

# [£1.4m delivered to projects supporting sustainable fishing and fisheries science across the UK](#)

Eight [innovative new projects](#) that will support the UK's fishing industry to be more productive and sustainable have been awarded a share of £1.4 million, the government has announced today.

The funding is the first part of the £24 million earmarked from the [£100 million UK Seafood Fund](#) specifically for science and innovation projects – to invest in new technology, trial new gear and support world-class research.

One of the successful applicants announced today is a project trialling the use of kites and Looming Eye buoys to deter seabirds from diving into the water near to an operational fishery and getting caught up in the nets – an issue which is estimated to kill up to 400,000 seabirds worldwide each year. It's hoped the project will help to protect the UK's vital but threatened seabird populations, such as the Great Northern Divers, Black-throated Divers and Slavonian Grebes.

Another winning project will explore the use of artificial lights to change fish behaviour with a long term goal to look at more selective and sustainable ways of trawling for nephrops and squid, which can currently impact on other marine wildlife.

The £100 million UK Seafood Fund was launched to help level up coastal communities across the UK. Alongside the funding for science and innovation, it also includes a [£65 million infrastructure scheme](#) announced in December which will be made available for projects such as modernising ports and harbours, and a further £10 million to encourage new entrants into the processing, catching and aquaculture sectors, alongside training and upskilling current workers.

These schemes will ensure the industry and coastal communities are equipped to benefit from additional quota gained as a result of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) signed with the EU in 2020. Following our departure from the Common Fisheries Policy, there have been uplifts in quota for UK vessels, with the value of UK-EU fishing opportunities for the UK in 2021 totalling approximately £333 million.

Fisheries Minister, Victoria Prentis, said:

I am pleased to see the £100m UK Seafood Fund in action, backing the impressive wealth of talent and innovation in our fishing industry.

A sustainable fishing industry is essential if we are to ensure we have a healthy, thriving marine environment that is capable of

supporting our world-class industry long into the future.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Malcolm Offord said:

It's pleasing, but unsurprising, to see Scottish expertise at the heart of many of these projects receiving UK Government funding to boost innovation and sustainability in the UK fisheries sector.

Scotland's seafood, aquaculture and science sectors are world renowned and I look forward to continuing to work closely with them to ensure that this funding – and future allocations – drives the fishing industry to new heights and helps to deliver a sustainable and profitable future.

The funding has been awarded through the Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP) scheme, established to strengthen relations between industry and research organisations to promote world-class fisheries management. Today's investment is the first in a series of funding rounds that will see the fishing and seafood industry supported to work with scientists to research more productive and sustainable fishing gear and gather new data to more sustainably manage the UK's fish stocks. Applications for a second round of funding will open on Wednesday 2 March and run until 25 April.

This comes as the UK and Devolved governments call for views on the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS). The JFS sets out policies for achieving or contributing to the eight objectives outlined in the Fisheries Act 2020 which will help to achieve the UK's vision for clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse oceans and seas. Each of the eight FISP award winners have been chosen for their potential to meet one or multiple Fisheries Act objectives.

A second round of Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships funding opens on 2nd March and will remain open to applications until 25th April 2022.

Funding awarded includes:

- Over £274,000 to improve UK-wide data on catches of crab, lobster and whelks by using autonomous sampling systems on active fishing vessels, or at processing sites. The innovative project will also use image analysis technology to determine quantity, size and sex of shellfish catches to significantly improve our understanding of shellfish stocks and shape long-term sustainable fisheries management. The project will be delivered by Seafish, the Welsh Fishermen's Association, Western Fish Producers Organisation, Holderness Fishing Industry Group, Heriot Watt University, Bangor University and South Devon and Channel Shell fishermen Ltd.

- Almost £300,000 to support a healthy lobster and crab industry with a programme that will see creel mounted cameras deployed in fisheries in Holderness, Orkney and the Isle of Man. The project will look to develop a more accurate picture of population size. With FISP funding, the project will see the Holderness Fishing Industry Group, Orkney Sustainable Fisheries, Cefas, Heriot Watt University and Bangor University working collaboratively to deliver rigorous stock assessments.
- Almost £16,000 to address bycatch in gillnet fisheries, an issue which has been estimated to be responsible for the death of nearly 400,000 seabirds worldwide each year. The project will be delivered by Fishtek Marine, partnered with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Seafood And Eat It Processing Ltd and SeaScope Fisheries Research Ltd. The organisations will collectively develop a full research proposal that will lead to a systematic programme of bycatch monitoring and evaluation of deterrents designed to protect the UK's vital but threatened seabird populations, such as the Great Northern Divers, Black-throated Divers and Slavonian Grebes.
- Other selected projects include a programme to develop one or more full research proposals that will address the specific challenges facing the Celtic Sea demersal trawl mixed fisheries that will receive £19,000 in funding. A data collection project using bio-collectors to develop a more predictive stock assessment of inshore lobster fisheries has secured over £264,000 and a study of whelk, lobster and crab fisheries to understand wider impacts of fishing activity, including use of static gears, will receive almost £18,000.
- The first round of funding will also invest over £280,000 in a project that will explore the effectiveness of using artificial lights to change fish behaviour. Almost £248,000 will be provided to facilitate a major research project to address key barriers to improved assessment and management of whelk fisheries. The project aims to support sustainable management and assess the effectiveness and economic viability of alternatives to traditional whelk baits.

#### Further information:

- For a full list and information on the eight project winners, [please see here](#).
- The FISP Network, comprised of three fishing charities, has been set up to support fishers connect with scientists and jointly develop proposals. More information on this can be found here: FISHERIES ANIMATEUR ([fishinganimateur.co.uk](http://fishinganimateur.co.uk))
- All FISP projects are delivered in collaboration between the fishing and seafood industry and research organisations.
- (1) The incidental catch of seabirds in gillnet fisheries: A global

review', The incidental catch of seabirds in gillnet fisheries: A global review (fao.org)