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FISHING NEWS

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NEW REPORT LOOKS AT VITAL NEXT STEPS TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE FISHING

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Fleetwood inshore fishermen fight for survival

Inshore fishermen at Fleetwood held a public meeting followed by a flotilla demonstration last week, to raise public awareness of the impact that DONG Energy's latest wind farm, the Walney extension project, will have on their traditional fishing patterns, reports **David Linkie**.

DONG Energy has requested an exclusion zone that would involve the local fleet remaining tied up without any fishing activity for the whole of 2017, to ensure that planned work, including running cables along the south side of Lune Deep, is not impeded by fishing activity.

Fleetwood Commercial Fishermen's Group (FCFG) claims that the area in question is fished by all the



▲ Fleetwood inshore boats came together last week to demonstrate against DONG Energy's proposed extension to the Walney wind farm. (Photograph courtesy of Granville Child Photography).

◀ The Fleetwood inshore trawler **Mi Amor** files a banner stating 'Wind farm projects taking over traditional fishing grounds!' during the demonstration held on Tuesday 23 August. (Photograph courtesy of Granville Child Photography).

local vessels and makes up at least 80% of their fishing grounds.

FCFG spokesman **Will Bamber**, skipper/owner of **Mary Oakley** and a fifth-generation Fleetwood fisherman, told *Fishing News*: "Unless something better is offered, this could be the end of us. This extension to the wind farm means the company needs to lay cables under the sea bed from the turbines. They have told us they

want us to stay out of the whole area during 2017. The problem is that this extension covers key fishing grounds. There's nowhere else for us to go.

"The offer of only £750 in disturbance payments for each of the 10 inshore boats which fish from Fleetwood, in recompense for being denied access to key grounds that for decades have been of vital importance to us, could well be the

death knell sounding on what is left of Fleetwood's inshore fishing industry.

DONG Energy argues that only a small handful of up to 100 fishermen in the Irish Sea have a problem with the deal being offered – and the company maintains that there are other areas in which Fleetwood fishermen can fish while the work is carried out.

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REGIONAL NEWS

North Sea MSC herring attracts high demand

The brief harvest of North Sea summer herring moved into top gear last week, when skippers reported a good spread of marks from north of Fair Isle and Orkney, south to the Turbot Bank off Aberdeen, reports **David Linkie**.

Catches of top-quality MSC-accredited herring are attracting high levels of international demand, particularly from Japan.

Processors are reported to be paying between £650-£700 per tonne for some shots; almost double the prices on offer 12 months ago.

The higher prices are welcome news for skippers and their crews, some of which made only their second pelagic landing of the year last week after being tied up since early February.

The majority of midwater trawlers from Shetland and north-east Scotland crossed the North Sea last week to land to processors in either Norway or Denmark, before returning to the grounds, when some vessels are expected to completed their annual quota of North Sea herring.

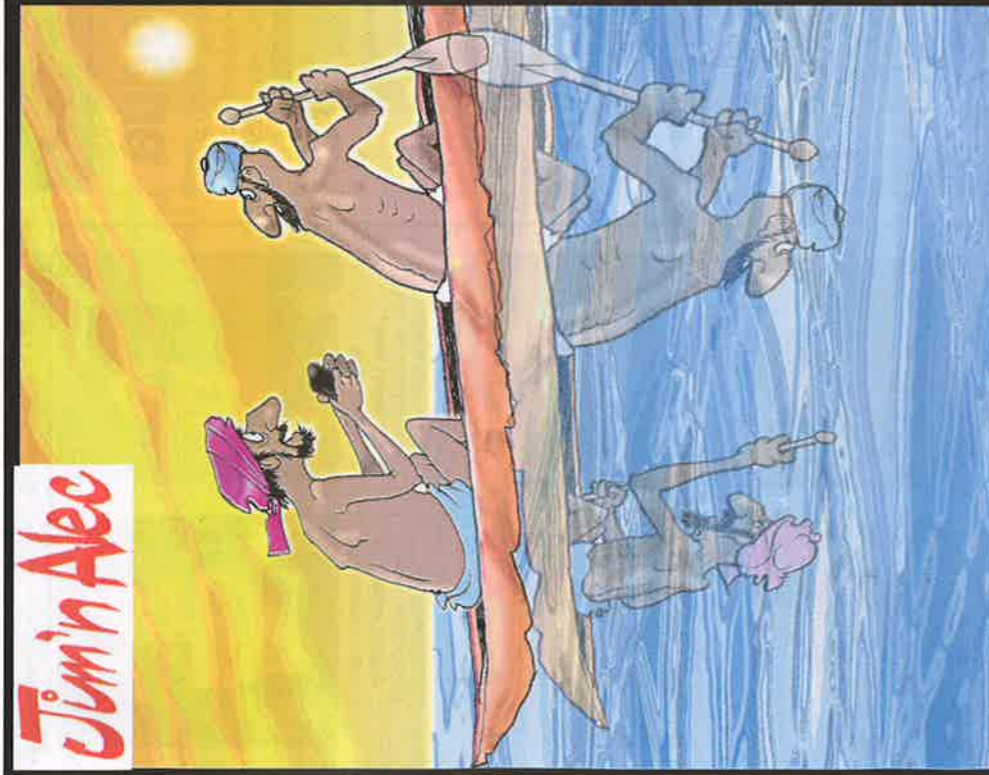
Next week's *Fishing News* will include a special feature on the **Whalsay** midwater trawler **Adenia** in action, including pumping pelagic fish over the stern.



