

# MARINE TIMES

DECEMBER 2023 - PRICE €3

## IRELAND'S LEADING MARITIME NEWSPAPER



Papas Boy leaving Killkeel Harbour. Photo: Christopher Feenan



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*Christmas*

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## Inshore Fishermen Say They Need Help to Survive the Winter

### Irish Fish Producers Organisation Calls for SFPA Accountability

*"There needs to be a more productive relationship between the SFPA and the fishing industry...."*

## Is the EU Commission Failing Ireland as A Member State In 'Deals' with Outside Fishing Nations?

**All of this plus so much more inside**

**Newspaper for Ireland's Fishing, Marine and Coastal Communities**

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## the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

### Time We Started Trying to Pull Together As a Country

**L**ads - as we approach the end of a dramatic year we wonder what kind of a country do we live in. Lots of bad things happening topped off with the dreadful scenes in Dublin last month.

We have had so many suggestions as to what should have been done or what should be done going forward that it copper fastened my assertion that we would be far better off if the Opposition were in charge. They as usual have the answer to everything but the solution to nothing.

It's time as a country we started trying to pull together lads and not immediately attack people who have made a miscalculation or a mistake.

Some of the interviews on the days of the riots were sickening. Amongst the suggestions we had were the introduction of Identity Cards for everyone and the introduction of Body Mounted Cameras on the Gardai. If those suggestions are given airtime our friends from the Peoples' Rights Organizations will immediately swing into

action as they did that morning. They were followed closely by those who reckoned that the Water Cannons should not be engaged suggesting that our Police should basically operate with their hands tied behind their backs.

As with so many things in this country we protect the Criminals with no thought for the victims. It's a mindset lads which is partially responsible for the lawlessness which is become more and more accepted.

And yet we have laws which can criminalize a fisherman for a relatively minor offence and even if in the Courts of Law he is found to be not guilty the Points Penalty remains in place .... "We know you are not guilty- but we're going to hang you anyway!"

In any sensibly managed business lads



James Collins off Ballyglass, Co. Mayo - Photo courtesy Sean Moran

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the success will be enhanced by concentrating on the more profitable and sensible elements of that business. Board Bia did that with the Agri Sector and grew the Kerrygold Brand along with other marketing initiatives for Irish Agri Products.

Can we not have a Fish Based Brand like that - **Pure Irish Frozen Prawns** ????. And exploit the markets which Board Bia have already set up in many countries where they have Representative Offices and people on the ground.

I am and always have been committed to the belief that it is actually possible to manage a business to death - and very much fear that there is a cohort in this country committed to screwing our fishermen to the last degree.

I am not going to list the various problems which have been created for our fishermen over the past few years because you know what they are lads. Some of the problems have been created by outside forces (Brexit?) but rather than trying to lessen those difficulties our own Regulators have enhanced the problems by further regulating them way beyond a standard required by the EU who are blamed for everything..... Could we not have a declaration from our own authorities which might provoke either a sign of relief or even a "cheer" it appeared to improve the lot of our Fishing Industry. On the other side of the coin then lads when we actually get some assistance in the form of Tie Up or Brexit Compensation Schemes must we squabble amongst ourselves over who got what ?????

I know everyone must do the best for themselves, but unity is so important when the system is weighed against you as I believe it is without the level of support that you should be getting from the State.

I have always said that the overall membership of the POs is far less that it should be to give them the voice that they need to properly represent you. I urge you all to join your PO and now that the Inshore Fleet has its own PO that is even more important.

Lads - I have been in the financial services sector on both sides of the fence since joining the Bank in 1967 and make no apology for claiming that the Fishing Sector people have been the most decent and hardworking people I have dealt with. The level of personal, social and financial risk you have taken over the years to bring your Industry to where it is - is unique.

I am finding now that as new people come into the industry on the banking and legal sides without being properly trained there is too much money being paid to those who really don't know what they are doing by Fishermen who basically risk their lives to earn it ..... Stick close to those who are trying to help you lads and try not to pick faults in their efforts.

We boast about having a buoyant Seafood Sector but always remember and take pride in the fact that **without those that go to Sea in their Ships there is no Seafood Sector.**

We could use the simile of the goose that lays the golden eggs but that might be over the top.

**Stay safe everyone and let's look forward with hope and optimism to next year and always remember that the Hurler on the Ditch NEVER Scores !!!!!**

## Marine Times

### Contents for December 2023

**As Ireland's leading maritime newspaper we have a concentration on News coverage which this month includes the challenge to the SFPA by the IFPO about the level of inspections of Irish fishing boats, compared to those carried out on foreign vessels. That is on PAGE 5**

**On Page 3 we report the calls for a radical reset of Third Country access to Irish waters.**

**Inshore Fishermen say they need help to survive the Winter. Read about their appeal to the Minister on Page 4**

**The Naval Service has taken Observer Status in a European Corvette Development for a new type of naval vessel, about which we have an exclusive report on Page 9**

**On Page 13 we hear concerns about European aquaculture stagnating.**

**The Chief Executives of the leading fishing industry representative organisations give their views about the industry on Pages 10 & 11**

**Hear how the IFSA feel the SFPA are macking a mockery of the Minister's claim that he supports the inshore fleet - Page 9**

**GOATS in the Marine Times? We have good news stories about Goat Tours and Goatsbridge Trout - See Pages 26 & 34**

**That is just some of the content this month, which includes our Quarterly Maritime Ireland Journal Supplement and our wide range of correspondents writing about the wide marine sphere.**

**Also in the issue .....**

**Page 14 Tom's Maritime Diary**

**Page 20 & 21 Maritime Ireland Quarterly Supplement**

**Page 22 & 23 Herring Fishing at the Stags Sound**

**Page 24 International News**

**Page 27 & 31 RNLI News**

**Page 33 Island Notebook**

**The MARINE TIMES is Ireland's leading maritime newspaper bringing you all the vital news and voices from around the coastline.**

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# Call for Ban on Factory Ships in Fishing in Irish Waters

**If non-EU countries want to fish in Irish waters, then they must face the same control and conservation regime as the Irish fleet. Otherwise, all of the fish species they catch may not be recorded which affects stocks, conservation and sustainability, say Irish fishing industry leaders.**

Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO) chief executive, Aodh O'Donnell, says Ireland has a "land-based not sea-based processing sector. We rigidly monitor, report and fully account for mixed species in our catches – not just those which a vessel sets out to catch. But we have concerns that non-EU fishing vessels currently don't always report 'by-catches', (species caught accidentally), which has major implications for fish conservation and sustainability.

"For example, if an Irish vessel fishing for mackerel catches whitefish species in their nets, this 'by-catch' has to be logged, recorded and counted as part of their quota. We have concerns that this is not the case for non-EU vessels which don't land the fish they catch in our waters in Irish ports."

"At the same time, a strict conservation driven approach to control is applied to the Irish industry. This necessitates heavy capital investment by the Irish industry in best-in-class modern live feed monitoring technologies."

**"If Norway and other non-EU countries want access to Irish waters, then part of the deal must be that they submit to the same controls for by-catches. Otherwise, we are endangering conservation and putting the Irish fleet at an operational and competitive disadvantage.**

"The EU is in negotiations with Third (non-EU) Countries like Norway and Iceland about access to Ireland's EU waters. This access proposal is a highly sensitive issue for our members. Any such arrangements must require strict adherence by Third Country vessels to a fully harmonised level of species reporting. This is vital for long term sustainability reasons and to maintain the fish landing obligations of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)."

The Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association (IFPEA) fully support the IFPO position. IFPEA chief executive, Brendan Byrne says Ireland must "stand firm and clearly state that factory ships for processing catches at sea are not welcome into the Irish EU waters. This must be fundamental to any new arrangements made between the EU and Third Countries.

"Norwegian and Icelandic vessels press hard for access to the EU-Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to catch their enormous self-allocated quotas. These Norwegian vessels catch huge volumes of blue whiting in our waters each year. In fact, Norwegian fishing opportunities to catch

their quotas are five times greater than what Ireland is permitted to catch in our own waters. These foreign vessels cannot pretend to have 'clean' fisheries or avoid fully accounting for their by-catches. In the interest of sustainability and good ocean governance, we need effective measures agreed at EU level and implemented by Ireland to ensure that third country vessels comply fully with Point of Entry and EU Control and Enforcement provisions. In particular, we need strict requirements for sampling and speciation of their enormous catches in the Irish EEZ."

The Irish South and West Fishermen's Producer Organisation (IS&WPO) says Ireland's valuable waters must be protected in the long-term national interest. IS&WPO chief executive Patrick Murphy says the resilience of our peripheral coastal communities "is largely dependent on this traditional sector. Access deals for Third Countries must take account of a fit for purpose control and enforcement regime by our authorities. We are at a crossroads and a radical state led change in approach is required."

**"This is a priority as otherwise we have too much to lose. Any access deal to fish in our waters must include a suite of additional comprehensive control procedures that take account of mixed species realities."**

Aodh O'Donnell says Ireland's "rich maritime space is heavily exploited by other players. This is a sustainable resource requiring effective harmonised management and control. This monitoring, control and vessel inspection process is coordinated with our authorities by the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) in Vigo Spain. The effective application of control procedures to Third Country users is a key concern. Good ocean governance is in the EU and international community's long-term interest and third country agreements need to reflect this. We need clarity about how controls will be applied and what resources will be deployed to effectively control Third Country vessels.

**"We have good reason to be concerned that our vessels are reporting by-catches but third country vessels are not always doing so. We call on the control and enforcement authorities to urgently implement new harmonised protocols in the coming year".**



Padraig Coyles with a purple lobster on the Silver Leaf, Ballycastle



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



## GOVERNMENT NOTICE

### FOR THE ATTENTION OF MARINE USERS IN THE NORTH-WEST IRISH SEA

This notice is to advise you that under Regulation 16 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, and following on from the earlier Regulation 15 notice of 13 July this year in respect of the same proposed classification, the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage has identified the North-west Irish Sea 004236 as eligible for classification as a Special Protection Area (SPA).

The site has been identified and selected on ornithological grounds and will be recognised as an internationally important site for birds. Ireland must take appropriate measures to protect such sites. The Minister has issued a Direction in respect of certain activities (Activities Requiring Consent) which must not be undertaken within or close to the site without permission having first been obtained from the Minister. Planning authorities will include the site in all relevant Development Plans. The classification of this site will be taken into account when assessing any future development proposals within or close to the site.

A map showing the area of the candidate SPA may be viewed in the public offices of the following in the locality or is available on request from the email/address below:

- Teagasc • National Parks & Wildlife Service • Local Authority
- Garda Stations • Social Protection • County Libraries

#### Request for observations

Any person with a sufficient interest in the area selected for classification can submit an observation to the Minister. Observations must be supported by scientifically-based ornithological criteria and must be received at the address below by 19th February 2024.

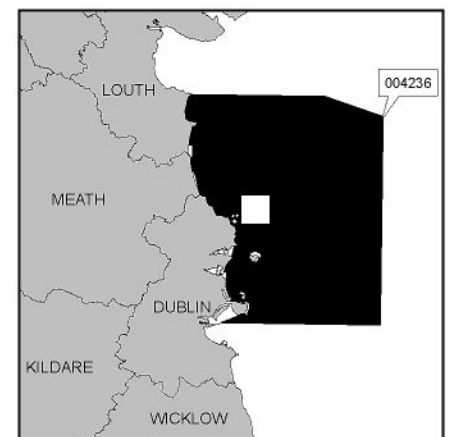
#### Objections to proposed designation

Any person, having or being entitled to an interest in the area selected for classification, can object to the classification or to the Ministerial Direction relating to the Activities Requiring Consent.

Any person requiring further information, including the objection process, should contact [sitedesignations@npws.gov.ie](mailto:sitedesignations@npws.gov.ie) or write to Designations Unit, National Parks and Wildlife Service, 90 King Street North, Dublin 7, D07N7CV.

#### North-west Irish Sea 004236 Candidate Special Protection Area

	Latitude	Longitude
A	53° 50' 53" N	5° 43' 38" W
B	53° 47' 54" N	5° 30' 27" W
C	53° 19' 43" N	5° 32' 45" W





# Inshore Fishermen Say They Need Help to Survive the Winter

Report - Tom MacSweeney

**Inshore fishermen say they are in “severe financial straits” because of a ‘crash’ in prices and processors closing.**



The National Inshore Fishermen's Association Chairman Michael Desmond said they had made a request to the Minister for the Marine for “immediate financial support” in order to survive the winter.

A delegation from NIFA delivered a letter to Minister Charlie McConalogue's constituency office in Carndonagh, Co. Donegal (pictured above).

“Many fishermen will not be able to maintain themselves during the Winter months,” Mr. Desmond told me. “This leaves an uncertainty to the once lucrative Christmas season when fishermen would normally receive the highest prices of the year.”

“While some processors continue to purchase product, the levels at which they are buying is greatly reduced,” NIFA said in a statement and told the Minister that this means vessels are on minimal daily limits “on the days they are actually allowed to fish, leaving some buyers even encouraging vessels to bring their gear ashore.”

In some cases, processors have stopped completely while others have set dates for when they are closing, the Association said. “This, coupled with the fact that many processors are delaying opening at the start of the season and are closing during the height of the season.”

“It is vital that the inshore sector receives financial aid to sustain them throughout the winter period and enable them to continue to maintain their businesses going forward. It is imperative to see the sector supported as it provides employment in some of the most isolated parts of the country where there are little or no other employment opportunities. Most shellfish producers are in an unprofitable position with greatly reduced turnovers.”

NIFA Directors met with Minister Charlie McConalogue in Agricultural House the Department offices late on Tuesday evening, November 28, to again “highlight the hardships that the inshore is experiencing at present,” a statement issued after the meeting said.

“Following on from the letter delivered to his Constituency Office by members the Minister was left under no illusions about what the sector is suffering at present with widespread disruption to shellfish markets. It was explained to him that the inshore artisanal fishermen are the bedrock of the industry and, while other sectors from processors to large-scale operators are being supported. the inshore sector is neglected. Before the meeting ended the ball was left firmly in the Minister's court as to the severity of the situation and that it was up to him and his team to find the solutions.”

## State Aid Approval for Liquidity Aid for the Irish Scallop Fleet

**A €560,000 support package for the Irish scallop fleet segment of €22-28m that targets scallop in the Irish Sea, Celtic Sea, and the English Channel has been approved.**

Minister McConalogue said: “I am pleased to announce that I have secured €560,000 State Aid approval for support for this segment of the Irish scallop fleet. The Specific Scallop Fleet Transition Support Scheme recognises that the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) while directly impacting quota species, has also indirectly impacted non-quota species such as the scallop sector, which has been significantly affected by reductions in fishing time and logistical issues related to landed catch.”

Prior to Brexit, scallop caught in the English Channel were landed into the UK and shipped directly back to Ireland for processing. These processed scallops were then re-exported to other EU countries. Post-Brexit, as a consequence of the TCA, these operators now face significant additional logistical and administrative burdens, with associated additional costs.

On average the days at sea fished by this fleet segment has reduced from 217 days in the period 2018-2020 to 142 days in 2021, a reduction of 34%. This has resulted in reductions in average turnover of €227,000 (37%) across the fleet segment. This represents an averaged loss of 37.5% between trips now landed on the continent compared

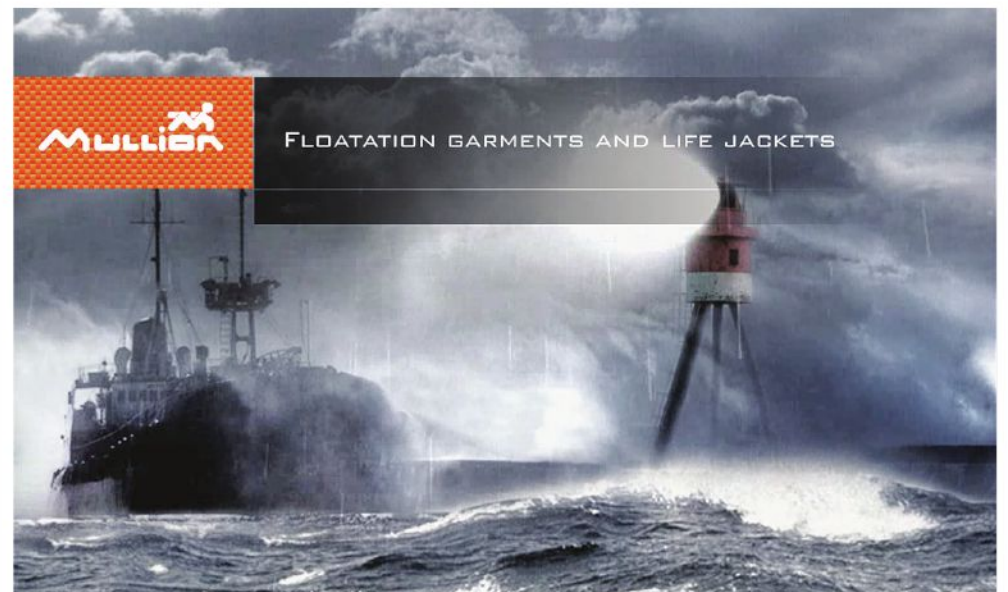
to previous trips which were being landed in the UK.

The Minister continued: “In that context I consider it appropriate to put in place a short-term liquidity aid scheme covering losses incurred by this segment during the 2021 scallop season due to reductions in fishing time, which have led to reduced turnover.”

The scheme will be open to owners of vessels in the specific scallop segment and aims to partially offset losses incurred by the sector due to the TCA during 2021 compared to 2018-2020. To be eligible for funding, vessel owner(s)/company must have suffered a 30% or more reduction in turnover over in 2021 compared to the period 2018-2020 as a direct result of Brexit. Payments will be based on the per days at sea lost in 2021 compared to the period 2018-2020, up to a maximum of 20 days or €80,000 per vessel.

The Minister concluded: “I am confident this support of up to €80,000 per eligible vessel will assist this segment of the Irish scallop fleet to consider all options to re-structure and adapt to the issues created by Brexit in the scallop fishery.”

Scheme information, once launched, will be available on bim.ie



## Designed for and by fishermen

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# Stagnating EU Aquaculture Production Despite Increased Funding

## Challenge for the New EMFAF funding programme

Marine Times Reporter

**The EU Court of Auditors has identified shortcomings which, it claims, are stagnating EU aquaculture production, despite increased EU funding.**

In a Special Report on EU Aquaculture Policy, published in late November, the Court identified spatial planning and licensing procedures in Member States as ‘hampering the growth of the aquaculture sector in Europe.’

“Member States demonstrated low absorption rates for funding allocated for aquaculture development and often reallocated financial resources to those measures attracting greater interest from the aquaculture sector and financed almost all eligible projects, irrespective of their expected contribution to the objectives of EU support,” the Special Report stated.

Its conclusions included that, while the EU’s strategic framework for aquaculture has improved in recent years, EU Aquaculture has seen little growth, there are no reliable indicators to track the sector’s sustainability nor the contribution of the increased EU funding to the development of EU Aquaculture. It recommended that “EU

aquaculture policy should evolve,” taking account of weaknesses and shortcomings identified in the past, addressing current challenges related to environmental and climate sustainability and food security.

IFA Aquaculture is the representative body of all sectors of the Irish Aquaculture industry. It includes stakeholders who farm fish, shellfish, seaweeds and other species cultured around the Irish coast.

Responding to the Special Report on Aquaculture, the IFA has indicated that stakeholders, the industry, State agencies, Government departments and the EU Commission must note the conclusions and work to implement recommendations outlined “to allow Seafood production fulfil its potential through sustainable development and contribute to food security.”

- Read the analysis of the Court of Auditors Report for this month’s MARINE TIMES by IFA Executive, Teresa Morrissey, on Page 13



Oileán an Óir - Photo: John Cunningham

**“There needs to be a more productive relationship between the SFPA and the fishing industry....”**

## Irish Fish Producers Organisation Calls for SFPA Accountability

Report – Tom MacSweeney

**The Irish Fish Producers’ Organisation has made a strong attack on the Sea Fisheries Organisation, citing lack of accountability and concern about the level of inspections of Irish fishing boats, compared to those carried out on foreign vessels.**

It has come at a time when the SFPA has launched a public consultation on its Statement of Strategy for 2024–2026 which will be open for submissions until Thursday December 21.

IFPO Chief Executive Aodh O’Donnell outlined his Organisation’s concerns: “Our primary interest is to ensure that Ireland has fit-for-purpose controls which are fair to everyone. Our current focus is on two main areas: inspections and accountability.”

He instanced “ongoing concerns about the level of physical inspections carried out on Irish vessels, compared to foreign vessels.”

“It is the responsibility of the SFPA to offer greater transparency on how controls and inspections are applied to all of those fishing in Irish waters. Otherwise, the Irish fishing industry has to question whether there is a level playing field in Irish fisheries controls.”

The IFPO statement has mirrored what the MARINE TIMES has been informed about, increasing unhappiness in some ports about the comparative levels of inspection and alleged higher focus on Irish boats.

“In the interests of sustainability, there needs to be a more productive relationship between the SFPA and the fishing industry. We believe this must change as a matter

of urgency and fear that the SFPA will not move to address the operational concerns we have unless they can be held to account at national level. We are not alone in these concerns,” Mr. O’Donnell said.

Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue has made clear that legally he is precluded from getting involved in SFPA operational matters.

To that Mr. O’Donnell said: “This is the core of our concern – accountability at Governmental level.”

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) sets out its strategic programme every three years and is currently preparing its Statement of Strategy for 2024–2026. It says this “will focus on what the SFPA wants to achieve during this period to ensure effective regulation of the shared marine resources surrounding Ireland.”

As part of the process of developing that strategy, the SFPA has said that it “welcomes the contribution of members of the public and stakeholders, especially those who fall within the its regulatory remit.”

At the time of going to print with this edition of the MARINE TIMES, the SFPA had not issued an official response to the IFPO’s stated concerns.

- Read more about this story in the CEOs on Page 10



Wishing all our members and everyone involved in the fishing industry a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Nollaig shona agus athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh.

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The Certificate in Fishing Vessel Engi-

neering Skills commenced in October and consists of four modules which have been tailored to specifically meet the needs of a fishing vessel engineer. The programme meets the initial training required for a Class 3 Engineering (fishing) Certificate in Competency (CoC). From here students can progress to Class 2 and Class 1, potentially leading to the rank of Chief Engineer. Those that do not wish to pursue a career at sea can choose to progress their career ashore in the marine engineering services sector.

