

IRELAND'S LEADING MARITIME NEWSPAPER

MARINE TIMES

MAY 2023 - PRICE €3



Kate Marie heading back to Dingle - Photo: Donal Healy



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Fleet Modernisation Scheme Needed

Existing Producers Organisation Scheme Needs to Be Adapted to Accommodate Newly-Approved Representative Organisations

South West Fishermen Want A Complete Evaluation of the Fishing Fleet

BIM Business of Seafood Report Confirms Further Decline Within Fishing Sector According to IFPEA - all of this plus so much more inside!

Newspaper for Ireland's Fishing, Marine and Coastal Communities

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the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

Manners Are Cheap but People Who Have Them Are Priceless

Manners cost nothing but are worth a fortune. If someone speaks to us in a room or maybe even in public do we not reply or at least acknowledge them?

In the Pre Mobile Era did we not all answer our telephones without knowing who was calling us? In the days before Email did we not answer letters?

Why now at a time when communication was never easier or more available can it be so difficult to communicate, particularly with service providers.

I am not targeting anyone or group particularly because frankly lack of manners and delivery has become a pandemic formed on the back of the Covid Pandemic.

We have had the announcement that the wearing of masks in hospitals is no longer

obligatory - yet the working from home and staggered work practices started during the pandemic has not really been abolished.

The Pandemic is all but over lads so why are so many of you still using it as a reason - excuse even - to create horrible delays.

I would like many of you to consider the effects of what you do to those of us who must complete our tasks before demanding payment for our work.

It could be claimed that those of you causing the delays will be paid anyway whether you have completed the task or not.

I am trying not to be unduly nasty here but there are those of you who traditionally delivered in style who have now reduced your reputation to a level of which you cannot be proud.

We used to have **Service Level Agreements** lads. A good concept which appears to have been consigned to the bin.

The reduction in levels of service have reduced to a level where those delivering bad service don't even realize they are doing it and certainly have no understanding of the misery they are inflicting on those of us on the "outside" doing our best to get things done.

I for one am now reaching the end of my patience and believe I will be leaving a lot of work to others as I am weary and disillusioned.

There was a time when properly presented paperwork was rewarded by better delivery than for paperwork or applications prepared with less care.

I am afraid that proper presentation counts for very little now - so why bother????

I am tired of apologizing for things which are not my fault Lads!!!!

Today as I am writing this piece we will have the launch of the BIM Business of

Seafood 2022 report which is an excellent document and gives us an idea of what the Industry is worth.

The figures are down somewhat on last year but I believe that the document clearly demonstrates the potential for the sector to generate even more income to the overall Irish Economy.

To do that it must be treated with the respect it deserves rather than the suspicion which it so often experiences.

I hope that when the decommissioning has been completed and the fleet begins to enjoy the benefits of the New Grant Schemes and the availability of the larger shares of the quota will serve to ensure the futures of those remaining.

Our Licensing Authority are under terrible pressure and delays in completing paperwork have become an unfortunate feature.

They need help lads ... More staff and maybe a streamlining of procedures.

That along with getting some kind of regular attendance patterns in the Shipping Registries should get us back to where we were a couple of years ago.

I wonder if some modification of the 2 year rule deeming Capacity which is off register for 2 years expired could be reexamined.

It does not make sense to tie up our Licensing Officials in the process of renewing Capacity which is about to expire.

Surely after the decommissioning our national level of Capacity will be trimmed enough to drop that rule??

Too much time and effort being wasted in so many sectors doing things which have no positive results.

So frustrating!!

You hear from people in all sectors that too much time is being spent on administration and which has no positive productive effect.

Some of us have reached an age where we are tired and thinking of handing in our guns.

Stay safe lads and lets see how we get on.



