

IRELAND'S LEADING MARITIME NEWSPAPER

# MARINE TIMES

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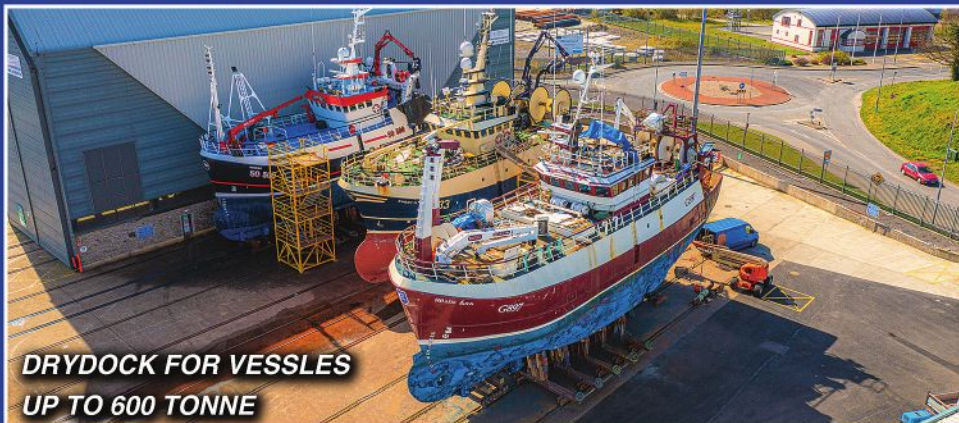
The new Eilean Croine undergoing sea trials off Killybegs - Photo: Alan Hennigan / Mooney Boats



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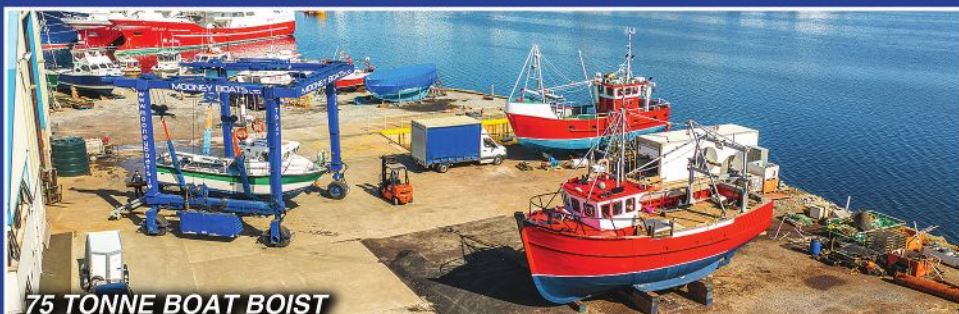
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## the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

# Hurlers on the Ditch

**I** worked in the bank in Bundoran from 1969 to 1978 and have many happy memories of days when we related to our customers and performed many of the functions now completed by the computer system by hand.

Twice a year we calculated the interest on overdrawn accounts and posted the entries after they had been checked to the accounts.

On one occasion a customer who believed that one of his functions in life was to bully and generally disrespect bank staff

charged in to the bank and informed the Manager that the interest charged on his loan account was incorrect.

The Manager conceded that as the calculations were performed by mere mortals that of course we could be wrong but asked the customer what he thought

the figure should be. The customer could not tell us what he thought it SHOULD be so we asked how he knew our figure was wrong – if he did not know the correct answer.....

I see this kind of argument almost every day in our Political System.

No matter what might be suggested by a Government the opposition will trot out a list of objections to it - **WITHOUT** offering any alternative suggestions.

My views on the “**HURLERS ON THE DITCH**” are well known and I must ask what exactly the duties of an elected member of the Dail are.

We are paying these people €100,000 p/a plus expenses to represent us, the public, in the process of Government. If they have suggestions on how things might be improved do they not have an objection to let us know what they are?

Coming on The Week in Politics or

Morning Ireland to criticize almost everything which the Government does serves no purpose and I suggest is not what they were elected for.

**Nobody is elected as a member of the Opposition.** They are elected as **Teachtaí Dala** – members of Dail Eireann.

If you have a better plan Ladies and Gentlemen – let’s hear it, how it will work and who will pay for it. Anything less is waffle and hot air!!!!

I have suggested in the past that after an election it might be better simply to **put the Opposition in charge as they appear to have all the answers.** What is the expression??? “**The answer to everything and the solution to nothing**”???

We are still in the Labour Pains state on the decommissioning scheme and the date for acceptance is fast approaching. There are mixed feelings across the fleet underwritten by a sadness that we need to do this at all.

I agree with those feelings but in the absence of realistic and achievable alternatives maybe it is not completely unsatisfactory that some escape avenue is available for those who decide to leave the industry.

Lets revisit the actual title of the decommissioning scheme. It is called the **BREXIT VOLUNTARY PERMANENT CESSATION SCHEME** .... The operative word here being **VOLUNTARY**.

There was good coverage of the fishing sector from the Limerick Expo – particularly on the Pat Kenny Show and I must compliment those who were interviewed for their balanced and dignified approach in what is a “not good” situation.

However, the commitment from BIM to ensure through a series of Grants to make the remaining fleet as efficient and modern as possible is good. Take advantage of the Grant System lads and use it wisely.

In any situation in life there will be “what if” situations. That’s how things work and as the old saying goes: “You can please **some** of the people **all** of the time. You can please **all** of the people **some** of the time. *But you can’t please all of the people all of the time!*”

There are always people who know better lads .... Like the Opposition!!!!



Kilmore Quay - Photo courtesy Alan Hinchy

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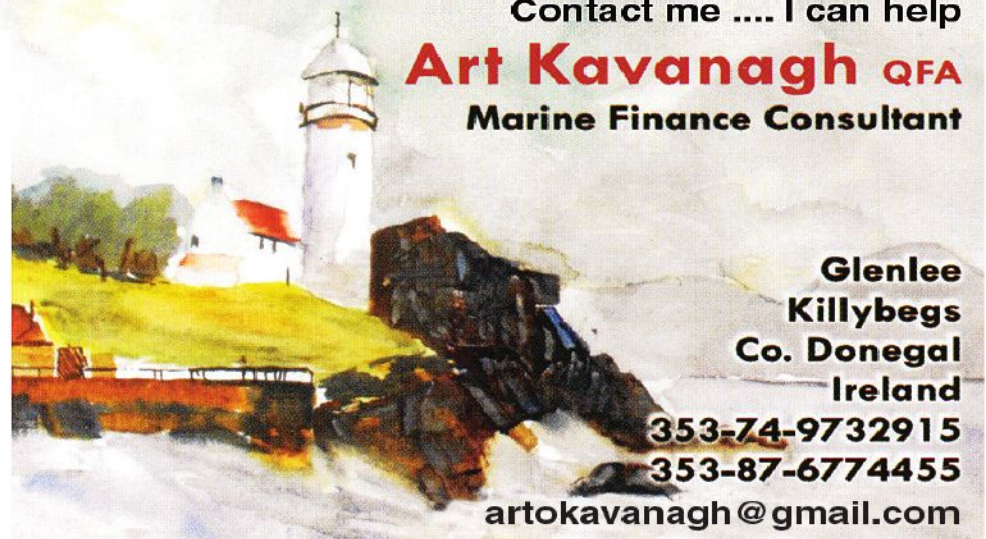
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# “Only Incompetence or Indifference Can Explain the Absence of Fuel Subsidies for Fishermen”

**I**ndependent TD for Cork South-West Michael Collins has called on the Tánaiste Micheál Martin to prioritise the introduction of a fuel subsidy for fishermen in line with similar provisions and supports currently accessible at EU level to Spanish and French fishermen.

Deputy Collins was speaking in the Dáil where he warned that unless immediate action was taken on the issue, fishermen from Castletownbere, Bantry, Schull and Union Hall to Kinsale, would be unable to salvage anything positive from the last number of years, which he described as ‘disastrous.’:

“We know that the European Commission has introduced a derogation in fuel subsidies in order to reduce the completely unsustainable level of costs that fishermen are faced with just in terms of keeping their vessels moving,” said Deputy Collins.

“However, for some inexplicable reason, our own Government and in particular our own Minister has utterly failed to make any moves on replicating access to a similar system of supports here. Minister McConalogue has been saying for months now that he is ‘reassessing the situation’ and ‘looking at what additional support may be neces-

sary.’ But we have been telling him loudly and clearly precisely what supports are necessary; yet still he fails to act.”

“I do not know what else can explain it at this point except incompetence or complete indifference to the fate of the fisheries sector.”

“The Spanish and French Governments have gone back for a second time to take what they can from the fuel subsidy arrangements. Meanwhile our own Government must have a pain in its behind from sitting on the fence and ‘reassessing’ the situation. A fuel subsidy for the fisheries sector should be top of the list when it comes to the kind of actions that can bring about immediate and positive outcomes. Just get on with it. Our fishermen and women do not have time to wait. That is my call to Minister McConalogue and Government,” concluded Deputy Collins.



Ocean Harvester II at Rossaveal harbour- Photo courtesy Enda Dirrane



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# Industry Issues Strong Objection at Failure to Include Main Stakeholders in Consultation Over Marine Protected Areas Bill

*Omission of all major fishing and seafood organisations from consultation/pre-legislative scrutiny on the General Scheme (Heads of Bill) of the Marine Protected Areas Bill 2022 has now given rise to a flawed process*

Report by Mark Mc Carthy, Editor

**The following Fishing and Aquaculture Representative Bodies; Killybegs Fisherman's Organisation (KFO), Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO), Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation (IS&WFPO), Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation (IS&EFPO), Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association (IFPEA) and the Aquaculture Committee of the Irish Farmers Association (IFA Aquaculture) have officially lodged their strongest objection at the failure to include representative bodies in the recent round of consultation on the General Scheme of Marine Protected Areas Bill 2022.**

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD and the Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform Malcolm Noonan TD, have recently announced a programme of measures designed to target the pressures on Ireland's marine environment. According to their press release, the programme consists of a broad range of actions with commitments across Government Departments to ensure the sustainable use of our seas, and restore degraded ecosystems and species – one of these programmes includes a proposal to develop and expand Ireland's Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to cover 30% of our marine area by 2030, including enacting of the Marine Protected Areas Bill in 2023 .... All without consultation with the fishing and seafood sector?

The new State Agency that will ultimately look after such matters as MPA's and planning applications for offshore windfarms is the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) and it falls under the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. It excludes the Department of the Marine and for the most part working with the fishing and seafood sector. As Enda Conneely of the Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation (IIMRO) stated in our October issue; *"If they cannot do things on land I would not be too confident of their ability to do it at sea"*

In a submission to the Joint Oireachtas Committee by Norah Parke of the Killybegs Fisherman's Organisation in conjunction with other industry organisations she points out that on the 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2022 the government approved the General Scheme of a Bill to provide for the designation and effective management of Marine Protected Areas. The MPA draft bill was informed by the 2020 report on *Expanding Ireland's MPA Network* prepared by an advisory group chaired by Professor Tasman Crowe, University College Dublin, and which engaged with over 100 stakeholders, including the fishing and aquaculture industries, in developing its recommendations.

The General Scheme was published on the gov.ie website on the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2022. Though there appears to be no official

consultation process for the proposed bill it is undergoing pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The committee has hosted two sessions in 2023 (31<sup>st</sup> January and 2<sup>nd</sup> of February), the first of which featured Professor Crowe, who provided pertinent feedback on the text of the bill and outlined, in particular, the lack of stakeholder engagement in the text of the Bill. This was a notable omission given that one of the key recommendations of the 2020 MPA Advisory Group report was that *'Early and sustained stakeholder engagement should be integral to the selection and management processes for MPAs. Engagement should be inclusive and equitable and the process should be designed to ensure that it is transparent, meaningful and facilitating.'*

A further Joint Oireachtas Committee meeting to discuss the Bill took place on Thursday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February. In this instance a select group of stakeholders were invited to give their views of the proposed Bill. These stakeholders included Wind Energy Ireland and a number of Irish environmental NGO's (Fair Seas, Birdwatch Ireland, Irish Wildlife Trust, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group) under the umbrella of the IEN Environmental Pillar.

**Notable by their absence were the current primary marine stakeholders i.e. the fishing and aquaculture industries as they had not been invited to present their views on the proposed Bill.**

The joint statement from the industry reiterates that the failure by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage to be fully inclusive in their consultation is most regrettable and the omission of all major fishing and seafood organisations from consultation/pre-legislative scrutiny on the General Scheme (Heads of Bill) of the Marine Protected Areas Bill 2022 has now given rise to a flawed process. Significant deficits now exist in the process of consultation and pre-legislative discussions that any Oireachtas Committee must undertake in order to provide balanced scrutiny of any impending legislation laid before the House of the

Oireachtas. This is particularly the case with legislation such as the Marine Protected Areas Bill 2022, which will impact on the livelihoods of so many in the seafood sector.

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

The fishing and seafood organisations will however make a submission on the basis that they will be called before the same Committee to give evidence, in the same manner which was afforded to all other interested parties that appeared before the Oireachtas Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage recently. It would be only fair and balanced that such an opportunity be given to the seafood sector.

It is also pointed out that their written submission must not be taken that this alone

is consultation with the Committee. This document must be taken as their opening statement to the Committee and that the Committee needs to call the representative bodies as witnesses to appear before them, anything short of that they will have to reserve their position.

**The industry wish to work constructively with the Committee but need to be afforded equality and respect in order represent the views of their sector.**

In the submission it is pointed out that first and foremost is to clarify that the fishing and aquaculture industries are not opposed to MPAs. They recognise and understand the need for and the value of MPAs both in the wider environmental and conservation context and also in the specific value they can add to existing fisheries and food security by improving sustainability. The MPA proposal is a welcome development and if implemented **fairly, effectively** and based on **scientific evidence** would no doubt be welcomed by the industry as it could help, for example, with the conser-

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vation of sensitive ecosystems and habitats including spawning and nursery grounds of many commercially important species. However, there is need to acknowledge that Ireland's marine area is also a part of a food production system and fisheries and aquaculture provide a vital source of protein for many people around the world.

The definition of Marine Protected Area as outlined under Head 2 must be clarified. The current definition states *'Marine Protected Area means a geographically defined area of marine character or influence which is protected through legal means for the purpose of conservation or protection of specified species, habitats or ecosystems and their associated ecosystem services and cultural values, and managed with the intention of achieving stated objectives over the long term.'*

This definition is ambiguous and some of the terms are open to interpretation. For example, what does 'marine character or influence' mean? What 'ecosystem services' are being considered with this definition? Will generation of seafood be included as an ecosystem service?

What 'cultural values' are being considered and how are opposing views of different cultural values accounted for within the definition? What is culturally important to one individual may be considered abhorrent by another with different cultural values. Over time cultural values can also change so how will this be accounted for? Further, can cultural values alone be used as the basis for designating an MPA if their conservation is the primary objective, or must they be in conjunction with one of the other environmental criteria?

**The entire proposed bill depends on the interpretation of the definition of an MPA and it is critical that there is no confusion, ambiguity or incorrect interpretation around the meaning of each and every word within it.**

There is a significant lack of aspiration in the text concerning stakeholder engagement in the proposed Bill. Head 9 and 10 are concerned with 'Public Participation' and 'Consultation'. The proposed approach falls far short of the co-creation and co-management advised in the 2020 MPA Advisory Group report. In essence what is being proposed is a notification process that will be open to objections, much like the current Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designation process. The lack of proper engagement in site identification and the other parts of the process will unfairly force the fishing industry to use the only avenue available, which appears to be an objection. This is not stakeholder engagement nor is it effective consultation.

Further under Head 10 the Minister will 'endeavour' to notify a wide range of marine users including those with foreshore interest, foreshore licences and petroleum or gas licences but not the fishing industry apparently. Why are the fishing and aquaculture industries not named as consultees? Are all of these other groups licenced under the DHLGH? Whereas fishing and aquaculture licences are administered by DAFM who appear to have no part in the MPA process.

If so perhaps this is indicative of the lack of cohesion and engagement between the departments.

There should be mandatory engagement between the different Departments within government, particularly those that are concerned with licencing marine activities such as DAFM is for fishing and aquaculture. The fact that DHLGH is not involved in the regulation of sea fisheries and aquaculture should not mean that the MPA process is undertaken in isolation from the primary marine users i.e. fishing and aquaculture industries. Similarly, issues surrounding renewal of aquaculture authorisations require the Minister to seek 'best available scientific evidence' from the DAFM which, potentially, may result in loss of necessary authorisation and create serious uncertainty for operators. Such 'ad hoc' approaches need to be eliminated with the inclusion of appropriate arrangements between relevant Departments included in the Bill. This basic level of government inter-departmental collaboration should not need to be highlighted however in the proposed Bill it seems to be lacking.