A shorter, stand-alone module has also been introduced which will lead to a Certificate in Marine Engineering Processes and Operations.

**For information on all of BIM courses visit [www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie)**



# MARINE TIMES

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

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## Dear Santa ....

We have been very good boys and girls this year, for the most part, and have been doing our very best at trying to be kind and truthful throughout the year. As you well know paper doesn't often refuse ink so we have to be very careful what can go on our pages every month unlike the scourge of social media where any old muck can be flung left right and centre with very little consequences attached.

The Marine Times will be 35 years in print in 2024 and we have so many people (readers and contributors) and companies that we owe our utmost thanks to ... it is an often overlooked phrase but 'Thank You' means so much to both pass it on and receive.

Santa, we are not ones to usually ask but you might consider putting some on your naughty list. If you have been keeping a close eye on the Marine Times over the past year you probably know who has been either naughty or nice .... Maybe you could have a word with those on our naughty list to try and have a better 2024 for all our sakes.

Also, if you could keep in mind all those around the coast who are struggling in the fishing industry – with each successive year it is becoming more and more difficult to make a living and pass on a tradition to our younger members of the wider coastal community. Please, sprinkle a wee bit of your magic over them and treat them nice.

There is so much wrong in the industry at the moment one would think it was being run by naughty elves – maybe you could check it out for us.

Meanwhile we will encourage happier news and stories from around the coast. We will endeavour to celebrate success and encourage the coastal community to embrace not only the fishing industry but the wider onshore services and seafood industry and maybe bring that little bit of extra work their way.

Thank you

**Mark Mc Carthy**  
 Editor, Marine Times Newspaper

PS: Did you ever find that Millenium Falcon I had on my letter to you in 1982? I've moved a few times since so maybe if you can get it up to Donegal this year, I'd really appreciate it!

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Thank you for your continued support of the Marine Times and we wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Safe & Prosperous New Year



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# National Broadband Plan Surveying to Commence

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## Should Minister Reply to Major Fisheries Organisation?

By Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney

**Why does a Minister not reply directly to a major fishing organisation which says it has pointed out technical and scientific flaws in a proposal which he announced without, the organisation says, consulting them when he declared on a public function outside of Ireland, on protected areas which would affect traditional fishing areas?**

The question arises from the revelation by the MARINE TIMES last month that the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation had been pursuing the Green Party Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Malcolm Noonan, since last February about the announcement he made at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference in Montréal, Canada, in November of last year.

The Minister's announcement, in response to which the KFO says it submitted detailed scientific objections, involved new Special Areas of Conservation created under the EU Habitats Directive, off the North/West coast and off the South.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are prime wildlife conservation areas considered of importance at both European and Irish level. The deepwater sites announced by the Minister, encompass almost 3 million hectares and include extensive cold-water corals that support an array of marine species, his Department said in a press statement announcement. The selection of these two sites would more than double the area of protected reef habitat in Irish waters from 10% to 24%.

Sean O'Donoghue, Chief Executive of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, told me for this month's edition of the MARINE TIMES, that they still had not had a response from the Minister: "We have now sent at least 10 Emails without reply. It is beyond a joke. We made a submission last February and the only answer we get from other official sources is that it is still being looked at. How long does it take to look at

a submission which points out technical and scientific flaws, as we have done?"

How long indeed?

I asked the Minister's Department a number of times in the last month why there had not been a reply. Several Emails later the explanation offered in mid-November from the Department's Press Office was:

*"The process for dealing with observations and objections in relation to Natura site designations is set out in legislation. That is the process being followed, and the Minister would not be in a position to address observations or objections in relation to Natura designations outside that process or in a parallel channel."*

That is the answer to the question – should a Minister reply directly to a major fisheries organisation.

Mr. O'Donoghue says: "The environmental situation, for special areas of conservation and MPAs, is a matter of great concern for us," Mr. O'Donoghue said. "We would like to hear back from the Minister to our submission. We put that in last February and now it is December. Our submission shows up that there are huge flaws in the proposals, designating areas that there is no basis for. It is gone beyond a joke at this stage."

+ There is more about the fishing industry and the environment in the CEOs on PAGES 10 & 11 and South Coast Offshore Energy Review by Paul Gallagher, Assistant Principal Officer, Department of the Environment, on PAGE 9.



The Orla S heading out to sea from Ardglass on her first day of the new scallops season. Photo: Christopher Feenan

## Radical Reset Needed of Third Country Access to Irish Waters

### EU Attitude to 'Free' Quota for Norway Not Acceptable

**There is grave concern in the Irish fishing industry about the attitude of EU negotiators in the ongoing discussions in Oslo at which Norway wants to get rights to catch 150,000 tons of Blue Whiting in Irish waters. This would be worth €42m to the Norwegian industry, for which it is not offering any compensatory benefits to the Irish industry.**

The Irish industry position is that it is not opposed to granting Norway access arrangements to fish rich Irish waters for Blue Whiting, as they have done for many years but, as Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation, Aodh O'Donnell, says "it is entirely reasonable that Ireland and the EU should receive compensation from Norway for granting such generous access, which is so crucial to the profitability of the Norwegian blue whiting fishery.

He said: "We are in Oslo to participate in ongoing fishing negotiations for 2024 and with a prospect of Norway being granted access to our waters to fish almost three times Ireland's own quota and free gratis. This access ambition is of critical importance to Norway as this Blue Whiting stock is abundant mainly in Irish waters. We are not opposed to reaching an agreement and there is precedence in such arrangements for granting access. The access for Norway to Irish waters underpins their profitability for this fishery. However, a fair treatment is needed if Ireland's seafood sector is to survive and grow, as Norway's is. This is critical for the Irish industry, which is still reeling from the Brexit TCA in which we lost 40 % of the total EU value in this deal."

Brendan Byrne, CEO of the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association said the industry has grave concerns at the prospect of Norway being granted enormous

levels of free access to Irish waters.

"This cannot be at Ireland's expense and so there must be something on the table for us too. The Irish Government must maintain the position similar to the UK that any access for Norway to our fishing grounds, must be adequately compensated. Discussions are ongoing and a firm position must be taken

**"We are at a crossroads and Ireland must be prepared to maintain a firm unwavering stance."**

until an arrangement is reached which benefits the EU and Ireland in particular, as much as Norway. Ireland must no longer attend the table as a perpetual loser; we must refuse to countenance any additional unfair deal with a non-EU Member."

"We are at a crossroads and Ireland must be prepared to maintain a firm unwavering stance. A radical reset is required regarding access by third countries to fish in our waters," said IFPO CEO O'Donnell. "The UK granted access rights to Norway in 2023 to fish mackerel in its waters and received in return a quota transfer that benefitted the UK sector to the tune of approx. €35m. This mechanism is a benchmark that can be equally applied to the Blue Whiting access under discussion for Norway. Minister McConalogue must maintain a resolve and be prepared defend our interests with a meaningful compensatory transfer of quota by Norway in lieu of access. This is required as a step to turn the tide for our coastal communities."

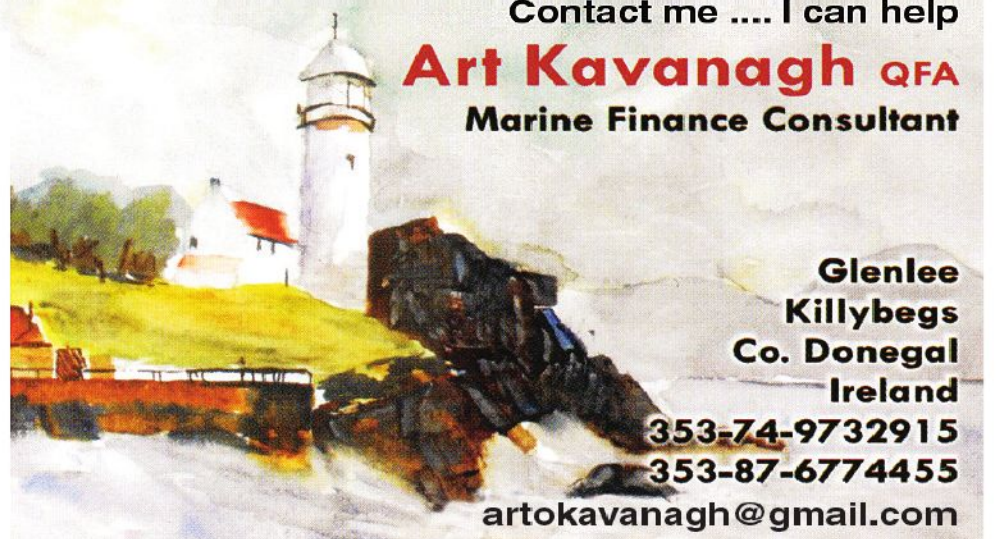
### BIM New Fishermen Scheme

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## EXCLUSIVE

## Irish Navy and the New European Patrol Corvette

Report – Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney

**T**he Naval Service has Observer Status in a European Patrol Corvette development, described as “a programme of future innovative naval vessels, a step forward in European defence co-operation.”

It is being developed by several Navies and Members of the European Union, under the banner of the PESCO project.

The ‘Permanent Structured Co-operation’ project (PESCO), in the area of security and defence policy, was established by a European Council decision on December 11, 2017. It offers a legal framework to jointly plan, develop and invest in shared capability projects and enhance the operational readiness and contribution of armed forces.

Five Navies have officially formed the European Patrol Corvette development (EPC) programme - Italy, France, Spain, Greece and Norway. Romania, Ireland and Portugal are observers. The aim is to define jointly the requirements for “a 2nd rank surface combatant of about 110 metres long and 3,000 tons able to replace in the near future several series of ships.”

“The EPC programme represents a step forward in European defence co-operation. It will strongly contribute to European sovereignty in the second line vessels domain, by strengthening the European industry, increasing efficiency and lowering delays to go from the military need to the delivery to Navies,” according to a statement about a consortium of shipbuilders. These include Fincantieri (Italy), Naval Group (France), Navantia (Spain) and interests from Greece, Denmark and Norway who are carrying out the first phase of the EPC programme which could cost €87m., of which €27m. will be contributed by Italy, France, Spain, Denmark, Greece and Norway. It is expected to take two years to complete the initial design of what are being described as the “next generation class of Naval vessel – the European Patrol Corvette.”

The EPC project is strongly supported by the European Commission. According to its proponents, the programme will “foster European in-house and know-how skills by pooling the resources of the countries involved.

“The ships will be able to carry out a wide range of missions in operational contexts as diverse as surveillance on the high seas with a high degree of autonomy, or law enforcement and sovereignty affirmation missions closer to the coast, adapted to the different Navies needs. It is a programme of future innovative Naval vessels which is developed in a collaborative way by several Navies and members of the European Union.”

# IFSA Claims That the SFPA is Making a Mockery of Minister’s Assertions That He Supports the Inshore Fleet

**O**nce again Killybegs is witnessing what has been described as the blatant discrimination and injustice against fishermen by the Sea Fisheries Protection ‘Authority’ as the inshore vessel Westbound landing herring was subjected to a rigorous and ‘full monitor’ normally reserved for the large pelagic fleet, according to the Chairman of the Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance, Cormac Burke.

Mr Burke has stated that; “For the Westbound, the only one of the Donegal inshore herring boats to land in Killybegs today (Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> December), this is her second SFPA full monitor landing in less than a week.

“As recently as last August, Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue proudly announced his decision to alter the Herring Management Policy of 2012 so that for 2023 and future years, the Policy would be modified, and a set quantity of herring will be made available for non-ringfenced vessels (vessels less than 20m in length overall), at a level of 350 tonnes.

“This change will improve fishing opportunities for the inshore fishing families that are the linchpin of rural coastal communities,” McConalogue said.

“So, in an almost identical situation to when the Minister said that he hoped more pelagic vessels from other nations would land in Killybegs, and immediately the

SFPA set about making life difficult for such visiting vessels and discouraging them from coming to the port, there now exists the situation where a local inshore boat is clearly being targeted to discourage that vessel, and others, from coming to Killy-

begs.

“Before McConalogue comes out with his usual ‘get out’ response by saying that he has no control over the SFPA it is likely that inshore fishermen will be wondering what exactly does he have power over?”

Concluding, Mr Burke says that; “The festive spirit is apparently not within the walls of the SFPA as fishermen try to benefit from the “improved fishing opportunities” that the Minister previously proclaimed.”



Photo: Cormac Burke, IFSA

## South Coast Offshore Energy Review

From Paul Gallagher, Assistant Principal Officer

Offshore Energy – Long Term Strategic Planning; Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

### Government reviewing feedback on potential offshore energy locations off the south coast ahead of a second public engagement period in 2024

**T**he Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications has welcomed feedback received from a recent public information period it held with south and southeast coastal communities looking at potential offshore renewable energy developments for the region.

Last August, the department began a nine-week public information period seeking views from coastal communities in counties Wexford, Waterford and Cork regarding the location of future regional offshore wind developments. The department also met with community organisations, representative bodies from the fishing and seafood sector, environmental organisations, as well as business groups within each county.

The public information period followed the publication of the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) Proposal by the department last July, which put forward an ‘initial’ proposed geographical area within which future offshore renewable wind energy developments may take place.

The initial proposed area of marine space is approximately 8,600 square kilometres in size, stretching from the coastline of counties Wexford, Waterford and Cork. The department is continuing to review feedback from the public information period before commencing another period of engagement in 2024.

Ahead of this next engagement period, the marine area of the

South Coast DMAP Proposal will be refined to identify specific areas for proposed future offshore renewable energy development, which will be included in a ‘Draft DMAP’. It is intended that this Draft DMAP will then undergo a six-week statutory public engagement period which is expected to take place towards the end of Q1 2024.

The establishment of a South Coast DMAP is part of the wider plan-led approach recently adopted by Government to ensure sustainable offshore wind development. What this means in practice is that the State, in cooperation with local communities and with consideration for other maritime activities, including fishing and seafood production, and environmental protection, will determine the appropriate location for future offshore wind developments.

A date for the next statutory phase of the Draft DMAP will be finalised in early 2024 and communicated by the Department.

Further information is also available on available on the department’s website at gov.ie/SouthCoastDMAP



## INDUSTRY OPINION: Chief Executives of the FPO's discuss the latest industry news.



Killybegs Fishermen's  
ORGANISATION LTD.

**S**ean O'Donoghue, Chief Executive of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, who retires at the end of the year, says the December EU Fisheries Council meeting should be better than in recent years. He says there has still been no official response to the KFO from Green Party Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Malcolm Noonan, about his announcement of Irish Special Areas of Conservation when he attended the UN Biodiversity Conference in Montréal, Canada, last year.

This will be the last December EU Fisheries Council Fisheries meeting for me, but looks as if we will be in a better position for the meeting this year, at this stage, than we were over the last two years. The EU-UK bilateral negotiations are at this time (*the time of going to print*), likely to be completed in advance of the Council meeting, which could then sign-off on them. Since Brexit the December Ministers' Fisheries Council had become an irrelevancy. Now it is to be hoped that they will have some function this year.

The EU-Norway negotiations are still in the melting pot at the moment, but if all that is done we will be heading into the Council on Sunday and Monday, December 10 and 11, with a package of all the proposals going to the Ministers for endorsement which is a step forward on the crazy situation which we had since Brexit when the December Council meeting was a damp

squib. That is what it looks like at the moment, but in my experience over the years, I have known there is many a slip possible before the meeting.

The environmental situation, for special areas of conservation and MPAs is still a matter of great concern for us. We still have not had a reply to us from Minister Noonan to our submission about the North/Western area proposals. We pointed out the scientific and technical flaws to him. We are now up to about ten Emails to him. The only answer we got back from official sources is that it is still being examined. We put that in last February and now it is December. Minister Noonan made his announcement without consulting anybody last November. Our submission shows up that there are huge flaws in their proposals, they are designating areas that there is no basis for. It is gone beyond a joke at this stage.



**A**odh O'Donnell, Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation, outlines the concerns his organisation has about the SFPA.

The Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO) has concerns about both the operation and oversight of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA). Our primary interest is to ensure that Ireland has fit-for-purpose controls which are fair to everyone. Our current focus is on two main areas - inspections and accountability. We are concerned that the information offered by the SFPA - in their annual report or on their website - does not offer sufficient transparency regarding the level of physical inspections, in particular. These statistics provided by the SFPA appear to be based only on catches landed in Irish ports. They don't appear to reflect the number or level of catches from Irish waters which are landed elsewhere.

For example, the SFPA figures for 2022 show just 50 landings of catches from Norway vessels to Irish ports. Given the high level of Norwegian fishing opportunities in Irish waters, it is likely that there are exponentially more Norwegian catches from Irish waters landed into other countries. This is the basis for our concern that the limited information from SFPA statistics may not reflect the full number of Norwegian or other foreign vessel catches in Irish waters.

We also have ongoing concerns about the level of physical inspections carried out on Irish vessels, compared to foreign vessels. The SFPA's 2021 annual report shows 69% of physical fishing vessel inspections were carried out on Irish vessels whilst 82% of the SFPA non-landing administrative controls were of Irish vessels. Given that only around 15% of fish caught in Irish EU waters are caught by Irish vessels, this would appear to be grossly disproportionate. It may reflect under-inspection of non-Irish vessels if this is case.

The SFPA's 2022 Report failed to provide comparative data on what percentage of inspections were carried out on Irish vessels. Furthermore, their website statistics for 2022 fail to distinguish between physical inspections and administrative 'controls'. Administration 'controls' are simply e-log book queries, as far as we know, but are being counted as inspections in 2022 figures.

Most notably, statistics on inspections of vessels which fish in Irish waters, but do not land their catches in Irish ports, remains missing from both the 2022 annual report and the website statistics. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the SFPA to offer greater transparency on how 'controls' and inspections are applied to all of those fishing

in Irish waters. Otherwise, the Irish fishing industry has to question whether there is a level playing field in Irish fisheries controls.

In the interests of sustainability, there needs to be a more productive relationship between the SFPA and the fishing industry. But this is a challenge while there are so many unresolved issues, such as inspections, by-catches and concerns over the recording procedures in weighing system regulations. The bottom line is that there needs to be greater independent oversight of the SFPA at Government level in Ireland and at present there is none.

We acknowledge that the SFPA is subject to European Commission audit in how they oversee the implementation of EU Regulations. Minister McConalogue has stated in the Dáil that, when it came to all operational issues concerning fisheries control, as a matter of law, he is 'expressly precluded from getting involved in operational matters.'

**This is the core of our concern - accountability at Governmental level.**

We believe this must change as a matter of urgency and fear that the SFPA will not move to address the operational concerns we have unless they can be held to account at national level. We are not alone in these concerns. A key recommendation of the 2020 Price Waterhouse and Coopers Report into the SFPA had this to say:

"The SFPA ... does not have the support or direction of an independently-established board. While the 2006 Act does not provide for such a board and the Act itself is outside the scope of this review, establishment of an Advisory Board, nominated by DAFM, comprising members with expertise and/or professional experience in senior administration, public sector governance requirements and management, not related to the sectors regulated by the SFPA, to assist the management in strengthening the capabilities of the organisation, may be something that the parent Department may wish to consider, particularly given the nature and scale of the change programme envisaged in this report."

The IFPO fully supports the creation of an effective Advisory Board. However, it must also have the requisite resources to monitor control and enforce best practice in our waters for all vessels including those foreign vessels that process at sea and third country vessels. Such a move would help mend the divisions between the SFPA and the fishing industry and help secure a more effective fishing control environment into the future.



Ronan Ross pictured at Ardglass. Photo: Christopher Feenan





### IS&EFPO - Working For The Fishermen

**J**ohn Lynch, Chief Executive of the Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation, says the scallop scheme has been welcomed and is being availed of and that fishing organisations have been guaranteed that they will be involved in the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan.

The scallop scheme, giving our fishermen compensation for the Brexit situation, has been awaited for a long time and has been a source of frustration, but that the scheme was announced and is being availed of is a bit of positive news. It is important for those in the sector. There have been many meetings about it and a lot of frustration, but it has come to fruition at last.

On the environment, we have been told by the Department of the Environment in response to the joint submission made by the eight fisheries organisations about the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan that we will be involved and will be consulted. That is a guarantee that we have and we want to be involved.

No fishermen is happy with ORE (off-shore renewable energy) coming into their fishing grounds, but we have to be involved in what is going to happen and it appears that this is now accepted, which is important for the industry. I am happy enough that we will be consulted. This is only right for fishermen and the correct way to proceed.

The December Council and the TACs and Quotas, the sharing arrangement amongst Member States is coming up. We had a meeting with the Commission and they told us they had agreement with the UK on most points. There had to be sign-off on a few more aspects, but they have gone through the process with the UK.

We haven't been given the figures as yet, but we are told they will be ready for Christmas this year, so we won't be waiting until the last minute about the situation for the next year. The figures should be there for the Council meeting. It would be a little bit better than the situation of the last few years.

There are other issues to deal with at the Council, such as management. We have an on-going issue over whiting in the South Coast and the difference between the management of areas. The advice coming out for the Eastern Channel and the Western Channel and Approaches, puts our area on

the western side with advice for whiting which is negative advice, very low, probably zero, while there is positive elsewhere. This situation is very important for us. The advice is different, positive on the eastern side, weaker on the western, so we are afraid we could end up with a very small quota.

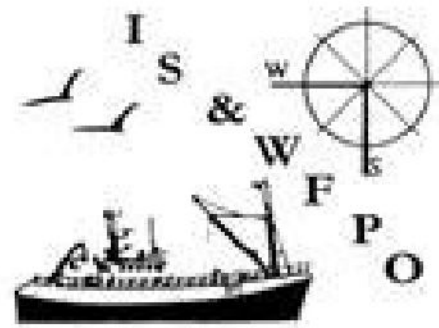
We need to have enough quota to maintain the mixed fisheries on the South Coast. Even if the stock is low we still need to be left with a substantial by-catch to maintain the mixed fisheries.

We have worries about cod and about pollock as well which is on zero advice and that has serious implications for all fisheries, but particularly for inshore fisheries. The advice is out for the nephrops and it is positive, 5 per cent increase overall and 20 per cent on the Porcupine which is good news.

#### Haddock 7 b-k

As we do not have the figures for the 2024 TACs and quotas as yet, we are not fully aware of the implications of the TAC advice at this moment. In the advice released from ICES in June the advice for Haddock in ICES areas 7 b-k was for a 31% reduction in TAC. This advice if fully applied to the quota will have a significant impact on the Irish white fish fleet. Landings data will show that all vessels targeting demersal species in the Celtic Seas are landing quantities of Haddock.