Loading up to start the season in Bundoran - Photo courtesy Sean Carty

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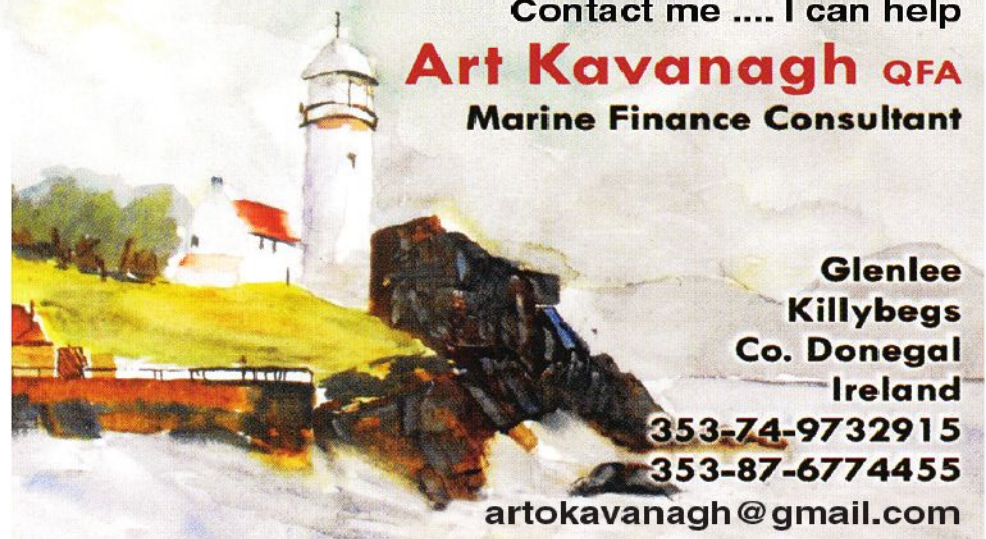
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Further Support for Inshore Fisheries Sector Announced

In a meeting with representatives of the Inshore fisheries sector, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Charlie McConalogue announced a new round of funding under the Brexit Inshore Fisheries Business Model Adjustment Scheme.

The support scheme which operated in 2022 was put in place to assist inshore fishers in adjusting to the impacts of Brexit on their businesses and delivered on a recommendation of the Report of the Seafood Task Force – Navigating Change (October 2021). The scheme was delivered successfully to over 800 eligible applicants. However, given the ongoing challenges faced by the inshore sector, the scheme has been redeveloped and relaunched to offer further support to inshore fishers.

The Minister and inshore representatives also discussed a range of other topics important to the inshore sector, including developments in the hook and line mackerel fishery, North West herring policy and new fishing opportunities for spurdog. The Minister also spoke about his initiative to establish a Brown Crab Working Group in order to review the current arrangements in place for that fishery and to examine management options likely to support the sustainability of brown crab stocks in Ireland.

Announcing the new Scheme, Minister McConalogue said: “Our inshore fishers make a significant contribution to our coastal communities and blue economy, but have been significantly impacted by Brexit and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

While positive steps have been taken to support these fishers, the challenges in terms of operating costs and market access remain.”

Up to €3.5 million in short-term funding for the sector in this new round of support will bridge the gap for the inshore sector, while longer term measures to strengthen the seafood sector as a whole take effect.

The 2023 support scheme will introduce a suite of new online training modules to be made available by BIM, specifically tailored to the inshore fishing sector which will help these fishermen manage costs, increase product quality and reach new customers. The scheme will be open to owners of fishing vessels under 18m in length, registered in the polyvalent, polyvalent potting and specific segments. Payments will be made to eligible beneficiaries who complete one of the modules, in order to assist them in implementing changes to their business model. Payment rates remain at €2,700 for owners of vessels under 8 metres in length and €4,000 for owners of vessels between 8m and 17.99m in length.

Minister McConalogue added: “This additional measure for the Inshore sector is part of a wider comprehensive package of



Photo courtesy James Grandfield

supports and development strategies which will transform the seafood industry so that it can continue to develop sustainably. The ongoing investments in promoting inshore stocks in domestic and overseas markets, in developing marine infrastructure and investing in all elements of the seafood supply chain will provide opportunities for inshore fishers. These latest short term supports will allow these fishers to capitalise on these opportunities and navigate through the current challenging environment.”

Christopher O’Sullivan TD commenting on the supports says; “For the last 6 months I have been campaigning for further supports for the inshore fishing sector. I’m delighted that Minister McConalogue has announced a support scheme very similar to

the last support scheme. Payment rates will be €2,700 for boats under 8m and €4000 for vessels between 8m and 18m in length. The inshore sector is such a vital part of coastal communities. We need to continue supporting them. Further details will be available on the BIM website in the coming weeks.

“Hats off NIFA for their persistence on this one.”

The Scheme will open in the coming weeks and will be administered by Bord Iascaigh Mhara. Further details will be available from BIM in due course at: bim.ie/fisheries/funding/

* For vessel owners to be eligible, they must demonstrate that they were actively fishing during 2022. The scheme will specify requirements in this respect.

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Prices Up Though Catches Down in A Volatile Year for The Fishing Industry

BIM Annual Report Praises “Enduring Strength” of Fishing Industry

Minister Says Industry Showed “Resilience in Facing Significant Challenges”

Marine Times Reporter

The Irish seafood sector in total was worth €1.3 billion last year to the national economy, despite 2022 being a volatile year.



