



NEWS RELEASE – Immediate
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Tayport company to feature in documentary after inventing 'bomb listener' technology designed to help protect Malaysian coral reefs

A Scottish technology company, which has developed pioneering new technology to help flush out fish bombers who damage already endangered coral reefs in Malaysia, is set to feature in a documentary programme.

Tayport-based St Andrews Instrumentation, pioneers in real-time autonomous acoustic detection, designed and built a specially commissioned 'bomb listener' at the request of one of the UK's leading conservation bodies, the Marine Conservation Society (MCS), to help put a stop to the decades-old practice taking place in marine parks across South-east Asia.

The company was first approached around two years ago by MCS, which was looking for technology to help stop the fishermen who were causing the damage. SA Instrumentation went on to design a bespoke product using three of its Decimus® systems working together to collate the bomb noise in almost real time. A compass was also built into the equipment, allowing enforcement rangers at the marine park to identify the location of the bomb.

The collaborative project, which also involves the Government of Hong Kong, aims to deter local fishermen in the Sabah region of Malaysia from detonating bombs which not only kill large numbers of fish, but also damage the already endangered coral reefs.

After hearing about the technology and the project, independent film maker HonYuen Leong last year successfully entered a Malaysia-wide competition, sponsored by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, in a bid to win a grant to develop a documentary.

However, while the Decimus® system will be a key feature of her programme, she is currently in the process of trying to raise additional funds through crowdfunding to come to Scotland to film the SA Instrumentation team, which comprises Operations Manager Richard Baggaley, Systems Engineer Graham Weatherup, Senior Systems Engineer Angus Aitken and Product Development Engineer Aaron Jones.

Dr Douglas Gillespie, of the St Andrews-based Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU), works closely with SA Instrumentation and is the designer writer of the PAMGuard Software, which is used widely in their products. He will also be filmed as part of the design team.

Operations Manager Richard Baggaley said: “This has been a very challenging project for a number of reasons, the main one being that we were asked to design a product which could listen for bombs from multiple locations and determine the approximate GPS location of the explosion, something that is not very far away from the normal Decimus® systems’ marine mammal criteria, but challenging none the less.

“It was also more difficult from the point of view that the product we had been asked to design was for use so far away. As a result, our technicians were unable to attend the site to test and configure the product due to travel restrictions advised by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

“However, we are very pleased to have been able to help out with an environmental project such as this. The system has been recently put in place, and we are hoping to have news of positive results very soon.”

Dr Elizabeth Wood, MCS Coral Reef Officer, said: “Fish bombing is not new to Sabah or the rest of South-east Asia, including the Philippines, Indonesia and Hong Kong. Traditional fishing methods using a fishing line and a lure result in perhaps only a handful of fish; fish bombing on the other hand involves throwing handmade explosives into the coral reefs, resulting in a much bigger catch in a fraction of the time.

“The marine park authorities have no idea where or when it is going to take place, and the area is often so big that it’s impossible to catch those doing it. By using ground-breaking technology produced by SA Instrumentation, the authorities will receive the exact co-ordinates of the fish bomb blast in almost real time, giving them the opportunity to arrest those responsible while they are

collecting the fish. The overall aim of the plan is to deter more fishermen from using these harmful bombs.”

Anyone who is interested in supporting HonYuen and the film crew to come to Scotland can do so by visiting <http://www.pozible.com/project/201096>

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About– www.sa-instrumentation.com

St Andrews Instrumentation are pioneers in real time autonomous acoustic detection. Its Decimus® range of products can be used on land or at sea to mitigate the impact of projects on the environment, delivering fast, accurate and reliable information.

A global company, it has offices in St Andrews, Scotland, Hong Kong, Seattle, Washington, and Vancouver, British Columbia.