The advice at this time does not reflect the available quantities of fish on the ground. The introduction of the landing obligation only adds to the difficulties this mismatch of advice and available catches imposes on the demersal fleet. I think we should take a look at this issue with haddock which has occurred time and again in our fisheries and have a review of the most recent haddock benchmarking to try explain why intermittently haddock stocks and ICES advice do not match up creating a huge operational difficulty for Fishermen.



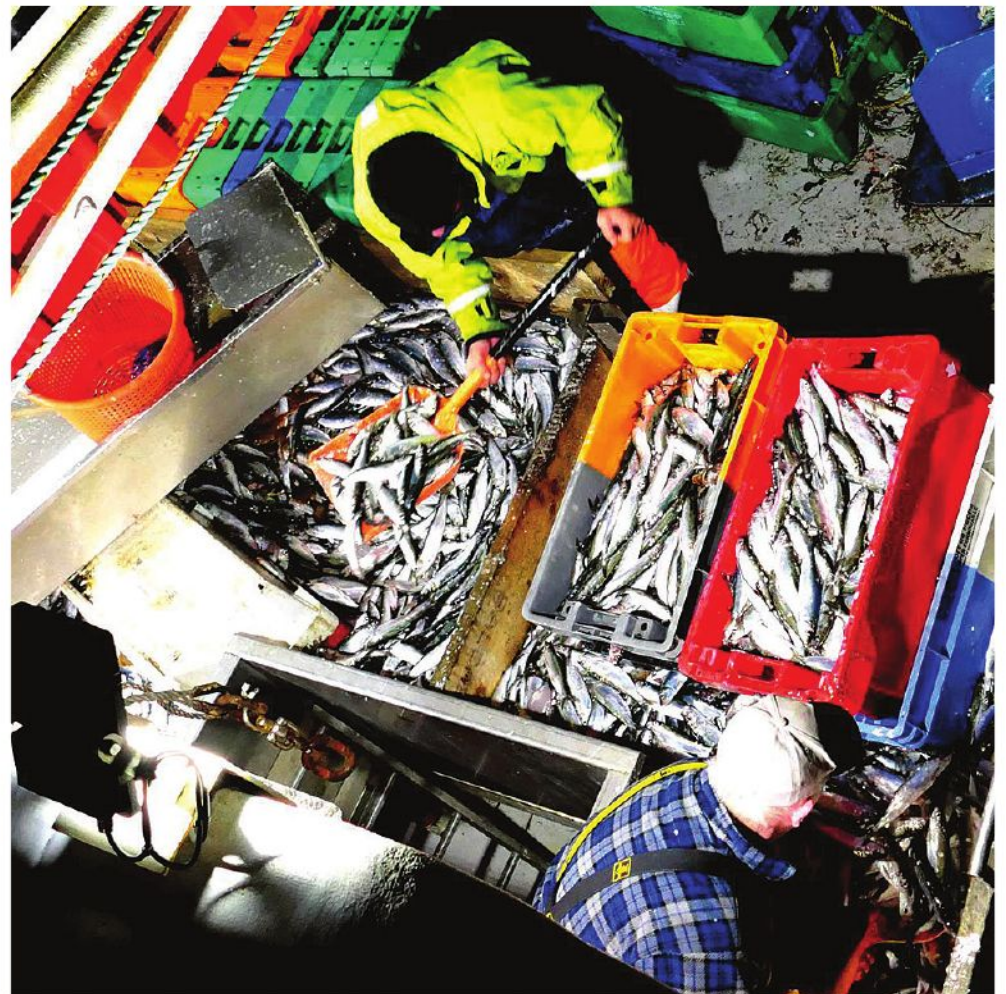
**P**atrick Murphy, Chief Executive of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation is concerned about discrimination occurring in compensatory tie-up scheme payments to some boats.

"There is a discriminatory practice which is happening and we do not seem to be able to get the Department and the administration to understand the situation. There are boats which now find themselves discriminated against because of the month of November 2021 / 2022 they tied-up previously.

"The liquidity aid scheme for Pelagic boats was based on European criteria that vessels that had lost money due to Brexit in the first three months of the year would be given compensation for their losses due to Brexit. That was then extended to the months of November and December to accommodate those who had not fished in the first three months but in the Autumn.

"The boats which didn't fish in those months but had previously taken a tie-up scheme are now told that they have to pay that money back, exclusive of funds that were paid to the crew.

"A handful of Tier One and Tier two Boats which Tied up in November are now disadvantaged even discriminated under the scheme, because they will have to pay back money they got under a previous tie-up, despite the fact they like the vessels with no Authorisation in December 2021 had no ability to fish as they had to inform the SFPA where they were berthing the vessels for the month and could not move unless given permission to do so."



A fine catch of traditional Lough Foyle herrings being discharged at Greencastle Harbour by Skipper Liam O'Brien and crew. Photo: Enda Craig

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## Award-Winning Galway Seafood Business is Planning to “Mussel” In on the Growing Seafood Market



Kelly Oysters Family (l-r); Micheal, Theresa, Diarmuid, Mary & Michael.

**F**ollowing a €172,000 investment which has been supported by BIM, Kelly Oysters based in Kilcolgan will see the business expand sales of mussels for the domestic market. €74,844 of the investment has come from the Brexit Processing Capital Support Scheme, implemented by BIM.

The scheme, which will deliver up to €45 million in funding to the Irish seafood processing sector, is funded by the European Union under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve. It was recommended by the Seafood Taskforce established by Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D.

Diarmuid Kelly, one of two brothers who runs the business, said the investment has seen the introduction of a new production system which will package small sized bags of mussels suitable for home preparations. He sees this as opening the doors for new sales channels at home and abroad.

Kelly Oysters recently won a presti-

gious Euro-Toques Food Award for its outstanding Blue Rope Mussels, and for its contribution to regenerative aquaculture in Ireland. “We were so proud to win this award. It is recognition of the work we put into producing the finest shellfish possible.” said Diarmuid Kelly.



At present the live mussels produced by the Kelly's are mainly packed in 10kg to 15 kg bags for the food service and wholesale market.

But they are not suitable for retail sales.

Diarmuid Kelly says: “We noticed an increase in demand from fish wholesalers for smaller sized packaging during the Covid-19 pandemic and this trend has remained. Market research is telling us that



Kelly Oysters - Michael and Diarmuid.

consumers are looking for produce that is semi prepared and ready to cook. Our new smaller 1kg packaging is an opportunity to drive increased sales into retail, and direct to consumer channels.”

Traditionally, handier 1kg net bags of mussels have been produced by hand, something which was very labour intensive. But thanks to the recent investment, supported by BIM, Kelly Oysters has introduced a product line that will prepare, weigh, pack and label 1kg bags of mussels that are fully traceable from farm to fork.

“Our investment will add huge value to our existing produce,” said Diarmuid Kelly. “From existing inquiries, we estimate a demand of 20 tonnes of 1kg packs of mussels per annum, growing to 50 tonnes over three years. We are very excited about the new chapter and the prospect of welcoming new generations of shellfish lovers to our product.”

For more than seven decades the Kelly family has been successfully farming delicious, top quality oysters, mussels and shellfish in the crystal-clear waters of Galway Bay. Its sustainably farmed oysters grace the tables of some of the finest restaurants and hotels in Ireland and around the world.

Kelly Oysters was first set up by Diarmuid's father, Michael, in 1952. At that stage there was only a wild stock of oysters on the west coast, and no oyster farming. “My grandfather, who was also called Michael, was an oyster dredger and he would dredge wild oysters from the bottom of the sea from a fishing boat. It was my father Michael who formally set up the business and started selling oysters to restaurants.”

The passion and love for the business was passed down to sons Diarmuid and Micheal. But pivotal also to the business are their wives Mary (married to Micheal) and Theresa (married to Diarmuid) who work full time in the business. In addition, Micheals, son Michael junior, is on the staff of ten.

Said Diarmuid: “Where we are now is very much due to the hard work and dedication that our entire team put in every day. The Brexit Processing Capital Support Scheme has been a huge help to us, and was the incentive for us to introduce our new product line which will help us become more efficient and to reach new customers.”

The Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit created several challenges for the business with significant disruption to sales.

“We realised to meet the economic and future needs of this family business a new strategy was required which included adding value to existing products, and which did not rely solely on the existing wholesale food service market.”

Currently Kelly Oysters sell approximately 30 per cent of its product abroad, and 70 per cent to the domestic market. It exports oysters to 14 countries around the world including Canada and Singapore.

## High Speed Broadband Infrastructure Works On The Way For Over 500 Cork Offshore Island Homes

National Broadband Plan surveying to commence on three islands off the coast of Cork

**N**ational Broadband Ireland (NBI), the company rolling out the National Broadband Plan (NBP) has announced that surveying works are to commence in the coming weeks on three Cork offshore islands – Cape Clear Island, Sherkin Island and Bere Island).



Peter Hendrick, Chief Executive Officer of National Broadband Ireland, said: “NBI's mission is to ensure that no community is left behind under the National Broadband Plan, no matter how rural or remote their location; and this obviously includes our offshore islands. We are very proud that we will provide connectivity to the islands as part of our work, and I am pleased to say that a further three Cork islands are now advancing towards high-speed broadband infrastructure for over 500 homes.”

“NBI teams will be on the ground on Sherkin, Cape Clear and Bere islands in the coming weeks to commence engineering surveys. This planning work is a crucial step that informs the detailed network design and determines the locations for essential network equipment. Once the survey is complete, we will proceed to the detailed design phase. This phase confirms existing infrastructure and identifies any additional requirements, such as power and the necessary footprint for building the network. Our planners and surveyors will collaborate with the Local Authority, relevant stakeholders and island residents at every step of the way.”

“Once the planning and design phases are complete, we will move into construction and ultimately provide access to high-speed broadband with minimum speeds of 500 megabits per second. I would encourage residents to keep up to date on NBI's progress by registering for Eircode-specific updates on our website at [www.nbi.ie/eoi](http://www.nbi.ie/eoi) or by calling our contact centre on 0818 624 624 where they can also be registered to receive the future updates.”

The NBI infrastructure is already live on ten islands including Hare Island and Long Island off the coast of Cork; Turbot Island and Inishturk South Island off the coast of Galway; Inishlyre Island and Collanmore Island off the coast of Mayo; as well as Inishfree Island, Rutland Island, Eadarinis Island and Eigher Island off the coast of Donegal.



**Stagnating EU Aquaculture production, despite increased funding, is a challenge for the new EMFAF funding programme writes Teresa Morrissey, IFA Aquaculture Executive, analysing the Special Report of the EU Court of Auditors on EU Aquaculture.**



## State Agencies, Government Departments and The EU Commission Must Take Heed of Shortcomings Identified by The EU Court of Auditors

# IFA Aquaculture

**The European Court of Auditors has published a Special Report on EU Aquaculture policy which addresses stagnating EU Aquaculture production - despite increased EU funding.**

Some of the conclusions of the report include recommendations for the European Commission to carry out actions in relation to:

- (1) support for member states in addressing the obstacles to a sustainable development of EU aquaculture;
- (2) improve targeting of EU funds
- (3) enhance the monitoring of EU funding's performance and of environmental sustainability.

The previous funding programme, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (€1.2 billion allocated in 2014-2020) and its current successor, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (€1.0 billion allocated in 2021-2027), along with the Common Fisheries Policy's aim, is to

grow Aquaculture sustainably and deliver economic, social and employment benefits. The audit carried out as part of the Special Report looked at the 2014-2020 period, as well as the provisions and programmes that had already been established for the 2021-2027 period at the time of the audit.

The auditors found that the EU strategic documents have improved in terms of promoting the sustainable development of the Aquaculture sector. At Member State level, multiannual strategic plans for Aquaculture were generally aligned with the Commission's guidelines, but some key strategies for the environment did not take Aquaculture into account properly.

Moreover, spatial planning and licensing procedures still hampered the growth of the Aquaculture sector.

Funding allocated exclusively to Aquaculture for the 2014-2020 period was more than three times the total spent in 2007-2013. The need for such a large increase was not well demonstrated. Member States

demonstrated low absorption rates for funding allocated for Aquaculture development, and often reallocated financial resources to those measures attracting greater interest from the Aquaculture sector, and financed almost all eligible projects, irrespective of their expected contribution to the objectives of EU support.

Since 2014, EU Aquaculture production has stagnated in terms of volume, and employment has decreased. However, the sector has seen an increase in the value of production.

The Special Report concluded that while the EU's strategic framework for Aquaculture has improved in the recent years, EU Aquaculture has seen little growth and there are no reliable indicators to track the sector's sustainability and the contribution of the increased EU funding to the development of EU Aquaculture. The report also recommends that EU Aquaculture policy should evolve taking account of the weaknesses and shortcomings identified in the past, addressing the current challenges related to environmental and climate sustainability, and food security.

The publication of this report is timely given the next EMFAF operational programme is about to get underway in Ireland, with the first funding schemes of the €258.4 million allocated EMFAF funds (€142.4 million EU funds and €116 million National funds) due to be opened in early 2024. This is an increase of over €18 million compared to €240 million under the predecessor EMFF programme.

This is a significant allocation of funding for the development of the Irish Seafood sector. It is imperative to ensure this increase of EMFAF funds is appropriately allocated and fulfils the purpose of

promoting and developing a sustainable Seafood sector. All stakeholders, industry, State agencies, Government departments and the EU Commission must take heed of the shortcomings identified by the EU Court of Auditors Special Report and work to implement the recommendations outlined to allow Seafood production to fulfil its potential through sustainable development and contribute to food security.

## IFA Aquaculture Conference and AGM - February 2024

IFA Aquaculture will host its annual conference and AGM at the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel, Limerick on Thursday, February 22, 2024. The event will take place on the eve of the Skipper Expo taking place at the UL Sport Arena, Limerick on Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th February.

A full agenda for the day will be issued in advance of the event. It will include an update on the next EMFAF programme and the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture, along with a brief on relevant issues relating to the sustainable development of Irish Aquaculture.

Details on registration for the event and information regarding the AGM for IFA Aquaculture members will also be issued in the New Year.

Accommodation can be secured by contacting the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel directly or booking online via their website using the promo code IFAAGM24.

**IFA Aquaculture wishes all its members, stakeholders and supporters of the sector a Very Happy Christmas and a bright New Year for 2024.**

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Dublin South 93.9FM; Dublin City FM 103.2FM; Dublin Near FM 90.3FM; Liffey Sound Dublin 96.4FM; Dundalk FM 97.7FM; Erris FM 90.8FM; Kilkenny City Radio 88.7FM; Radio Corca Baiscinn South West Clare 92.5 and 94.8 FM; Connemara Community Radio 87.8 FM and 106.1FM; Athlone Community Radio 88.4FM; CRY Youghal 104.FM; West Cork FM; West Limerick 102 FM; Tipp MidWest Radio 104.8 and 106.7 FM; Ros FM Roscommon 94.6FM

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



Sam Nunn's new boat, "Cupla Na Farrage" arriving into Kilmurry Quay. Best wishes to owner and crew with this fine new addition to the south east fleet. Photo courtesy Alan Hinchy





# Tom MacSweeney's Maritime Diary

## Protect The Puffins

One of my outstanding sea-going memories is sailing on an idyllic day in Summer a few years back, under a blue sky, across a nicely calm sea, the yacht moving slowly with a gentle breeze as we passed the Skelligs off the Kerry coast and I saw Puffins diving into the water to catch fish.



PUFFIN - Photo: BirdWatch Ireland

It was riveting to see them hurtle down off the cliffs, smash underwater, then emerge a few seconds later, sometimes with a catch, sometimes with nothing.

Puffins are unmistakable and a bit comical in appearance, black-and-white with a parrot-like, multi-coloured bill, which is on show during the mating season, red-and-black eye markings and bright orange legs. They generally stay underwater for 30 seconds or less but are said to be capable of going 200 feet deep.

Ever since that first meeting with a colony on the South/West coast I have had a liking for the Puffins, a funny-looking, but rather adorable seabird which spends most of its 20-year life actually at sea, resting on the waves, surviving in harsh conditions and travelling long distances. Their range spans the eastern

coast of Canada and the United States to the western coast of Europe. While there are three types of puffins in the world, Ireland is home to perhaps the most iconic species, the Atlantic Puffins.

So, I was disappointed to hear that the Seabirds Count Census has found they are in serious decline.

“Puffins are reliant on sandeels and this crucial food source is in decline in waters off Britain and probably Ireland,” the Census survey says, adding that “this is one of the many potential factors contributing to the species’ decline, though more research is needed to get a full picture of what is affecting this iconic bird. The Puffin has declined by 28% in Ireland and is now a Red-listed bird of conservation concern, meaning it is vulnerable to extinction.”

Puffins have their own island off Kerry. They are also known to fancy herrings as a meal.

Puffin Island is a wildbird conservancy reserve south of Valentia, separated from the mainland by a narrow sound. In addition to the Skelligs, which has the largest population, the Great Saltee, the Cliffs of Moher and Horn Head in Donegal are other sites in which they settle to breed.

Puffins spend most of their lives at sea, the land beckoning for the breeding season. Male and female puffins form long-term pairs and both parents help in the raising of offspring. Each year, females lay a single egg, which the parents keep warm.

The Seabirds Count census ran from 2015 to 2021, led by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee UK with 20 steering group partners, including BirdWatch Ireland and our National Parks and Wildlife Service, who spearheaded efforts to collect and publish the findings here. It is the most comprehensive seabird census providing

population estimates for regularly breeding species of seabirds in Ireland, Britain, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. It was published in November after 10,000 sites and 25 species were surveyed. It is a mixed picture, some have increased, others have declined. The table shows the seven at the top which have increased and the 18 that are declining.

Mediterranean Gull	↑
Roseate Tern	
Northern Gannet	
Razorbill	
Great Skua	
Sandwich Tern	
Common Tern	
Great Cormorant	=
Common Guillemot	
Black Guillemot	↓
Little Tern	
European Shag	
Atlantic Puffin	
Black-headed Gull	
Arctic Tern	
Northern Fulmar	
Black-legged Kittiwake	
Great Black-backed Gull	
Common Gull	
Arctic Skua	
Leach's Storm-petrel	

Regrettably, the adorable Puffins have declined sharply.

Seabirds are important to the maritime sphere. Let us remember to protect them all.

## “Achill Island Sea Salt” Success as they Achieve Protected Designation of Origin Recognition



The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D., has announced that the application for a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) for “Achill Island Sea Salt” has been successful. The European Commission Regulation advising of the registration of “Achill Island Sea Salt” as a Protected Designation of Origin has been published today in the Official Journal of the European Union and will come into force on the twentieth day following its publication.

“Protected Designation of Origin” (PDO) is a name which identifies a product: (a) originating in a specific place, region or, in exceptional cases, a country; (b) whose quality or characteristics are essentially or exclusively due to a particular geographical environment with its inherent natural and human factors; and (c) the production steps of which all take place in the defined geographical area. Achieving PDO status will mean that producers of “Achill Island Sea Salt” may use the PDO logo on their products.

Minister McConalogue said: “I am delighted to announce that Achill Island Sea Salt has been successful in their application for PDO status, further strengthening Ireland’s reputation for quality food products. I would like to congratulate the applicant, Achill Island Sea Salt, on this substantial achievement. PDO status provides both recognition of the exceptional quality and unique characteristics of this hand harvested sea salt from the waters around Achill Island and reflects the dedication of our local producers.”

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, as the Competent Authority for Geographical Indications, guided the applicant through the application process. Following the National Opposition Procedure in 2020, the application was submitted to the European Commission for scrutiny following which the Member State/ Third country opposition procedure was completed without opposition.

[achillislandseasalt.ie](http://achillislandseasalt.ie)



Ayala-may off Ardglass - Photo by Christopher Feenan



BIM provides **essential training** and **skills development** for the **Irish seafood industry** at its two **National Fisheries Colleges of Ireland**, **mobile coastal training units**, **in-person workshops** and **online programmes**.

To learn more about the full range of upcoming courses visit [bim.ie](http://bim.ie)

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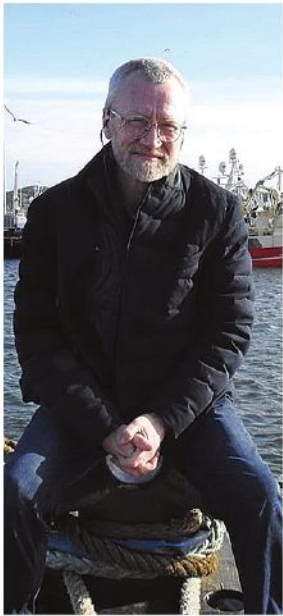
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Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland







# Is the EU Commission Failing Ireland as A Member State In 'Deals' with Outside Fishing Nations?

*Cormac Burke, IFSA Chairman says that to 'chase with the hare but run with the hounds' is an old Irish saying that generally describes someone who is working on both sides of an argument with the eventual aim of benefiting their own interests and not necessarily either of the sides in opposition.*



**Posting an editorial comment on the IFSA Facebook page, Cormac Burke says; "It would seem, from an Irish viewpoint, that the EU Fisheries Commission is guilty, to some extent at least, of taking this position when it comes to access to Irish waters for non EU Third Countries with pelagic interests.**

Fishing stock advice from ICES, the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas, is one of the cornerstones upon which the EU Fisheries Commission claims to base its aim of sustainable fishing and of EU Member States staying within MSY (maximum sustainable yield) for all of the various species of fish that are commercially targeted.

According to the Commission's own website, EU Member States are "legally bound to manage fish stocks at sustainable levels under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)" and that "sustainable fishing has made substantial progress in the EU based on ICES advice".

However, it would appear that while this cornerstone law is imposed with rigid control on every EU Member State, a more relaxed attitude is taken by the Commission when it comes to considering deals with outside nations who wish to fish in EU waters, particularly those waters belonging to Ireland.

And it should also be remembered that the Commission has a track record when it comes to not living up to its own standards, as seen in the Brexit deal when previous pillars of the CFP such as zonal attachment were dismissed in making Ireland foot the majority of the bill in the payment to the UK while other EU nations got off relatively lightly in comparison.

Currently, with nations such as Norway and Iceland, for example, who have given themselves quotas far beyond the recommended EU/ICES advice, based on an unqualified zonal attachment claim, the EU Commission has and continues to, be willing to sit down and discuss such Third Countries being allowed catch some of their quota in Irish waters with, as evidenced in the past, no return whatsoever to Ireland but a benefit to Dutch-owned EU nation flagged

vessels to get access to Norwegian waters.