Caroline Bocquel, CEO Bord Iascaigh Mhara launched the annual Business of Seafood Report

Fish landings were down, but prices were up says Bord Iascaigh Mhara in its analysis published in the annual Business of Seafood Report.

“Challenges abound, but growth in the sector continues,” according to BIM. “The volume of seafood produced didn’t match previous years, but this was compensated for by very strong price growth. That was particularly and most noticeable in sea-caught, wild fish, where prices paid for product increased by 38%.”

“In spite of a volatile year there was a 4% annual growth due to a combination of higher prices, the reopening of restaurants after Covid-19 and an increase in the consumption of seafood in Ireland,” said BIM’s Chief Executive Caroline Bocquel.

“The figures reflect the enduring strength of those working in the seafood industry and the vital role which the sector plays in coastal communities in Ireland. BIM remains steadfast in its commitment to support the industry to navigate the fast-changing global landscape.”

Against the backdrop of the conflict in Ukraine and the continued uncertainty brought by Brexit, 2022 was another challenging year for the Irish seafood industry. However, despite the steep increase

in fuel prices, reduced quota available to Irish vessels, coupled with difficult trading conditions globally, overall, the value of the sector still rose in 2022 to €1.3 billion. This was an increase from the €1.25 billion seen in 2021 and represents a 4% growth in GDP.

There is a particularly encouraging note in the report in the domestic market, where it says that “the main driver of growth was from the consumption of seafood domestically, which increased to €475 million in 2022, a 13.5% increase following from the decline of 54% in 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.”

Significant growth was seen in the value of landings of wild caught fish and aquaculture production, which were up by 14% and 10% respectively. Exports also increased in value by 4% to €696 million. Exports to the EU continued to grow to €407 million up from €393 million in 2021. Exports to the UK decreased for the third year in a row, as the difficulties in trading with the UK created by Brexit began to bite. Overall investment in the sector decreased marginally during 2022 to €443 million (-1%), reflecting continued uncertainty in the sector. However, Government investment increased by 10% as funding under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) came on

stream during 2022.

Main points in the report:

- The top-selling species on the Irish market during the year were salmon (€119 million) and cod (€44 million)
- Dublin Bay prawns surpassed mackerel as the most valuable wild-caught species, more than doubling in prices earned – up 53%. They were the top species landed by the Irish fleet, accounting for 6,200 tonnes with a value of €82 million.
- Organic salmon was the top species produced by the aquaculture sector – accounting for 13,500 tonnes worth €124 million.
- Rock oysters (+8%) and rope grown mussels (+7%) also reflected strong price growth within the aquaculture sector.
- A total of €507 million worth of seafood was landed at Irish ports, a 14% increase on 2021 in value.
- Killybegs was the largest fishing port by value with landings worth €135 million, followed by Castletownbere with €129 million worth of catch landed.
- Landings, particularly in whitefish and prawns, also increased significantly in

the Ros an Mhíl (Rossaveal), though the report comment that landings there had appeared to be in long-term decline. Landing also increased at Clogherhead and Green-castle, it stated.

Publishing the report the Minister for the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, said the industry had shown “resilience” in dealing with the “significant challenges” which included the war in Ukraine which led to rising energy costs as well as reduced quotas and difficult trading conditions with the UK in the aftermath of Brexit.

“The industry has once again shown its resilience to such shocks and continues to be a key socio-economic driver in coastal communities, employing more than 15,000 people. The report shows a 10% increase in Government investment at €255 million in 2022 which includes the opening of several schemes to cushion the impact of Brexit.”

Before decommissioning, the BIM report recorded 1,993 registered vessels. It gives a total of 15,373 jobs, 101 seafood processors and 296 aquaculture sites.

• **The report can be downloaded from the BIM website**



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“The recently published Business of Seafood Report 2022 by BIM confirms that the Irish Fishing industry is in further decline, it is without doubt the worst report into Irish Fishing in recent times. When one drills down into the report and the actual figures, it is a damning report and is nothing short of shocking” according to the CEO of Irish Fish Processors and Exporters, Brendan Byrne - Read more on page 17

Further reaction throughout this issue of the Marine Times

Three New Irish Ports Designated for Landings by Northern Irish Vessels

Whilst officially opening the SFPA's new Port Office in Greencastle on Friday 28th April, Minister McConalogue also announced the designation of three new Irish ports for landings by Northern Irish vessels in County Donegal – Malin Head, Glengad and Bunagee which will be serviced by the SFPA in Greencastle. These ports will be additional to the seven ports already designated for such landings.