**The almost complete absence of reference to fishing or the fishing and aquaculture industries in the proposed bill is striking.**

Fishing and the fishing and aquaculture industries are, and will be, inextricably linked with the identification, designation and management of MPAs and OECMs and will be affected by both the positive and negative aspects. As such there is the potential to develop a mutually beneficial scheme which incorporates both the environmental/ecosystem considerations and international obligations and also the socio-economic and cultural considerations of the fishing industry. As noted in the Draft EU Action plan, *'Sustainable fisheries can and must play a key role in enhancing the protection of Europe's marine ecosystems and achieving good environmental status of EU seas and oceans.'* The proposed Bill in its current format appears to completely disregard the fishing and aquaculture industries.

Further to this, energy security is cited twice in the proposed bill, under Head 7 and Head 16, where it states that it shall be considered when generating a list of potential MPAs. However, **food security** is not mentioned at all when it is perhaps even more relevant and important in the context of the marine environment.

**The composition of the expert body needs to be defined and clarified. Will the expert body be comprised of members from academic institutes or from organisations such as the Marine Institute and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)? Will stakeholders with relevant expertise, from environmental NGO's, fishing, aquaculture or wind energy industry organisations, also be eligible to be part of the Expert Body? What criteria will be established to ensure that the relevant and impartial expertise is available?**

How will the approaches of the Expert Body align with international standards and methods? Will the approach taken for identification of MPAs in Irish waters be consistent with the approaches taken in



Lia Jan off Kilmore Quay - Photo courtesy Alan Hinchy

adjacent EU and UK waters?

The International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) already undertake similar Expert Body roles at the EU level. Will the proposed Expert Body align with these international standards? Will members of the Expert Body have experience of working within ICES and STECF?

It is important to clarify and define the standards for the official expert advice that the Minister will receive in relation to the designation of MPAs.

The proposed Bill makes provision for an 'Effectiveness Review', which every 6 years will conduct a review of the designation and management processes and their operation. This is a valid consideration and giving a time-line under which to make the review is a sensible idea. However, it does not state that the MPA themselves will undergo regular monitoring and be reviewed to assess if the measures implemented have had the desired effect on the ecosystem, habitat or species of concern.

It is important to clarify whether or not the individual MPAs will undergo regular monitoring on a defined time scale to assess if ecosystem restoration has been achieved. Further, if recovery has not been achieved in the absence of the activity or pressure

reported to have caused the issue then what will be the process followed.

**A potential outcome of the MPA designation process is the closure of important fishing grounds to all vessels or to particular métiers or the closure of important aquaculture areas. This could result in significant financial impact within that sector or locality and could have wider effects in other areas with the displacement of existing effort. In the case of some fisheries or aquaculture sites it may not be possible to move fishing grounds or sites and such there would simply be a cessation of fishing or aquaculture activity.**

Given that OECMs are now included as part of the 30% protected areas by 2030 target, this situation should not arise. However it is prudent to put in place a mechanism that could deal with this situation if it does arise and therefore a provision for compensation should be included within the proposed Bill. It must be stressed though that this is the least favourable outcome to the industry and the preference is to work together to identify suitable MPA sites whilst minimising the negative impact on existing fishing and aquaculture activities.

A full unedited version of the above statement can be downloaded from the Oireachtas website



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# Low Take-Up of Decommissioning Scheme

**The decommissioning scheme closed on Friday March 3rd, with a low take-up of twenty applications being pursued.**

**Report by Tom MacSweeney**

**The figure of twenty applications was given by Bord Iascaigh Mara at The Skipper exhibition in Limerick and is the latest known at the time of going to print with this edition of the MARINE TIMES. A more detailed statement is promised by BIM.**

The lower than expected take-up contrasts with initial suggestions that between 60 and 80 boat owners would decide to decommission. It reflects dissatisfaction with several aspects of the scheme, the value placed on fishing boats, the extent of compensation for lost tonnage and potential earnings and the reduction of compensatory lump sums by deducting from the final settlement offered of any payment made under the temporary tie-up scheme. Owners deciding to decommission will have to pay the cost of scrapping their boats themselves.

“We pointed out what should have been the format of a decommissioning scheme which would have worked and been acceptable if our view had been accepted,” said Patrick Murphy, Chief Executive of the Irish South and West Fishermen’s Organisation, “but a political decision was made which has led to the situation that now exists. The knowledge is there of what should and could have been done and we pointed this out. The main thing should have been more compassion showed to people who did not want to leave the industry, who wanted to stay in the industry, but that was made impossible by political decisions. The scheme and criteria was not fit for purpose. If the Minister had gone for the proposal we put forward at the Task Force, there would have been decency and proper treatment of those in the industry. There are people who have been left in a very bad situation.”

“Indications are that the uptake may be much less than expected,” said Aodh O’Donnell, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers’ Organisation. “Obviously there are a number of criteria which mitigate against people taking it up, It is unfortunate that there has to be decommissioning in the whitefish fleet at this time and that is directly responsible to the effects of Brexit.”

“Fishermen have a skill set, the solu-

tion to the needs of the industry is for the Minister to get extra fish for the fishermen to catch,” said Patrick Murphy.

That does not seem likely, taking into account what Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue said when questioned by journalists at The Skipper exhibition.

He repeated his statement about “overfishing” when interviewed on the Pat Kenny programme on NEWSTALK: “We have seen stocks become depleted because of overfishing generally, so we have been moving to a situation where we apply sustainability at all levels to how we fish..”

The MARINE TIMES asked Minister McConalogue to which sector he was referring in regard to ‘overfishing’?

He did not answer directly.

The Department of the Marine’s Press Office sent this reply: “In June 2022, the {European} Commission published its assessment of fishing in the EU ahead of the process of setting Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for 2023. The Commission’s analysis showed that over the period 2003 to 2020, overall fishing pressure in the EU waters of the Northeast Atlantic (i.e. the waters around Ireland) had decreased considerably and the overall status of stocks fished in these waters had improved. In 2020, the ratio between the actual fishing mortality and the fishing mortality at Maximum Sustainable Yield (FMSY) fell below 1 in the Northeast Atlantic for the first time. A stock is fished sustainably at MSY when this ratio is below or equal to 1. The number of stocks being fished sustainably has increased considerably over time. The Marine Institute’s 2022 Stock Book shows that in 2022, 40 of the fish stocks of interest to Ireland were fished below FMSY while in 2013 only 20 stocks were fished at this sustainable level.”

## MARINE TIMES

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

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### Who and What Is It All For?

Breaking ground in Ros a Mhil and naming new piers in Howth – Who is it for? What is it for?

Capital expenditure being dished out for projects at our fishery harbour centres long after our fleets badly needed them – long after our fleets have disappeared.

One can only surmise that it is to aid the bounty our European ‘partners’ are reaping from our seas.

All of these images of new developments around our harbours contrast starkly against the sad images of vessels being ripped apart after decommissioning – it stinks to high heaven.

We should be warmly welcoming the development of our fishery harbour centres and improvements around the coast of smaller harbours for our inshore fleet – But how can you when you hear stories of fishing families being stripped of a tradition and eviscerated of employment opportunities all because it is easier to make the Irish fishing industry disappear rather than fight for its existence and development.

For God’s sake our politicians can’t even say the term ‘fishing families’ – cant even accept that generations of fishing families are being ethnically cleansed from our communities. BUT if there is even a whisper of something in the agriculture sector the term ‘Farming Families’ is bandied about as if it is a holy mantra.

Would the ‘Farming Family’ be excluded from important issues relating to their land? The wider ‘Fishing Family’ were about the sea! As the spatial squeeze in our waters gathers pace between offshore windfarms and a proposal to make 30% of Irish waters Marine Protected Areas, the fishing and seafood sector were excluded from the recent round of consultations on the General Scheme of Marine Protected Areas Bill 2022. If our sea’s main stakeholders are excluded, how can it be a proper consultation?

Where is the Taoiseach’s promises now of taking a leading role in transforming the fishing sector – if the current state is transformative ..... In ainm Dé!

So again, we ask – who and what is it all for?

The cynics will say it’s for the Europeans to land our fish easier. The conspiracy theorists will say it’s for all the offshore windfarms. Our Minister says, ‘the Fishery Harbour Centres are accommodating an ever-increasing amount of diverse marine commercial business, including commercial cargo traffic, cruise liners, restaurants and other leisure, tourism, and social activities.’

Says it all really – one thing for certain is that there will always be Irish seafood caught and readily available for our supermarkets and restaurants ..... sadly, we are looking at the situation where it will no longer be caught by Irish vessels. It will be caught by foreign fleets in Irish waters, landed at improved facilities in Irish ports, exported out of the country on improved road networks and shipped via excellent Irish port facilities to the European mainland – only for us to import our own fish back again ..... **that is who and what it is all for!**

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## MAY

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NFCI Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training  
**02 May - 04 May 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting  
**08 May - 10 May 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle
- GMDSS General Operators Certificate  
**08 May - 19 May 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle

- Three Day Basic Safety Training  
**16 May - 18 May 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere
- STCW Personal Safety and Social Responsibility  
**18 May 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting  
**23 May - 25 May 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere
- Enhanced Safety Training  
**25 May 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training  
**29 May - 31 May 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle
- STCW Medical Care Aboard Ship  
**29 May - 02 June 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere
- Passenger Boat Proficiency  
**29 May - 02 June 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere

## JUNE

- Three Day Basic Safety Training  
**06 June - 08 June 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere
- Advanced Firefighting  
**12 June - 16 June 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training  
**19 June - 21 June 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle
- Advanced Firefighting  
**19 June - 23 June 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere
- Navigation Control Course  
**26 June - 07 July 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere
- Passenger Boat Proficiency  
**26 June - 30 June 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere

## JULY

- STCW Medical First Aid  
**03 July - 05 July 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training  
**04 July - 06 July 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere

- STCW Medical Care Aboard Ship  
**10 July - 14 July 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere
- Passenger Boat Proficiency  
**10 July - 14 July 2023**  
NFCI Castletownbere
- Passenger Boat Proficiency  
**17 July - 21 July 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle

## AUGUST

- Deck Officer Second Hand Full Certificate of Competency  
**28 August - 15 December 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle

## SEPTEMBER

- Deckhand Foundation Programme  
**04 September - 13 October 2023**  
NFCI Greencastle

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Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland





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



**Killybegs Fishermen's**  
ORGANISATION LTD.

**The publication by the European Commission of four action plans; the continuing Norwegian / Irish blue whiting situation; access to the Brexit Fund and still no fuel compensation for the Irish fishing fleet**

**Sean O'Donoghue, Chief Executive Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation**

There are a lot of issues in these four documents. The first is not the Review we were looking for. It is only a report and not what we were looking for. There will have to be negotiations in relation to that. The second is the action plan in relation to biodiversity and one of the galling things in that is that they are planning to ban bottom-trawling which is a big issue for us. The third relates to the energy transition which is very important for the fleet and the fourth one referring to market organisation for fishery and seafood products, so all four are going to take up a huge amount of time. There are serious implications for us and we will be actively engaged in relation to them over the next number of months.

There has been no change in the Norwegian attitude to their demand for increased access to Irish waters. As it stands there is no change in the situation and no agreement is in place. In the next four to six weeks all of the blue whiting would be inside of Irish waters. If an agreement is not reached within the next month I cannot see it happening this year.

I am really annoyed that we have been waiting and waiting for the Minister to introduce a fuel subsidy scheme. The French have extended their supports and it is galling that we have not got any assistance.

The European fund established to compensate Irish fishermen adversely impacted by the permanent loss of quota due to Brexit, has yet to be distributed to the most affected sector some 17 months after it was first recommended. Our members are extremely frustrated at the inordinate and punitive delay in providing financial support to pelagic (mackerel, horse mackerel, blue whiting, boarfish and herring) fishermen which is ironically, the sector most impacted, from the Brexit fallout. The number one economic driver of the fishing industry here, mackerel, has been reduced by a staggering 26%. We have been repeatedly fed the line that our modest slice of the €1

billion Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) was subject to the Department receiving national sanction and State aid approval at EU level. However, Denmark was formally given EU Commission approval under State aid rules meaning the way is now effectively cleared for our monies to be dispersed here. If Danish fishermen can draw down the funding for losses of quota due to Brexit, why can't we get it? The most damning aspect of this protracted fiasco is that if we don't distribute this funding by year end, it will be returned to Europe and permanently lost to our fishermen. This is potentially an appalling vista and we're calling for the most urgent of political action by Minister McConalogue on this.

In the absence of financial support and other burden sharing measures, Ireland's pelagic sector will shed more than 1,200 jobs by 2030 because of Brexit. From 2021 to the end of 2023, pelagic fishermen will have had more than 37,000 tonnes of their mackerel quota stripped away as a direct result of Brexit, resulting in loss of more than €52 million. This fishery is the cornerstone of KFO members' businesses with fishermen in the North West feeling the cold wind from Brexit for more than two years now and further hits to come over the next three years.



**The long delay in paying out compensation for the effects of Brexit on the pelagic sector and that the monies provided by the EU will go back unpaid; decommissioning; the Norwegians and blue whiting**

**Aodh O'Donnell, Chief Executive Irish Fish Producers' Organisation**

The pelagic sector was most affected by the Brexit transfers of mackerel away from Ireland and the serious financial effect that has had on fishermen in the sector. There was provision made within the Task Force for funding to be provided to take account of the loss of earnings. Resolution of this has been outstanding for some time and we strongly urge the Minister and his Department to deal with this. We are aware of the heavy impact it has had on people in the sector. This money was intended to be compensation for significant financial losses. It is European money that has been provided and if it is not used it will go back to Europe. This matter must be resolved soon.

In the decommissioning the indications are that the uptake may be much less than expected. Obviously there are a number of criteria which mitigate against people taking it up. It is unfortunate that there has to be decommissioning in the whitefish fleet at this time and that is directly responsible to the effects of Brexit.

On the Norwegian blue whiting issue the government has held firm, the Commission is supportive of the reasonable demands from Ireland. The sector is prepared to do

business but there has to be some form of reciprocation. It is good to know that the landings in the most recent days. First of all there is significant abundance of stock and secondly the stock that has been caught in recent days seem to be very suitable for food production, which is good for us in Ireland, our specialisation, as we have been developing markets for the species.

Our members are satisfied that Ireland is holding steady on the Norwegian situation. No deal is better than a bad deal.

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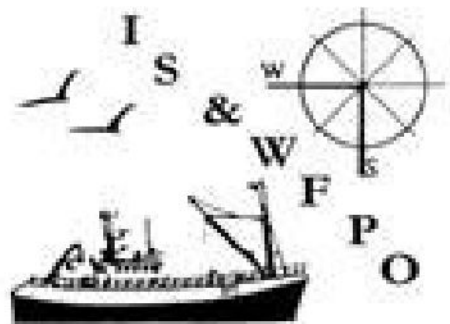
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**Decommissioning; Why are fishermen and the fishing industry not listened to? The lack of knowledge about the cumulative effect of wind farms on the seas and oceans.**

**Patrick Murphy, CEO, of the Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation**

We pointed out what should have been the format of a decommissioning scheme which would have worked and been acceptable if our view had been accepted, but a political decision was made which has led to the situation that now exists. The knowledge is there of what should and could have been done and we pointed this out. The main thing should have been more compassion showed to people who did not want to leave the industry, who wanted to stay in the industry, but that was made impossible by political decisions. The scheme and criteris was not fit for purpose.

If the Minister had gone for the proposal we put forward at the Task Force, there would have been decency and proper treatment of those in the industry. There are people who have been left in a very bad situation. Fishermen have a skill set, the solution is for the Minister to get extra fish for the fishermen to catch. I have been in the UK talking to those who have this fish available and would be willing to trade with Ireland, in regard to stocks we are badly lacking in monkfish, hake, haddock. There are problems, very difficult ones, but there are solutions, we need our politicians and Minister to listen to the industry and work with us, not against us to try and solve the problems.

We have always put forward reasonable proposals. It would be good to have seen some of them implemented. But fishermen, the fishing industry is not properly listened to. It is frustrating what has been going on. We can offer solutions, but the people who are in a position to make things happen on our suggestions, do not seem to want to make them happen.