Apparently if a Third Country wishes to award itself a huge quota that exceeds the same ICES advice but then has problems catching that quota in its own waters then the EU Commission is still willing to sit down and negotiate a deal with them - - and thereby totally ignoring their own mandate of only working within the remit of 'sustainable fisheries' that they claim is practically an EU Commission religion.

In these cases, where is the EU Commission's duty to uphold its own faith in the ICES model and shouldn't any approaches from those who flaunt the laws of the EU fisheries system not be chased from the room, never mind be invited to sit down to the negotiating table?

And even if the deal with Third Countries in question involves species quotas that are within ICES advice, does the EU Commission not have a moral obligation to get the most beneficial result possible for Ireland as a Member State and not some other EU nation that pays nothing into the deal?

### Crunching numbers

This argument will be very much to fore with the recent strong rumours that Iceland plans to negotiate a deal with the EU in a proposal to be allowed access to Irish waters supposedly to fish for blue whiting but with many in the industry believing that this is only a ploy to get negotiations underway and actually to reach their real aim of being allowed target mackerel in Irish waters as they can't fill their massive self-awarded mackerel quota in their own waters.

Irish waters are once again being used as a form of barter however the benefit of the exchange is not being returned to the doner. The EU are seeking to preserve or enhance fishing opportunities that benefit other EU member states at Ireland's expense. This is possible because the coastal states agreement is a complicated multi species horse trading exercise. Therefore, clandestine deals can be disguised behind so much smoke and mirrors that it is difficult to identify the winners and losers.

And, in relation to mackerel in Irish wa-

ters, it must be kept in mind that the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the Irish pelagic fleet is now down to just 52,385 tonnes, reflecting this year's 2% reduction on ICES advice plus a further 2.6% reduction as part of the ongoing Brexit 'payback'.

And understandably while the EU Commission must 'mind it own business' regarding Norway, also seemingly unable to fill its self-awarded mackerel quota in its own waters, doing a deal with the UK to catch mackerel there, the Commission must seriously look at the blue whiting scenario and the ramifications of any new 'deals'.

The blue whiting situation is, pardon the pun, a different kettle of fish.

States deal agreed in 2006 but they want to be allowed catch 150,000t, worth 45 million euros, inside the Irish 200-mile limit.

Ireland naturally is fighting even the notion of further access for Norway in Irish waters and indeed are insisting that the 2006 Coastal States deal to give Norway this so-called 'traditional right' to Irish waters was unconstitutional in the first place and needs to be reviewed.

### Precedent

Norway's recent deal with the UK to be allowed catch a large portion of their mackerel quota in those waters saw payment in return to the UK pelagic industry in the form of a new annual Norwegian/UK mackerel quota transfer worth some 36 million euros.

Therefore a benchmark has been set and the question is being posed by the Irish

fishing industry at this time as to the need for the EU Commission to take a strictly 'business approach' in any blue whiting deals with Norway and, in a similar vein to the UK, demand a payment of real value to the Irish industry in return before any access is considered.

**"Irish waters are once again being used as a form of barter however the benefit of the exchange is not being returned to the doner."**

Of a total Western Waters TAC of some 1,355,933 tonnes the Irish pelagic fleet gets a minuscule 4% (53,776t) and Norway, although not exceeding ICES TAC advice in this case, has a huge quota in comparison.

Norway already has access to Irish waters for blue whiting under an EU/Coastal

## YOUR INDUSTRY NEEDS YOU!

**The Irish Fishing & Seafood Alliance (IFSA) continues to lead the fight for justice for Ireland's fishing industry and the coastal communities who rely on it.**

The IFSA is a non-profit organisation that receives no funding from any source other than the generous support from fishing vessels, processors, ancillary service companies and individuals.

YOUR support would be greatly appreciated and annual subscription rates are only €20 for an individual, €100 for an inshore vessel or sole trader and a modest rising scale for larger vessels and companies (email ifsacormac@gmail.com for further details on this).

If you want the IFSA motto of **'Your Voice in Our Industry'** to continue to put pressure on this Government and the marine minister to stop neglecting our marine resources then please play your part by making your subscription.

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**Thank you for your support and for becoming a part in this industry's rapidly growing fight for justice.**



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news from the **North West**  
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## NPWS Approach to Designating New Conservation Areas Lacks Scientific Integrity

**Lack of consultation is a further slap in the face for fishermen says KFO**

**Three new proposed marine conservation areas which have been foisted upon fishermen and other stakeholders in the last ten months represent a new low with absolutely zero meaningful stakeholder engagement.**

That's according to the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation CEO, Seán O'Donoghue who said that for the initial proposed Special Area of Conservation (SAC) along the Porcupine Shelf and Southern Canyons to be followed by the announcement of a Special Protection Area (SPA) in the North West Irish Sea as recently as July, constitutes the most chaotic form of governance and will ultimately alienate fishermen, driving a wedge between them and Government.

Mr O'Donoghue said: "Minister-of-State Malcom Noonan shocked everybody outside his own Department with the announcement of two proposed new Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) at the COP15 UN Biodiversity Conference in Montréal last December. We lodged a formal objection to this given the lack of scientific data underlying the proposal and its potential impact on our industry yet in spite of sustained communiques to the Minister and his officials, we have yet to receive any meaningful response.

"To add insult to injury, Minister Noonan followed the same modus operandi on July 13<sup>th</sup> last by announcing an SPA in the same autocratic fashion – this time relating to seabirds, giving rise to genuine concern that this will have an impact on fishing activities since it overlaps with nephrops (prawn) grounds in the North West Irish Sea. We have made the Department aware of our position and have lodged a submission but again, we have major concerns that not only are we not being listened to, but we are

actually being treated with contempt.

"Insofar as the proposed Porcupine Shelf SAC goes, it is akin to designating the combined area of counties Dublin, Wicklow, Wexford, Kildare and Louth based on the presence of a habitat equal in size to the Phoenix Park. There is even less logic regarding the Southern Canyons SAC designating the same area based on the presence of habitat the size of St Stephen's Green. This is the archetypal example of using a sledgehammer to crack a nut."

"We must also determine what analysis was used to derive the proposed outline of the SPA as no information was provided by NPWS. This begs the question of whether there was actually any analysis performed or whether it was an arbitrary decision. There is a pressing need for clarity around this issue. Without knowing the basis for the delineation, it's impossible to determine if it's scientifically robust or not."

"We believe it was a complete solo-run with zero advance consultation with other Government Departments and stakeholders - therefore it simply cannot be allowed to happen. It flies in the face of both good governance and best practice while using technical and scientific advice which is flawed. I know that other Departments are very displeased at how the NPWS and Minister Noonan have managed this debacle," concluded Mr O'Donoghue.

## Pringle Pushes for Government to Provide Financial Support for Inshore Fishermen

**Independent TD for Donegal, Thomas Pringle, has called on Government to provide immediate financial support for inshore fishermen.**

Addressing Minister Charlie McConalogue in the Dáil, Deputy Pringle said: "Due to the ongoing war in Ukraine and a significant crash in the prices for crab, shellfish producers are currently left in an unprofitable position, with greatly reduced turnovers. Live markets are under severe pressure from the extra product that's being

funnelled into them to try and compensate for the problems with the cooked crab market.

"The inshore sector desperately needs financial assistance in order to sustain themselves throughout the winter period. Without financial assistance hundreds of families across Donegal and the west of Ireland are at risk of not being able to pay their bills or put food on the table this winter.

"The inshore sector provides vital employment in some of the most isolated parts of the country, where there are little or no other employment opportunities, particularly our island communities such as Arranmore and other areas such as the port in Inver, Clad na Gcaorach, Shalway and Loughros Point, to name but a few," he said.

The deputy raised the issue during questions on policy or legislation.

Deputy Pringle asked: "Will your government provide immediate financial support for inshore fishermen?"

In his response, Minister McConalogue said he has engaged with the inshore fishery sector on the issue and is assessing the situation and aware of the challenges they face.

## Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation Announces New Chief Executive

**BIM executive, Dominic Rihan appointed to helm of Ireland's largest fish producer organisation**

**The chairman of the board of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation has announced that Bord Iascaigh Mhara Director of Economic and Strategic Services, Dominic Rihan has been appointed as its new CEO.**

Ciarán Doherty said that the KFO was extremely pleased to have somebody of the calibre of Mr Rihan to lead the organisation through what will be a transformative and transitional period for Irish fisheries.

"Mr Rihan has 34 years' experience in working at the coalface in crucial issues

relating to fisheries. He is respected not just nationally, but at a European and international level and we have no doubt that he will be a driving force as well as a strategic leader as the KFO embarks on a new chapter.

"We have many challenges to overcome, the most important of which is reclaiming stocks and quota which have been taken from us. We look forward to Dominic picking up where his predecessor left off. We have lobbied tirelessly on burden-sharing post-Brexit and this work continues apace. It is imperative that all EU coastal states share the impact of fish lost due to the British withdrawal equally and fairly," said Mr Doherty.

The incoming CEO, Mr Rihan stated: "I'm extremely excited and enthused about this appointment. Having observed the status and profile of the KFO up close for many years, it's an organisation which represents members in a highly professional and effective way in an industry which is simultaneously complex and challenging.

"I hope to use my experience for the betterment of the sector and look forward to building on the tireless work of my predecessor in representing the members of the KFO. I'd like to thank my colleagues in Bord Iascaigh Mhara for their unwavering support for the last 34 years and look forward to embracing this new chapter in 2024."



Mr Rihan takes up his position as CEO of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation in early 2024.



# THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

## A New Vision for Drogheda and the Louth Coast

### Dr. Joe Hiney, Director, Bremore Ireland Port

*Drogheda Port on the River Boyne is changing, with initial capital investment of €1 billion in a plan to develop it into Bremore Ireland Port. For this month's interview, Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney, talks to Dr. Joe Hiney about a plan which foresees huge changes for the County Louth coast.*

**O**ne of the most dramatic marine visual sights in the country is along Drogheda Port's town quays, the backdrop of the Boyne Viaduct which carries the main rail line from Dublin northwards spans the historic River Boyne that has been known since ancient times. The Greek geographer Ptolemy is said to have drawn a map of Ireland in the second century which included the Boyne. In 937 A.D it is recorded that there were 60 Viking ships on the Boyne, plundering ancient sites of Ireland and that where the river joins the sea they used as an expedition base.

There is a new vision for Drogheda which declares that it will become "the first new deep-water port development since the foundation of the Irish State."

That is, unquestionably, a daring vision, which can be justified Joe Hiney tells me when we discuss the future of what is now called Bremore Ireland Port. "It will be a world-class deep-water multi-modal port, with a concentration on involvement in the energy production section. It will transform Ireland's energy landscape and the coastline."

Joe Hiney is a former Chairman of Drogheda Port and now a Director at Bremore Ireland Port. He is a Doctor of Philosophy from Dublin University. He focused on Comparative Political Economy I learn and is an experienced international port management consultant.

The Bremore Port idea first emerged about 20 years ago, research shows. At one time there were suggestions that aspects of Dublin Port should be moved to Bremore. There has been an "on/off" aspect to the project, which was re-initiated in 2019 and this time has strong Government backing as part of the national ports policy. The development of Bremore and its position in relation to Dublin Port has been the subject of discussion in the ports and maritime sphere for several years. The project is a public-private joint venture company between Drogheda Port Company and Ronan Group Real Estate.

Formal announcement of the project by Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, (another example of this Department's widening involvement in the marine sector) emphasised the intention to focus on energy development.

"There will be a focus on the offshore wind sector, with the port to be equipped with purpose-built infrastructure, including specialised quays for wind turbine assembly and facilities for bulk, break-bulk and ferries.



Joe Hiney on left, with Paul Fleming, Chief Executive Drogheda Port and Rory Williams, CEO Ronan Group, at the announcement of the Bremore Port development plan.



Bremore Ireland Port will also support Ireland's National Hydrogen Strategy objectives. It will be equipped to convert offshore wind energy to green hydrogen energy," Dr. Hiney told me. "It will add significant port capacity consistent with national ports policy in deepwater to the south of the existing river port system."

In a ports policy statement made in December two years ago, the Government described Bremore as being needed to deliver Ireland's renewable energy objectives, with a potential impact on decarbonisation, energy security, job, housing creation and industrial opportunities along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor of Louth/Meath.

A project team is working on marine and landside design, environmental, ecological and heritage specialists, preparing the necessary material for the planning application.

"There will be an extensive public consultation process and substantive discussions with port users and other stakeholders before that is made. These are very important because we want the port to be part of the community, integrated within it and that the community feel part of the port, that it is of their community," he says, explaining that the vision for Bremore includes urban development and bringing together modern technology with fostering economic growth, facilitating research and development, develop an educational hub, provide new residential areas with essential community services and with a strong leisure marine commitment."

There is confidence that this is the future for Drogheda, with its geographical and physical location on a direct link to the M1 motorway and the Dublin-Belfast rail line. Market demand will be the key to the future, Joe Hiney admits. "It is an enormous opportunity around the carbon neutrality of heavy goods and maritime transport.

"We are starting into about an 18-month consultation process with the local community. In parallel we are in discussion with the planning and maritime authorities. Detailed studies will have to be run. Bearing all the various requirements it could be 2026/27 when we make a planning application.

"Dependent upon the outcome of that process – and there can be many twists and turns to that, it will be some years before development goes ahead and port operations start.

"A move away from traditional port construction, a blended, integrated development where you're not building a fence, with the port on one side and the community on the other," he says as we conclude our discussion about Bremore Ireland Port. "It will be much

more fluid and integrated including opportunities for research, innovation, education, not just the port footprint and living spaces, all very topical and necessary in this country at present.

**"The core, underlining attraction for me and for others is the green energy, a decarbonised transport future, that's where there is an enormous opportunity for Ireland as for Drogheda Port. We are an island. Dare I say the obvious, it's a resource we do not make enough of."**





## BIM Courses Available to Meet Safe Manning Requirements and Changes to Fishing Certificates of Competency.

*If you need a fishing Certificate of Competency (CoC) or have one and need to have it endorsed or re-validated BIM can help you with the training.*

*We offer **Second Hand Limited/Second Hand Full Certificate of Competency training** in both BIM colleges several times a year.*

### **CERTIFICATE OF COMPETENCY ENDORSEMENTS**

*Fishers who hold a Second Hand Limited or Second Hand Full CoC and who wish to skipper a vessel greater than 15 metres in length can apply to have their CoC endorsed by the Marine Survey Office.*

*Recent changes in regulations (see Marine Notice 41 of 2023) state that the Department of Transport will no longer issue CoCs for the deck officer qualification of Second Hand Special, except for those who have already commenced a period of training for that qualification. All training, including sea service, must be completed before **1 July 2026**.*

### **RE-VALIDATION OF CERTIFICATES OF COMPETENCY**

*Under the new regulations, an expiration date has been placed on all CoCs for fishing vessels, for both deck and engineer officers. The new regulations provide that all CoCs can be revalidated for a further period of five years, and every five years thereafter, subject to the requirement to complete updated training in Personal Survival Techniques (PST), Fire Prevention and Firefighting (FPFF), and Advanced Firefighting (AFF). BIM will be scheduling extra PST courses along with courses in Updated Fire Prevention & Firefighting and Updated Advanced Firefighting (one day each) from 2024 onwards.*

*You are encouraged to give yourself ample time to complete the re-validation and enquire about available training dates.*

*Please contact BIM to discuss and book any further training you may need in relation to the above.*

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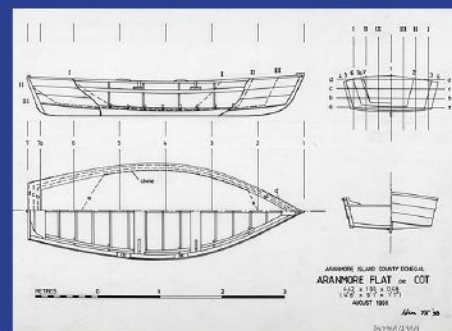


**I**n this, the third edition of our quarterly maritime heritage journal we feature contrasting stories which highlight differences in the appreciation and understanding of the value of preserving that heritage.

**W**here does such heritage stand is a question raised about the sale by the national tourism development body of a historic building in West Cork, defying the attempts of a local community to develop it as a coastal marine centre, which would have been on the highly-publicised Wild Atlantic Way.



**C**ontrasting with that decision is the co-operation by Dublin Port Company with the Dublin Dockers' Preservation Society to preserve the history of the capital city's dock work force, highlighting an issue which we featured on the Marine Times a few months ago.



**A**nd, from Portstewart in Co. Derry, we hear how Ireland has been a cultural cross-roads in European boat building, through the story of the Madill Archive.

**Tom MacSweeney**

## WHERE DOES OUR MARITIME HERITAGE AND HISTORY STAND?

**T**hat question has been raised in the aftermath of the sale by the national tourism development authority of a waterfront building in the West Cork coastal village of Baltimore to a property developer. Community development groups had attempted for many years to have it turned into a maritime heritage centre.

Maritime heritage considerations, advanced for several years, did not rate sufficiently highly to prevent the sale decision, leading to a local comment – “Where does our maritime heritage and history stand in this country? Just trampled on.”

Efforts had been made over many years to develop the station site as a marine centre. Ownership had passed to Fáilte Ireland. Information given to the Marine Times claimed that this was with the understanding that the building would be used for community benefit.

The West Cork railway line, terminating at the station, closed on March 31, 1961 after 112 years in operation. In 1969 the Glenans Irish Sailing Club, a non-profit sailing school affiliated to the larger, internationally well-known French Les Glénans sailing school, converted and opened a base in the station offering courses approved by the Irish Sailing Association. That closed in 2013.

When Fáilte Ireland took over ownership of the waterfront property, locals said they understood that would benefit the community. However, during several years of controversy, community groups came to believe that the tourism body was determined to sell the station. In 2014 it was offered

for sale with an advised minimum value of €350,000. The site, with several buildings, is situated near the North Pier, to where the railway line had been run for transport of fish landings.



That sale did not go through. Community groups prepared plans and sought fundraising to transform the building into a maritime museum. Local County Councillors wanted the Council to lease the premises from Fáilte Ireland and help the groups to create a maritime museum and heritage centre. Council discussions with Fáilte Ireland to take a lease on the property broke down over the cost of renovating the site.

The sale price achieved for the station has not been disclosed, but the sale was ‘guided’ at €750,000. Fáilte Ireland has not commented publicly.

One of the Baltimore community leaders campaigning for it to become a maritime centre, Mary Jordan, said: “We are devastated. Minister for Heritage Malcolm Noonan tried his best with Fáilte Ireland, but

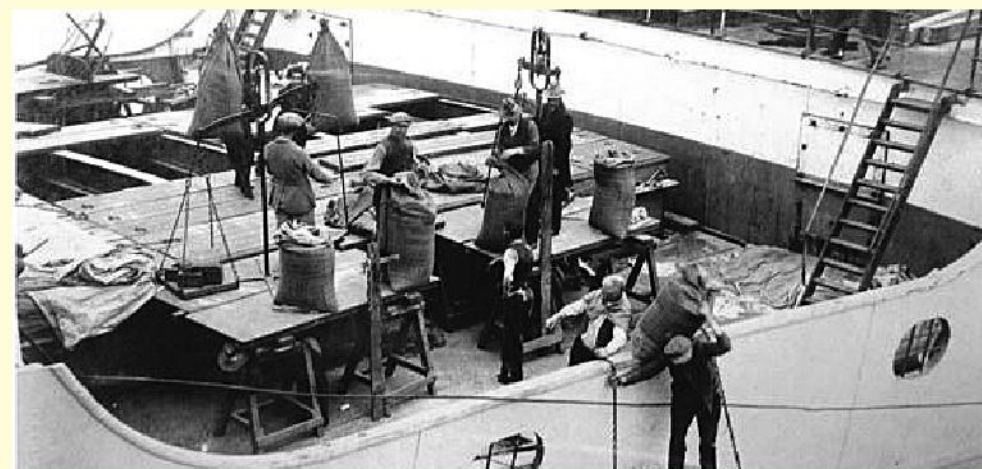
it was all sown up. Where does our maritime heritage and history stand in this country? Just trampled on.”

Independent County Councillor Paul Hayes said the iconic building was given to Fáilte Ireland on the understanding that it would be developed and used as a public space or amenity that would benefit the community. “It seems they were just being humoured because the goalposts were continually moved before the site was sold to a property developer.”

**The hope for a maritime heritage centre in the West Cork coastal village, a prominent maritime, fishing and sailing location, has gone.**

## DUBLIN PORT SUPPORTS THE DOCKERS

**D**ublin Port Company has funded the Dublin Dockers Solidarity Exhibition in the Substation Building which is beside the Port Centre where it will run on Thursdays to Sundays, open from 11.30a.m. to 3.30p.m., until mid-February.



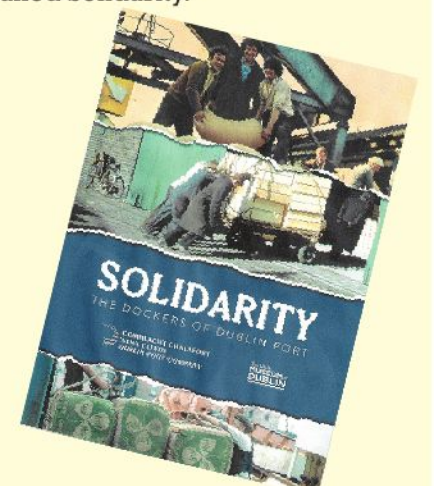
The exhibition includes the stories of the three dockers for whom the Dublin Dock Workers Preservation Society had been trying for several years to get public recognition – Michael Donnelly, Patrick Currie and William Deans – for their heroic achievements while working in the port. We high-

lighted this campaign by the Society in the MARINE TIMES.

“Three local artists did paintings of the three heroes for the exhibition,” says Declan Byrne, one of the Society’s organisers, which has been in existence for twelve years to preserve

the industrial history of Dublin docks and links with dockland communities. The Port Company hired The Little Museum of Dublin to research and design the exhibition,

“They did a superb job,” Declan says. “It is appropriate that the exhibition is called Solidarity.”





