

IRELAND'S LEADING MARITIME NEWSPAPER

MARINE TIMES

JANUARY 2023 - PRICE €3



Emma Lou off Dunmore East - Photo courtesy Richard Guildea



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Put Growth on Agenda for Seafood Sector in 2023

Irish fishing representatives say it's time to put growth on the agenda for our seafood sector this year. "Our seafood exports delivered less than 1% growth over the last five years," says Aodh O'Donnell, Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation ... See page 3

Offshore Islands When Gone - Are Gone

"You often hear of islands being depopulated, but never being repopulated. When an island community is gone it will not be restored," says Simon Murray of Inishbofin, Galway, former Chair of Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann and life-long island advocate. Read full report on page 18

Please Be Kind & Fair

- Editorial Comment Page 6

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by Art Kavanagh

Where There Is a Will ...

I have always preached about how important it is for us all – and in particular for those of you in Business to make your Wills.

Even simple wills cover a multitude and avoid serious complications later should one of you pass away suddenly and your partner needs to sell part of the property.

I have two instances at the moment where Widows of deceased Husbands are trying to sell small boats. Because neither of them have a will we are in all kinds of trouble trying to establish title to progress the transactions. Go to your Solicitor in the New Year and make a simple will. Even a “Me to you and You to Me” Will can make things much easier at a time when grief and desperation provide enough discomfort without the addition of complicated legals being added.

I have also always tried to encourage

my clients to enter their Vessels – Fishing or otherwise – on the Mercantile Marine Register. This establishes your clear Title to the Vessel and makes it easier to sell. It also allows a prospective buyer to offer a Mortgage on the Vessel to secure a Loan should that be necessary.

I had hoped that at this stage the Letters offering Decommissioning will have issued and you will be discussing the Terms and the Amounts with your accountants to establish what you will be left with after paying whatever tax might be due.

Only your Accountant can really advise you on that as he or she will be submitting and signing off your Tax Returns. The Tax

treatment is designed to make the Decommissioning option more attractive so it needs careful consideration.

As I write here the Offer letters have not materialized which is more than unfortunate. We all know that personal considerations have not scored highly in the treatment of the Fishing Sector in the past and we have that lack of consideration here again.

Decommissioning is a HUGE decision which really should include ALL of a Family including those not directly engaged in the Crewing. The final decision on whether the Decommissioning offer should be accepted I suggest is one that should involve as many family members as possible and the Christmas Holiday period would have provided the ideal opportunity for families to sit together and discuss the future. That opportunity has now been lost Shame on whoever is responsible for this.

The original announcement on Decommissioning set out specific dates the first of which was 16th December for the license offers to issue - and we have missed that.

Something needs to be done about the overall Licensing and Registration Process because as it stands it simply is not satisfactory at all.

I level no accusation at any Officials but the current situation is more than unsatisfactory.

In the case of a Fishing Vessel we are dealing with 3 Government Departments and in order to complete a license we need to dovetail the various processes to match the days on which the various officials are working.

A process which previously might have taken 3 days can easily now take 3 weeks.

That simply is not fair in situations where there are Fishing Crews prevented from going to work because officials are working Flextime or working from Home.

The most irritating aspect is the uncertainty generated by simply not knowing when offices are being attended. At least can the various offices let us the public know when there is actually someone there.

That would be a basic Provider / Customer relationship - that's assuming that we are regarded as CUSTOMERS ????

I repeat my ongoing contention that it is grossly unjust and unfair that anyone who enjoys the flexibility of working from home can in any way prevent someone who can't work from Home – Working !!!!

A little bit of respect goes a long way lads and I have to question the Respect which the system offers our Fishermen.

I suggest that a centralized system of Registration would be efficient both in delivery and in terms of cost.

There are and will always be those who will go the extra mile to facilitate people but equally there will be those who will hide behind procedure I can say no more without becoming upset.

Let's get the Decommissioning done lads for those of you who it suits and hope that you can manage the quotas to maximum effect in the coming year.

Stay safe everyone and Happy New Year to you all.



Arkh Angell in the Irish Sea. Photo by David Reid

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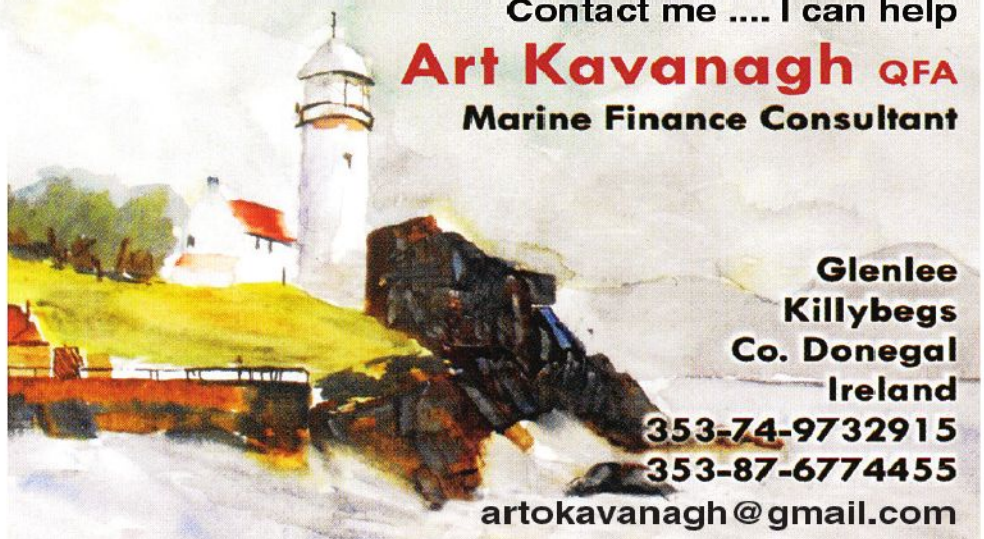
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Put Growth on Agenda for Seafood Sector in 2023

Irish fishing representatives say it's time to put growth on the agenda for our seafood sector this year. "Our seafood exports delivered less than 1% growth over the last five years," says Aodh O'Donnell, Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation.

"Norway, a non-EU member with a similar population, delivered seafood export growth of 25% in the last year alone. In 2022, their seafood exports were worth €14bn, compared to just €0.674bn for Irish exports. They have succeeded where we have faltered as they now export 20 times the value of Irish exports annually with EU markets accounting for 43% of this. Our economy and coastal communities should benefit from the resource our waters represent. Instead, other EU and non-EU fleets are increasingly permitted to catch more fish in our waters than the Irish fleet."

"Yet the EU re-opens talks this week to consider Norway's request to catch 450,000 tonnes of blue whiting. This is over nine times the size of Ireland's quota. Furthermore, Norway is seeking to catch most of their blue whiting quota from our stocks in Irish waters."

O'Donnell says the critical EU-Norway talks broke down in December and commended the Irish Government and Marine Minister for opposing an unfair deal. "The EU must ensure fairness is central to any proposal to grant Norway greater access

to Irish waters. Ireland cannot be expected to acquiesce to these new and additional requests for access unless we are offered a reciprocal arrangement.

O'Donnell says fishing bodies appreciate that other EU States desperately want a deal with Norway to give them access to Norway for cod stocks. "But it is unthinkable, unjust and inequitable that everyone else should gain at Ireland's expense."

"It's time the EU acted positively to support growth of Ireland's seafood sector instead of constantly allocating us an unfair share of fishing quotas. Our quotas were decimated in 2021, dropping 15% after the disastrous Brexit Agreement. Under this agreement, Ireland's share was 40% of the value of EU quota which was transferred to the UK, far more than was taken from any other EU State. The national response to this has been to shrink the whitefish fleet by 30% through a permanent decommissioning, instead of seeking a fairer quota. Most

of our stocks are in a healthy state. We need fair treatment and to steer a new course if our seafood sector is to survive and grow, like Norway's."

Brendan Byrne of the Irish Fish Producers and Exporters Association says fishing bodies are united on this issue. "We acknowledge that other EU fleets want an EU-Norway agreement to give them access to Norwegian waters. But it cannot be at Ireland's expense, so there must be something on the table for us too. We are open to reciprocal arrangements."

"The Irish Government must maintain the position that any new access for Norway to our fishing grounds must be treated

separately from the existing EU-Norway

historical agreement. To cede any part of Ireland's traditional fishing grounds requires a separate arrangement by the EU which compensates us for any displacement."

Patrick Murphy of the Irish South and West Producers Organisation (IS&WFPO) says the Government "must be resolute and clear. If Norway are seeking access to any part, however small or large, of Ireland's fishing grounds south of 56 degrees or east of 12 degrees, then this is a new request.

Ireland must not allow pieces of these fishing grounds to be ceded away in a piecemeal fashion. A firm position must be taken until a clear arrangement is reached which benefits Ireland as much as Norway. Ireland must no longer attend the table as a perpetual pauper, we must be prepared to walk away and refuse to countenance any additional unfair deal with a non-EU Member."

Aodh O'Donnell says Ireland has many things in common with Norway. "We have a similar population of five million, sharing a long maritime tradition. They have enjoyed successive years of compound annual growth of seafood exports resulting in impressive social and economic benefits to coastal communities. In contrast, the Irish marine sector has declined and stagnated during its 50 years of EU membership.

"We are now at a crossroads and Ireland must be prepared to maintain a firm unwavering stance. A radical re-set is required to resist unfettered access to our waters by non-EU countries. Ireland must be prepared to walk away unless a meaningful quota transfer is agreed, in return for wider access to our blue whiting. The Minister has already shown resolve on this matter, and he must be prepared to walk away. He has our full support at this crucial time, to help turn the tide for our coastal communities."

"It is unthinkable, unjust and inequitable that everyone else should gain at Ireland's expense."

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FINAL IRISH FISH QUOTAS 2023

Pelagic Quotas 2022

SPECIES	ICES AREA	TAC 2022	% TAC Change	TAC 2023	Quota 2022	Pre Brexit Quota 2023	Hague Change	Full Brexit Change 2021 - 2023	% Quota Change 2022 - 2023	Quota 2023
Mackerel	6, 7, 8 5b 2a 12 14	794,920	-2%	782,066	54,992	66,210	0	-13,822	-5%	52,385
Horse mackerel	2-4-6-7-8-5b 12 14	61,416	-78%	13,400	15,737	3,439	0	-158	-79%	3,283
Horse mackerel	4b, 4c 7d	8,969	0%	8,969	202	263	0	-68	-3%	194
Blue whiting	1-8, 12 14	752,763	81%	1,359,629	28,438	60,388	0	-708	110%	47,569
Herring	1 2	598,588	-15%	511,171	3,099	2,952	0	-306	-15%	2,646
Herring	5b, 6b 6aN	3,480	-65%	1,212	470	183	0	-22	-66%	161
Herring	6aS, 7b, 7c	1,360	39%	1,892	1,236	1,720	0	0	39%	1,720
Herring	7a	8,455	-14%	7,309	719	1,902	0	-1,464	-39%	439
Herring	7g, 7h, 7j 7k	869	0%	869	750	750	0	0	0%	750
Northern albacore	Atlantic Ocean	37,801	0%	37,801	3,317	3,130	0	0	-6%	3,174
Greater silver smelt	3a 4	809	0%	809	5	5	0	0	0%	5
Greater silver smelt	5, 6 7	11,626	-30%	8,124	821	573	0	0	-30%	576
Boarfish	6, 7 8	22,791	0%	22,791	15,749	15,748	0	0	0%	15,749
		2,303,847	20%	2,756,042	125,534	157,263	0	-16,547	12%	128,651

AREA VI WHITEFISH STOCKS (2023 FINAL)

SPECIES	ICES AREA	TAC 2022	% TAC Change	TAC 2023	Quota 2022	Pre Brexit Quota 2023	Hague Change	Full Brexit Change 2021 - 2023	% Quota Change 2022 - 2023	Quota 2023
Cod	6a; 5b	1,279	-5%	1,210	219	273	89	-86	-15%	188
Cod	6b; 5b	74	0%	74	14	17	6	-3	0%	14
Megrim	5b; 6; 12 14	5,581	-1%	5,499	627	712	-	-108	-4%	605
Anglerfish	6; 5b; 12 14	5,102	-20%	4,082	439	408	-	-65	-22%	343
Haddock	5b 6a	5,006	30%	6,507	682	1,065	-179	-179	30%	887
Haddock	6b	5,825	-30%	4,078	385	320	-	-58	-32%	264
Whiting	6; 5b; 12 14	1,800	46%	2,636	561	767	189	35	43%	802
Plaice	6; 5b; 12 14	658	-10%	592	248	234	-11	-11	-10%	224
Pollack	6; 5b; 12 14	156	-20%	125	22	18	-	0	-18%	18
Saithe	6; 5b, 12 14	4,664	19%	5,538	353	379	0	-21	1%	357
Common sole	6; 5b; 12 14	57	0%	57	46	46	-	0	0%	46
Norway lobster	6; 5b	11,862	12%	13,311	160	180	-	0	13%	179
		42,064	4%	43,709	3,756	4,419	95	-496	4%	3,927
						3,923				3,923

AREA VII WHITEFISH STOCKS (2023 FINAL)

SPECIES	ICES AREA	TAC 2022	% TAC Change	TAC 2023	Quota 2022	Pre Brexit Quota 2023	Hague Change	Full Brexit Change 2021 - 2023	% Quota Change 2022 - 2023	Quota 2023
Cod	7a	206	-20%	165	104	109	-23	-25	-19%	83
Cod	7b, 7c, 7e-k, 8, 9 10	644	0%	644	338	369	-25	-33	-1%	336
Megrim	7	18,916	13%	21,348	2,827	3,534	-	-237	17%	3,297
Anglerfish	7	41,173	11%	45,724	2,977	3,465	-	-182	10%	3,283
Haddock	7b-k, 8, 9 10	15,000	-21%	11,901	2,920	2,523	122	-249	-22%	2,275
Haddock	7a	3,038	-13%	2,648	1,171	1,146	-	-143	-14%	1,003
Whiting	7a	721	0%	721	274	415	-102	-145	-1%	269
Whiting	7b-k	10,696	-10%	9,650	3,972	3,886	18	-9	-2%	3,877
Plaice	7a	2,747	-26%	2,039	1,031	1,233	-326	-467	-26%	767
Plaice	7b 7c	19	0%	19	15	17	0	0	13%	17
Plaice	7f 7g	1,735	-77%	402	237	200	4	-53	-38%	147
Plaice	7h, 7j 7k	114	16%	132	47	59	-	-3	19%	55
Pollack	7	8,012	-20%	6,410	572	490	-	-36	-21%	453
Saithe	7, 8, 9 10Nor S 62° N	2,541	0%	2,541	1,404	1,403	0	1	0%	1,404
Small-eyed Ray	7f 7g	123	-30%	86	12	11	-	-3	-33%	8
Common sole	7a	787	-23%	605	105	86	1	-1	-19%	94
Common sole	7b 7c	34	-44%	19	28	17	0	0	-39%	17
Common sole	7f 7g	1,337	0%	1,338	39	39	-	-2	-5%	39
Common sole	7h, 7j 7k	213	0%	213	95	96	-	0	1%	96
Norway lobster	7	17,038	8%	18,353	5,682	6,768	-	-741	6%	6,027
Norway lobster	FU 16	5,196	-100%	0	1,016	1,374	-	0	35%	1,374
		130,290	-4%	124,958	24,866	27,239	-332	-2,327	-5%	23,547
										24,912

AREA VI, VII & OTHER WHITEFISH STOCKS (2023 FINAL)

SPECIES	ICES AREA	TAC 2022	% TAC Change	TAC 2023	Quota 2022	Pre Brexit Quota 2023	Hague Change	Full Brexit Change 2021 - 2023	% Quota Change 2022 - 2023	Quota 2023
Cod	Nor 1 2	0		0	290	0	-	0	-100%	0
Hake	6 7; 5b; 12 14	44,268	5%	46,335	2,383	2,556	0	-70	4%	2,485
Redfish	5; 12 14 (shallow)	0		0	0	0	-	0		0
Ling	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 14	4,589	170%	12,371	323	911	-	-46	168%	865
Blue Ling	2 4	27	0%	27	2	0	-	0	-100%	2
Blue Ling	5b, 6 7	10,859	1%	10,952	30	32	-	-2	0%	30
Tusk	5, 6 7	4,294	0%	4,294	238	242	-	-5	0%	237
Greenland halibut	2a 4; 5b 6	2,571	0%	2,571	29	29	-	0	0%	29
Skates and rays	6a, 6b, 7a-c 7e-k	9,482	3%	9,797	1,177	1,278	-	-71	3%	1,207
Undulate Ray	7d 7e	234	1264%	3,192	25	368	-	-40	1212%	332
Picked dogfish	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12 14	270	3933%	10,889	47	2,138	-	-266	3883%	1,871
		76,594	31.1%	100,428	4,544	7,554	0	-500	55.2%	7,058

DEEPWATER STOCKS (2023 FINAL)

SPECIES	ICES AREA	TAC 2022	% TAC Change	TAC 2023	Quota 2022	Pre Brexit Quota 2023	Hague Change	Full Brexit Change 2021 - 2023	% Quota Change 2022 - 2023	Quota 2023
Black scabbardfish	5, 6, 7 12	618	193%	1,813	18	52	-	0	189%	52
Roundnose grenadier	5b, 6 7	639	263%	2,317	42	150	-	0	257%	150
Roundnose grenadier	8, 9, 10, 12 14	572	170%	1,545	1	2	-	0	100%	1
Alfonsinos	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12 14	63	184%	179	2	6	-	0	200%	5
Red seabream	6, 7 8	0		105	0	3	-	0		3
		1,892	8	5,959	63	213	0	0	238.1%	211

Quotas for Spurdog and North West Herring a Welcome Development for Fishing Communities

The conclusion of the EU-UK negotiations before the 20 December deadline set out in the EU-UK Trade & Co-operation Agreement allows Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas to be set for the full year. Most of Ireland's commercial fish stocks are shared with the UK and the conclusion of this agreement will provide clarity for the Irish fishing fleet in the year ahead.

There are increases in the quotas for some of Ireland's most important commercial stocks including Prawns (nephrops), Celtic Sea Monkfish, Hake and Megrim and North-west Haddock and Whiting. Restricted, by-catch only quotas have been set for some vulnerable stocks caught in mixed fisheries including cod stocks around the coast and for the Horse Mackerel stock to help these stocks recover

Minister McConalogue said: "The re-opening of the spurdog fishery, after it was closed for over ten years to rebuild that stock, provides a great opportunity for our inshore fishers who traditionally participated in this fishery. In addition, the North West Herring fishery will be re-opened as a commercial fishery. This fishery was closed, other than for the collection of data for scientific purposes, since 2015. We are seeing the positive results of taking necessary tough action when needed. It will be important that we manage all these fish stocks in order to continue to build on the progress that has been made to date."