On wind farms and their effect on the industry, there have been moves to form a group between European countries about the cumulative effect of all the proposals being made, in Irish, the UK, Baltic and other waters, the Dutch coast, the Bay of Biscay. The cumulative effect could mean that, for migratory stocks, there would be no sea or ocean that wouldn't have this technology within them and the pulses that come from them, the wind sheer from them, the displacement of water and the movement of water around the turbines. No one knows, adding all this together what they could do to north-west waters, the rich fishing grounds and marine life within them. Whales and dolphins use sound to navigate. What will this do to them? There is a lack of knowledge no one knows. The knowledge gap is massive. There are huge questions about what is a massive change in the seas and it is blinkered. Fishermen are being told to make changes to their nets, to equipment and yet there is a blinkered view on what the wind farms effects, floating and fixed will have. Where does it all end?

### Official Notice of Ship Name Change

I Séamus Ó Drisceoil, Secretary of Thar Tonn Teoranta of Ionad Fiontair, Oileán Cléire, An Sciobairín, Co Chorcaí, hereby give notice that I have applied to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport under Section 67 of the Mercantile Marine Act 1955 in respect of our ship 'Spirit of Doolin', Official Number 405080, of Registered Tonnage '34 Tons' [Net], for permission to change her name to 'Carraig Aonair', to be registered in the said new name at the Port of 'Galway'.

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.

Signed, Séamus Ó Drisceoil, Secretary of Thar Tonn Teo.

## New €10m "Fishing Pier" at Howth Fishery Harbour Centre Officially Named

Minister McConalogue has officially named the new €10m "Fishing Pier" at Howth Fishery Harbour Centre, which is one six State-owned Fishery Harbour Centre. This major redevelopment project was funded through the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme.



John Lynch Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation and Minister Charlie McConalogue at the launch of the new "Fishing Pier" at Howth Harbour.

Officially opening "The Fishing Pier", the Minister said: "I'm delighted to officially open the new "Fishing Pier". It is an integral part of my Department's overall strategy to provide dedicated, stand-alone fit for purpose facilities for the fishing industry in Howth. The newly redeveloped "Fishing Pier" facilitated the moving of vessels from the west pier onto this redeveloped pier. I must also acknowledge our main contractor, John Sisk, and Consulting Engineer Malachy Walsh and Partners who overcame COVID 19 restrictions and supply chain delays to deliver a first-class structure."

The works comprised of the construction of 134 metres of new quay wall, dredging, stabilisation and infill of subsea material which covers a greatly enlarged area of 6,500m<sup>2</sup>. Works commenced in October 2020 and were completed in April 2022 at a cost of €10 million. The additional berthing space created relieves vessel congestion issues and enables greater segregation between the activities of fishing vessels and the marine tourism and leisure activities which are mainly concentrated on the West Pier.

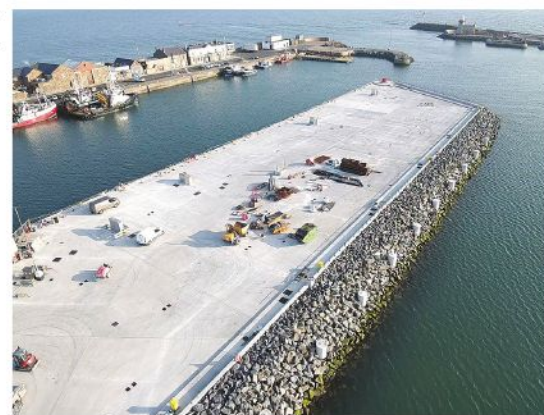
In 2021, almost 90% of all fish landed into Ireland was into the six State-owned Fishery Harbour Centres. At Howth, these landings were valued at c.€12.9 million.

The Minister noted: "The six Fishery Harbour Centres are critical infrastructure for our seafood industry. By attracting increased fish landings, we will deliver the raw materials to drive and maximise the opportunities for primary and secondary processing and ensure a strong Irish seafood processing industry. The importance of these primary and secondary food production activities is reflected in the Government's Food Vision 2030 policy".

The Department has plans for further significant investment with a dredging and reclamation project for Howth Fishery Harbour Centre

and planning permission for this project is currently under consideration by An Bord Pleanála.

After unveiling the plaque, Minister McConalogue concluded by saying: "In addition to the Fisheries and Seafood Production industries, the Fishery Harbour Centres are accommodating an ever-increasing amount of diverse marine commercial business, including commercial cargo traffic, cruise liners, restaurants and other leisure, tourism, and social activities. All of these activities complement the critical economic activity generated by our fishing industry and help to maintain the vitality of these coastal communities."







## The Fishing Industry Cannot Be Sacrificed to Wishful Thinking

Report by Enda Conneely, IIMRO

**R**eality begins to dawn....  
**R**eveloper-led projects are not the best model for any but a very small number of wealthy investors.

Rushing headlong into things is rarely successful...

And again we see that headline grabbing targets are no substitute for basic hard work and considered planning.

Our waters are the richest fishing grounds in the EU. We are aware of how very little of that resource is allocated to Ireland, but the countries that have managed to corner it do have the good sense not to tolerate its destruction. There is potential for generating energy in the ocean but creating a "gold rush" free for all as has been done here will prove its undoing.

We need an audit of what we use all this energy for in the first place in order to see what is necessary for humanity and what is not.

Building power hungry industries while we are in short supply is not a good idea.

If we are impacting the climate by our activities, increasing those activities is not a solution.

Creating what is essentially a currency for wealthy investors in the carbon credit

system merely makes life miserable for populations, while enriching a few.

Trading a valuable food resource on our doorstep for electricity will not end well.

Food shortages are talked about constantly now and the price of foodstuffs is increasing. We still do have access to our fish. The management of the resource under the CFP has not been good but can be improved.

We still do have wind and ocean energy.

We should manage both for the benefit of the people.

Reducing our insatiable demand for power would be a start.

Small-scale private and community based systems are doable.

Scale is a double edged sword. Big brings big problems as well as big money.

A mistake at a large scale does colossal damage. It has not been unheard of in history that a small group of experts have made egregious errors. Questioning is the bedrock of science.

Areas that are suitable for ocean energy should be identified carefully.

The fishing industry cannot be sacrificed to wishful thinking. We need real food to sustain us, not virtual food.



*National Inshore  
 Fishermen's Association*

## Who Decided to Call Us 'Fishers' - Why Is BIM More Tourist-Oriented Than Fishing and Inaccurate Claims About Endangered Species

Michael Desmond, Chairman, NIFA

**T**here have been media reports based on the BIM / Marine Institute Shellfish Stocks and Fisheries Review which claimed that an increasing number of skates and rays were being caught and seals as by-catch and affecting endangered species. These are giving a wrong impression because the figures in the report are saying that we caught no fish are using lack of data to paint a bad picture of those.

There are figures trying to show that we went from taking zero in 2017 and 2018 to a bigger amount, but they had no data for those years and they put us in as zero which is not correct. There was no data and now what is being given is a wrong impression of us and inshore fishermen are being shown in a bad light.

### BIM and Tourism

BIM has been doing a 'Road Show' about the FLAG scheme and the Blue Economy. There is absolutely everything for tourism, nothing for fishing if you look into what I thought was a FLAG scheme for local fisheries groups. There is absolutely anything and everything for tourism and there is zero for fishing. The whole point I thought for this scheme was that 'FLAG' stood for Fisheries Local Action Group and the money was sent from Europe for fisheries.

There are castles that have been done up walkways, greenways, blueways, kayaking,

canoeing, every single thing for tourism and if you go to the boat section of it, it provides for whale-watching boats, tourism boats, for sight-seeing boats, you can even do a course to learn a foreign language to speak to tourists and written underneath in each section is "not for fishing vessels." As far as I am concerned BIM is being the Irish tourist board. How can they give this money that was supposed to be for fishing to the tourist industry?

### No Grants for Inshore

Then there is the Brexit Reserve fund money, the only thing inshore got in the last five years, now we hear that, like the temporary tie-up scheme, any money got will have to be paid back if other grants are obtained, they will be less that money. Not that there are any there for us now anyway.

### The Word "Fishers"

Then there is the word "fishers." We were described as fishermen for thousands of years, in the Bible in ancient Biblical texts. Now some politically-correct academic, in case we should insult someone outside the industry, we have to change our name. No one asked us about that and no women that I know in the industry asked for it. Yet it is being foisted upon us.

You can look the word up in dictionaries and see that it refers to animals or mammals that catch food. So we are being likened to that. Would any other industry accept being described like that.

No one likes it. It is like we are being wiped off. What is going on is showing how we are regarded.



Reflections at Greencastle - Photo courtesy Catherine Turner

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# Irish Seafood Has One of The Lowest Carbon Footprints of Any Produce in Ireland

**A new study by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) - has found that Irish produced seafood is among the lowest carbon food produced in Ireland. This study provides the Irish seafood sector with access to reliable data for the first time. It identifies areas for targeted strategies to help minimise the carbon emissions associated with the production of seafood.**

The Carbon Footprint Report of the Irish Seafood Sector found that carbon emissions for the sector are just under 400,000 tonnes of CO2 – less than 2% of those produced in other key food sectors. This number includes the emissions for both farmed and wild caught seafood. Farmed mussels (rope grown), oysters and wild caught mackerel in particular have been shown to have very low carbon emissions.

Caroline Bocquel, BIM Chief Executive Officer welcomed the newly published report. Speaking from the Irish Skipper Expo in Limerick – a trade show event for the fishing industry that BIM sponsors - she said it provided scientific evidence that the sector has significantly low levels of greenhouse gas emissions:

“Access to reliable data is crucial to understand which steps of seafood production create the most emissions. Being able to feed people in a healthy, nutritious, and equitable way, without adding to global warming, is key.

This comprehensive study has taken almost two years to complete. Delivering the data required input from industry and other stakeholders. The findings of the report demonstrate how the sector is producing a beneficial, nutritious, and safe food with low environmental impacts.”

“In fishing, fuel accounts for more than 90% of carbon emissions, while processing and transportation accounts for 10% of the emissions. Already, we are seeing transitions away from exclusively diesel-powered engines to hybrid vessels and alternative fuels are also being explored. Later this year BIM will produce a report under the Climate Action Plan 2023 on the role these alternative fuels may play in the future of the Irish seafood sector. We now have a great opportunity to reduce emissions even further.”

The Irish fishing sector has faced significant challenges in recent years, including the closure of markets due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing im-

part of Brexit. The Government’s Seafood Taskforce – which included seafood representative organisations – produced a set of recommendations in its final report. These include business supports, funding for capital projects and development of skills to allow seafood businesses to build or adapt their operating models. It also extends to other businesses in coastal communities, to help ensure these are sustainable.

BIM is currently administering schemes with a total value of €265m under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) delivering on the recommendations of the Seafood Taskforce. The aim of all schemes is to develop and restructure the sector, ensuring a

profitable and sustainable seafood industry providing jobs and economic activity in coastal communities dependent on fishing.

“The seafood sector has shown immense resilience and strength in its ability to adapt to changing marketplaces and socio-political impacts. BIM is working closely with industry and other stakeholders to develop supports that allow businesses to be agile and take advantage of new market opportunities,” said Caroline Bocquel.

“Coupled with the fact that seafood has one of the lowest carbon footprints of any food produced in Ireland, this paves the way for a sustainable future for the sector.”



MFV Laura Louise heading out into the wild west - Photo courtesy Aiden Deegan



## Committed to Sustainability

The Clean Oceans Initiative is the umbrella name for a range of BIM and seafood industry supported programmes to minimise the impact their sector has on our oceans, including Fishing for Litter, Co-ordinated Local Aquaculture Management Systems (CLAMS), the new pilot Gear Retirement Scheme, shore and pier cleans.

Involvement in the Clean Oceans Initiative demonstrates the Irish seafood industry’s commitment to sustainability for a healthy ocean and contributes towards Ireland’s responsibilities under the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the EU plastics strategy.

For more information visit [www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie) or simply scan here:



An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine



EUROPEAN UNION  
This measure is part-financed by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund





*IFA Aquaculture Executive Teresa Morrissey writes about the organisation's annual conference which was held recently in Limerick*

# IFA Aquaculture

## Critical Need for Government to Commit to Aquaculture

**O**pening the IFA Aquaculture annual conference and AGM in Limerick IFA President Tim Cullinan said that there is “a critical need for commitment from Government” to ensure that the economic potential and sustainable future of the Irish aquaculture sector is realised.

“Prioritising immediate action to implement a functioning aquaculture licensing system must be a key priority for the future development of the Irish aquaculture sector, including appropriate legislative changes required to facilitate this,” he said.

Irish aquaculture is worth €180m to the Irish economy, providing almost 2,000 direct jobs and contributing to 8,500 indirect jobs in the seafood sector, sustaining coastal communities.

There was a very strong attendance of over 150 delegates with very positive engagement between the industry, stakeholders, DAFM officials, and State agencies throughout the day. The Marine Institute were also on hand to demonstrate the new DAFM online AquaMIS system along with a number of exhibitors that provide services to the wider aquaculture sector.

### IFA Aquaculture Launches First-of-Its-Kind Industry Licensing and Compliance Resource

A new, industry-focused policy guide, ‘Best Practice Guidance & Information on Aquaculture Licensing, Legislative Responsibilities & Environmental Objectives’, developed by IFA Aquaculture in conjunction with Aquacence Consulting was launched. It is the first fully compre-

hensive resource on licensing and environmental objectives for those operating in the sector.

IFA Aquaculture Chairman Michael Mulloy is delighted with this resource for members, the wider sector and anyone with an interest in aquaculture.

“Those in the sector know our obligations under multiple EU Directives and national legislation. However, until now, there has never been a guide that brought all relevant information together in a ‘one-stop-shop’ format. This can prove challenging for people keen to ensure they meet the highest standards and adhere to multiple regulations and directives. This guide removes any uncertainty and sets out exactly what producers seeking aquaculture licence renewals, and new applicants, must undertake to be fully compliant. It is a living document that will be continually updated if and when legislation changes.”

Topics at the conference included the next EMFAF programme, the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture, the Carbon Footprint of the Irish Aquaculture Sector, Marine Protected Areas and the DAFM AquaMIS project.

Michael Mulloy said, “There have been many challenges for the Irish aquaculture sector in recent months, with many producers struggling to deal with the rising cost of inputs, market instability and logistics.

“Prioritising immediate action to implement a functioning aquaculture licensing system must be a key priority for any future development of the Irish aquaculture industry, including appropriate legislative changes required to facilitate this.”



Michael Mulloy, IFA Aquaculture Chairman, Caroline Bocquel, BIM CEO, Minister Charlie McConalogue, Teresa Morrissey, IFA Aquaculture Executive and IFA President Tim Cullinan at the IFA Aquaculture Conference in Limerick.

## ‘Making Ground’ at €30m Deep Water Quay Development at Ros an Mhíl, Galway

Minister McConalogue visited the site of the new Deep-Water quay development under construction at the State-owned Fishery Harbour Centre at Ros an Mhíl, Galway. The project is being funded through the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine’s Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme.

Welcoming the commencement of the works, the Minister said: “I’m delighted to be here today to mark the start of the works on the Deep-Water quay project. In this case, we are ‘making ground’ rather than breaking it, to add 200 metres of quayside to this facility so we can accommodate larger fishing vessels and attract additional landings from both Irish and non-Irish fishing vessels.”

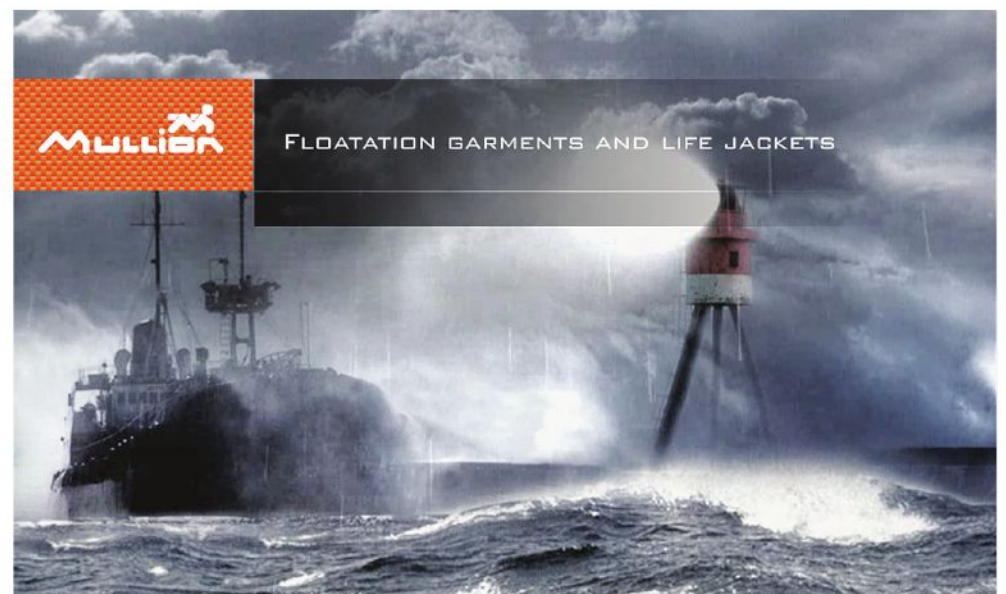
In 2021, almost 90% of all fish landed into Ireland was into the 6 State-owned Fishery Harbour Centres. At Ros an Mhíl, these landings were valued at c.€15.9 million. This primary production is critical to supplying the downstream indigenous seafood processing and export industries and in sustaining the livelihoods of coastal communities. The importance of these primary and secondary food production activities are reflected in the Government’s Food Vision 2030 policy.