# A CULTURAL CROSS-ROADS IN EUROPEAN BOAT BUILDING

## THE MADILL ARCHIVE PROJECT

By Dr Wes Forsythe, Senior Lecturer, School of Geography & Environmental Science, Ulster University

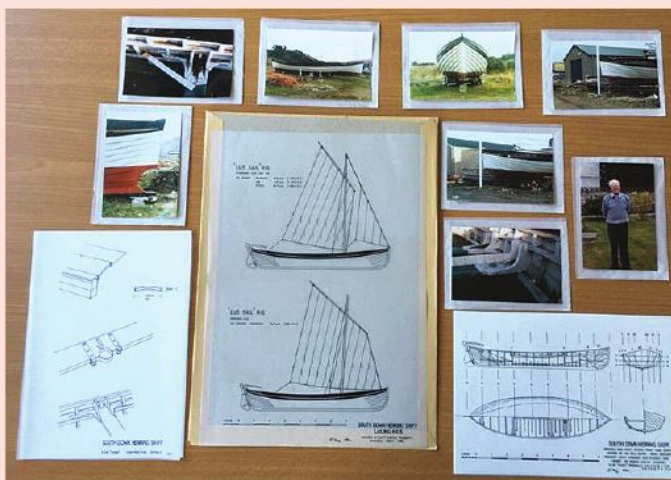
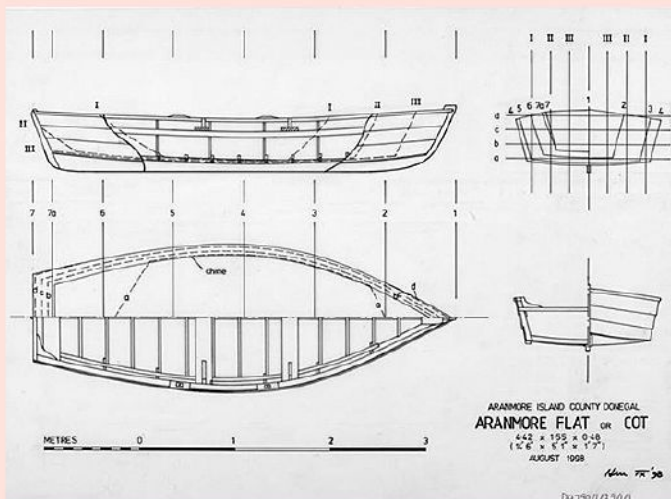
**I**reland has been described as a cultural crossroads in European boat-building traditions, employing a wide range of types and techniques down the centuries.



In recent decades many of our traditional forms have given way to more modern boats using very different materials and manufacturing techniques. Growing up in the small fishing town of Portstewart in Co. Derry, Harry Madill spent much of his youth around the harbour and boats became an obsession. He went on to build his first boat aged 12. When asked where he learned the skills, it was common practise he recalled to 'ask the last person who built one'.

Harry trained as an engineer and became a weekend sailor but realising that traditional craft were becoming obsolete and abandoned, he set out to discover, describe and draw the last remaining craft around the northern coasts of Ireland, from Louth to north Mayo. His draughtsmanship skills came to the fore as he recorded boat lines and he brought his engineer's eye to the documentation of build techniques. Nevertheless, Harry realised 'it's more than feet and inches and boat lines. It's who built them? Why were they built? How were they used? Why were they used, and the social commentary about the places they were used'. So, he augmented his work by interviewing boat builders and fishermen with direct experience of handling, modifying and working these vessels. The result is a decades-long attempt to capture and record the last traditional working craft and the men who manned them.

The boats surveyed by Harry reflect the dominance of two traditions – the skin boats now largely confined to Donegal and the wooden clinker-building tradition of overlapping planks. The latter were a Viking introduction, maintained by the later Medieval Irish and reinvigorated in recent centuries. They include the Drontheim (the name a corruption of the Norwegian port of Trondheim), punt and salmon coble. Making contact with other specialists in these craft such as Dónal Mac Polin, Harry eventually made a major contribution to Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh's seminal publication *The Traditional Boats of Ireland*.



**Main photo: Salmon coble operating on the Foyle fishery features Eddie Moore and Jombo the dog (Courtesy A. Lyttle). Photos above: Line drawing of an Aranmore Island Flat, 1998. One of the more unusual boats recorded by Harry it was first built by Jack O'Hara, an islander returning from America, from where the concept may have been imported; Line drawings and photos from the Madill Archive.**

In 2019 Harry donated his primary archive to the Centre for Maritime Archaeology and we quickly realised its value. The Madill Archive Project was es-

tablished to catalogue and digitize the collections of drawings, reports, photographs and interviews, all of which were transferred to the Public Record Office in Belfast (PRONI) for professional care. The project exhibition 'Strakes and Skins' was launched at PRONI in June 2023 and appeared at five maritime festivals over the summer.

The legacy of Harry's work is a wonderful resource for anyone interested in traditional craft. However, it also has a living legacy exemplified by the Drontheim Elizabeth. Having spent its working life out of the north Antrim port of Ballintoy, the boat was in an unsalvageable condition by the time Harry recorded it. It was decided that a local traditional boat group would take a mould of it. To date no fewer than 17 fibreglass copies of Elizabeth's hull have been produced with the wooden components (e.g. floors, gunwales, thwarts and masts) finished by the community.

The work continues to be relevant to the new generation of traditional boat-builders. Orlagh Thompson from Co. Down recently completed a Foyle Punt as part of her final year boat-building course at Albaola in the Basque Country. She returned to Harry's lines drawings to loft the craft in preparation for cutting timbers, finding that 3D scanning technology had missed some vital details.

The Madill Archive can be accessed via PRONI's website: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/madill-archive-project>. The Madill Archive Project is a collaboration between Ulster University, the Public Record Office (NI), National Museums and Galleries NI, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and Ulster Maritime Heritage. It is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

**This article is reprinted from the Traditional Boats of Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way Blog of the National Museum of Ireland, a great maritime resource and with the co-operation and permission of Dr Wes Forsythe.**



# Herring Fishing at the Stags Sound by Peter Deasy

**The fishing grounds off the West Cork coastline were always abundantly rich in stocks. Over many centuries, these grounds were exploited by local and visiting fishing fleets. Thus, the fishing industry on the South Cork Coast was a vibrant one. Boats from the small harbours along the south Cork coast steamed incredible distances out to sea to catch a huge variety of fish on spillers or long lines or hand lines. Of course, the seasons dictated the type of fishing. The mackerel would be fished using drift nets in the spring.**



Locally, Baltimore would have been one of the most important ports in Ireland for the mackerel fishery with large volumes of mackerel being landed there by a huge fleet of mackerel drift netters from the Isle of Man, England, France and Ireland. Spillering (hand lines or baited long lines) was the most common fishing method. As the boats became bigger and more mechanised, other fishing methods were adopted. Seining or 'ringing' for white fish and later trawling became the most common methods of catching fish.

The Atlantic herring has been a hugely important commercial species in Irish waters. Early in the 20th century, herrings were fished in Trá La Gach using drift nets.

Locally, from the 1960's, 1970's and into the early 1990's, the herring fishery from Baltimore east to Glandore Bay was hugely lucrative for local trawlers and visiting vessels. The vicinity of the Stags Rocks off Toe Head was a vital spawning grounds for herrings from October into November. In one night alone you could have up to 25 boats towing up and down the grounds around the Stags Sound.

The herring season was always very welcome to trawler skippers/owners and crews during the Autumn/Winter months when the weather was more often than not very rough or stormy, thus not being conducive to the usual method of demersal fishing or trawling. So, the local boats from Union Hall and Reen vied for their catches with visiting boats from Greencastle and Killybegs in Donegal, Achill Island, Rossaveal, Co. Galway, Dingle, Castletownbere, Schull and Baltimore.

During the 1970's and 1980's the trawlers which were owned and fished out of Union Hall, that participated at the herrings would have been the *Silver Rose*, *Elaine Catherine*, *Cú Na Mara*, *Emerald*

*Isle*, *Sea Eagle*, *Francis Maria*, *Carraigh Breagh*, *Jeanette Ann*, *Siobhanna* and *Jemalean*. From Baltimore, the *Silver Crest* and *Inane*, the *Girl Geraldine*, the *Star of David*. From Reen there was the *Assumpta*, the *Deborah Anne* and *Evening Twilight*. From Schull there was the *Breda Helen*, *Ocean Breeze*, *Naomh Oilibhear* and *Mulroy Bay*. At that time each trawler would have had been crewed by a local owner/skipper, from their respective ports and up to 4 or 5, or more local crewmen depending on the size of trawler. The fact that so many boats were locally owned and crewed by locals highlighted the economic importance of the herring fishery. The herring season was of critical importance to the economy of Skibbereen, Baltimore, Union Hall, Schull and all the other ports along the South Coast.

Whilst we were used to admiring the locals' boats of 50, 60, 65 foot in length, the migrating boats from Dingle and Galway and Donegal were 70 or 80 foot in length. These were massive boats in our eyes as youngsters. Always well maintained. These boats would have largely been built of timber, of larch planking on oak frames and the majority would have been built in the Bord Iascaigh Mara boat yards dotted around the coastline, Meavagh, Co Donegal, Killybegs, Dingle, Baltimore, Cobh, or at family-owned yards such as Tyrells in Arklow, Co. Wicklow.

Once the herring season would be coming near, the local boats would 'change over' from their normal demersal fishery or trawling to go at the herrings. There would be a definite buzz around Union Hall village. The trawling gear was put ashore in storage and the midwater net was put aboard. The pound boards, the scuffers and shovels were put aboard in anticipation of a bumper herring season. Skippers and their crews always looked forward to the

herrings as it was lucrative, and the days were short and there was money to be made in less time and effort than they would make while the boats would be trawling. Although the season was short, from October through to January or February or early March, the local boats always began by sounding out the Stags.

For a period of several weeks, catches at the Stags were always bountiful. The method of catching herring, or pelagic fishing, to give its correct title, was by having two trawlers pairing up to tow a large nylon net between the two boats. Weather permitting, the boats would steam out from Reen, Union Hall, Baltimore and Schull to the Stags grounds in the crisp Winter dawn. The net was prepared to be shot out over the stern of one of the boats and the other pair boat would come alongside to take the ends and the net would be briefly towed by the pairing trawlers. Once the nets were filled to capacity, the boats would take aboard their catches by bringing the net alongside the boats, brailing or lifting the nets up so as to gradually empty the fish aboard and then getting the fish into the hold and once the hold was full, the remainder of the catch was spread over the upper deck.

The hold was sectioned off by stanchions and pound boards so the cargo of fish was prevented from swilling around thus maintaining the stability of the vessels. Once the hold was full, the decks were filled, again using the pound boards on deck to maintain security and stability of the load and to prevent the fish from washing out over the side of the boat in the sea swell. Once one boat was filled to capacity, the partner boat came along side to begin to take aboard the remainder of the catch still in the pair net.

More often than not the water was rough

with a swell running, and a strong tide running in the Stags Sound. There would be a big fleet operating around the Stags and there was little room to tow the nets, and to take the fish aboard. Operating boats so close in a small area was highly dangerous. With boats working so close - should the boats collide or be struck, it could cause catastrophic harm to the two boats, with planks being driven in. The skippers of these, largely timber hulled vessels would have been the best in the business. They were highly regarded as skippers and owners who maintained their vessels to exemplary order and specifications. But the vicinity of the Stags fishing grounds was notoriously hazardous. The skippers had to be so alert and be able to manoeuvre their boats in tight situations. Nets were being shot or cast and hauled in shallow rocky grounds. It was a common occurrence for the net to be torn on the rocks. Should a boat suffer engine failure or God forbid, a boat was to take its net in the propellor, the boat would be totally at the mercy of the conditions and would be effectively immobilised and could not manoeuvre.

During the Winter herring fishing at the Stags of 1983, two visiting herring pairing boats from Rossaveal in Co. Galway, the *Spes Nova* and *Joan Patricia* foundered on the Stags Rocks in rough weather. On that night there was a big swell running. One of the boats propellers became fouled by the net and was at the mercy of the conditions and could not manoeuvre. The other pair boat went to assist and foundered on the rocks. Sadly, one of the crewmen, a Jennings man from Rossaveal lost his life in the incident. It was some days later before his body was recovered in Trá La Gach. I recall the night vividly and the tragic loss of that fisherman. The following year, 1984, a Castletownbere trawler, the *Crystal River*, while brailing their catch of her-



rings, drifted up on the Bellies in the Stags Sound, foundered and was a total loss. Fortunately, all the crew were safely taken aboard another boat.

Once the pair boats had taken aboard their loads, they would begin to steam to Baltimore or Cobh as these were designated ports for the landing of herrings. The steam was more often in the dusk of the evening or night fall and might often be in poor weather conditions.

Upon arrival in port, the arduous task began of unloading the catch. The herring buyers would be waiting on the pier in Baltimore or Cobh or Castletownbere to assess the quality of the catch. If the herring roe was of a suitable quality, the catch would obtain a better price for export to Japan. Or the herring might not be of sufficient quality and would end up going for fillets or worse again, might end up going for fish meal, which no skipper or crew wanted to hear.

The crew would first start in the hold using scuffers and ice shovels to begin to try to dislodge and loosen the fish which had become congealed in a mass whilst the boat made its way from the grounds into port. They'd fill the brailer net up which was then hoisted ashore to fill 1ton capacity fish bins on the pier. [The volume measuring of herring catches was in 'crans']. This was a more modern method for that time, as previous to this method, the herrings would have to be scuffed into wooden fish boxes aboard the boats and then hoisted ashore. This new method of filling fish bins was far faster than boxing.

Yet, the unloading of herrings was back breaking, hard physical work down in the holds in a cramped confine. The crew wore bib and brace oilskins with a sou'wester top to keep themselves from being covered in the roe of the herrings. Even though the time was Autumn or Winter, the crews sweated out unloading the herrings. The whole unloading process would take hours and hours, tons and tons being landed by the crews all through the night and possibly into the early hours of the mornings with little or no breaks as the catch had to be dispatched away by the waiting lorries to the factories as fast as possible. The crews worked unbelievably hard. One crew man stood at the winch to operate the derrick. The derrick dropped the brailing net down into the hold. Two or more men were down below in the bowels of the hold scuffing the

herrings out of the pounds. As the pounds were emptied, the pound boards were tossed up to another man on the main deck whose job it was to hose them down and wash off the scales and the roe in preparation to being handed back down once the hold was emptied. Herring scales tended to go everywhere, and it wasn't unheard of to get a scale in the eye. Despite the hard physical, hazardous, sleep depriving nature of fishing in general, crews were most often always in a jovial mood.

Whilst the crews worked away through their day or more often through the winter nights, the skipper would go down below to his bunk. If the weather allowed, the whole process of catching the herring would begin all over again the next day. After a few hours rest, the boats would head out again to make the most of the time they had to fish the grounds.

During the crisp clear Autumn and Winter nights I remember seeing the lights of all the trawlers from the League in Raheen as they fished around the Stags Rocks. As we headed down Raheen Hill we caught the first glimpse of the lights in the distance. The lights seemed to dance in the cool of the winter night. Somehow, to a child the view was spectacular. Far away city lights or so we thought. Then we would lose sight as the road turns in a bit, until we went over the League and about a third of the way over, we could once again open the sight of the Stags. The small 'sound' between Horse Island and Flea Island would be filled with the brief view of the deck lights of the many trawlers towing up and down around the Stags.

The herrings in the Stags sustained many fishing families and homes throughout the Winter months. As the total allowable catch was realised at the Stags, the local and the migrating herring catching fleet from up the West Coast would steam away to Cobh and later on in the season to the Celtic Sea to Dunmore East in Co. Waterford.

**Sadly, nowadays the herring season is confined to a meagre few weeks in the Autumn and the local trawlers no longer fish for herrings. The herring fishery at the Stags is no longer existing. Yet the Stags remain an iconic outcrop of rocks and historically the Stags remain a central part of local maritime history.**

## Unique New Book on Huge Fish Caught by Anglers in Ireland Published

### Irish Specimen Fish Atlas shows drop in numbers of large specimens in 40% of species

**A** unique record of very large fish caught and released by anglers in Ireland over the past 60 years has just been published.

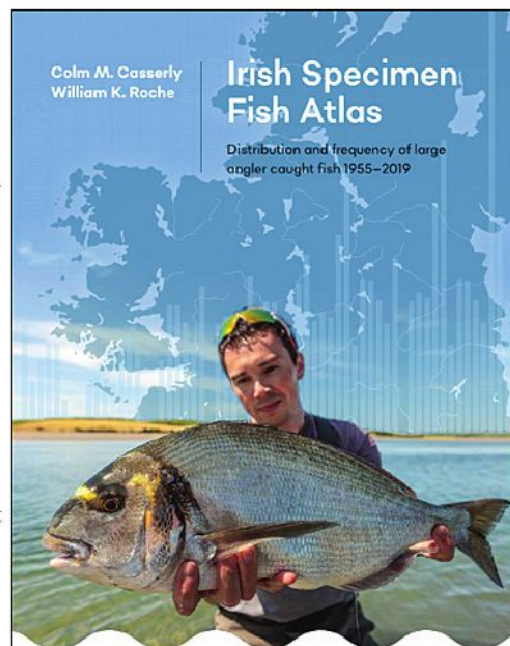
The 220-page Irish Specimen Fish Atlas covers 83 various species nationwide. It was compiled by the Irish Specimen Fish Committee, and supported by Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI).

The atlas presents information on the distribution and frequency of more than 27,000 individual specimen fish - about 420 per annum on average since 1955 - reflecting the quality of angling for distinctive large fish species in Ireland over time.

Dr William Roche, co-author and Senior Research Officer with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) commented: "The Irish Specimen Fish Atlas offers a different insight into fish populations here, and shows where quality fish - of many distinctive species - can be caught by anglers in the productive waters within, and around, the island of Ireland.

"This accessible publication identifies many Irish waters where and when big fish have been, and are still being, caught.

"But it also reveals a drop in numbers of large individual fish in about 40% of species. Some 'newer' ones, such as thick-lipped mullet, are improving, but more 'traditional'



species, including cod and salmon, are in decline.

"The decrease in numbers of large fish of some species is concerning although not consistent across the board. The reasons for these declines are varied and complex.

"For commercial marine species over-exploitation may be a factor. Non-commercial marine species are vulnerable to pressures such as being caught unintentionally as by-catch.

"Pressures on freshwater fish vary from catchment to catchment, and may include deterioration of water quality, the presence of dams and weirs, and reduced habitat quality.

"However, overall there are plenty of species providing quality specimen angling, and offering great scope for enjoyment of being outdoors and fishing on rivers, lakes and/or marine waters which characterise many parts of Ireland."

**The A4 full-colour Irish Specimen Fish Atlas: Distribution and frequency of large angler caught fish 1955-2019 costs €29, including postage (for Ireland and NI).**

**'Irish Specimen Fish Atlas' is available to purchase on [specimenfish.ie](http://specimenfish.ie) and further details can be accessed via [isfc@fisheriesireland.ie](mailto:isfc@fisheriesireland.ie)**

**Inset photos: Atlas front cover with Irish angler Stephen Brennan holding a large Gilthead Bream; Angler Sid Kennedy with large Pike; Angler Jim Clohessy with large Plaice.**

Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year

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# International Fishing and Maritime News

## UK Government Listens to Cornish Fishermen

**T**he UK Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has decided to introduce a higher minimum size for catching crawfish as national policy. The MMO decision follows the Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation calling for the UK Government to bring in such a measure.



Cornish fisherman, Andrew Pascoe, holding a pair of crawfish Photo: CFPO

Crawfish, also known as spiny lobster, is mainly found around Cornish shores. Two years ago, the Cornish Organisation went above national regulations and pioneered a voluntary measure to protect crawfish stocks. There has been a significant resurgence of the fishery in recent years, which has led to an increased amount of targeted fishing. The new measures to ensure the long-term sustainability of an important South West fishery have been announced after Cornwall's fishing industry led the way. "Having Government listen to us and roll it out as a national measure is a great achievement for Cornwall, especially after so long of us crying out for help to manage this important fishery," the CFPO said.

Chris Ranford, CEO of the Cornish

Fish Producers Organisation, said: "Cornish fishermen are always at the forefront of sustainable fishing and it is no surprise that they are leading the way with setting new fisheries management in this post-Brexit era. There is no better time to manage a fishery than when stock is on the way up, something we've been highlighting to government for several years, so we're thrilled that they're finally following Cornwall's lead and implementing this measure. Bringing scientists, fisheries managers and local fishermen together to develop new ways to manage our fisheries is absolutely the approach we should be taking as an independent coastal state."

The Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation was established in 1975 by local fishermen.



Faroesse vessel Katrin Johanna at Killybegs with blue whiting. Photo: John Cunningham

## SCOTLAND Fishermen Defeat Highly Protected Marine Areas Policy

The Scottish Government has said it will not proceed with implementation of its controversial Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) proposal, but fishermen are concerned that more attempts may be made to reintroduce the policy because of vague wording in the Government's decision announcement.

The HPMAs policy, if implemented, would have resulted in about a 10% reduction in Scotland's fishing areas, according to the industry. Though relieved by the scrapping of HPMAs, fishermen say that they remain wary of potential attempts to introduce similar policies through alternative means.

A poll of public opinion carried out by the Scottish Fishermen's Federation showed strong support for the fishing industry in Scotland, with 9 out of 10 Scottish people supporting the protection of fishing fleets. Elspeth Macdonald, CEO of the SFF, welcomed the decision not to progress with HPMAs, emphasising the importance of a balanced approach to marine conservation that considers both fishermen's livelihoods and sustainable fisheries. The SFF stressed the need for collaboration and scientific evidence in marine protection policies.

"While the decision to scrap HPMAs was a victory for fishing communities, ongoing concerns highlight the need for transparent and science-based policy-making to ensure the long-term sustainability of Scotland's marine environment," according to the SFF. "The fishing industry remains committed to collaborating with the government on policies that strike a balance between conservation and sustainable harvesting.

The CEO of the SFF helped to form a coalition between several Scottish seafood organisations to voice their opinion against HPMAs earlier this year. "In June we called on the Scottish Government to scrap their plans, scrap the ban and acknowledge that it's time to think again. The decision not to progress the proposed HPMAs recognises the importance of a balanced approach to marine conservation, taking into account the livelihoods of our hardworking fishermen and the sustainability of our fisheries.

"Nobody cares more about our marine environment than those who are dependent upon it for their livelihoods and we remain committed, as we have been for many years, to working with the Scottish Government on an approach to marine protection that strikes a balance between conservation and sustainable harvesting."

The HPMAs proposals sparked major protests from fishing communities across Scotland.

