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MARINE TIMES



Rony heading into Kilmore Quay - Photo: Alan Hinchy

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“A Slap in the Face!” Court of Appeal Overturns Minister’s Policy Directive on the 6-mile Limit - Page 12

The “Spatial Squeeze” Is One of The Most Significant Challenges for Fishing

The fishing industry has proven tremendously resourceful, dynamic and resilient for 700 years. The development of renewable energy, which Ireland needs, is creating significant concerns about loss of fishing grounds. The newly appointed Chief Executive of BIM discusses the issues in an article for the Marine Times - Page 6

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the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

Making Legal Mountains Out of Molehills

One day a motorist had a puncture and as chance would have it the mishap occurred outside the gates of the local mental hospital. As he started to change the punctured wheel his attempt was being carefully observed by a patient who was leaning over the wall. He successfully removed the nuts and placed them carefully in the hubcap as you do but as he removed the wheel, he overturned the hubcap and the nuts all fell into the drain. Seeing his despair, the patient suggested that if he removed one nut from each of the other wheels, he would then have three nuts on all wheels which with careful driving would see him safely to the nearest garage. Our motorist was amazed and thankful - asking the patient how such a sensible idea could come from a patient of an asylum to which the following reply issued "I'm in here because I'm mad - I'm not stupid!!"

I throw that story in today because of frustration built on the number of people making Legal Mountains out of Molehills.

The Banks are creating a feeding trough

for the legal profession lads and I persist in my assertion that there is a very distinct difference between an "Expert" and someone who knows what they are doing!!



Little Flower passing Rackard at Howth Harbour - Photo courtesy James Grandfield

The concept of having someone to blame persists and even more so if that person has professional indemnity cover - although I have instances on my books at the moment where the banks are reluctant to challenge the "Professionals" who made the errors.

What is the point of insisting on a Professional Valuation or Condition Survey if you are not prepared to follow it up should it prove to be incorrect.

We are working our way through the Decommissioning process and the first requirement is that the vessels being Decommissioned are removed from the Fishing Register.

In many - if indeed not most cases - there will be a Mortgage registered against the vessel for which a Consent Letter will be required from the Lending Bank. That will call for a Mandate over the Decommissioning Payment which is fair enough but I am afraid that the Lenders are turning the process into a Funfair.

I will say no more because they are sickening me.

The uplift in the Blue Whiting sounds like good news. We still begrudge the amount of Blue Whiting that the Norwegian fleet is allowed in our back yard but let's take what positives we can.

We forget sometimes where we stand in the overall picture and the Distribution of Quotas is a matter between the EU and the Norwegians and it is hard to know where we stand in the Game. Hopefully the uplift in the Blue Whiting Quotas will take some of the sting out of the huge cut in the Scad Quota.

Discussions around the creation of limitations to Bottom Trawling are scary lads and let's hope that nothing too drastic results from those discussions.

We also have the prospect of further management of the Potting Sector which hopefully will be sensible in its approach. The Potters have been successful and have saved many jobs in the coastal area as small processors have developed products which are being well received by the Markets. We make a lot of our own luck lads - if we are allowed.

I compare progress in areas like Health and in particular Housing and am very

struck by the similarities between us and the UK where the primary objective of the opposition is to OBJECT.

Someone 25 years ago decided that building houses by the Government was a bad idea. Many of us grew up all over the country in "Corporation" houses which in time as tenants we were allowed to buy. That increased the level of Home Ownership. That concept WORKED lads and I cannot understand the reluctance to have another go at it.

In Ireland we still enjoy the concept of PRIVATE OWNERSHIP so in a crisis situation is it not the responsibility of Government to plug the gaps?

Everyone says that we need more houses. That's why we have a Housing Shortage. Of course we do - so why does the Government not do it. By all accounts we certainly have the money.

We have allowed a situation to develop now whereby if someone decided that we should start building State Owned houses next week we are short of Construction Workers.

Meanwhile over the past years "Despite Everything" our Fishing Fleet has developed beyond all recognition.

I know that the Decommissioning leaves a very bad taste but as an Industry you have so much to be proud of in the way with very little Government Assistance - financial or otherwise - you have developed the Industry.

I hate begrudgery in all its forms lads and negative thinking. If there is a chink of light lets latch on to it and make it grow.

Let's give our reduced fleet every encouragement to reemploy any of those locals losing their berths on Decommissioned Vessels.

Let's train our people at sea and onshore to make every possible penny from those resources available to us. As an Industry you have tried always to improve your Business by actually DOING THINGS.

Sitting around objecting to everything that is suggested achieves nothing.

We are back to the Hurlers on the Ditch Lads They are everywhere.

Stay safe everyone

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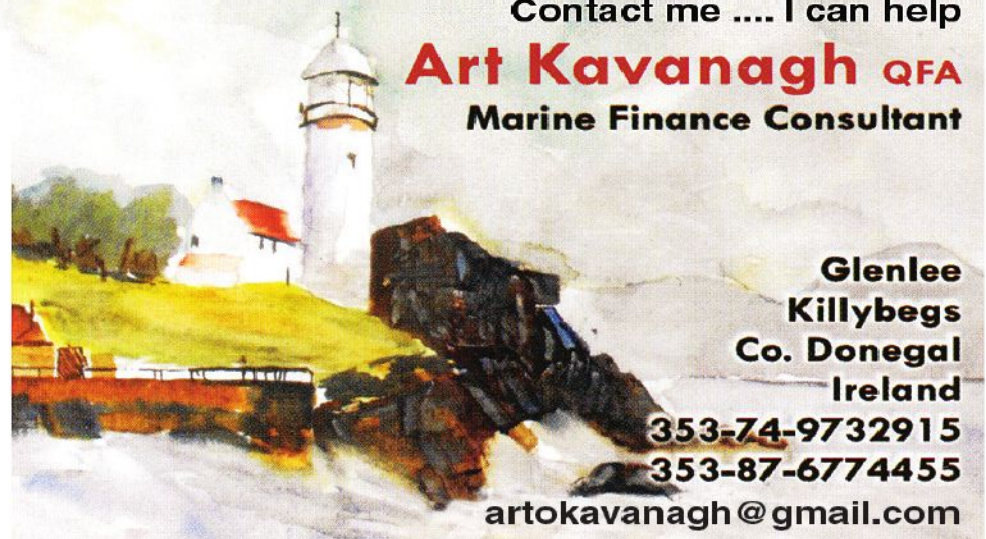
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BIM New Fishermen Scheme

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Differing Views on Decommissioning Scheme

Report by Tom MacSweeney, Deputy Editor



Castletownbere harbour - Photo courtesy Anne Marie Cronin Photography

The final acceptance figure for decommissioning is 42 vessels with a combined total capacity of over 6,700 gross tonnes. This falls short of the Seafood Task Force report which had targeted the removal of 8,000 gross tonnes from the Irish whitefish and prawn fleet.

Bord Iascaigh Mhara, which administered the scheme, has described it as a “high uptake” at 84% of the target.

The final figure is a considerable increase in the number of owners which had shown interest in leaving the industry in early March when the likely figure was given by BIM at 20. The number increased, apparently after appeals against initial offers to owners were reviewed. By the closure date at the end of last month the expected 20 had just more than doubled. It was, however, less than had been predicted at the outset of the scheme when numbers as high as 80 were being suggested.

The decommissioning “will not impact Ireland’s overall quota share,” according to BIM, “but decommissioning of a significant number of vessels will free up an estimated €30 million of quota for species such as prawns, hake, monkfish and haddock for those vessels remaining in the fleet.”

“This effectively means that remaining Irish vessels will have more Irish quota available to them allowing a more sustainable future.”

The scheme is funded under the European Commission’s Brexit Adjustment Reserve. It was one of the key recommendations of the Seafood Task Force Report, established by Minister for the Marine Charlie McConalogue. The Task Force was set up to consider measures to counteract the impacts of the fish quota share reductions arising from the Brexit agreement on the Irish Fishing industry and coastal

communities that depend on fisheries.

The Task Force agreed a decommissioning target to remove 8,000 gross tonnes from the Irish whitefish and prawn fleet to ensure future profitability post-Brexit. The 42 vessels which will leave the industry have a combined total capacity of over 6,700 gross tonnes, so the scheme has achieved 84% of its fleet reduction target. The forty-two vessels leaving are prawn and whitefish trawlers, seine netters, gillnetters, and beam trawl vessels from various fishing ports around the coast.

Total cost to the EU for decommissioning these vessels will be over €60 million.

“We understand that any decision to voluntarily decommission vessels is a very difficult one for owners and BIM has been working closely with the industry to assist them through the process,” BIM Chief Executive Caroline Bocquel said. “Recognising the magnitude of choosing to stop fishing, BIM is confident that the result of the scheme will put the sector on a firmer financial footing and deliver a more sustainable future for the industry. By restoring profitability of fishing it will help those remaining in the sector and support the wider economies of Irish coastal communities.”

There are reservations about whether this will actually happen and pressure has been exerted on Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue to ensure that the EU cannot seek to wrest any of the freed-up quota from Ireland or to use it to placate the demands of the industry for a fairer share of the

inequitable CFP quotas which are the basis of the problems that have faced the Irish industry for many years.

Vessel owners leaving the industry have to decommission their vessels in an environmentally-compliant way by October 31 and can face costs involved.

BIM says that four vessels have already been decommissioned in specialist recyclers at New Ross and Limerick and that scheduling of the rest of the vessels for scrapping is underway.

The Irish Fish Producers’ Organisation suggested that some tonnage from vessels accepted for decommissioning should be kept in a bank of tonnage in State ownership to allow for new entrants to the industry to encourage the building of vessels in the future, to ensure a continuance of the Irish fishing industry.

The Marine Minister declined to be drawn into a discussion about this proposal when it was put to him. Mr McConalogue said he still believed commercial fishing was a dynamic sector in spite of the considerable loss of national fish quota under the bad Brexit deal when the Government failed to protect the industry, as it had undertaken to do. He said the decommissioning scheme was a recommendation of the Seafood Task Force which he had established and which was supported by fishing industry organisations. Scrapping boats would allow for more quota for those remaining in the industry, he said.

“Fishing sector in a death spiral as number of decommissioned boats doubles.” Michael Collins

Independent TD for South-West Cork Michael Collins has described the latest Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) data relating to the Department of Agriculture’s

‘Voluntary Decommissioning Scheme’ as an alarm bell sounding the death knell of the Castletownbere fishing fleet.

Deputy Collins was speaking after BIM confirmed that there are now 42 fishing boats to be scrapped; a more than 100% increase on the 20 boats that were part of the Scheme last month.

It is being reported that the single largest number of applications to decommission came from fishermen operating in the west Cork town of Castletownbere.

It is also understood however that this data relates to a total of 57 letters of offer that were issued to 64 fishing boat owners who initially applied to the Scheme when it opened in 2022:

“What is unfolding right before our eyes is the death spiral of the west Cork fishing sector and indeed the Irish fishing sector in general,” said Deputy Collins.

“This is a direct result, and the end point of years of political neglect and an utter failure to prioritise and properly incentivise the sector.”

“To add insult to injury it is very likely that fishermen and fisherwomen who participate in the absurdly named ‘voluntary’ scheme will not be able to recoup the full value of their boats.”

“What is happening here is Government imposed cruelty born of ineptitude and appalling levels of departmental lethargy around supports like the fuel subsidy which our fishermen have been crying out for.”

“As a result, and the data from BIM now reflects this, fishermen are voting with their feet and are leaving their heritage and their livelihoods behind. It is a shameful indictment of Government policy,” Deputy Collins concluded.

Off-Bottom Doors in The Irish Nephrops Fishery

BIMs latest Fisheries Conservation study demonstrates the potential for off-bottom doors to improve the economic and environmental performance of the Irish Nephrops fishery

Dr Ronán Cosgrove, Fisheries Conservation Manager BIM

The recent communication from the European Commission on Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector outlines how increases in energy efficiency are needed in the short to medium term while a transition away from reliance on fossil fuels is required in the longer term.



Skipper James Connolly from Clogherhead with Matthew McHugh from BIM and Thyge Baungaard with the MLD doors onboard the MFV Emerald Shore

BIM is working with the Irish Fishing Industry to develop more energy efficient fishing gears. As outlined in BIMs recent carbon footprint report, fuel use and carbon emissions from seafood are relatively low, but within the sector, the Nephrops fishery is on the higher end of the scale.

Work is ongoing on the development of more hydrodynamic trawls and modified rigging ahead of the nets which improve energy efficiency. We have also started testing off-bottom doors. Doors are typically responsible for around 30% of gear drag and lifting them off the seabed has major potential to significantly reduce drag and energy use.

First up for testing were MLD doors from Denmark. MLD develops high-aspect trawl doors which can be controlled from the wheelhouse primarily for the pelagic industry but have recently developed a 1.74 m² prototype version for the demersal sector.

Teaming up with James Connolly and crew on board the MFV Emerald Shore, and led by Dr Matthew McHugh from BIM, the MLDs were tested in the Western Irish Sea over 5 days in October 2022. The doors were set at 3 m altitude (height) from seabed. In general, the doors did what they were supposed to do, remaining off the seabed for around 90% of deployment periods.

There were some software issues, and the altitude was lower than expected although this improved when Dyneema warps were added towards the end of the trial.

The skipper increased towing speed from his usual 2.5 kts up to 3 kts to help keep the doors off the bottom. Fuel was down by 8% compared with conventional doors and no increase in engine revs occurred despite the greater speed. Trawl wingend spread was down by around 14% with the MLDs although this was at least partially offset by the increase in speed which resulted in no difference in swept area. Focused primarily on the practicalities and operational performance, it was not possible to analyse the catches in detail, but the MLD system did catch prawns. Further testing would be needed to confirm the catching performance.

Despite some challenges around optimising the MLD system and gear performance over a short-term period, the trial demonstrated that off-bottom doors have potential to improve energy efficiency in the Nephrops fishery. Additional advantages include reducing seabed abrasion as, within the trawl system, the doors generally have the greatest impact on the seabed. Given these potential benefits, a number of door manufacturers are stepping up research in this area and BIM has plans to test more door models over the course of 2023.

BIM would like to thank James, Niall, Seamus Connolly and crew of the MFV Emerald Shore for a successful collaboration. Thanks also to everyone at MLD Aps, especially Thyge Baungaard for assisting with the trial onboard the Emerald Shore and Torben Søndergaard for helping set up the project.

This work was funded by the Irish Government and part-financed by the European Union through the EMFAF Operational Programme 2021 – 2027.

A full report on this work is available at www.bim.ie/publications/fisheries

SFPA and Irish Naval Service Host Joint Seminar on Landing Obligations at the National Maritime College of Ireland

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and Irish Naval Service have come together to organise a seminar on the Landing Obligation.

The seminar was held on the 15th March 2023, at the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI), Cork. The seminar was specifically aimed at Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers of the SFPA and the Irish Naval Service. The primary objective of the seminar was to ensure compliance with the Landing Obligation through inspections and control activities, both at sea and on land, as well as cooperation across control agencies.

The SFPA has highlighted that in order to promote compliance with the fishing industry, cooperation with other control agencies and stakeholders are vital to achieving these objectives.

According to the SFPA, the Landing Obligation is a key element of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) reform of 2013, which mandates the gradual reduction of discards. Since 2015, the Landing Obligation has been gradually implemented across pelagic and demersal fisheries in different regions, leading to its full implementation since 2019, which applies to all species with catch limits.

The SFPA also state that the Landing Obligation aims to align previous regulations that prohibit high grading and require the recording of all catches with new requirements to retain previously discarded catches of species with catch limits. The use of selective fishing gears is a vital aspect of implementing the Landing Obligation, as it reduces the capture of unwanted catches.

Commenting on the seminar, Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson of the SFPA said: “We are delighted to be co-hosting this seminar with the Irish Naval Service. The SFPA continues to ensure implementation of the landing obligation through inspection, control activities and promotion of compliance through consultation with fishers, other control agencies and various stakeholders.”

Commenting on the seminar, the Irish Naval Service said: “By working closely with the SFPA, the physical inspection at sea, carried out by the Naval Service through Last Haul Analysis and gear inspections, together with the corroboration and verification of findings ashore by the SFPA ensures greater compliance with the landing obligation.”

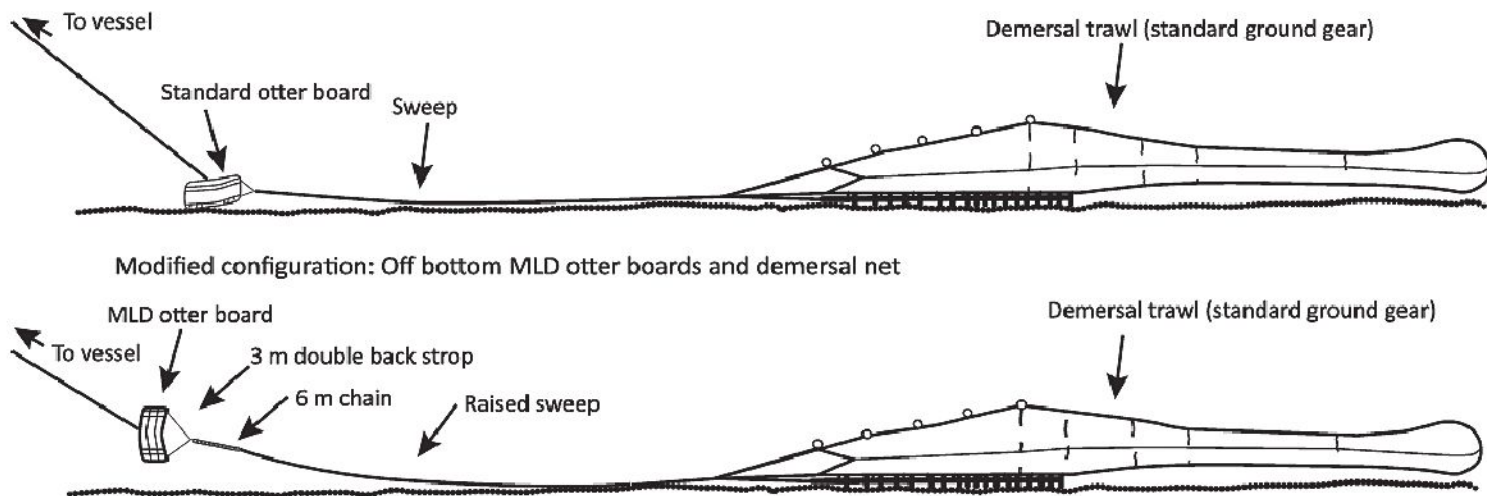
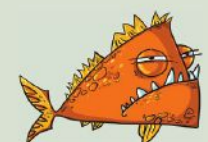


Illustration of standard and off-bottom door configurations



MARINE TIMES

**The Strong Voice for Ireland's Fishing,
Marine and Coastal Communities**

E: editor@marinetimes.ie WhatsApp: 087 7989582 W: www.marinetimes.ie

Waffle and the Platypus

It is bitterly disappointing that any serious debate about fishing within the hallowed halls of governance in Ireland has to be termed as 'Waffle' but any keen observers out there will agree that it truly is awful waffle.