The Minister added: “This critical infrastructure further demonstrates the importance this Government places on safeguarding the future of our fisheries dependent coastal communities. By providing a first-

class landing infrastructure, we are ensuring the seafood industry can operate effectively and be efficiently serviced in this region”

While primarily benefitting fishing vessels, the new quay will also be available to large vessels such as Irish Navy fleet, Marine Institute Research Vessels, marine survey vessels and marine leisure craft. The Deep-Water quay is a flagship project under the Department’s 2023 Capital Programme. The Contractor, Ward & Burke Construction Limited, commenced works on site at the end of January and it is expected that the project will be completed by December 2024.

The Minister concluded by saying: “With this investment, this Government is recognising Ros an Mhíl Fishery Harbour Centre as an economic hub with potential for downstream development and job creation in this region. It is fitting that a local company, Ward and Burke Construction Ltd, is undertaking the works and I have every confidence that other local businesses will seize the opportunities provided by this development in time.”



# Designed for and by fishermen

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# THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

## Noirin Burke, Director of Education at Galway Atlantiquaria

Noirin Burke knows a lot about fishing. Her studies in GMIT focused on herring and her 'post-grad' was all about monitoring stock movements.

**A**bsolute enthusiasm for the marine sphere comes across strongly as we talk about the privately-owned Atlantiquaria on the seafront at Salthill, which has currently launched a conservation project focused on maritime education and engagement, involving local community groups and individuals, looking at native species and habitats, with emphasis on the marine and freshwater.

"We are a small operation, dedicated to spreading the maritime message, so it's not a massive amount of money, a thousand Euros each for five projects, but we want to support the work of others, individuals or community groups who are doing things in the marine sector. So it's a small conservation project, supporting habitats, or looking at a marine issue, perhaps through storytelling, maybe an art presentation. It's really all about a focus on species and water, highlighting conservation. It might just be the help a group or individual needs to support what they are doing."

All the details about how to apply are on the Aquarium's website at: [www.nationalaquarium.ie](http://www.nationalaquarium.ie)

The Aquarium itself is located on the Promenade in Salthill, close to the shore of Galway Bay on Grattan Beach, Salthill. "Ireland's largest native species aquarium," it describes itself, owned by Liam Twomey from Kerry and has been 20 years' in existence. "We are caretakers of hundreds of native animals from our rivers, lakes, canals and oceans and have a network of conservation and environmental groups around the country, including the Irish Ocean Literacy Network, an all-Island grouping of individuals and organisations working towards an ocean literate society across Ireland."

Meeting with the general public, is the biggest part of its operations, Noirin tells me. "About 85 to 90 per cent of our visitors are people who are walking the promenade, perhaps on a family day out. What we want to do is that, when they come through the doors, we highlight the amazing species in the rivers, seas, oceans, around Ireland and the issues those species and creatures and their habitats are facing. We want to be involved in discussions with people."

Noirin has been with the Aquarium since 2018, so I ask what changes she has noticed over the years. Are people more interested now in maritime matters?

"It varies greatly from person-to-person," she tells me. She has noticed "a real increase in people's interest in the marine sphere," but it still needs more attention, "to make it the topic of



household and general discussions, to become more part of our lives."

She has been giving classes to adults when we talk and tells me how asking people if they had seen the INFOMAR map of Ireland and how it shows the extent of the Irish marine sphere, elicited a varied response.

"That map has been around a long time and some people say that 'yes' they have seen it, they know that it shows Ireland has a lot of marine area. So you would think that

most people would have seen this map of their country, of our marine resources, but there are those who haven't. There are those who say they have never seen it and don't know what it is about. That shows there is still a way to go in appreciating the marine sphere, in understanding how important the ocean is, how it affects our everyday lives. As an educational tool that map is very important, showing the vast maritime resources and value we have. People appreciate what we have in marine resources when they are told about them."

She makes an interesting suggestion about communicating the maritime message by information signs, such as along tourist routes like the Wild Atlantic Way.

"There is a lot shown on signs about physical features and all that is good, but I think how wonderful it would be if there was more, such as about the social elements of the maritime communities, the people. These are missed a bit and could be developed. Wouldn't that be great, to spread information in simple, but direct ways?"

"Providing information is so important. People really appreciate it and that comes back very clearly when they are told. They appreciate what we have and it opens a new perspective for them on the marine sector."

Noirin says Galway is a great maritime centre, with so much based in the area and maritime-focused, the Marine Institute, NUI Galway, GMIT, the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology which evolved into the Atlantic Technological University.

"Galway is very fortunate in the concentration of so much of the marine sector. What we want to do at the Atlantiquaria is to engage, educate and inspire. That covers from sharks and other species in the seas around Ireland to freshwater fish that glide along our rivers and under the surface of our lakes and the colourful and exotic creatures from warmer climates which have been increasingly coming into Irish waters."

Engaging people and attracting them into taking more interest in marine and freshwater life is her driving force in life.

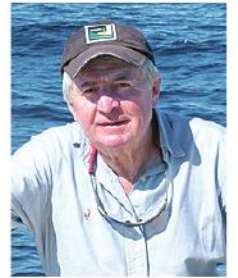
"We deliver in-house education and outreach and are part of a number of school programmes, including SFI Curious Minds and the Explorers Education Programme, funded by the Marine Institute. Sharing with the public the passion, knowledge and expertise of those working in the marine sphere, the delight and revelations of discovery and investigation, does get a positive response, engaging people formally and informally, in person and online."

It seems to me to be a pretty good way to advance the maritime message to the public.





# Tom MacSweeney's Maritime Diary



## An Island Nation – Dominated by Urban Concern

**T**here is a new concept in the environmental world, devised in the Sorbonne Business School, part of the University of Paris. It is being described as the “15-minute city urban planning concept.”



Note – “city urban planning concept.” No reference outside of the urban sphere.

“Cities are key to climate action, a new concept of urban living can help us reach the Paris Agreement targets for climate change” according to those promoting the view that “everyone” should be able to source what they need – shops, schools, workplaces - within 15 minutes of their home, preferably by foot or bike. This will be good for the environment and quality of life, they say and, as it is being promoted around Europe, the concept can be expected to arrive in Ireland.

City lifestyles bring consequent needs of high-density populations, little of which is heard about their impact on climate.

The concept demonstrates zero awareness of other living communities – coastal and maritime and of the workplace of the sea, essential for food and other supplies. This island nation needs the sea and ships

on which there is 95 percent dependence for exports and imports.

The Government and its State administrative system needs to appreciate and value the maritime sector. It does not do so sufficiently.

“The 15-minute city idea is a long-term aspiration to add more services to neighbourhoods and plan cities better,” say those who describe the concept as “achieving better neighbourhoods.”

“Better neighbourhoods” should be applied equally to coastal and rural areas. But the concepts of national strategists are more urban-focused. This is a problem of strategic long-term planning in Ireland. State concentration appears centred on cities and urbanity.

An urban area is defined as the region surrounding a city, but there is more to life than city living. Coastal communities are bordered by the foreshore.

“The coast is an edgy place,” wrote Carl Safina, in ‘The View from Lazy Point: A Natural Year in an Unnatural World,’ winner of the 2012 Orion Book Award. An American ecologist and author about human relationship with the natural world, his description of a coast area can apply globally: “Living on the coast presents certain stark realities and a wild, rare beauty. Continent confronts ocean. Weather intensifies. It’s a place of tide and tantrum; of flirtations among fresh and saltwaters, forests and shores; of tense negotiations with an ocean that gives much but demands more. Every year the raw rim coast gets hammered and reshaped like molten bronze. It roils with power and a sometimes terrible beauty. The coast remains youthful, daring, uncertain about tomorrow. The guessing, the risk; in a way, we’re all thrill seekers here.”

Are “thrill-seekers” needed to populate the coastal regions of Ireland?

Current issues - the future of the fishing industry and communities dependent upon it, the introduction of SACs (Special Areas of Conservation); SPAs (Special Protection Areas); MPAs (Marine Protected Areas) and inshore wind farms concern coastal communities. There are 440 declared SAC sites on the National Parks and Wildlife Service website. Increasingly it is being claimed by many affected in those communities, that their concerns are being given less attention and consideration than developers and environmental interests.

This is an island nation, so why are maritime issues under the control of the Department of Housing? What is the extent of marine and coastal experience within that Department? Why is no role given to the Department of the Marine? Does that reflect Government thinking towards the maritime sector where Civil Service bureaucracy has succeeded, over the years, in dividing the sector between various Government Departments, according it less influence in State administration.

Does that reflect urban bias in Government?

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Kilmore Quay - Photo by Alan Hinchy



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### 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](mailto:della.osullivan@bim.ie)

### Greencastle College

National Fisheries College of Ireland,  
Greencastle, Co. Donegal

Maria McCarron, College Administrator

**T:** + 353 74 938 1068

**E:** [maria.mccarron@bim.ie](mailto:maria.mccarron@bim.ie)



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Stunning photo of sunrise on Lough Foyle courtesy Catherine Turner



# Volunteers Needed



**Niamh Stephenson, Media Manager salutes the hardworking fundraising volunteers around the coast**



**This is a salute to the volunteer fundraisers. The RNLI is looking for volunteers for its fundraising teams in both the Republic and Northern Ireland. They are needed to help raise financial support for station lifesaving crews. This is a major part of the work of the lifeboat service.**

I frequently mention the people on our lifeboats, their retirements and their milestones and these are often the stories that I get asked about from the column. However, I don't often mention the fundraisers, the people who can go out and talk about money and who always have an eye for an opportunity. I can clearly see the correlation between the lifeboat launch and the funds raised to make the service happen.

There is currently a recruitment drive for volunteer fundraisers in the RNLI. We have been highlighting some of the men and women who do these roles and I thought I'd share a few of them here as they are the ones on the other side of the lifesaving service at the stations.



Kilmore Quay is a great fishing village and Grainne O'Brien is the secretary of the Kilmore Quay Guild. Growing up in a family steeped in fishing and volunteering for the lifeboat, she had an early appreciation of the significance of fundraising for the charity in her community. 'I come from a fishing family and my grandfather Paddy Hayes and my uncle John Hayes were both crew on the lifeboat in Kilmore Quay.

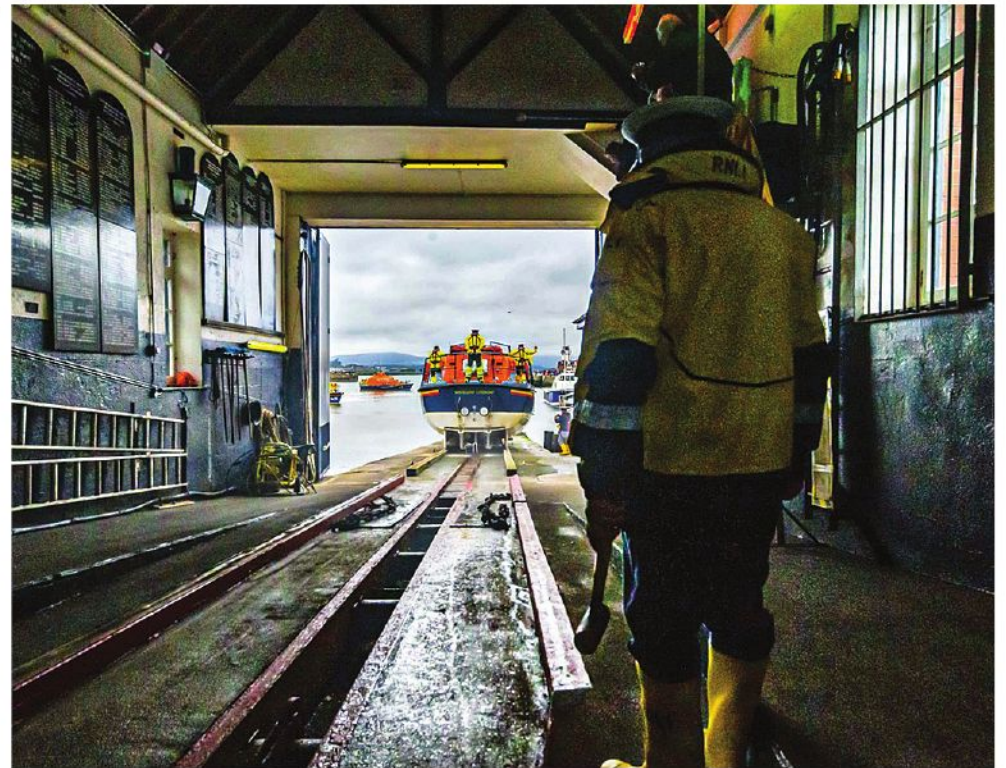
From a kid growing up, I always knew the importance of the lifeboat to our community. I first got involved in volunteering as a teenager helping out in the shop over the summer breaks."



Alan Couser is a Committee member on the Donaghadee RNLI Fundraising Branch and is Chair of Donaghadee RNLI. He has been volunteering for the charity for almost 23 years. He became the Honorary Secretary at Donaghadee RNLI in 2000, and did that role for 16 years. My personal interjection here, is that Alan had a secret weapon for his huge success on lifeboat collections days. He would dress his huge and very loveable dog in an imitation cloth lifejacket and have him stand beside him with his own collection box. I witnessed this with my own eyes and it was a sure fire hit.



Janella and John Fitzmaurice have been fundraising for the RNLI since 2003. Despite moving from Kildare to Galway, distance has proved to be no barrier as Janella is Chair of the Kildare branch while her husband John is a former chair and current committee member. The couple regularly make the almost two-hour drive from Galway to attend various fundraising meetings and events. They say that "we go out in the rain, but the lifeboat crew go out



**At 1:30pm on Sunday 28th April 2019 to the sound of loud applause, John Sillery, struck the pin which released the Annie Blaker down the slipway and into the water for the final time. John has now retired after 34 years of service to the RNLI. Photo: Patrick Browne**

in the storms." When collecting, they hear many different stories. On one occasion when collecting outside a rugby match, a man approached them from Scotland to say he was a fisherman and had been rescued by the RNLI. They may not be near a lifeboat station but their volunteering brings it to them when they are out and about.



Odharnait Collins is the chair of the Baltimore RNLI Fundraising Branch having first got involved in 2019. Her RNLI roots go much deeper as lifeboating is very much a way of life for the Collins family. "My grandfather Christy Collins was the Coxswain of the Baltimore lifeboat," Odharnait explains. "I remember the stories and awards of his from my childhood. Then my dad Pat who does relief mechanic and relief Coxswain, and his brothers, joined the crew when they came of age, and my brother Diarmuid joined the crew when he was 17. My mother Joan was involved in fundraising and after she passed away in 2018, the committee asked if I would step up. Growing up, I have always been aware of the importance of the lifeboat and the great lengths that the crew go to and it is always a relief to everyone to know it is there when needed."



Mary McDonagh is the Souvenir Secretary on the Clifden/Connemara RNLI Fundraising Branch and volunteers her time for a range of fundraising events throughout the year. She got involved four years ago: 'I lost two brothers at sea and I wanted to help

out the crew who were there for us when we needed them, I wanted to give back. Those crew are all volunteers and their lifesaving work is reliant on the donations raised through fundraising and they really deserve it.' I personally got to know Mary well through the Launch a Memory lifeboat appeal when she put her brothers names on the lifeboat and kindly let me share her story to encourage others to come forward and put a loved one on the Clifden lifeboat.

These are just some of the incredible people who are RNLI volunteer fundraisers.