Greencastle is now one of twelve new ports designated by Minister McConalogue as EU entry ports for Northern Ireland registered vessels. Masters and operators of Third Country (non-EU) fishing vessels are required to adhere to the regulations pertaining to entry to and landing only in designated EU ports and to ensure that the masters of the vessels provide sufficient prior notification for such entry and landing. Such reporting requirements exist for non-EU vessels entering EU ports. Under regulations designed to deter Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing, the designated ports in Ireland for all non-EU vessels are limited to Castletownbere and Killybegs with additional access only for those vessels registered in Northern Ireland to the ports of Greencastle, Rathmullan, Burtonport, Ros an Mhíl, and Howth as well as the new additions in Malin Head, Glengad and Bunagee.

The new SFPA Port Office has been established by this Government to mitigate the impact on the fisheries and seafood sector of the UK withdrawal from the EU. According to the SFPA, a substantial programme of work has been undertaken by the SFPA team in the Greencastle office to promote and enforce compliance with the EU Common Fisheries Policy, sea-fisheries legislation, and seafood safety law, all with the goal of ensuring the future sustainability of Ireland's marine resources and assuring public trust in the quality and provenance of seafood.

In a press statement to the Marine Times the SFPA state that the establishment of a permanent SFPA port office in Greencastle formed an important part of the measures undertaken by the SFPA to ensure regulatory preparedness and compliance with EU sea-fisheries legislation and fisheries conservation control following the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. Import controls applicable to non-EU countries undertaken by the SFPA rose from an annual average of 800 pre-Brexit to over 3,000 post-Brexit, driven principally by pre-existing UK trade being reclassified as 'Third Country' trade. The volume of catch certificates issued for export freight by the SFPA rose from approximately 200

to over 800 (with the UK accounting for 71%), while Third Country landings (the majority originating in the UK) rose to over 600. The presence of the port office in Greencastle allows the SFPA to respond effectively and efficiently to the increased volume of activity.

Minister for Agriculture Food & Marine, Charlie McConalogue said: "I am delighted to formally open the SFPA office here in Greencastle which provides a vital port of entry and continuity to fishers and small vessels operating off the Donegal coast post-Brexit. In 2021, I previously designated five additional ports for landings by Britain and Northern Ireland-registered vessels, namely, Greencastle, Rathmullen, Burtonport, Ros a Mhíl and Howth. In addition to the Ports already designated for landings by Northern Ireland vessels, I am announcing today an extension to the landing hours for Greencastle as well as new designations for Malin Head, Glengad and Bunagee. The eight newly designated ports join Killybegs and Castletownbere, which continue to be designated for landings by vessels of any Third Country origin. I designated these additional ports having regard to amongst other things the previous level of activity by UK registered Northern Ireland vessels in the recent past. The designation of the five additional ports was an important decision that allows fishers and small vessels in particular to continue landing at Irish ports following Brexit. The SFPA has undertaken significant work in putting in place the arrangements necessary, including additional staff, and now this Port office in Greencastle, to provide for these port designations. I am glad the outcome will mean many of those fishers will now have the opportunity to access a number of additional ports including this excellent facility in Greencastle."

Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson, SFPA said: "We are delighted that Minister Charlie McConalogue is here to officially open our Port Office in Greencastle. A substantial programme of work has been progressed and completed across the SFPA as part of its remit to prepare for the impact of the UK departure from the EU, to maintain vibrant marine ecosystems and safeguard Ireland's international reputation for safe, quality seafood. Notwithstanding the immense volume of work achieved, I commend the work undertaken by colleagues to ensure the office in Greencastle is fully operational and open. The port office in Greencastle is an invaluable addition to our suite of port offices."



Greencastle - Photo: Catherine Turner

Fleet Modernisation Scheme Needed

Report by Tom MacSweeney

The Chief Executive of the Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation says that a fleet modernisation scheme is needed.

Speaking to the Marine Times, John Lynch says that, following decommissioning, Ireland has a smaller fishing industry which should get stronger support from government.

"What we now have is a small industry and this smaller industry than Ireland used to have needs a lot more support now to rebuild it and modernise it for the future," he told the Marine Times. "We need a fleet modernisation scheme and probably could even do with a fleet renewal scheme to bring us into line with other fleets in Europe. This modernisation of the fleet could also help by reducing our fuel consumption, with less carbon and help the Government's green energy targets."

Mr. Lynch said that the full effects of decommissioning had yet to be seen on the industry and coastal communities, but it

was inevitably pointing to less employment in the industry. There was an immediate imperative for action by the State to ensure the future of the industry that was left and to give it every assistance to be viable.

