

## FISHERNET in Iceland - Project meeting and symposium in Iceland



*Humpback whale in Skjálfandi bay in northern Iceland ©Friðbjófur Helgason*

The FISHERNET project meetings in May 2010 will be held in Siglufjörður, Húsavík and Akureyri in northern Iceland and will also include study visits in Reykjavík. The venue for the symposium is Húsavík, a town internationally renowned for whale watching, its Whale Museum and the co-development of the two main industries, fishing and tourism, in and around the harbour area.

The symposium's theme on the 7th of May will be **Fishing Heritage and Conservation as a Cultural Resource in Times of Troubled Waters**. It will include presentations on the status and future prospects of maritime culture. Cultural heritage may be a major asset in local

*A view of Húsavík harbour ©Friðbjófur Helgason*

development and community viability, but this requires creative use of traditional knowledge and experience, to transform these into economic opportunities for the benefit of individuals and communities.

Study visits will include the Reykjavik Maritime Museum, a grassroots initiative involving a group working on the conservation of traditional Icelandic fishing boats in Reykjavík, and, in the north, the Herring Era Museum in Siglufjörður. Additionally in Akureyri we will be sailing on Húni II, one of the largest oak ships ever built in Iceland and the largest still in use.

### **Whales, Tourism & Traditional Activity**

The addition of whale watching into the coastal community of Húsavík (pop.

2,500) is perhaps a prime example of best practice in the constructive role of fishing heritage and culture. This is part of a wider project of economic development, conservation and dissemination of fishing cultural heritage. The new, seemingly alien, enterprise met a positive local response due to its contribution to the community economy and well-being. In addition it has been thoroughly integrated into, and presented as part of, the community's maritime culture, including the creation of settings which incorporate the use of salvaged old fishing boats and other elements of authenticity and local identity. In spite of the radical change in the method of using whales for local livelihoods, this new approach has not entailed a transformation of the cultural system but rather a successful merging of the new activities into existing patterns of culture and economy.

The Húsavík Whale Museum, originally a trial project, is a non-profit organization founded in 1997 with the primary aim of providing an educational component to summertime whale watching trips. Located in a former slaughterhouse it is also used as a venue for concerts and exhibitions.

For more information about the museum or whale watching trips visit the following links:

<http://www.whalemuseum.is/is/forsida/>  
<http://www.northsailing.is/>  
<http://www.gentlegiants.is/>  
<http://www.sild.is>  
<http://www.sjominjasafn.is>  
<http://www.huni.muna.is>



# FISHERNET

## European Network of Fishing Cultural Heritage

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### Sharing Strategy and Knowledge

On October 11<sup>th</sup> 2009 participants in the Fishernet project arrived in Honningsvåg (Norway) to take part in a seminar promoted by the Fishernet network, and hosted by its local partner, Museene for kystkultur og gjenreisning i Finnmark IKS (The Finnmark Fishing Culture and Reconstruction Museums).

The programme started with a short series of academic presentations about fishing culture and its valorization possibilities and methods. It continued with more very interesting talks about practical examples of activities (productive and non-productive) implemented throughout Norway. The core and common feature to all these presentations, combined with some study visits in Honningsvåg town was, of course, the recognition and use of, and benefits from the local fishing culture.

Hilde Andresen, representing the Norwegian programme for the valor-



*Foldalbruket was one of the fine examples discussed during the conference © Liv Jorunn Nyård*

ization of their lighthouses, congratulated the Galician delegation, as UNESCO has included the "Torre de Hér-

cules" (Hercule Tower, in A Coruña), in their list of World Heritage Sites in 2009. As the first lighthouse ever in the UNESCO list it symbolizes the importance and increased recognition of European maritime culture.

During the second day of the seminar, practical examples of valorization activities in different places in Europe were presented, followed by study visits throughout the Honningsvåg municipality and Tromsø.