Speaking to the Marine Times, Chairman of the NIFA / NIFO, Michael Desmond said; "We in the NIFA / NIFO welcome the Minister's decision to reopen the Spurdog fishery in 2023. As well as it being an additional source of revenue for the Irish under 18m fleet, it may also help to alleviate pressure on shellfish stocks.

"NIFA / NIFO have been campaigning for this fishery to reopen for some time now. We have put in an amount of effort in conjunction with the Marine Institute on stock assessment and data gathering etc.

"Hopefully BIM and Board Bia will be able to obtain lucrative markets abroad for this species as many of the UK factories that used to process it are closed. It is an ideal opportunity for the seafood development centre in Clonakilty to get involved in adding value to this product with its fish smoking technologies etc., which may lead to new employment in rural coastal areas."

The Minister recently discussed with representatives and forums issues important

to the inshore sector, including views and proposals in relation to developments in the hook and line mackerel fishery, North West herring policy.

John Menarry in a statement to the Marine Times on behalf of the NIFA / NIFO says that; "The NW herring has a commercial TAC this year but unfortunately due to the policy in place at present the inshore vessels, excluding the 10 vessels that are deemed to have "track record" in the fishery as per the existing policy, the rest of the inshore fleet has access to only 5% of the TAC approx. 95 tons in 2023. The QMAC committee was informed by a DAFM official at the last meeting that the Minister was considering a policy review in light of the small tac and had to satisfy himself that a substantial change had occurred since the last policy review. When the policy was last reviewed in 2011 (I think) then Minister

Coveny stated that 'In 2011, I asked the fishing industry and other interested parties to make proposals on the future management arrangements for all Irish herring fisheries, the Celtic Sea stock, the stocks off the North West coast and the Atlantic Scandian stock. The objective of the review was to deliver a policy which would ensure an economically and biologically sustainable fishery.'

"Considering that the policy that was meant to deliver a biologically sustainable fishery was a complete failure and delivered a stock collapse it would be in the opinion of NIFA/NIFO irresponsible to continue with the existing policy and it would be up to the minister to oversee a review."

For full details on the quotas see table on page 4 (courtesy KFO) and more reaction on pages 8 and 9 of this issue.



Prolific at Ballycotton - Photo courtesy Brian Motyer

Resolute Opposition to Norwegian Demands for Access to Irish Waters

"Profoundly shocking that the EU would even consider granting Norway unfettered access to Irish waters"

Danger that EU interests will sacrifice Ireland's waters to gain cod rights from Norway for themselves.

As the MARINE TIMES went to print for this edition, the EU/Norwegian talks

about blue whiting access in Irish waters were to resume, probably on January 11.

No decision was reached in talks before Christmas, with the Norwegians demanding unlimited access to what is the area of the old Irish Box, but unwilling to offer any concessions to gain that access.

The four Irish Producer Organisations have campaigned strongly against concessions being given to the Norwegians without reciprocal concessions to Ireland in Norwegian waters.

The Minister for the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, has committed himself to resisting the Norwegian demand. The POs have said he must maintain this position and be strong and resolute to resist the Norwegians and EU Member States who might be inclined to support them, to gain advantages for themselves in Norwegian waters.

"The EU-Norway talks offer no meaningful reciprocity to Ireland," says Aodh O'Donnell, CEO of the IFPO. "Blue whiting in Irish waters is valued at an estimated €100-€120m for 2023. Ireland currently has just 3% of the EU allowable quota for blue whiting, while Norway already has 18% and were seeking unfettered access to Irish Coastal waters. Until a final deal is reached, there is still a danger that EU interests will want to sacrifice access to Ireland's waters to secure Norway's Arctic Cod for themselves."

"It is profoundly shocking that the EU would even consider granting Norway

unfettered access to Irish waters, without a comparable dividend to Ireland," said Patrick Murphy, CEO of the Irish South and West FPO.

"The Government urgently need to make it abundantly clear, that the historical arrangements between the EU and Norway will be honoured. However, they must also make clear that any new or additional access South of the 56 degree line or East of the 12 degree line must be dealt with separately and with consideration for Ireland.

"Marine Minister, Charlie McConalogue has shown determination at EU level to reduce the EU Transfer of Blue Whiting quotas to Norway. It is vital that the Minister maintains this position and secures a meaningful transfer of quota to Ireland from this third country, and as a compensatory measure, in lieu of access to our waters."

"The Norwegian issue is not decided yet and negotiations are to resume between the EU and Norway," commented John Lynch, CEO, Irish South and East PO. "The ISEFPO in line with the other FPOs want some benefit to accrue to Ireland. We must get something in return."

Sean O'Donoghue, CEO Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation said: "It is of critical importance that any transfer to Norway in the ongoing EU/ Norway negotiations is kept at a very low level and that access to the Irish Box is paid for by the transfer of blue whiting quota to Ireland."

Ireland the sacrificial lamb once again - see page 13



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More Hope of Spotting a White Whale Than a Fuel Subsidy Scheme for The Fishing Sector! Minister Slammed for Refusing Fuel Supports to Fishermen

The failure of Government to introduce a fuel subsidy scheme for the Irish fishing fleet, almost 10 months after the EU gave the go-ahead for such initiatives, has been described as an egregious dereliction of responsibility, by the Independent TD for Cork South-West, Michael Collins.

Deputy Collins was speaking after a meeting of the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine with representatives from Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO), the Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO), the Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation (IS&EFPO) and the Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation (IS&WFPO).

The Committee had earlier heard from Minister Charlie McConalogue and senior Department officials: "The presentations and statements made to the Committee by the fishing representatives exposed so many holes in the Minister's position that you could sail a fleet of boats through it," said Deputy Collins.

"This was the case in terms of the Minister's ongoing insistence that Ireland has 'only' suffered a 15% reduction in quota levels. But as I pointed out to the Minister earlier in the day this is a highly misleading figure that does not reflect the scale or impact of the cut in real terms. This point was confirmed by the fishing body representatives.

"I also took serious issue with the Minister's insistence that he was doing everything he could to support the capacity of the fleet to fish and to not have boats tied up at shore.

"Once again, however, the fishing representative made clear that they are simply at a loss to understand why this has not involved the roll-out of a fuel subsidy scheme. This is despite the fact that on 25 March, the EU Commission adopted and implemented a decision to trigger the crisis mechanism of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, EMFAF, which allowed for the introduction of fuel subsidy schemes.

"In fact, we know that since then both France and Spain have action to introduce direct subsidies of this kind. Yet here our fishermen and women are 9 months later, either, cut adrift or moored at their har-

bours."

"We can talk all we like about long term alternatives such more efficient vessels and engine design but in the immediate term there must be a recognition that some kind of fuel subsidy is required in the intervening period," concluded Deputy Collins.

Independent TD for Donegal, Thomas Pringle, has slammed the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine for failing to support fishermen with fuel subsidies.

Deputy Pringle said: "The minister's excuse is that fuel for fishing vessels is exempt from tax, so therefore he can't introduce a subsidy on it, which is a nonsensical argument.

"In the specific case of the inshore fleet, most of their fuel is petrol for outboard motors, which they have to buy at the full rate, and the minister will not do anything to help them.

"Our fishing communities are struggling, and rising fuel costs are imposing additional pressures on an already struggling sector. Jobs are at stake.

"Fishing communities have long been calling on Minister McConalogue to provide emergency assistance in the face of rising fuel costs – other EU member states gave their fishing fleets emergency fuel subsidies months ago," he said.

Deputy Pringle raised the issue at the meeting of the Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The deputy said the minister's response to requests for fuel supports, "obviously is an indication that he doesn't want to give money except to give tax breaks – that's all he wants to do."

Noting the use of petrol by the inshore fleet, Deputy Pringle said: "Surely the Minister and the Department would have it within their remit to be able to come up with a scheme that would subsidise fuel costs for the inshore fleet."

Ireland To Be the Sacrificial Lamb Yet Again - Page 13

Blue Whiting and The Norwegian Access South of 56 Degrees – What Does It Really Tell Us About Ourselves? - Page 21

MARINE TIMES

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

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Please Be Kind & Fair

Would it be too much to think that in 2023 we will see an improvement for our beleaguered fishing industry, its fishermen, the coastal community and the wider family of the sea?

Of all the things I either read or saw over the festive period it was a simple answer to a simple question that made the biggest impact: It was an animated mole asking a small lost boy what he wanted to be when he grew up – a simple one word answer was given by the child "Kind"

Mulling it over I thought wouldn't life be so much easier if everyone was not only kind but also fair – especially when it comes to matters around our coast? Sadly, this is far from the ideal but we seem to be falling deeper into an Orwellian dystopia when it comes to our fishing industry.

Granted we get thrown the odd breadcrumb like spurdogs and quota cuts that are not as bad as we expected ... but isn't that a sad indictment of the level of our 'optimism'?

Fuel – where is the fair attitude towards bringing into reality a fuel subsidy for our industry when every other EU nation is availing of it? Is it kind to deny our fishing industry an instrument to ease financial pressures? Why or who is behind the denial of this has still to be fully addressed and answered.

Decommissioning – is it kind to watch as fishing families and our coastal communities see a way of life disappear ... is it fair as we are reduced to this due to decades of negligence and lack impetus for our coastal communities?

Enforcement – is it fair that the largest portion of the Department's budget for our fishing industry is spent on enforcement rather than development?

Norwegians – it beggars belief that anyone would think that it would be either kind or fair to surrender more of our own fish in our own waters Then again have we not been living with that legacy for 50 years now?

Islands – is it fair that the fates of our Island populations may be left in the hands of those who have no first hand experience of Island life?

Dedicated Minister – I think at this stage we should just give up the ghost on this one as it seems every aspect of life and society is getting its own dedicated ministerial appointment whereas we have to share ours with agriculture, trees and greyhounds – and not forgetting we probably have to go through three different government departments to get one thing done.

My list could go on and on but another line that resonated with me was the lost little boy asking a horse what was the bravest thing he ever said – 'Help' said the horse we are asking for help, we are asking for fairness and we are asking for those in charge to be kind!

- Wanted -

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

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

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

Castletownbere College

National Fisheries College of Ireland,
Castletownbere, Co. Cork

Della O'Sullivan, College Administrator

T: + 353 27 7 1220

E: della.osullivan@bim.ie

Greencastle College

National Fisheries College of Ireland,
Greencastle, Co. Donegal

Maria McCarron, College Administrator

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“Blue whiting, Norwegian access attempts to Irish waters, the impact of Brexit and decommissioning are major issues. Decommissioning is going to have a long-term effect on our coastal communities. This is a permanent blow to these communities. There is a very important social dimension to this.”

Aodh O'Donnell, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation, underlines the vital need for the government to protect access to Ireland's rich Blue Whiting fishing grounds. With negotiations due to resume around the time of going to print with this edition, he said that outstanding issues had been put on pause over the Christmas and New Year period and the industry had welcomed the Minister for the Marine's commitment to protect Ireland's situation after it had lobbied extensively weeks against EU discussions with Norway, a non-EU member, which was seeking unfettered access.

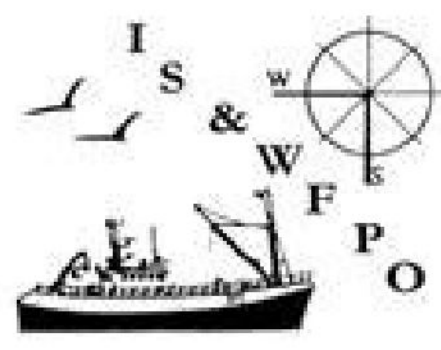
The EU-Norway talks offered no meaningful reciprocity to Ireland. Blue whiting in Irish waters is valued at an estimated €100-€120m for 2023. Ireland currently has just 3% of the EU allowable quota for blue whiting, while Norway already has 18% and were seeking unfettered access to Irish Coastal waters. Killybegs is the European hub for the processing of blue whiting. It is a vital species for the Irish fleet. The Minister must hold firm against the proposal to give Norway access to our blue whiting. Until a final deal is reached, there is still a danger that EU interests will want to sacrifice access to Ireland's waters to secure Norway's arctic cod for themselves. There is as yet no equitable offer on the table which would give Ireland anything in return for this blue whiting. This effectively pits us against other EU members, who don't necessarily care about Ireland's interests but do want access to Norway's cod.

What we need is solidarity all round. The Irish fishing industry representatives are united and of one voice on this important national issue. We need the support of our Minister to fight for a fair deal. We need the support of the EU, so they give Ireland a fair deal. In return, we will support a politically negotiated agreement which gives Ireland, other Member States and Norway a fair deal.

We are being forced into a situation where two species will be major in availability of the pelagic segment of the fleet – blue whiting and horse mackerel. The situation is a red line for the industry and the Minister must deliver on his commitment to protect Ireland's situation.

As we head into a new year there are big issues facing the industry. The impact of Brexit remains a major problem, there are reduced quotas to be dealt with and the decommissioning in the whitefish fleet will have a major impact on the industry and coastal communities. Up to a third of that fleet will be decommissioned permanently. That is going to have very significant impacts on coastal communities generally, in terms of unemployment, on the supply of seafood and also on the service industries that support these vessels. This is a permanent blow to these communities. They are coastal, they are peripheral. There is a very important social dimension to all of this.

For our coastal communities, the seafood sector is similar to a large software plant in the capital. Seafood and fishing and fishing communities and the industry generally underpin a wide range of social activities. These are sometimes intangible and hard to qualify, but certainly the decommissioning is going to have a long-term effect on our coastal communities.



“The very lifeblood has been drawn from the Irish fishing industry we need to take a stand here. We were disappointed neither the Danish Mackerel nor the Blue Whiting access to Irish waters was dealt with and Ireland's rights protected.”

Patrick Murphy, CEO, of the Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation, says Norway demanded additional access to Irish waters to catch this species and offered no payment for their access.

The Marine Institute Stock Book published annually provides the up-to-date scientific information and advice developed by International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES).

This book shows the Blue Whiting biomass is predominately in our waters in the Spring of each year. Norway receives additional amounts of Blue whiting each year in return for access to their waters. For access in 2023, the Norway proposal is for more than 50,000 tons - 7,500 tons to be paid by Irish fishermen - for access to their waters. In return, Europe would get 10,000 tons of Arctic Cod - just 300 tons of which would go to Ireland.

Norway already has a blue whiting quota nine times greater than ours almost half a million tons. Yet, they demanded additional access to our waters to catch this species and offered no payment for their access. Their request for unfettered and non-biased access became a red line issue for our members. So, we welcome the deferral of the EU-Norway talks and the Minister's commitment to ensure that Ireland's priorities are protected.

Now is the time for the Government and the EU to address the massive disparity in Ireland's share of EU fishing quotas. Ireland's fishing industry has suffered massive negative impacts from EU membership, compared to other sectors of our economy.

We are at a critical point in our fishing industry. Brexit and the disastrous TCA deal for Irish fishing has left an industry that is struggling to survive.

It is profoundly shocking that the EU

would even consider granting Norway unfettered access to Irish waters, without a comparable dividend to Ireland. The Government urgently need to make it abundantly clear, that the historical arrangements between the EU and Norway will be honoured. However, they must also make clear that any new or additional access South of the 56 degree line or East of the 12 degree line must be dealt with separately and with consideration for Ireland.

Marine Minister, Charlie McConalogue has shown determination at EU level to reduce the EU Transfer of Blue Whiting quotas to Norway. It is vital that the Minister maintains this position and secures a meaningful transfer of quota to Ireland from this third country, and as a compensatory measure, in lieu of access to our waters Blue whiting in Irish waters is valued at an estimated €100-€120m for 2023. Ireland currently has just 3% of the EU allowable quota for blue whiting, while Norway already has 18% and were seeking more from our waters.

For too long Ireland's fishing industry has suffered or paid a price to accommodate others, while all the time our own fishing industry declines. This is where we say no more and no further – the very life blood has been long drawn from the Irish fishing industry we need to take a stand here.

At the December quota negotiations we were disappointed that neither the Danish Mackerel nor the Norwegian Blue Whiting access to Irish waters was dealt with and Ireland's rights fully protected.



Photo: Anne Marie Cronin Photography



Killybegs Fishermen's
ORGANISATION LTD.

“Litany of festering problems facing industry.”

Sean O'Donoghue, CEO, Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, says that morale in the Irish fishing industry is at an all-time low as rocketing fuel costs, shrinking quotas and the lingering legacy of Brexit are all proving extremely problematic.

The challenges facing the sector are manifold and although complex, KFO members have presented and agreed solutions to all of the key issues which are realistic, credible and based on scientific evidence.

The Minister must get his act together and urgently distribute monies which his Government committed to providing for pelagic fishermen more than 14 months ago.

Just over €423million was recommended in October 2021 with the Task Force rightly recognising that the end of the Brexit withdrawal period brought about the biggest change and disruption in EU-UK relations in 50 years, across all aspects of trade and society but most notably on the Irish seafood sector. Our pelagic fishermen have still to see a single cent of this money. In 2021 and 2022, the sector has lost approximately 24,000 tonnes of mackerel quota valued at €35million. This fishery is the cornerstone of our business. We've been feeling the hit from Brexit for two years now with further hits to come over the next three years.

We Are not going anywhere and to be overlooked in this manner is an appalling affront. Government has waxed lyrical and lauded the positives of this taskforce report but all the while, has produced diddly-squat for our pelagic members who are getting angrier by the day.

Last but by no means least, the Irish Government has been given approval by the Commission for a fuel support scheme for the sector which is already in place in many other EU member states. Governments in those countries have acted swiftly to provide a beleaguered industry with financial support to offset the huge spike in fuel costs. Approximately half of our members gross earnings are expended on putting fuel in their boats. It's placing Irish vessels at a major disadvantage compared to our EU counterparts which have had the scheme implemented in their respective countries.

In the important issue of the Danish mackerel quota in Norwegian waters which comes from western waters mackerel stock as well as underlining the significant increase of 81% in the blue whiting TAC for next year, given the proximity of Ireland to the main fishing grounds of this stock, landings into Ireland are attractive for foreign vessels. It is therefore of critical importance that any transfer to Norway in the ongoing EU/ Norway negotiations is kept at a very low level and that access to the Irish Box is paid for by the transfer of blue whiting quota.

- Sean O'Donoghue addressed these comments to the Oireachtas Committee.



IS&EFPO - Working For The Fishermen

“We have done a bit better than expected this year in the December quota negotiations. Overall not as bad as expected. We have now got a proper quota for spur dog which we have been on about for a long time.”

John Lynch, CEO, of the Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation, reports some good news, including a quota for spur dog for the Irish fleet and progress on the issue of non-EEA workers on Irish fishing boats.

Overall, the the December quota negotiations did not come out as bad as had been expected, with some benefits for Irish fishermen. There is a small increase in prawns of 3 per cent and a very welcome 35 per cent increase in the Porcupine quota. The reduction in haddock in the Celtic Sea was only 8 per cent instead of around the twenties.

