reviews were very favourable.

SSMO Inshore Co-ordinator Carole Laignel said “SSMO has a Licensing Policy which, like all of their other policies, is reviewed annually.

“New entrant licensing rounds are held depending upon stock assessment advice.

“The directors also recently amended the licensing rules to allow new entrants in through the route of succession. This is a process whereby a fisherman who is retiring out of the industry can add someone onto their licence and once this person has been named on the licence for a set period of time they are able to take over the vessel and the SSMO licence.

“This has been very successful with 15 fishermen entering through this method in the last few years and another 5 en route to do so this year. The route of succession is a way whereby younger entrants can get into the fishery and which also allows existing vessels to remain in the local fleet.”

SSMO was granted the legal right to sustainably manage commercial shellfish fisheries out to the 6 nautical mile limit by the Shetland Islands Regulated Fishery (Scotland) Order 1999. The SSMO work closely with Marine Scotland and the Order requires them to keep the Scottish Ministers advised of any changes to their rules and regulations.