

Case study

Saving our seas

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Tell us about the World Fisheries Congress.

The Congress is organised by the World Council of Fisheries Societies, an international, not-for-profit, non-governmental organisation. It is held every four years and its aim is to promote international co-operation in fisheries science and management. To do that it brings together scientists, management and industry from across the world. Our 2012 strapline was ‘Sustainable fisheries in a changing world’ and the event was opened by HRH The Prince of Wales, who is founder of the Prince’s International Sustainability Unit.

How do you feel the Congress can make a difference in promoting sustainable fishing?

I think there are three main ways. One is in getting some of the science across to the industry. Another is listening to what industry has to say about the practicalities of implementing new ideas. And the other really big positive to come out of this event

is raising the profile of sustainability. Things are changing now, consumers are becoming more aware and it is becoming an issue in the supermarket. Raising awareness is a large part of what we try to do and this Congress in particular received a lot of coverage in the national media. Having the Prince of Wales in attendance was probably the biggest impact on that, but we also had a number of people involved from the Scottish Government.

How do you feel Edinburgh worked as a host city?

It’s the first time the congress has come to the UK and, in fact, there are just a few cities in the UK that can hold an event of this size. Sometimes the big venues will be situated right on the edge of town, or, in London, hotels can be spread over several square miles, which often means that delegates don’t see each other in the evening. But in Edinburgh the EICC is right in the centre and you can find yourself passing by conference delegates

in the street. The infrastructure distance from the airport is also very good and people really like the idea of coming to Scotland.

How did you find the EICC?

The thing that struck me most was how good the acoustics were. In some venues with large spaces, it can be very hard to hear, especially when you consider that many people are listening in a foreign language.

We had 1365 delegates in the EICC but you always felt as if you were in a regular sized room. A lot of discussion at these conferences also tends to happen outside the formal presentations and the set-up of the EICC really lends itself to that – there were always people sitting and chatting in small groups in the foyer. Finally, in terms of customer service, I’ve nothing but praise, particularly with regards to how helpful the staff were – service with a smile everywhere.