Questions posed in the Dail chamber about our industry are constantly responded with stock answers taken directly from the spreadsheets of excuses and allaying blame on Brexit etc

Take for example two recent exchanges including varying sizes of vessels; Supertrawlers and Inshore Fleet. A question regarding supertrawlers was answered with how decommissioning will aid our industry and a question regarding the overturning of the 6 mile ban because of ineptitude on the Department's behalf was answered with the phrase "the narrowest of grounds" which correct me if I'm wrong was a legal obligation on the Government to notify England and Europe to allow them to have a say in the policy.

It would be a refreshing change if someone for once would put their hands up and say yes, we dropped the ball – the constant waffle of regurgitated statements, figures and forever blaming Brexit has to stop. At the moment we have 42 vessels in line to be scrapped – that means there is a multiple of 42 affected directly by the aberration of decommissioning and yet still not one mention of the 'fishing families' affected?

The waffle has to stop – we should be developing our industry and not decimating it!

It is getting ludicrous – we are at a stage now where the future of what is left of our industry is now in the hands of a Government department that is not the Marine (they won't even have a say in it) as the spatial squeeze that is taking place at a rapid pace is overseen by the Department of Housing. So not only overseeing a possible mass eviction around our country they will be overseeing a mass eviction of our fishermen from our waters due to Marine Protected Areas and the proliferation of offshore windfarms – all without consultation with the fishing, aquaculture and seafood industry!

As one commentator in this issue of the Marine Times says, 'The lack of joined-up, realistic thinking in terms of managing marine space and over-arching Marine policy in Ireland is really a cause for continuing concern.'

Correspondence received after last month's issue says, 'It's quite unbelievable the fishing and aquaculture industries have not had the opportunity to present to an Oireachtas Committee and this completely undermines the MPA process.'

Sadly, it is quite believable as this is the regard given to our industry or should I say lack of regard.

Maritime planning in this country is a disjointed mess – it is getting passed from pillar to post and mixed up in Government departments and committees that don't deal directly with the main stakeholders and for an Island Nation that is a disgrace.

Maritime planning in Ireland reminds me that a platypus is actually a horse designed by disjointed committees – such is the current state of our island!



Lily Tom III at Howth harbour - Photo: James Grandfield

Owners & Skippers of 12-15m Vessels in Transition to Electronic Recording & Reporting to Be Assisted with Training by the SFPA

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) are to provide training to owners & skippers of a number of vessels that are required to adopt the use of the Electronic Recording & Reporting System (ERS). The ERS is a system for recording, reporting, processing, storing, and transmitting fisheries data (catch, landing, sales and transhipment) according to the EU rules.

The key element of the ERS is the electronic logbook. The electronic logbook is used to record and transmit in a secure way details of fishing operations. The information is managed by the master of the fishing vessel and is transmitted to the Member States authorities where the authentic fishing operation details are kept in a secure database.

All vessels 12m or greater are required to use Electronic Recording & Reporting System (ERS) since January 2012. To date, an exemption has been in place for some vessels that fall into the 12-15m category on the basis of either: the vessel is at sea less than 24 hours per trip, or the vessel is fishing within the 12 nautical mile limit. This exemption is now being removed for the 12-15m category – which consists of approximately 48 registered vessels - ahead of pending regulations that will require 10m-12m vessels to also have ERS on board.

Registered owners of these exempt 12-15m vessels were contacted by letter by the SFPA during the week commencing the 27th February 2023 to advise of this removal of the exemption. Included in this correspondence, the SFPA have advised of training for the owners and skippers of these

vessels on certain dates in Castletownbere, Greencastle, Dingle, Dublin, Wexford, and Westport to facilitate ease of access for all parties concerned. The first of these courses took place in Castletownbere on 30th March.

The one-day training will cover how to use the ERS application. Upon completion of the training, a laptop provided by the SFPA will be allocated to each vessel for commencement of use of ERS immediately. The SFPA will provide support for the users and the ERS application after training.

Commenting on the programme, the SFPA said: "An important element of our remit is the promotion of compliance with the EU Common Fisheries Policy, sea-fisheries law and seafood safety legislation, to ensure the long-term sustainability of this valuable social and economic resource. The SFPA engages positively with fishers on a continuous basis, providing the most up-to-date information and training on how best to comply with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy."

Schedule of ERS training events: Thursday 30th March – Castletownbere; Tuesday 4th April – Greencastle; Thursday 13th April – Dingle; Tuesday 18th April – Dublin; Thursday 19th April – Wexford; Tuesday 25th April – Westport

The “Spatial Squeeze” Is One of The Most Significant Challenges for Fishing

By Caroline Bocquel, Chief Executive, Bord Iascaigh Mhara

The fishing industry has proven tremendously resourceful, dynamic and resilient for 700 years. The development of renewable energy, which Ireland needs, is creating significant concerns about loss of fishing grounds. The Chief Executive of the State fisheries board discusses the issues in this article for the Marine Times.



The seafood sector in Ireland contributes €1.3bn to GDP annually and employs in excess of 16,000 people. As a business that is conducted almost entirely in coastal communities, it is both an essential part of our social fabric as well as providing a healthy, environmentally sustainable and nutritious food at a time when consumers are looking for precisely that. Over its 700-year history the fishing industry has proven itself to be a tremendously resourceful, dynamic and resilient sector and it has evolved almost continuously over that time, with the last four years being some of the most difficult with prohibitive fuel costs and the continued navigation of the impact of Brexit.

It is clear Ireland needs to rapidly increase its renewable energy and our natural resources provide a significant opportunity to address this. We have one of the most favourable coastlines in Europe to take advantage of what is on course to be a significant economic opportunity for Ireland. However, when taken together with the proposed marine protected areas, the cumulative impact of this “spatial squeeze” is one of the most significant challenges for the sector yet.

While being in full support of Government policy, we must manage this transition with minimal negative impact on the seafood sector. There are a number of challenges that must be overcome in achieving this balance and we need to heed the warnings and the advice from other countries who have experienced the impacts, both positive and negative, of offshore renewable energy (ORE).

We know from studies in Scotland, the US, Germany and Holland that communicating early and with commitment results in better outcomes for both developers and the fishing industry. Working together to agree the timings of surveys will minimise unintended impacts on fishing grounds and we need to better understand how co-existence can work and what the likely impacts of this will be.

This needs to be balanced with ‘consultation fatigue’ and

ensuring that communication is meaningful and conducted early with a genuine desire to achieve the best outcomes for both sides.

The Seafood/ORE working group set up by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and chaired by Capt. Robert McCabe was an excellent initiative that has developed a set of useful and practical communication protocols which have been endorsed by industry. Once approved these protocols must be embedded in the consenting regime to ensure they are fully adhered to and that they cannot be set aside.

Despite the progress made on these protocols, significant concerns remain with respect to loss of fishing grounds based on the maps currently being produced. Productive fisheries in the Celtic Sea, in the middle of a biologically sensitive area which has been managed carefully for many years, are now under threat as they are in a proposed area for development for offshore wind infrastructure. The impact of such developments on marine species is not yet fully understood but there is no doubt there will be impacts on the fishing industry.

We know there are data gaps with respect to levels of fishing activity at the level of granularity required, particularly for the in-shore sector and BIM is working with both industry and the Marine Institute to address this. Unless we fully understand the value of landings and the fishing activity being carried out in these areas, we have limited information with which to protect those fisheries and to ensure the livelihoods dependent on them remain secure.

The development of a new industry will also lead to opportunities for those working in the fishing sector – new skills and vessels will be needed to service the sites and there will be opportunities for upskilling with seasonal employment opportunities.

At BIM we will continue to work with national and international partners to understand how Ireland can provide leadership in balancing a successful marine renewable energy sector with a thriving fishing sector. We will continue to gather data and we will continue to be constructive, responsible and progressive, however, this must be met by a willingness to engage authentically and to communicate with respect with an industry that fully intends to be existing and thriving for another 700 years.

Valentia Island Heritage Centre

Valentia Island Heritage Centre says in its annual report to members that it became amalgamated with the Tourist Office last year and its staff was boosted by two new part-time members who integrated with its current two staff members.

Artefacts donated to the Centre included a plaque of Claire Ring commemorating her work at the Centre and also a fishing boat and nets. Local poetry from Beginnish was donated by Dan McCrohan and framed and displayed. Judy Green provided memorabilia from the days when the bridge to the island was built.

Irish Ocean Literacy Network

The Secretariat of the Irish Ocean Literacy Network at Galway Atlantiquaria will hold a series of regional members’ meetings in Connacht, Leinster, Munster and Ulster over the next few months.

“These will give the Network the opportunity to come together to exchange ideas and discuss future plans for common ocean literacy initiatives,” IOLN says. The first regional meeting was held in Queen’s University Belfast on March 29. Others will be in Galway on April 21; Dublin on May 12; Cork on June 7. The fourth meeting will be organised in tandem with a Fair Seas’ inaugural conference which on the following day.

“These events are for IOLN members, but anyone who has an interest in ocean literacy and shares the vision of the Network is welcome to attend and join the discussion,” the organisation says.

Waterways Ireland

Waterways Ireland is selling-off by public tender, a number of vessels which were removed from the inland waterways. Ten vessels are stored at Shannon Harbour, Co Offaly and at Munster Harbour near Portumna.



Tender information and relevant documentation are available from the Waterways Ireland website or by contacting the Inspectorate Office, Waterways Ireland, Harbour Street, Tullamore, Co Offaly (Tel 057 932 5019). Sealed tenders should reach the Assistant Inspector of Navigation at that address not later than noon on Friday 21 April. Only postal submissions will be accepted.

A condition of sale is that vessels must be removed from Waterways Ireland property once purchased.

Upcoming Courses 2023

NFCI Castletownbere

- Three Day Basic Safety Training
18 April - 20 April 2023
02 May - 04 May 2023
16 May - 18 May 2023
06 June - 08 June 2023
04 July - 06 July 2023
- Surface Supplied Diving Operations
10 April - 05 May 2023
- STCW Medical First Aid
04 April - 06 April 2023
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting
11 April - 13 April 2023
23 May - 25 May 2023
- Electronic Navigation Systems
17 April - 05 May 2023
- Deck Officer Second Hand Full Certificate of Competency
08 May - 07 July 2023
- STCW Medical Care Aboard Ship
29 May - 02 June 2023
10 July - 14 July 2023
- Navigation Control Course
26 June - 07 July 2023
- Passenger Boat Proficiency
24 April - 28 April 2023
29 May - 02 June 2023
26 June - 30 June 2023
10 July - 14 July 2023

NFCI Greencastle

- Three Day Basic Safety Training
17 April - 19 April 2023
29 May - 31 May 2023
19 June - 21 June 2023
10 July - 12 July 2023
- Enhanced Safety Training
25 May 2023
13 July 2023
- STCW Personal Safety and Social Responsibility
18 May 2023
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting
19 April - 21 April 2023
08 May - 10 May 2023
- STCW Medical Care Aboard Ship
24 April - 28 April 2023
- Deck Officer Skipper Full Certificate of Competency
02 May - 07 July 2023
- Deck Officer Second Hand Full Certificate of Competency
28 August - 15 December 2023
- Deckhand Foundation Programme
04 September - 13 October 2023

- Class 3 Engineering (Fishing) Certificate of Competency
04 September 2023 - 02 February 2024
- GMDSS General Operators Certificate
08 May - 19 May 2023
- STCW Medical First Aid
03 July - 05 July 2023
- Advanced Firefighting
12 June - 16 June 2023
- Passenger Boat Proficiency
17 July - 21 July 2023

CASTLETOWNBERE COLLEGE -

Della O'Sullivan
T: +353(0) 2771230
E: della.osullivan@bim.ie

GREENCASTLE COLLEGE -

Maria McCarron
T: +353(0) 749381068
E: maria.mccarron@bim.ie

COASTAL TRAINING UNIT 1 -

Della O'Sullivan
T: +353(0) 2771230
E: della.osullivan@bim.ie

COASTAL TRAINING UNIT 2 -

Huan Tan
T: +353(0) 873940763
E: huan.tan@bim.ie

Coastal Training Unit 2 Howth, Co Dublin

- Three Day Basic Safety Training
18 April - 20 April 2023
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- Enhanced Safety Training
12 April 2023
13 April 2023



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



INDUSTRY OPINION: Discussing the major issues at the country's leading fish producer organisations, as reflected in the comments and analysis of the latest developments in the industry by the CEOs.



Killybegs Fishermen's
ORGANISATION LTD.

Opportunity To Change Quota Problems

"We achieved what we set out to achieve in the EU-Norway blue whiting negotiations and we now have an opportunity to see if we can change the problems we have in lack of quota in other species, which go back to the formation of the Common Fisheries Policy. It is not only blue whiting where we need more quota, there are many other species that we need to go after to get a fair share. What has been achieved in the blue whiting negotiations offers and opportunity that we must grasp."

Sean O'Donoghue, Chief Executive of Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, says that the outcome of the EU-Norwegian blue whiting deal offers an opportunity to change the quota problems which Ireland has faced since the introduction of the CFP.

"We achieved what we set out to achieve, that there would be no access to the Irish Box because Norway and the other Member States did not want to pay for it and that was a key point of ours. Obviously the increase that we have got is welcome, but now we need to take this to the coastal States and the key thing here is that shares are all up for discussion in the Report on the CFP from the EU Commission. Now is our opportunity to go after this fearlessly, to change the shares that we have, particularly in view of the bad outcome from which Ireland has suffered in the Brexit deal.

"I would prefer if we had a bigger quota after the EU-Norwegian negotiations, but that original situation was created many years ago, before my time, in the Common Fisheries Policy back in 1983. We now have an opportunity to see can we change the problems our industry has in lack of quota. Now is the opportunity, because it is not only blue whiting where we need change, but in a lot of other species.

"The EU-Norwegian agreement is a bi-lateral agreement that happens every year. However, Ireland's share of all species within the EU Community won't change unless there is a change in the fundamental CFP and now the opportunity is coming around to actually do that. The Working Group on the CFP for which the Irish industry produced its Report last August was accepted by the Minister and the Government and made the Irish position clear, which was put forward to the EU.

"We expect that the Minister and the Government will vigorously pursue those issues over the coming months because within a year I would expect there is going to be some decision taken. That will either be to do nothing, which is what the Commission seems to want, or that we try to redress the imbalance against us in

the low quotas we have as an industry and which has been further affected by Brexit. The blue whiting negotiations have opened a window, but what is most important is that the Commission Report on the CFP has opened a window in the Parliament and in the Council which as an industry we must take advantage of.

"We have to fight really hard now in terms of trying to redress this huge imbalance that Brexit caused and the fundamental change it has made to the concept of relative stability in the CFP.

"Aside from that very important issue, there is still the situation for the pelagic sector, the key sector affected by Brexit where any compensatory scheme or payment is still awaited. Not one Euro has come to the sector, even though in Denmark a scheme has been agreed.

"It must be sorted out or else the funding provided by the EU will be lost."

"We are calling on the Minister and the Department to clear the way and provide a scheme for Ireland. It is unfair and totally unacceptable that this has still not been done. This must be sorted out.

"There is still the problem of the attempt by the Commission in its action plan, which is not fit for purpose, to ban bottom trawling in what are being described as marine protection areas. There is no basis for this and we have taken up the issue at European level.

"We are part of the European bottom fishing alliance which has met all the Member States who have agreed that the plan is not fit for purpose. We have to be mindful of this, because these environmental things are coming in without a basis of fact or scientific information which is not acceptable."



IS&EFPO - Working For The Fishermen

Communication Problems with The EU Commission

"We have no problems with protecting and restoring the oceans which we are supportive of, but there is a big problem with the communications from the EU Commission."

John Lynch, Chief Executive of the Irish South and East Fish Producers, says the Commission has an ambition to stop bottom water fishing in 30 per cent of European waters, but it is not acting by its own standards that everything should be scientifically based.

"We are supportive of marine protected areas, supportive of protection and restoration but there must be evidence for where is to be protected, why areas are to be protected and how they are to be protected. The areas need to be chosen on the basis of certain criteria. There are many different reasons being given for MPAs, to protect the bottom environment, to protect mammals, various reasons are given, but all this should be done on a scientific basis before a blanket ban on 30 per cent of European waters is introduced without a proper scientific basis.

"That is going to be a major issue, but

our Minister and other coastal states have taken a strong position on this and that any proposals must be clearly justified and the reasons stated before there can be a blanket ban on bottom-water fishing.

"We are happy with the results of the EU-Norway negotiations, that Norway didn't get free access to the Irish Box and we established the principle that access has to be paid for.

"It is good that the EMFF scheme has been approved, procedures have been signed-off and funding from it should now become available for grants."

MARITIME IRELAND is a monthly Podcast and Programme presented by the Marine Times Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney, reporting on Ireland's maritime culture, history, tradition and development.

It is available on all major Podcast services including, Apple, Spotify, Mixcloud, Amazon, Google and Marine Times.ie



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Be part of the 'Community of the Sea' with Maritime Ireland



Shift In Attitude Towards Fishing Industry

“There has been a discernible shift in attitude at both the Department of the Marine and at EU level towards our fishing industry.”

Aodh O'Donnell, Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation, reflects on the EU-Norwegian blue whiting quota deal.