A by-catch quota for cod in the Celtic Sea and the Irish Sea has been given as part of the negotiations to allow other big fisheries to take place. That is very important. You must have a by-catch quota to allow the other fisheries to take place.

However, black sole in the Irish Sea was reduced 23 per cent and plaice was reduced 77 per cent in the Irish Sea. They are two big cuts for the Irish Sea over all really.

The Norwegian issue is not decided yet and negotiations are to resume between the EU and Norway on access for Norwegian vessels into Irish waters, the old Irish Box.

Norway are looking for unlimited access for Norwegian vessels fishing for blue whiting in the Old Irish Box. They are looking for unlimited access. That is being opposed. For this to happen the ISEFPO in line with the other FPOs want some benefit

to accrue to Ireland. We must get something in return.

A bit of good news where the application has gone in for non-EEA workers on fishing vessels in Ireland to be included permit scheme. This has been done by the four POs in conjunction with BIM. The transition to the employment-permit based system would entitle employment permit holding fishermen to transition to a Stamp 4 immigration permission and the wider entitlements offered by that permission. The Department of Justice has given a transitional measure so anyone with their paperwork in order will now be able to continue working on Irish vessels.

Fuel is still very expensive though gone back a small bit. There is still nothing from the Minister on a fuel scheme. Even now, considering the major impact that the cost of fuel had on the whole fleet, even at this stage some level of a subsidy or assistance to cover the massive price of fuel in 2022 would be appreciated.

We have now got a proper quota for spurdog which we have been on about for a long time. We have got a proper quota again. Ireland has 1,800 tonne quota for spurdog for 2023.

Producer Organisations in Ireland - A Dail Question

Deputy Holly Cairns asked the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine if he will provide details of the producer organisations relating to the fishing sectors, including the number of members in each producer organisation. [62972/22]

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine: Producer Organisations are officially recognised bodies established by fishery or aquaculture producers in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013 on the Common Organisation of the Markets in Fishery and Aquaculture Products (CMO Regulation). Recognition can be achieved through a relevant group applying to the national competent authority which, in the Irish case, is my Department.

Producer Organisations are responsible for the day-to-day management of fisheries for which their members are involved. They are also responsible for guiding producers towards sustainable fishing, taking mea-

Producer Organisation	Location	Number of Members per the PO's most recent Annual Report
Irish Fish Producer Organisation (IFPO)	Killybegs, Co Donegal	39
Killybegs Fisherman's Organisation Ltd (KFO)	Killybegs, Co Donegal	36
Irish South and West Fisheries Producer Organisation Ltd (IS&WFPO)	Castletownbere, Co Cork	53
Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation Ltd (IS&EFPO)	Waterford City, Co Waterford	33
Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation Cooperative Society Ltd (IIMRO)	Arranmore Island, Co Donegal	41

asures to channel the supply and marketing of their members' products, promoting their members' products through certification schemes and working towards reducing the environmental impact of the fishing activities of their members.

Producer Organisations are supported by my Department's EMFF Seafood Development Programme with grant aid provided for the preparation of their annual Production and Marketing Plans and for other related expenses. Five Producer Organisations have achieved recognition (see table).

In addition to these five, one further organisation has applied for recognition as a Producer Organisation in June 2020. My Department was informed by the organisation in November 2022 that its members had adopted its Constitution and Rules. Now that this step has been completed a final assessment can be conducted, after which formal approval can be made. This organisation will represent 112 members.

Contractor Appointed to Complete the €30m Deep-Water Quay Development in Ros An Mhíl Fishery Harbour Centre

The €30m contract for the development of a Deep-Water quay in Ros an Mhíl Fishery Harbour Centre has been awarded to Ward & Burke Construction.



Ros a Mhil. Photo: Shaun Coyne

Welcoming the signing of the works contract with the contractor Ward & Burke Construction Limited, Minister McConalogue said: "I'm delighted to be able to announce the successful outcome of the tender competition for the Deep-Water Quay project which will provide an additional 200 metres of quayside to accommodate larger fishing vessels and attract additional landings from both Irish and non-Irish fishing vessels."

At present Ros an Mhíl Fishery Harbour Centre has 325 metres of quayside but is limited in deep water to a maximum of -5.8 metres chart datum and experiences congestion in busy fishing seasons. The new development will be accessible to large vessels such as Irish Navy vessels, Marine Institute Research Vessels, marine survey vessels and marine leisure craft.

The Minister went on to say that: "Our Fishery Harbour Centres are critical infrastructure for the seafood industry and Ros an Mhíl is a clear example of how these facilities stimulate economic activity for the surrounding rural coastal communities with the potential for downstream development and jobs."

In summing up, the Minister said: "This project is further evidence of this Government's commitment to addressing the impacts of Brexit on the fishing sector and to a strong future for Ireland's seafood primary producers. I expect the project to commence in January 2023 and to be completed by September 2024."

Éamon Ó Cuív TD speaking about the development says it was a 'huge vote of confidence in the West'.

He said he approached his party colleague when he was appointed minister with responsibility for marine and brought him to Conamara to see the plans.

"As a Fianna Fáil Minister he realised the importance of this project to the Gaeltacht, to Conamara and the West. I hope now that this development will give a major boost to the fishing industry in Ros a' Mhíl and lead to a re-opening of the Iasc Mara factory there, which was a major employer in the past," he said.

The project will be funded through the Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme.



Pictured at a recent visit to Ros a Mhil where the Minister announced that a deep water quay facility is to be built at the State-owned Fishery Harbour Centre is from left Seantor Sean Kyne, Minister Charlie McConalogue, Anne Rabbitte TD and Eamon O Cuiv TD.

Government Finally Wakes Up to Its Indefensible Policy of Not Applying for Bluefin Tuna Quotas

The disproportionate impact of Brexit on Ireland's fishing quotas as well as the failure by government to establish a fuel subsidy scheme for Irish fishing vessels have leant greater urgency to Ireland being granted an extensive quota of high value blue fin tuna by the EU, according to Independent TD for Cork South-West, Michael Collins.

Deputy Collins, who is a member of the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Food and the Marine, was speaking after he attended the Committees debate with Minister Charlie McConalogue ahead of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council (AGRIFISH) meeting which attempts to set fishing quotas for 2023.

"The Minister confirmed to me that almost two and a half decades on from 1998 when the blue fin tuna quotas were set, Ireland is finally going to apply for its share," said Deputy Collins.

"When I asked him to clarify why this has not happened prior to this year, the Minister stated that Ireland had no 'track record' of catching blue fin tuna. This was not just a pathetic response; it was in plain contradiction to the facts as the Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation pointed out in our second Committee session."

"I also raised the ongoing challenges that exist with respect to the temporary tie-up and fishing vessels decommissioning schemes and in particular the ludicrous situation whereby money received under the schemes can be clawed back from fishers because of the terms and conditions that are being applied. This is in stark contrast to the positions adopted by the French and Dutch governments. Indeed, while their fisherman and women are generously supported, ours are subjected to a grasping and heartless approach. This must be urgently re-examined."

"In typical fashion, the Minister and the Department approached many of the issues I raised with an insistence that we have to operate under the heavy hand of the law as laid down by the EU. That is just not good enough especially when every fisherman and woman on these islands can see that there is a gross disparity in how such laws are applied to the bigger fleets of Germany, France and Norway," Deputy Collins concluded.



The Santa and Elves SUP charity event on the River Liffey - Photo courtesy James Grandfield

Coast Guard Volunteer Association Calls for Independent Enquiry

The national executive of the Irish Coast Guard Volunteers Representative Association has said it is giving “full support” to Oireachtas members from County Clare who have called for an independent inquiry into Irish Coast Guard management.

This refers to an article in the Clare Champion newspaper quoting Clare TD’s and Senators in a cross-party political call for an inquiry.

“We would like this to include the Minister of State with responsibility for the Irish Coast Guard Ms Hildigarde Naughton TD; the Department of Transport including the Maritime Directorate and the Secretary General of the Department of Transport,” the Representative Association says.

It refers to a meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee last May when its members made a submission about “problems faced by Coast Guard volunteers particularly when any problems arise within Coast Guard coastal units.”

The Association says in a statement that “only a truly independent inquiry can address the questions that need to be addressed. It is time to bring a just solution to the dismissed volunteers that would like to present their own individual case before any independent inquiry.”

Minister Ryan Issues First Offshore Wind Maritime Approvals

Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications Eamon Ryan has issued Maritime Area Consents to seven offshore wind farms.

The seven Phase One projects to receive consents are Parkwind and ESB’s 375MW Oriel Wind Park, SSE Renewables’ Arklow Bank 2, RWE and Saorgus’ 900MW Dublin Array, Statkraft’s 500MW North Irish Sea Array, EDF and Fred Olsen’s 1.5GW Codling Wind Park (Codling 1 and Codling 2), and Corio Generation’s 450MW Skerd Rocks.

The consents will allow the Phase One projects to progress through the Irish planning system. It also enables the projects to participate in the ORESS 1, the first auction for offshore wind under the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS). ORESS 1 is expected to procure approximately 2.5GW of electricity generating capacity.

Projects which have been granted maritime area consent will have to apply for development permission and secure a route to market within set timeframes, ensuring project progression and maximising benefits to the State.

Phase One projects are also required to pay an annual levy to the State – under the terms of their consents.

Migrant Fishers’ Rights Addressed Under New Permit Scheme

The Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO) has unequivocally welcomed the new permit scheme which will give non-EEA migrant fishers the same rights as EU crew members. IFPO chief executive, Aodh O Donnell says their members lobbied for the change and are delighted it has now finally come into effect.

O Donnell says this employment permit system also offers a more streamlined process to crew members and vessel owners alike.

The Department of Justice confirmed the new arrangements this week. Under the new scheme, all holders of a current valid permission to work as a non-EEA Crew member under the Atypical Working Scheme (AWS) in the Irish Fishing Fleet expiring on or after 1 January 2023 will be granted a Stamp 4 immigration permission.

The new arrangements provide for legislative changes for non-EEA Crew in the Irish Fishing Fleet and to assist in the transition period to the Employment Permit system.

O Donnell says this award of Stamp 4 permission “is a critical and much embraced change to the status of Crew employed in the Irish Fishing Fleet under the auspices of the problematic Atypical Working Scheme.”

“Our members have worked hard with us, as a representative body, to support the right of all non-EEA migrant fishers to fair treatment and for fit for purpose permitting. This is positive news with the introduction of measures to protect migrant fishers and to grant them the full rights and entitlements under Employment legislation. This legislative change gives qualifying non-EEA crew the same full entitlements as EU crew and the option to avail of the share-based remuneration. Furthermore, the process of permitting is streamlined for both crew and vessel owners. Costs of administration are also radically reduced to the benefit of all stakeholders”

“In this regard we highly commend Ministers Charlie McConalogue at the Department of Agriculture Food, and Marine and Damien English at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. They must be credited for sound leadership and for

spearheading this much needed legislative initiative. In addition, we should point out that the seafood sector worked together and engaged proactively with the various government departments over the last year to deliver this outcome. The cooperation and support of the Civil Service is a paradigm for what can be achieved in the process of open, focused, and constructive engagement.”

Niall Connolly Chairman of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation adds that “we have been consistent in saying that our crews are the backbone of the traditional fishing activity. Ours is a professionally operated sector, committed to international best practice. These employees have valuable skill sets that are critical to our business and are much prized. We have shared goals, and we strive for continuity and international best practice”.

Barry Faulkner, Director of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation also acknowledged the support of the Minister for Marine and the delivery of an undertaking at a Protest meeting held in Kildare Stret on May 18th last year. “Our vessel owners were joined in solidarity with our migrant crew colleagues to support them in a protest at Leinster House. This initiative was led by crew and skippers alike and aimed to raise awareness of much-needed legislative change to current permit schemes. The protest meeting was addressed by Minister McConalogue. Whilst there are some technical implementation considerations, the Minister has delivered on an undertaking given to vessel owners and crew on that day.”

Aodh O Donnell says the “partnership with the crew members underpins the performance of our vessels to ensure a shared long-term future in a challenging international environment. This fit for purpose permit scheme is a key element of this universally welcomed change.”



Another fine catch of Lough Foyle Herring at Greencastle. Skipper of the Crystal Dawn Liam O'Brien and his sea bounty. Photo courtesy Enda Craig

Redoubling Efforts to Improve Energy Efficiency

BIM and the Irish Fishing Industry's latest gear trial demonstrates substantial increases in catch rates, energy efficiency and profitability by pairing up on fishing operations

Report by Dr Ronán Cosgrove, Fisheries Conservation Manager BIM

Energy efficiency is a key challenge facing the Irish fishing industry. In the long term, the European Commission is seeking to align taxation with climate objectives under the European Green Deal which aims for net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This will likely lead to increased taxes on fossil fuels to encourage development and transition to use of more sustainable fuels, with marine engine and fuel infrastructure technologies endeavouring to keep pace.

The energy crisis is driving on such developments. Faced with a 150% increase in fuel prices between 2021 and 2022 (BIM Business of Seafood), short-term measures are urgently needed, however, to maintain the commercial viability of current fishing operations. Gear technology has a role to play in this regard.

Most fishing for demersal species such as haddock, whiting and hake in Ireland is carried out by individual or 'solo' vessels using bottom-towed gears such as trawls or seines. Commonly used in other parts of the world, bottom-pair trawling or seining where two vessels tow the net was identified as a potentially more energy efficient fishing method.

Conducted in the Celtic Sea in October 2022, the trial was led by Matthew McHugh and Martin Oliver from BIM in close collaboration with the skippers and crews of two whitefish vessels whose names are excluded due to use of their economic data. We compared catch data from the pair vessels with a similarly sized solo vessel operating at the same time in the same area. Operational data such as fuel use and gear performance parameters were compared with subsequent solo trips by the trial vessels. Profitability was analysed using the operational data, sales notes and economic questionnaires.

Thanks to the absence of trawl doors and reduced energy requirements for two boats towing one net, the pair vessels reduced their fuel use by 40% during fishing. Catch rates were 29% greater for each of the pair vessels due to much longer sweep and bridle configurations and associated increases in swept area and fish herding. Resulting reductions in variable costs and increases in revenue provided an estimated 32% increase in profitability at trip level.

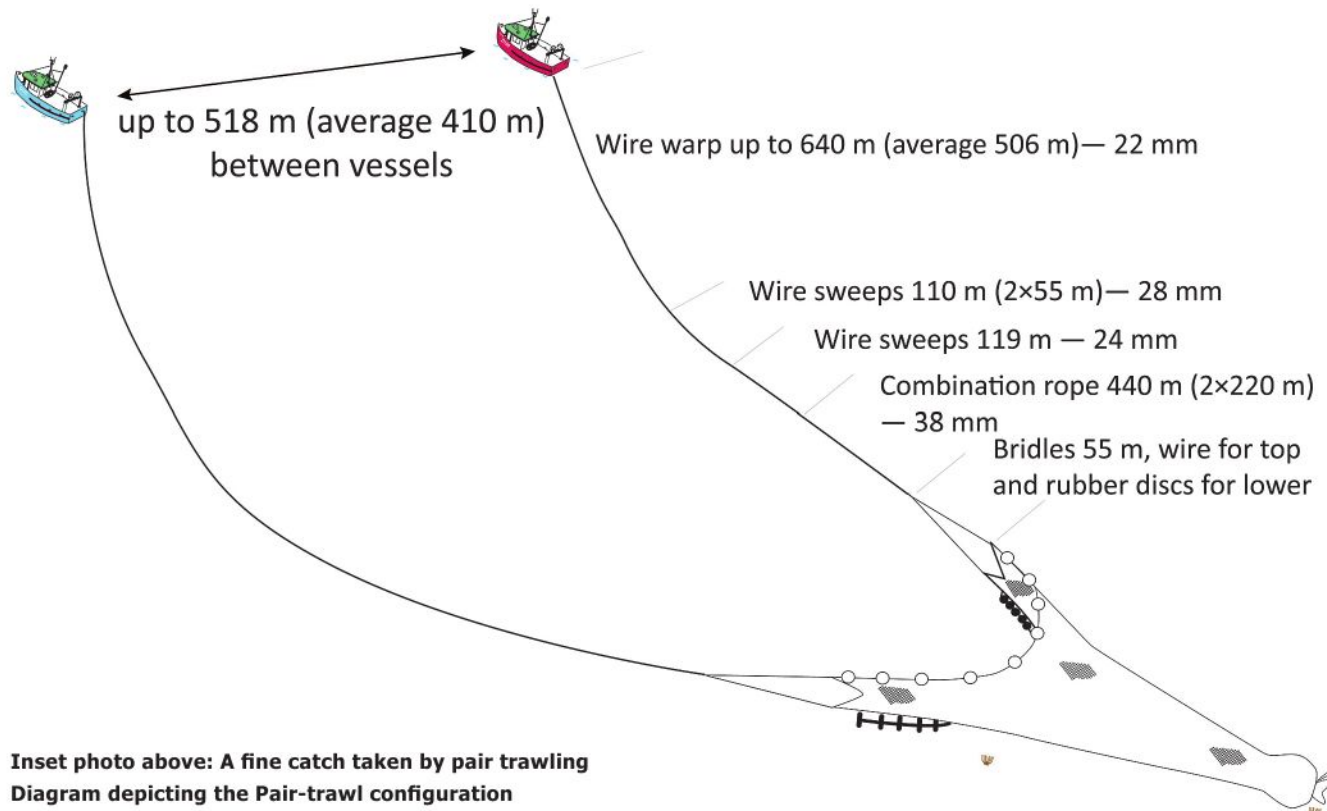
Engine load was reduced by 38% suggesting additional potential benefits in terms of lower maintenance and improved engine resiliency. Taking turns to haul the net aboard provided the crew with more time to handle catches potentially leading to improvements in fish quality.



Haddock and to a lesser extent hake were the main commercial catch species. Over 97% of haddock, hake, cod and whiting were above minimum size. Some 8% of plaice were undersize but overall plaice catches were relatively low and well within the monthly quotas. Haddock catches were reduced by just 20% during night-time suggesting that this method is viable during hours of darkness.

The skippers and crews of the pair trawlers were delighted with the results and keen to further develop the method. Pair trawling and seining are very similar in terms of the rigging used so scope exists to extend this method to Ireland's commercially important seine-net fleet.

BIM would like to thank the skippers and crew of the trial vessels for a successful collaboration. Thanks also to the quota management team from the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM) who were supportive of the initiative. This work was funded by the Irish Government and part-financed by the European Union through the EMFAF Operational Programme 2021 – 2027. A full report is available at: www.bim.ie/publications/fisheries



Inset photo above: A fine catch taken by pair trawling
Diagram depicting the Pair-trawl configuration

Fisheries Left On The Hook As Government Fails To Appoint Dedicated Junior Minister

Independent TD for Cork South-West, Michael Collins, has described the failure of the new government to appoint a dedicated junior minister to oversee the ongoing crisis in the fisheries sector as “the clearest indication yet that the failed policy approach of the previous administration will be continued despite an obvious need for a change in direction.”