"Now that our fleet has been reduced to a very low level from decommissioning there is a need to invest in what we have left and to modernise it and help to reduce our fuel consumption. Fuel cost is still a major concern and the fleet is still trying to claw its way back from the impact of the high fuel costs and the losses of last year. A lot of fishing businesses have built up debt over the last year and owners are trying to get money together to pay that debt off.

"We must bring our fleet to a stage where it is as good as any other fleet, giving it strong, national support."



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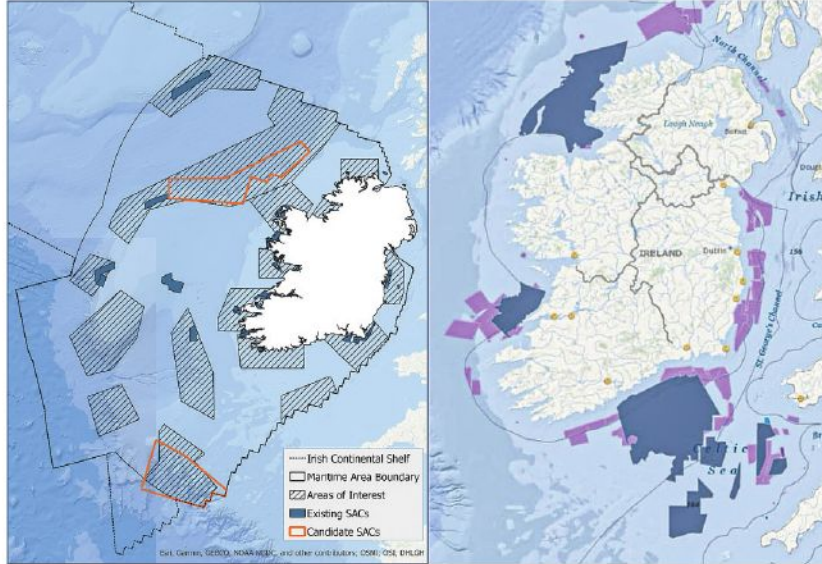


MARINE TIMES

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

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Much like the spatial squeeze in our waters this issue of the Marine Times has a lot to say with not enough room to say it all so - we will let a picture tell this story



Two maps one displaying current MPA's and proposed MPA's (30% of Irish waters) and the other map is proposed offshore windfarm development areas of interest everything else in between accounting for quotas, restrictions, enforcement, licences, stock availability, etc, etc is what MIGHT be left for our Irish fishermen not much is it?

South West Fishermen Want A Complete Evaluation of the Fishing Fleet

Killybegs and Castletownbere Fishermen Complain About Lack of Funding to Fishermen from the Brexit Adjustment Reserve

Report by Tom MacSweeney

The South West Fish Producers' Organisation has called for a complete Scientific and Economic Evaluation of the entire Irish fleet after decommissioning.

"It is necessary to have an evaluation of the fleet, from the smallest boat to the biggest," says Patrick Murphy, CEO of the South West FPO.

"There has to be an inventory of the fleet to see where the industry is going. The promises made that there would be a sustainable industry after decommissioning are not looking like they will work out. We made clear that Ireland needed more fish, but everything was hinged on decommissioning, but that is not going to work. We have not got more fish which Ireland, with our waters, should have.

"We had less fish to give out in April than we had last year. The decommissioning scheme is not going to solve the problems. We said that and we warned that there would not be a fishing industry left because of the way things have been done. There are no young people coming into the fishing industry. Our coastal communities and our industry deserve better."

Mr. Murphy says that the funding under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) has not gone to fishermen as it was intended that it should.

Killybegs Calls on Minister For 'Most Urgent Political Action'

The Chief Executive of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, Sean O'Donoghue, has also complained about the way in which the BAR fund has been handled, or rather more accurately perhaps, not been dealt with by the Marine Minister as the industry expected it would be.

"The Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) was put in place to provide financial support to pelagic fishermen which is the sector most impacted from the Brexit fall-out. However, not one single cent of monies have been distributed to date. It beggars belief that a tranche of money which would provide so much relief to our members is not being disseminated. We lag behind our EU counterparts and what's of most concern to us is that if this funding is not distributed by the end of the year, it will be returned to Europe and permanently lost to our fishermen.

"This is potentially an appalling vista and we are calling for the most urgent of political action by Marine Minister McCool on this matter."

Photographing the Saoirse at Hegarty's Boatyard, West Cork

A new book *Hegarty's Boatyard - Building Conor O'Brien's Saoirse* with photographs by Kevin O'Farrell was launched on Thursday 20th April in the West Cork Hotel. The book beautifully documents the craft and passion of bringing the Saoirse back to life.