“The industry is cautious, but the outcome is a ‘win’ for Ireland in that the EU refused to grant Norway the unreasonable request it was making for unfettered fishing rights inside the Irish Box. This was achieved due to intense lobbying by the fishing organisations.

“Norway’s gains under the latest EU deal allows them to catch 4.5 times our blue whiting quota in our own EEZ. We welcome Norway’s exclusion from the Irish Box, but Ireland still lacks an equitable arrangement.

“Norway has been allocated an extra 36,000MT of blue whiting in the Irish EEZ, compared to just 4,800MT extra blue whiting for Ireland. A non-EU member still secured more out of the deal than Ireland. They can now catch 224,000 Metric Tonnes (MT) of blue whiting, west of Ireland, whereas we can catch a maximum of 52,000MT in our own waters. In return, Ireland gets just over 258MT of arctic cod and access to Norwegian waters to fish 2,640 tonnes of Atlantic Scandia herring.

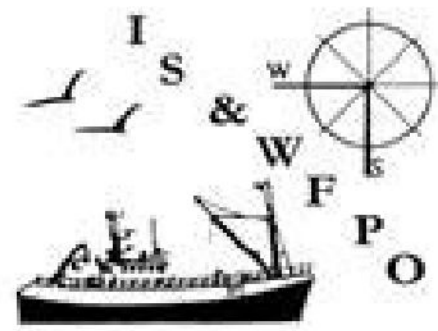
“In addition, Ireland benefits from 4,800MT of blue whiting from other Member States. This transfer includes a paltry volume of 2,400MT in lieu of Norway having access to the Irish EEZ - outside the Irish Box - to catch an additional 36,000MT of blue whiting. If you do the sums, you can see they can catch almost 5 times more blue whiting in Irish waters than we can. This last-minute St Patrick’s Day deal does nothing to address Ireland’s unfair share of EU fishing quotas and rights.

“However, the industry counts it as ‘a win’ that the EU refused to grant Norway their unreasonable request for unfettered fishing rights inside the Irish Box.

“We feel this was due to intense joint lobbying efforts with other fishing organisations. Our industry united as never before to make our voice heard and we are proud of what we achieved together. We feel there has been a discernible shift in attitude at both the Department of the Marine and EU level towards our fishing industry.

“However, the Irish fishing industry continues to suffer and that is despite having the largest fishing grounds in western Europe with the richest supply of stocks. Ireland must not be forced to pay because Norway was displaced by the UK, under Brexit.

“We must not allow Ireland to be the whipping boy anymore. Our challenge now is to keep collaborating cohesively as an industry. We will keep making our voice heard at home and in Europe until we achieve positive growth for the fishing and seafood industry.”



Shortcomings Not Addressed

“The Minister has failed to address shortcomings in support to vessels which are struggling to make a living.”

Patrick Murphy, Chief Executive of the Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation, outlines how, following the announcement of the EU deal with Norway, he addressed the Plenary Meeting Session that was held in Brussels on the afternoon of St. Patrick’s Day.

“Immediately following this announcement, while congratulating both sets of negotiating teams for finally reaching agreement, I raised issue with a member of the Norwegian negotiating team who had objected to the stance adopted by the EU of refusing to grant access to Norwegian boats to fish in Irish waters lying to the east of the 12-degree line of Longitude and up to Ireland’s 12-mile limit.

“I pointed out that Ireland was, through the EU, granting access to Norwegian boats to come and catch hundreds of thousands of tonnes of Blue Whiting in waters within Ireland’s Exclusive Economic Zone whereby Norway’s total catch of Blue Whiting in these waters vastly exceeds Ireland’s entitlement to catch fish stocks of ALL species in Irish waters.

“I had respectfully requested that Ireland’s Minister for Agriculture, Food & the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, should follow his own example in introducing a public consultation to examine, amend and change his Department’s current Policy on Herring in Area 6a and immediately embark upon a review of policy for Blue Whiting.

“Boats registered in the Polyvalent Segment of the Irish Fleet are limited to 9% of Ireland’s total allocation of Blue Whiting with qualified boats having to enter a lottery so that 12 boats can be allowed partake in the fishery while the 23 boats registered in the RSW-Pelagic Segment of the Fleet are rewarded with 91% of Ireland’s National allocation.

“I have received confirmation from Minister McConalogue that he has declined to embark upon any review of Blue Whiting policy and has refused to review and balance the allocation of this national quota between the Polyvalent and RSW-Pelagic Segments of the Irish fleet, despite the very significant increase of 81% in Ireland’s allocation for 2023 and the fact that Polyvalent Segment boats entitled to partake in the Blue Whiting fishery are struggling to make a living.

“As these Tier 1&2 Polyvalent vessels are not partaking in the voluntary decommissioning scheme they are experiencing a significant loss in earnings post-Brexit. The Minister has failed to address these shortcomings in the supports available to this sector.”



What a sight to behold - Two brand new Irish trawlers, built by an Irish boat yard (Mooney Boats), sailing side by side on fishing trials. The MFV Sparkling Star and MFV Eilean Croine. The Marine Times wishes the owners, crew and all the families involved safe and successful fishing in the years ahead. Photo courtesy Alan Hennigan, Mooney Boats.

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Inshore and small-scale fleets make up 85% of the Irish fishing fleet and have been consistently undervalued from an economic point of view. A change of approach to our small-scale fleet needs to be prioritised by Government.

Seamus Bonner, Secretary, IIMRO

IIMRO have raised the importance of the inshore and small-scale fleets for coastal and island communities since our foundation as a national fishery representative organisation for the offshore islands in 2014. IIMRO requested a breakeven analysis for the small-scale fleet from BIM so that we could identify and better communicate the main issues facing fisheries and small boat operators.

The report called "An economic analysis of the Irish small-scale fleet", published recently has a number of important findings, many of which we already knew anecdotally from speaking to IIMRO members and all of which require urgent action to address the issues.

One important finding is that this segment which makes up 85% of the Irish fishing fleet has been consistently undervalued from an economic point of view. The gaps in official data which have allowed this to occur need to be urgently addressed so that a clearer understanding of the reality on the ground can be achieved to better inform decision-making.

"Overall, the fishing income of the Irish SSF is estimated to reach €89m per annum, which is far higher than previous estimates of the sector (the Annual Economic Report of EU fishing fleets notes the Irish SSF to have a gross value of landings of €41m)."

This economic value is however, only a small fraction of its value to the way of life on the islands and elsewhere, where fisheries are interwoven into every aspect of community life around the coast.

The increasing costs of going to sea, particularly around fuel, is hitting hard at

livelihoods across all fleet lengths studied in the report. This has been compounded by the complete failure to deliver available EU fuel supports by the Government which would ease hardship caused by a doubling of fuel price increases.

"Data shows energy price inflation of 4% in 2021 and 100% in 2022. These increases are applied to all sub segments and length classes."

These on-going economic challenges for the inshore and small scale fleets are taking their toll, affecting our ability to encourage new entrants into the fishing community. This attrition cannot be sustained in the medium to long-term and a change of approach to our small-scale fleet needs to be prioritised by Government.

The report concludes: "... given the outstanding issues in the inshore fisheries sector further assistance is likely to be required to assist the sector overcome the serious challenges currently posed."

IIMRO calls on all stakeholders to ensure that this is implemented in partnership with the small-scale fishing community in a new approach.



National Inshore
Fishermen's Association

NIFA Annual Meeting Decides On Co-Operative Approach

Michael Desmond, Chairman, NIFA

NIFA decided at its annual general meeting in Galway to establish itself as a co-operative. As such it will have shareholders rather than members, each of whom will hold one share. This was considered to be the best approach which would suit all boat owners within NIFA.

A marketing plan is necessary and we are prepared and want to work on the development of this, but we are still awaiting contact from the Department since we were declared a Producer Organisation. We are seeking a meeting to progress this, hopefully it will happen soon because a marketing plan is required and in the interests of the Association.

There are times when it seems that our boats do not exist in the overall perception of the industry, but we are an important part of the seafood sector and intend to be properly recognised, as we are entitled to be.

NIFA continues to be concerned about

the development of offshore wind projects, about which it is still not clear whether there will be exclusion zones created around them. It is one thing for boats to be kept clear, during survey work or construction, of areas where our boats fished but to be permanently forced out of our traditional fishing areas is not acceptable. A clear indication, clearly stated, is needed about this and it seems that is being avoided at present. This situation has to be made clear.

There is a duty and responsibility on the Government through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage which is overseeing this, to make it clear.

A 'Slap in The Face' To Sustainable Fishing

Kieran Healy, Secretary, NIFA

The recent overturning of the Minister's policy Directive on the 6-mile limit has come as a huge disappointment to NIFA/NIFO, the wider inshore industry plus the many TDs, NGOs and individuals who campaigned so earnestly for its implementation. The Court's ruling comes as a slap in the face to all those who fish and wish to fish on in a sustainable forward-thinking manner.

The reasons for the original Policy Directive don't need to be repeated, but a good analogy would be if you removed all the food from your local McDonalds it would become an empty shell of a building. That is what is already happening in the bays of SW Ireland.

The Directive was challenged by two boat owners. Not a single one of their reasons for challenging it was successful. The blame lies with the Minister and his Department officials for failing to notify the UK (EU members at the time) and the wider EU of the policy directive.

As it stands this particular policy directive is dead. It cannot be re-visited, tweaked nor re-submitted. However, a new policy Directive can be introduced. NIFA/NIFO, along with all other concerned parties would hope that the minister and his officials would be on top of their legal requirements this time and not make the same mistake twice. It is important to con-

sider that there is probably a wider group of vessel owners who may feel that they didn't campaign quite hard enough against the 6-mile limit first time around. Those individuals are not going to want to make the same mistake either.

Keep in mind that this battle, like before, is not being fought by NIFA/NIFO alone. We still have the same broad alliance on our side as previously. As the dust settles on the Court ruling, clear heads are coming together and a new policy directive will be requested, demanded even. Be one of those clear heads, make your feelings known politely, but firmly to your local TDs, especially the ones focusing on a particular Dutch "supertrawler", instead of what's happening on their own doorstep. Make your submissions to a new public consultation. Be positive, be forward-thinking and do everything you can because there won't be another bite offered at this cherry. NIFA/NIFO will be doing all that it can.

NOW CONCENTRATE THIS TIME, DOUGAL.

THESE ARE SMALL, BUT THOSE...

ARE FAR AWAY.



Let's not forget as was pointed out to us on the Marine Times Facebook page:

"If you work a 19 foot punt a 60 foot boat is a super trawler!"



IFA Aquaculture Executive Teresa Morrissey points out the inconsistencies in the Government's attitude towards aquaculture and the development of Marine Protected Areas. How will all sectors have adequate marine space and, crucially, how will the marine space be effectively managed when there are multiple policies, multiple sectors and multiple Government Departments involved, she asks?

IFA Aquaculture

The Competition for Ireland's Marine Space

As we are now all aware, there is Government commitment to achieve 30% of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) by 2030, which is to be welcomed by all who use and value the Marine space. The general scheme and heads of bill for primary MPA legislation were published before Christmas and are now progressing through the various stages of the Oireachtas having completed pre-legislative scrutiny by the Joint Oireachtas Committee recently.

This pre-legislative scrutiny process did not include stakeholders from the Seafood sector, so we wrote collectively to the Committee Chair to voice our concerns and make a submission on behalf of the Irish Seafood sector.

Most notably in relation to Aquaculture, Head-14 relates to 'Existing Authorisations' which states that the Minister for Dept. of Housing, Local Government & Heritage

(DHLGH) may make written submission to the Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM) where the "Minister receives a notice of an application of renewal of a licensed aquaculture activity occurring within the boundaries of a Marine Protected Area". Further a submission from the Minister for DHLGH shall include "a request that the Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine attach any measures and additional license conditions". This



Students from the BIM fishmonger skills certificate programme were treated to a tour of Carlingford Oysters with MD Kian Louet-Feisser recently. With most of the students already working as fishmongers, the course is helping them enhance their skills and receive professional certification. See bim.ie for more details on the course

could have some very relevant consequences for aquaculture licence applications and renewals into the future, so there should be mandatory engagement between the different Departments within Government, particularly those that are concerned with licencing marine activities such as DAFM is for fishing and aquaculture.

Similarly, issues surrounding renewal of aquaculture authorisations require the Minister to seek 'best available scientific evidence' from the DAFM which, potentially, may result in loss of necessary authorisation and create serious uncertainty for operators. Such disjointed approaches need to be eliminated with the inclusion of appropriate arrangements between relevant Departments included in the Bill. This basic level of Government Inter-Departmental collaboration should not need to be highlighted. However, in the proposed Bill it seems to be lacking.

It is envisaged that the proposed MPA legislation is intended to work in parallel with the Maritime Area Planning Act (2021) which could be tricky for Irish Aquaculture as the sector is not legislated for in the aforementioned Maritime Area Planning Act (2021).

Along with this, the fact is that the management of the existing Natura 2000 network is the responsibility of National, Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) which is part of the Heritage Division of the DHLGH, but is currently managed separately from the MPA legislative process.

Further to this we also have the development of the Offshore Renewable sector moving forward at breakneck speed, with the second Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDP) undergoing public consultation until the 20th April. This OREDP focuses on the spatial strategy, proposing how the State will identify the

area's best suited for ORE – in other words the OREDP aims to identify suitable marine space for ORE development. In June 2022, the European Commission proposed the Nature Restoration Law (NRL) which aims to have legally binding restoration targets for marine, freshwater and terrestrial ecosystems. The goal is to have 20% of land and sea ecosystems restored in Europe by 2030 – in other words nature restoration also needs adequate marine space.

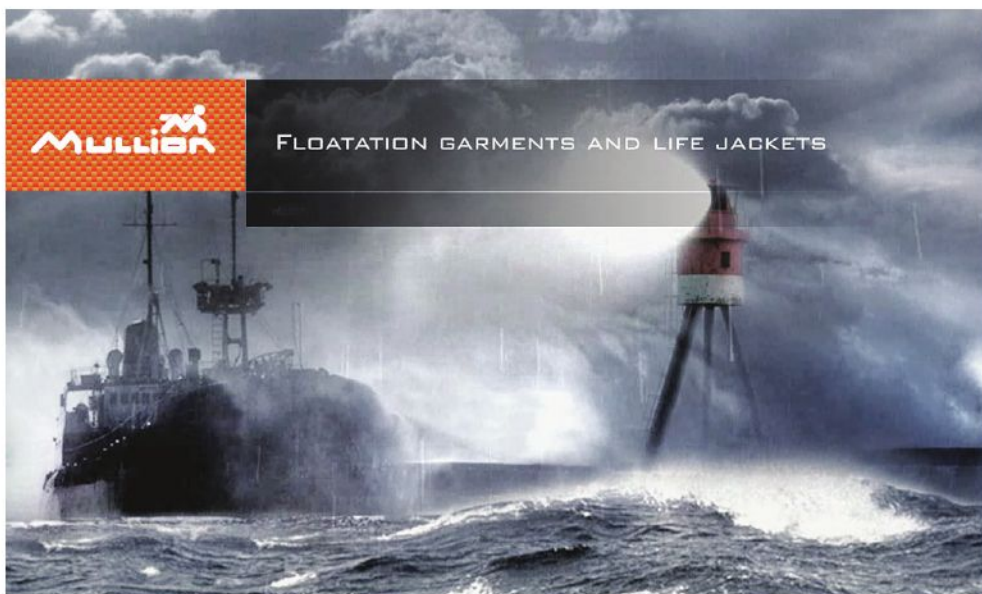
So, how will all the sectors have adequate marine space, and crucially how will the marine space be effectively managed when there are multiple policies, multiple sectors and multiple Govt. departments involved?

The lack of joined-up, realistic thinking in terms of managing marine space and over-arching Marine policy in Ireland is really a cause for continuing concern. We have seen in the past that this approach has caused confusion and difficulty for many in the Marine sector.

Continued and meaningful engagement with all relevant Marine sector stakeholders is the best way to approach this, rather than a top-down, disjointed approach to Ireland's Marine policy.

Annual "Facts & Figures" Infography

The first annual "Facts & Figures infography" about aquaculture has been circulated by AAC-Europe, the Aquaculture Advisory Council which provides advice to the European Commission and Member States on new legislative and regulatory or legal measures at European or national level that affect aquaculture. It includes detailed information about recommendations and expert reports, members, meetings, on-going work, funding and social media activity.



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“A Slap in the Face!” Court of Appeal Overturns Minister’s Policy Directive on the 6-mile Limit

Report by Mark Mc Carthy, Editor

The overturning of the Minister’s policy Directive on the 6-mile limit has come as a massive disappointment to the wider inshore industry who campaigned so earnestly for its implementation. According to the NIFA; “The Court’s ruling comes as a slap in the face to all those who fish and wish to fish on in a sustainable forward-thinking manner.”

The Directive was challenged by two boat owners and in his judgement, Mr. Justice Murray rejected all but one of the grounds of challenge advanced in these proceedings. The blame lies with the Minister and his Department officials for failing to notify the UK (EU members at the time) and the wider EU of the policy directive: “As of April 2019 there was an obligation on the Minister to comply with the provisions of Article 20(2) of the Regulation prior to the commencement of the Policy Directive on 1 January 2020. The failure to comply with that obligation meant that the Policy Directive – in its entirety – could have no legal effect.”

Raising the issue in the Dail, Independent TD Caherine Connolly stated that she raised this issue in the Dail prior to Justice Murray’s findings when seemingly ‘nobody seemed to know this case was coming up for final judgment the following day’. She asked the Government: “In that judgment, the court quashed the policy of the Government. Why was that? It was because the Government failed on one ground, namely, it failed to comply with its legal obligation to notify England and the European Union in regard to the policy it was bringing in. Significantly, it is a wonderful policy. It was brought in during 2019 and due to come into effect in January 2020, over three years ago, with the specific aim of conserving fish stocks and to help fishermen in the area.

“The judgment in July stated that the policy directive was a measure for the conservation of fish stocks and that the failure to notify that measure pursuant to the provision at the time did not invalidate it. It stated that the policy directive was not discriminatory. The Government had the power to bring this in and it was not irrational or invalid. The judgment was positive about this policy and the essence of what it was about. It failed not due to the communication strategy in Ireland but because of the failure to give warning to the European Union and to England.