You may see yourself in some of them or recognise their stories and think you could do that too. Or you may know someone who might be interested. There is more information on how to get involved at [www.rnli.org/OneCrewVolunteers](http://www.rnli.org/OneCrewVolunteers)

## Wicklow

**John Sillery, the long-serving Head Launcher at Wicklow Lifeboat Station, has retired after 34 years of dedicated service to the RNLI.**



John joined the RNLI on New Year's Day 1989 as a volunteer winch operator. He was appointed head launcher at Wicklow and took charge on the slip of all launching and recovery activities for the all-weather Tyne class lifeboat RNLB Annie Blaker. In lifeboat history, John will be remembered for launching the last operation Tyne Class slipway lifeboat in the RNLI fleet, at 1:30pm on Sunday 28 April 2019 to the sound of loud applause, John Sillery, struck the pin which released the Annie Blaker down the slipway and into the water for the final time, ending an era that spanned over three decades at Wicklow and signalling the retirement of the last Tyne class lifeboat from the RNLI fleet.

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### The Maritime Museum

I was working in Dun Laoghaire Lifeboat Station when I popped across the road to meet some of the incredible people who run and volunteer at the National Maritime Museum. We are planning something exciting with them for the RNLI's 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year.

Whenever I am in there, I find that time moves at a different pace. Joe and Brian are the most incredible hosts and you'll find them there most Tuesdays. This little gem of a museum is one of the country's best-kept secrets. It is a treasure trove of maritime history and is housed in a former church complete with pulpit, baptism font and stained glass windows. The library is crammed full of historical texts and they love to see families visit. Situated across the road from Dun Laoghaire lifeboat station, it is available to rent for events and a warm welcome awaits. I can't wait to talk about what we are planning there but if you find yourself in Dublin with an hour or two to spare, the museum in Dun Laoghaire is a great place to go. Even better, make it a Tuesday and tell Joe and Brian I sent you.

### Lough Derg

Lough Derg RNLI volunteers have thanked Catherine Gleeson who retired after five years as the station's Deputy Launching Authority.

Following their February monthly meeting they held a party for Catherine, a lawyer by profession, who said that she was sad to be leaving. "It has been a great honour to volunteer at the station. I am in awe of the crew which have my enormous respect for their bravery when out on a shout."



Catherine with her parting gift of an oil painting by Tipperary artist Aine Quinlan. Photo by Eleanor Hooker, Lough Derg RNLI

### Dun Laoghaire Lifeboat

The Council of the RNLI has awarded Stephen Wynne of Dun Laoghaire Harbour Lifeboat Station the prestigious 'Excellence in Volunteering' award in recognition of his dedicated commitment to the RNLI since 1975.

"Stephen has been an outstanding ambassador for the RNLI and has dedicated himself to building strong and lasting relationships with local stakeholders, which continue to benefit the Institution. He has continuously displayed the RNLI values of being trustworthy, courageous, selfless, and dependable. His contribution has helped the RNLI to save lives at sea," said the citation.



Paddy McLaughlin, RNLI Trustee (left) presenting the award to Stephen Wynne.

### Hooked on Swimming's '12 Swims of Christmas' Raises €15,260 for Fethard RNLI with A Little Help from Their Friends

Popular local swimming group 'Hooked on Swimming' have presented Fethard RNLI, with a cheque for €15,260, raised through their recent 12 Swims of Christmas fundraiser. The funds were raised through their Go Fund me page, a coffee morning, a grand raffle and support from local businesses. As part of the total raised, the group were thrilled to receive a substantial donation of €6,750 from Siemen's, who wished to support one of their employees, Siobhan Redmond, as she undertook the 12 swims.

The fundraiser, led by local woman, Helen Mason, saw members from the 160-strong group, take to the water over the festive period to do a swim and raise funds for their local lifeboat station. In doing so the group wanted it to become a social activity and community event, which was important to them as a rural based group. Fethard RNLI is operated by a group of volunteers who live and work locally, and train year-round to be ready to launch to save lives at sea, day or night. Fethard RNLI has a proud tradition of search and rescue and the charity relies on the public to continue its lifesaving work.

Commenting on their generous donation to the 12 Swims of Christmas fundraiser. Ronan Dooley, Siemens Energy's Campile Converter Station Project Manager, said, "We are delighted to support Fethard RNLI Lifeboat Station, local to the Greenlink Project. It is a vital service for the area. The 'Hooked on Swimming' group have been fantastic to brave the cold water in order to raise funds and awareness. Siemens Energy can also be extremely proud that one of our own, Siobhan Redmond, was amongst the swimmers. We are also delighted that the Fethard RNLI will be taking the time to come to Great Island and give a talk on Sea safety to our Site team."

In giving his thanks to the organisers of the swim and those who so generously donated to the lifeboat station, Fethard RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager Walter Foley said, "We are so delighted to receive this incredible donation from the Hooked on Swimming group, for their '12 Swims of Christmas'. This is the second year of the event and it has gone from strength to strength. Funds raised will go to meet the costs of running our lifeboat station. We rely on our volunteers to launch the lifeboat and go out and help those in trouble on the water 24/7 but we also need to train and equip them to do that, with the very best the RNLI provides. When you see our lifeboat crew out training or launching to save someone on the water, it's all been made possible by the people who so generously supported our fundraising, they are our lifesavers."

### SFPA Discuss Key Role in the Protection of Skates Stocks at the Regional Skate Working Group Conference

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) participated at the second Regional Skate Working Group Conference in Galway on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2023. The conference, organised by Queens University Belfast and the Marine Institute, brought together international specialists, government agencies, and other stakeholders to discuss the protection and management of endangered skate species in the region.



Skates such as the Flapper Skate and Blue Skate are endangered and have been prohibited from commercial fishing for almost 15 years. Skates are required to be fished in accordance with Irish and EU regulations and this ensures the long-term sustainability of these stocks. The conference focussed on the protection of these species and other endangered skates in our waters. The discussions also highlighted the role of marine protected areas (MPAs) in the protection of these species and how best to legally protect them.

The SFPA's participation in the conference demonstrates their commitment to sustainable fishing practices and the protection of endangered species. They joined other leading authorities in sharks, skates, and rays, including the Irish Elasmobranch Group, the Shark Trust in the UK, and university academics.

The SFPA said: "We are honoured to be a part of this conference and to be able to share our expertise and learn from other international experts. Our participation demonstrates our continued commitment to sustainable fishing practices and the protection of endangered species.

"To ensure the long-term sustainability of skate stocks, it is essential they are fished in strict accordance with Irish and EU regulations. Accurately recording the species of skates that are caught enables more accurate stock assessments which provide clear scientific advice. The SFPA's role in the promotion of compliance with sea-fisheries law and food safety assists in ensuring the long-term sustainability of skate stocks."



Hooked on Swimming's '12 Swims of Christmas' Raises €15,260 for Fethard RNLI with A Little Help from Their Friends



## Minister and EU Have Different Views About Young Entrants to Industry

Marine Times Reporter

**T**he Minister for the Marine refused to make any special commitments towards encouraging young entrants to the fishing industry when he was questioned at The Skipper Expo in Limerick.

This contrasted with the specific commitment to encouraging young fishermen in the European Commission's four action plans for fishing published in February.

Responding to those plans, the European Transport Workers' Federation called for supports by the Commission to be given towards making fishing "more attractive to young generations."

The Irish Fish Producers' Organisation (IFPO) called on the Government to reserve some tonnage from vessels which are accepted for the national decommissioning scheme. This would keep "a bank of tonnage" in State ownership that could be used to help new entrants into fishing to build vessels in the future, the IFPO suggested.

**Asked about this by journalists in Limerick, Minister McConalogue would not comment specifically. He refused to discuss the IFPO calls for the State to take specific measures to ensure a route for young entrants into the fishing industry.**

EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius, said that the "Pact for Fisheries and Oceans" included in the Commission's four action plans has "at heart making the sector an attractive job place for the younger generations."

Referring to the EU plans, the ETF criticised aspects reducing fishing efforts and called for a "review of the definition of fishing capacity to allow and incentivise better working and living conditions on fishing boats which can make jobs more attractive to young generations."

Tánaiste Michael Martin: Hi Nicola, any chance we can have a wee chat about Rockall?

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon: Naw!

Tánaiste Michael Martin: Ok so, bye bye.



# How the Other Half Live



*As ever it seems to have been, Ireland's fishing industry remains in a perpetual state of depression, uncertainty and confusion according to Cormac Burke, Chairman of the Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance*



**T**he inshore sector has always been neglected by our governments and authorities and there always seems to be a lack of political will to try to help develop and increase any fishing opportunities for this fleet which makes up the backbone of the Irish industry.

And management of inland fisheries is in disarray with Eamon Ryan finally dissolving the IFI board following a history of catastrophes and a litany of controversial events.

Meanwhile the long-suffering demersal fleet, not only working on a pittance of a quota since Ireland's lack of genuine representation during the ill-fated BREXIT negotiations, are now facing a decommissioning scheme which, rather than being any sort of compensation for voluntarily leaving the industry, has been designed in such a fashion that it is more like a punishment and will leave many with little or no reward after years of dedicated service to this industry.

The Seafood Task Force saw objections by some industry representatives made regarding a decommissioning scheme and yet when the final transcripts and summary report of the outcome of the Task Force talks were published, any such objection was omitted for the Minister's version.

This sector has also never seen a single cent in actual compensation for lost quotas and rising fuel costs while other EU Member States have actively been operating such schemes.

And then there's the pelagic sector - - the smallest sector in vessel numbers but the most important in terms of catching value and seasonal processing employment in coastal regions — a sector in an ever-spiralling decrease in mackerel quota and a sector which needed robust defending in recent times as Norway attempted to bully the EU Commission to permit them access to catch vast amounts of blue whiting in Irish waters while Ireland were to remain on its small quota.

If there has been one tiny shaft of light in this depressing time it has been that Ireland, through the work of the various POs and MEPs such as Colm Markey, have worked

together to convince the EU Commission of Ireland's right to defend its fish in its own waters and, given a successful blocking of an effort to steamroll over these rights, this small victory may be the start of something more positive in that the Irish fishing industry will no longer be seen as push-overs by the EU and by other Member and non-Member States next time it comes to pelagic or demersal quotas.

There's been no mention of the 53 million euros that this sector has lost since BREXIT and no mention of the financial compensation as a result of 'burden sharing' that was promised - a scheme which has already seen the Danish pelagic fleet given monies in lieu of quotas lost.

Topping all this off the Irish fishing industry has to fight against a rising scale of wind farm development often which entails little or no genuine dialogue with the fishing industry or results in any form of benefit or compensation to fishermen.

Amidst all of this depression and confusion one would be entitled to ask where is our Minister for 'Fishers' Charlie McConalogue?

Recently described in Dáil Éireann by Ind TD Michael Collins (whilst discussing a failed agricultural Bill) as "a minister and a department that has lost all credibility and has lost the confidence of the people", Charlie McConalogue deemed Round 5 of the EU / Norway / Ireland blue whiting

talks in Brussels (which transpired to be the final and most crucial of these negotiations) not worthy of his presence but don't worry folks as he will now happily pack his bags for a jaunt to New Zealand next month where he will attend St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

Perhaps the 'Fishers' Minister would better serve the industry by staying at home and writing some answers to ongoing questions such as:

(I) why he is overseeing investment in the expansion of Irish fishery harbours whilst at the same time overseeing a decommissioning scheme and reduction of the size of the fleet?

(II) who exactly are such structural improvements to quaysides intended to benefit if the Irish fleet is being decreased in numbers?

(III) can we see accountability with regards the funding of such projects i.e. that this money is not being taken out of the EU BAR fund that was intended as compensation for Irish fishermen and that it is coming out of the national structural fund as it should be?

(IV) and finally when will the minister actually be his own man, make his mark on this industry for the right reasons for a change, and start working with & for the benefit of this industry and not just spend his term in office speaking from the prepared scripts from his DAFM officials?





# SeaMonitor Project Highlights Benefits of Tracking Sea Life

The marine research programme, SeaMonitor, studied the seas around Ireland and Western Scotland through the use of advanced acoustic telemetry equipment. The Marine Institute is one of nine partners that has been involved in this research project over the past four years.



To conclude the SeaMonitor research project, Loughs Agency welcomed an international delegation of over 100 marine scientists, academics, and political representatives to the SeaMonitor-STRAITS Conference on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

The conference provided an opportunity for the consortium working on the Loughs Agency-led SeaMonitor project to present their findings and highlight the benefits of tracking aquatic life in our seas and rivers. The data collated from this project will be utilised to help inform policy and management decisions, with the protection of vulnerable marine species a priority throughout the process. The species targeted included salmon, seals, basking sharks, cetaceans, and skate.

The results of the project make for impressive reading, with over 1,000 animals tagged and receivers picking up over 4.5 million detections from a variety of species throughout the lifespan of the project.

As part of the project, The Marine Institute was able to track free swimming salmon juveniles hundreds of kilometres into the open ocean using advanced robotic technology. An 'ocean glider' equipped with an acoustic tag detector was deployed from the RV Celtic Explorer during a 2021 fisheries survey. During its two-month mission, the glider successfully detected four individual juvenile salmon smolts measuring only 15 to 19cm, nearly 600 km from their home rivers in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The four fish originated from the River Burrishoole in Co Mayo Ireland, the River Bann in Northern Ireland and the Rivers Clyde and Awe in Scotland.

Dr Niall Ó Maoiléidigh of the Marine Institute said, "The SeaMonitor project has provided a unique opportunity to identify migration routes of highly vulnerable marine animals hundreds of miles out at sea

using the latest tracking technology, including remotely piloted autonomous underwater gliders."

SeaMonitor has made waves in science circles for its innovation and ambition, with Europe's largest fish counter deployed in the North Channel between Malin Head and Islay as part of the project. This particular counter measures over 60km and 100 receivers in length, demonstrating the scale of this important work.

Loughs Agency has collaborated with the European Tracking Network (ETN) throughout this process, with similar counters deployed in the Danish Straits and new ones planned for the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Turkish Straits.

The consortium working on SeaMonitor consisted of Loughs Agency, Atlantic Technological University, University College Cork, the University of California (Davis), the Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute, Queen's University Belfast, Ocean Tracking Network (Dalhousie University), Marine Institute, and the University of Glasgow. All members of the working group were in attendance at the Guildhall.

Dr Ciaran Kelly Director of Fisheries Ecosystems Advisory Services at the Marine Institute said "SeaMonitor has been a very successful project from a number of aspects, not only has it provided valuable insights into behaviour of vulnerable species in the marine environment, which will help their conservation, but it has also facilitated collaboration and the development of this technology through agencies operating across Ireland and the UK."

The SeaMonitor project received €4.7m in funding from the EU's INTERREG VA initiative.

For more information on the SeaMonitor project, visit [www.loughs-agency.org/sea-monitor](http://www.loughs-agency.org/sea-monitor)



## IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP IWDG NEWS

*Padraig Whooley, IWDG Sightings Officer writes that the Centre of Excellence for Climate Action & Sustainability at Myross Wood House in Leap is the location for this year's WHALE TALES.*

## Whale Tales

West Cork is a good location for the event which will start on the evening of Friday, March 24th and continue throughout the weekend until Sunday 26th, open to both IWDG members and the general public.

This annual meeting of the IWDG is an opportunity for all whale (and dolphin) enthusiasts to join us over the course of a weekend to share our appreciation for these charismatic mammals and to learn more about the conservation and research work being carried out by the IWDG and others.

This year's event is being held at CE-CAS The Centre of Excellence for Climate Action and Sustainability, at the wonderful former religious retreat, where many of the attendees will be staying on a residential basis. It's great to be able to support this local community initiative, which aims to make a positive impact on addressing climate change and the biodiversity crisis.

We plan to kick start the weekend with a humpback whale film/ presentation on the evening of Friday 24th, which will be very relevant to anyone living in West Cork who has ever been fortunate enough to see this iconic species. Saturday will be a "Whale day" of news and stories from IWDG officers, as well as an opportunity to introduce and discuss important issues on topics including offshore renewables and Marine Protected Areas (MPA's), with plenty of time for Q&A's. More importantly, this is a great opportunity to share your own stories and mingle with like-minded folk, passionate about our marine environment and its wildlife.

To facilitate as many people as possible attend, there is a small registration fee of €25 for IWDG members (€35 non-members) which includes a venue facility fee, light lunch and refreshments on the Saturday. Our activities on Sunday morning will be dictated by the weather, but among our options are to hold a land-based whale watch from a local vantage point or to deliver a simulated live-stranding exercise on a local beach or at the venue. We hope you'll join us on what promises to be a most interesting weekend with a difference. Bookings on Eventbrite link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/whale-tales-2023-tickets-523564293897>

The IWDG AGM is on Saturday afternoon at 17:00, which as always is open only to current members and so if you'd like to attend this part of the day you should become an IWDG member and to encourage attendees to support our charity by joining we are offering a discounted rate using this promo code: **TBY3XZQ4** in our IWDG Shop [www.iwdg.ie](http://www.iwdg.ie).

