

# Local Fisheries Management in Shetland

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# Shetland

- ◆ Most northerly part of the UK
- ◆ Population ~ 23,000



- ◆ Peripheral location, few natural resources
- ◆ At the heart of rich fishing grounds
- ◆ Fishing has underpinned Shetland's economy throughout history
- ◆ Large, modern fishing, aquaculture, and seafood processing industries
- ◆ Little potential for other significant, sustainable industries

***Fishing Still Matters !***

# Shellfish Fishing in Shetland

- ◆ Crabs, lobsters, scallops, etc.
- ◆ Small boat / inshore



# Shellfish Fisheries Management

## 1990s

### ◆ Little management

- > No quotas
- > No restrictions on gear
- > No limits on effort

(No Sea Fisheries Committees in Scotland)

### ◆ Steady increase in number of boats

### ◆ Growing local desire to gain some control of fishery

- > To prevent over-fishing / stock depletion

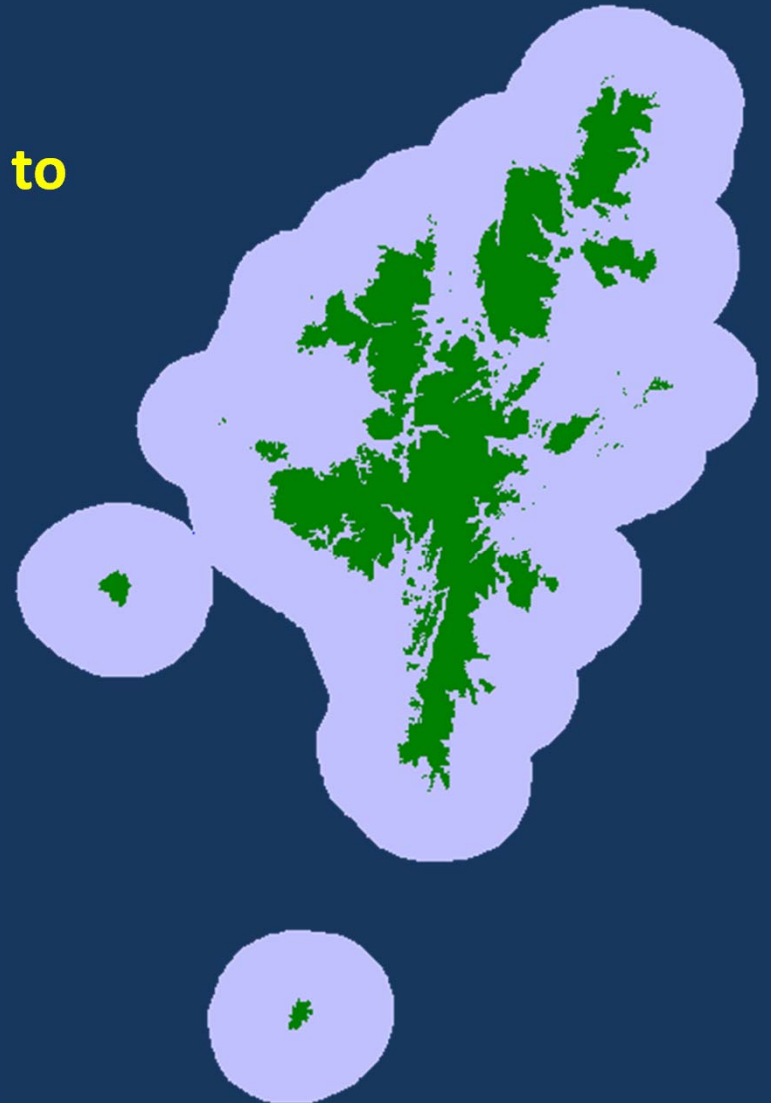
# Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation

- ◆ **Established to manage Shetland's shellfish fisheries**
  - > to ensure their long-term sustainability; and
  - > to ensure that the local community benefited from local fish stocks
- ◆ **A partnership of interested local parties:**
  - > Shetland Fishermen's Association
  - > Independent Fishermen
  - > Shetland Islands Council
  - > Shetland Association of Community Councils
  - > Processors/buyers

# Shetland Islands

## Regulated Fishery Order

- ◆ **Regulating Orders grant legal powers to manage shellfish fisheries**
- ◆ **Shetland Order**
  - > Crabs, lobsters, scallops, queen scallops, whelks, oysters, mussels, cockles, clams, and razorshells
  - > Low water mark to six mile limit (~6,000 km<sup>2</sup>)
- ◆ **Unique in Scotland**



# Shetland Islands

## Regulated Fishery Order

### Regulations in Force

- ◆ **Licensing Scheme** (Annually Renewable, non-transferable)
- ◆ **Vessel Size Limit** (17 metres)
- ◆ **Gear Limitations** (Max. 10 scallop dredges, 600/240 creels)
- ◆ **Prohibitions** (Hydraulic/suction dredges, 'French' dredges)
- ◆ **Size Limits** (Whelks, velvet crabs, lobsters)
- ◆ **Closed Seasons** (Velvet crabs)
- ◆ **Closed Areas** (Vulnerable habitats, closed to scallopers)

# Science

- ◆ Scientific advice provided by NAFC Marine Centre
- ◆ Partnership between scientists and fishermen
- ◆ Unique long-term data series:
  - > Landings data from fishermen's log-books
  - > Data collection by scientists on fishing vessels
  - > Fisheries surveys





# MSC Accreditation

- ◆ **Certified as sustainable, March 2012:**
  - > **Brown crabs & velvet crabs (creel fishery)**
  - > **King scallops (dredge fishery)**
- ◆ **First MSC certification of these fisheries, globally**
- ◆ **Now due for re-accreditation.**



# Conclusion

- ◆ Technically it has not changed but a management system has evolved and been refined over the years with changes in detail rather than any fundamental changes.
- ◆ Shetland Regulating Order has allowed the local community to successfully manage its own marine resources
- ◆ Could it serve as an example for other coastal communities in the UK ?