“Now, we have no policy, more than three years after it was brought in to conserve fish stocks, protect biodiversity and give

small fishermen a chance by excluding boats over 18m. It is now a free-for-all. It is now séasúr oscailte, open season, and the taking of sprat in an unsustainable manner has continued unabated.

“My specific question is this. What urgent action is the Government now taking and what timeline have we now got for the implementation of the policy, having consulted properly with Europe and England?”

Responding on behalf of the Minister, Deputy Niall Collins stated that the Court of Appeal issued a final judgment on 10 March last stating that the applicant fishers were successful on “the narrowest of grounds”. The Minister, Deputy McConalogue, is currently consulting legal advisers to consider the implications of the judgment and the possible next steps.

Responding Deputy Connolly said; “What the Minister of State calls “the narrowest of grounds” was a legal obligation on the Government to notify England and Europe to allow them to have a say in this policy. Now, we are in the crazy situation - “crazy” does not capture it - where it is a free for all within the 6 mile limit as a result of the failure of the Department to carry out its duty. How that happened is beyond me but now that the mistake has been made, what are we doing about it? How quickly can we rectify the mistake? When will this very good policy, which is absolutely essential, be reinstated? It followed a long process of consultation.

“The Minister of State has outlined that there were 900 submissions. The vast majority of these submissions appealed to the Government to do something about sustainability within the 6 mile limit. Since then, we have judgments from the High Court and the Court of Appeal with the final judgment more than two weeks ago and yet the Minister of State is telling me the issue is with “the narrowest of grounds”. There is no explanation as to how the Department failed to comply with its duty or, more importantly, how to rectify that mistake as quickly as possible in order to reinstate the policy. What steps are going to be taken?”

Deputy Collins concluded the Dail exchange with; “I have nothing further to add to what I have already stated in that the Minister is consulting legal advisers on the implications of the judgment and the steps that can be taken.”

As it stands this particular policy directive is now dead. After years of hard work and consultations it cannot be re-visited, tweaked nor re-submitted. However, a new policy Directive can be introduced And so it begins again

BIM’s Taste the Atlantic Young Chef Ambassador Programme is now open for applications

Calling ambitious young chefs with a passion for Irish seafood

BIM in association with Chef Network has announced the 2023 Taste the Atlantic Young Chef Ambassador Programme is open for applications. The seafood mentoring programme, now in its third year, is aimed at ambitious young chefs. It will take them on an immersive journey, where they get first-hand experience of Irish seafood production along the Taste the Atlantic trail, part of the Wild Atlantic Way.

Each of the selected chefs will receive training and mentorship in social media, business, culinary and fish handling skills from experienced industry mentors. They will also be paired with a Taste the Atlantic producer to learn about the provenance of Irish seafood, broadening their knowledge and inspiring the creation of new Irish seafood recipes.

To date, ten chefs have completed the programme.

Taste the Atlantic Young Chef Ambassador from 2022, Becca Sweeney called on all young chefs and student chefs to take up the opportunity to apply.

“The overall experience of the Taste the Atlantic Young Chef Ambassador Programme is magnificent”, says Becca, who is now Head Chef of Sligo’s Hooked restaurant on Ireland’s Wild Atlantic Way.

“It gave me great insight to the culinary world, outside of the kitchen. I have made connections throughout the food industry, developed my fish handling skills, and developed new relationships with local suppliers. I loved meeting seafood producers and understanding their process. As a result I have incorporated more local seafood on my menus and inspired my team through what I learned on the programme. I can’t encourage young chefs enough to apply. The programme has been a huge stepping-stone for my career. My fellow ambassadors and I created unforgettable memories”.

The BIM Taste the Atlantic Young Chef Ambassador programme is inviting applications for chefs aged between 18-24. The closing date for applications is 30 April 2023. Full details are available on www.chefnetwork.ie

The Young Chef Ambassador Programme is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union, under the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).



Roches Point, Cork Harbour - Photo: Carroll O'Donoghue, Kinsale Deep Sea Angling (KinsaleAngling.com)

THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

An Affair in the Antarctic

Fergus O’Gorman, former Head of Research at the Irish Wildlife and National Parks Division and the Department of Lands and Forestry and a former FID with the Falkland Islands Dependency Survey, tells Marine Times Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney, what life was like for three years in the Antarctic and why it took him a long, long time to write a book about it.

Back in December I mentioned in my Maritime Diary that I had met a man who claimed to be “the only living Irishman who wintered in the Antarctic.”

Since then he has been featured on the RTE Nationwide TV programme, has given lectures about his experience and his book has been doing pretty well in sales.

So, it is time to hear more about that “affair” which Fergus had in the Antarctic.

When it finished he headed to Cork and joined the staff of University College Cork as a Lecturer. He liked the time he spent on Leaside, before becoming Head of Research at the Irish Wildlife and National Parks Division in the then Department of Lands and Forestry in Dublin.

“Cork was a nice place, close to the sea, lots of marine advantages and was nowhere as cold as Antarctica,” he tells me and, when I ask why his book has taken more than twenty years to write, he tells me that it is a “fantastic story of a personal journey.” This, I note, is also a description emanating from a Corkman, Polar explorer Pat Falvey.

He started writing the book in 1976. It was published last year by the Harvest Press.

Any author who uses the word “b.....s” in the introduction to a work which took so long must have something special about him. Fergus O’Gorman does and it is all about his life with the Falkland Islands Dependency Survey in Antarctica where, at the age of 23, in the International Geophysical Year of 1957, he arrived in that cold region with a bang!

The *RSS (Royal Research Ship) Shackleton*, known to those aboard as *‘The Shack’* made that impact when it arrived in the cold, windswept Falkland Islands with Fergus aboard as a FIDS novice. On the pier at Port Stanley “a number of people were knocked off their feet when *The Shack*, on its arrival, had a problem coming to a halt and made a significant dent to the jetty,” Fergus recalls. “Captain Norman Browne was not popular with ‘the brass’ waiting to greet us. A further incident later, involving a near-sinking in the ice, heralded an end to his time in the Antarctic!”

Fergus went the entire time of his three-year FIDS assignment. The Falkland Islands Dependency Survey was the original name of the British Antarctic Survey. Fergus had applied to it for a job as a glaciologist. When interviewed, he found out he was being checked out for a post as a meteorologist.

“I didn’t get either job, but I was offered and accepted to be a research biologist, at which I spent three years in Antarctica, starting in October 1957 when I left Southampton aboard the *Shackleton* following the footsteps of two other Irishmen, Ernest Shackleton and Tom Crean.”

After the encounter with Port Stanley’s pier, the FIDS Team headed for South Georgia, then the headquarters of a what was, in many respects, a “bloody” whaling and sealing industry.



Two-and-a-half-hours after dropping Fergus and his companions on Powell Island the *Shackleton* nearly sank and he was the subject of a banner headline news story in *The Sunday Independent*.

“She hit an ice floe and would have gone down, but for heroic efforts by two sailors who went over the side



Fergus facing a bull elephant on the ice at Signy Island

into the freezing waters to stick a patch on the sixteen-foot-long tear in the hull. The banner headline in the paper said – ‘*Irishman in Antarctic Drama*’ and I wasn’t even aboard then. But it’s a great story, isn’t it?”

His task was to survey the nearly extinct Antarctic Fur Seal.

“I hardly knew what they looked like. The only live seals I’d ever seen were in Dublin Zoo. During my research work, I was standing not two yards from a somnolent seal snoozing away on a pebble beach. It was love at first sight on a windswept, snow-covered island!

“I reached out and gently touched its fur which was soft, sleek, oily. I gently stroked its side a couple of times. The upper eye flickered open, the nose lifted up and it looked at me over the top of its head. That was instant panic for me. Grunts from it were followed by a chattering of its jaws, the clicking and clashing of its teeth and a rumbling warble deep in its throat. To my relief, it headed off for the sea. Without a ripple it disappeared into the dark blue depths. I had ruined its nap!

“I did things better later when I got used to having an affair on the ice let me tell you and it was quite enjoyable!

“After some practice I could lie down beside the seals for the survey and stick a thermometer into all sorts of places that can’t be mentioned in polite company, but definitely without causing pain or a stir to them. I could approach any animal, any bird and touch them without, in most cases, getting in return anything other than a somewhat startled look.”

There were, however, different experiences - with the ‘Stinkers’ (Giant Petrels) and with the birds the FIDS called ‘Paddies’ and with the Cape Pigeon, “the prettiest of southern seabird, Fergus tells me. He observed whales on a small open boat, with an outboard engine his only power, made challenging sea journeys.

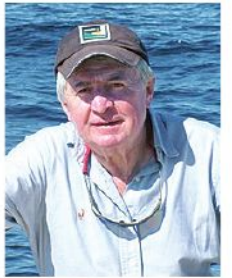
Even though he was part of a team, isolation was an issue, to relieve which he liked the ‘waddling nuns.’

“Several times during the years in the icy wastes my sanity was saved by the Sisters of the Order of the Adélies on Gourlay Peninsula. I would head there if I was in need of peace and freedom. It required several hours of hiking. The sight of miniature black-and-white figures trudging up the slope from the sea put a smile on my face. They were like waddling nuns in black habits and starched white fronts. This was the biggest Penguin rookery in the Antarctic and I make that observation as a good Catholic God-fearing boy!”

There is a lot more in “Antarctic Affair,” about which a number of readers of last December’s *Diary* wanted to hear more about the emotion, poignancy and stories of life and death amongst humans and wildlife in the Antarctic. His story is ‘gripping’ he assured me.

You can hear it in his own words on the April edition of my *MARITIME IRELAND* Podcast programme. Fergus lives in Dalkey, Co.Dublin.

Tom MacSweeney's Maritime Diary



Seascapes Is No More

The end of SEASCAPES, my original 'maritime broadcasting brainchild' came on St. Patrick's Night when it departed the RTE airwaves after a run of 34 years on Radio One.



When one door closes, sometimes we need to turn a handle to open another the gates may be finally locked on RTE's SEASCAPES however Tom's wonderful Maritime Ireland Radio Show / Podcast is going from strength to strength so please do be part of the 'Community of the Sea' and tune in.

It was disappointing that what I had started as a 15-minute weekly programme in 1989, originally for the then Summer months, became silent. Over 22 years as

its Presenter and Producer I built it into a weekly half-hour programme, surviving many twists and turns from RTE radio scheduling administrators who moved it

wildly between different times and evenings, a death-knell for many programmes, but not for SEASCAPES. Around the nation listeners remained loyal and supportive and it gained audience, with the uniqueness of its theme tune, Sailing By, particularly attractive. That was not the Ronald Binge version of the tune broadcast on the BBC's late night Sea Area Forecast. My version came from Ronnie Aldrich and his Orchestra on their Sea Dreams LP.

In many places I was known more by SEASCAPES than for my RTE News radio and television work and so, when I succeeded in becoming RTE's first – and only – Marine Correspondent, I achieved my dream job.

Effective communication is the process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, opinions and knowledge, so that the message is received and understood with clarity and purpose. When we communicate effectively, both the sender and receiver feel satisfied.

A maritime voice is needed because the marine sphere does not get sufficient attention on the national media, electronic or print. Which is why I now present my programme on Community Radio Stations around the country and on all leading Podcast services.

It is also broadcast on the Marine Times website and on the Maritime Ireland website: maritimeirelandradioshow.ie

And the theme tune is Sailing By....

Do tune in

Tom MacSweeney's Maritime Ireland Radio Show & Podcast

Broadcast On 18 Radio Stations and On Podcast Services

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 - KILKENNY CITY RADIO 88.7 FM
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 - CONNEMARA COMMUNITY RADIO 87.8 FM and 106.1 FM
 - CRY 104 FM YOUGHAL
 - ATHLONE COMMUNITY RADIO 88.4 FM
 - WEST CORK FM
 - BERE ISLAND 100.1 FM
 - KINVARA FM
 - COMMUNITY RADIO CASTLEBAR 102.9FM
 - WEST LIMERICK 102 FM
 - TIPP MID WEST RADIO 104.8 FM AND 106.7 FM
 - ROS FM – ROSCOMMON 94.6 FM
- PODCASTS ON APPLE; SPOTIFY; MIXCLOUD; AMAZON; GOOGLE and www.marinetimes.ie

Clean Sweep for Green Rebel at Wind Energy Awards

An Irish data company that provides site investigation services to the offshore wind sector has been recognised at the Irish Wind Industry Awards. Green Rebel was shortlisted in two categories and was named as winner of both at a gala event in Co. Kildare.

The awards were established by Wind Energy Ireland to showcase the best in the industry and to honour the individuals, organisations and companies who are demonstrating excellence and shaping the future of renewable energy in Ireland. Green Rebel received awards for Excellence in Project Delivery and the New Market Entrant award.

The Excellence in Project Delivery trophy was awarded to Green Rebel for the geophysical survey work it carried out on Energia Renewables' North Celtic Sea offshore wind site. This work is a vital step in offshore wind developments, informing important site selection and engineering decisions. The Roman Rebel survey vessel operated 24-hours a day, over a number of weeks, with a team of surveyors, geo-scientists, crew, fishery liaison officer and marine mammal observer on board. Its onshore processing team then carried out the processing, interpretation, analysis and reporting of the data which gave context to the conditions of the seabed at the site.

The organisation's win for the New Market Entrant award is a reflection of Green Rebel's significant growth and success as an innovative Irish company. The company

was established by Cork entrepreneur Pearse Flynn in 2020 when he learned about the extent of investment from offshore wind developers looking into Irish sites that was forecast to be directed outside of Ireland. Green Rebel began as a team of three people and today employs more than 80 people across its Geo, Aerial and MetOcean divisions. It has offices in Cork city, Crosshaven, Cork Airport and Limerick.



David McInerney, ElectroRoute category sponsor presenting the Excellence in Project Delivery award to Kieran Ivers, CEO, Green Rebel.

Green Rebel CEO, Kieran Ivers said, "We were thrilled to win two out of the nine categories at the Irish Wind Industry Awards. This is a reflection of what we are building here at Green Rebel and recognition of our outstanding team, who are consistently commended for their work by our stakeholders and demonstrate our value of Excellence as Standard. At the event, the judges commented on the significance of an Irish Supply Chain Company working with an Irish Developer to drive Ireland's ambition. As a proud Irish company advocating for the development of an indigenous offshore renewable energy supply chain, this was meaningful to us and shows that we are meeting and often exceeding our goals. It was clear to them that Green Rebel is a vibrant, ambitious and 'now' established industry player, put simply, doing great work. In the space of just over two years, we have grown significantly and have delivered multiple successful projects for offshore wind developers. The offshore renewable energy sector has the potential to create jobs and revitalise towns and villages. We believe that Ireland can be at the front of the global green energy industry ensuring that much needed talent is kept locally."

Nominees for the Irish Wind Industry Awards were put forward by Wind Energy Ireland members and non-members. The winners were selected by an independent judging panel.

Some of Green Rebel's significant projects to date include geophysical surveys for Energia's North Celtic Sea Project and SSE's Arklow Bank Wind Farm project, numerous Aerial Ecology surveys and its floating LiDAR system off the coast of Scotland.

Endorse your Certificate of Competency with BIM

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood Development Agency, is urging all skippers of vessels of 15 metres in length and above that hold a Second Hand Limited (SHL) certificate to ensure their Certificate of Competency is endorsed for service as Second Hand Special.

BIM is an approved provider of maritime training on behalf of the Marine Survey Office.

To apply to endorse your certificate of competency please contact BIM to discuss and book any training you need. Contact details for BIM's two colleges are detailed below:

Castletownbere College

National Fisheries College of Ireland,
Castletownbere, Co. Cork

Della O'Sullivan, College Administrator

T: + 353 27 7 1220

E: della.osullivan@bim.ie

Greencastle College

National Fisheries College of Ireland,
Greencastle, Co. Donegal

Maria McCarron, College Administrator

T: + 353 74 938 1068

E: maria.mccarron@bim.ie



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Minister Criticises European Commission Action Plan

Shift in attitude at Marine Department and EU level towards fishing industry?

New Way Forward to Changing CFP?

Report by Tom MacSweeney, Deputy Editor

Could the Government's attitude towards the fishing industry be changing to a more positive, supportive approach in the wake of the united opposition of the industry and Minister Charlie McConalogue to successfully resisting the Norwegian attempt to force its way aggressively into Irish waters for extra blue whiting quota?

"There has been a discernible shift in attitude at both the Department of the Marine and at EU level towards our fishing industry," according to Aodh O'Donnell, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation.

Sean O'Donoghue, CEO at Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, says that the outcome of the blue whiting negotiations offers an opportunity for a new pathway to re-open discussion about resolving the low quotas with which the Irish fishing industry has suffered since the inception of the Common Fisheries Policy.

This needs to be grasped by the industry and supported by Government. The Minister has strongly criticised the European Commission's Review of the Common Fisheries Policy which he has described as failing "to analyse and address the impacts of Brexit, which has been the most significant and enduring challenge faced by the fisheries sector for generations."

Mr. McConalogue told a meeting of the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels in late March that he had approved and formally submitted to the Commission the Irish industry's own Common Fisheries Policy Review Group which included key recommendations that the full impact of Brexit on the functioning of the CFP must be addressed.

"I welcome the progress which has been made under the current Common Fisheries Policy over the past decade in improving the sustainability of fish stocks. The fundamental role played by stakeholders in driving these positive changes has been recognised. However, I am very concerned that the Commission's Review of the CFP has failed to analyse and address the impacts of Brexit. I want to see the development of a comprehensive EU strategy to set clear objectives that will protect and enhance Irish and EU interests. We need to plan for future fishery negotiations with countries such as Norway and the UK, to strengthen the EU's hand. We need to use all available EU tools, including market access, to deal a fair and equitable outcome for our seafood industry."

Perhaps it is all "just straws in the wind" and, without doubt, caution is needed when analysing whether there is change in the Department. Our task at the Marine Times is to report what we see, hear and are told. Readers will make their own judgement.

The March meeting in Brussels mainly focused on the recent package of fisheries policy communications on the Common Fisheries Policy from the European Com-

mission. This consisted of a 'Communication on the Common Fisheries Policy, a report on the Common Market Organisation for fisheries and aquaculture; a communication on the energy transition of the fisheries and aquaculture sector and an Action Plan to protect and restore marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries.