The value of Scottish salmon exports has increased by 7% in a year as international demand continues to grow, according to data from the UK Revenue & Customs service, analysed by the trade body Salmon Scotland. For the first three quarters of 2023 to September, there was a rise of stg£33m to £478m. On an annual basis, exports stand at stg£611m, which would confirm

that Scottish salmon is the UK's top food export.

## INDIA Government Pledges Support for Deep Sea Fishing

The Indian Government has promised its fishing industry that it will provide grants of up to 60% to help fishermen convert their vessels into deep-sea fishing boats.

This follows a decision to support traditional fishermen to transition to fishing offshore.

## EU Autonomous Quotas and A Study of the Future of Fishing

Autonomous EU Tariff Quotas for certain fishery products will be introduced for 2024, 2025 and 2026, plus new rules for their management.

The EU Council has unanimously adopted a regulation opening ATQs for certain fishery products for the years 2024, 2025 and 2026, plus new rules for their management. According to the EU, the newly-adopted regulation aims to ensure that the EU's fish processing industry can continue to source raw materials for further processing from non-EU countries at reduced rates of duty or duty-free. They also take into account potential impact on EU suppliers to ensure fair competition between imported fishery products and EU ones, according to the EU Council statement. Further details are awaited.

The European Commission has announced yet another 'new project' which is to examine the future of the fishing industry up to 2050. The 'Fishers of the Future' project will examine hopes, fears, expectations and needs of fishers to understand how their jobs will "evolve in the coming decades," the Commission says, adding: "It will also explore the expansion of fishers' role in society beyond providing high-quality seafood." What that means has not been explained.

## NORWAY Salmon Tax Battle Continues

The Norwegian Government and the country's aquaculture sector remain at loggerheads over the new salmon tax which the government is pressing ahead.

A new Council is to be appointed before Christmas to set the price norms that will be used as a basis for the tax, which is predicted to raise the equivalent value of €400m a year for the Norwegian Exchequer. It is being fiercely opposed by the country's aquaculture sector which says that companies will be taxed on 'deemed' income, not the income they actually earn.

The Government maintains that the system will be simpler for the companies and reduce the need for control by the tax authorities.



# news from Castletownbere

## Helen Riddell



Photo: Catherine Turner

## Christmas in Castletownbere

Transition year students at Scoil Phobail Bheara will hold a Christmas Market at the Square, Castletownbere on Thursday December 7th from 10.00am selling handmade candles and soaps, baked goods, ornaments and much more.

Castletownbere Development Association (CDA) will hold a Christmas craft and food fair on Saturday December 9th from 11.00am at the Halla at Scoil an Chroi Ro Naofa. To book a table contact 087 2927534. Christmas Newsletters from parishes throughout Beara are now available to buy in shops throughout the peninsula. This Christmas, the Castletownbere Development Association are encouraging people to shop local and buy from a business in Beara.

## Delia Power RIP

Delia Power (Goggin) of Rossmacowen Castletownbere, (originally of Donemark Bantry) passed away suddenly on October 28th 2023. Delia was a proud staff member of St Joseph's Community Hospital Castletownbere for twenty plus years. Following her retirement from the hospital she volunteered in the RNLI lifeboat shop in Castletownbere. She was a dedicated reader of the Marine Times and enjoyed the photos and catching up with all the news from around the coast. Delia will be dearly missed by her heartbroken husband Declan,

children, grandchildren, many friends and family.

## Castletownbere Youth Theatre

Castletownbere Youth Theatre will stage A Winter Miscellany on Sunday December 10th at 3.00pm at Scoil an Chroi Ro Naofa, Castletownbere. Tickets are available on [www.eventbrite.ie](http://www.eventbrite.ie)

## Cancer Connect Fundraiser

Vince Power, from Castletownbere, was diagnosed with cancer and used the services of Cancer Connect to take to and from Cork for his daily treatment. Vince wanted to give something back as a way of a thank you to the service so arranged a fundraising walk on Bere Island which was held on October 14th and music and a raffle in MacCarthy's bar, Castletownbere that evening. The fundraiser proved to be a huge success and raised over €16000 for Cancer Connect.

## Castletownbere Coast Guard

Over the past month the Castletownbere Coast Guard team have completed their first aid first responder course and one of the team members also completed their national powerboat certificate course.

On November 4th, the team were tasked by MRSC Valentia to a person seen in the

water at Castletownbere Harbour. The casualty was subsequently removed from the water by the local Fire Brigade Unit with assistance from the Castletownbere RNLI lifeboat.

## Beara Film Fest

Submissions are now open for the 2024 Beara Film Fest. Films should be a minimum of twenty minutes in duration, in the English language or if in Irish or a European language it should be clearly subtitled. The director must be living in or from County Cork and the film must have been filmed from January 1st 2022.

The closing date for all submissions is Friday February 9th 2024. For further details see the Beara Film Fest Facebook page.

## BIM Basic Safety Training

The BIM National Fisheries College in Castletownbere will hold three day basic safety training early in the new year from January 9th – 11th and from February 6th to 8th. The programme consists of personal survival techniques, elementary first aid and fire prevention and safety awareness. On successful completion of this three-day course, the learner will receive a BIM Basic Safety Training Card.

For further details and to book contact 027 71230 or email [nfcicastletownbere@bim.ie](mailto:nfcicastletownbere@bim.ie)

## West Cork Islands

The West Cork Islands Community Council will hold their AGM on Thursday December 14th at 11.00am in the Sherkin Island, Community Hall. A ferry will leave Baltimore at 10.30am.

## Castletownbere Rowing Club

Castletownbere Rowing Club held their end of year party in November in Berehaven Golf Club. A presentation of a painting by local artist Brian "Boss" O'Sullivan was made to Miriam Sheehan to acknowledge her fantastic achievements throughout the year. Miriam has competed nationally and internationally representing the club and Ireland. The U16 women and U16 men were praised for their Bronze medal wins in the Swift Junior Irish Coastal Championships in August. The U14 men were also acknowledged as they narrowly missed out on a medal that day. The U18 and senior ladies were applauded for their gold medal wins in the classic and sprint races at the Irish Coastal Yawl Championships in Farran, and the U16 ladies and U14 ladies who qualified from their heats to get to the finals at Farran.

## SVP Beara

Castletownbere St Vincent de Paul is available to help anyone in need in the local area. Calls can be made in strictest confidence to 083 356 1132.



# No Kidding! Dublin Business Partners Launch Goat Boat Tours, With Support from BIM



Making Waves! The new Dun Laoghaire Harbour tour RIB, Billy Goat, on a Goat Boat tour in scenic Dublin Bay

**D**ublin business partners and sea lovers, **Conor Battigan and Ed Ruane, have launched the first dedicated boat tour business in Dun Laoghaire Harbour, with the support of Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM).**

Goat Boat tours, which offers people an exciting opportunity to explore the rich diversity of Dublin Bay, was launched in September with a new gold standard rib boat and equipment capable of taking up to 10 passengers.

The launch involved an investment of €170,000, of which more than €58,000 was grant aided under the Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Development Scheme, recommended by the Seafood Taskforce established by Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D. and implemented by BIM. The scheme is funded by the European Union under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve

The tours include getting up close to Dalkey Island, which has famously been home to a herd of goats since the early 1800's. "That was the inspiration for the title of the business," said Conor. "Along with the fact that one of my children told me that in the urban dictionary goat stands for 'greatest of all time'. And we had to name the boat Billy Goat!"

Each tour lasts one and a half hours and includes a safety briefing where all-weather clothing, lifejackets and a set of binoculars are supplied to all on board.

During the tour, passengers experience some of the incredible biodiversity that the area has to offer, from jellyfish to grey and harbour seals, sea birds, and if lucky, harbour porpoises and dolphins.

In addition to the biodiversity, passengers learn about the history of Dun Laoghaire Harbour, the various Martello Towers, Dalkey Island, local legends and get a commentary on some of the famous locals who live in some of the jaw dropping houses dotted along the stunning coastline.

Said Conor: "The support of BIM has been immense. Securing

the grant aid has been a game changer for us and has allowed us to go ahead to follow our dream."

"We are both from Dun Laoghaire and were born with a passion and absolute obsession with the sea. We have saltwater running through our veins! To be able to launch a new business that taps into our love of marine life is really a dream come through," said Conor.

The chance to set up Dublin Bay's first dedicated boat tour business presented itself last year when Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council offered an exciting tender opportunity for water sports providers to take premises in Dun Laoghaire Harbour. The move is part of an effort to grow water sports along the coastline and within the harbour in what's widely renowned as a centre for sailing in Ireland.



Business partners Conor Battigan and Ed Ruane in their new rib, Billy Goat, which they launched as part of their Goat Boat tours of Dun Laoghaire Harbour and Dublin Bay

"We saw the potential and applied and were successful. Goat Boat Tours is building on the County Council's strategy of developing the Dun Laoghaire coastline economic activity."

Conor said the opportunity came at a time when there was an explosion in interest in outdoor activities due to the pandemic. Another factor that helped was the increase in the number of cruise ships visiting Dun Laoghaire, with an estimated 150,000 passengers and crew visiting between April and October. Projections for 2024 are similar.

While Conor said it wasn't ideal launching a business near the end of the tourist season it will give them a chance to iron out any issues. The business hopes to take on two more for the start of the 2024 tourist season.

"We are both proud locals and over the years we have developed considerable knowledge of Dublin Bay. We have been in or on the water for most of our lives and have backgrounds in the marine industry. The dream for Goat Boat Tours has been a long journey and it took many turns along the way. But thankfully, and with the help of many people and BIM, we have developed a business that we are very proud of," said Conor.

[www.goatboat.ie](http://www.goatboat.ie)

## Green Ocean Coffee and the Dublin Bay Oyster Reseeding Project

**U**p until the early 1800's Dublin Bay hosted naturally occurring oyster reefs which were harvested by hand and boat in the Clontarf, North Bull areas of the bay. These reefs were so abundant that the oysters were sold as 'fast food' by street sellers to many Dubliners in the capital. However, the popularity of the Irish oyster led to their downfall as the oyster reefs were overexploited leading to a permanent demise of the Dublin Bay Oyster. Until now....

The Green Ocean Coffee Oyster reseed-ing project is an ambitious project to start the process of developing a brood stock of the European Flat Oyster (otherwise known as the Native Irish Oyster) using a technique known as oyster gardening. Green Ocean Coffee are sourcing wild Irish oysters from Tralee Bay and placing these in specialised marine boxes that allow the oysters to filter feed. These boxes are suspended in 1 – 2 meters from floating walkways in harbours and marinas around Dublin Bay. Each oyster garden will house 10 or so mature oysters to allow them to adjust to their new environment in the way that maximises health and their ability to spawn / fertilise. Each healthy female oyster releases up to 1.5m eggs into the water each July / August. As fertilisation occurs, the fertilised larvae settle on hard surfaces or substrate (harbour walls, other oysters, rocks etc) and grow from spat to juvenile to mature oyster over a 3 year period with an expected life of 20 years.

Each oyster filters approximately 190 litres of sea water per day feeding on nutrients, algae and phytoplankton from the water column, this process improves water clarity allowing sunlight to penetrate the seafloor which encourages the recovery of seagrass and seaweed beds. Seagrass and seaweeds provide an ideal nursery environment for fish to spawn and develop. Seagrass is also a powerful carbon sink as it sequesters atmospheric carbon dioxide at a rate of 35 times faster than the rainforest.

As time progresses (10 – 20 years) the oysters spread and form clumps which develop into reefs. These reefs help to stabilise the seafloor providing a natural barrier against storm surge which protects seaweed and seagrass beds and the coast from erosion. The oyster is a keystone species in providing a nature based solution to against the risk of climate change and we need your help in expanding the impact of this project.

**The sales of the Green Ocean Kish blend are funding this really important work so if you would like to book a tasting for your office or café then please get in touch with the Green Ocean Coffee Company - for more info visit [greenoceancoffee.ie](http://greenoceancoffee.ie)**



# A Christmas Eve Memory



Every year I attend the annual Christmas Eve ceremony held by Dun Laoghaire RNLI at the end of the East Pier, to remember the lifeboat crew who were lost in 1895 on that day, writes Niamh Stephenson RNLI Media Manager



**The 'Civil Service No. 1' Dun Laoghaire lifeboat was wrecked while going to the assistance of the SS *Palme* of Finland. The entire crew, 15 in total, were drowned. The lifeboat capsized 600 yards from the vessel and, although every effort was made to send help to the lifeboat and to the *Palme*, nothing could be done. Of the SS *Palme*, the Captain, his wife, child and 17 crew were eventually rescued on the 26th of December by the SS *Tearaght*.**

It's probably strange that an event to remember such a sad occasion makes me feel the spirit of Christmas, but it does. A message popped into my Facebook page back in October from Cormac Becton, asking me if I was planning on being at the ceremony. I smiled at that.

Cormac is the great grandson of Edward Murphy, a volunteer lifeboat man who lost his life during the rescue of the *Palme*. Cormac and I meet once a year and it's at the end of the pier in Dun Laoghaire, where we watch as the wreaths are laid in the water, listen to the Piper's lament and the reading from the newspaper of the day and a song written in memory of the lifeboat crew. Then we make our way back to the small crew room at the lifeboat station for a cup of tea. The ceremony itself has grown and we now remember all those who were lost through drowning and I'm sure many think of loved ones no longer with us.

We also remember Finton Sinnott from Kilmore Quay lifeboat crew who lost his life on a callout on Christmas Eve 1977. If you are reading this and find yourself in the area that day, you are more than welcome to join us.

## Heading West

I went West recently with our Head of Region, Anna Classon, visiting the two Mayo lifeboat stations, in Achill Island and Ballyglass. Warm welcomes awaited in both stations. As Anna started her career on the West coast, there were a lot of memories, including stories of the late great Buddy Valkenburg from Belmullet.

One person I do want to mention, is the wonderful Alexandra Val Tuyll. Unbeknownst to Alexandra, Fundraising Chair, Tony McNamara had arranged to have a Certificate of Thanks presented to her in recognition of her generous support of Achill Island Lifeboat Station since 1999. I met Alexandra when she produced a wonderful publication called 'Sea meets land, Around Ireland in Aid of the Ireland' and Tom MacSweeney came down to launch it in Gielty's Bar. The recognition is richly deserved and was warmly applauded by Alexandra's friends and colleagues around the table, both fundraisers and crew. Both lifeboat stations are facing out into some challenging seas but they carry it lightly. They are wonderful lifeboat communities, and the welcome would warm your heart.

## New Crew At Galway

**Two trainee crew at Galway Lifeboat Station, have completed training and passed their final assessments to progress to fully-fledged crew. Lifeboat training covers a range of skill sets, including seamanship, boat handling, navigation and search-and-rescue. Trainee crew must complete 15 training modules and 49 different assessments of activities in the lifeboat station and on the water.**

James Corballis is originally from Kilkenny and has been living in Galway for the past 15 years. "The RNLI has been a big part of my family growing up and from where I live in Galway I could see the lifeboat launching at all hours day and



Aaron O'Reilly (left) and James Corballis (right) after completing and passing their assessments, with RNLI Assessor/Trainer Sean Ginnelly (centre)

night. It was something that I always I hoped I would do and in 2020 I was able to join the RNLI. I'm delighted to have now completed my training. I can now take on more responsibilities when we head out to sea when the pager goes off."

Aaron O'Reilly grew up on the water and has always been involved in sailing and powerboating. "I know how important it is to have assistance if you need it, if there is an accident or medical emergency out on Galway Bay. I joined the RNLI so I could give back to the community and I'll be able to play a greater part in providing a 24-hour rescue service for those who need assistance."

## The Big Birthday Challenge

**Finally, this is 'starters pistol,' so get ready. The RNLI has a big birthday coming up in 2024. Two hundred years young. It will be marked in a few different ways and no doubt the best events will be the ones dreamed-up by our Stations and Branches.**

We do have a challenge to put out. There is a lot of lifeboat history, up in attics, at the back of cupboards and probably in that shed out the back garden that needs a bit of a clean. We are planning an exhibition with our friends in the National Maritime Museum in Dun Laoghaire and hopefully moving it to Belfast when we get the right venue. We would love to hear from people what they have at home or in their Station that is an important part of the RNLI history. We

won't be moving anything valuable or rare from its home, but we'd love to know about it and celebrate it.

My own heritage moment came when we were doing some filming with Courtmacsherry RNLI for a BBC documentary, and they opened with the sinking of the *Lusitania*. One of the station crew produced the handwritten entry by the Honorary Secretary of the return of service. We have treasures everywhere and we would love to know about them.

As we head into our 200th year, our history and our heritage, of which we are justifiably very proud, will be centre stage. If you have anything or just want to flag, a great story, history or person please drop us an email at: [Claire\\_Brennan@rnli.org.uk](mailto:Claire_Brennan@rnli.org.uk)



And Merry Christmas to you and yours .....

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Restored Lifeboat Richard Vernon & Mary Garforth of Leeds passing Old Head of Kinsale  
Photo: Carroll O'Donoghue (KinsaleAngling.com)



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## IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP IWDG NEWS

*Is engagement with planning for offshore renewables the correct approach asks the Chief Executive of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Simon Berrow.*

**T**he expansion of offshore renewable energy (ORE) is one of the most potentially significant developments in Irish coastal waters in decades. If the government reach their target of 5GW of offshore wind energy built by 2030 and 20GW by 2040, we will see hundreds of turbines, both fixed and floating, deployed in our coastal waters.

The ecological impacts of this development on whales, dolphins and porpoise and their habitats are not clear. If constructed in important habitats, for example foraging or calving areas, or constructed without appropriate techniques to mitigate impacts they could be very negative. If offshore wind farms are developed with associated ecological enhancement such as rehabilitation of benthic habitats, enhanced fish biomass and diversity, with activities such as trawling restricted, they can have positive benefits for cetaceans. Clearly it is essential to build robust and high-resolution baseline line datasets in Irish habitats with Irish cetacean communities, which are more diverse and typically have greater abundance than at sites in the North Sea or off NE Scotland, to accurately describe those species potentially affected and to enable any short, or long-term changes, to be measured to inform future management and mitigation.

The IWDG have been at the forefront of championing environmental issues related to ORE for many years.

Currently the planning and development of ORE has moved from an industry to a Government-led approach. We are working with the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communication on the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP), both through the consultation process and direct communication. We have recently shared our unique database of more than 22,000 cetacean sightings to ensure important cetacean habitats are considered when creating these DMAPs. There are a large number of scoping documents for proposed offshore wind farms in circulation for comment and by June 2024 a suite of environmental impact assessments (EIA) will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála as part of planning applications. These will require considered responses.

The IWDG is being proactive in identifying key issues for cetaceans and their habitats in Ireland, ensuring our concerns are addressed at all levels, and recommending monitoring, mitigation and management. We believe at this early stage in the process that this is the right approach. Much of our engagement is not headline-seeking, plastered all over social media, but is the IWDG approach effective? While we feel it is, ultimately only time will tell.

Read more on: [iwdg.ie/the-development-of-offshore-renewables-and-the-current-iwdg-approach](http://iwdg.ie/the-development-of-offshore-renewables-and-the-current-iwdg-approach)

Irish Whale  
and Dolphin Group



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*Fisher-owned data is particularly relevant given the very real potential for displacement of small-scale fishers by blue economy activities such as offshore renewable installations and environmental designations such as Marine Protected Areas*

## The Future of Small-Scale Fisheries

By Seamus Bonner, Secretary,  
Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation Producer Organisation

**A**n IIMRO delegation travelled to Galicia in Spain in November to discuss the future of small-scale fisheries with colleagues from across Europe and the world.



Gathering shellfish at Ria de Arousa

The four-day workshop was organised by the Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE), the International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF) and Mulleres Salgadas, a local Galician cofradia representing shellfish collectors. 45 participants travelled from 16 countries to Vilanova de Arousa to discuss and to plan actions to address the many issues and find solutions affecting small-scale fishers.

A team of social scientists from the University of Santiago helped facilitate the opening session and were present throughout the week to hear from participants and the issues that they are facing in their daily operations.

The issue of generational renewal came across strongly in all workshops as well as women in fisheries, access to the fishery resource and markets. Governance, traditional knowledge and co-management were a consistent theme and the local Mariscadoras (women shellfish gatherers) showed an impressive example of pride in their work and shared responsibility and local organisation during a field trip to the Ria de Arousa where they collect a variety of shellfish.

IIMRO presented a number of case studies on their work here in Ireland, including our partnership with Abalobi where we co-developed their catch log app and online marketplace for traceability and direct sales. Participants were very interested to hear about our experience with data collected in a pilot with CLS, a French company that manufactures inshore vessel monitoring system (VMS) devices for small boats. This fisher-owned data is particularly relevant across the globe given the very real potential for displacement of small-scale fishers by blue economy activities such as offshore renewable installations and environ-

mental designations such as Marine Protected Areas.

The meeting concluded that a fair future for small scale fisheries in Europe must include:

- The recognition of SSF as a cornerstone of vibrant aquatic economies, supported by equitable, inclusive and transparent policies with ecosystem regeneration at their core, as well as ensuring fishers' basic human rights of access to the resources that sustain their livelihoods
- Co-management schemes based on shared responsibility that weave environmental stewardship into the social fabric and the dynamic culture of communities
- Viable SSF enterprises and decent work, fostering generational renewal, gender equality and inclusivity, underpinned by fair and participative processes
- The recognition of traditional, inherited and experiential knowledge of small-scale fishers and fishworkers, including women and indigenous peoples as prerequisite for informing fisheries management decisions
- Markets that reflect the true value of sustainable small-scale food production and which deliver fair rewards along the value chain, from catch-to-plate
- The gathering and use of information and innovation to support our cause, to enhance our natural world for all rather than restricting its use for a few, based on data sovereignty, accessible technology, and digital literacy
- Future proofing of SSF communities to the effects of climate change, and making them resilient to natural and human disasters

More information on the meeting can be found at: [www.icsf.net/resources/europe-workshop-iyafa-2023/](http://www.icsf.net/resources/europe-workshop-iyafa-2023/)



# Seafood Sector Has a Low Carbon Footprint

Marine Times Reporter

**T**he Irish seafood sector is undergoing a transformation in new technologies, alternative fuel sources as well as operational changes to reduce carbon emissions.



**Leading figures in Seafood Climate Action met in Athlone for the Bord Iascaigh Mhara and Marine Institute Seafood Climate Action Seminar. Pictured (l-r): Dominic Rihan – Director, Economic and Strategic Services, BIM; Joan Mulloy, Blackshell Mussel Farm; Friederike Ziegler - RISE Institute Sweden, Keynote Speaker; Kathriona Devereaux, Broadcaster and MC; Ciaran Kelly - Director of Fisheries Ecosystems Advisory Services, Marine Institute.**

That is the view of the State fisheries development organisation, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, which says that it has carried out a study that found carbon emissions in seafood are minor in the context of national emissions.