Queries to IWDG on Email: [padraig.whooley@iwdg.ie](mailto:padraig.whooley@iwdg.ie)

[whooley@iwdg.ie](mailto:whooley@iwdg.ie) or Ph. 086 3850568

## Hooky Links Ireland and Canada

A humpback whale that was seen in Irish waters in January of 2010 and was not reported again for thirteen years has been spotted off Newfoundland.



Originally spotted on January 17, 2010 inshore off Hook Head, County Waterford, a biopsy obtained under a National Parks and Wildlife Service licence it was confirmed as a young sub-adult male and a new humpback in Irish waters. It was added to the IWDG's Irish Humpback Whale Catalogue as #HBIRL11.

As with all humpbacks photographed in Irish waters, images of it were shared with IWDG partners 'Allied Whale' at the College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, Maine, USA, who manage the North Atlantic Humpback Whale Catalogue and have a database of 11,000+ individual humpbacks. It remained adjacent to Hook Head Peninsula until February 28, regularly observed feeding on sprat and herring, often in the same area as both fin whales and short-beaked common dolphins.

For the past 13 years, 'Hooky' as he was colloquially dubbed, has not been recorded in Irish waters, but in mid-February Allied Whale told IWDG there had been sightings off Newfoundland in 2018 and 2021. This is an important development, the first re-sighting between Ireland/British Isles and the western North Atlantic feeding grounds. The fact that this whale, has been recorded in two known feeding areas, Newfoundland (Summer) and Irish South coast (Winter), is noteworthy.

Irish Whale and Dolphin Group



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



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



MFV Strathmore off Kilkeel - Photo courtesy Leslie Campbell

## New Regulations on Soft-Shelled Brown Crab

New regulations, which came into effect on Friday 10 February 2023, prohibit the landing and retention of soft-shelled edible (brown) crab.

This is the latest measure introduced by DAERA following calls from the fishing industry for better regulation to ensure the sustainability of the brown crab fishery, the third most valuable in Northern Ireland.

Brown crabs grow by moulting their shell and taking on water before their new shell hardens. During this time from moulting to the hardening of the shell, the soft-shelled brown crab will continue to feed and may be caught in pots that have been put out by fishermen. In that period the volume and quality of their meat decreases significantly and is of poor value until the shell hardens again.

In 2022, DAERA consulted on the proposal and all respondents supported a ban on landing soft-shell crab.

The Edible Crabs (Conservation) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2023 prohibit the retention on board a sea-fishing boat, the bringing to land, the landing, having in possession, selling, exposing for sale, buying for sale, or consigning to any person for the purpose of sale, a soft-shelled edible crab. Such crabs must be immediately returned to the sea.

## Tarragon Bay Fishing for Success

CAFRE's collaboration with Invest NI and their innovation voucher scheme has once again given a local seafood company a helping hand in developing new products.

Businessman Vincent Rooney runs a wholesale seafood business specialising in sourcing and harvesting a sustainable and fresh supply of premium fish, shellfish, and sea vegetables. Through his company Tarragon Bay, he wanted to add value to his products with a view to bringing a range of seafood pâté products to market. Vincent worked with CAFRE Food technologist Clare Campbell to take his concept and make it a product ready for market.

Vincent was asked why he chose to work with CAFRE

on this project.

"I chose CAFRE as it has a proven track record in assisting local food processors by providing an extensive product development service which has already enabled many of NI's key artisan producers to create high-end products for supply to export markets throughout Europe and beyond."

The products are pitched to the highest end of the seafood market sector and have been created to sustain a long shelf life whilst maintaining high quality without the use of artificial preservatives. The product development process was vigorous in ensuring that the pâté flavours were just right and that the heat treatment did not affect the flavour, colour, or texture.

A Prawn pâté and Scallop pâté were developed in Loughry College Food Innovation Centre. Once samples were approved, they were upscaled in the Food Technology Centre Pilot plant. Loughry's Food Technology Centre is furnished with state-of-the-art equipment which processes such products to correct safety parameters whilst maintaining quality attributes.

Following successful upscaling of the recipes, the products were tested microbiologically and nutritionally allowing the necessary product labelling information to be generated.

Vincent has had a positive experience through this process claiming: "My experience to date working with CAFRE and Clare Campbell has been exceptionally positive. It is evident that the focus of their specialist mentors and business support team is to showcase local produce, with particular emphasis on exceeding statutory production and quality standards. I have developed a good rapport with my contacts within CAFRE and look forward to a continued productive relationship with CAFRE as I bring my new product range of seafood products to market."

Tarragon Bay plan to sell its pâté range to local hotels and restaurants, as well as online. The long shelf life of the product also allows scope for export to different markets.

Get in touch with CAFRE technologists if you require expertise in Product Development. Their Knowledge Advisory Team has a wealth of knowledge and experience in all areas of Food processing which can be availed of to help

you turn your idea into a reality.

You can contact them at: [loughry.foodtechnology@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:loughry.foodtechnology@daera-ni.gov.uk)

## Geoff Palmer RIP

Geoff passed away on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February after a short illness. He was a fisherman for over 35 years on the trawlers before retiring and turning his hand to a smaller boat and fishing for crabs and lobsters right up to last year.



Geoff also became a net mender helping fishermen who just didn't have the time to get their gear fixed before heading out to sea.

Geoff's knowledge and presence will be sorely missed by everyone within the fishing family in and around Ardglass harbour.

The Marine Times extends its deepest sympathies to the family, friends and wider fishing community of Ardglass.



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All lit up in Killybegs harbour

## RNLI Calls on New Volunteers to Join Its Fundraising Crew in Donegal

The RNLI is looking for new fundraising volunteers to join its lifesaving crew across the county. Volunteers are needed for branches at Arranmore, Downings/Carrigart, Ardara/Glenties/Portnoo, The Rosses, Donegal Town and Bundoran.

Just like the charity's lifeboats, the RNLI's fundraising team need a dedicated volunteer crew. Volunteers are at the heart of the RNLI and make up 95% of its people. They are ordinary people who do extraordinary things and without them, the organisation couldn't continue to save lives at sea.

But it's not all about volunteering on lifeboats or at a station, there are many other ways people can give a little or a lot of their time to support the RNLI and make their own lifesaving difference.



Susie Harkin is the secretary of the Ardara, Glenties and Portnoo Fundraising Branch having first got involved five years ago. She was approached by a committee member to join, and Susie says she didn't need to think twice.

'The branch needed new members at the time,' Susie explains, 'and my neighbour's son who is the chair came to me and asked if I would get involved. I jumped at the opportunity. Living in a rural location 200 yards from the sea and having a husband who fishes part-time with his brother and is always on a boat, I know the importance of the lifeboat in an emergency. I felt if I could help in any way then I wanted to be involved.'

'I have witnessed many search and rescue missions over the years including one for a friend who was never found so

I know a lot about the lifesaving activity, and I admire it so much.

As for what she finds rewarding about being involved, Susie says for her it is knowing the difference the funds raised can make: 'The reward is knowing our work helps to enable the rescue missions and contributes to saving lives. I like to help and it feels good to know that my help in a small way has helped others. We also have good fun while doing something for a great cause. Be it to raise funds for a rope or kit for the crew, we are helping and the craic is amazing.'

Mary Creedon, RNLI Fundraising Partnership Lead hails the selfless efforts of people like Susie: 'Without our volunteers, the RNLI simply would not be able to operate the way it does today. With 92% of the RNLI's income coming from donations, the charity relies on the generosity of supporters and on the dedication of our fundraising volunteers to help raise essential funds. Thousands of community fundraising volunteers organise a wide range of activities and events each year, contributing their time, energy and skills to raise money to save lives at sea. Some of our fundraisers have been volunteering for many years while some just join us for a few months in the year depending on what their commitments allow.'

'We now really need to bolster that support and grow our volunteer fundraising crew. If you like to have fun, enjoy meeting new people and want to join a motivated and enthusiastic team, we encourage you to find out more and apply. You will learn new skills, gain experience and have the rewarding satisfaction of giving back. The RNLI will also provide all the necessary training and support so you can carry out your chosen role effectively.'

To find out more about how you can sign up to be a fundraising volunteer at the RNLI in Arranmore, Downings/Carrigart, Ardara/Glenties/Portnoo, The Rosses, Donegal Town or Bundoran, or to apply, visit: [rnli.org/OneCrewVolunteers](http://rnli.org/OneCrewVolunteers)

## MEP Raises Irish Concerns with EU Fisheries Chief

Fine Gael's Colm Markey has reaffirmed Ireland's position on the EU-Norway fisheries talks with the EU Commissioner for Fisheries Virginijus Sinkevicius during a one-on-one meeting in the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

The Midlands-North-West MEP reminded the Commissioner that Ireland was the biggest loser out of Brexit and allowing further access to Norway would be disastrous if

we get nothing back.

He commented, "I have met the Commissioner on a number of occasions over the last year or so and I was keen to reiterate the concerns from an Irish perspective as these discussions continue. We must stand firm as Norway presses for new and additional access to Ireland's blue whiting grounds. I reminded the Commissioner that Ireland bore the brunt of quota cuts after Brexit and the industry simply can't afford to take another hit, unless there's a reciprocal arrangement in place with Norway."

Markey added, "The Commissioner told me that he understands the Irish case very well and I'm satisfied that our concerns are being taken into account. Commissioner Sinkevicius has always been open to engagement and I was grateful that he took time out of his busy schedule to meet with me. We also discussed a number of other issues including the Sea-Fisheries Control Plan and Marine Protected Areas."

"It's important that we keep the pressure on and stand firm in order to get a fair deal for Ireland", he concluded.

## The Immovable Rockall

Pádraig Mac Lochlainn recently asked the Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs the status of negotiations with the British Government to reinstate access for the Irish fishing fleet to the 12-mile limit around Rockall.

Replying, Tanaiste Michael Martin said; "My Department and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine continue to work to address issues related to Rockall, reflecting the longstanding fisheries tradition in the area.

"I last discussed the matter with Scotland's First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon in November. We agreed to continue to prioritise this matter and to continue to work together to seek to resolve outstanding issues.

"Officials are also in active ongoing contact with their Scottish counterparts on possible ways forward.

"I look forward to discussing the matter with my Scottish counterpart, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, Angus Robertson in the near future.

"Through these engagements, the Government is seeking to address the issues involved, reflecting longstanding fisheries patterns in the area.

"The Government's position in relation to territorial claims on Rockall is consistent with longstanding Irish Government policy."



# International Fishing and Maritime News

## A Pact for Fisheries and Oceans – A Challenging Task

**The EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Virginijus Sinkevičius, says the EU wants to establish a “pact for fisheries and oceans” to ensure sustainable fisheries, protect and restore marine ecosystems and strengthen long-term food security.**

“This is a challenging task.” was his summary of the publication last month by the European Commission of four action plans relating to biodiversity and climate breakdown in the marine environment. Phasing out bottom trawling, extending marine protected areas and reducing reliance on fossil fuel are main themes of the four plans, arising from the European “Green Deal”.

The four plans are:

**A Communication on the Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector;**

**An Action Plan to protect and restore marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries;**

**A Communication on the Common Fisheries Policy titled “Today and Tomorrow”**

**A Report on the ‘Common Market Organisation for fishery and aquaculture products’**

The main objectives of the measures are described as “to promote the use of cleaner energy sources and reduce dependency on fossil fuels as well as reduce the sector’s impact on marine ecosystems.”

The proposed actions will be carried out gradually to help the sector adapt, according to the Commissioner. “The Pact for Fisheries and Oceans will support the full implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy in co-ordination with member states and fisheries stakeholders, including fishers, producer organisations, regional advisory councils, civil society

and scientists. The proposals have at heart making the sector an attractive job place for the younger generations.

“We are proposing concrete actions to restore marine ecosystems and to reduce the impact of fishing activities on the marine environment. We are also promoting an energy transition to help the sector adapt its vessels and equipment, improve working conditions and move towards renewable, low-carbon energy sources.

“This is a challenging task. For this reason, the transformation will be gradual and we will promote dialogue between all communities to lay the foundation for a resilient fisheries and aquaculture sector,” he said.

- Birdwatch Ireland and Our Fish, two non-governmental organisations, described the EU plans as “inaction plans.”

### The EU’s First Ambition Should Be to Protect Fishing People

**The ETF, European Transport Workers’ Federation said the first ambition of the EU should be to protect workers in the fishing industry, It welcomed “dedication to the social dimension of fisheries, since it is a dimension that has been largely neglected, Fisheries have a major role for coastal communities, fishers and their families and European traditions and culture.”**

The sector provides jobs to many regions and the Common Fisheries Policy should have the ambition to protect the people

working in an industry that plays such a crucial part in ensuring food security in the EU.

“Despite the plan documents stating that social consequences of conservation measures must be considered, we can also read an explicit will to phase out mobile bottom fishing, which employs many fishers in Europe. This contradiction between objectives and concrete actions needs to be highlighted and resolved. This is confirmed by the absence of any possible review of the definition of fishing capacity to allow and incentivise better working and living conditions on board, which can make fishing jobs more attractive to young generations.”

### Successful Start for Scottish Mackerel Fleet and Blue Whiting Boats Head for Irish Waters

**The start-of-the-year Scottish mackerel fishery was successfully completed by the middle of February, with the last fish caught on grounds to the west of the Butt of Lewis, according to the Scottish Pelagic Fishermen’s Association. “A notable feature of this year’s fishery has been the length of time the big shoals of mackerel have been present in Scottish waters – a five month period stretching from October to February – highlighting the importance of Scotland’s seas as home for these fish. This is a trend that could well continue into the future and is something fishery managers need to take cognisance of when allocating catch shares,” said the SPFA in a statement.**

“In the Atlanto-Scandian herring fishery for Scottish boats the fleet has been targeting fishing grounds south of the Lofoten Islands. This is a short fishery, given that the UK has a relatively small quota of only around 10,000 tonnes. The blue whiting fishery commenced for the Scottish fleet, with boats heading to grounds to the west of Ireland. There has been a large increase in quota this year due to the healthy state of the stock that has been aided by a recent peak in stock recruitment. The size of the quota means this fishery could last until the beginning of April.

Thereafter, a lull in activity for a few months will occur until the Scottish fleet resumes on the North Sea herring fishery

in July, followed by the end-of-the-year mackerel season, which usually commences in October.”

### France Extends Stated Aid to Fishing Industry

**The French Government has extended its support to the country’s fishing industry, including a fuel subsidy, until May. The Irish Government refused to introduce such a subsidy.**

A review of the industry led by the French Secretary of State for the Sea with the Presidents of the National Committee and the Regional Maritime Fisheries Committees assessed the national Support Plan introduced after Brexit and announced the extension of fuel aid until May 15 as well as an ‘Individual Plan.’

“State services and the Fisheries Ministry endeavoured to have a dialogue with each fisherman, to make sure of his will to go out fishing, by showing a will and vigilance not to destabilise the sector,” according to a Government statement.

The fuel subsidy has already been extended twice. It is 25 centes per litre of diesel.

“The next three months will be used to carry out a review of the scale of the entire sector to put in place more sustainable solutions so that the sector can get out of its dependence on fossil fuels,” according to the French government.

### Giant Phantom Jellyfish in Antarctica

**Rare sightings of giant phantom jellyfish, deep-sea creatures that look like UFO spaceships with thick ribbons streaming from their undersides, have been reported by cruise liner passengers who spotted the otherworldly animals off the coast of Antarctica.**



**A giant phantom jellyfish (Stygiomedusa gigantea) encountered off the Antarctic Peninsula during a Viking cruise. (Image credit: Antony Gilbert)**

Live Science website has reported that the giant phantom jellyfish (Stygiomedusa gigantea), one of the deep sea’s largest invertebrate predators (opens in new tab), were seen while cruise ship passenger were underwater in a submersible deployed by the cruise line operator Viking. Researchers estimated that the jellyfish were longer than 16 feet (5 metres), with one stretching to at least 33 feet (10 metres) in length.

The researchers were shown a photo of the jellyfish taken by one of the passengers. It was identified by one of Viking’s chief scientists, Daniel Moore: “I instantly recognised it for what it was and, given the rarity of sightings, was flooded with excitement,” he told Live Science.