▲ The Shetland midwater trawler **Adenia** taking fish onboard north of Orkney last week.

◀ MSC-accredited herring flow down the delivery chutes into Adenia's RSW tanks.

REGIONAL NEWS



"It's a Prince Charles thanking us for our ISU catch data input, but asking us if we'd consider cutting back on our 'days at sea'?"

Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association showcases scientific work on social media

The Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association (SPFA) has launched a new Facebook page to highlight how the association is working with scientists to support the sustainability of pelagic fisheries.

Created by the SPFA's new chief scientific officer, Dr Steven Mackinson, the Facebook platform will aid in the communication with the fishing industry and other interested parties, regarding the broad sweep of scientific work being undertaken by the association.

The initial content is focusing on an industry-led

survey currently underway on the status of the West of Scotland herring stock, and includes video clips of some of the sampling work being undertaken.

Dr Mackinson said: "There is often much mystery shrouding the techniques used in marine science and the challenges encountered. Our aim is to shed light on this scientific work by providing relevant information on our Facebook page in an informative and easily accessible manner."

The Facebook page can be viewed at www.facebook.com/SPFAScience.



Sampling West Coast of Scotland herring.



The Fleetwood inshore fleet lie together against the backdrop of wind turbines that threaten their existence. (Photograph courtesy of Granville Child Photography).

Fleetwood inshore fishermen fight for survival

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Will Bamber continued, "No fair compensation for this has been offered to the fishermen who rely on the industry and the local fishing grounds to pay their bills and feed their families. Organisations, companies, and the people who should represent the industry are failing us."

"This is something we have been involved in talks with since February. We kept quiet until last week because we hoped we could sort things out with DONG Energy ourselves; we have tried to liaise with them but unfortunately we have not got anywhere. Things have become very bad and at our last group meeting we decided it was time to go public.

There are guys here talking about selling up, and they're going to have to either find

a new job, take early retirement, or move out completely. It's very upsetting for all of us."

Fleetwood MP Cat Smith, who attended the public meeting, said: "I will be making representations on behalf of the fishermen to try and ensure they get the right deal which will enable them to continue. I am behind the fishermen. Their livelihoods are at stake and must be protected."



'Decisions being made without consulting local fishermen' is the clear message displayed on skipper Will Bamber's static gear boat, Mary Oakley. (Photograph courtesy of Granville Child Photography).

DONG Energy
A DONG Energy spokesman said: "In preparation for the offshore construction work on the Walney Extension wind farm off the coast of Cumbria, DONG Energy has held positive discussions with groups representing around 100 local fishermen. Where applicable, these talks cover appropriate disturbance payments for any loss of catch, or other cost, that can be demonstrated to result from the construction work.

"Unfortunately, we have so far not been able to come to a mutually acceptable arrangement with a small number of fishermen who have rejected the terms offered. The construction work will not affect their entire fishing area. It will simply require them to keep a safe distance from a narrow strip of sea while survey and construction work for the export cable of the wind farm takes place."

"We hope to reach an amicable evidence-based settlement with the FCFG group in the near future."



Will Bamber.

Fleetwood Commercial Fishermen's Group

FCFG spokesman Will Bamber said: "Both the public meeting and flotilla protest went well for us, and we want to thank all involved, especially our local MP Cat Smith and all the local public who turned out to support us.

"We now believe that the local public are more aware of the fishing tradition we are fighting to maintain, and how our aim is threatened by DONG Energy's latest wind farm, the Walney extension project, and, in particular, the cable route section of the project and if required, UXO clearance."

"The public meeting gave us the chance to show the local public what we are up against, and the likely outcome this could have on Fleetwood's remaining fishing fleet."

"The flotilla protest's main aim was to make people aware that Fleetwood does still have a working inshore fleet, despite claims being made otherwise, and that the Walney extension will impact on fishing activity. The flotilla of boats showed that we are here, we are united, and we will not go away. We will continue to try and achieve a fair deal with DONG Energy and believe we have more than enough evidence and data to back up our claims. The banners displayed expressed our main concerns."

Rare blue lobster caught off East Devon

Two Devon fishermen have caught a very rare, bright blue lobster off the East Devon coast, reports **Martin Johns**.

The unusually-coloured creature was caught by Keith Setter who was potting from a small beach launched boat off Ladram Bay, near Exmouth, along with Robin Carter who is also a director of the well-known Waterdance empire of beam trawlers and netters.

Keith Setter said: "I have been fishing in Ladram Bay



The distinctively-coloured lobster caught in Ladram Bay. (Photograph courtesy of Nick Irving).