After four years in build Saoirse leaves the grain store workshop, with the Hegarty crew justifiably proud of their skills. (l-r): Paddy Hegarty, John Hegarty, Fachtna O'Sullivan, Teddy O'Donovan, Pierre Couture and Liam Hegarty. © Kevin O'Farrell

Speaking about his new book Kevin says; "Living near Hegarty's Boatyard means I can go there regularly to enjoy spending time following my two major passions in life; photography and wooden boats. This yard has always been a refuge for those interested in wooden boats, so it's a great place to chat to like-minded friends.

can clearly see the content, structure and composition of the photographs. And, because black and white images are a step removed from how we usually see the world, their use is an interesting and important aspect of photography's rich heritage - a practice I firmly believe should be respected and continued.

"Through many such casual conversations with Liam Hegarty over the years, I learned that Saoirse had long been top of his boatbuilding wish-list. So when Hegarty's ten-year restoration of the Ilen came



Saoirse on sea trials in Baltimore Harbour, 2023. © Kevin O'Farrell

to an end in 2017, this freed up space for Liam's lifelong dream to finally become reality. Laying Saoirse's keel would mark the start of a new project for Hegarty's Boatyard and for myself, as I began the long process of documenting the 'rebirth' of this iconic boat.

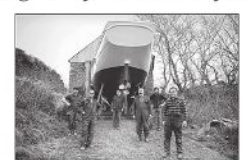
"In my Documentary Photography, images are not meant to be viewed individually, but as a series, with each one building upon another to form a unique narrative. Photography is the only form of communication that captures such ephemeral moments, with each photographer recording the essence of their own personal experience at that time. The diversity and truth of this individual approach is, for me, what makes photography so interesting.

"I have chosen to work in black and white as the simplicity of monochrome helps to focus attention on the main subject. Without the distraction of colour, the viewer

"Watching these boatbuilders at work today offers an insight into previous generations of such craftsmen, as their tools and skills remain unchanged. Unfortunately, however, these traditions are in danger of being

lost now as very few young people take up careers in wooden boatbuilding. This would represent a tragedy for our island nation, so I feel honoured to witness and record this extraordinary craftsmanship for future generations. This book is my tribute to the wonderful living maritime heritage that is still practiced daily in Hegarty's Boatyard."

Hegarty's Boatyard



Building Conor O'Brien's
SAOIRSE
Photographs by Kevin O'Farrell

Hegarty's Boatyard - Building Conor O'Brien's Saoirse is available from all good bookshops or online at www.kevinofarrell-photographer.com

Upcoming Courses 2023

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- Three Day Basic Safety Training
02 May - 04 May 2023
16 May - 18 May 2023
06 June - 08 June 2023
04 July - 06 July 2023
26 September - 28 September 2023
10 October - 12 October 2023
17 October - 19 October 2023
07 November - 09 November 2023
05 December - 07 December 2023
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting
23 May - 25 May 2023
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04 September - 20 December 2023
- STCW Medical Care Aboard Ship
29 May - 02 June 2023
10 July - 14 July 2023
- Navigation Control Course
26 June - 07 July 2023
- Passenger Boat Proficiency
29 May - 02 June 2023
26 June - 30 June 2023
03 July - 07 July 2023

NFCI Greencastle

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

- Class 3 Engineering (Fishing) Certificate of Competency
04 September 2023 - 02 February 2024
- GMDSS Short Range Certificate
22 May - 25 May 2023
- GMDSS General Operators Certificate
08 May - 19 May 2023
- STCW Medical First Aid
03 July - 05 July 2023
- Advanced Firefighting
12 June - 16 June 2023
- Passenger Boat Proficiency
17 July - 21 July 2023

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- Kilmore Quay
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30 May - 01 June 2023

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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



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



IS&EFPO - Working For The Fishermen

Fleet Modernisation and Renewal Scheme Needed

John Lynch, CEO of the Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation says: "Landings of wild-fish catches by Irish vessels are down ten per cent, while the value is up 14 per cent, but that does not offset the increased costs which have been experienced in fuel. Employment in the seafood sector as a whole is down 8 per cent and that is before decommissioning and we are still waiting to know exactly the final figure of those who will take it, but whatever happens it means that there will be less people employed in the industry. Employment in the sector is going to go down more."

"Although there has been an increase in value as recorded in the BIM Seafood Business Report, the decrease in volume from the effect of Brexit is still having a very serious effect on the industry as a whole because it is volume that gives employment. While value is good and helps increase profitability, the volume of fish to be processed onshore is what gives jobs, fish to be caught and processed. We don't have the volume even though we may have more value."