**Scottish pelagic fishing boats at Peterhead**



# news from Castletownbere

## Helen Riddell



Saint Rosa heading out of Castletownbere - Photo Anne Marie Cronin Photography

### BIM

BIM is urging all skippers of vessels of 15 metres and above that hold a Second Hand Limited certificate (SHL) to ensure their Certificate of Competency is endorsed for service as Second Hand Special. For further details and to apply to have the certificate of competency endorsed contact Castletownbere National Fisheries College at 027 71220 or email [della.osullivan@bim.ie](mailto:della.osullivan@bim.ie)

### St Patrick's Day Parade

The Castletownbere St Patrick's Day Parade starts at 3.00pm on Friday March 17<sup>th</sup> and will be led by piper Etienne Baranger. The parade will follow the usual route through the town to the West End before heading back to the Square where the judges' viewing stand will be located. Ahead of the parade, there will be live music in the Square with Aoife O'Neill from 2.30pm and after the parade there will be a display of Irish Dancing from Scoil Rince Carney.

### Business and Tourism Awards

Congratulations are extended to Allihies Copper Mine Museum who were winners of the Best Business in the Community Award at The Southern Star Business and Tourism Awards which were held recently. Other Beara businesses who were nominated for awards included Dursey Boat Trips

and Wild Atlantic Glamping.

### RNLI

The RNLI is looking for new fundraising volunteers to join its organisation across Cork, including its Castletownbere branch. As with the organisation's lifeboat crew, the RNLI's fundraising also needs a dedicated volunteer crew. Volunteers are at the heart of the RNLI, and make up 95% of the organisation. Thousands of community fundraising volunteers organise a wide range of activities and events each year, contributing their time, energy and skills to raise money to save lives at sea. The RNLI will provide full training and support. For further details see [www.rnli.org/support-us](http://www.rnli.org/support-us)

### Beara Historical Society

The Beara Historical Society will hold their next talk on Tuesday March 7<sup>th</sup> at 8.00pm, at Twomey's Lounge, Castletownbere. Historian Kieran Doyle will speak on Understanding Commemoration and the Revolutionary Period in Cork 1914 – 1923.

All are welcome to attend and a donation of €5 will be requested from non-members.

### Berehaven Golf Club Green Party

To round off the St Patrick's weekend celebrations Berehaven Golf Club is holding a Green Party evening on Saturday

March 18<sup>th</sup>. Everyone is invited to dress in green to mark the occasion. The evening will start with the Ireland v England in Rugby Six Nations match on the big screen at 5.00pm followed by live Irish folk and trad music with Clusterfolk at 7.30pm. Tickets are €20 per person (children free). All proceeds will go to support Berehaven Golf Club Junior's Programme. For tickets text 083 8511112 or enquire at the Club House.

### Castletownbere Development Association

Castletownbere Development Association are planning to hold a multi-national festival day on the June Bank Holiday weekend and would like to hear from people from all nationalities living in Beara to help them with ideas to showcase food and crafts from their countries. Anyone who would like to share their suggestions can contact the group via their Facebook page.

### Award for Castletownbere takeaway

CatchaCoffee, a Castletownbere takeaway coffee truck has won the Coffee Cart of the Year award at the Irish Takeaway Awards which were held in Athlone recently. CatchaCoffee which operates from a converted horsebox is owned by Patrice and Donal O'Neill. The couple were thrilled to win the award, and said it was all down to

their customers, "without them, and their support we couldn't have achieved this."

The awards which took place in the Radisson Blu Hotel in Athlone saw takeaway teams from across Ireland come together to celebrate the best in their industry. CatchaCoffee is located just metres from Castletownbere's main pier, and will reopen for the summer season on the May Bank Holiday weekend.

### Beara AC

Beara AC hold adult training on Monday and Wednesday evenings at 6.30pm in Dinish Island. Session details will be shared on WhatsApp on the day before. These sessions are open to all abilities. Underage training will be held at Castletownbere Community School on Fridays from 5.00pm to 6.30pm. Newcomers are always welcome, for details contact the Beara AC Facebook page.

### SVP Beara

St. Vincent de Paul Beara have vacancies for people who qualify under the Rural Social Scheme for paid positions in their shop in Castletownbere. An active herd number or fishing licence in the family is required in order to apply. These are paid positions with flexible hours. For further information contact SVP Beara on 083 356 1132 or Arran O'Driscoll on 086 841 2539.



# Explorers School Projects Score 100% In Achieving Marine Communication and Creative Skills

The Marine Institute's Explorers Education management team is delighted to report that teachers and children who took part in the Explorers Healthy Ocean School Projects around Ireland in 2021-2022 reached 100 per cent in developing their communication and creativity skills. 'Being an active citizen' was evident in 95 per cent of the projects and up to 75 per cent of children also engaged in fostering 'wellbeing' as part of their ocean-themed projects.

Patricia Orme, Corporate Services Director, Marine Institute, congratulated the Explorers management and outreach teams for helping schools mark this achievement reaching key competency skills that support the Irish primary school curriculum: "The team has done a fantastic job working with the teachers and children, where the Healthy Ocean School Projects module was introduced to over 3,000 children, leading on to the first Explorers Ocean Champions Awards last year."

"Recognising the UN International Day of Education in January where the theme for 2023 was to invest in people and prioritise education, I congratulate the Explorers strategic management team at Camden Education Trust and the outreach teams for supporting this international goal with the work they do. Delivering the range of marine projects to such a high standard, along with engaging with the children was highlighted by teachers and local communities at the recent Explorers Ocean Champion Awards," Ms Orme further said.

The Explorers Healthy Ocean School Project is a school-driven programme that encourages teachers and students to work in collaboration with their wider school and local community to raise awareness and engagement about creating a healthy ocean.

"Being active citizens', the children produced outstanding school projects that included organising beach cleans where the whole school got involved, creating information posters for public notice boards, producing marine podcasts, to writing and performing songs about the ocean. They also collected information on plastics found on the shore, created artwork and made decorations from recycled materials. Many of the schools organised art exhibitions to showcase their work within their local communities," explained

Cushla Dromgool-Regan, Camden Education Trust.

The Explorers teams are currently working with over twenty schools on new healthy ocean projects this term, covering some amazing concepts from recycling fishing nets to showcasing key species to promote ocean conservation.

"We're pleased to have some availability for schools to work with the Explorers outreach teams to complete their school projects by the 1<sup>st</sup> May. The 'all-school' project must focus on one of four categories: Marine STEAM; Ocean Literacy Creative; Sustainable Development Goals and Ocean and Marine Outdoor education.

The schools that complete an Explorers healthy ocean project will be awarded the Ocean Champions' certificate of participation from the Marine Institute Explorers Programme. The national winner and winners of each category will receive a specially-designed plaque and certificate for their school.

"The Explorers team will present prizes ranging from marine-themed books for their libraries, to marine biodiversity workshops held with the students to the winning school. We will also provide schools with an opportunity to showcase their work to further engage a wider audience involved in marine and education," explained Ms Dromgool-Regan.

The Explorers outreach teams include: Leave No Trace – Ireland, Galway Atlantaquaria, Sea Synergy, Old Cork Waterworks Experience, Oceanics Surf School & Education Centre, and Seashore Kids. For more information about the Explorers Education Programme see Explorers School Projects and Project resources at [www.explorers.ie](http://www.explorers.ie)

## German Registered Fishing Vessel Detained for Alleged Infringements

The detention of a German registered fishing vessel operating in the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) resulted from a joint operation under the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) Western Waters Joint Deployment Plan (WW JDP) with the Irish Naval Service and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA). The German registered fishing vessel was detained by the Irish Naval Service on the 7th February 2023 for a number of alleged breaches of fishing regulations following extensive analysis of the vessel's Electronic Logbook (ERS) and Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) positions over a number of weeks. An intelligence led operation with multi-agency co-operation led to the detention.

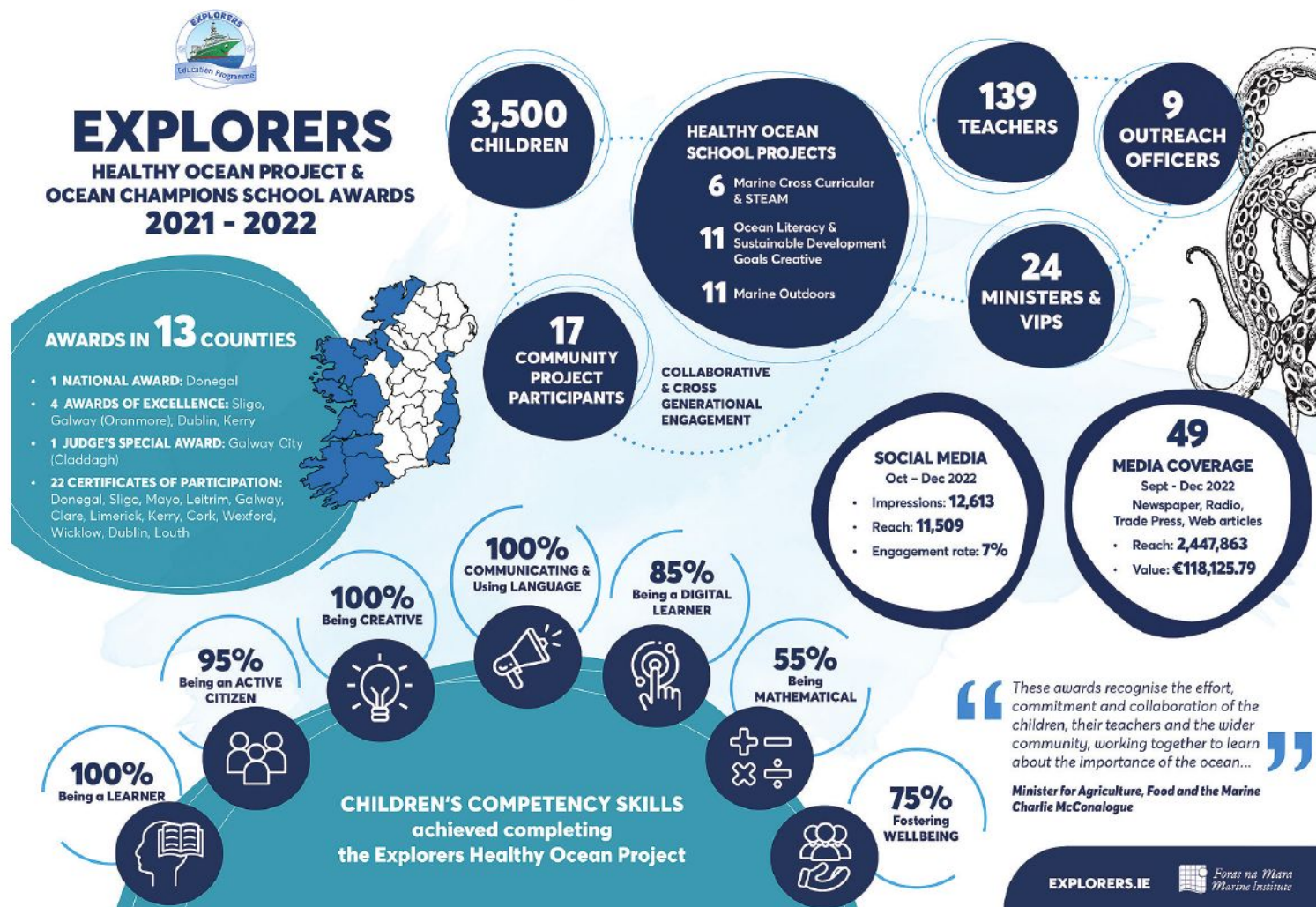
Both the SFPA and Irish Naval Service received an intel report from a confidential source on the 6th January 2023 in relation to this vessel and alleged breaches of fishing regulations.

The Fisheries Monitoring Centre monitored and conducted analysis of the vessel once it entered the Irish EEZ in late January. The Irish Naval Service then requested the activity of the vessel to be monitored by the aerial surveillance aircraft chartered by EFCA who had a flight plan for the Irish EEZ at that time under the WW JDP.

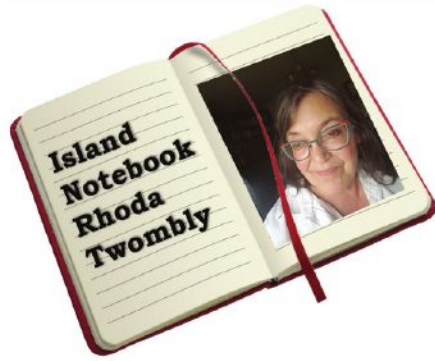
The flight plan was amended to monitor this vessel and the video footage gathered verified the intel received as well as additional evidence gathered. The Irish Naval Service had a Sea-Fisheries Protection Officer (SFPO) on site at the EFCA Coordination Centre in charge of the WW JDP analysing this aerial footage as it was live streamed back to both the SFPA and the FMC.

On Tuesday 7th February, the vessel was detained by the Irish Naval Service vessel LÉ SAMUEL BECKETT for numerous suspected non-compliances with sea-fisheries legislation. The vessel was escorted to Castletownbere arriving in port on Saturday.

The Master of the fishing vessel, Ortegá Tres, was brought before a special sitting of Bandon District Court on Monday February 13th and was charged with a total of 25 fishing offences on various dates between a date unknown in December 2022 and February 3rd 2023 while fishing within the exclusive fishing limits of the State and has been returned for trial by a judge and jury.







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

## Bringing The Skulls Back Home – Success for Inishbofin

**I**slanders of Galway's Inishbofin received welcome but bittersweet news in late February. 13 skulls that had been taken from the island in 1890 without permission, in the dead of night by two "academic grave robbers," Alfred Haddon and Andrew Dixon, are to be returned to Inishbofin for burial in the island graveyard.

The skulls had been given to anthropologist Charles Browne at Trinity College for further study. At the time, craniology was widely used to racially group people, make deceptive claims about racial intelligence and to study the range of physiognomy amongst humans.

Marie Coyne of the Inishbofin Heritage Museum & Gift Shop and a team of like-minded islanders had been campaigning for their return for years, but it was only after other academic institutions and museums revised their policies on returning human and other artifacts to their place of origin that TCD came to the conclusion that these skulls, stolen from St Coleman's Abbey, deserved to be returned to their home place.

Marie is delighted that these remains are finally coming home: "It is very poignant that the Inishbofin Skulls / Human Remains will be coming home after 130 years to rest in their graveyard. 'From dust you came, and on to dust you shall return.' May they Rest in Peace in Bofin soon."

### Running The Islands

**With longer days and improved weather (fingers crossed!) several islands are planning their running events. In the case of Bere Island, their Saturday Park Runs have been ongoing through the winter so they are already fit for anything! Anyone can join in on Bere – run, walk, jog or skip – but be sure to register with Park Run beforehand.**

All three Aran Islands have running events. Inis Iron Meáin is the original Island road race, running successfully (pardon the pun) for 16 years. They are credited for inspiring several of the offshore island road races: Lá an 10K' is a major social event for Inis Meáin, that sees the return of many familiar faces year after year.

Coláiste Naomh Eoin, the Island's sec-

ondary school, is the beneficiary of the race fees which are vital to the continued viability of this small but exceptional school.

There is a choice of 5K or 10K route or the challenging 12K route, which includes a beach run, for the braver, more experienced runner. All routes are scenic and inspiring, cutting across landscapes of unreal stone walls. This year the race takes place on 29<sup>th</sup> of April. Please see their website <http://inisironmeain.com/> for registration and more information.

Inis Oírr's Cleasathon takes place on Easter Saturday (April 8<sup>th</sup>) every year. All levels of participants are welcome from the walkers to runners, long distance and relatively short. They have three types of races to choose from: 16k Adventure Run, the 10k Road Run, an undulating road run crossing the beautiful island and the twisted 7k Road Run, which takes in some of the gorgeous hilly routes and grassy byways of Inis Oírr. Please visit their website, <http://discoverinisoirr.com/whats-on/festivals-events/> for more information.

Over on Inis Mór, the half-marathon has been held for over twenty years, raising funds for Irish Children's Hospitals. Sponsored and organised by Aer Arann this

event has raised over €2 million to date for children's hospitals, badly needed equipment and highlighted challenges faced in trying to provide the best of care to these precious patients and their families. A new charity partner was recently announced by Aer Arann – The Mater Foundation. The 2023 Aer Arann Islands Half Marathon event will take place from Friday, 21st to Sunday, 23rd April.

Lots to look forward to..