Minister McConalogue also criticised the Commission's proposals for a blanket ban on bottom trawling, which has been vigorously opposed by Irish fishing industry organisations. (See more in the FPOs/CEOs Opinion Pages 8 & 9 of this issue)

"I support the introduction of management measures to achieve the conservation objectives set for Marine Protected Areas, but I do not accept that achieving those objectives requires a blanket ban on the use of mobile fishing gear in all MPAs. There has been no impact assessment by the Commission on this aspect of the proposal nor have they provided any objective basis for this type of approach."

The Council discussion was an initial exchange of views on the Commission's package. Further discussions will take place in the coming months.

Minister McConalogue described it as "a complex package," which will "take time to consider and discuss in detail with stakeholders."

Positive Response from the Industry

Mr. McConalogue's attitude has been welcomed in the industry.

"There has been a discernible shift in attitude at both the Department of the Marine and at EU level towards our fishing industry," according to Aodh O'Donnell, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation. His comment came after the outcome of the EU-Norwegian blue whiting negotiations. "We feel this was due to intense joint lobbying efforts with other fishing organisations. Our industry united as never before to make our voice heard and we are proud of what we achieved together. We feel there has been a discernible shift in attitude at both the Department of the Marine and EU level towards our fishing industry."

The Minister thanked the fishing industry organisations for "close co-operation" during the negotiations and "their active campaigning in Europe that helped to secure this strong outcome."

A New Way Forward?

Sean O'Donoghue, CEO of Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, says that the outcome of the blue whiting negotiations

offers an opportunity for a new pathway to re-open the discussion about resolving the issues of the low quotas with which the Irish fishing industry has suffered since the inception of the Common Fisheries Policy.

"We achieved what we set out to achieve in the EU-Norway blue whiting negotiations and we now have an opportunity to see if we can change the problems we have in lack of quota in other species, which go back to the formation of the Common Fisheries Policy. It is not only blue whiting where we need more quota, there are many other species that we need to go after to get a fair share. What has been achieved in the blue whiting negotiations offers an opportunity that we must grasp.

"The Working Group on the CFP for which the Irish industry produced its Report that was accepted by the Minister and the Government. It made the Irish position clear, which was put forward to the EU. We expect that the Minister and the Government will vigorously pursue those issues over the coming months because within a year I would expect there is going to be some decision taken. That will either be to do nothing, which is what the Commission seems to want, or that we try to redress the imbalance against us in the low quotas we have as an industry and which has been

further affected by Brexit. The blue whiting negotiations have opened a window, but what is most important is that the Commission Report on the CFP has opened a window in the Parliament and in the Council which as an industry we must take advantage of. We have to fight really hard now in terms of trying to redress this huge imbalance that Brexit caused and the fundamental change it has made to the concept of relative stability in the CFP."

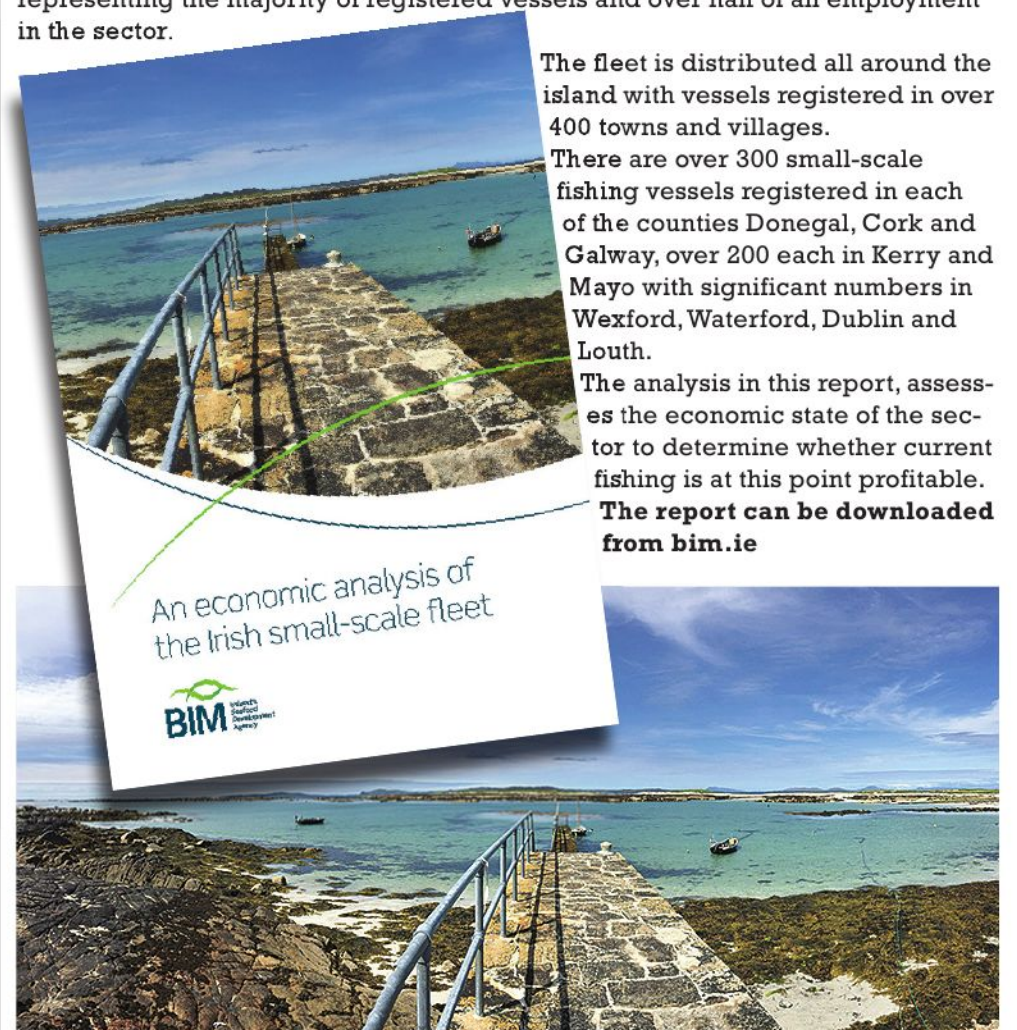
Brendan Byrne, CEO of the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association (IFPEA), said the Irish Government and the EU "have taken too much away from Ireland for too long in fishing, so that others can benefit. This has led to the total decline of our industry, while countries like Norway see massive growth in their seafood sector. That must be changed."

Counter viewpoint: See letters to the Editor on page 30 "McConalogue's effort at fooling the public into thinking that he 'got' Ireland a BW increase is outrageous when this significant increase was known last year and is based on usual ICES scientific advice and recommendations that confirm healthy stocks due to responsible fishing... therefore the fish was already allocated (and for the most part already caught...), so in truth, we got NO increase."

BIM has published its latest report, An economic analysis of the Irish small-scale fleet (SSF). This report represents the most detailed economic assessment of the Irish small-scale fishing fleet carried out to date.

Multiple data sources were used to assess the economic state of the SSF to understand fishing patterns, fleet structure, landing volumes, sales values and export patterns.

The small-scale fleet (SSF) is an integral part of the overall Irish fishing fleet representing the majority of registered vessels and over half of all employment in the sector.



The fleet is distributed all around the island with vessels registered in over 400 towns and villages. There are over 300 small-scale fishing vessels registered in each of the counties Donegal, Cork and Galway, over 200 each in Kerry and Mayo with significant numbers in Wexford, Waterford, Dublin and Louth. The analysis in this report, assesses the economic state of the sector to determine whether current fishing is at this point profitable. The report can be downloaded from bim.ie



Gearing up for their next fishing trip out of Kilmore Quay - Photo: Alan Hinchy

Robust Monitoring and Regulation? Petition to Ban Super Trawlers in Irish Waters as 'Enough is Enough'

Report by Mark Mc Carthy, Editor

At a time when the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority are calling for Irish fishermen to take part in a pilot remote electronic monitoring project off our coasts the irony isn't lost as calls have been made for on-board monitoring of fishing activity off the west coast of Ireland by the world's largest super-trawlers. These obese monsters with nets of over 1km in length seem to be working away with little or no regulation by Irish authorities.

Social Democrats TD Jennifer Whitmore, who is the party's spokesperson on Climate and Biodiversity, said: "The FV Margiris, an industrial-sized fishing vessel, is currently operating in Irish waters off the coast of Cork in an area noted for its rich marine life, including dolphins, porpoises and whales. News of its arrival off our shores has been greeted with dismay by environmental organisations and fishing communities.

"I share their concerns, as these mega-trawlers have the potential to cause enormous damage to ocean biodiversity and can quickly deplete fish stocks.

"At the very least, the activities of super-trawlers should be strictly supervised. I have written to the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) seeking to establish if it is within their remit to assign monitoring personnel to ships like the FV Margiris for the duration of its time in Irish waters. I also asked if CCTV monitoring could be used as part of this process.

"In their response, the SFPA said at sea monitoring activity, including inspection of logbook reports, is carried out by the Fisheries Monitoring Centre. However, there is currently no legal requirement under national or EU regulations for the vessel to have CCTV on board or carry control observers from the relevant coastal state.

"I have now sought further clarity from the SFPA as to whether this type of monitoring would be possible under existing legislation if resources were made available by the State.

"Despite being legally permitted to operate in our waters under EU law, I believe that vessels of this size pose a serious threat to marine life and ultimately should be banned – as is the case in countries such as Australia.

"There is far too much at stake – from both a sustainable fishing and environmental perspective – to allow the operation of these giant trawlers in our seas to go unchecked."

"Dutch super trawler is an annihilating force destroying the Irish fishing fleet" according to Independent TD for Cork South-West Michael Collins who has launched a scathing attack on the presence of the Dutch owned super trawler The FV Margiris off the Cork and Kerry coast.

The Independent TD has also called for clarification on whether the vessel, which can deploy drag nets up to 1 kilometre in length, is being subjected to the same level of robust regulatory supervision or searches by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority as Irish fishing vessels are: "Every time this monster of a vessel enters Irish waters it casts a shadow of destruction over the local fishing fleet," said Deputy Collins.

"It hoovered up thousands of tonnes of fish off Donegal in 2020 and now it is here off the Cork coast to engage in similar levels of catching that Irish fishermen haven't a hope of competing with."

"It is outrageous that we have vessels of this scale freely entering and operating within Irish waters at a time when our own fishermen and fisherwomen are being forced to either decommission their own boats or are being asked to operate with one hand tied behind their backs in terms of the paltry quota limits 'negotiated,' or more accurately, surrendered, by our own incompetent Government."

"There is no place for this type of vessel in Irish waters and its future entry must be restricted."

"The first priority of the Irish Government and indeed the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine should be about ensuring that such a restriction is given the force of law so that Irish fishermen and fisherwomen can have their already tenuous livelihoods protected," concluded Deputy Collins.

Sinn Féin spokesperson on Fisheries and the Marine, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn TD, has commenced a petition to the Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, calling for super trawlers to be banned from Irish waters.

The petition can be found here: <https://my.uplift.ie/petitions/ban-super-trawlers-in-irish-waters>

Deputy Mac Lochlainn's action follows the presence of the two largest super trawlers in the world, the 475 foot Annelies Ilena and the 470 foot Margiris, fishing in Irish waters over the last week.

They were joined by another super trawler, the 383 foot Helen Mary. All three vessels are owned by the huge Dutch corporation, Parlevliet & van der Plas.

Teachta Mac Lochlainn said: "I have commenced this petition because enough is enough.

"The presence of these monster vessels in Irish waters is a kick in the teeth for a struggling Irish fishing industry that is facing further quota cuts, tie-up schemes and the decommissioning of dozens of vessels.

"These super trawlers are undoubtedly causing untold damage to precious fish stocks off Ireland's coast. Last year, the Margiris shed 100,000 dead fish into the Bay of Biscay off the coast of France.

"How can anyone within the Irish government or European Commission call this method of fishing sustainable with a straight face?

"It is highly destructive and it must be stopped. These supertrawlers have been banned from fishing in Australian waters and they should be banned from fishing in all European waters now too."



SFPA Seek Participants for Pilot Remote Electronic Monitoring Project

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) is seeking a number of Irish registered fishing vessels to participate in a Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) pilot project, which is part of a larger European Union, North-Western Waters (NWW) REM initiative. REM is a technology that allows for the remote monitoring of fishing vessels, providing valuable information on fishing activity and compliance with regulative requirements, including the landing obligation. The SFPA has written to Fisheries Producer Organisations to encourage participation in the REM pilot project.

Commenting on the REM pilot project, SFPA Executive Chairperson Paschal Hayes said: "We believe that this technology has the potential to bring significant benefits to the Irish fishing industry and in assisting the SFPA to fulfil its control and enforcement mandate for all fishing vessels operating in Ireland's EEZ. Efforts by SFPA personnel to secure volunteer fishing vessels to participate in the REM pilot project have, to date, proved unsuccessful. Therefore, we are seeking the advocacy of Ireland's Fishery Producer Organisations to encourage a small number of Irish registered fishing vessels to participate in the REM pilot project. The SFPA wishes to work with the Irish fishing industry to manage the introduction of REM, and to explore its potential benefits as well as address any concerns through the pilot project.

"The legislative introduction of REM in fisheries control at European level is nearing certainty, having passed through the initial consultative stage, through the European Parliament and back for final consultations. Furthermore, there has been work in the UK and Scotland to mandate the use of REM for some areas and some fisheries, which may impact Irish fishers. Therefore, we feel it is important that we gain real and meaningful experience of REM and put ourselves in a position where both the SFPA and the Irish fishing industry can guide and advise on the technicalities of REM, its introduction and uses. Ireland holds the largest stake in the NWW, and gaining experience of REM is, we feel, of significant importance for our fishing industry."

Naming Ceremonies and Rescues



Niamh Stephenson, Media Manager reports that the month of April will see two naming ceremonies for lifeboats in Ireland, a D-class at Portrush and the 'Launch a Memory' Shannon lifeboat at Clifden.



A 'Naming Ceremony' is a special occasion where we honour the donor who has funded the lifeboat and welcome their family and close friends to the station and its personnel. Portrush RNLI will name their D-class The Ken Blair, on April 15. Clifden RNLI will name their new lifeboat, St. Christopher, on Saturday, April 22nd.

Clifden's lifeboat is moored away from the shore but on 'naming day' will be brought onto Clifden beach, available to view up close between 2 and 4 p.m. This will enable the many people who put their loved one's name on the lifeboat for the 'Launch-a-Memory' campaign to see it up close.

With the longer evenings, there is the opportunity to take part in the RNLI's Mayday Mile fundraiser – taking on the challenge of covering a mile a day for the month of May. You can cover one mile in any way you like every day in May, with sponsorship raising vital funds for RNLI lifesavers. The fundraiser takes place from Monday, May 1 to Wednesday, May 21. To sign up and find out more at RNLI.org/SupportMayday

Two stories about 'casualty' in the RNLI now and how we use it in different ways. We call everyone who the lifeboat crews assist a 'casualty' to differentiate between them and the lifeboat crew. You may even hear the term 'casualty vessel' for the craft in trouble.

Call-outs involving large numbers of casualties can be challenging, a lot of people who suddenly find themselves in a position that they never imagined they would be in when they took to the water for work or enjoyment.

One such occurred for Lough Derg RNLI when the inshore lifeboat was launched to assist forty people on a 40ft passenger vessel aground on a rocky shoal off Bonaveen Point on the County Galway shore, at the north-western end of Lough Derg.

Lifeboat Helm Eleanor Hooker with crew Doireann Kennedy and Oisín Higgins launched into a north-westerly, gusting Force 6. With the large number of people involved, Valentia Coast Guard also requested Killaloe Coast Guard to launch. The lifeboat crew navigated around two shallow shoals to make a safe approach, keeping in VHF contact with both Valen-

tia Coast Guard and the 'casualty' vessel. While no water was getting onboard there was a significant hazard on their starboard side.

The lifeboat came alongside the port side of the casualty vessel and given the number of casualties on board, the location of the vessel and the weather conditions on the lake, the lifeboat helm made the decision to take the vessel off the shoal. Killaloe Coast Guard came alongside the lifeboat's port side and took some passengers off to lighten the 'casualty' vessel. Members of the Killaloe Coast Guard mobile unit had travelled by road and met the casualties to drive them to their cars. In all, six passengers were transferred across to the Killaloe Coast Guard vessel.



Lough Derg lifeboat approaching the casualty vessel which had 40 people aboard

A RNLI volunteer boarded the 'casualty' vessel to set up a bridle for tow. They then took the vessel off the rocks clear of the hazard on its starboard side. It was able to make way under its own power.

Eleven crew members at Wicklow RNLI took part in intensive casualty first aid care training at their station. This took up to 30 hours of their time over two weeks. Stephen O'Flaherty, is the RNLI's Casualty Care Trainer and travels the country to deliver training on site to the lifeboat crews. The RNLI is in his blood as his mother, Phil, has been involved with the RNLI for many years and is based in Crosshaven, Co. Cork.

The RNLI is in a partnership with the GAA. While it is based on water safety, the paths of the volunteers often cross in their communities. Members of Erin's Own GAA club travelled to Dunmore East RNLI to present the station with a cheque for €45,733, the proceeds from their sponsored Croagh Patrick climb. Erin's Own is in the beautiful county of Kilkenny, in Castlecomer to be exact. The climb was held in memory of their club mate Nicky Connolly and in aid of the station. The club's generosity is much appreciated.



(Above): Courtmacsherry All Weather RNLI Lifeboat "Frederick Storey Cockburn" was called out at 1.30 pm on Friday "St Patricks Day", to aid a large 70ft fishing vessel that sought assistance 50 miles off the Old Head of Kinsale .

(Below): Wicklow RNLI volunteer crew with Stephen O'Flaherty (standing).



Members of Erin's Own GAA club travelled to Dunmore East RNLI to present the station with a cheque for €45,733, the proceeds from their sponsored Croagh Patrick climb.

