



Kilkeel Seafoods: Part of the UK's largest scampi producer

One of the more exciting things to happen in the fishing industry in Northern Ireland in recent years is the procurement of Middleton Seafoods and Rockall Seafoods, both in Kilkeel, County Down, by the North Yorkshire scampi producer, Whitby Seafoods, consolidating these into Kilkeel Seafoods, and in the process creating over 30 new jobs in the town.



Parent company Whitby Seafoods was founded by Graham Whittle 30 years ago in Whitby after raising funds to buy the premises of the then defunct Whitby Shellfish Company. Over the last ten years, Whitby Seafoods has sourced increasingly large volumes of langoustine from Kilkeel, Co. Down. The reasons for increasing the company's capacity in Northern Ireland were two-fold: firstly the County Down coast has some of the best *Nephrops norvegicus* beds in the British Isles and secondly Kilkeel has a skilled labour force, with many workers having decades of experience in the seafood industry. Kilkeel now supplies about 50% of *Nephrops* tails used by Whitby Seafoods to produce their famous scampi.



Dan Whittle, son of the founder Graham, and Managing Director of Kilkeel Seafoods (pictured overleaf), is passionate about getting the freshest, highest quality *Nephrops* from the quayside. *Nephrops* tails are frozen using state-of-the-art equipment, within hours of landing thereby ensuring Kilkeel Seafood scampi tails are the best on the market.

Kilkeel Seafoods' ongoing investment in state-of-the-art equipment, infrastructure and facilities demonstrate the company's commitment to the Northern Irish seafood industry and confidence in the future.

The company is passionate about ensuring sustainability of *Nephrops*, the species used to make their delicious scampi. *Nephrops* are commercially the most important species to the UK fishing industry. As part of the Whitby Seafoods group, Kilkeel Seafoods, work with fishermen, scientists and organisations such as Seafish and the Marine Conservation Society to ensure the best information is made available to policy makers to ensure a sustainable and profitable *Nephrops* fishery for future generations and long term sustainability of their business and the fishing boats which rely on Kilkeel Seafoods.



What is scampi?

Believe it or not, 'What is scampi?' is the second most popular question on Google!

Scampi is battered or breaded langoustine tail. The scientific name for langoustine is *Nephrops norvegicus* and they are also known as a Norway lobster or a Dublin Bay prawn. All langoustine tails processed by Kilkeel Seafoods are caught by fishing boats working in British and Irish waters.

Whitby Seafoods scampi can be found in a variety of outlets from Waitrose, ASDA, Tesco, Morrisons and Sainsburys and pubs and restaurants such as Greene King, Punch and Brewers Fayre

Uncertainties around future fishing quotas for *Nephrops* and variability in oil prices can have a dramatic effect on the cost of fishing. This creates challenges for Dan in running Kilkeel Seafoods however he says: "I represent the second generation in the family business, and I hope in about 30 years time to be able to pass that business on to a third generation. I am sure that if we are focused on finding a way through all these uncertainties, then there will be a sound business to hand on."



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Supporting a profitable, sustainable
and socially responsible future for
the seafood industry.