

Holyrood photo exhibition will demonstrate challenges of fishing industry

A photo-led exhibition that depicts the challenge, pride and responsibility felt by those working in Scotland's fishing industry is to debut at The Scottish Parliament.

Running from 19 to 21 March, "Pride in the Seas" profiles vessel owners, skippers, deckhands, scientists and analysts from Berwickshire to Shetland, with all involved intent on ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for the industry.

Sponsored by Scottish Conservative shadow rural affairs secretary, Rachael Hamilton MSP, and created by the [Scottish Fishermen's Federation](#) in partnership with photographer, Ian Georgeson, it is hoped that the exhibition will provide the sector with an invaluable opportunity to engage with the country's leading political figures.

Elsbeth Macdonald, chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said: "There is always a lot of debate surrounding Scotland's fishing industry – and that is only right given its role in our economy, culture and society, in coastal regions and beyond.

"What is often overlooked are the individuals at the very heart of it. A vast majority of the fishing workforce see it as a

calling and, whether a result of family heritage or instinct, want it to be passed on to the next generation in a healthy state.

“SFF’s Pride in the Seas exhibition captures this and through the stories of 12 of these inspiring people offers a chance for politicians and other key figures to have meaningful discussions about securing the future for a brilliant industry that is putting healthy, low-carbon protein on our plates.”

Scotland’s key political figures in attendance will also have an opportunity to sign a pledge in support of Scotland’s fishing communities, to protect against loss of access to key fishing grounds and guard against the creation of new policies without the cooperation, engagement and support of the industry.

The 12 individuals featured in the exhibition will include:

- Trevor Spouse, Skipper in Eyemouth
- Mark Anderson, Skipper, and son Nicol, Deckhand, in Shetland
- Colin Stephen, Skipper in Peterhead
- Mark Robertson, part-owner, and sons Paul and Adam, Skippers, in Fraserburgh
- Willie John McLean, Skipper in Mallaig
- Erin Mackenzie, Deckhand in Mallaig
- Dr Steve Mackinson, Chief Scientist, Scottish Pelagic Fishermen’s Association
- Dr Paul Macdonald, Senior Fisheries Analyst, Scottish Fishermen’s Organisation
- Elena Balestri, Senior Fisheries Policy and Science Manager, Scottish Fishermen’s Federation

Ms Hamilton said: “I’m delighted to sponsor the Pride of Seas exhibition which will showcase the people at the heart of making our fishing industry one of the finest in the world.

“Day and night, many risk their lives at sea and should be commended for putting the outstanding seafood on our plates that we so love and enjoy.

“They are an integral part of creating a modern, resilient and profitable fishing sector underpinned by sustainable fish stocks and a prosperous marine environment for the future.

“This event will give my parliamentary colleagues and I the chance to discuss how we can continue to develop healthy marine ecosystems that provide livelihoods, enjoyment, and prosperity to our coastal communities.

“I’m particularly keen to strengthen fishing businesses and enhance their sustainable growth which will bring additional benefits to the UK.”

Following its debut, the exhibition will be available for tour across towns, schools, museums and other public facilities around the country.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2023 The Scottish Fishermen’s Federation was established to represent a sustainable, prosperous fishing industry in Scotland. It was borne in response to the need for greater political engagement when the UK joined the EU and in adapting to the first oil exploration which saw the proliferation of other activities in the historic fishing grounds of the North Sea.

Fighting for the interests of 450 fishing vessels in Scotland’s fleet, the federation is made up of eight Associations which represent the sector from small creel boats to large pelagic and white fish trawlers.

The full exhibition and case studies are now available to view on the SFF website: <https://www.sff.co.uk/news/category/pride-in-the-seas>



Scottish Sea Fishing Federation, L-R MSP Rachael Hamilton, Elspeth MacDonald and Hannah Fennell



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