"What we now have is a small industry and this smaller industry than Ireland used to have needs a lot more support now to rebuild it and modernise it for the future."

"We need a fleet modernisation scheme and probably could even do with a fleet renewal scheme to bring us into line with other fleets in Europe. This modernisation could also help by reducing our fuel consumption, with less carbon and help the Government's green energy targets."

"Any increase for the industry is welcome, so the extra value is good and that fish is becoming more valuable. But we need to use this now to our advantage and to modernise the fleet to meet the changed circumstances that we now live in."

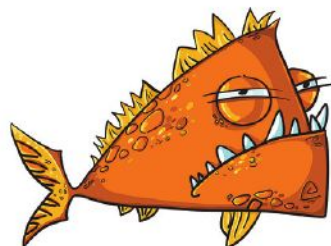
"It is also good to see from the BIM report that people are eating more fish, that domestic consumption is up and the reason that they are doing so is that it is a very high value protein and relatively cheap in fish such as whiting and haddock, for which domestic consumption is well up and hake is also up."

"People may also be realising that these three products - whiting and haddock and hake - are landed by Irish vessels whereas cod can be very much an import. When whiting, haddock and hake are bought, those three products can give customers the satisfaction that they are Irish-caught."

"The increase in this white fish consumption is down to the very successful Bord Bia promotion campaign. Bord Bia has done extensive work in promoting the consumption of Irish fish and it is starting to pay off in domestic consumption. The public are noticing where the product is coming from."

"Fuel cost is still a major concern and the fleet is still trying to claw its way back from the impact of the high fuel costs and the losses of last year. A lot of fishing businesses have built up debt over the last year and owners are trying to get money together to pay that debt off."

"Now that our fleet has been reduced to a very low level from decommissioning there is a need to invest in what we have left and to modernise it and reduce our fuel consumption. We must bring our fleet to a stage where it is as good as any other fleet, give it strong, national support. Fishing provides food that can be bought by the public in the knowledge that it is the lowest carbon user to provide for the food that they buy."



Seafood Sector Is at a Crossroads

Aodh O'Donnell, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation says; "At just €1.3bn., the value of the entire Irish seafood sector is lower than the consolidated turnover of just one large Dutch seafood business at €1.4bn. The latest BIM figures show how badly Irish catches have fallen. The Irish seafood sector is at a crossroads."

"Non-EU member Norway has a similar population to Ireland, but enjoys seafood exports 20 times greater than us. We are being starved of access to our own marine resources. It is time for the Government and the EU to change this and deliver for Ireland's seafood sector."

"Some Non-EU Coastal States in Western Europe are taking advantage of the flawed negotiation process and fishing an unfair share of pelagic species like Mackerel and Blue Whiting. These Coastal States include Norway, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Greenland and - since Brexit - the UK. Norway and the Faroes have a record of setting themselves inflated unilateral quotas in non-compliance with scientific advice. This seriously threatens the health of these economically critical stocks."

"These Coastal States enter negotiations with the EU every year, but the flawed system allows them to avoid committing to any sharing agreements. For example, the mackerel coastal sharing consultations again failed to deliver by the March target date. This suits Norway, Faroe Islands and Iceland, because they are not bound by any multilateral agreed measures at the Coastal States. They are then free to fix quotas unilaterally at whatever level their industry wants."

"Norway, in particular, refuses to allow the Coastal States process to come in under the North East Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NEAFC) which is based in London. Within NEAFC, agreements would be bound by more stringent rules and rights. More crucially, they would also be bound by the obligations and potential sanctions of a regional fisheries management organisation. Equally guilty in this respect is Faroe Islands. Worse still, the Russian Federation's fisheries in the North East Atlantic still appears to be protected and encouraged by Norway in all Coastal States consultations."

"It is time for the EU to act more forcefully in these negotiations to protect the interests of member states like Ireland. The EU has an impressive Coastal States negotiating team, but they need a stronger political mandate to achieve a better outcome for EU Members. In addition, the process needs a more sustained focus and earlier co-operation on all three separate strands: TAC Setting, Sharing Arrangements, and Access."

"Blue whiting remains the major currency and bargaining chip in negotiations with Norway. Uniquely, Norway needs to access the EU/Irish EEZ to catch their enormous Blue Whiting quota because it is now denied access to the UK waters. Norway's catches are mainly taken in the Irish EEZ with a total share reported catches exceeding 25%. At the same time, Ireland's catch share of blue whiting in our own EEZ is just 3%. This is ridiculously low given that the stock spawns primarily in waters to the West of Ireland."