Deputy Collins was speaking after the Cabinet approved the appointment of several new junior ministers following a reshuffle. The Cabinet also signed off on the creation of a new dedicated junior minister's position at the Department of Integration to help assist with the refugee crisis: “I have lost count of the number of times I have pleaded with former Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, to create a ministerial role that would accord fisheries the level of respect and concentrated full-time engagement that it demands,” said Deputy Collins.

“On each one of those occasions I was told that it was simply not possible. Yet here we are today with new roles and new appointments to beat the band. Meanwhile fisheries is left, once again, to sing for its supper as the poor relation.

“There are real questions for me now around whether or not the former Taoiseach misled both myself and the Dáil on this matter.”

“The fact of the matter is we simply cannot go on as before.

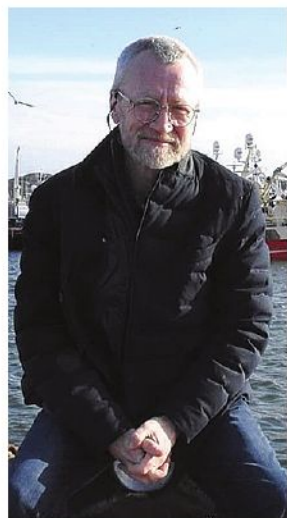
“Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has said that we must treat each challenge as a national emergency and deploy the full resources of the State, the full machinery of Government, to make an immediate and real difference.

“He obviously does not include fisheries among the top challenges or as one of the areas that demands a real difference to be made. If he did, he and his partners in government would not have wasted an ideal opportunity to raise the fisheries profile.

“There is time yet for this egregious oversight to be rectified and for government to put its money where its mouth is in terms of fisheries. Nothing less than a dedicated minister for fisheries will do at this crucial point,” Deputy Collins concluded.



Ireland To Be the Sacrificial Lamb Yet Again



Cormac Burke, Charman of the Irish Seafood and Fishing Alliance says that Department officials are not fighting a meek surrender of Irish blue whiting to Norway



Most people in the Irish fishing industry will by now be aware that prior to the Christmas break Norway had approached the EU Commission for permission to catch its hundreds of thousands of tonnes of blue whiting quota in Irish waters in what they describe as “unfettered access” - and, while the EU probably no longer view such waters as ‘Irish’ but as being ‘EU community’ waters, the proposal was being given serious consideration.

The general feeling amongst the fishing industry representatives involved in this debate, namely the IFPEA, IFPO and the IS&WFPO, was that there should be ‘no surrender’ of yet another jewel in the crown of Irish resources - but that if the might of an EU Commission / Norway (& other EU nations) deal could not be halted then, at the very least, Norway should be forced to give to Ireland, in exchange for access to make their catch in Irish waters, a sizeable offer of blue whiting quota (in the region of 50,000 to 80,000 tonnes) to the Irish pelagic fleet.

Despite Norway holding an annual blue whiting quota of ten times that of Ireland, (and their pelagic fleet of 280 vessels also ten times the number of Irish pelagic vessels) the proposal of any payment in terms of fish to Irish fishermen was deemed unacceptable to Norway and the talks were suspended.

However, with these talks set to resume in Brussels as this issue of the Marine Times goes to print, the plan has now taken on a new twist in which not only will Ireland not receive any compensation for an EU deal to allow Norway catch its blue whiting quota in Irish waters, but a deal which will see a portion of the existing Irish quota (IN IRISH WATERS) actually be given to Norway!

If this is not a case of the turkey being forced to pay for the new cooker he’s going to be roasted in at Christmas then I don’t know what is...

The Norwegian blue whiting quota is currently around 420,000 tonnes, plus the 74,000 tonnes it is to be ‘gifted’ by the EU in return for quota transfers in Norwegian waters for Arctic cod which involves the demersal vessels of Spain, Portugal, Germany and Netherlands - meanwhile Ireland’s blue whiting quota is currently 28,900 tonnes and, under ICES’ advice, is set to rise to 47,800 tonnes.... BUT, under the EU’s ‘gifting’ of blue whiting quota to Norway, Ireland will be forced to submit 15% of its quota to them in what is being termed as ‘balance transfer’.

While the loss of 5,800 tonnes of blue whiting by Ireland is reportedly being accepted to be ‘a bit high’ by the EU Commission, it nevertheless expects Ireland to be satisfied with ‘only’ having to give up around 2,500 tonnes instead - and, it would seem that because Ireland ‘don’t want to upset’ their EU colleagues, the outgoing DAFM Assistant Secretary General and Ireland’s main pelagic Producer Organisation are reportedly NOT fighting against such a settlement.

The Norwegians, backed by the Dutch, have come up with this plan that will be to the benefit of everyone - everyone except Ireland of course.

The ‘swaps’ or access to Norwegian waters for EU demersal vessels is reportedly around 10,000 tonnes and Ireland’s share of this is a miserly 300 tonnes per annum - so it is obviously unsustainable for any Irish demersal vessel to steam from the Irish coast up to Norwegian waters just to catch 300 tonnes.

Once again the Irish fishing industry is about to be shafted - and once again the price and the scene of the crime is to be Irish fish stocks and Irish fishing waters.

Setting aside the cruel injustice of all of this, a repeat of the injustice of BREXIT, surely the Minister and his DAFM advisor can see the scientific dangers involved here — if Ireland was previously taking 30,000-odd tonnes of blue whiting with Norway taking a similar amount out of Irish waters every year and, through politics, deals and pure greed, Norway are now allowed to catch the guts of a half a million tonnes of blue whiting in Irish waters then the tenfold pressure on a stock which is currently deemed to be sustainable by scientists will be tremendous and this new massive pressure is bound to eventually lead to a stock collapse or displacement - in which case ICES will likely close the fishery completely and when that happens Norway will return to catching their quota elsewhere and Ireland will have lost yet another fishery.

It is laughable that other EU nations such as Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and Germany think that it would be unreasonable for Ireland not to accept the current proposal but that’s because they all stand to gain from it and, bearing in mind that these are not Norway / Ireland talks but Norway / EU talks the EU Commission’s fear is that if Norway doesn’t get its way then they will withdraw the EU deals that allow certain other nations access to Arctic cod in Norwegian waters.

If Minister McConalogue and his outgoing DAFM advisor were the managers of a football team mired in the relegation zone after years of dreadful management then the fans would be shouting “you don’t what you’re doing” but the bigger concern amongst fishermen today is that they know exactly what they are doing i.e. ensuring yet another step towards the final bankruptcy of the Irish fishing industry.

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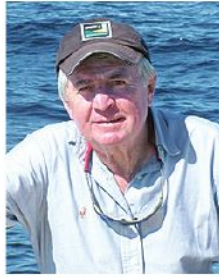
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Killybegs harbour when it nearly froze over in December - Photo courtesy Alan Hennigan, Mooney Boats

Tom MacSweeney Maritime Diary



Shipwrecks And People



The MV Alta shortly after she ended up on the shore of Ballyandreen pictured by Brian Motyer in 2020. The ship has since deteriorated from sea conditions. The mid-section has broken away leaving the bow and stern separately wedged on the rocks.

There is a wealth of maritime information to be found on websites which are not well-known to the public.

Having read the annual report of the Coast Guard for last year, which recorded 2,699 incidents and noted that it was the “second highest number of calls for help in five years,” I was checking for maritime emergencies at the start of the New Year and came across a website ‘Coastguards of Yesteryear.’

The man who established it in 2001, Tony Daly, died in 2021 and left it for researchers. It is dedicated “to the Coastguards who lived and worked around the Irish coastline between the 18th and early 20th centuries and has fascinating stories. Such as in January 1823 when, in only the second day of a new year, a “dreadful shipwreck” was reported near Ballycotton in East Cork, which contrasted the attitude of coastal communities towards shipwrecks.

“A little to the southward of Ballycotton, the fine ship ‘Weare’ went to pieces with only 13 survivors. A woman with a young child returning from the West Indies where she had acquired considerable property to spend the rest of her life in Ireland, was one of those who perished. The screams and shrieks of this unhappy woman were heard distinctly from the shore and the agonising fervour with which she addressed her infant child that perished with her, was heartrending,” reported *The Freeman’s Journal*. “The fury of the storm stopped any attempt at rendering assistance. The Water Guard kept

up the strictest watch and to the honour of the peasantry, not the least disposition to plunder has manifested itself. Every attention is paid to the poor survivors.”

Forty-four years later, on January 7, 1867, there was no such praise for people around Clonakilty Bay where the ‘*San Francisco*’ went aground.

The *London Standard* reported that the ship had another name and was known to the Collector of Customs at Swansea, from where she had left, as the *St. Francis*, a 108-ton vessel registered in Gibraltar, for where she was bound when she finished up in Clonakilty Bay. Guiseppe Garibaldi, Master, with a crew of 11 had sailed from Swansea on November 21.

“Ship said to be leaky and was run ashore in Clonakilty Bay on Jan.7, with a cargo of 166 tons of steam coal. Vessel’s back broken” reported the paper. “No information on the voyage after the vessel left Swansea until run ashore at Muckcross in Clonakilty Bay. The vessel was very old, fastened and sheathed with yellow metal. On the afternoon of the 7th she was standing into the Bay under canvas and struck on the rocks and afterwards went over them about high water onto the strand which it was the Captain’s original intention of taking. Had the weather moderated he would have succeeded in stopping the leak and proceeding on the voyage. Master and the whole of the crew were foreigners and left Ireland immediately.

“Intelligence spread that there was a ship ashore. In a very short time a crowd of people assembled for the purpose of

plunder. Coastguards were on the spot and county Constabulary. There was no lack of diligence on their part. When the tide receded a mob gathered and tried to plunder the wreck. The Coastguard fired several rounds of ball ammunition to disperse the mob. There were numerous financial discrepancies in the salvage accounts. While the masts and canvas were saved some three hundredweight of copper bottoming were taken away by local people.”

On the same night another vessel was reported to have gone ashore at Galley Head, said to be “laden with sugar in boxes, a total wreck. No account of the crew,” according to reports.

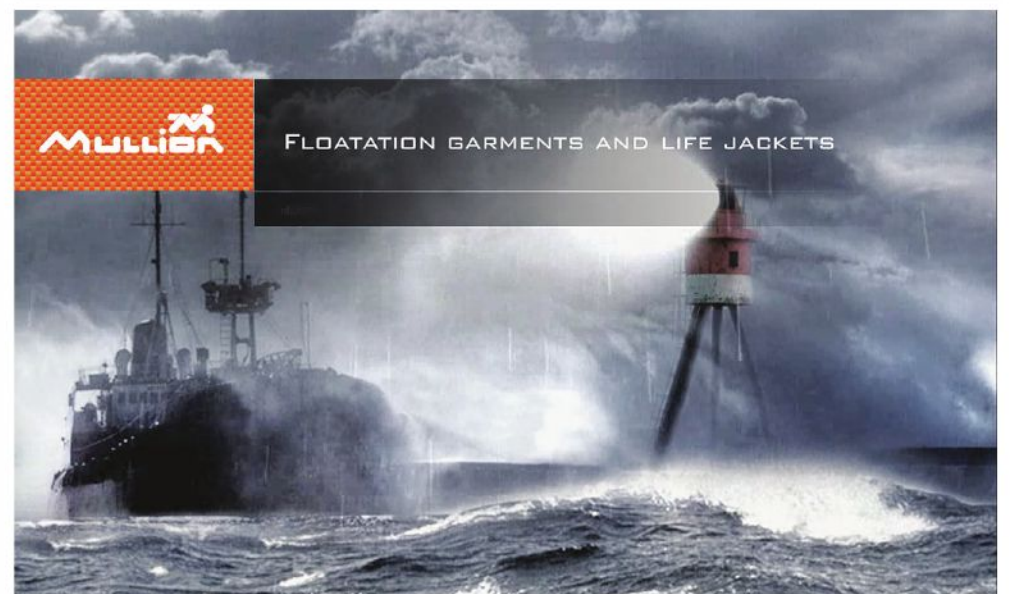
Ballycotton’s Ballyandreen beach is where the *mv ALTA* is heading for its third year ashore. Labelled the “ghost ship” because it had been abandoned and roamed on its own around the seas before grounding in East Cork, the wreck continues to deteriorate from sea conditions. The mid-section has broken away leaving the bow and stern separately wedged on the rocks. Cork County Council says it is continuing “to liaise with the Department of Transport on whether any further interventions are required, but there are no plans to remove the wreck,” which has been there since February 2020. Local landowners have complained about damage to their property from people going to the wreck site, alleging fences cut, gates left open with cattle roaming as a result, crops trampled on, looters threatening them and fires being caused at the wreck which threatened their homes. The response from the Council does not satisfy them.

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Designed for and by fishermen

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DECEMBER

- Three Day Basic Safety Training
06 December 2022 - 08 December 2022
Rossaveal, Co Galway, Coastal Training Unit 1

JANUARY

- Three Day Basic Safety Training
03 January 2023 - 05 January 2023
Howth, Co Dublin, Coastal Training Unit 2
- Deck Officer Second Hand Full Certificate of Competency
03 January 2023 - 18 April 2023
NFCI Castletownbere
- STCW Medical First Aid
04 January 2023 - 06 January 2023
NFCI Greencastle
- Deck Officer Second Hand Full Certificate of Competency
04 January 2023 - 18 April 2023
NFCI Greencastle
- Enhanced Safety Training
05 January 2023
NFCI Greencastle
- Navigational Control Course (Fishing)
09 January 2023 - 20 January 2023
NFCI Greencastle
- Enhanced Safety Training
09 January 2023
Howth, Co Dublin, Coastal Training Unit 2
- Enhanced Safety Training
10 January 2023
Howth, Co Dublin
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
10 January 2023 - 12 January 2023
NFCI Castletownbere
- STCW Personal Safety and Social Responsibility
12 January 2023
NFCI Greencastle
- Enhanced Safety Training
12 January 2023
Fenit, Co Kerry, Coastal Training Unit 1
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
17 January 2023 - 19 January 2023
Fenit, Co Kerry, Coastal Training Unit 1
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
17 January 2023 - 19 January 2023
Howth, Co Dublin, Coastal Training Unit 2
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
23 January 2023 - 25 January 2023
NFCI Greencastle
- GMDSS General Operators Certificate
23 January 2023 - 03 February 2023
NFCI Castletownbere
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
24 January 2023 - 26 January 2023
Lettermore, Co Galway, Coastal Training Unit 1

- STCW Medical Care Aboard Ship
30 January 2023 - 03 February 2023
NFCI Greencastle

- Advanced Firefighting
30 January 2023 - 03 February 2023
NFCI Castletownbere

FEBRUARY

- Enhanced Safety Training
01 February 2023
Fenit, Co Kerry, Coastal Training Unit 1
- Enhanced Safety Training
02 February 2023
Fenit, Co Kerry, Coastal Training Unit 1
- Enhanced Safety Training
07 March 2023
Clogherhead, Co Louth, Coastal Training Unit 2
- GMDSS Short Range Certificate
07 February 2023 - 09 February 2023
NFCI Greencastle
- GMDSS Short Range Certificate
07 February 2023 - 09 February 2023
Fenit, Co Kerry, Coastal Training Unit 1
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting
07 February 2023 - 09 February 2023
NFCI Castletownbere
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
07 February 2023 - 09 February 2023
Kilmore Quay, Co Wexford Coastal Training Unit 2
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
13 February 2023 - 15 February 2023
NFCI Greencastle
- STCW Medical First Aid
13 February 2023 - 15 February 2023
NFCI Castletownbere
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
13 February 2023 - 15 February 2023
NFCI Castletownbere
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting
14 February 2023 - 16 February 2023
NFCI Greencastle
- Enhanced Safety Training
15 February 2023
Kilmore Quay, Co Wexford, Coastal Training Unit 2
- Enhanced Safety Training
16 February 2023
Kilmore Quay, Co Wexford, Coastal Training Unit 2
- Advanced Firefighting
20 February 2023 - 24 February 2023
NFCI Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
28 February 2023 - 02 March 2023
Clogherhead, Co Louth, Coastal Training Unit 2

MARCH

- Commercial Scuba Diving Operations
06 March 2023 - 31 March 2023
NFCI Castletownbere
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
7 March 2023 - 9 March 2023
NFCI Castletownbere
- Enhanced Safety Training
08 March 2023
Clogherhead, Co Louth, Coastal Training Unit 2
- Surface Supplied Diving Operations
10 April 2023 - 05 May 2023
NFCI Castletownbere
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
14 March 2023 - 16 March 2023
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- STCW Medical Care Aboard Ship
20 March 2023 - 24 March 2023
NFCI Castletownbere
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THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

Tom MacSweeney talks to Anna Classon, RNLI Head of Region, Ireland, about the operational independence of the lifeboat service, its liaison with State marine rescue agencies, recruitment of volunteers and how technological evolution may change the future of the RNLI.

Trust is very important to Anna Classon. She refers to it several times during our interview.

There is the level of trust shown by the public who provide the funding to operate the lifeboat service. There is the trust shown by the volunteers who run and support the stations. There is the trust between the lifeboat crews on the frontline of the emergency rescue work and in those who administer and manage the organisation.

“Trust is really important to me. The crews trust that in managing the service we provide them with the supports, the equipment they need to carry out rescues, the best technology available, and their base stations. When crews head out on a rescue they have to trust in themselves that they have the competency to do what they are being asked to do, which comes from the training they have been given. They trust the tools they have been given to do the job, the boats and the equipment with which they have been provided. There has to be trust in leadership, in everything that we do, right through the chain. That trust is essential. It is a core of the organisation. The job is done completely and efficiently because that trust exists.”

She tells me that her job as Head of Region in Ireland is to make sure that “when our crews head to sea they can be confident that the support systems for which I am responsible are in place at the right time to give them what they need.”

Anna Classon comes from a fishing background in Donegal and has been involved with the RNLI for 25 years. She led fundraising and communications previously and now she has the role of leading the organisation. That reflects changes from a time past when women were not as welcome in leading RNLI roles.

“We are well past that, 11 to 12 per cent of our crews are women. We need more inclusion, diversity, balance. Women bring something different, it’s not worse or better, it’s just different and that perspective has a value. There are women involved in all aspects of the maritime sector now, right across the maritime community and that should



be celebrated. I want to encourage more women into the RNLI and into the wide marine sphere.”

Technology is constantly changing, so how will that impact the concept of a lifeboat station in communities, where their presence is a badge of honour. Is there a limit to what the voluntary service can do in providing lifeboats?