### Listening To Bere

**I am writing with Bere Island Community radio playing in the background and warm almost-Spring sun belting through my office window, toasting my arm and tempting me to run outside.**

Bere Island's Sunday radio programme is keeping me entertained, though, as I wade through a mountain of paperwork. Tune in yourself – every Sunday at 11am on 101.1 FM or online via the link on their Facebook page. The programme is wide-ranging with news from Bere and the West Cork Islands as well as news from Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann and ESIN. The music selections are super: - the 'favourite five' is presented by a different guest DJ each week. As I listen the line-up is Transition Year Students – All Ireland Basketball Quarter Final, Paul O'Neill with his Favourite 5, Grace O'Sullivan MEP on Hope Spots, Brenda talks to Sean Cronin of Zero Waste Alliance, Maire Uí Mhaoláin CEO of Comhar na nOileán CTR speaking on the LEADER program and more.

For now, it's slán from the islands.



Sarah David at Ardglass - Photo courtesy Christopher Feenan



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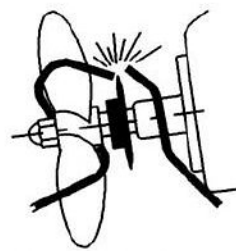
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## 2,000 People to Walk from Howth Harbour to Dun Laoghaire Harbour (Or Reverse) This St Patrick's Day



Emer O'Neill, broadcaster, author & activist is pictured at Dublin Port Company at the launch of the 16th annual Aware Harbour2Harbour Walk which takes place on St. Patrick's Day, Friday 17th March with Stephen Butterly, Head of Fundraising & Business Development at Aware (left) and Barry O'Connell, Chief Executive at Dublin Port Company.

**B**roadcaster, author and activist Emer O'Neill has launched the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Aware Harbour2Harbour Walk which will take place on St. Patrick's Day, Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March from 10.30am to raise vital funds for mental health organisation Aware. Over 2,000 enthusiastic walkers are expected to take on the 26km challenge, with the option of starting from Howth Harbour or Dun Laoghaire Harbour. Suitable for most fitness levels, the walk will take participants along the scenic Dublin Bay route with a 'Halfway Hooley' hosted at sponsor Dublin Port Company's historic Pumphouse.

An official event of the St Patrick's Day One City Festival Programme, the Aware Harbour2Harbour Walk is now open for registration at [www.aware.ie/harbour2harbour](http://www.aware.ie/harbour2harbour) at a cost of €25 per person.

Ambassador Emer O'Neill commented: "I am delighted to be involved with the Aware Harbour2Harbour Walk. Having experienced depression myself, I know how important it is for us to open up the conversation around mental health. The services provided by organisations like Aware are invaluable to anyone experiencing depression or bipolar disorder and I would encourage anyone struggling with their mental health to reach out for support. We all know how beneficial fresh air and exercise is for both your physical and mental health, so I hope to see lots of people from around Dublin joining us on St Patrick's Day to raise both awareness and vital funds for Aware."

The Aware Harbour2Harbour Walk is a flagship fundraising event for Aware, the national charity supporting people impacted by depression and bipolar disorder. This event will help raise vital funds to ensure the organisation can continue to deliver its free support, education and information services to individuals and communities nationwide.

Stephen Butterly, Head of Fundraising at Aware commented: "The Aware Harbour2Harbour Walk is a lovely way to get friends and family together to celebrate St Patrick's Day in a fun and healthy way, while demonstrating your support for mental health. Each year Aware directly supports up to 50,000 people via our support and education services. All proceeds from this event will go towards these services, helping to ensure that people across Ireland impacted by depression and bipolar disorder know they are not alone and are provided with the knowledge and tools they need to improve their wellbeing. We are incredibly grateful for the generous sponsorship from Dublin Port Company who have supported this event since 2014."

All participants will receive a t-shirt when they arrive for the event and are encouraged to wear these as they take part to raise awareness and show their support for mental health. People can also join the conversation online, using the hashtag #WeAreAware when sharing on social media.

Speaking about Dublin Port's involvement, Barry O'Connell, Chief Executive at Dublin Port Company commented: "Dublin Port is delighted to be partnering with Aware and supporting the annual Harbour2Harbour Walk. It's a great family day out and the perfect way to see Dublin's harbours, river and city, all while raising funds for Aware's vital services. The 'Halfway Hooley', which this year is being hosted at our Pumphouse, will provide a welcome and celebratory mid-way break for all those taking part. We look forward to welcoming the thousands of walkers to the Port and showcasing the beauty of Dublin Bay."

Aware Support Services include Support & Self Care Groups and a Support Line and Support Mail service, both of which operate 365 days a year. Aware also delivers a range of positive mental health programmes to adults and senior cycle students nationwide, designed to build resilience and empower people with the skills and tools to manage their mental health. All Aware services are now available in-person and in virtual environments.



# Letters to the Editor

## Give Our Island Communities 'One Last Chance'

Editor  
Marine Times Newspaper

A Chara,

As an islander from Cape Clear Island I am saddened by the demise and depopulation of all the island communities that I have witnessed over the course of my lifetime. Born and raised on Cape Clear, I made my livelihood from fishing. The recent decommissioning has caused me to reflect on the support, or indeed the lack of it, shown to West Cork Islands and the fishing industry, by successive Irish governments, since the beginning of the state. Indeed, from the late 1890s to the 1920s the British government, through Lady Countess, funded the local fishermen to build successful fleets, complimented by the Baltimore Piscatorial School who provided training, and the foresight of Fr Davis.

While it may be late in the day, in 2023, why can't our politicians look at our diminishing communities and introduce a sustainable fishing scheme for island and small coastal communities?

Sustainable and remote are buzz words in today's world – regeneration, repopulation and environmentally aware. My suggestion to the powers that be is to pilot a program on our West Cork Islands to encourage and support fishing with hooks and lines for salmon, blue fin tuna, pollack, mackerel, and allow each community a small quota to get a traditional fishing industry restarted. In the same way as it is trendy to "grow your own" let's have a marine scheme that encourages "fish your own".

West Cork Islands Group already have a governance structure in place, so it would be possible to have this pilot project monitored by WCIG. A project of this nature fits well with the West Cork Islands vision for 2040 policies "to support eco-friendly and sustainable ... fishing and aquaculture linked to employment".

So, can I appeal to Patrick Murphy, our local fishing spokesperson, who has strong West Cork island connections, to carry this suggestion to Minister McConalogue and give our dwindling island populations one last chance at revival before it is too late.

Mise le meas,  
Skipper Pat Con O Driscoll,  
Ardgort,  
Cape Clear Island.

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## Newfoundland to Ballyconneely

Editor  
Marine Times Newspaper

You may be interested in a very interesting find myself and my daughter found washed up on the beach in Ballyconneely, on the Slyne Head peninsula, Galway on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February. We found a device with a barcode and instructions on what to do if found ashore, so we brought it home and my daughter Caitlin scanned it with her smart phone which brought us straight to a website that told us it had been in the water since April 2020.



We then sent an email to the email address printed on the device and after a few hours we got a message back saying they will be in contact soon with instructions on what to do

with the device (see reply attached).

It came all the way from Newfoundland in Canada. The unit is called a OSKER drifter and it's filled with GPS sensors and has been tracking the ocean currents out at sea.

Kind Regards  
Bridget & Caitlin Lee  
Ballyconneely  
Co. Galway

Dear Bridget Lee,

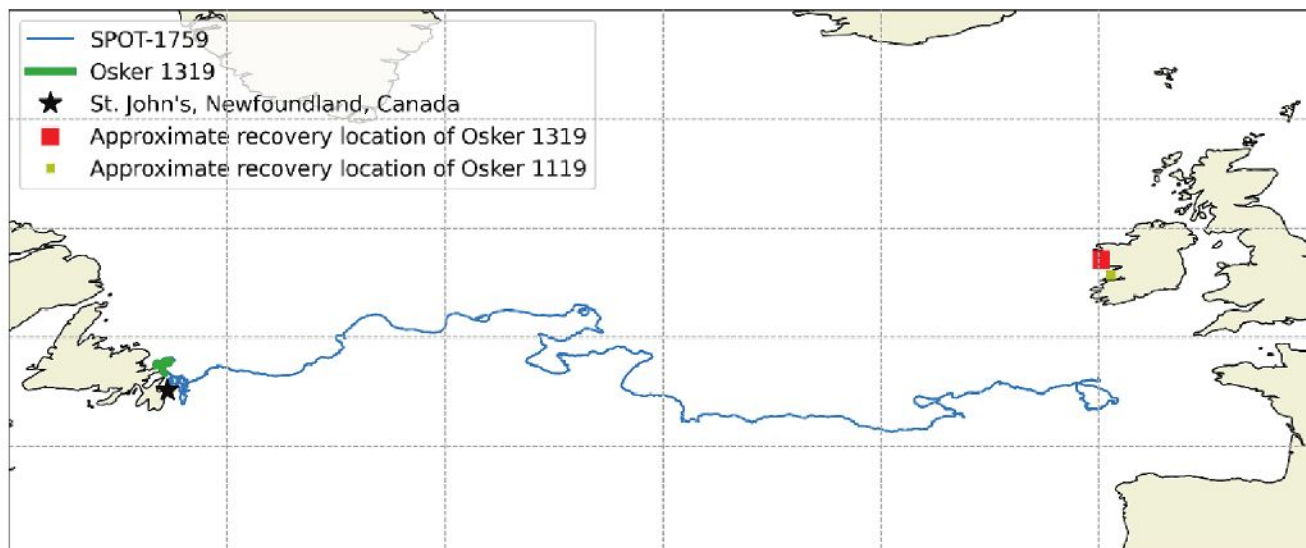
Thank you for reporting the recovery of this device, Osker 1319, which is an ocean drifter. This particular drifter was released as part of an experiment to study the drift and dispersion of objects in the marine environment.

The data collected from this device will be used to improve our understanding of ocean circulation patterns and how different parts of the Atlantic Ocean are connected. It will also be used to evaluate the accuracy of the ocean models that are used to forecast drift predictions in the area.

I've attached an image of the drifter's trajectory below. This drifter was released in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean near St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada on April 23, 2022. Unfortunately, this drifter stopped reporting in early May 2022, probably because of harsh environmental conditions. Eventually, the drifter grounded in Co Galway, Ireland and was recovered in February 2023. For context, I've also included on the image the path of another drifter (SPOT-1759) released at the same time and location but is still reporting data as of February 20, 2023! Finally, for your interest, another Osker was recovered in Co Clare, Ireland in December 2022.

I'd like to thank you for reporting the recovery of this drifter. There are no dangerous components to this drifter, and we received all the relevant information via satellite. You can keep it as a conversation starter or dispose of it at your local electronics disposal site or, I can make arrangements for a shipping company to pick it up and we can dispose of it here.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Soontiens  
Research Scientist  
Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Centre  
Fisheries and Oceans Canada



Trajectories of two drifters released in the Northwest Atlantic Ocean near St. John's, NL, Canada on April 23, 2022. The green line represents the known path of Osker 1319 which was recovered on the west coast of Ireland in February 2023. The yellow square represents the approximate recovery site of another drifter, Osker 1119, found in Co Clare, Ireland in December 2022. The blue line represents the path of another drifter (SPOT-1759) deployed at the same location and time but is still reporting data as of February 20, 2023.



# Bogue (*Boops boops*) Captured in the Irish Sea off Arklow

Report by Declan Quigley

**I**n late December, a Bogue (*Boops boops*), measuring c. 300 mm total length (TL) was captured in a surface herring net off Arklow Pier (52.7936°N, 6.1451°W), Co Wicklow (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Bogue (*Boops boops*) captured off Arklow Pier, Co Wicklow (21.12.2022)

The current specimen represents the 10<sup>th</sup> record of *B. boops* from Irish waters and the first from the east coast (Irish Sea, ICES VIIa). Indeed, there are only two previous records of Bogue from the Irish Sea, both of which were reported from UK waters. On 15 September 1999, a specimen was captured in salmon nets at Carsluith (54.8661°N, 4.3593°W), Wigtownshire, Galloway, SW Scotland. On 10 October 1986, another specimen was reported from near Aberporth (52.1784°N, 4.6055°W), SW Cardigan Bay, Wales.

The first Irish specimen, measuring 265 mm TL and weighing 210 g, was captured during November 1959 by the *MFV Pride of Ventry* (Skipper: Paudy Curran) while surfacing netting for herring in Ventry Harbour, Co Kerry (Fig. 2). Up until 2003, at least five more specimens were recorded from the Dingle Bay area, and two more from Co Cork (Castletownbere and Kinsale). More recently, the *MFV Caronia II* (W297) [Skipper: Michael Cunningham, Dunmore East) captured a specimen measuring 300 mm TL and weighing 289 g, while demersal seine netting at a depth of 120 m in the Celtic Sea off Co Waterford during June 2014 (Fig. 3).

Although the Bogue is regarded as a relatively uncommon sea-bream (Sparidae) in NW European waters (as far north as SW Norway), the species occurs more frequently from southern Biscay (45°N) southwards via the Mediterranean and Black Sea and along the African coast to Angola

(South-Central Atlantic). Within its native range, Bogue support seasonally important artisanal inshore commercial fisheries.

The Bogue is a gregarious bentho-pelagic species usually found in inshore waters at depths <150 m, albeit occasionally down to 300 m. Although usually reported as single specimens in NW European waters, during May 1987 up to 450 specimens were captured together by the *MFV Wanderer* while seine netting in the Firth of Clyde (SW Scotland).

On the Atlantic coast of SW Portugal, where spawning takes place between February and May, it was estimated that male and female Bogue reach sexual maturity at an average TL of 152 mm and 1-3 years of age. All of the specimens recorded from Irish waters to date would appear to have been adult size fish (average TL 326 mm; range 265-410 mm), corresponding to an age range of 6-10+ years.

The largest specimen reported from Irish waters to date, measuring 410 mm and weighing 825 g, was captured in Dingle Bay by the *MFV Brandaris* (Skipper: Paul Flannery) during February 1993. A specimen of similar TL was captured 12-16 km SSW of Newlyn, Cornwall (UK) during February 1975. The heaviest specimen, weighing 986 g (402 mm TL) was captured in Güllük Bay (Aegean Gulf, Turkey) during March 2018. The current UK Rod & Line Record, weighing 885 g, was captured in Guernsey during 1978.

Archaeological remains of both adult and juvenile *B. boops* dating from c. 2500 BC were recently discovered in coastal Neolithic middens at Annerod (57.4000°N, 12.0333°E), SW Sweden, which suggests that sea water temperatures were previously high enough for the species to breed in NW European waters. Increasing sea water temperatures in Irish waters during recent decades may eventually lead to the establishment and/or re-establishment of self-sustaining breeding populations of *B. boops* and other warmer-water marine species beyond the current northern limits of their European Atlantic distributions.

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



Figure 2. Paudy Curran with the first record of Bogue from Irish waters (NMINH 1959.21.1)

Figure 3. Bogue (*Boops boops*) captured by the *MFV Caronia II* in the Celtic Sea off Co Waterford (12.06.2014)



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Alannah Riley in Castletownbere - Photo courtesy Anne Marie Cronin Photography

## “They Were Just Fishermen”

Kevin Flannery writes:

**W**hile awaiting the funeral outside the church in Dingle, two people in passing, one asked the other who was dead, the reply came “some fisherman or other”. One could feel the anger and rage well up in the wish to put them right.

They may have been just some fisherman, but like so many before them and now so many fewer, they were proud fishermen. Proud of their trade, proud of their tradition, proud of how and where they worked and of the bounty they caught and provided for their crews, families and friends.

Over the past while in Dingle we and not unlike other fishing ports have lost two solid old stock fishermen, James Sheedy and Tim O Sullivan. Both of them spent their lives at sea, trawling and dragging a living from the sea. Both started out on the decks of the open Fifty Footers.

James was one of the last men wearing the traditional “Barra Baoil” all in one oilskin. After years on the deck, gradually as was tradition, they took over the wheel from time to time and in the finish they were both skipping trawlers from Dingle. Trawlers like the Morning Star, Naomh Dearacha,



Assumpta, Duex Orcadies, but to name a few.

These two men worked the traditional grounds working on old hard won marks, using hills, hollows, peaks and headlands. They provided a living for their crews and owners, their families and factory workers to name but a few.

Once retirement came, they hauled a few pots, and giggered for a few mackerel, and now their time to sail to the harbour of the other fishermen in Gods right hand, Peter, James and John.

Tim leaves behind his brother, family and many friends. James leaves behind his wife Maura Cait, daughters and grandchild, and many friends.

**Like Peter, James and John, they may have been just fishermen - but they were proud “FISHERMEN”.**



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