

# Fishing Minister visits Peterhead

Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis experienced first-hand the outstanding work undertaken at the UK's largest fishing port during a two-day fact-finding trip to Peterhead.

The Ministerial visit started yesterday (Thursday, 11 March) with a tour of the [Macduff Shellfish](#) factory, where Director of Sustainability & Public Affairs, Andrew Brown, provided an overview of how wild scallops, langoustines, crabs and whelks are handled at Europe's largest shellfish processing facility.

Minister Prentis then spoke to traders while touring Peterhead's buzzing fish market, and visited the UK's largest white fish and pelagic fishing port, accompanied by Peter Duncan, Business Development Manager for [Peterhead Port Authority](#) and [David Duguid](#), Scottish Conservative MP for Banff and Buchan.

The visit provided the opportunity for a wide-ranging discussion with key stakeholders, including Elspeth MacDonald, Chief Executive of the [Scottish Fishermen's Federation \(SFF\)](#) and J Johnston, and Jimmy Buchan from the [Scottish Seafood Association \(SSA\)](#).

Minister Prentis heard more about the sector's top priorities, and explored how the Scottish fishing and seafood industries can take every advantage of the opportunities available as we become an independent coastal state.

Fisheries Minister, Victoria Prentis, said:

As the new Fisheries Minister, I am absolutely delighted that I was able to visit Peterhead and meet organisations such as the SFF and SSA to hear about the important contribution of the seafood sector to this vibrant community, and to the UK economy at large.

Peterhead is at the very heart of the Scottish seafood and fishing industry – it's one of the most versatile ports in the UK and one that is very ambitious about its future. As we become an independent coastal state, it is my priority to ensure that our fishing industry is set to thrive in the years to come.

Elspeth Macdonald, Chief Executive at the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said:

Hearing the Minister reiterate the UK Government's position about securing the Sea of Opportunity outside of the Common Fisheries Policy was very welcome.

There is much to do over the coming months to deliver this, and the SFF is committed to working closely with both the UK and Scottish Governments to achieve this for the benefit of our businesses and communities.

The visit offered the opportunity for Minister Prentis to reiterate the UK Government's strong commitment to the fishing industry in Scotland and across the whole of the UK.

The UK Government has already confirmed that funding supported by the European Maritime Fisheries Fund will be guaranteed. In addition, it has allocated an additional £37.2 million to support the industry as we transition out of the EU and [committed to funding for four domestic grant schemes](#) across the UK from 2021 onwards.

Scotland is also one of the greatest beneficiaries of the [Seafood Innovation Fund](#). In the first round of applications, over 50% of the fund were awarded to aquaculture R&D projects in the nation, a total investment of nearly £1.8 million. The second round is currently open for applications.

Leaving the EU means that Scotland, and the other Devolved Administrations, will see a significant increase in the decision-making powers in fisheries, and for protecting the marine environment. This ambition is enshrined in the Fisheries Bill, along with the opportunity to design our own domestic fishing policy, one that is catered to support our coastal communities best.

The visit coincides with the launch of a new seafood campaign led by Defra and Seafish. ["Sea for Yourself"](#) aims to showcase the varieties of seafood caught in UK waters, and provides consumers suggestions to best enjoy less known, but equally tasty and versatile seafood species. The campaign is one of the latest government initiative to support the fishing industry in Britain as we leave the Common Fisheries Policy and become an independent coastal state.

Minister Prentis concluded her visit with a tour of Mill of Crimond farm in Fraserburgh, and a meeting with representatives of NFU Scotland, including President Andrew McCornick, and David Duguid MP. The group discussed the opportunities and challenges ahead for the industry.