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IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP

IWDG NEWS

Increasing demand for scarce minerals and trace elements used in smart phones, electric cars and green energy is creating a problem writes the CEO of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Dr. Simon Berrow

Deep Sea Mining: An Emerging Issue

As if we didn't have enough new policies being rolled out for our marine environment, one more that is getting more and more media attention is Deep Sea Mining (DSM). The driver is increasing demand for scarce minerals and trace elements used in technologies such as smart phones, electric cars and green energy which is putting greater demand on existing land-based sources of these minerals.

With an estimated value of over 14 billion euro by 2030, the development of DSM would be some of the largest planned mining operations in history. Current exploration licences cover an area of 1.5 million km alone, which if mined commercially to entirety, would be the equivalent to mining the combined area of France, Spain, Portugal, and Germany.

Technology based impact assessment tool for sustainable, transparent deep sea mining exploration and exploitation (TRIDENT) by the Marine Institute and UCC and funded by the EU, aims to develop a reliable, transparent and cost-effective system for continuous environmental impact assessment and monitoring of DSM. The TRIDENT study states "before mining activities can start, potential environmental impacts and mitigation approaches must be fully understood. The effective monitoring and inspection system to be developed will comply with international and national legal frame-

works". However the IWDG propose that as no mitigation is effective enough, and the environmental consequences too high, that DSM in Ireland should be banned.

To inform this emerging issue, the IWDG with funding support from the Heritage Council have published a comprehensive review of current knowledge on DSM and its likely effects on whales and dolphins. Impacts include increased noise levels, introducing bright artificial light in a completely dark environment, producing sediment plumes and the resuspension of toxic chemicals and accelerating carbon emissions.

Following this review the IWDG concluded that without an independent environmental regulator and sufficient knowledge of deep-sea ecosystems and how they impact on the global environment, we are not in a position to responsibly proceed with commercial DSM, both on the High Seas and within national jurisdictions. Ireland as a member of the International Seabed Authority and various international treaties has a right, and a duty, to protect the marine environment on the high seas and within Ireland's EEZ from transboundary effects.

For more information please see <https://iwdg.ie/deep-sea-mining-a-comprehensive-review/>

www.iwdg.ie

Marine Institute Welcomes Historic UN Agreement on Protecting Marine Biodiversity in International Waters

After more than a decade of negotiations, the countries of the United Nations have agreed the first ever treaty to protect the world's oceans that lie outside national boundaries. The UN High Seas Treaty places 30% of the world's oceans into protected areas, puts more money into marine conservation and means new rules for mining at sea. This will help reverse biodiversity losses and ensure sustainable development.

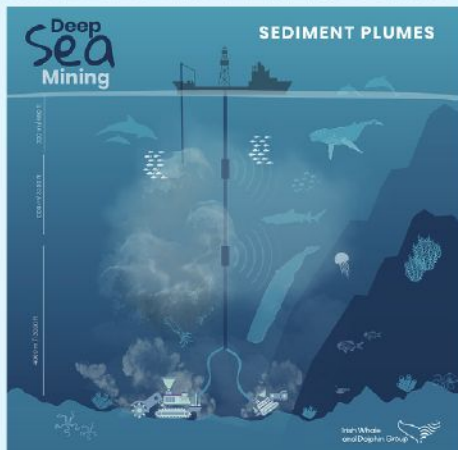
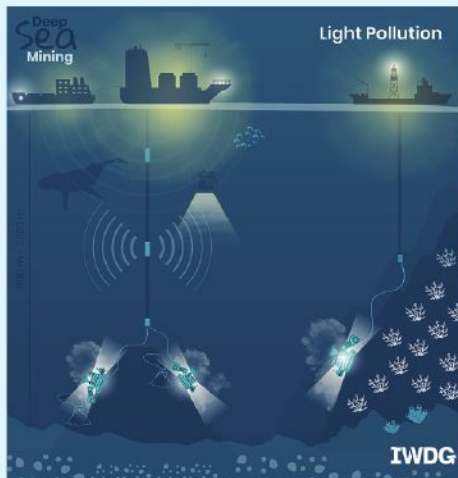
The treaty was agreed at UN Headquarters in New York on the 4th March, 2023, where tough negotiations on the draft treaty have been under way for the past two weeks. The agreement reached by delegates of the Intergovernmental Conference on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction is the culmination of UN-facilitated talks that began in 2004.

In welcoming the Treaty, Dr Paul Connolly, CEO Marine Institute said: This is a historic agreement and finally offers a framework for governments to work together to protect our global ocean. Ensuring a sustainable future for our ocean is one of the great missions of the next decade. The ocean is our life source, supporting humanity and every other organism on Earth and is critical to our shared future. Put simply, without a healthy ocean we will not have a healthy future. International cooperation is essential for developing the scientific research and innovative technologies needed to protect and preserve the ocean and all that it sustains.

In a Statement from the UN, Secretary-General António Guterres said: The Treaty is crucial for addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. This agreement will counter the destructive trends facing ocean health, now and for generations to come. The statement issued by the UN also recognized the critical support of non-governmental organizations, civil society, academic institutions and the scientific community.

Noting that the BBNJ decision builds on the legacy of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Secretary-General commended all parties for their ambition, flexibility and perseverance, and saluted Ambassador Rena Lee, of Singapore, for her leadership and dedication. "Ladies and gentlemen, the ship has reached the shore," Ms. Lee said last night, announcing the agreement to an extended standing ovation in the meeting room.

Delegations will reconvene later to formally adopt the text.



Deep Sea Mining IWDG

Undetermined amounts of sequestered carbon from deep-sea sediments pumped to the surface are likely to be re-emitted into the atmosphere

Cetaceans will be impacted by anthropogenic noise introduced from a variety of sources

Sediment discharge plumes may be created which could cover a wide area, and release toxic chemicals

Deep-sea ecosystems recover slowly when damaged, if at all

Operations will introduce bright artificial light in what would otherwise be a completely dark environment

Mining types	Environmental impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cobalt-rich crusts • Polymetallic sulphides • Polymetallic nodules • Other forms of deep sea mining 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise pollution • Light pollution • Sediment plumes and resuspension of toxic chemicals • Climate change

Ireland could experience emerging deep sea mining interests in the coming decades. A new study called TRIDENT

news from **Northern Ireland**
 editor@marinetimes.ie



Benaiah IV out of Kilkeel - Photo courtesy Leslie Campbell

Northern Ireland Set to Improve Fishing Safety & Supply Chain Transparency

The fishing fleet in Northern Ireland will benefit from a new Fishing First Safety Management project from The Seafarers' Charity.

The Northern Ireland Fishing First project is set to benefit fishing vessel owners and crew in Northern Ireland. The project is led by Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers' Organisation (ANIFPO) and Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation (NIFPO).

This new project from The Seafarers' Charity builds on the 2021 Fishing First Safety Management project in the Southwest of England which improved the safety management practices of 50 fishing vessels. Fishing First Safety Management is a bespoke auditable safety management system for a fishing vessel which evidences compliance with legislation in respect of the management of health, safety and welfare onboard the vessel. The project makes use of the SafetyFolder to build an onboard safety management system which can be audited. The bespoke nature of the service makes it suitable for all vessel sizes and gear types. This new project in Northern Ireland will audit up to 30 vessels' safety management systems. In addition to the original South West project, the Northern Ireland project will focus on increasing supply chain transparency

for retailers and develop and test a new country-wide mechanism to identify and manage crew grievances.

The Seafarers' Charity underwrote the cost of delivering this project prior to full funding being confirmed. The Charity will be managing payments and communications, as well as leading a consultative committee consisting of representatives from industry, seafood retailers, funders and others. The project also includes on-the-ground support from Seafish who will coordinate meetings of an industry implementation group in Northern Ireland. The first implementation group meeting was hosted by the ANIFPO at Kilkeel Harbour and saw fishing vessel owners and fish producer organisations meet with the SafetyFolder to discuss how the service will be developed and delivered in Northern Ireland.

Funding for the project has been provided by ANIFPO, NIFPO, Kilkeel Seafoods, Fishmongers' Company's Fisheries Charitable Trust and the Seafood Ethical Action Alliance (SEAA), which is a consortium of retailers and seafood businesses concerned with human rights abuses in the global seafood supply chain.

Andy Hickman, Head of the Sea Alliance Programme says "The SEA Alliance Change on the Water Fund aims to support projects in our member company supply chains that positively impact the human rights and labour standards of fishers. We welcome the fact that the Northern Irish fishing industry is seeking to develop improved grievance processes for fishers, and that they have committed to involving crew themselves in the development of these, alongside vessel owners and supply chain actors. Our 30 member

companies, made up of leading retailers and seafood businesses, recognise that we have a responsibility to contribute to improvement work in the supply chains that produce our seafood."

Alan McCulla OBE, CEO of the ANIFPO says "We want to develop a grievance reporting system within this project as we want to take action to improve the welfare and working conditions of our crew (many of whom are migrant workers). We recognise we need to make it easier to hear from them about any concerns and that this can help us to respond and ensure a safe and decent working environment for everyone."

This project's objective is to make fishing safer for all by ensuring vessels operate legally and crew have access to decent work. This includes ensuring decent living and working conditions, maintaining appropriate labour standards and support for the human rights of all crew.

Ultimately, fishing remains the highest risk industry in the UK, and despite many initiatives and the implementation of ILO C188 there remains an unacceptable level of accidents, fatalities and welfare issues. The Seafarers' Charity is committed to improving safety in the UK fishing fleet. The charity supports the Fishing First Safety Management System as a proven auditable safety management method which adheres to an international standard and can be utilised by fishing vessels and crews of all sizes. Taking forward this new Fishing First project in Northern Ireland is an important step for the Charity in expanding the service to the entire UK fishing fleet.

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Portaleen Pier, Glengad - Photo: Catherine Turner

Greencastle Bearing the Brunt of No Access to Rockall

Rockall is a traditional fishing ground for Irish fishermen, in particular Donegal fishermen. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine has assessed the loss to be in the millions of euro. In the case of the likes of Greencastle, as much as 25% to 30% of the income could be lost. It is outrageous and has no basis in international law. Two years later, what is the Government is doing about this?

The Government acknowledges that approximately 25 Irish vessels have fished in the waters around Rockall during the spring and summer months in recent years. Under the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, EU vessels must be licensed by the UK authorities. Since 1st January 2021, the licences issued by the UK to EU vessels, where granted, expressly preclude access to the 12 nautical mile zone around Rockall.

Irish vessels have traditionally fished for haddock and squid in the waters around Rockall. Haddock may be caught within and outside 12 nautical miles of Rockall, but squid is caught within six nautical miles of it. Other stocks caught in the waters around Rockall, within the 12-mile area and outside, are monk and megrim.

In a recent Dail debate, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn once again raised the issue of Rockall criticising the lack of impetus by the Government on such an important issue for Donegal fishermen; "This is outrageous. There is no basis in international law for putting a nautical mile limit around an uninhabited rock. There is no basis for this under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS. It is absolute nonsense. How on earth is the Government tolerating this? How is it not being taken to international arbitration? Why did the Government sign off on the Maritime Jurisdiction Act on access for the British Government to and control of the area at a time when it is negotiating to reinstate our traditional fishing grounds to our fishermen? Who on earth would tolerate that?"

"We talk about Brexit and the attitude of the Tories. They have arbitrarily kicked Irish fishermen out of our traditional fishing grounds, with no international legal basis for doing so. I have raised this issue many times over the past two years on the floor of the House and nothing has been done about it. The Government has not called this out internationally or gone for international arbitration. How many times does the Government have to talk to these people before it does what is right by international law?"

"Under Brexit, the British Government and fishermen

around the coast of Britain regained 70% of what are now territorial waters. We lost about 15% of the overall value. In areas like pelagic fishing, nephrops and prawns, we were badly walloped. This industry in Ireland is currently being decommissioned. The whitefish sector in Ireland is about a third of what it was 15 years ago. This is the reality of the Irish fishing sector.

"We have tolerated a situation whereby we are being excluded from our traditional fishing grounds in Rockall. Up to 30% of the value in somewhere like Greencastle is gone. We have allowed this to happen for two years. There is no basis in international law for this. It is an uninhabited rock. We cannot put a six or 12-mile limit around an uninhabited rock. It is utter nonsense. Why are we tolerating this?"

Killybegs Marine Cluster

The Killybegs Marine Cluster welcomed the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC), together with Donegal ETB to Killybegs, to gain insight into this unique marine ecosystem and understand the vast career opportunities available within the blue economy. This visit involved a series of short informative presentations from KMC members and stakeholders as well as site visits to several businesses.

Killybegs Marine Cluster is an Enterprise Ireland funded marine cluster which currently comprises 20 members with combined annual revenues in excess of €300m and exports representing circa 95% of turnover. The member companies employ between 2 and 250 full time staff & collectively provide sustainable employment for more than 1,000 people. The business activities are across a number of blue economy related domains including Commercial Fishing (Base industry), Fish Processing, Marine Engineering, Aquaculture, Offshore Marine Services and Marine Tourism.

Paddy Is Home From The Sea Again

Paddy Conaghan worked in tunnels in Thailand, Hong Kong, Denmark, the Channel Islands, Isle of Man and everywhere from Lands End to John O' Groats, but he says his greatest achievement was driving and ducking 515 times at beaches clockwise around Ireland as he celebrated his eighty second birthday in January. Paddy set off on his latest quest on the 4th December 2022 having previously faced the challenge of diving off as many piers as possible anti clockwise around Ireland.

His first challenge raised over €100,000 for Gemma's legacy of hope charity.

His chosen charities this time continues to support mental health and a charity close to his heart, the RNLI.

Paddy said "I chose the RNLI because I am very familiar with the work they do in saving lives at sea, we have a lifeboat on Arranmore since 1883 that has saved many lives and I thought the RNLI would be a safe bet if I got into bother in my ventures around the coast. They also rely on fundraising by the public so I hope I can raise some money for them"

Paddy was supported at every swim by people who turned out to swim with him, supplied him with food, towels and the odd bottle of whiskey to stave off the cold.

Owners of the Arranmore Blue Ferry Seamus and Louise Boyle supplied him with a van and kitted it out with bedding and cooking appliances and Paddy chose to stay full time in the van despite many offers of bed and breakfast. Paddy felt it added to the challenge to stay in the van, enduring temperatures of minus 2 degrees centigrade.

Prior to completing his final swim at Maghery beach, Donegal, Paddy was thinking of how this venture might end and came up with the idea of leaving his final swim for somebody else to start a similar challenge. In Paddy's own words "I would really like somebody else to continue this challenge on a yearly basis, always leaving Maghery beach for the next challenger. I am so glad to have completed the circuit twice, it gave me a great sense of satisfaction to do something for the various charities, I wasn't doing much else with my life".

Arranmore RNLI press officer Nora Flanagan, spoke to Paddy on arrival back in Arranmore on Sunday 13th March and said "Paddy is the most unassuming, modest man I have the pleasure to know, I asked him about his World Open Water Swimming Awards (WOWSA) Man of the Year award, an award which celebrate individuals and offerings that embody the spirit of open-water swimming and have positively impacted the community, showcasing their determination, fortitude, sense of adventure, tenacity and perseverance and he said he didn't think he deserved it because many people swim in the sea. Yes they do, but not many would dive into the sea several times a day around Ireland in the middle of winter to raise funds for charity.

"The RNLI is a charitable institution which relies on people like Paddy to help keep the lifeboats afloat. Many people volunteer with the RNLI as crew, fundraisers and shore crew and together our one aim is to support the lifeboats to continue saving lives. I asked Paddy what he's going to do now with time on his hands and all he said was "I'm thinking" and I have no doubt that he is".

If you wish to donate to Paddy's charities you can follow the link www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/paddysadventure

(Thank you to Norah Flanagan, Arranmore RNLI for story.)

International Fishing and Maritime News

Norway Should Look Again at Full EU Membership

Norway's former Prime Minister Erna Solberg, who is also Leader of the country's Conservative Party, has suggested it is "high time" that Norway should once again look at seeking full membership of the European Union.

At the moment the country is in the EU single market through its membership of the European Economic Area (EEA). The Conservative party has said it will scrap the 'salmon tax' that is favoured by the present Government but strongly opposed by the aquaculture industry if it is re-elected in 2025. The 'salmon tax' is a tax of ground rent on fish farms.



The Conservative party has been under pressure from the industry and its likely Coalition ally, the more right-wing Progress or FrP party, to take a firm stand against the current government's controversial tax proposal. The government, led by the Labour and Centre parties, has seen its poll ratings plummet over both the cost of living issue and the 'salmon tax' which is favoured by environmental interests. The Conservatives are widely tipped to form the next coalition government in two and a half years' time.

The 'salmon tax' pledge was made at the Conservative Party's annual conference by Deputy Leader Henrik Asheim. It would examine an industry tax that would be more equitably based on profits. Norway last had a Referendum on EU membership in 1994, when just over 52% voted against joining. The EU is regarded as certain to become a political battleground in the next general election campaign. However, the country's fishing industry would be expected to once again come out strongly against full EU membership.

77 Per Cent of English Fleet Under 10 Metres

Three-quarters of the English fishing fleet is under 10 metres in size, accord-

ing to data presented to the House of Lords by the Minister of State for Biossecurity, Marine and Rural Affairs, Lord Richard Henry Benyon.

"Data from the Seafish annual fleet economic survey shows that in 2021 there were 2,017 fishing vessels in England. This figure is stable year-on-year but represents a 10% decrease on pre-Covid levels (2015-2019 average). The top three species landed, by value, by these vessels were crab, lobster and mackerel with an average Gross Value Added (GVA) of £66,000 per vessel in 2021 (2021 prices). Average GVA contributions per vessel in 2021 differ between vessels which are under 10m (£20,000) and over 10m (£237,000). Around 77% of the English fishing fleet is less than 10 metres.

"The average GVA per English vessel was stable year-on-year but saw a 12% real terms reduction compared to pre-Covid levels. This decline was driven by a 19% real terms reduction in average GVA per vessel for the English over 10m fleet, while the under 10m fleet experienced a 7% increase. In 2021, there were 2,683 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) crew members on English fishing vessels. Like the number of vessels in the English fleet, this figure is stable year-on-year but represents a 13% decline on pre-Covid levels. The decline is more significant in the under-10 metre fleet than the over-10 metre fleet who saw a reduction in FTE crew members of 32% and 6% respectively," he said.

China A Net Importers of Seafood

China has become a net importer of seafood, according to a new analysis by The Fish Site.