Anna says the organisation constantly reviews its operations, with the main focus being on the level of risk identified in an area, how that can be dealt with and responded to. The expansion of inland waterway stations is an example of the organisation’s response.

Consultation and discussion with communities are essential, she says, but acknowledges that change and technological development will be considered in future planning.

“Technology is moving forward all the time, so we are constantly looking at solutions and how to innovate. So

much data is collected now all around Ireland and the UK that we can look at that and establish what is needed. Is there another way that we can address risk where response is needed? Is there a way to do that which isn’t about a boat? Are there different tools we can give to a community? There are loads of tools out there that can be used to negate risk. But where a lifeboat is required, the RNLI will absolutely consider that, working with the community.

“The risk is changing. There are many different kinds now, a lot of the risk is within ten miles of the coast. What are the tools of the future that we need to mitigate, to respond to those changes? That has to be considered. Our job and our Charter says that we save lives at sea. There are many things we can do, working with colleagues in the Coast Guard and Water Safety Ireland to help communities deal with safety issues they identify. We provide the tools to voluntary local communities to save lives. That is through lifeboats, as the RNLI has always done and will do and also can be by considering and evaluating other tools as technology develops.

“We are funded by the public, by donors, by their donations, so we must deliver the most effective response to justify the support we get, that is the trust I referred to which also means discussions with communities, based on the data, the information, the need where we operate. We have to develop our operation in line with changes.

“That might mean difficult decisions that may be tough on communities and on the RNLI, but always best in what we are there for – search and rescue, safety.”

Volunteers are coming into the RNLI now from all walks of life, not just from the fishing industry which had been the staple support. The RNLI plans to develop its water safety message into third level colleges.

Looking to its future, will the RNLI always remain an independent organisation?

Her answer is quick and notably strong:

“Yes that is very definitely going to continue and it is important that it should.”

Christmas Eve Lifeboat Tragedy Remembered at Dun Laoghaire RNLI Ceremony on The East Pier



Dun Laoghaire RNLI lifeboat crew gathered on Christmas Eve to lay wreaths at sea and remember 15 of their lifeboat colleagues who were lost while on service in gale force conditions to the SS Palme that had run aground off Blackrock, back in 1895. The event has become a Christmas Eve tradition for the station, who now remember all those who have drowned around the coast, on inland waters and abroad.

The ceremony saw lifeboat crew joined by members of the Dun Laoghaire Coast Guard and Civil Defence, who formed an honour guard. Both Dun Laoghaire RNLI’s in-shore and all-weather lifeboats launched, and the volunteer crew laid wreaths from the lifeboat in view of the watching public. Broadcaster, PJ Gallagher, a volunteer at Dun Laoghaire RNLI, read an account of the disaster, published at the time of the tragedy.

During the service, Irish UN peacekeeper Private Seán Rooney, was remembered.

The short ceremony took place under the lighthouse at the end of the East Pier and included an ecumenical blessing and music. Joe O’Donnell of ‘Wedding Pipers’ played

a lament from the Lighthouse Battery and musician, William Byrne, performed the ‘Ballad of the Palme.’

On 24 December 1895 the ‘Civil Service No. 1’ Dun Laoghaire lifeboat was wrecked while proceeding to the assistance of the SS Palme of Finland. The entire crew, 15 in total, were drowned. The lifeboat capsized 600 yards from the distressed vessel and, although every effort was made to send help to the lifeboat and to the Palme, nothing could be done.

The second Dun Laoghaire lifeboat ‘Hannah Pickard’ also launched but it too capsized under sail, fortunately all crew returned safely. The Captain, his wife, child and 17 crew were eventually rescued on the 26th December by the SS Tearaght.

Commenting on the event Dun Laoghaire RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager Ed Totterdell said, ‘The loss of fifteen lifeboat volunteers devastated the local community at the time but the RNLI here kept going. Volunteer lifeboat crew came forward then, as they still do, to help those in trouble at sea and on inland waters. We hold this ceremony to honour their memory and also to remember all those we have lost to drowning.’



Potter inside Roches Point in Cork Harbour – Photo courtesy Carroll O'Donoghue Kinsale Deep Sea Angling



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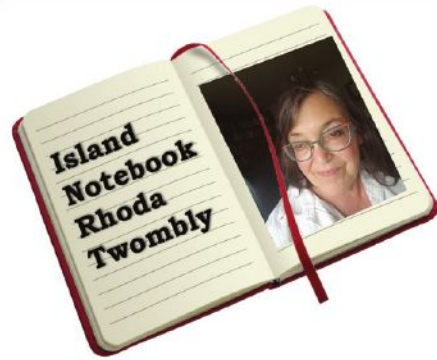
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The latest developments on the offshore islands reported by Rhoda Twombly, Secretary Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, the Islands' Federation.

OFFSHORE ISLANDS WHEN GONE - ARE GONE

“You often hear of islands being depopulated, but never being repopulated. When an island community is gone it will not be restored,” says Simon Murray of Inishbofin, Galway, former Chair of Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann and life-long island advocate.

Simon has personal experience of this. His mother was the teacher on Inis Airc which was cleared of residents in 1960 basically because of government neglect of their circumstances.

Brendán Ó hEithir, writer and Irish language champion from Inish Mór, was asked by Gay Byrne on the Late Late Show in the 1980's what he would say in reply to comments that all that islanders do is to complain.

Brendán replied he felt that islanders must loudly protest neglect, otherwise they would be forgotten completely by government.

Shocking statistics may be found in CSO data. In 1841 the population of Irish islands was 34,219. By 2016 it had fallen to 2,627.

No other community on the nation of Ireland has experienced such a dramatic decline.

The fight for the offshore islands continues.

Lack of appropriate, year-round affordable housing has been identified as a primary hurdle to island sustainability. It was thought that a positive side-effect of Covid and increased remote working would be that this would encourage people to either stay on the islands or relocate to them. People did try to resettle on some

islands, but most had to leave once it was apparent that there just wasn't housing available to them long-term and high-speed broadband for all is still not available on all offshore islands.

Planning issues are a huge stumbling block to those who want to build, even on family land. Anecdotally, young people have been refused two and three times and find they must move off an island to build a house. In some counties those looking for council housing have been told they must move to the mainland as they will not be accommodated on the island. Far from supporting island sustainability, government housing and planning policy is acting to speed the demise of island communities.

Significantly, the recently released report on housing by UCC team of Dr. Siobhan O'Sullivan and Dr. Elaine Desmond on the West Cork islands, carried out with local consultation, emphasises that if the problems related to housing aren't resolved there will be a serious threat to small island communities on these seven islands.

It is also noted that solutions to housing challenges on islands are not necessarily the same as those employed on the mainland and must be considered regarding geographic, economic and cost of living differences and must be community-led with comprehensive consultation with existing and hopeful residents. Unfortunately, as noted in this report, little research into housing solutions has been conducted in consultation with the islanders and this needs to be done to formulate a housing plan into the future.

The West Cork Islands UCC team as well as Dr Conor Cashman, Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann and Comhar na nOileán CTR have conducted a housing survey across all of the offshore islands. The data from this work is being analysed and a preliminary report is expected in

February. This will be an important piece of work which, along with the study of the West Cork Islands, can form a starting point to housing schemes across our islands depending on the needs and circumstances of individual communities and islands.

Offshore island residents, development organisations and co-ops all eagerly await the launch of the island policy document being written by Rannóg na nOileán of the Department of Rural and Community Development.

It is hoped this important document will be completed early this year. While hugely appreciative of monies granted for island projects and infrastructure, core to creating solutions to the challenges that have faced the offshore islands for generations is that all Government policies recognise the fact that one-size solutions do not fit all.

Islands by their very nature present a cohort of variables, unlike those on mainland Ireland. For our islands to survive, and indeed thrive, efforts must be made to think outside the box for innovative solutions and to widely consult with residents and organisations for their ideas on solutions.

There is also a strong call for all the offshore islands to be considered together as a region as opposed to being linked to their mainland county in line with the policy of other European countries.

This is especially important in delivering programmes such as LEADER and SICAP. It is considered vital that an island-based company administer these programmes as an island-based company would have huge knowledge of specific solutions to challenges presented, would be bilingual and would have a history of working with islanders on beneficial projects.

In 2023 Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann would like to see continued support of our farmers and increased support of the small fishers working from

the islands. While the Island Payment to island farmers has been a huge help in making farm improvements possible more could be done to ease the economic stress brought on by transportation costs. Much more should be done to help the island's small fishers.

“Small offshore islands which are dependent on fishing should, where appropriate, be especially recognised and supported in order to enable them to survive and prosper” (this is in the EU Common Fisheries Policy). As with farming, the island fishers need financial support to help with increased island costs as well as help in lifting barriers to successful fishing employment.

The future of our offshore islands is not only in the hands of the government: the true guardians are the islanders themselves and, into the future, the island youth.

Comhdháil has made increased inclusion of youth part to their future planning. As such, there is now an island branch of Foróige which will be built on through the year. Their Leadership for Life program will be on offer to those 15-18 to develop skills, inspiration, vision, confidence, and action plans to become effective leaders. Obviously, this will benefit their community in the years to come: effective leadership will result in positive community development.

The programme will start in the first quarter of this year and those completing the three modules will receive the foundation certificate in youth leadership & community action from NUI Galway.

In their document “Our Rural Future” the Department of Rural and Community Development states: “Our ambition is to ensure our offshore islands continue to support sustainable and vibrant communities and that visitors have an opportunity to experience and appreciate the unique culture, heritage and environmental richness the islands have to offer.”

It is the sincerest wish of Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann that this dream will be realised, that islands become sustainable through the creation and implementation of policies, an island-proofed action plan and the inclusion of community opinion and ideas in future development.



Rachel D and Ros Ard at the sprats - Photo courtesy Brian McIntyre

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Offshore Specialists Welcome Bill To Simplify Ireland's Planning System

Green Rebel says the Dutch approach would further accelerate offshore development

A Cork-based data company providing site investigation services to the offshore wind sector has welcomed moves to expedite the planning process for developments in Ireland. However, Green Rebel says there would be further opportunities for Ireland if the government learned from the Netherlands and coordinated all site studies for offshore developments.

Green Rebel has also called for early involvement and input from fisheries and other marine stakeholders when it comes to offshore wind developments and the creation of designated wind farm zones.

The Cabinet is expected to approve the Planning and Development Bill. The bill, which is set to be published in January, will place strict time limits for judicial reviews in a bid to avoid lengthy legal delays to construction projects. It will also allow for the creation of a Planning and Environmental Court to speed up decisions.

The Netherlands Enterprise Agency carries out the assessments of designated wind farm zones as part of efforts to attract energy companies to build wind farms in their waters. The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management then determines the conditions under which an operator can build and exploit a wind resource, including the ecological regulations and impact on other users.

Green Rebel was recently invited to the Netherlands by their national enterprise agency along with twenty other country representatives to learn about the Dutch approach.

Kieran Ivers, CEO of Green Rebel said, "The new Planning and Development Bill recognises the need to accelerate the planning process and is very much welcome as we all strive to move away from our dependence on fossil fuels. In order to speed up the process further, I would like to see the Dutch approach adopted in Ireland and for the assessment of wind farm zones to be carried out by government appointed companies. This includes acquiring general information, details of unexploded ordinances and archaeology as well as the geophysical, geotechnical and meteorological and ocean surveys. All of this data will then be owned by the state. It's vital too that fishers and other marine users are at the table especially if designated zones are created for wind development. We believe that the input of all stakeholders will lead to much better outcomes for everyone."

Kieran Ivers added, "The Dutch approach to de-risking the application process for developers has the additional benefits of considering the national wind resource as a whole. This enables the Netherlands to determine how best to develop the accompanying infrastructure such as the electrical grid to bring the energy from turbines to shore, or the port development needed to service such developments. Ireland doesn't need to re-invent the best approach to how we understand our national wind assets; of course the solution for a windy island on the coast of Europe is different, but the European policy context is similar as are the players in this sector. They would get confidence from a regime that they're familiar with."

Green Rebel is headquartered in Cork and has a team of over 80 scientists, chemists, engineers, ecologists, vessel crew and business practitioners across multiple locations in Cork and Limerick. It offers offshore wind developers an end-to-end set of data services that extend from acquisition, processing, interpretations and reporting, with their fleet of purpose-built vessels, aircraft, floating LiDAR buoys and in-house team of scientists and industry experts.

Formal Farewell At Last to Baltimore Coxswain Kieran Cotter

Baltimore RNLi in West Cork held "a proper send-off" for their retired former Coxswain, Kieran Cotter, over the Christmas holiday period. He retired at the end of 2020 after 45 years of service with the Baltimore lifeboat, 31 of them as coxswain.

COVID restrictions meant they could not mark the event at the time of his retirement.

Not only an experienced lifeboatman, Kieran Cotter is also a pillar of the local sailing community and was recognised as Afloat.ie Sailor of the Month in January 2021.

Tom Bushe, Baltimore Lifeboat Operations Manager, described Kieran's career to the large attendance at the ceremony: "Kieran served as crew member on Baltimore Lifeboat for 45 years, 31 of those as Cox up to his retirement. He first joined the crew on 1st Jan 1975 becoming Coxswain in 1989. One of the longest-serving Coxswains in the country, Kieran has a remarkable record of service and community commitment. As with every volunteer, this service would not have been possible without the support of family and we are equally grateful for this support from his wife Bridget and his children Ciaran, Cillian and Derval which has enabled Kieran to give this service to his community.

"Kieran Cotter gave forty-five years of service to the Baltimore Lifeboat and when you think that in 2019 we celebrated the centenary of the first lifeboat arriving in Baltimore it really puts Kieran's length of service into perspective. On occasions customers would arrive to Cotter's shop to find the door closed and a sign on the door saying: "GONE ON LIFEBOAT BACK LATER."

"In Oct 1991 Coxswain Cotter was awarded a Bronze Medal and the Crew Letters of Appreciation for a rescue in October 1991 when, in a temporary lifeboat "The Good Shepard", they rescued a Spanish fishing boat "Japonica" and its 15-man crew, in storm force winds 20 miles west of the Fastnet. The "Japonica" was towed into Bantry. While the lifeboat was returning to Baltimore it had to put into Castletownbere to land an injured crewman. Almost immediately the lifeboat received another call to a yacht "Atlantis Adventure" in difficulty south of the Fastnet. The yacht was located and towed back to Baltimore. In total the lifeboat had been at sea for 26 hours. Kieran also received the Maud Smith Award for the bravest act of lifesaving in 1991 for this service.

"In 2008 Kieran and his crew received recognition from the Swiss embassy for the outstanding Bravery and commitment shown during the rescue of Swiss nationals in hazardous conditions and from the United States Congress for the rescue of Rambler during the 2011 Fastnet Race.

"Other notable rescues that Kieran was involved in were the Fastnet Disaster in 1979 when Baltimore lifeboat was at sea for over 24 hours. And the rescue of Charles Haughey, in Sep 1985

"In total Kieran launched on calls nearly 700 times as well as launching on exercises a similar number of times.

"I first worked with Kieran when I started as crew in the

1980s. Over the years his dedication and commitment to the Baltimore RNLi has been exceptional and his advice to me in my role has been invaluable. I am sure all the crew and everyone else in the Baltimore Station feel the same.

"Fortunately, Kieran's vast array of knowledge and experience has not been lost to Baltimore RNLi as he has remained involved by becoming a Deputy Launching Authority.

"Kieran has left a legacy of lives saved from the sea and witnessed the evolution of the RNLi's service provision in the area over 5 decades for which he should be justifiably proud."

On the night of the delayed retirement ceremony for Kieran, another retiree from Baltimore RNLi was honoured, Ronnie Carthy, a crew member who retired after nearly 30 years' service. He was presented with a book on lighthouses signed by the crew.

Kieran Cotter was presented with a three-dimensional chart which was made in Kinsale.

John Kelleher, Lifeboat Operations Manager from Union Hall, also made a presentation and there were representatives from Crosshaven RNLi present.



(Above): Kieran Cotter with family (l-r): Wife Bridget, Cillian, Derbhail and Ciaran. Cillian and Derbhail were both home from Canada for Christmas.

(Below): Tom Bushe (Lifeboat Operations Manager); Aidan Bushe (Coxswain), Cathal Cottrell (mechanic), Retiring Coxswain Kieran Cotter and Declan Tiernan (Fundraising Committee Chair). Photos: Deirde Bushe



Farewell at last - from Baltimore to their Coxswain Kieran Cotter. Photo: Karen Cottrell

Codling Wind Park off Wicklow Coast to Reduce Number of Wind Turbines from 140 to Maximum of 100

Poolbeg confirmed as electricity grid connection location where maximum generating capacity of project will be 1,450MW



Ireland's largest Phase One offshore wind project, Codling Wind Park, which will be located off the Wicklow coast, will require almost 30% fewer wind turbines than originally proposed. Notwithstanding this significant reduction in wind turbines, the development will still generate enough renewable electricity to meet over 20% of Ireland's 2030 offshore wind targets.

While the initial estimate for the number of turbines required had been put at a maximum of 140, the project team says advances in wind turbine technology, combined with a more detailed understanding of the wind farm site, means a maximum of 100 turbines – almost a third less – will now be required.

It has also been confirmed, by EirGrid, that Poolbeg in Ringsend will be the location of the project's electricity grid connection with 1,450MW – enough electricity to power up to 1.2 million Irish homes – confirmed as the maximum amount of electricity it will generate. The project had previously indicated that it hoped to generate between 900MW and 1,500MW.

Codling Wind Park is a 50/50 joint venture between Fred. Olsen Seawind and EDF Renewables and will be located approximately 13 to 22 kilometres off the Wicklow coast between Greystones and Wicklow Town.

New details about the project were announced ahead of the second round of public consultation, which is taking place from the 11th of January to the 8th of February. The consultation will include a number of face-to-face exhibitions in Wicklow and Poolbeg, together with an online virtual exhibition and a series of dedicated information clinics.

The consultation process will provide further details on various onshore and offshore environmental, technical and feasibility surveys being carried out as part of the project. Feedback gathered from the public as part of this consultation process will feed into the ongoing development of the project, and updated proposals will be presented at a third phase of public consultation later this year.

Co-Project Director Scott Sutherland said everyone at Codling Wind Park was looking forward to the consultation and the opportunity to engage with, and hear from, local communities and other stakeholders.

"We have made significant progress since our first phase of public consultation in March 2021 and we are looking

forward to updating people, in Wicklow and Poolbeg in particular, and receiving their thoughts and feedback on a range of topics, including the design of the project, the Environmental Impact Assessment we are working on, the best way we can deliver benefits to local communities through the Community Benefit Fund over the next 20 years and how best we can continue to engage with the fishing and sailing communities."

Codling Wind Park was recently awarded a Maritime Area Consent (MAC) by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. Together with the grid connection agreement it has received from EirGrid, this enables the project to participate in the first Offshore Renewable Electricity Scheme (ORESS) auction in the coming months. If successful, the project will then submit a planning application to An Bord Pleanála later this year.