The Irish seafood sector has a low carbon footprint, with carbon emissions less than 2% of Ireland's total carbon emissions, a late November seminar hosted by BIM in partnership with the Marine Institute, was told. Representatives from across Ireland's seafood sector attended, with experts in climate change, marine, renewable energies, fishing, aquaculture, and seafood processing sectors.

The BIM study sets a greenhouse gas emissions baseline for the Irish seafood sector, incorporating the fishing vessel fleet and aquaculture, creating a benchmark to measure future emissions. It reveals that the total Irish fish catch and aquaculture segments represent just 1.76% of Ireland's total carbon emissions. Pulling together seafood carbon data for the first time, the study identifies areas to minimise carbon emissions associated with seafood production and finds that farmed mussels, oysters and wild-caught mackerel in particular have very low carbon emissions. It emphasised the need for a detailed decarbonising plan to ensure that the seafood sector plays its part in Ireland's ambition to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Taking almost two years to complete, delivering data from industry and other stakeholders, the findings of the report demonstrate how the sector is producing a beneficial and nutritious

food with low environmental impacts, the seminar heard. However, it was noted that the Irish seafood sector is diverse, and the carbon footprint of different seafood products varies depending on the species and the methods used to cultivate or catch them.

Dominic Rihan, Economics and Strategic Services Director, BIM said the seafood sector is undergoing a transformation "in how we do things, how we fuel our fleets, how we grow our shellfish, and feed our salmon. The industry is looking at a range of new technologies, alternative fuel sources as well as operational changes to reduce their carbon emissions. Investment in the future for such initiatives will be provided through the European and Maritime, Aquaculture and Fisheries Fund, under which Ireland has received total funding of €258.4 million. There is also a lot of work done on waste and plastics reduction. All these initiatives contribute to lower GHG emissions from the sector. The Irish seafood sector is deeply aware of the focus on sustainability and the need to decarbonise. It sees climate action and achieving net zero as a primary objective.

"The opportunity is to provide consumers with seafood that is healthy and nutritious and sustain a prosperous seafood sector that will continue to directly employ over 8,000 people in the coastal regions. There is a clear need for business level climate action advisory services, so that seafood businesses are clear in terms of what they should be doing from an emissions perspective."

## Important Update on the €25.6 Million Liquidity Aid Scheme for the Pelagic Segment of the Irish Fishing Fleet

**T**ier 1 and Tier 2 polyvalent vessels that had no authorisation to fish mackerel in December 2021, and who availed of aid under the Temporary Fleet Tie-up Scheme in that month, will not have the payment from that scheme deducted from their aid under this new Pelagic Fisheries Support Scheme.

The Pelagic Fisheries Support Scheme, funded under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve Fund, provides a €25.6 million support package for the Irish pelagic fisheries sector. It will compensate owners of Refrigerated Sea Water (RSW) pelagic vessels and polyvalent Tier 1 and Tier 2 vessels that have suffered losses of mackerel quota over the period 2021-2023 as a result of the quota transfers to the EU under Brexit. The support is designed to stabilise cashflow and assist vessel owners to re-structure their operations in light of the loss of earnings associated with the reduction of available quota under the TCA. The short-term aid is essential financial support to allow the 23 RSW vessels and the 27 polyvalent Tier 1 and Tier 2 vessels sufficient time to put in place longer-term restructuring measures.

Announcing the important update, Minister McConalogue said: "This €25.6 million support for the RSW pelagic fleet segment recognises the impact of quota transfers to the UK from the EU under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), and in particular that this segment of the Irish fleet has suffered the largest TCA related quota reductions for the main target species of mackerel. I welcome the engagement of the Commission in clarifying this important aspect of the implementation of this scheme, which now means that the maximum aid possible under the scheme may be paid to the affected vessels"

The Pelagic Fisheries Support Scheme

was one of the recommendations of the Seafood Taskforce appointed by the Minister. It is restricted to eligible vessels in the RSW pelagic segment as well as Polyvalent Tier 1 and Tier 2 vessels fishing for mackerel in 2021 and 2022. Payments under the scheme represent the value of reduced fishing opportunities that resulted from the actual loss of mackerel quota in 2021 and 2022 arising from the quota transfer of quota to the UK. In monetary terms, the loss of mackerel per vessel over the same period, equates to the loss of one month's fishing opportunities per year, with payment calculated on the average monthly turnover per vessel, less cost of fuel and provisions, over the period 2018-2020, compensating for one month per annum for 2021 and 2022.

The Minister added: "The RSW pelagic fleet segment has suffered significant quota loss of some 20,130 tonnes worth approximately €27.3 million, and this much needed support will go some way to supporting the segment to adjust to the changed situation we find ourselves in so as to ensure a profitable and sustainable fishing fleet into the future. Now that I have secured State Aid approval from the EU Commission, I will be instructing BIM to administer this scheme without delay."

Scheme information, once launched, will be available on BIM's website [bim.ie/Brexit-hub](http://bim.ie/Brexit-hub)

### Consultation Process for SFPA's Statement of Strategy 2024 – 2026

**The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) sets out its strategic programme every three years. They are currently preparing the Statement of Strategy for 2024 – 2026, which will focus on what they want to achieve during this period to ensure they deliver the effective regulation that is central to the realisation of the vision for the shared marine resources surrounding Ireland.**

As part of the process of developing the strategy, the SFPA welcome the contribution of members of the public and stakeholders, especially those who fall within the SFPA's regulatory remit.

The SFPA would welcome your views specifically in relation to the following questions:

- What matters should be considered in developing the SFPA mission, vision, and value Statements?
- What metrics should the SFPA use to measure our performance and monitor achievement of our strategic goals?

A copy of their current strategy can be viewed at: [Our Strategy \(sfpa.ie\)](http://OurStrategy(sfpa.ie))

The SFPA would be grateful to receive your response together with any more general views you may have on the strategic direction of the SFPA and how it can best deliver on its remit.

**Please submit your response by email to [Strategy@sfpa.ie](mailto:Strategy@sfpa.ie) by Thursday, 21st December 2023.**



news from the **RNLI**  
editor@marinetimes.ie

## Six Crew Members at Newcastle RNLI Recognised for Their Role in Bringing Crew of Capsized Rowing Boat to Safety in Gale Force Weather Conditions

Six crew members from Newcastle RNLI have been recognised for their courage, determination and teamwork in bringing the crew of a racing rowing boat to safety after it capsized off Ardglass Harbour in June last year.

Coxswain Gerry McConkey, mechanic Shane Rice and crew members Lochlainn Leneghan, Declan McClelland, Karl Branigan and Declan Barry have all received a framed RNLI Chief Executive commendation for their efforts that saw them launch their all-weather lifeboat and go to sea for 10 hours in weather conditions that deteriorated to gale force 9 winds and rough seas.

The volunteer crew were requested to launch the *Leonard Kent*, at 7.15am on 26 June 2022 to go to the aid of the crew of a racing rowing boat that capsized 12 nautical miles east of Ardglass Harbour. Weather conditions at the time were poor with a Force 7 southerly wind and rough seas. Conditions then deteriorated following the launch with weather increasing to a force 9 southerly wind and high seas. On arrival at the scene at 9.24am, the volunteer crew assessed the situation and decided a tow was necessary to bring the vessel's crew to safety. Such were the conditions at sea that it took three attempts before a tow was successfully established.

In his commendation, RNLI Chief Executive Mark Dowie said: 'With courage, determination, and excellent teamwork, the casualty vessel was located. A tow was established, and the vessel was brought to the safety of Ardglass Harbour during a service that lasted almost 10 hours.'

Speaking of the commendations, Darren Byers, RNLI Area Lifesaving Manager said: 'This is a fitting recognition of the crew's efforts during a challenging call out that saw them spend almost 10 gruelling hours at sea in difficult weather conditions. Our volunteers are highly skilled and train for all eventualities and that was certainly put to the test during this service – I congratulate the crew on a richly deserved commendation.'

## Wicklow RNLI Crew Receive Commendation from RNLI

Six Wicklow lifeboat volunteers have been honoured with meritorious awards from the RNLI Chief Executive, Mark Dowie for their part in the rescue of three fishermen off the Wicklow coast earlier this year.

Area Lifeboat Manager, Lisa Hollingum presented the commendations to Coxswain

Ciaran Doyle, Peter Byrne (Station Mechanic), Carol Flahive, Paul Sillery and Stephen Kenny. Ian Heffernan was unable to attend due to work commitments.

The call out occurred on Saturday 14 January 2023, when Wicklow all-weather lifeboat RNLB Joanna and Henry Williams slipped its moorings at the south quay at 11.30am, following a Coast Guard launch request to investigate reports of a fishing vessel with engine failure off the Wicklow coast.

At 12:15pm the drifting fishing vessel with three crew was located west of the Codling Bank. Weather conditions at the time were sea state rough with a three-metre swell, wind was strong gusting north easterly force 7-8 at times.

Coxswain Ciaran Doyle conducted an assessment of the vessel which was found to have engine failure. As the vessel had no propulsion and unable to return to port under its own power and with the deteriorating weather, it was decided the best course of action was to tow the vessel back to Wicklow. A towline was established, and course was set for Wicklow harbour at 12.45pm.

Speaking after the callout Coxswain Ciaran Doyle said "We located the fishing vessel drifting eighteen miles north-east of Wicklow harbour, conditions at the scene were challenging, but the crew worked well and had no difficulties preparing a towline. The tow home was slow due to the weather, and we had to adjust the towline on a couple of occasions to suit the conditions."

The fishing vessel was brought alongside the east pier at Wicklow harbour at 5.30pm and the three fishermen were landed safely ashore.

Speaking after the presentation, Lifeboat Press Officer, Tommy Dover said: "We are extremely proud of our lifeboat volunteers and the commitment they give to the local community. They demonstrated excellent teamwork and skilled boat handling during a challenging six-hour service in poor weather conditions. This recognition by RNLI Chief Executive Mark Dowie is deeply appreciated by Wicklow RNLI."

## The RNLI May Be 200 Years Old but Connemara RNLI Volunteers Have Clocked Up 400 Years of Fundraising

Fourteen members of Clifden / Connemara RNLI's fundraising branch have received long service medals at a recent ceremony recognising their combined 400 years of fundraising.

As a fully independent charity organisation the RNLI relies on donations to fund its life saving work. Clifden lifeboat crew are on call 24/7 but they require ongoing training, well maintained equipment, lifeboats and shore equipment to carry out their mission of saving lives at sea. None of this would be possible without the dedication, commitment and drive of our local fund-



Photos: 400 years of volunteer fundraising recognised at Connemara RNLI; Wicklow RNLI receiving commendations from the RNLI and Newcastle RNLI recognised for their courage.



raisers who have each dedicated many years to supporting their local coastal community.

The commitment and selflessness of our fundraising volunteers was acknowledged by Danny Curran, RNLI Regional Engagement Manager. Speaking at the awards ceremony Danny said, "I know how much thought and effort goes in raising every euro for our charity and I'm extremely grateful to the volunteers here today who have worked tirelessly on this goal for decades. In rain, hail and snow; every week, every month, every year, you have ensured we can keep our life saving services running. These awards are not just to celebrate the fundraising volunteers for their incredible achievements over many years but also their families and friends who play a key role in supporting our work."

Long service award recipients include Pdraig Griffin from Kilkerrin who is the longest serving fundraiser in the branch having dedicated an incredible 55 years to Clifden RNLI, Eileen and Oliver Coyne

from Cleggan who are responsible for the legendary RNLI Christmas hamper raffle and AnneMarie Bennett, out-going chair of the fundraising branch and highly valued RNLI volunteer.

A special moment was observed for Lavinia Joyce who sadly passed away in August this year. Lavinia was the first Chairperson of Clifden / Connemara fundraising branch, or the "Clifden Ladies Guild", as it was known when she joined in 1992. Her enthusiasm, dedication and sense of purpose to be involved with the RNLI was infectious. She was an inspiration to all of us and an absolute lady, rest in peace Lavinia.

**Clifden RNLI Long Service Awardees 2023:** Geraldine Heanue; AnneMarie Bennett; Pdraic Griffin; Stewart Freeman; Collin Mullen; Paraic Mc Donagh; Percy Hyland; Oliver and Eileen Coyne; Jacqueline Hannon; Nancy Duffy; Lavinia Joyce; Ann Day; Thomas King.



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*Rhoda Twombly, Secretary of Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, the Islands' Federation*

## The Launching of The Islands Housing Needs Report

**C**omhdháil Oileán na hÉireann (COÉ), the Irish Islands Federation, launched 'Ireland's Offshore Islands: Housing Needs Survey' on November 22 in Leinster House. The survey and report had been instigated by COÉ after a series of forums had identified a lack of appropriate, available island housing as a chief concern among Islanders.



**Attending launch of the Islands Housing Report at Leinster House (Back row l-r): Joanne Carroll (COÉ), Fionna Collins, Máire Uí Mhaoláin, (CEO of Comhar), Micheál Ó Conghaile (COÉ), Tomás Mac Pháidín (GRETB & COÉ), Dr Conor Cashman (UCC), Ruabhán Mac Pháidín; (Front row l-r): Cllr Michael Moegie Maher (Chair GRETB & Galway Co Co), Mairead Farrell (TD, SF), Judith Gilbert (Comhar), Aisling Moran (Chair, COÉ), Chloe Ní Mháille (COÉ), Dr Siobhán O' Sullivan (UCC), Tuuli Rantala (COÉ), Brenda Elphick (Comhar), Kevin McCann (COÉ); Front: Seán Cronin (UCC).**

The housing research concerning the West Cork Islands by Dr. Conor Cashman and Dr. Siobhán O' Sullivan of University College Cork offered many insights into the housing challenges in those islands and this work was expanded to include all of the inhabited offshore islands supported financially and administratively by Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann and Comhar na nOileán.

The research was conducted between September and December of 2022 and found that the islands face unique challenges within the national housing crisis and failing to address housing on the offshore islands means that the continuity of sustainable communities on the islands is at risk.

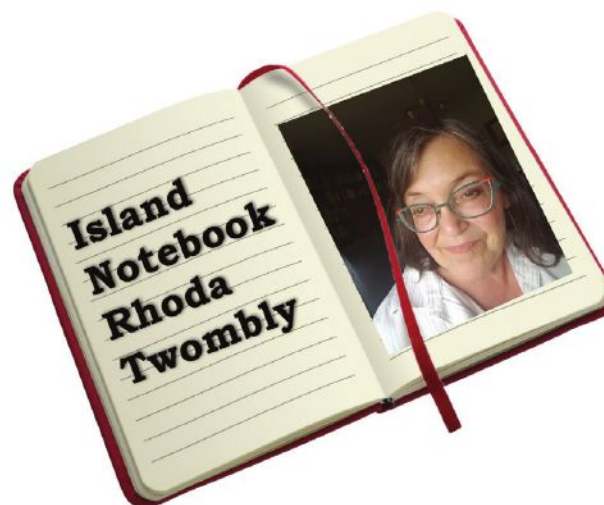
Mairead Farrell and Éamon O'Cuív, both TD's for Galway West Region, were key in organising the launch and welcomed a delegation of 10 representatives from the offshore Islands and a further 7 people from supporting organisations and University College Cork. The discussion panel for the meeting included Aisling Moran, Chair of Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, Dr Conor Cashman, Dr Siobhán O' Sullivan, Martin Galvin from University College Cork, Judith Gilbert, a resident of Cape Clear Island who has raised 8 children on the Islands, and Deputies Mairead Farrell and Éamon O' Cuív.

In presenting their findings in the report, Dr Cashman highlighted four key

elements:

- Full-time residents and communities want to remain living and thriving on the islands, and there is a clear cohort of people wishing to return to or move to the islands for the first time.
- Availability and affordability of housing are the most significant issues identified by survey respondents wishing to remain on, or move to, the islands.
- 79% of renter respondents stated they are likely to move in the next 5 years. Although most want to remain living on the offshore islands, they said the lack of affordable housing to buy, lack of long-term rental accommodation and tenure insecurity make that very challenging.
- There is very strong support for developing schemes and a range of housing options to enable younger generations and full-time residents to remain on, or move to, the islands.

The survey found that the islands face unique challenges within the national housing crisis. Failing to address the housing crisis on the offshore islands means that the continuity of sustainable communities on the islands is at risk. The launch is ahead of commencing a series of actions to address this existential threat to the islands and represents an opportunity to engage with Government and policy makers to address the report's findings. The launch will act as a springboard for actions to avert this exist-



Comhdháil  
Oileán  
na



hÉireann

Irish Islands Federation

tential threat to the offshore islands while opening the door to working with Government and relevant agencies to address the study's recommendations.

The report sets out 5 recommendations, including establishing an Island Specific Housing Task Force and Action Plan, developing a community-led Housing Association/Approved Housing Body, and ensuring that the voices of islanders are heard in relation to policy development and implementation with particular focus on planning and vacant homes.

In launching the report, Máire Uí Mhaoláin, CEO of Comhar na nOileán stated: 'This report provides clear data highlighting the urgent need to address housing on the islands. The report's publication represents a key step in addressing these needs and advocating for the needs and wishes of islanders to sustain our communities and way of life on Ireland's offshore islands.'

Dr Martin Galvin (UCC) summarised the housing issues on the islands before the discussion was opened up to the floor. Dr Galvin referenced Diarmaid Ferriter's book, 'On the Edge, History of Islands,' that noted the 'official neglect' pointing to the fact that islands are "sick with the cancer of indifference and lack of capital" in the past and now, whilst still being recognised as important constituents of our State.

Highlighting the importance of implementing the recommendations of the report, Aisling Moran, Chair of Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, said, "The report outlines the key housing needs for the islands and we are hopeful that through collaboration with the National government and local authorities we can improve the housing situation for all the Irish off shore islands."

The Government's policy - Our Living Islands' - noted that the lack of available, affordable housing or sufficient employment

"can lead to a drop off in population if people are required to move to the mainland to live or work." This report points out the threats of continued lack of social housing availability, planning permission difficulties plus environmental policies (e.g. SACs) leading to a curtailment of housing development - all of which contribute to falling population and greatly lessened sustainability.

Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann has said in the past and continues to maintain that the offshore islands are unique, that the "one size fits all" approach does not work, and a vital section of Ireland's culture could be wiped out through neglect. As stated in a COÉ policy document in 2014: The offshore islands of Ireland constitute a unique element in the fabric of Irish society. Island communities have a special inheritance due to the uniqueness of Island living. This Island way of life needs to be protected, resourced, financed and valued. In particular, the Islands bring an important cultural, heritage, tourism, and artistic dimension to the nation.

The housing survey reports on the West Cork Islands, on the needs of housing across the offshore islands as well as an upcoming study on the existing buildings across our islands will all inform the plan to improve the housing situation across the offshore islands.

The Board of Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann wishes you all a **Very happy and healthy Christmas - Nollaig shona agus shláintiúil do chách**

*Christmas is all about home: it is our greatest wish that more Islanders can return to their islands, that more islanders can stay on their islands and will be celebrating Christmas in their island homes in the years to come.*

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# Scaling Up at Goatsbridge Trout Farm After €1.68 Million Investment



Mag and Ger Kirwan pictured alongside the new Solar panels which will radically cut down on Goatsbridge's energy costs.

**G**oatsbridge Trout Farm has completed a €1.68m investment with support from BIM which will see it improve efficiencies and increase production of its popular trout products at its Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, base.

The investment was supported with grant aid of €666,540 from the Brexit Processing Capital Support Scheme and the Brexit Sustainable Aquaculture Growth Scheme, administered through BIM.

The two schemes combined will deliver up to €65 million in funding to the Irish seafood processing sector. Both are funded by the European Union under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve, and are recommendations of the Seafood Taskforce established by Minister McConalogue T.D.

Mag Kirwan, who runs Goatsbridge with her husband Ger, said the investment - which included a factory extension, upgrading and introducing new state-of-the-art production lines and introducing solar panels - will transform the business which produces smoked trout, trout pâté, fish chowder and Ireland's only caviar made

from trout roe.

The investment will also protect the current 27 jobs in the business and hopefully increase the numbers employed in the next year.

"We are delighted with the new development. These upgrades will ensure greater production efficiencies and standards, as well as increasing our capacity to develop further value-added products," she said. "It will also improve energy efficiency. As well as solar panels we have upgraded existing doors to improve temperature control in the production area, and added a blast chiller to improve the processing of products including caviar."

According to Mags Kirwan the investment will pave the way for the business to pursue its strategy to produce more high volume, high margin products to

allow for increased domestic and overseas sales.

As well as being available in Irish retail outlets all over the country Goatsbridge products are on sale in 400 Sainsburys outlets in the UK. Recently the company landed a deal to stock its popular products through the Ocado online food company in the UK. Goatsbridge is currently pursuing exports further afield with negotiations underway for a possible listing in the Dubai-based Spinneys supermarket and grocery chain which has more than 65 locations across the UAE.

The new Solar panels will radically cut down on Goatsbridge's energy costs. "Due to climate change over the last number of years we find the temperatures in the water are higher and the water levels are lower, especially in the summer months. If we do not allow for more oxygen and water recirculation our production capacity will be greatly reduced. But this takes up a lot of energy and the solar panels will have a big impact here."

"We aim to become carbon neutral in the coming 3 to 5 years. We want to be sustainable not just from a business point of view, but more importantly from an environmental point of view. We want to protect what we have for generations to come," said Mag.

She said the support of BIM and the Brexit Processing Capital Support Scheme has been immense. "The scheme was the trigger we needed to bring our business to a new level. This support has been vital in helping us to innovate and grow. It is particularly beneficial in the current climate with costs rising. I strongly believe it is when you are feeling fearful that it's time to be brave and make changes."

In recent years, Goatsbridge has focused on adding value to its highly sought after trout products. As well as supplying to the Irish retail and hospitality markets, and starting sales into the UK, it also supplies to wholesale which forms a large part of the business. Online sales are being developed.

BIM CEO, Caroline Bocquel, said: "It is great to see at first hand the positive impact of the Brexit Processing Capital Support Scheme on fish businesses including Goatsbridge. Mag and Ger have been true champions in the Irish seafood industry for almost 30 years and are constantly adapting and innovating and seeking to be more efficient."

In 2012, Goatsbridge developed Ireland's first ever caviar - trout caviar - with support from BIM. Caviar is salted fish roe or eggs and regarded as a delicacy.