Representatives from museums and administrations, project managers, tourism operators, sociologists, artists, geographers, and others learned, listened and worked with members of the network during these few intense days. This facilitated rich exchange and mutual learning about opportunities and methods for conserving fishing heritage, and its potential for local development.

**FISHERNET** is a three year project involving collaborators from six European countries. It aims to investigate best practices for collection and dissemination of fishing cultural heritage and to establish a network for ongoing development of fishing heritage opportunities and maintenance of fishing communities. This newsletter provides up-to-date information about the programme and fishing heritage issues.

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**VALORISATION** (verb): In a European Union context the term **valorisation** means sharing and trialling the innovative best practices resulting from projects. Using and benefiting from these and incorporating them into general training and learning experiences.

For full EC definition see [http://ec.europa.eu/dqs/education\\_culture/valorisation/doc/def\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dqs/education_culture/valorisation/doc/def_en.pdf)

### Fishernet in the European Parliament

On December 1<sup>st</sup> last year, the European Parliament and the DG MARE (Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) hosted a public hearing under the framework of activities of the Reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. Organisations and administrations from all coastal EU member states were invited to contribute on different

aspects relating to this reform and fishing activities.

One of the contributors was a representative from the Fishermen's Association of Lira, Galicia, the Fishernet coordinator. He introduced the network and emphasised the importance of including specific measures relating to the valorisation of cultural fishing heritage,

both for its cultural value per se and for its potential to support the sustainable development of fishing communities into the future.

This is the second time the Fishernet network has been presented to EU representatives. It was previously introduced at the European Maritime Day in Rome in May 2009.



*Lighthouses are an important aspect of cultural heritage ©Thorsten Henn*



«This bulletin does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors»



## Galician Government Disseminates Fishing Heritage Information

### *Encouraging consumption of fresh seafood*

The Galician Sea Ministry (a Fishernet member) implemented the “Mar Achega” project last year, by means of which people are shown traditional coastal fishing practices. The project has helped raise awareness about the specific characteristics of fisheries professions and the quality of their products.

In this pilot project one-day guided visits to fishing ports were provided for groups in October and November of 2009. Altogether there were ten tours, each involving 50 participants from inland Galician

areas, and eight ports were visited, one of these being a member of the Fishernet Project. During the tours the groups attended a fish auction and visited fishing and processing areas where they tasted fresh seafood and heard a presentation about local fishing cultural heritage.

The Ministry emphasised that the project objectives fully coincide with their priorities: *“in order to encourage the consumption of fish, it is essential to raise awareness about the product, and*

*the best way to achieve this is to bring consumers closer to the product and the reality of fishermen’s daily lives”.*

*Gathering coastal shellfish is a traditional activity@*



## Aquaculture

### *Cyprus*

Responding to over-exploitation of Cypriot wild fish stocks the government of Cyprus has developed aquaculture. It is hoped that this will boost fish stocks, meet the increasing demand for fish products and provide the Cypriot market with additional new fish products.

There are currently three main operational fish hatcheries in Cyprus, primarily stocking Guilthead Sea-bream (*Sparus aurata*) and European Sea-bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), and located 1-4 km offshore.

In 2008, total production of aquaculture-

related fishery products was 3600 tons, with an estimated value of 31 million Euros. Amazingly, aquaculture generates 70% of total fish production and value in Cyprus. Of the 3600 tons produced approximately 2400 tons were exported contributing to a total value of 25.5 mil-



*Off the shores of the British bases, fish farming provides new jobs but also creates controversy among local fishermen ©Natasa Xenophontos*

lion Euros. Additionally, development of aquaculture has provided new jobs for the Cypriot population, with an estimated 240 people employed in the aquaculture sector alone. The Department of Fisheries and Marine Research at the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment operates two aquaculture research stations at Kalopanagiotis and Meneou. At Meneou research has focussed on the potential for diversification in aquaculture through the breeding of new species such as the Cypriot Pagrus, Sea-bream, and Pandora, as well as on the development and refinement of reproductive methods.

