

Socio-economics of the Yorkshire Coast Inshore Fishing Fleet.**Progress report.**

Almost all the data required for this study has now been collected and transferred to a database in preparation for analysis which will begin in earnest shortly. Data has been collected from fishermen and tourists within the geographical area of this study, whilst information from merchants is currently the only area of this study yet to be undertaken. It is expected that all information will be collected by the beginning of July. In addition, a literature review on recreational bass angling has been completed, as agreed with Alex Smith of the ICZM group.

To date, 32 fishermen questionnaires have been completed by face to face interviews with skippers from six towns along the Yorkshire coast, these being Whitby, Scarborough, Filey, Bridlington, Hornsea and Withernsea. Interviews with fishermen from Flamborough have been arranged and will be undertaken shortly. These 32 vessels represent 68 fishermen who are employed directly by the fishing industry in these areas. All of the skippers questioned indicated that their crew were local, suggesting benefits to the local communities both socially and economically, both through direct employment of local individuals and also by the wages these individuals will spend locally.

Preliminary examination of the data suggest that fishermen wages range from less than minimum wage to over £30 000, with skippers earning more than crew in many cases, although as yet the correlation between port, boat size and earnings has not been analysed fully. This will be examined in greater detail in the analysis of responses to be undertaken shortly.

The majority of the vessels in the survey fall into the 10m or under category, with only 1 vessel measuring over 15m. Skippers were also asked to provide information about the type of vessel they used (e.g. cobble, mini-keel) along with the Kw of their engine, and examination of this data will hopefully yield valuable information about any relationship between vessel size, power and earnings. In addition, skippers were asked to supply information on the type and amount of gear they used, along with prices for replacement gear. Once fully analysed, it is hoped any differences between

gear used at different ports and the costs incurred will become clear, and the total expenditure by fishermen on their equipment will be available.

Many of those questioned have been very interested in the study and have answered the majority of the questions fully and frankly. Most of the fishermen questioned indicate that were they to replace their vessel within the next 10 years they would get another inshore vessel, suggesting that they believe in the viability of the inshore sector in the short- to mid-term. However, almost all those questioned indicated there would be some difficulty in obtaining crew, whilst most respondents indicated it would have been easier to find crew 10 years ago.

The majority of respondents also indicated that the bulk of their catch (90-100%) was sold to local merchants or selling agencies, producing further benefit to the local economies. It is hoped this link can be further examined once interviews with these merchants have been completed.

These responses indicate a very brief overview of the data collected from fishermen to date, and much more detailed information will be available as further analysis on the responses is completed.

In addition to the questionnaire completed by fishermen (where 32 fishermen have each answered in excess of 30 questions) information has been collected by face-to-face interviews with tourists in the 7 towns within the study area, in an attempt to discover the way people view the fishing industry along the Yorkshire coast. It is hoped this information may be useful in determining the value of the fishing industry to tourists visiting coastal towns along the Yorkshire coast, by analysing responses to questions on how important visitors feel seeing fishing vessels are to their holiday and by examining how much individuals have spent on seafood during their visit. In total, each participant was asked 24 questions, and the majority of these responses have now been placed in a database ready for examination. In order to obtain a sufficient sample for analysis over 400 face-to-face interviews with tourists, along with a smaller number of locals, have been collected.

The only remaining section of the study still to be undertaken involves interviews with local merchants, and it is hoped this will be completed in the near future. The data collected here will aim to show how many people are employed in the sector on shore, and should hopefully indicate the economic benefits to communities provided by these employers. Questions will also be asked to discover the quantities of seafood landed at, handled by and distributed by these businesses in an attempt to gain a clearer understanding of the financial impacts of the inshore fishing fleet.

It is hoped that a detailed and exhaustive analysis of the results obtained from fishermen, merchants and tourists will yield valuable information which will show more clearly the true social and economic benefits of the inshore fishing fleet. It is hoped all analysis will be completed by September 2004.