



For release: 19/11/09

## Fishing for Litter Widens Its Net

**Fishermen across South Devon are being invited to sign up to the pioneering Fishing For Litter scheme as it gets underway in the ports of Brixham and Plymouth this week.**

The initiative was praised by Hilary Benn The Secretary of State for the Environment, during his visit to Newlyn earlier this year when he spent time with local skippers involved in the project, listening to their concerns regarding marine litter and its impact on the fishing industry. The project has been operational in Newlyn since March 2009 and aims to provide additional facilities for fishermen in the ports of Looe, Newquay and Appledore.

Despite many initiatives, marine litter remains one of the most significant problems affecting the marine environment. 20,000 tonnes of litter is dumped into the North Sea alone every year.

Fishing For Litter provides vessels with large bags to collect marine litter caught in their nets. When full, these bags are deposited safely on the quayside, the waste is then moved to a secure container ready for disposal at a site regulated by the Environment Agency. The project is designed to recover marine litter whilst raising awareness of the detrimental impact such waste can have on the marine environment.

**Pete Bromley, Sutton Harbour Master and Fisheries Manager said; "Sutton Harbour Fisheries are totally committed to the South West Fishing industry and as such are happy to support the 'Fishing for Litter' scheme which clearly demonstrates a responsible approach to the environment and a determination to continue to develop a sustainable regional fishery".**

Items commonly caught in fishing nets and trawls include pieces of plastic and polythene, rope and cord, nets, bottles, rubber, metals and textiles. If not recovered, all these items would eventually end up on our seabed or littering the region's beaches and shoreline.

Supported by the Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committee and funded by The Marine and Fisheries Agency, The Environment Agency, Cornwall Council, The Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation, The Crown Estate, Duchy of Cornwall, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Natural England, the project forms part of the Fishing for Litter network run by KIMO, an international organisation of local authorities working to tackle marine pollution and environmental issues.

**Chair of Torbay Council's Harbour Committee, Councillor Robert Horne said: "Brixham is on the crest of the wave with this conservation initiative. As well as being harmful to marine life, litter can pose a serious risk by causing entanglement or breakdown of vessels at sea.**

**"I am urging Brixham fisherman to join us in this campaign and preserve the marine environment. We must all work together to create a sustainable future for the next generation of fishermen."**

Fishermen working out of Brixham and Plymouth wishing to join the scheme should contact Sarah Crosbie, Project Officer on 01736 364324 or their Harbour Office for more information. Visit [www.fishingforlitter.org](http://www.fishingforlitter.org)

*Ends*

**Image:**

Caption: Fishing For Litter Project Officer Sarah Crosbie with litter collected by fishing boats signed up to the scheme

**Media opportunity:**

The media are invited to attend a photo opportunity at Brixham quay at 12 Noon. Please meet at the security gate. Assistant Director of Marine Services, Paul Labistour and Sarah Crosbie from Fishing For Litter South West will both be present. For further information please contact:

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**Notes to editors:**

The South West project is based upon Fishing for Litter Scotland which has been in operation for over 3 years. Scotland's fishermen, from 16 major ports and from over 110 vessels, have removed over 200 tonnes of litter. Fishing for Litter South West is coordinated by Sarah Crosbie, Seafood Cornwall Training Ltd. 50 The Strand, Newlyn, Cornwall. The project was developed by KIMO. Email: [sarah@seafoodcornwalltraining.co.uk](mailto:sarah@seafoodcornwalltraining.co.uk) Tel: 01736 364324

**About KIMO:**

KIMO was founded by local municipalities with a shared concern for the state of the environment. KIMO is designed to give municipalities a political voice at the international level, to share best practice and to find solutions to marine political problems that affect coastal communities.

Fishing for Litter is an example of where this has been successful. The scheme, which encourages fishermen to take ashore litter they catch while fishing by providing the infrastructure required, has been acknowledged by United Nations Environment Programme as one of the tools to reduce marine litter. KIMO will continue to seek funding for projects in the future that will benefit the coastal communities that it represents.

Funders:



The Duchy of Cornwall



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