## Adaptation to Changing Times in Orkney



Orkney’s fishing communities have proved very adaptable to the changing trends in fishing over past decades and centuries. Whaling and herring fishing were key activities for harbours such as Stromness during the 1800s and early 1900s. Creeling and potting for crabs and lobsters became increasingly popular during the 20<sup>th</sup> century as traditional net and line fisheries went into decline. In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century globalisation has created new market places for fisheries products from Orkney with shellfish such as swimming crabs and whelks now exported to

Europe and further afield. At the same time some of Orkney’s fish processors now work with imported as well as locally caught produce. Fishermen are also getting directly involved in stock management with, for example, the local lobster restocking scheme now funded through local support. Adaptation is clearly the key to success and it is hoped that Aquatera’s involvement in the Fishernet project will contribute to keeping the Orkney fishing community up to speed with the latest initiatives regarding past, present and future fishing heritage.

*Juvenile hatchery-raised lobster, before release to sea ©Northbay Shellfish Ltd.*

## Foldalbruket - From an inoperative fishing factory to merchandising coastal cultural history: coastal communities in transition

A good example of innovation and added value for well known aspects of coastal culture and businesses is undoubtedly the Foldal fishing factory (Foldalbruket) in Kjøllefjord in Finnmark, Norway. In the past, few would have believed that an old fish depot and fish factory would ever become a cultural centre including an arena for concerts and festivals, a living museum, a gallery and accommodation for tourists. It is an example of the novel utilisation of something that was once a part of daily life at the coast; today Foldalbruket spreads knowledge about coastal heritage. To find out more about Foldalbruket visit the webpage <http://www.foldal.net/>

Foldalbruket was built by Nils Foldal in 1912 and its main product for more than 70 years was stockfish. The factory and all its installations were burned down during the Second World War but have since been reconstructed. Production of stockfish, salted fish and cod-liver oil was resumed but market collapse resulted in both production and the buildings being



*Inside Foldalbruket, an old fish depot is now a cultural centre © Liv Jorunn Nyård*

abandoned. The local community discussed tearing down the ghost-like buildings, however a group of enthusiastic and dedicated people took the initiative of ensuring the preservation of the fac-

tory buildings, recognising them as an important aspect of our cultural history and heritage. Most of the restoration was achieved through grassroots and voluntary work.

## Saint Nicholas Patron saint of fishermen & sailors

Every year, on 6<sup>th</sup> December, the Orthodox Church celebrates the memory of St. Nicholas of Myra-Lychia, the Miracle maker, one of the most highly honoured Christian saints in Bulgaria. The popular name of this holiday is Nikulden

The commemoration of Saint Nicholas as a patron of fishermen and sailors emerged quite early in Bulgaria. According to popular belief he sails on a golden boat arriving wherever his miracle-making hand is needed.

On St. Nicholas Day the autumn fishing ends and fishermen used to divide amongst themselves their earnings of the season.

According to tradition, an icon of St. Nicholas must be built into any new boat constructed. It is believed that this will protect the boat from storms and winds. During storms at sea fishermen's wives used to go down to the shore carrying an icon of the saint and dip it three times into the water as a conjuration to get their husbands back safe and sound.

## New Sea Museum Paphos, Cyprus

Since it opened in 2005, there has only been one sea-themed museum in Cyprus. Aptly named "THAL-ASSA" (meaning 'sea' in Greek), the museum is located in Ayia Napa. Now there is good news for local sea enthusiasts and tourists alike, since it appears there will soon be a sister

museum opening in Paphos. The Municipality of Paphos has recently given the "Tornariti-Pieridi Sea Life Foundation" the green light to proceed with a €110.000 project to build the new museum. The Paphos museum will reflect the importance of the sea in the culture of Cyprus from time immemorial, and visitors will be able to see embalmed fish, shells and sea-birds that lived in Cypriot seas 300 million years ago! Additionally, a great deal of effort has been

made by the project coordinators to present the exhibits in an educational manner and with a strong emphasis on the use of audiovisual techniques.