Mr Sutherland said this first auction will be a seminal moment for Ireland's offshore wind industry.

"We are excited not only to deliver one of the largest energy infrastructure investments ever seen in Ireland, but to also help the country realise its enormous potential and become a world leader in offshore wind. Our total focus now is on progressing the Codling Wind Park project through the ORESS auction and into planning. The awarding of a MAC and the confirmation of our grid location and capacity were key steps in that process.

"On its own, Codling Wind Park can help Ireland deliver over 20% of the country's 7GW renewable energy target by 2030. This demonstrates the importance of this project – and the other Phase 1 projects – in supporting the country's future energy security and in helping Ireland achieve its target of generating 80% of its electricity from renewable energy by 2030," he said.

When developed, Codling Wind Park will be Ireland's largest offshore wind farm. The project is expected to create over 1,000 jobs in the construction phase and 75 new, long-term jobs associated with its proposed Operations and Maintenance Base at Wicklow Port.

Subject to all necessary permits and consents being received, Codling Wind Park could begin construction in 2026, and is expected to take two to three years to complete.

To find out more about Codling Wind Park and the public consultation process which is taking place from January 11th to February 8th please visit www.codling-windpark.ie

BIM and RNLI Announce Further Dates in Man Overboard Experience for Fishers

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood Development Agency, in partnership with the RNLI, are delighted to announce new dates in the series of one day Man Overboard experiences they are offering to the fishing sector. These events will highlight the importance of wearing a correctly fitted Personal Floatation Device (PFD) and ensure fishers are ready to implement their vessels Man Overboard (MOB) recovery plan. Participants will experience first-hand the difference between falling overboard in challenging sea conditions with no Personal Floatation Device, followed by the same incident with their PFD correctly fitted.

Although the conditions are controlled, they provide a realistic experience, simulating the impact of how work clothing, oilskins, and boots effects a person's buoyancy, coupled with challenging sea conditions. The sessions also look at the importance of having and following your Man Overboard recovery plan.

Recent research (May 2021) commissioned by BIM to understand more about fishers and their views on safety at sea revealed the vast majority of fishers understand that wearing a PFD could save their lives. However, just over half of fishers interviewed said they do not always wear their PFD at sea. The research also highlighted that 80% of those that have attended safety at sea training within the past five years are considerably more likely to regularly wear their PFD. This compares to 58% for those that were on a training course more than five years ago or have never been on one before.

BIM's Skills Development Director, Ian Mannix, said: "The research clearly highlights the importance of reinforcing the message that wearing a PFD is essential at sea. Having participated in this class myself recently, it really brought home the extreme difference wearing a PFD makes. Without a doubt, it is essential for surviving at sea. We are delighted to be able to partner with the RNLI in delivering these classes free of charge to Irish Fishers. Both BIM and the RNLI have a shared goal of safety at sea. The experience compliments and builds upon the existing mandatory three-day Safety Training offered by BIM in both its National Fisheries Colleges in Donegal and Cork and our two mobile coastal training units."

Frankie Horne, Fishing Safety Manager, RNLI, delivers the course and he said: "As fishers, one of the most important things we can do is be prepared for an 'Accidental Immersion' whereby we unintentionally end up in the water. RNLI data analysis shows that most Fishing Fatalities from accident immersion are because we cannot stay afloat or be recovered in time. 109 fishers lost their lives in Irish and UK waters between 2008 and 2017, going about their daily work. Of these, 47 fatalities were a result of Accidental Immersion, Man Overboard (MOB). When you go overboard, capable people, become incapable very quickly. Be Rigged and Ready."

The free, 1-day sessions will run on Friday 20th and Saturday 21st January 2023 at the Errigal Training Centre, Falcarragh, Co. Donegal and on Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th February in the National Maritime College of Ireland, Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork. Potential participants must have their BIM Mandatory Safety Training completed and be over 16 years of age.

To register your interest contact Lisa Hollingum, E: Lisa_Hollingum@rnli.org.uk or M: +353 87 1138126

More information can be found at: www.bim.ie

Blue Whiting and The Norwegian Access South of 56 Degrees – What Does It Really Tell Us About Ourselves?



Brendan Byrne, Chief Executive of the IFPEA wishes a very Happy New Year to all the readers of the Marine Times, and hopes that 2023 brings us hope and renewal especially in our fishing industry. As he says “for we sure are at an inflection point!”



Prior to Christmas the IFPO Aodh O’Donnell, IS&WFPO Patrick Murphy and ourselves the IFPEA spent some days in Brussels finding out for ourselves what was the real story regarding this new and additional access being sought by the Norwegians, what was the real position being put forward by the Irish at political level and through our officials. How Ireland again was being asked to take the hit for all of Europe, how is it after 50 years of being part of the common market and membership of the community that we in fishing are worse off now than we ever were before.

The past 50 years of stagnation in the Irish fishing industry can be directly compared with 50 years of successive growth in the Norwegian industry, two states of similar population but one is outside the EEC or EU, the other is a member. But, it is too simple to blame all this on our EU membership, the greatest majority of blame rests with ourselves, it is difficult to comprehend but our failures are more internal political failures than EU policy.

Like most things in Ireland, the greatest weakness is ourselves usually, we just are poor negotiators and managers of our own natural resources – if Norway had our fishing grounds their industry instead of being worth €15 billion to their economy which it is at present, it would be worth €30 to €40 billion - for the record our fishing industry is worth €650 million, and declining, having declined 16% between 2016 to 2019 alone. Brexit will result in even more drastic declines for the Irish fishing industry.

Ireland must not alter its position regarding this new and additional Norwegian access to waters south of the 56-degree line and east of the 12-degree line, this is a new request by a third country and as such must be dealt with as an entirely new request by the EU Commission. It is not acceptable that attempts are made to tag this request onto existing agreements – any pre-existing agreements will be honoured by Ireland but the 2022/23 proposal for additional unfettered access from Norway does not fall under those historical agreements.

Our EU colleagues can rely on Irish support on the pre-existing agreement with Norway and we acknowledge many of their industries depend on an agreement but we have a right to defend our industry and the opening of any part of these fishing grounds previously off limits to a third country is a fundamental principle for us as a member state.

The Irish Government must maintain the position that any new access has to be dealt separately from the existing historical agreement, and to cede any part of these traditional fishing grounds will require a separate arrangement by the EU but taking into consideration the displacement

on Ireland. The Government has to be resolute and clear, that any part however small or large of the fishing grounds south of 56 degrees or east of 12 degrees is a new request. Ireland must not allow pieces of these fishing grounds to be ceded away in a piecemeal fashion, similar to salami tactics, whereby pieces are granted or ceded away each year over time. A firm position is taken until a clear arrangement is reached, failing that if no agreement is reached then no access will be the ultimate outcome.

We hold all the trump cards, it’s a new request and it falls completely outside any historical agreement already in place. The waters are within the Irish EEZ and it is us that will suffer the displacement if the Norwegian vessels are permitted into these fishing grounds. We are the country that was disproportionately hit by our EU colleagues through Brexit / TCA loss of quota, we were promised burden sharing but to date nothing has come from that. Here is an opportunity that each member state in the EU can ease that post Brexit burden on Ireland, it will not directly affect any member state, as this is an EU deal with a third country, lets see how much solidarity there really is for Ireland when we enter the next round of talks.

In many ways, I totally admire the Norwegians for going at this completely bald headed, they are one country that certainly knows how to look after their fishing industries. Then again, they are the country that has 50 years of successive growth in their fishing industry, and it is little wonder, they are the best of managing their natural resources and assets – how we in Ireland could learn from them.

As we start into 2023, lets take a reality check and we are not too good at that either, as we tend to live on occasions in a parallel world – believing everything will be alright on the night effort. Our industry is at rock bottom, the lowest level since the foundation of the state. Less people fishing most definitely after we decommission up

to 64 vessels, that’s over a third of the white fish fleet, less fish available to our retail and markets at a time when others are rapidly expanding across Europe. A completely dysfunctional control authority the SFPA, even after the transformation process now seems to be completely hapless and rudderless basing that on their recent appearance before the Oireachtas Committee but never mind we will throw them up to €100 million from the new EMFAF programme – to coin an old Irish political phrase “an Irish solution to an Irish problem”. The reality is the problems are not going away nor are they being dealt with.

The real hope in 2023 for our fishing industry is the recent job vacancy advertisement - the Assistant Secretary, Head of Seafood and Marine, has a key role in the leadership and management of the functions of the Department which operate from the National Seafood Centre, Clonakilty, Co. Cork. The area covers a number of sectors relating to Sea Fisheries, Aquaculture, Seafood Development & Marketing, Training, Fleet Management, Seafood Processing, Fisheries Resource Management, Harbour Infrastructure capital development, Fishery Harbour Management and Marine Research. The Assistant Secretary is involved in National and International matters related to Fisheries and Aquaculture policy and all matters relating to the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

We are told in the advertisement for the post that the ideal candidate should have amongst others points but these in particular that I highlight;

- a proven high level of management and organisational skills with the ability to motivate and develop teams and staff based across multiple locations;
- experience of interacting with sectoral representatives;
- a knowledge of the marine or food industries or rural development;
- a clear understanding, or the capacity to develop quickly an understanding, of the role of the seafood sector in supporting economic, rural and social development of coastal communities.

Before this post is filled I think it is time that the political world took a real hard look at where we are heading in the Irish fishing industry, as I said before more of the same is not an option.

This is an opportunity to set a new course, one which will be pro-development, pro innovation and for once let it be at least pro fishing industry.



Potting in Ringabella Bay at the mouth of Cork harbour - Photo courtesy Carroll O’Donoghue Kinsale Deep Sea Angling

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Government Approves Drafting of The Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Accidents) Bill

On 6th December 2022, the Government approved the drafting of a Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Accidents) Bill to provide for a full-time Marine Accident Investigation Unit within the Department of Transport. The Unit, which will be located outside of the Department, will replace the Marine Casualty Investigation Board as the permanent body responsible for marine accident investigation.

Separately, the Bill will also provide enabling powers to develop regulations which will cover the construction, survey and certification of various classes of offshore service vessels on the Irish flag.

The establishment of a Marine Accident Investigation Unit is one of the six recommendations set out in a review of the current organisational structures underpinning marine accident investigation in Ireland in the context of national, EU and international obligations commissioned by the Department of Transport in 2021. The review was undertaken by Clinchmaritime Ltd. and Captain Steve Clinch, the former Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents for the UK's Marine Accident Investigation Branch. The final Report of the review was received in July of 2021.

The Department is now in a position to publish the recommendations and observations arising from the review. The report's recommendations are the key output of the review and they are set out in full be-

low. Based on the advice of the Office of the Attorney General, the Department is not in a position to publish the full report.

Speaking upon the occasion of the publication of the General Scheme, Minister Ryan said: "Following the enactment of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act in May 2022, I am happy to be in a position to announce further legislation in the important area of marine accident investigation. I wish to acknowledge the support of the current Marine Casualty Investigation Board for this reform, and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Board and its members for the valuable work they are continuing to carry out while we transition to the full time Unit – their hard work, integrity and diligence in such an important and sensitive area of activity is very much appreciated."

Minister Ryan further commented: "My Department accepts all of the recommendations which are addressed to it in the report completed by Clinchmaritime Ltd. and their

publication enables us to advance quickly on the work required to address them."

The Board of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board has welcomed the publication of the General Scheme of Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Accidents) Bill 2022 and the Government's decision to establish a new independent Marine Accident Investigation Unit (MAIU) within the Department of Transport.

In a statement issued to the Marine Times, the Board believes that the new proposed structure and the potential for greater synergy with other investigation units within the Department's remit will enhance future investigations of marine casualties and thereby contribute to greater marine safety.

Restrictions on the membership of the Board which arose following a European Court of Justice decision in 2020, were resolved by the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Accidents) Act 2022. Notwithstanding these challenges, the Board and its team has fulfilled its statutory responsibilities as evidenced by the quality of investigations completed.

In February 2022 the Board completed a recruitment drive for additional investigators to the investigator panel which comprises independent persons with a high level of technical expertise.

In September 2022, the Board initiated the recruitment process for a full-time expert marine consultant for the MCIB. The process is ongoing.

This initiative is in line with Recommendation 1 of the review of the organisational structures underpinning marine accident investigations commissioned by the Department of Transport and published today.

The Board has assured the Minister and the Department of its full support and co-operation to ensure continuity for ongoing and new investigations and to enable a smooth transition of the function of investigating marine casualties from the Board to the new Unit which will be established by the current Bill.

Following approval at Cabinet, drafting of a Bill will commence in conjunction with the Office of the Attorney General while the General Scheme will also be sent to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Transport and Communication for pre-legislative scrutiny.

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IFA Aquaculture Executive Teresa Morrissey details arrangements for the organisation's annual conference next month

IFA Aquaculture

The National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture will be discussed at the annual conference and annual general meeting of IFA Aquaculture which will be held on Thursday, February 23 at the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel in Limerick.

IFA Aquaculture – Guidance on Aquaculture licensing, responsibilities and objectives will be launched at the event where a number of other topics will be on the agenda: An update on the next EMFAF programme; DAFM AquaMIS project; A briefing on relevant issues relating to the sustainable development of Irish Aquaculture

A full agenda for the day will be issued in advance of the event which will take place on the eve of the Irish Skipper Expo at the UL Sport Arena on Friday and Saturday, February 24/25. Details on registration for the event and information regarding the AGM for IFA Aquaculture members will be issued shortly. Accommodation can be secured by contacting the Kilmurry Lodge Hotel directly or booking online via their

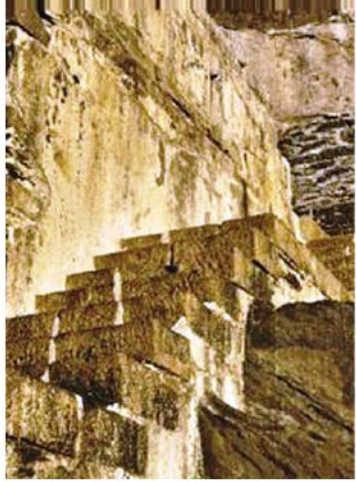
website using the promo code IFAAGM23.

The National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture Development 2030 (NSPSA) is the successor plan to that was developed in 2015 for the period up to 2020. It was published by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, last August.

In an opening statement to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture, Food & the Marine on 'The Challenges facing the Aquaculture Industry' on Wednesday, September 21 last year IFA Aquaculture Chair Michael Mulloy said: "We are lacking a coherent, realistic, ambitious policy for Irish aquaculture. The policies and objectives that we do have in relation to aquaculture are non-binding and non-specific in terms of targets and are coupled with numerous policies and regulations that are not streamlined. There needs to be a realistic EU and National policy to develop the Aquaculture sector which facilitates the sustainable development of Irish aquaculture."

The Iron Men of Cape Clear Island

By Seamus O Drisceoil



Last Summer's fine weather brought with it a rare chance to land on the Fastnet Rock itself. Doing my best to overcome my fear of heights I managed to climb the steep steps. As I sat for a little while looking back at Cape Clear Island, an almost forgotten conversation came to mind.

I remembered Michael John Cadogan of Cape Clear telling me about bringing coal to the Fastnet Rock in days gone by. But as I looked down at the steep and unguarded steps that I had just climbed I reasoned that I must have

heard him wrong. For it seemed an impossible task. Surely no mortal men, let alone men that I know had carried bags of coal on their shoulders up those treacherous steps? And so I decided to investigate the matter further, and to put this myth of mine to rest.

But it was no myth. Because back on Cape Clear I came across Sean (Loal) O'Driscoll and he remembers every detail of this arduous trade. For it was his family's boat, the *Inis Barra* that was used and he joined with his brothers Oilibhéar, Concubhar and Pádraig (Loal Ó Drisceoil). Concubhar went on to become the most famous of Island Ferry Skippers and Chieftain of the O'Driscoll Clan. Others who took part included Seán Cadogan, Michael John Cadogan, (Micheál Ó Ceadagáin), Carey Cadogan and Jim Mike O'Driscoll.

Because of the extreme volatility of sea, tide and weather conditions at the Fastnet the men had to wait for some extremely settled weather. As soon as it arrived they set sail for Schull to load 7 tons of coal, usually at the crack of dawn. They needed to approach the Fastnet during a flood tide. This allowed them to tie a single line ashore from the stern while the tide itself would keep the boat off the treacherous rocks. The younger men would scramble ashore while the older ones, normally Carey Cadogan and Jim Mike stayed with Pádraig to man the boat and load the bags.

An Arduous 99 Steps

From there each bag was brought ashore by the derrick and onto the platform. That was the easy part. For then they were shouldered one by one up an incredible 99 unguarded steps to the 'New Tower' above. Sometimes as the day wore on there was nothing for but to split the bags as fatigue set in. But the 7 tons always made it all the way to the top. Other times the weather deteriorated and they had to use the same derrick with a bosun's chair to travel above the surly waves back to their boat.

The Inis Barra

The *Inis Barra* was built in Baltimore. Her keel was long, having been originally intended for a 50ft vessel. But the order was cancelled and the now 35-foot *Inis Barra* was built instead. This made her a great sea boat. She served the O'Driscoll's very well and later found her way as far as Donegal where she operated until recent years. Sadly the *Inis Barra* has reached the end of her days.

The Eventide

Before the *Inis Barra*, this trade was carried on by the *Eventide*. But sin scéal eile, that's a story for another day.

And What Of The Iron Men Of Cape Clear?

While some are no longer with us, others are going strong. May we wish all the remaining Iron Men of the Fastnet Coal Trade sincere seasonal greetings. They are greatly appreciated by their families and communities and may they be awarded some extra warm hugs this year.

Cléire abú. Scoil Mhuire Abú. Carraig Aonair abú.



Photos from top left down: The Steps of Fastnet Rock; Sean Loal O'Driscoll; Sean Cadogan; Micheál Ó Ceadagáin; Inis Barra in her working days.

The National Seafood Survey- Fisheries: Deadline for survey returns is 31st January 2023

The National Seafood Survey, collecting data for 2021 operations, will remain open until the 31st of January 2023 deadline.

Completing the survey is a legal requirement (S.I. No 132 of 2010) and a condition of grant aid payment.

What is the purpose of the online survey?

The survey asks a series of questions about the financial and operational performance of fishing vessels and the demographics of the crew. The findings of the survey provide key data and insights into the status of Ireland's fishing sector on an annual basis. The returns form the basis for the justification of national and EU grant aid programmes, focused on supporting the industry and coastal communities.

How do I register for the online survey?

Watch a YouTube video* demonstrating how to register for the online survey

You can register for the online survey via the BIM website with links at www.bim.ie

Once your account has been confirmed by BIM, you will receive an email with a link to access the survey. Please note that this can take up to 24 hours on weekdays and 72 hours if you register over the weekend.

