Fishers at the forefront of sustainable fisheries

6th World Fisheries Congress
Sustainable Fisheries in a Changing World

Michael Park, Chief Executive, SWFPA Ltd
The Scottish Industry

- Three main sectors: Demersal whitefish, Shellfish and Pelagic
- £435 million - The total value of sea fish landed by Scottish vessels in 2010
- 2,153 - The number of active fishing vessels based in Scotland at the end of 2010
- 5,218 - The number of fishermen employed on Scottish fishing vessels at the end of 2010
The Scottish Industry

- Nine main Associations representing fishers
- Associations operate collectively under the banner of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)
- A number of focus groups and committees facilitate a bottom up approach
- Fisheries Management and Conservation Group (FMAC) - Stakeholders and Government in a formal group delivering joined up approaches and regional policy
A change in Approach

- Tradition continues to deliver a centralised command and control approach to managing our fisheries
- Overly simplistic solutions to complex issues, such as cod recovery, has led to unintended consequences and unnecessary hardship
- Transformed into *push factors*, the old fashioned approach has produced some very ambitious direction change from Scottish fishers
A change in Approach

- **Push factors** – FMAC trade Seasonal and Real Time Closures to protect spawning aggregations of cod in return for additional effort
- Imaginative gear design – Reducing the capture of cod by around 60% and the capture of juveniles by a similar amount
- **Fully Documented Fisheries (FDF)** - Developing national systems of opportunity management that transfers responsibility and accountability to fishers
A change in Approach

- Approaches that incentivises business to develop in a positive way
- The traditional response of resistance has been overtaken by positive action and creativity – an open mind approach with a vision on the medium to long-term
- Key words in our development: Awareness, understanding, commitment, energy and focus
A change in Approach

- **Pull factors** – Market awareness, an understanding of the requirement for sustainable fisheries - MSC certification
- Delivering change for a better future – fishers have a vision that sensible management equals freedom to roam – a return to the golden years
- Successful business requires stability and the ability to plan for the long term
- Coastal and island communities are very much dependent on a well managed fishery and prosperous industry
Learning from our mistakes

- Commercial fishing is an activity that largely remains unseen – a loss of respect for the system leads to a fundamental breakdown in compliance

- Detached, uncaring governance precipitates anarchic behaviour

- Our experience has shown that stocks and the wider ecosystem will be protected if fishers are afforded both the time and incentives to deliver change

- Retrospective understanding will show that current change is as significant as the move from sail to steam to diesel and from line fishing and drift net to trawl and pair trawl
“Our major obligation is not to mistake slogans for solutions”.  ~Edward R. Murrow