It says this "should be good news for farmers: both in countries like Ecuador and Vietnam, which are exporting more shrimp and pangasius to China, and for those in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, who may not have to compete with cheap Chinese tilapia imports for much longer."

Scottish Salmon UK's Biggest Food Export

Scottish salmon is the UK's biggest single food export, outperforming bakery goods, chocolate, cheese, cereals and lamb, according to figures issued by HM Revenue & Customs. They show that salmon accounted for 56% of Scotland's total fish and seafood exports by value last year and that fresh and chilled Scottish salmon made up 33% of the UK-wide fish and seafood total. With smoked and processed salmon included, that figure increased to 41% – stg£705m.



Scottish exports of all fish and seafood were valued at stg£1.04 billion in 2022. That is 2% higher than the previous year. But fresh, whole Scottish salmon export sales of stg£578m. were down 6%, compared with 2021. The EU accounted for nearly 64% of sales, with the US and Chinese markets also remaining popular. The volume of fish transported overseas fell by 26%, reflecting tight supplies globally and more Scottish salmon being sold in the UK domestic market – which is valued at around £1.2bn annually.

High Farm Tax Proposed in Faroes

The new Social Democrat-led government elected in the Faroe Islands in December has shocked the salmon farming industry with a proposal for a big rise in the ground rent tax on salmon farms.



At the highest level it would double up to 20 per cent of the present figure. The rise is higher than that suggested by the previous administration.

Details of the tax have been circulation to the industry for consultation before it is voted on by the Faroese Parliament.

Octopus Farming Controversy in Spain

The Spanish food processing company, Nueva Pescanova, is proposing to build the world's first indoor octopus farm in Gran Canaria, a 1,000-tank facility producing 3,000 tonnes of octopus a year.

The proposal is causing controversy and opposition from environmental and animal rights groups. Octopus is a popular ingredient in many country's cuisines. Octopuses can put on 5% of their body weight in a day, an appealing prospect for aquaculture, but are regarded as difficult to breed in captivity. Nueva Pescanova has announced a scientific breakthrough, allowing them it claims, to farm Atlantic common octopus.

It says this can reduce catching methods such as sea-bed trawling and ensure "marine-based food, relieving pressure on wild fishing grounds".

Bay of Biscay Causing French Government Problems

The French Council of State decision to ban fishing in the Bay of Biscay has caused huge controversy and strong criticism by Comite des Peches (CNP-MEM), the official representative body of the fishery sector in France. It has written to the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, criticising the decision by the Council which is the highest Court in France.

"The ban on fishing in the Bay of Biscay will be the death of fishermen. Radical environmentalism is endangering food security in France and Europe," the Fisheries Committee has told President Macron.

The Council of State told the French Government to make legislation prohibiting fishing in the bay after a big increase in the number of dead dolphins being washed ashore on beaches. The French Oceanographic Institute reported that at least 910 dolphins were washed ashore on France's Atlantic coastline since the start of the winter. Over a single week, more than 400 marine mammals were found stranded along the coast. Environmental non-governmental organisations have been pressurising the French Government and the European Commission to stop fishermen operating in the Bay of Biscay which, the NGOs say, would protect dwindling dolphin numbers.

The French Government's Department for the Sea told the Council of State an emergency plan has been in place since the Summer of last year in conjunction with the fishermen, NGOs and scientists. This includes cameras and scaring devices to keep cetaceans away from fishing nets. The Secrétariat said that the fishing sector had demonstrated its desire to preserve the marine environment and biodiversity through investment made by fishermen in these measures.

Fish Lizards Were Around 250 Years Ago in Norway

Ancient "fish-lizards" were swimming around the oceans 250 million years ago, long before scientists thought they first emerged.



Researchers discovered fossilised remains of an ichthyosaur on Spitsbergen, a Norwegian Arctic island in the Svalbard archipelago, Live Science website reports.



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Atlantic Quest landed her first catch into Castletownbere under the new ownership of Aidan O Callaghan. We like to wish Aidan, Susan and his crew happy and safe fishing.
Photo: Anne Marie Cronin Photography

news from Castletownbere

Helen Riddell



Castletownbere St Patrick's Day Parade

The organisers of the Castletownbere St Patrick's Day Parade have extended their thanks to all who took part and who came to view what was a fantastic event. The day started with a live broadcast by Bere Island Community Radio, thanks to Paul Moore, John Walsh, Dominic Hallahan, Paul O'Shea and Dorothy Brophy and all those who were interviewed on the day. This was followed by live music with Aoife O'Neill who did a fantastic job entertaining the crowd as they gathered for the parade and thanks also to Ivalo Linder who looked after sound on the day.

The parade started at 3.00pm led by piper Etienne Baranger who led the parade through the town and back to the Square. The quality of the floats was first class, the work, effort and thought that went into each one was amazing, and the judges Kim Kinsella and Michael Donaghy had a hard task of choosing the winners which were: Overall winner: Bere Island National School. Most entertaining: Castletownbere GAA. Best effort: Scoil an Chroí Ró Naofa, Castletownbere. Best business: Dursey Boat Trips. Best voluntary: Caha Centre Adrigole Men's Group. Best walking group: Castletownbere Coast Guard. Best music group: Garnish Sound from Lehanmore Community Centre. Best U13: Cahermore National

School. Best U6: Eyeries Playgroup. Best commercial: Mowi.

Thanks were extended to all those who helped in anyway: Stewards, Brendan O'Driscoll, Anthony O'Regan, Seán Cronin, Basil Murphy, Vincent Murphy and Richard Sheehan. Amanda Cronin for distributing medals to the children. Sandra Regan, Deirdre Harrington, Dorothy Brophy, Andrea Lotty, members of the Castletownbere Development Association for their help. Mike Popovici who gave his time with the forklift to bring and clear the barriers. David Regan and Kevin McCarthy who brought and took away the stage To John Joe Sullivan, Donal Dan O'Sullivan who register the floats every year. To all committee members Anne Marie Cronin, Donal Kelly, Garnish and to Miah O'Sullivan for his patience behind the scenes during the week!!! To Scoil Rince Carney dancers who performed outside the Skippers. To SuperValu for their continued sponsorship of the huge hamper which was the prize for fundraising Raffle. The winner was Patrick O'Connor, Knockrua.

Maggie Dunne Commemoration

On Easter Sunday Mass will be celebrated for Maggie Dunne at 12.00pm at St Fachtna's Church Adrigole. On April 8th 1923, six weeks before the ending of the Irish Civil War, local Cumann na mBan

member Margaret (Maggie) Dunne was fatally wounded after an incident involving the Free State Army and local Irregular IRA members at Droumlave, Adrigole. Maggie was 26 years old at the time of her death and her funeral drew a huge crowd to the local parish church.

To mark this historic occasion Maggie's extended family have organised a commemoration to mark the centenary of her tragic death. Following mass a piper will lead the congregation to the site where Maggie was fatally wounded and a plaque will be unveiled in her honour.

Peninsula Players

Peninsula Players will perform two short plays, Joining the Club and Murder in Little Grimley, in the Béara Bay Hall Castletownbere on Friday April 7th and Saturday April 8th. Both plays are comedies, written by David Tristram, and there will be a short interval between the two.

Doors will open at 7.30 pm with the performance starting at 8.00pm. Admission is €10, payable on the door. Seating is limited so come early!

New SVP Shop

The official opening and blessing of the new St Vincent de Paul Shop in Castletownbere took place Tuesday March 14th, officiated at by Fr. Noel Spring and the tape was cut by JJ Mc Loughlin. Donal Kelly, President of St Vincent de Paul in Beara said it was a very special occasion and they were delighted to welcome all to celebrate with them. He said these are very difficult times for everyone with the ever increasing costs of living and more people are turning to St Vincent de Paul for help. Donal said that all proceeds raised in the shop are spent on the people of Beara.

It is hoped that the shop will be open 6 days a week if more volunteers can be recruited. There are currently 2 places available on FAS and CE schemes. Anyone in need of help from St Vincent de Paul should ring 083 3561132 in strict confidence.

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Mixed Bag as Fishing Industry Cautious on Nor-EU Deal

Norway's gains under their latest EU deal allows them to catch 4.5 times our blue whiting quota in our own EEZ. That's according to Irish fishing industry leaders who welcome Norway's exclusion from the Irish Box but say Ireland still lacks an equitable arrangement.

"Norway have been allocated an extra 36,000MT of blue whiting in the Irish EEZ, compared to just 4,800MT extra blue whiting for Ireland," says Aodh O'Donnell, chief executive of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO). O'Donnell says fishing representatives took time to carefully consider the new deal, ironically struck on St Patrick's Day, before responding.

"Norway, a non-EU member still secured more out of the deal than Ireland. They can now catch 224,000 Metric Tonnes (MT) of blue whiting, west of Ireland, whereas we can catch a maximum of 52,000MT in our own waters. In return, Ireland gets just over 258MT of arctic cod and access to Norwegian waters to fish 2,640 tonnes of Atlantic Scandia herring."

"In addition, Ireland benefits from 4,800MT of blue whiting from other member states. This transfer includes a paltry volume of 2,400MT in lieu of Norway having access to the Irish EEZ - outside the Irish Box - to catch an additional 36,000MT of blue whiting. If you do the sums, you can see they can catch almost 5 times more blue whiting in Irish waters than we can. This last-minute St Patrick's Day deal does nothing to address Ireland's unfair share of EU fishing quotas and rights."

However, Mr O'Donnell said the industry counted it as 'a win' that the EU refused to grant Norway their unreasonable request for unfettered fishing rights inside the Irish Box. "We feel this was due to intense joint lobbying efforts with other fishing organisations. Our industry united as never before to make our voice heard and we are proud of what we achieved together. We feel there has been a discernible shift in attitude at both Dept of the Marine and EU level towards our fishing industry."

Brendan Byrne of the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association (IFPEA) said Brexit was part of the problem leading to this latest deal. "After Brexit, Norway was excluded from UK waters. That displacement brought them into Irish waters to fish their blue whiting quota. Ireland had already donated 40% of the EU's quota allocation to the UK so were already the biggest losers post-Brexit. Norway's increased fishing off our coast thus exacerbated an already grave situation."

"The Irish Government and the EU have taken too much from Ireland for too long in fishing, so that others can benefit. This has led to the total decline of our industry, while countries like Norway see massive growth in their seafood sector."

Aodh O'Donnell says the Irish fishing industry continues to suffer. "And that's despite having the largest fishing grounds in western Europe with the richest supply

of stocks. Ireland must not be forced to pay because Norway was displaced by the UK, under Brexit. We must not allow Ireland to be the whipping boy anymore. Our challenge now is to keep collaborating cohesively as an industry. We will keep making our voice heard at home and in Europe until we achieve positive growth for the fishing and seafood industry."

The Minister for the Marine Charlie McConalogue says the Irish blue whiting quota is up from 28,438 tonnes in 2022 to 53,776 tonnes in 2023 after the conclusion of prolonged negotiations between the European Union and Norway, resulting in a bi-lateral fisheries agreement for 2023.

"These are always difficult negotiations with different Member States having different interests. For Ireland, I am satisfied that the final outcome is the strongest possible one for our fishers. They now have a quota of 53,776 tonnes for 2023 worth in excess of €13m.

"There were many different elements in these complex talks including reciprocal access to waters and transfers of quotas between the parties and internally in the EU. I am particularly satisfied that in relation to Blue Whiting Ireland was able to secure a 33% reduction in the traditional level of Norwegian access to EU waters from 68% to 45% and their complete exclusion from the Blue Whiting fishery in the Irish Box off the North West Coast of Ireland.

"In terms of quota transfers I was able to maintain the principle that Ireland's contribution to the EU quota transfer to Norway would be capped at 4% and, as importantly, established for first time that Ireland would be directly compensated with additional quota by other Member States for transfers and access provisions. In this regard I was able to secure an additional 4,820 tonnes of blue whiting for the Irish fleets. Scientific advice tells us that the Blue whiting stock is in good shape and expanding rapidly and this coupled with the agreement secured bodes well for the sustainability of this fishery for Irish fishers going forward".

The Minister's move to allow Norway to take 226,855 tonnes of blue whiting in Irish waters while limiting Irish fishermen to just 53,776 tonnes in 2023 has drawn strong condemnation from Rural Independent TD for Cork South-West Michael Collins.

Deputy Collins, speaking from his Cork South-West constituency, issued a scathing statement regarding the recent quota allocation deal, stating: "How could Minister McConalogue issue a self-congratulatory press release claiming that this deal was a

victory for Irish fishermen? The reality is that Norwegian boats will be permitted to catch over four times the blue whiting stock that Irish boats can in Irish waters."

"I am calling out Minister McConalogue for his apparent willingness to accept such a deal, which was a cynical exercise. In fact, the deal is yet another blow to Ireland's indigenous fishing industry. For some time, I have been expressing my concern that the Minister and the government have abandoned their commitment to protecting the Irish Box and safeguarding the future of the Irish fishing industry."

"The government has yielded to the unelected bureaucrats in Brussels who were eager to use Ireland's Blue Whiting quota as the currency to pay for Arctic Cod that could be passed on to southern European fishermen. Allowing the EU to use Ireland's Blue Whiting stocks in this way is undermining the entire sector. Blue Whiting is one of the most important pelagic stocks and is valued at an estimated €200 million for 2023."

"Despite the importance of this fish stock, Ireland will only have approximately 5% of the EU allowable quota for blue whiting in 2023, while Norway will now be allowed to catch over 20% of that species in Irish territorial waters. I find it scandalous that 80% of the stock underpinning this fishery spawns and breeds in Irish territorial waters, yet Norwegian vessels will be catching most of the blue whiting quota in Irish waters this year."

"The harsh truth remains that Irish waters will be stripped of their blue whiting quota this year, with Norwegian vessels reaping the lion's share and leaving many Irish boats floundering on the brink of bankruptcy. How can any responsible Irish Minister claim victory from a deal that allows foreign ships to plunder our waters, while our own fishermen are left with only a meagre slice of the estimated €200 million bounty?"

"This is yet another instance where the livelihoods of Irish fishermen have been sacrificed on the altar of political expediency, all in the name of securing Arctic cod quotas for other nations. It's a betrayal of the highest order, and the fact that Irish fishermen were not properly consulted makes it more galling."

"Time and time again, our officials have failed to stand up for our fishing industry, allowing precious resources to be squandered while foreign boats sail away with the spoils. This cannot go on any longer. We need to hold these individuals accountable for their actions and demand answers. That's why I am calling for a full Dail debate and a thorough investigation by the Joint Committee on Agriculture into how this shameful situation has been allowed to unfold. It's time we had a government and a Minister who is willing to fight for the future of Irish fishing and the communities that rely on it," concluded Deputy Collins.

Arklow Maritime Museum Hosts the Launch of the Harbour-to-Headwaters Trails Project

On Wednesday 22nd March, the Arklow Maritime Museum was delighted to host the launch of Arklow Town Team's Harbour-to-Headwaters Trails Project. This fantastic project, for which the museum researched the history, folklore and archaeology aspects, has been three years in the making. Now it is up to everyone to get out there to experience and appreciate what the Avonmore-Avonbeg river system has to offer.



The project looks at the eco-systems, the history and archaeology, the ... Ah, why re-invent the wheel? Best read the following excerpts from their website, which you can access at the link below.

"The Avoca River which flows into Arklow has its origins in the Wicklow Mountains, with many tributaries such as the Glenelo, Glenmacnass, Avonmore, Avonbeg, Derry, and Ow Rivers all coming together to flow into the Irish Sea at Arklow. A new Harbour to Headwater Biodiversity Trail explores this catchment area, highlights the magnificent and varied local wildlife and the significant wealth of flora and fauna that exist on both the land and in the water.

"In 14 locations across the region from the harbour in Arklow right up along the river catchment to the headwaters of Glenmalure, you can find information panels specific to each of those points on the river network. In addition, an online interactive resource provides more information on local biodiversity with the option to take part in citizen science activities. You can look out for and identify aquatic insects (macro-invertebrates) and learn which are more sensitive insects, such as mayflies, and how they are intrinsically linked to water quality.

"Find the main Information Panel outlining the Harbour to Headwaters Biodiversity Trail in Arklow town before you choose which of the three trails you would like to undertake!"

While there have been many people from different fields (no pun intended) involved, we think it fair to say that councillor Peir Leonard has been a major driving force.

If you would like to know more about the Harbour-to-Headwaters Trails, go to www.visitarklow.ie/post/harbour-to-headwater-biodiversity-trail

SFPA Meet with Environmental Groups to Discuss Compliance in the Fishing and Seafood Industry

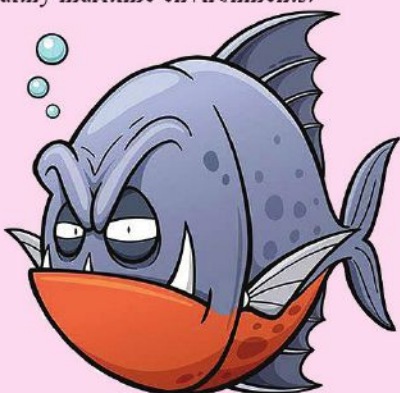
The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), met on the 20th March 2023, with representatives of Irish Environmental NGOs focused on marine sustainability, to discuss a range of issues related to safeguarding and enhancing Ireland's marine environment and resources.

The meeting is part of an ongoing process of engagement by the SFPA to share best practice, knowledge, and latest developments in relation to strategic initiatives as part of their regulatory remit to ensure compliance with the EU Common Fisheries Policy, sea-fisheries law, and food safety law with all relevant stakeholders.

During a wide-ranging and productive meeting, the SFPA updated on its regulatory remit and the various strands of Irish and European legislation covering the sector. Discussions focused on the new Sea-Fisheries Control Plan, the potential for Remote Electronic Monitoring, the Shellfish Classification Programme and monthly water sampling programmes undertaken with industry.

Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson of the SFPA said: "This meeting was a welcome opportunity for productive dialogue and engagement on a range of issues pertaining to the marine environment and sustainability of our marine resources. As the regulatory body for Ireland's sea-fisheries and seafood production, our remit is to promote compliance with the EU Common Fisheries Policy, sea-fisheries and food safety law, to ensure the long-term sustainability of this valuable social and economic resource.