How do I complete the online survey?

Watch a YouTube video* demonstrating how to complete the survey for vessels under 10 metres

The process is slightly different for over 10 metres vessels. The vessel owner completes the first section (i.e., vessel and crew questions), and their accountant completes the second section (i.e., income, expenditure, assets etc.)

Watch a YouTube video* demonstrating how to complete the over 10 metre vessel survey

Watch a YouTube video* demonstrating how to complete the over 10 metre vessel accountant's economic survey

* All YouTube video mentioned are available to view with links on BIM's website www.bim.ie

Further help

If you experience technical difficulties registering or accessing the online survey, please email: DCFDData@bim.ie or phone: 01-2144200 for technical support (Mon-Fri: 9am-5pm).

news from Castletownbere

Helen Riddell



Full moon rising between the winches of the Sea Spray at Castletownbere - Photo by Anne Marie Cronin Photography

Castletownbere RNLI

Castletownbere lifeboat was called upon on December 5th to go to the assistance of a 30m fishing trawler which was drifting without power between Dinish Island and Bere Island.

Castletownbere RNLI lifeboat, 'Annette Hutton', was tasked and launched immediately under the command of Coxswain Dave Fenton with Mechanic Marney O'Donoghue, and crew Sean Bawn O'Sullivan, Seamus Harrington and Carl Cronin.

The lifeboat was on scene within ten minutes where a local boat had attached a rope to the stricken vessel. In addition, a local tugboat was on standby. The lifeboat took the vessel under tow and proceeded towards Castletownbere Harbour where the vessel was berthed alongside the quay wall at Dinish Pier. The fishing boat skipper expressed his gratitude for the timely assistance of the lifeboat and local vessels. Commenting on the callout Castletownbere RNLI Lifeboat Launching Authority, Felix O'Donoghue, stated: 'Thankfully, there was a swift response from our crew and we were pleased with the outcome and we acknowledge the assistance of other vessels involved in the operation'.

Castletownbere Coast Guard

The Castletownbere Coast Guard team were tasked in December to assist in transferring an injured crew member from a French-registered fishing vessel.

The trawler, 'Danny Finn', had berthed

at Dinish Island in Castletownbere harbour, coast guard crew members transferred the crewman off the boat and into the waiting ambulance.

Supervalu Castletownbere Win Award

Murphy's SuperValu, Castletownbere were announced as winners of the 2022 Retail Store of the Year Medium Supermarket at the recent National Grocery Retail Awards.

The store, which is run by Lorraine and Chris Downey, was commended by the judges for being "an excellent store that really understands its customer base"

Beara Historical Society

The Beara Historical Society recently hosted the launch of Ted O'Sullivan's new book 'Bere Island Internment Camp 1921, Nora O'Neill's Autograph Book.'

The first internees arrived in the internment camp on Bere Island in April 1921 and were a diverse group of men comprising of poets, writers, intellectuals and committed War of Independence volunteers. Support for and contact with the internees fell to the women of the local Cumann na mBan, one of whom was Nora O'Neill, captain of the Castletownbere company. In the course of their time in the camp over forty internees signed Nora's autograph book.

Ted O'Sullivan's book features short biographical sketches of each autograph writer, along with a biographical sketch of

Nora O'Neill. The book is on sale locally, priced €20.

Beara Education Training Board

The Beara Education Training Board has a number of courses starting in early 2023 at their premises at the North Road, Castletownbere.

Courses will include Irish, English for speakers of other languages, art, technology, sewing, food and nutrition, budgeting and gardening. For further information and to book a place contact Maggie on 086 0850300.

Tour De Beara

Registration is now open for the 2023 Tour de Beara cycle race which will take place on September 9th 2023. For further details and to register see www.tourdebeara.ie

Caha Centre

MABS, the independent Money Advice and Budgeting Service will be hosting an outreach clinic in The Caha Centre, Adrigole on Wednesday January 25th. To book a slot, contact MABS directly on 0818 07 2450.

Castletownbere RNLI and CoAction Beara Fundraiser

The weekly fundraising lotto draw in aid of Castletownbere RNLI and CoAction Beara has now returned.

Tickets are €2 each and can be purchased from a number of businesses in the town. The weekly draw takes place on Wednesdays, if the jackpot is not won five lucky dip winners will each receive €50.

Adrigole GAA

The tenth annual John Con O'Sullivan memorial darts competition was held on St Stephens Day in the Wild Atlantic Bar.

In the Under 18 competition Donagh O'Sullivan defeated Jack Crowley in the final. In the main event, the winners were Noel O'Sullivan and Ray Mullins who defeated Alan O'Sullivan and Thomas Joe O'Sullivan in the final. Thanks were extended to all who took part and helped out in any way and all the tournament sponsors especially the main sponsor Mozz Pizza Glengarriff.

All in Adrigole GAA were deeply saddened by the untimely passing just before Christmas of Jason O'Shea.

The club expressed their condolences to his parents Denis and Dolores, brother Kieran and sister Lorraine and to his extended family and friends. Jason was an enthusiastic player with the club at underage and adult level who always gave his best and his passing will leave a big void in the club, community and fishing family. Adrigole GAA held a guard of honour for Jason from the church in Adrigole to the GAA grounds prior to his burial.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.

Ireland's Ocean Economy Worth Almost €5 Billion

The Marine Institute in partnership with the University of Galway's Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMURU) has released the latest update on the performance of Ireland's Ocean Economy.

The report provides an update on Ireland's ocean economy across three main economic indicators: turnover, gross value added (GVA) and employment, and provides an analysis of trends over the last five years.

The update shows that Ireland's ocean economy in 2021 had a turnover of €4.98 billion, with a direct economic contribution, as measured by GVA, of €2.1 billion. Taking into account indirect GVA generated from ocean related activity in Ireland total GVA is €3.8bn, representing 1.6% of national output. Brexit effects on trade and fisheries as well as the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly on marine tourism and the international cruise industry meant a significant reduction in ocean economy output value in 2020.

Commenting on the results, co-author Prof Stephen Hynes, Director of SEMRU at the University of Galway stated, "The latest figures demonstrate that it has been a very turbulent period for Ireland's ocean economy in the two years since the publication of the last report in the series. Against the backdrop of the immense challenges that have faced the sector we have seen a rebound in terms of output and employment in 2021. It continues to be a period of transition for Ireland's ocean economy as the marine industries innovate in the face of new policies and measures aimed at dealing with the impacts of the climate and biodiversity crises."

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD, said, "I am delighted to receive this latest SEMRU (University of Galway) and Marine Institute report on Ireland's Ocean Economy, which provides such useful data on the value of our marine industries and sectors. The marine sector and the employment it provides in crucial areas such as Ireland's fisheries and seafood sector, under my own area of Ministerial responsibility, are crucially important contributors in maintaining the

viability of our coastal communities. This interesting and timely report demonstrates that the marine sector as a whole has experienced significant challenges over recent years in common with international trends but is now slowly recovering. It will be particularly interesting to see if the current trends continue into 2023 and future years. We look forward to the next report and hopefully to a resurgent and vibrant marine sector both here in Ireland and internationally."

The report also reviews demographic change in Ireland's coastal economy, as well as highlighting developments in marine natural capital accounting. Natural capital accounting/ecosystem accounting views nature and ecosystems as assets, which provide a stream of ecosystem service benefits to society. The report highlights the importance of healthy marine ecosystem services to the ocean economy industries and Irish society more widely. In doing so it discusses the latest advancements in ocean environmental and economic accounting and how the Marine Institute and the University of Galway, in partnership with the CSO, are in the process of developing such accounts for Ireland.

Welcoming the report, Dr Paul Connolly, CEO of the Marine Institute said, "The ever-growing demand for more integrated advice and services has seen an increasing demand for economic data and evidence that will support the state's governance of our maritime area. This work, carried out in partnership with University of Galway, and other state organisations such as the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), is delivering a robust analytical framework to inform marine and maritime policies and planning, delivering a more equitable and sustainable ocean and coastal economies."

Ireland's Ocean Economy port 2022 is available on the Marine Institute's website www.marine.ie



All in a Row 'Liffey Challenge' held in December in aid of RNLI Lifeboats and Irish Underwater Search and Recovery - Photo courtesy James Grandfield



IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP IWDG NEWS

The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group are planning major modifications to their flagship, Celtic Mist, the former yacht of Charlie Haughey. Chief Executive Dr. Simon Berrow says they need funding support.

Celtic Mist Needs Your Support

The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group were donated Celtic Mist in 2011 by the Haughey family. Celtic Mist is a very familiar sailing vessel to many mariners around the Irish coast. She is a 56ft motor sailing vessel and has been working hard as a research and training platform for the IWDG over the last 10 years.



She is run and maintained by IWDG members in a voluntary capacity and has given many of our members new or refreshed sea legs. Since 2016 the IWDG have partnered with Glen Nua, sailors who trained and sailed under the Glenans sailing school, which unfortunately has now left Ireland.

A chance meeting between Fiacc O'Brolchain of the IWDG, who has been managing Celtic Mist since the IWDG were given her, and Seamus Fitzgerald of Glen Nua, who coordinated the Glenans sailors has been a huge success. We had a boat with few skippers and Seamus had skippers and crew, but no boat. Since this partnership was formed, we have sailed to Iceland, circumnavigated Ireland on five occasions and ran a Floating Classroom education initiative.

Throughout this period people from the two groups have also worked very hard to keep Celtic Mist in good condition, a challenge for such a large vessel. Although the boat is now in great condition, in a confused sea she can turn anyone's stomach, when she starts to roll. In order to make her a more effective survey platform and more comfortable for sailing, we wish to add bilge keels, which are deployed in pairs; one for each side of the ship to dampen her

rolling. But to do this we urgently need your support!

The IWDG must raise up to 50% of the estimated €10,000 cost in order to book into Leonards Shipyard in Howth, Co. Dublin and make these much needed improvements a reality. If you are in a position to support this Celtic Mist fundraiser, or if you can spread the word via our Facebook page, we would greatly appreciate it.

Finally, Celtic Mist is leaving Dublin as its home port after this upcoming survey season. After generous support from Waterways Ireland who allowed us to use Grand Canal Basin during the winter she is to finish the summer sailing in Kilrush, Co Clare and be berthed in Kilrush Marina. Its time for a fresh team to look after her and based on the west coast provides more opportunities to survey and promote potential Marine Protected Areas.

We would like to thank Fiacc, Seamus and Mick O'Meara for all their work over the last few years to keep Celtic Mist shipshape and in service for the IWDG.

www.iwdg.ie

Letters to the Editor

Challenges Facing the Fishing Industry

Editor,
Marine Times Newspaper

I'm a Fine Gael Cllr, married to Sean, an Inshore fisherman, my Father In Law and two of my Brother In Laws are fishermen also, so I understand the current hardships that fishermen are facing. As we know, the most pressing concern for Irish fishermen both inshore and offshore is the crippling price of fuel. I attended a meeting at our recent Fine Gael Ard Feis, where local representatives met with Colm Markey MEP, Senator Tim Lombard and others involved in the fishing industry. It was a positive meeting and I have followed up by contacting them again asking if they could explore avenues that would make the price of fuel less of a burden. As there are many to the pin of their collar to make ends meet.

An Overview of Challenges Facing Inshore Fishing

Fuel

As already mentioned above, the price of fuel is a crippling expense. For example, a 17 - foot punt will have a petrol outboard engine. It will burn approximately €350 worth of petrol a week. You are not allowed claim back vat on this. If a scheme were introduced where fishermen could claim the vat back on their petrol, it would go a long way to help offset the crippling costs.

Different Fisheries

The salmon driftnet ban was implemented in 2007. It was to be reviewed after 7 years, it has yet to be reviewed. Is it possible that this ban could be reviewed?

The size of cray fish that can be caught in Ireland is larger than in other European countries. The majority of our crayfish is exported to Europe where the cray fish size is smaller and therefore the market is looking for smaller cray fish. Surely the cray fish size in Ireland could be smaller in line with our European counterparts for export purposes. Looking into the possibility of a v notch scheme for cray fish would also be very beneficial in sustaining the future of the fishery.

Implications of Brexit

The implications of Brexit are far reaching; getting parts and material has become extremely difficult. Inshore fishermen have received a grant aid dependent on their size. However, could we extend the Brexit tie up scheme to include fishermen that have a track record with shellfish?

Sustainability and Diversification

We welcome measures that protect our industry and ensure its sustainability. We also recognise the need to diversify if we are to ensure the future of the inshore fishery. The size of crabs has increased from 130mm to 140mm, and we welcome this as it protects the future of the crab.

V notching of female lobsters has saved the lobster

industry and is essential to maintain its population. V notching is when a notch is cut into the tail of a female lobster. V notched lobsters when caught are placed back in the sea to protect and sustain the species. There's a scheme in place to pay the fishermen 70% for landing female lobsters that will be v notched and then released. If the amount paid was 100% it would ensure that v notching would continue and ensure the sustainability of the lobster species. Another solution would be to v notch the larger lobsters (lobsters that are over 127mm on the carapace (back) and get 70% as you can't land them anyway or increase the maximum size of lobster to 135mm as it's the perfect size for two eating one lobster.

An introduction of artisanal line fishery for blue fin tuna for boats under 10 metres. Blue fin tuna swim by our coast, track north and out into international waters where they are caught by long line fishers anyway. If we could open a line fishery where the season and catch is limited, it would be beneficial allowing allow crab and lobster fishers to diversify. You could also line fish for sea bass and sea trout in a similar manner.

Funding for experimental and alternative types of fishing to alleviate pressure from the traditional crab and lobster fishery would be advantageous. Funding provided for projects such as: experimenting with potting for scallop rather than dredging, designing and building a pot for cray fish, introduction of a squid fishery and use of light technology in catching different fish species.

Local Infrastructure and Governance

Currently there is little infrastructure on the pier to accommodate fishermen's needs. There is no power on Schull pier available to fishermen or the other multitude of users of the pier. Furthermore, there is no freshwater hose and pier users have no way of disposing of their waste.

BIM has grants available for cranes and refrigerators to be installed on quaysides. The cranes would ensure fishermen's health and safety and generally make life easier, and the refrigerator would ensure a better product. These grants need the support of the local council, this was not forthcoming and as a result very few ports, if any, availed of these grants. We need greater involvement, interest and engagement from our local county council.

An Overview of Challenges Facing the Polyvalent Sector

Fuel

The greatest challenge facing the polyvalent sector is the exorbitant price of fuel. To give an example: A 24 metre trawler working out of Castletownbere will burn between 20,000 -24,000 litres of fuel a trip. This breaks down to approximately 2,100 -2,200 litre of fuel burned a day. For example, this same boat will burn €20,000 per trip mounting to € 75,000 in a month. This is a crippling cost and doesn't take into account the other bills that need to be paid such as co-op levies, food, crew's wages, insurance etc. In addition, the prices paid for fish have not improved and markets are reduced. Most boat owners will not be able to sustain this and help in the form of aid is quickly needed to protect the livelihoods of many. This is exacerbated by the surging living costs and inflation and people are in dire straits.

The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority

The SFPA are heavy handed when dealing with fishers, they act in a punitive manner trying to punish fishermen rather than working in a collaborative way with them advising how to protect the future of our industry.

Furthermore, they seem to have power far in excess of their position. They have become the judge, the jury and the executioner. Members of the fishing community feel they have no recourse to complain if they have been treated unfairly as they feel they would then become a target. There needs to be independent oversight of this agency. Fishers are entitled to fair procedure if they feel they have been treated unfairly or discriminated against and should be able to do so without fear of retribution.

Quota Management

We have a small percentage of quota in our waters and for some reason we haven't been able to secure more quota. However, a move to fleet quota like other European countries such as the French and Spanish rather than the individual quotas we currently work off would be advantageous. If the quota was managed collectively from shore, it would be more effective and efficient in streamlining the management of our quotas rather than the ad hoc manner we do it in at the moment. We can't understand why we can't move to fleet quota when other European countries are doing it.

Decommissioning of Vessels

We welcome the introduction of decommissioning; however, we need clarity on it. It's complicated and it's unclear what is actually being offered to fishers.

Tuna Fishery

Our tuna fishery is now very small. We once had a very successful tuna drift net fishery that was lucrative but drift netting for tuna is now banned. Tuna fish are now caught by pair trawling, and this is more suited to the larger pelagic boats rather than the smaller white fishboats. If drift netting for tuna could be reopened for a limited amount of time in September for the white fish boats, it is a very fuel-efficient way of fishing for these smaller boats especially considering the current price of fuel.

The Future of the Industry

I worry about the future of the industry. It is no longer an attractive industry for young people. Boats and fishing licences are just too expensive for young people to buy. We need more incentives to engage young people in this industry. Without youth, we have no industry.

In conclusion, you can see there are many problems facing our industry. We thank you for taking the time to read this letter but we urge you to take action and help us.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Caroline Cronin (O'Driscoll)
Schull, Co. Cork



Photo of Leo Varadkar receiving a copy of the Marine Times from local fisherman Sean O'Driscoll on a visit to Schull where they discussed the issues effecting fishermen in West Cork. Also included in photo are Senator Tim Lombard, Cllr Caroline Cronin & Kevin O'Callaghan, representative for local fishermen.

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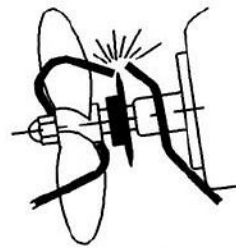
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EU Commission Adopt the €258 Million European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) Programme 2021-27 for Ireland

The decision by the EU Commission to adopt the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) Programme 2021-27 for Ireland has been welcomed by Minister McConalogue.

"I am pleased to announce that today the EU Commission has adopted the €258 million EMFAF Seafood Development Programme which envisages significant funding in our seafood sector and our coastal communities. These communities have faced extraordinary challenges in recent times, particularly due to Brexit and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. In 2021, I established the Seafood Task Force to make recommendations to address the challenges arising from these events and I have since announced €225 million in supports utilising the Brexit Adjustment Reserve. This new programme provides for additional, longer term supports to enable our seafood sector to engage in transformational change and for our coastal communities to thrive."

The EMFAF supports the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the EU Maritime Policy and the EU agenda for international ocean governance. Building on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) 2014-2020, it provides supports to achieve food security through the supply of seafood products, growth of a sustainable blue economy and healthy, safe and sustainably managed seas and oceans.

Minister McConalogue in the preparations for the new EMFAF Seafood Development Programme, which runs up to 2027, has secured an increase in overall funding over the previous EMFF programme. The new EMFAF Seafood Development Programme envisages funding up to €258.4 million, which includes a €134 million EU contribution and a Government of Ireland contribution of €116 million.

According to the Department, the EMFAF Programme aims to support a diverse range of activities within the marine area. For fisheries, the Programme will support capital investment on board, capital investment ashore relating to the landing obligation, innovation in fishing gear and methods, technical advice to the fleet, acquisition of first vessel by young fishers, supports to the inshore fleet, training and marketing.