Goatsbridge Trout Farm was started by Ger Kirwan's father, Pdraig, in 1961 when he created the first fish ponds on The Little Arrigle River in the heart of the Nore Valley. Ger and Mag took over the business in 2002.

## Ireland's Legendary Olympian on How the RNLI is Really About Saving Everyone

**I**n 1956, Ronnie Delaney won a gold medal in the 1500m race at the Olympics in Melbourne. Now 87, and a Vice President of the RNLI, Ronnie takes pride in how he competed for an all-Ireland country as an athlete, and how through his work with the RNLI, he's supporting an all-Ireland charity.



The Arklow athlete contributes to the highly acclaimed RNLI 200 Voices podcast with an episode entitled A Beautiful Thing.

He talks of how the RNLI is apolitical in Ireland, of extraordinary friendships he's made through the RNLI, and commends the charity's commitment to saving lives at sea - in his words: 'a beautiful thing'.

The unique podcast series continues to hear from people connected to the RNLI in Ireland and those whose lives have been touched by the lifesaving charity. Hear from locals with a special kinship to their lifeboat station, a crew member who's been on service for a generation, or the family of someone rescued by an RNLI frontline lifesaver - each episode is sure to take the listener on a journey through a touching story.

Launched in August the series already features several contributions of Irish interest including: Niamh Fitzpatrick; Fr. Tom Dalton; Kieran Cotter; Marion Broderick; Phil Coulter and former President Mary McAleese recalls a life lived close to the water and her relationship and work with the RNLI.

Available across all podcast platforms and the RNLI's website, listeners can hear from survivors, supporters, volunteers, lifeguards, celebrity ambassadors, historians and many more from across Wales, England, Scotland Ireland and beyond.

Launch into a podcast like no other: Listen to the RNLI's 200 Voices daily, wherever you get your podcasts or at [RNLI.org/200Voices](http://RNLI.org/200Voices).

To find out more about the RNLI's bicentenary, visit [www.RNLI.org/200](http://www.RNLI.org/200).



Ger and Mag Kirwan on the processing and production floor of Goatsbridge.



## BANTRY MARINE CENTRE

A feasibility report proposing a major maritime facility has been completed for the Bantry Marine Activities Centre group, composed of a number of maritime interests in the town, including the Atlantic Challenge, rowing and sailing clubs and others, focused on setting-up a marine centre.



The feasibility report, drawn up after community consultation, proposes a new maritime centre of two waterfront buildings with workshops, boat storage, public rooms, changing areas and other facilities. Public support in the town is strong for the project near the existing Abbey slipway on the waterside.

## GALWAY BAY OYSTERS TRADITION HIGHLIGHTED

Cuan Beo, the Galway Bay community organisation with a Mission of improving the quality of life, environment, economy and heritage has published an audit of the environmental, cultural, social and economic heritage of the native oyster in the bay.

It says there is a strong awareness of the traditions attached to oyster fishing and concern of the loss of these traditions. The central aim of the project was to compile a comprehensive baseline database of heritage relating to the native oyster, *Ostrea Edulis*, (European oyster) in South Galway Bay and to highlight its importance.

## HARLAND AND WOLFF REJECTED

An initial approach by Belfast ship-builder Harland and Wolff to acquire the Isles of Scilly Steamship Group has been rejected.

That group which has a passenger ferry, the Scillonian III and two freight vessels, described the approach from Harland and Wolff as “not in the best interests of shareholders.” The shipyard responded that it was “disappointed” and would “consider options”.

## SEAFARERS CONFERENCE

NMCI Ireland, the National Maritime College has announced that it will hold its Seafarer’s Conference 2024 on February 22 in Limerick. The title them is ‘Realising Ireland’s Ambition’.

## MARA CHAIRMAN RESIGNS FROM SHIPPING COMPANY

Retired Naval Service Vice Admiral Mark Mellett resigned from Irish Mainport Holdings of Cork which he had joined earlier in the year as a non-executive Director. The company announced that it had reluctantly accepted the resignation following his appointment as Chairman of MARA, the Marine Area Regulatory Authority.

# Scoil Chaitríona Junior in Renmore, Wins Explorers National Ocean Champion Award

**S**coil Chaitríona Junior, Renmore, Galway, has been crowned the national winner of the Explorers Ocean Champion School Awards 2023 for their Healthy Ocean project, ‘Caring for our Ocean’.



Mick Gillooly Interim CEO Marine Institute, Jane McLoughlin – lead teacher, Noirin Burke – Explorers Education Programme, Bernard Kirk – CEO Camden Education Trust and 2nd class pupils Luka Simanaviciute, Martyna Zubik, Ruby Griffin and Eva Zannin.

Scoil Chaitríona Junior applied marine themes (environmental care, cleaning up litter, looking after the animals in the ocean) across many different subjects throughout the year, from the sciences through to music and the arts. They shared stories about the ocean with a primary school in France, performed at the Marino Institute of Further Education and at the Féile Scoil drama competition.

“We were also extremely impressed with the school’s collaboration and engagement where the teachers and children worked with marine scientists from ATU to learn about seaweed and birdlife, and with artists through the Teacher Artist Partnership, as well as meeting with other marine educators,” said Mick Gillooly.

“These children stood out for their eagerness to learn about the animals in the ocean, and for sharing what they learnt with their community about protecting and caring for the ocean.

“Bringing the topic of marine conservation to local, national and international platforms shows an incredible amount of commitment from the staff, children and their parents,” he added.

Congratulating the children, teachers, and the Explorers outreach team, Mick Gillooly, Interim CEO of the Marine Institute said he was extremely impressed with the efforts of everyone involved: “The children’s enthusiasm was evident in many ways: in their shadow puppetry films, when they went on beach cleans, and in their musical performance ‘Fadhb na Mara’ about ocean conservation. Their work was exceptional.”

On behalf of the teachers, school principal Caitríona Daly said the award recognised their school’s commitment to learning about

local areas – particularly their own seashore: Ballyloughane Beach: “We’re also delighted to have received an EU Blue Schools Award. This award recognises the school’s effort to becoming ocean literate and for being an ocean champion!”

Twenty-eight coastal schools participated in this year’s competition, creating healthy ocean school projects based on themes including Marine STEAM, Ocean literacy, SDGs and the Ocean and Marine Outdoor Education.

“Each school showed incredible initiative by using cross-curricular content in support of the Curriculum Framework that introduces key competencies for children’s learning. These projects certainly show how the ocean can be used for thematic learning and how a healthy ocean is relevant to daily life,” remarked Cushla Dromgool-Regan, Strategic Education and Communications Manager of the Explorers Education Programme.

The Healthy Ocean School project and Ocean Champion Awards is organised through the Explorers Education Programme and is the only ocean-themed award for primary schools in Ireland. It recognises the effort, commitment and collaboration of school management boards, teachers, children, and the Explorer outreach officers who have engaged in the all-school, marine-themed project.

The Explorers Education Programme is funded by the Marine Institute and is managed and delivered by the Explorers Team of Camden Education, Galway Atlantaquaria, SeashoreKids, Oceanics Surf School, Old Cork Waterworks Experience, Sea Synergy and Leave no Trace-Ireland.

For further information see [www.explorers.ie](http://www.explorers.ie)



# Stunning Images to Make You Love Your Coast

## Clean Coasts Announces Winners of Love Your Coast Photography Competition, Showcasing the Beauty of the Irish Coast



**1st Place & Overall Winner: Stephen Dunbar - Humpback Feeding - Broadhaven Bay, Mayo.** "This image of a Humpback Whale was captured in Broadhaven Bay. I watched the whale feeding the day before from land. The next day, I was lucky enough to get out on a rib with Brendan and Marcus from IWDG. We first encountered two huge Basking Sharks when they came over to our boat. After that, we found the Humpback Whale feeding in the bay with a handful of Minke Whales and lots of common Dolphins. Many birds feed in the bay, including Kittiwakes, which are seen in the image, along with Puffins, Guillemots and Razorbills."

**C**lean Coasts have proudly announced the winning photographers of the 14th edition of the Love Your Coast photography competition. With a prize fund of €6,000, the competition has attracted hundreds of photographers all around Ireland this year, receiving a record number of over 1,300 entries.

Stephen Dunbar, with his "Humpback Feeding", captured in Broadhaven Bay, Co. Mayo won the "Photographer of the Year" title and 1st place in the **Wildlife and the Coast** category.

About the picture, Stephen said: "This image of a Humpback Whale was captured in Broadhaven Bay. I watched the whale feeding the day before from land. The next day, I was lucky enough to get out on a rib with Brendan and Marcus from IWDG. We first encountered two huge Basking Sharks when they came over to our boat. After that, we found the Humpback Whale feeding in the bay with a handful of Minke Whales and lots of common Dolphins. Many birds feed in the bay, including Kittiwakes, which

are seen in the image, along with Puffins, Guillemots and Razorbills."

Winners in other categories included: **Coastal Landscape:** Peter Vandermeersch, Horizon, Bray, Co. Wicklow; **Coastal Heritage:** Karol Ryan, Sturgeon Moon, Ballycotton, Ballycotton, Co. Cork; **People and the Coast:** Megan Gayda, The Ocean Flare, Co. Clare; **Underwater:** Derek Bolton, Emerald Jewel, Sovereign Island, Co. Cork; **Protectors of the Coast:** Robert Ledwith, A Ray of Hope, Co. Clare

In 2023, Clean Coasts celebrated its 20th anniversary. Since 2003, Clean Coasts has been working with communities to help protect and care for Ireland's waterways,

coastline, seas, ocean and marine life. Since 2010, the Love Your Coast photography competition has been a celebration of all the beauty and uniqueness of the Irish coast, that Clean Coasts volunteers work to protect.

As part of its commitments under the EU's Marine Strategy Framework Directive and OSPAR's Marine Litter Action Plan, the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government is proud to support An Taisce's 'Clean Coasts Programme', in its enthusiastic engagement with marine communities in relation to marine litter and in heightening public awareness and influencing positive behaviour among civil society.

Clean Coasts is also sponsored by Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority. The Green Coast Awards and associated Clean Coasts groups act as custodians for the beaches, seas, and marine life in Ireland, ensuring that they are managed appropriately and that they are litter and

pollution free for our visitors to enjoy.

"Clean Coasts' mission extends beyond a mere photography competition," stated Sinead McCoy, Coastal Communities Manager. "Our coastal and marine environment form an integral part of Ireland's identity. Through this competition, we invite the people in Ireland to appreciate, celebrate, and safeguard our coast, echoing the dedication of our over 2,000 volunteer groups working tirelessly to protect our marine environment."

The Love Your Coast photography competition stands as a testament to Ireland's coastal beauty and character, encapsulated through the lens of photographers who take part in the competition year after year. Clean Coasts wants to congratulate all the winning and shortlisted photographers and thank them for being part of this year's celebrations.

More of the winning photos can be seen on [cleancoasts.org](http://cleancoasts.org)





**UNDERWATER 1st Place:** Derek Bolton - Emerald Jewel - Sovereign Island, Co. Cork. Derek Bolton described their image, 'Emerald Jewel', as, "The Sovereign Islands from the surface they appear as barren rocks, but underwater they are home to many hidden jewelled covered walls."

**COASTAL HERITAGE 1st Place:** Karol Ryan - Sturgeon Moon, Ballycotton, Co. Cork. Karol Ryan stated of this winning image, "I had been to this location the previous month to try and capture this image but the weather didn't work in my favour, but the next month on 11th August the conditions were perfect & I managed to get the shot I was after."





# Juvenile European Lobster (*Homarus gammarus*)

## Scores a Hat Trick

Declan Quigley reports

**While hauling lobster pots on board the MFV Aine II (S630) east of Galley Head (51.5299°N, 8.9523°W), Co Cork on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2023, Ben and Neal Hooper noticed a yellow peaked cap floating on the surface (Fig. 1).**



On retrieving the cap they were surprised to find a juvenile lobster measuring c.25 mm total length (TL) along with two sprat hiding inside (Fig. 2). There were also relatively large numbers of pelagic Brachyuran crab megalopea larvae in the area at the time (Fig. 3). After taking a few quick photos, Ben released the juvenile lobster back to the sea (minus its cap).

Although the cap originated from the

Laguna Seca Motor Raceway near Salinas and Monterey in central California, it is highly unlikely that it floated all the way from the eastern Pacific to SW Ireland, a journey that would have necessitated either passage through the Panama Canal or rounding Cape Horn off the southernmost tip of South America. More likely, the cap was probably lost somewhere in the Western Atlantic and floated across the North

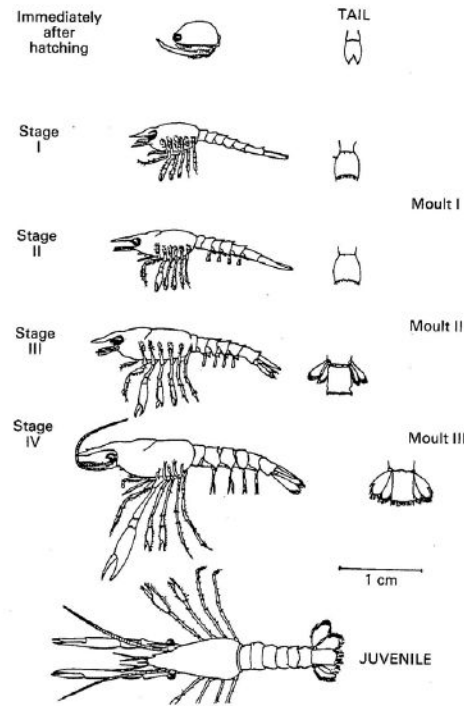
Atlantic to SW Ireland via the Gulf Stream and North Atlantic Drift. North American flotsam and jetsam are not infrequently found stranded on European Atlantic coasts. It is estimated that these passive trans-Atlantic drift crossings usually take at least 14 months.

Although it is tempting to speculate that the juvenile may have been an American Lobster (*Homarus americanus*) that rafted across the North Atlantic inside the floating cap, the diagnostic sub-rostral spine characteristic of this species was not discernible. Furthermore, pelagic larval lobsters adopt a benthic habit after a series of development stages lasting 4-6 weeks, much shorter than the estimated 14 months involved in a passive surface trans-Atlantic crossing. Therefore, the juvenile was most likely a native European Lobster (*H. gammarus*) that opportunistically took up residence in the cap when it arrived off SW Ireland.



Figure 2. Juvenile lobster found in floating cap.

Figure 3. Juvenile lobster along with Brachyuran crab megalopea larvae (circled).



Larval stages of the European Lobster *Homarus gammarus* (L.) (after Chadwick)

Although pelagic larval lobsters (Stages 1-IV) [Fig. 4] undergo diel vertical migrations in open water, they have occasionally been found amongst surface floating seaweed. It seems that the prolonged use of the cap as an artificial floating substrate by the current juvenile lobster may have delayed its normal settlement to benthic habitats. Due to their burrowing behaviour, early benthic phase juvenile lobsters are rarely observed in the wild and their general whereabouts still represents an unsolved mystery.

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

### Inland Fisheries Ireland Awarded First prize in SEAI Energy Awards

**IFI wins the category entitled 'Leadership in Public Sector Decarbonization and Energy Efficiency'**

**Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) has been awarded first prize in the 'Leadership in Public Sector Decarbonization and Energy Efficiency' category at the Sustainable Energy Association of Ireland's 20th Annual Energy Awards ceremony recently held in the Mansion House, Dublin.**



Since 2009, IFI has improved its energy efficiency by 44.5% with a climate action programme that has included extensive staff engagement and input including the development of a national Green Teams network, the installation of 18 solar PV systems, decarbonisation of fleet through the addition of 52 electric vehicles and the development of a national EV charging network at 32 locations to date.

Brian Beckett Director of IFI Dublin at Inland Fisheries Ireland commented: "We are grateful and humbled to be among Ireland's leading businesses and State agencies in decarbonisation in Ireland today. At Inland Fisheries Ireland we work on nature conservation – protecting and managing our fish populations and their habitats today and for future generations. We've had a focus on sustainability since our formation in the 1950's.

"This award recognises years of tireless effort by all of the IFI team. Sincere thanks and congratulations are due to all IFI staff for their drive and commitment to energy efficiency improvement and a sustainable future for all. The commitment and leadership shown by our Board and senior leadership team matched by the ambition and creativity of our local and national Green Teams will ensure that we reach and exceed our decarbonisation targets to 2030 and beyond.

"We're convinced that creativity, collaboration, partnership and innovation are the keys to unlocking a sustainable future for all and we welcome all opportunities to work with those who have common goals in this critical area."

This year at the SEAI energy awards, there were 114 applications, 40 finalists, who collectively reduced energy consumption by 16% saving €50 million in energy spend. The renewable energy produced by the 2023 entrants is equivalent to powering over 400,000 homes per year.



# 'Solidarity: The Dockers of Dublin Port' Launches at Dublin Port's Substation

**D**ublin Port Company proudly welcomes 'Solidarity: The Dockers of Dublin Port', a compelling exhibition curated by The Little Museum of Dublin to its Substation for a three-month stay.

The first-ever exhibition at the Substation, Dublin's latest cultural hub, was launched by Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste. The showcase - which includes never-before-seen photos - provides a poignant glimpse into the lives of the dockers, a vibrant and resilient community integral to the history of Dublin Port.

'Solidarity' delves into the rich tapestry of Ireland's industrial subculture, spotlighting the dockers' narrative characterised by hardship, camaraderie, and unyielding resilience. From the challenges of casual labour to the advent of containerisation, the exhibition vividly illustrates the evolution of this dynamic community.

Lord Mayor Daithí de Róiste commented on the significance of the exhibition, stating: "The dockers of Dublin Port have played a crucial role in shaping the city's history. 'Solidarity' is a tribute to their enduring spirit and a reminder of the sacrifices made by those who toiled on the docks. This exhibition not only preserves their legacy but also invites us to reflect on the vibrant tapestry of Dublin's industrial heritage. I would like to congratulate Dublin Port Company and the Little Museum of Dublin for coming together to put on such a wonderful exhibition."

Barry O'Connell, CEO of Dublin Port Company, remarked: "We are proud to support this insightful exhibition from the Little Museum of Dublin that brings to life the untold stories of the dockers. 'Solidarity' provides a unique perspective on the challenges and triumphs of this remarkable community, highlighting the crucial role they played in the development of Dublin Port. It is a testament to their resilience and the enduring legacy they have left behind."

'Solidarity' invites visitors to explore the profound traditions rooted in family ties that defined the dockers' lives. Many dockers followed in the footsteps of their families, embracing a life of physically demanding and unpredictable work. The exhibition meticulously examines various facets of the dockers' lives, including docker's reads, the button system of preferential hire, the tools of the trade, and the indispensable role of cranes. Additionally, the exhibition delves into the social aspects of a docker's life, juxtaposed with the daily dangers faced on the docks.

Free of charge for all, 'Solidarity: The Dockers of Dublin Port' is open to the public at The Substation, Alexandra Road, Dublin Port every Thursday-Sunday 11:30am-3:30pm until early February.

Dr Rhona Mahony, Chair of the Little Museum of Dublin, added: "We were thrilled to work alongside Dublin Port Company to bring this engaging exhibition to the port. Dockers would have gathered in their hundreds next to the Substation every day seeking work on the docks so there couldn't be a more appropriate venue. A lot of time and hard work went into this exhibition, and I would like to pay tribute to the Dockers who shared their memories with our curation team enabling them to create this exhibition."

**Inset photos: Historian in residence at the Little Museum of Dublin Daryl Hendley Rooney (left) with Dublin Port's Marta López (centre) and the Little Museum's Dara Flynn at the launch of Solidarity: The Dockers of Dublin Port; A section of the display panels at the 'Solidarity' exhibition; Paddy Daly and former dockers enjoying the exhibition at the Substation.**



(Above): Paddy Daly, retired docker, holding his docker's shovel, currently on display at The Substation at Dublin Port as part of the Little Museum of Dublin's exhibition Solidarity: The Dockers of Dublin Port. The exhibition showcases never-before-seen photos which provide a poignant glimpse into the lives of the dockers, a vibrant and resilient community integral to the history of Dublin Port. Solidarity is free of charge for all and open every Thursday-Sunday 11:30am-3:30pm until early February. (Photos by Tommy Dickson) (Below): Lord Mayor of Dublin Daithí de Róiste launches Solidarity: The Dockers of Dublin Port, alongside (left to right) Sarah Clancy, Chief Executive of the Little Museum of Dublin, Dublin Port Heritage Director Lar Joye, Dr Rhona Mahony, Chair of the Little Museum of Dublin and Barry O'Connell, Chief Executive of Dublin Port Company.







"Keriolet" and "Hilary Susan" leaving Dunmore East for the fishing grounds. Photo courtesy Aiden Moore

## Fishing Industry Given Assurances They Will Be Supported at Meeting with The Taoiseach

**R**epresentatives from the fishing industry recently met the Taoiseach who gave them a commitment that the sector would be supported and protected, a Fine Gael Councillor said.

Cork County Councillor and Local election candidate Caroline Cronin said the meeting provided an opportunity for the fishing industry delegation to discuss their priority issues with the Taoiseach at a Special Conference held by Fine Gael in Maynooth on November 18<sup>th</sup>.

Councillor Cronin said: "I have been a representative in the Cork South West area for almost two years and my husband is an inshore fisherman, so fishing is essential to the livelihood of my family and I have a first-hand understanding of the issues and challenges facing the fishing industry.

"We expressed deep gratitude for a very successful meeting with the Taoiseach at the Special Conference in Maynooth on November 18<sup>th</sup>, with the meeting also including representatives from Killybegs and Castletownbere.

"The meeting addressed various subjects such as heavy-handed oversight of the industry, fishing quota sharing, pelagic fishing, demersal fishing, inshore fishing, aquaculture, and fish processing.

"Resolving the issue of insufficient quotas is vital to sustaining our fishing industry. This follows the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) and quota transfers to the UK which will have an impact on Ireland's industry.

"Our fisheries sector is one of the sectors most impacted by Brexit so it is vital everything can be done to assist the sector and coastal communities in addressing the impacts of the quota cuts.

"During Fine Gael's special conference, various pressing issues within the fishing industry were discussed.

"The meeting held particular importance as it was ahead of the recent visit of Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, to Ireland.

"The Taoiseach attentively listened and assured us that he would raise these important issues with the Commissioner. We are very optimistic that the industry will receive the necessary support going forward," Councillor Cronin concluded.



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