"To ensure the long-term viability of our marine resources for future generations, a collective approach is required with shared responsibility. We were pleased to have the opportunity to meet with environmental NGOs focused in the marine areas and we look forward to continued and ongoing engagement, underpinned by an unwavering focus on ensuring sustainability and a shared agreement on the value and importance of healthy maritime environments."



The Flawed Process Continues as Government Remains 'On Track' To Progress MPA Legislation Without Fishing and Seafood Concerns

Report by Mark Mc Carthy, Editor

Having officially lodged their strongest objection at the failure to include representative bodies from the fishing, aquaculture and seafood sectors in the recent round of consultation on the General Scheme of Marine Protected Areas Bill 2022 it was of particular interest that Green Party TD, Deputy Steven Matthew, Chair of the Joint Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage, recently facilitated a meeting for a coalition of Ireland's leading environmental non-governmental organisations and networks with TDs and Senators in the Oireachtas to highlight MPA legislation.

Representatives from Wind Energy Ireland and a number of Irish environmental NGO's (Fair Seas, Birdwatch Ireland, Irish Wildlife Trust, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group) under the umbrella of the IEN Environmental Pillar, appeared before the Joint Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage in February as part of the pre-legislative scrutiny of the Marine Protected Areas Bill 2023. The committee has now taken the network's concerns on board and has now published (1st March) its report containing 45 recommendations to improve the bill.

We still await what consideration was given to the joint submission from the Killybegs Fisherman's Organisation (KFO), Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO), Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation (IS&WFPO), Irish South and East Fish Procedures Organisation (IS&EFPO), Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association (IFPEA) and the Aquaculture Committee of the Irish Farmers Association (IFA Aquaculture) delivered on 24th February?

As revealed in last month's Marine Times the seafood industry reiterated that the failure by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage to be fully inclusive in their consultation is most regrettable and the omission of all major fishing and seafood organisations from consultation/pre-legislative scrutiny on the General Scheme (Heads of Bill) of the Marine Protected Areas Bill 2022 has now given rise to a flawed process. Significant deficits now exist in the process of consultation and pre-legislative discussions that any Oireachtas Committee must undertake in order to provide balanced scrutiny of any impending legislation laid before the House of the Oireachtas. This is particularly the case with legislation such as the Marine Protected Areas Bill 2022, which will impact on the livelihoods of so many in the seafood sector.

Teresa Morrissey of the IFA says that; "The lack of joined-up, realistic thinking in terms of managing marine space and over-arching Marine policy in Ireland is really a cause for continuing concern. We have seen in the past that this approach has caused confusion and difficulty for many in the Marine sector. Continued and meaningful engagement with all relevant Marine sector stakeholders is the best way

to approach this, rather than a top-down, disjointed approach to Ireland's Marine policy."

If Ireland's leading environmental non-governmental organisations have been offered the opportunity to address the Joint Committee why not others, especially the main stakeholders in our seas? Questioned on this the response from the Joint Committee was "all submissions from all sectors were considered under the consideration of the MPA Bill."

One of the key recommendations of the 2020 MPA Advisory Group report was that 'Early and sustained stakeholder engagement should be integral to the selection and management processes for MPAs. Engagement should be inclusive and equitable and the process should be designed to ensure that it is transparent, meaningful and facilitating.'

To fail to include or engage the key stakeholders such as these fishing industry organisations is extremely difficult to comprehend – no Oireachtas Committee can undertake one sided consultation and deem that to be fully inclusive.

The coalition of Ireland's leading environmental non-governmental organisations and networks held a briefing for TDs and Senators in the Oireachtas Audio-Visual room on Wednesday 8th March. Fair Seas' experts delivered a presentation on Ireland's Marine Protected

Areas (MPA) journey to date.

In a press release issued to the Marine Times following the event, Aoife O'Mahony, Fair Seas Campaign Manager said, "Our briefing event at Leinster House was another opportunity for us to highlight the importance of the upcoming Marine Protected Areas legislation. It was reassuring to hear that the Government intends to progress the bill as soon as possible. We have before us a unique and exciting opportunity to not only progress towards our 30 x 30 targets, but for Ireland to become a world leader in how we protect, restore and value our seas. It's vital that all stakeholders are listened to and play a part in this process. TDs and Senators have an important role to play in ensuring that the final legislation passed is as strong and as effective as possible."

Green Party TD, Deputy Steven Matthew, Chair of the Joint Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage, facilitated the event and addressed the briefing.

Deputy Steven Matthews said, "I was delighted to host Fair Seas at Dáil Eireann for an information session with TDs and Senators on progress on Marine Protected Areas. Fair Seas assisted the Joint Oireachtas Committee in the scrutiny of the General Scheme of the MPA legislation and their recommendations and those of other maritime interests were included in the committee report. It is vital to the health of our marine area that we move swiftly to create a network of MPAs and provide clear guidance, monitoring and management plans for protection and restoration. Our sea area is huge, it supports jobs and is the future of energy production but it has been neglected for far too long. We can no longer delay action on the nature and climate crisis and I see no reason that would prevent this legislation from being enacted before the summer recess."



Dr Donal Griffin, Marine Policy Officer; Aoife O'Mahony, Fair Seas Campaign Manager; Deputy Jennifer Whitmore, TD; Sinéad Loughran, Marine Policy Officer; Deputy Steven Matthews, TD.

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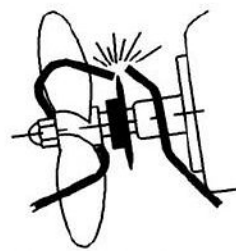
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This will add more value, more reading, more understanding and appreciation of the maritime sector, focused on uniting general, public interest throughout Ireland, coastal, rural, urban in maritime matters brought to you by the MARINE TIMES, the strong voice of Ireland's maritime, coastal and fishing communities.

editor@marinetimes.ie

Letters to the Editor

The Smell of Something Rotten in The Irish Fishing Industry!

Editor

Although I am under doctor's orders to stay off work for the next six to twelve weeks due to my serious accident recently, I felt I had to rise from my sick bed to urgently address this alarming issue.

Apparently the deal has been done and, without the agreement of many in the Irish fishing industry, Norway is to now be allowed to catch over 320,000 tonnes of blue whiting in Irish waters whilst in return Irish fishermen are only to receive a paltry 4,800 tonnes - - but I cannot understand how this agreement has been allowed to take place and under who's authority has the Irish fishing industry accepted such a deal.

This deal equates to Norway getting 67 million euros' worth of fish in Irish waters while Ireland's pelagic fleet will get 1.6 million euros' worth.

Worst of all is that our Minister used incredible comments that were no more than an insult to people's intelligence when he attempted to take the glory for something he has had absolutely nothing to do with when he this week issued a self-congratulatory press release on a BW quota increase.

McConalogue's effort at fooling the public into thinking that he 'got' Ireland a BW increase is outrageous when this significant increase was known last year and is based on usual ICES scientific advice and recommendations that confirm healthy stocks due to responsible fishing... therefore the fish was already allocated (and for the most part already caught...), so in truth, we got NO increase.

Even this 4,820 tonnes that we are being told Ireland is getting as part of the Norway deal is also not a win because Ireland was already a benefactor of this transfer arrangement in previous years!

As for the statement that this latest Norway deal is somehow a success because we managed to continue to protect

the Irish Box is a complete misnomer.

In 2014 the Norwegians were allowed from international waters into west of the 12-degree line and this was all they needed - - we got nothing for this - who was accountable for such treason!? Why was it allowed to happen?

Yes the Norwegians wanted East of 12 degrees and they did not get it but actually that makes zero difference when they are already allowed into West of 12 degrees.

The original 2014 agreement gave Norway access to the fishing grounds of the Irish EEZ west of the 12-degree line west, and north of the 56-degree line and it is with this 'giveaway' that the real problem Ireland faced over the last round of negotiations lay in.

Like so many previous agreements Ireland, through the 'representation' of our senior DAFM officials just simply threw away its fishing grounds while getting virtually nothing in return and this, along with dozens of other instances, is in itself grounds for investigation of the senior civil servant in question and his actions over the past two decades.

He, along with at least one so-called 'industry representative', sat at the table when this 2014 access agreement was reached - these individuals are still in their positions today and MUST be held to account for such a scandalous giveaway.

The recent talks succeeded in reversing the 2021 giveaway of the Irish Box - but the real question is what happened in 2014.

And aside from anything else, this event also raises several questions and for me, should be setting off alarm bells:

Foremost of these being how can someone from one of the smallest Irish fishing organisations (in terms of vessel members) strike a deal 'on behalf of Ireland', apparently with the blessing of our minister, when clearly the rest of the industry organisations had worked in a united, professional and successful manner in representing Ireland at EU Commission level in resisting any deal that would not be to the maximum benefit of Irish fishermen.

I'm also suspicious of the timing of this entire fiasco - - agreed upon during St Patrick's Day when the Taoiseach and Marine Minister were both out of the country - - and that the DAFM senior civil servant who has already been given his marching orders and is due to be out of his job by the 31st of this month was reportedly heavily involved in the deal.

If ever there was a situation for the basis for the launching of a major inquiry then surely this is it.



Regards
Cormac Burke,
Chairman,
IFSA

Waffle and Avoiding the Actual Question

Editor

I thought you would be interested in a recent exchange in the Dail recently regarding the well hyped appearance of super trawlers off our coast. It highlights the lack of concern within the Government for issues relating to our fishing industry and our coastal communities.

Regards

(Name and address with Editor)

Deputy Pearse Doherty: Two of the largest supertrawlers and factory ships in the world have been hoovering up vast amounts of fish in Irish waters over the past two weeks. The 470-foot *Annelies Ilena* and the 470-foot *Margiris* were joined by another supertrawler, the 383-foot *Helen Mary*. All three vessels are owned by a Dutch corporation. The presence of these monster vessels in Irish waters is a real kick in the teeth for our struggling Irish fishing industry, which is facing further quota cuts, tie-up schemes and the decommissioning of dozens of vessels. This has to stop now. Will the Government commit today to a campaign to ban these supertrawlers and factory ships from fishing in Irish waters in the way they do?

The Tánaiste Michael Martin: The Deputy needs to give the Government a more specific proposal. Fishing quotas are covered by the EU, as the Deputy knows. He also knows the decommissioning is because of Brexit. It was a decision because of Britain leaving the European Union. We avoided a no-deal Brexit, which would have been calamitous for our fishers, as one can understand. Deep down the Deputy knows, even though he says something else more publicly, that we cannot just ban a particular thing.

Deputy Pearse Doherty: I asked for a campaign to ban.

The Tánaiste Michael Martin: A campaign to ban, but we need honesty when dealing with people. I will engage with the fisher organisations but will not make promises on the hoof that the Deputy and I know will not be delivered upon any time soon.

Deputy Pearse Doherty: Will the Government campaign to ban the vessels?

The Tánaiste Michael Martin: We need to focus, in negotiations at European level, on trying to get more gains for our fishers.

Deputy Pearse Doherty: Would the Government like to stop these monster ships?

The Tánaiste Michael Martin: The decommissioning scheme is because of Brexit but it does involve the making available of significant resources to compensate the fishers for losing out.

Deputy Pearse Doherty: Waffle, waffle, waffle

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Long-finned Pilot Whale (*Globicephala melas*) Skull Discovered at Whitestown Bay, Cooley Peninsula, Co. Louth

Report by Declan Quigley



Figures 1 - 5: Whitestown Bay, Cooley Peninsula, Co. Louth; Dorsal aspect of Long-finned Pilot Whale skull; Ventral aspect of Long-finned Pilot Whale skull; Rear view of Long-finned Pilot Whale skull; Tooth sockets on anterior half of upper jaw of Long-finned Pilot Whale

During late December 2022 Kian Louet Feisser discovered the skull and some detached vertebrae of a Long-finned Pilot Whale (*Globicephala melas*) stranded on the rocky shore of Whitestown Bay (53.9870°N, 6.1313°W), Cooley Peninsula, Co Louth, in the NW Irish Sea (Fig. 1).

The skull measured 60 cm in length, 44 cm in width (Figs. 2-4). Although the jaw bones were heavily eroded, at least 9 empty tooth sockets were visible, the largest measuring 1.5 cm in diameter, arranged regularly along the anterior half of the upper jaws (Fig. 5). *G. melas* have 8-13 teeth in each jaw and their regularly spaced anterior position is a diagnostic feature of the species. It is possible that the whale may have floated from further afield before eventually stranding and decomposing in Whitestown Bay.

The well-weathered skeletal remains suggests that the stranding most likely occurred long before its recent discovery.

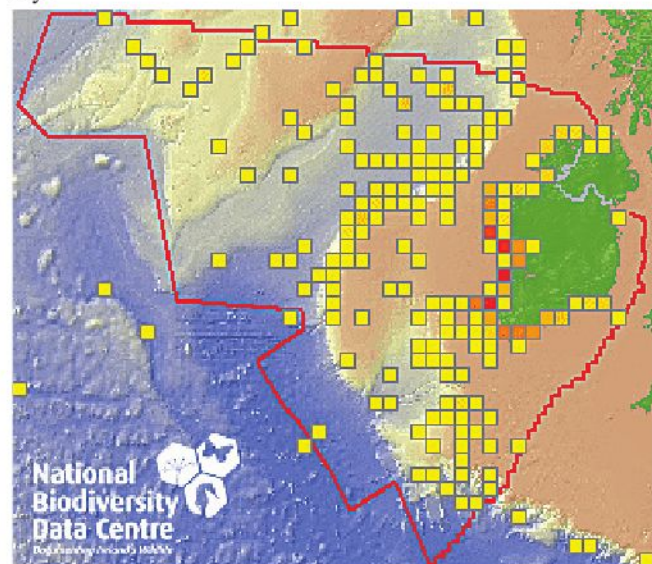


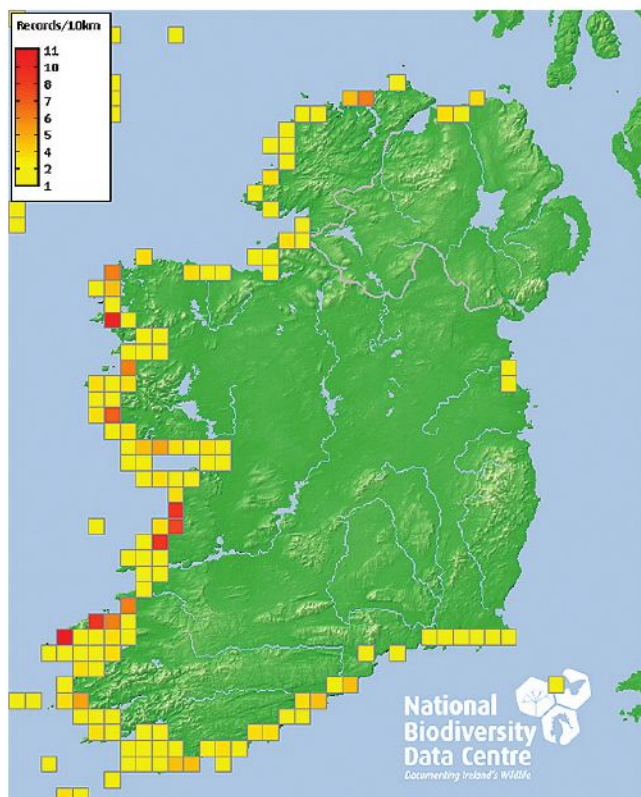
Figure 6. Distribution of Long-finned-Pilot Whale records from Irish offshore waters.

Long-finned Pilot Whales commonly occur in offshore waters (over depths >500m), particularly along the edge of the continental shelf off the west and north-west coasts of Ireland (Fig. 6) where large pods of live specimens have frequently been observed (Fig. 7). The vast majority of inshore records, including both live and dead strandings, have been recorded from the NW, W, SW and S coasts (Fig. 8), but relatively few (c.30) from the east coast, the majority (60%) of which were recorded from the southern Irish Sea.



Figure 7. Pod of Long-finned Pilot Whales in Irish offshore waters (David Wall).

Figure 8. Inshore records of Long-finned Pilot Whales from Irish inshore waters (National Biodiversity Data Centre).



Mass strandings of Long-finned Pilot Whales have frequently been recorded on the west coast of Ireland (Fig. 9), but rarely from the Irish Sea. During July 1840 an immense shoal of Pilot or Ca 'ling Whales was observed off Curracloe, Co Wexford (SE Irish Sea), 38 of which were harried ashore by fishermen further southwards at Raven Point – a rare opportunistic source of protein for the local community's otherwise unvarying diet of spuds (potatoes). It is interesting to note that during the same month large numbers were also reported to have been captured in Ardmore Bay, Co Waterford and Lough Swilly, Co Donegal.

During 1853, about 25 specimens were captured in Dundrum Bay, Co Down (NW Irish Sea). On 8 August 1957, 36 specimens were stranded at Fethard, Co Wexford (SW Irish Sea). There is a long tradition of hunting Long-finned Pilot Whales in Nordic countries, particularly the Faroe Islands.

During the late 19th century, Ca 'ling Whales were reported to occur in Belfast Lough (NW Irish Sea) every autumn, sometimes in small schools. On 27 July 2003, a live specimen was observed from a car ferry in the southern Irish Sea midway between Rosslare, Co Wexford and Pembroke, SW Wales. More recently, on 20 June 2013, two live specimens were stranded at Bettystown and Mornington, Co Meath.



Figure 9. Mass live-stranding of Long-finned Pilot Whales at Falcarragh, Co. Donegal during July 2014 (IWDG)

There are at least three previous stranding records of Long-finned Pilot Whale skulls from the Irish Sea. During 1929, a skull was found at Rosslare, Co Wexford, another on the North Bull, Co Dublin during 1932, and another in Dungarvan Harbour, Co Waterford during March 1994. More recently, the *MFV Arkh Angell* (DA33) retrieved a skull while trawling for *Nephrops* prawns on The Smalls Bank (Celtic Sea off SW Wales) in early December 2014.

Declan is always interested in receiving reports about rarely recorded species in Irish waters (WhatsApp: 087-6458485; declanquigley2021@gmail.com)



Prolific 2 heading into Howth under the watch of Ireland's Eye - Photo courtesy James Grandfield

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