For aquaculture, the Programme will support implemen-

tation of the National Strategic Plan for Aquaculture. This will include in particular support for capital investment in aquaculture sites, supports for innovation and research to develop technology and enhance knowledge, advisory services, training and marketing.



For processing, the Programme will support capital investment in seafood processing enterprises, in particular to add value to raw material, enhance energy efficiency, reduce CO2 emissions, and enhance competitiveness. It will also support innovation to develop new products, advisory services, marketing and training.

The Programme will support the socio-economic development and diversification of coastal communities through the seven Fisheries Local Action Groups. This will carry on from the Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Development Scheme, implemented through the FLAGs over 2022/23, but will also have a broader remit to support community type projects.

The Programme will support Ireland's environmental obligations through a continuation of the EMFF

Marine Biodiversity Scheme. This will fund appropriate assessment of fisheries and aquaculture activities, reporting on the Marine Strategy framework Directive, projects in support of the CFP, and species and habitat restoration.

The Programme will support enhancement of Ireland's knowledge of its marine environment, particularly in terms of enhancing knowledge of climate change impacts on fish stocks, habitats and species.

Lastly the Programme will fund Ireland's compliance with its obligations under the CFP, specifically for fisheries protection and for fisheries management science.

Minister McConalogue added: "The programme has been developed in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure we can help our seafood sector and coastal communities to maximise their potential while protecting our marine environment and its rich biodiversity."

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Change of Name Notice

We Celtic Trawlers Limited give notice that we have applied to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport under Section 67 of the Mercantile Marine Act 1955 in respect of our Ship MARIJTJE KEUTER Official Number 9056131 of Registered Tonnage 159 Tonnes for permission to change her name to BOOLAVOGUE to be registered in the said name in the port of Wexford.

Any representations or comments on the application should be sent to the Superintendent, Mercantile Marine Office, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, within seven days of the appearance of this notice

Celtic Trawlers Limited

International Fishing and Maritime News

MSC Certification Recognised by United Nations

The Marine Stewardship Council's (MSC) global standards for environmentally sustainable seafood was recognised at (COP-15) - the United Nation's Biodiversity Conference as a way to scientifically measure efforts to reverse declines in the world's biodiversity.

Data on MSC certified catch-and-supply chains are three of the official indicators in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework for two of the targets. The first target relates to the sustainable management and trade in wild species and the second relates to the integration of biodiversity values into economies. Complementary indicators can be used by governments to measure progress against those targets.

Presence in the framework is a sign of the credibility of the MSC programme in helping to sustain biodiversity, according to Rupert Howes, Chief Executive of MSC.

"The recognition testifies to the significant lengths that MSC certified fisheries go to understand their impact on the environment and ensure their sustainability, delivering improvements where needed – and the role of the supply chain in recognising and rewarding these efforts. This agreement is a major achievement. The challenge will now be to ensure that the pledges are matched by real action.

"Credible country-level action and measurement of outcomes will be key to ensuring the success of this new international agreement. Fisheries which meet the MSC's Standard must maintain healthy fish populations, minimize by-catch and impacts on endangered, threatened and protected species, as well as the wider marine ecosystem. These efforts are recognised and rewarded by retailers' and brands' commitments to sell certified sustainable seafood with the blue MSC label, responding to increasing consumer awareness of the need for sustainable fishing.

Denmark Scrappage Plan

The Danish Government has approved grants totalling €27 million Euros (Danish Kroner DKK 203 million) to decommission 31 fishing vessels. Of the 54 applications, 31 Danish vessels will be scrapped before July next year.



This round of scrapping grants is directly as a result of lost fishing opportunities due to Brexit. The scheme opened in September, providing fishermen with opportunities to apply for decommissioning support and to mitigate the negative effects of Brexit. As the scheme closed for applications on 1st November, 54 applications with a total value of close to

DKK500 million had been received, well in excess of the DKK204 million made available under the budget available.

As the 54 were reviewed, the total was whittled down as only 35 applications were found to meet the full criteria. These have been prioritised according to set criteria, and 31 vessels selected for being taken permanently out of operation and scrapped not later than 31st July 2023.

Alzheimer's Disease Could Be Cause of Stranded Dolphins

In Scotland research scientists from the University of Glasgow, the Universities of St Andrews and Edinburgh and the Moredun Research Institute has found that the brains of three different species of stranded dolphins show classic markers of human Alzheimer's disease.



They were engaged in an extensive study into dementia in toothed whales and studied the brains of 22 which had all been stranded in Scottish coastal waters. These included five different species – Risso's dolphins, long-finned pilot whales, white-beaked dolphins, harbour porpoises and bottlenose dolphins – and found that four animals from different dolphin species had some of the brain changes associated with Alzheimer's disease in humans.

The findings, according to the scientists may provide a possible answer to unexplained live-stranding events in some species. The results could support the 'sick-leader' theory, whereby an otherwise healthy pod of animals find themselves in dangerously shallow waters after following a group leader who may have become confused or lost.

Whales, dolphins and porpoises are regularly stranded around the coasts of Ireland and the UK. They are often found stranded in groups, or pods, in shallow waters and sometimes on beaches. While some animals can be moved to safer, deeper waters by teams of experts, other animals are less lucky and perish as a result. The underlying causes of live stranding events are not always clear, and research is ongoing to gain better insights. The brains of all of the aged animals studied had amyloid-beta plaques.

Lead researcher, Dr Mark Dagleish from the University of Glasgow, said: "These are significant findings that show, for the first time, that the brain pathology in stranded

odontocetes (toothed whales) is similar to the brains of humans affected by clinical Alzheimer's disease.

"While it is tempting at this stage to speculate that the presence of these brain lesions in odontocetes indicates that they may also suffer with the cognitive deficits associated with human Alzheimer's disease, more research must be done to better understand what is happening to these animals."

All animals in this research were studied after a stranding event. The research paper is published in the European Journal of Neuroscience.

Norwegian Government Halts New Land Based Fish Farming Applications

Norway's Fisheries and Oceans Minister Bjørnar Skjæran wants "time to develop a clearer framework for the needs of aquaculture on land against those of sea based aquaculture." Compared to traditional sea or fjord salmon farming, land-based farming is a relatively young, but fast growing, sector and seen by many as being more environmentally acceptable, he said.

"Land farms are not subject to the government's controversial ground rent tax proposal – at the moment. Several applications for such farms are known to be in the pipeline."

The announcement has taken the industry by surprise. It has said the rules need to be clarified.

The Minister said the suspension would only apply until new regulations governing land farms are in place.

Sweden's First Major Salmon Farm Receives €42m EU Grant

The EU investment bank EIB is to provide €42m to build a new "super green" land-based salmon farm in Sweden. The company behind the project, RE:OCEAN, is planning to produce 10,000 tonnes of salmon a year by 2026.



The bank said the RE:OCEAN is revolutionising the seafood industry with land-based salmon farming of the future at a large-scale facility near the attractive woodland town of Säffle in the south of the country. It will be powered by fossil free energy and almost all the water used will be in a closed environment.

RE:OCEAN said it will be able to locally produce 10 000 tonnes of sustainable and healthy salmon every year.. Sweden currently imports most of its salmon, mainly from from neighbours Norway. The project is supported by Sweden's three leading wholesale companies — Axfood, Coop and ICA — which see great opportunities in being able to offer consumers healthy and sustainable Swedish salmon.

Dursey Cable Car Goes From One Crisis to Another

With further delays on a completion date for the Dursey cable car, Deputy Michael Collins calls on the minister, to immediately set up a number of measures that both safeguards permanent residents on the island, but also safeguards for farmers and their animals in the island.

"Funding for the ferry service must be continued, but due to inclement weather this service may not be operational, so I have called for an emergency helicopter drop off for food or fodder needs to be put in place immediately. I have pleaded for this helicopter service on numerous occasions in the Dáil lately to this government, but all pleas have fallen on deaf ears.

"The people of Dursey island find themselves falling from one crisis to another and each time we are finding it slow to get a minister's response to counter act their difficulties.

"I also call on the minister to meet the people of Dursey island either in West Cork or Dublin so they can put the true case of their plight before her. The minister has to act quickly to prevent human and animal hunger on the island," concluded Deputy Collins.

Inland Fisheries Management Policies Being Reviewed

The Department of the Environment has been examining the effectiveness of current management policies towards inland fisheries, as a result of which Minister Eamon Ryan says that a broader policy review is now under way and he intends to make improvements. These will include greater focus on conservation and modernising licensing which will be intended to ensure more access to the fisheries in areas where conservation and biodiversity needs are met. Following on from that 81 rivers will be available for salmon and sea trout fishing this year. 48 will be fully open and 33 for 'catch and release' angling. 66 rivers will remain closed. These decisions are based on "general improvements in stocks."

Galway Beach Ban To Be Reviewed

Galway County Council has agreed to consult with watersport bodies about its proposed beach bye-laws which would ban all activities apart from swimming on 24 beaches. After a lot of controversy, Council officials have agreed to meet representatives from the watersport groups for discussions about the proposed bye-laws.

Rosslare – Le Harve Passenger Service Back

Brittany Ferries will re-open its Rosslare-Le Havre service for 'passengers' from March. It has been freight-only since the Covid pandemic. The Cotentin ferry, Cotentin, will operate the service with a limit of 114 passengers.

Blackfish (*Centrolophus niger*) Captured in Irish Waters

Report by Declan Quigley

The Blackfish (*Centrolophus niger*) [CEO], also known as the Black Ruff or Rudderfish, is an offshore oceanic species with a worldwide anti-tropical distribution in warm and temperate waters of the Northern and Southern Hemisphere. Juveniles and sub-adults are epi-pelagic, often found in association with medusae (jellyfish) and salps in surface waters. Adults are meso-pelagic, usually found at depths of 300-700 m, occasionally down to 1200 m, but rarely from inshore or coastal waters (depths <200 m). The species attains a maximum total length (TL) and weight of c.1500 mm and 5000 g respectively.



Figure 1. Blackfish (*Centrolophus niger*) captured by the MFV Verlaine (WD5) on the Porcupine Bank (03.12.22)

Blackfish appear to be not uncommon in Irish offshore waters, particularly on the Porcupine Bank and continental slope off SW Ireland where several specimens measuring 340-685 mm TL and weighing 325-2900 g have been recorded at depths of 180-960 m during research cruises and by demersal trawlers since 1924.

During June-August 1983, the MFV Aine Ide (Skipper: J. Murphy, Dunmore East) captured two specimens while trawling for *Nephrops* prawns on the Porcupine Bank at a depth of 400-600 m. During August 1988 and July 1991, the MFV Three Brothers and MFV Shannon (Skipper: Michael J. Flannery, Dingle) captured two specimens at a depth of 180 m, and during June 1992 the MFV Jacob (Skipper: Donnie Flaherty, Dingle) captured a specimen at a depth of 260 m west of Tearaght Island, Co Kerry.

More recently, on 3 December 2022, the MFV Verlaine (WD5) [Skipper: James Taite, Dunmore East] captured a Blackfish measuring 510 mm TL and weighing 1100 g, while demersal trawling for *Nephrops* prawns at a depth of 540 m on the Porcupine Bank (ICES VIIc2, 34D7; 52.5667°N, 12.9833°W) [Fig. 1].

At least 44 Blackfish measuring 175-838 mm TL, and weighing 184-4767 g, have been recorded from Irish inshore waters since 1889, the vast majority (88%) from the west coast (NW Donegal southwards to SW Cork). There are relatively few records from the NE (1) and SE (3) coast, and only one from the Irish Sea where, during August 1980, a rare vagrant measuring 470 mm TL was captured midway between the east coast of Ireland and the Isle of Man.

Since 1892, at least 14 Blackfish have been recorded from inshore waters around the Dingle Peninsula, Co Kerry. Curiously, two specimens were captured in lobster pots, one off Sleah Head during 1975, and the second from Dingle Bay in July 1976. During 1977 the MFV Saint Anne (Skipper: John Griffin) captured a specimen measuring 372 mm TL and weighing 364 g while trawling south of Dingle Harbour. A specimen was captured in a trammel net during June 1977 by John Brosnan in Smerwick Harbour. Three more specimens were captured in Dingle Bay during the early 1980s by the trawlers MFV Caroline Ann and MFV Resolution. During July 1987 the MFV Utopia (Skipper: Michael O'Connor) captured a specimen in a surface net off Ballydavid Head, and in July 1994, John Fitzpatrick captured a specimen while salmon drift-netting off Bran-

don. More recently, the MFV Golden Feather captured a specimen while demersal gill-netting NW of the Basket Islands during January 2002.

Between 1962 and 1979, at least 7 Blackfish were recorded from various locations in relatively shallow inshore and coastal waters of the Celtic Sea off Co Cork, including Ballycotton (3), Courtmacsherry, Union Hall, Baltimore, and Castletownsend. On 13 July 2011, a specimen was observed for the first time in close association with a Basking Shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) in the Celtic Sea (Fig. 2). More recently, on 30 May 2022, the MFV Endeavour (D28) [Skipper: Gerald Caulfield] captured a specimen while demersal seine netting in the Celtic Sea off Co Cork (ICES VIIg, 31E2; 51.2833°N, 7.1000°W) [Fig. 3].



Figure 2. Blackfish (*Centrolophus niger*) accompanying a Basking Shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) in the Celtic Sea (July 2011)
Figure 3. Blackfish (*Centrolophus niger*) captured by the MFV Endeavour (D28) in the Celtic Sea on 30.05.2022.



Almost 90% of the inshore specimens were captured during the summer and autumn, with a significant peak in July (Fig. 4). Over 50% of the specimens were captured in pelagic gear, notably salmon and mackerel nets. Curiously, five specimens were captured on rod & line, including two from the shore. The heaviest rod & line specimen weighing 497 g and measuring 390 mm TL, was taken off Tory Island, Co Donegal during July 1977. A potentially heavier

specimen, measuring 580 mm TL was captured by a shark angler in Courtmacsherry Bay during July 1979. The UK Rod & Line Record weighing 2679 g, was captured during 1998 from Aldbrough Beach, East Yorkshire (North Sea). The largest specimen recorded from Irish waters to date, measuring 837 mm TL and weighing 4767 g (guttled), was found stranded on Ballymastocker Beach near Portsalon, Lough Swilly, Co Donegal during November 1889.

Despite its widespread distribution, relatively little is known about the biology of *C. niger*. The occasional occurrence of this essentially deep-water oceanic species in inshore waters is currently unclear. Blackfish may be inadvertently carried into inshore waters via unusual influxes of offshore oceanic water masses and/or the species may be deliberately migrating inshore in pursuit of prey.

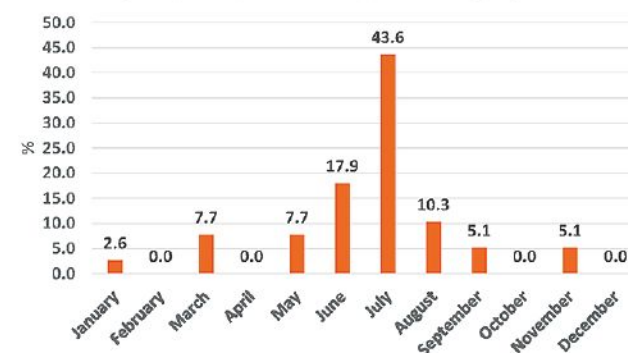
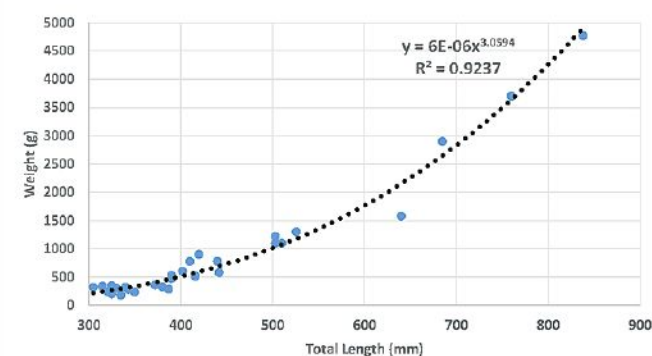


Figure 4. % Monthly frequency distribution of Irish inshore Blackfish (*Centrolophus niger*) records (N=39)

Figure 5. Total Length vs Weight of Irish Blackfish (*Centrolophus niger*) records (N=30)



It is unclear at what size Blackfish change from a juvenile epi-pelagic to a sub-adult meso-pelagic habit and reach sexual maturity. Although a recently spent female measuring 1195 mm TL was captured on a floating longline east of the Georges Bank (off Cape Cod, Massachusetts, USA) during early December 1963, it is possible that the species may attain sexual maturity at a smaller size. In the North Atlantic, spawning occurs from autumn to winter. Growth appears to be rapid, at least during the juvenile epi-pelagic phase; the TL of a captive Mediterranean juvenile increased from 20 to 170 mm over a 5-month period. Assuming that Blackfish reach sexual maturity at a TL of c.1195 mm, it would appear that the vast majority of specimens recorded from Irish waters (TL 175-838 mm; N=43) probably represent juveniles and sub-adults (Fig. 5).

It is possible that Blackfish are more frequently captured in Irish inshore waters than the current paucity of records would suggest. Perhaps most specimens are discarded because they are generally perceived to have no commercial value.

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

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Castletownbere - Photo courtesy Anne Marie Cronin Photography

Over 40,000 Lobsters V-Notched in Ireland 2022 – 28 Tonnes ... Highest on Record

More than 40,000 lobsters were v-notched in 2022, weighing almost 28 tonnes – the highest recorded since legislation began in 1995 to protect lobsters with such marks.

V-notching is a conservation tool carried out by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) trained Regional Officers around the coast of Ireland. Its primary aim is to protect female lobsters, giving them an opportunity to spawn and replenish stock while they are v-notched.

The process is simple and involves removing a v-shaped notch from one of the flaps (uropods) on either side of the central part of the animal's tail (telson) when it is first caught. If caught again, v-notched lobsters cannot be retained or offered for sale but must be returned to the sea where they and their offspring contribute to future recruitment.

Ian Lawler, BIM Development Manager, applauded the efforts of fishers involved in this year's programme, supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

"The 2022 v-notching programme was an exceptional year for all involved from the fishers who participated to the BIM regional staff who visited 94 piers along the Irish coast to v-notch lobsters throughout the year.



"It is a great collective effort that is enhancing the sustainability of a fishery that is the cornerstone of the Irish inshore sector."

The 40,339 lobsters released in 2022 represent over 302 million larvae that will be released each time the lobsters spawn.

Irish lobster is highly sought after in Ireland

and in continental markets, particularly in France, Spain and Portugal within foodservice and for home consumption. Lobster is in particular demand at Christmas and during other holidays such as Easter.



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