"The IFPO is of the firm view that the EU should make any access to its waters for mackerel and blue whiting conditional on quota sharing arrangements with Coastal States. The EU should make clear in those discussions that the Commission will not agree "mutual access" on blue whiting to Norway, until Norway agrees a quota sharing arrangement for all pelagic stocks."

"This access to the Irish EEZ must be conditional on agreement that ensures that unilateral quotas are not set for any pelagic species. Access to the 200-mile EEZ for Blue Whiting must be conditional on overall sharing agreements and delivering a meaningful distribution to Irish fishermen. We cannot stand idly by as Ireland's seafood industry dies while the sector flourishes in other EU and non-EU states."

"The time to act is now!"

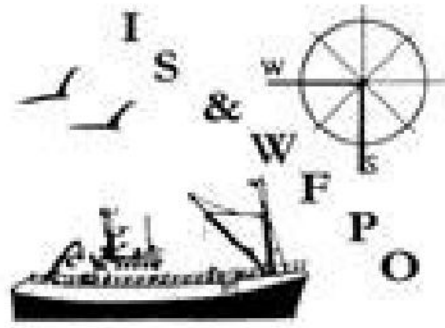
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Complete Evaluation of The Fishing Fleet Needed

Patrick Murphy, CEO of the Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation says; “We have written to the Minister asking for a complete Scientific and Economic Evaluation of the entire Irish fleet as it stands after decommissioning. This is necessary, from the smallest boat in the fleet to the biggest, because the future viability of the fleet is not ensured after decommissioning. There are people that are in serious trouble in our fishing industry. Even though the BIM report says that fishermen’s losses are negated by prices, unless they are looking at supermarket prices, because they are certainly not looking at what is coming back to the boats.

“Fuel and costs and everything have gone up and they are finding it hard to make ends meet. This is falling on deaf ears. There was to be money there for fishermen from the BAR fund but the money is not going where it should have gone, to the fishermen.

“We made it clear from the South/West FPO where we said that what was being proposed would not work, at the Task Force and with decommissioning and my members want a status quo of the fishing industry where it stands now. We want an evaluation of all of the fleet. There was an opportunity to help our fishing industry and we were not listened to. The money that was to be allocated to fishermen has not all gone where it should have, to the fishermen.

“The Minister could have done what the Spanish and French did with fuel aid. That sanction was there under State aid rules and the Minister could have done it and he did not. Fishermen did not get a cent. They

had to eat into any savings they had to keep going.

“There has to be an inventory of the fleet to see where the industry is going. The promises made that there would be a sustainable industry after decommissioning are not looking like they will work out. We made clear that Ireland needed more fish, but everything was hinged on decommissioning, but it is not going to work and we have not got more fish, which Ireland with our waters should have. We have had less fish to give out this month (April) than we had last year.

“The decommissioning scheme is not going to solve the problems. We said that and we warned that there would not be a fishing industry left because of the way things have been done. There are no young people coming into the fishing industry. Our coastal communities and our industry deserve better. The money is there, it was made available for the fishing industry, for fishermen, but it has not been given to them.”



Killybegs Fishermen's
ORGANISATION LTD.

Seafood Report Starkly Highlights Concerns

Sean O'Donoghue, CEO of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation says; “The ongoing, inordinate delay in providing compensation to fishermen impacted by Brexit is an absolute scandal which must be rectified forthwith. Fishermen are now waiting 30 months for access to approved Brexit funding.

“Bord Iascaigh Mhara, the State seafood development agency, in its Seafood Report underlines the seismic challenge faced by KFO Members with Dublin Bay Prawns now surpassing mackerel as the most valuable wild species for the industry. The report also states that the volume of exports fell by 13% to 293,000 tonnes due mainly to the lower quotas of mackerel and blue whiting as a result of Brexit.

“The Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) was put in place to provide financial support to pelagic fishermen which is the sector most impacted from the Brexit fall-out. However, not one single cent of monies have been distributed to date.

“It beggars belief that a tranche of money which would provide so much relief to our members is not being disseminated. We lag behind our EU counterparts and what's of most concern to us is that if this funding is not distributed by the end of the year, it will be returned to Europe and permanently lost to our fishermen.

“This is potentially an appalling vista and we are calling for the most urgent of political action by Marine Minister McConologue on this matter.

“In 2022 alone, we have had more than 12,000 tonnes of mackerel valued at approximately €18 million taken from our quota as a direct result of Brexit. No business can, nor could, be expected to sustain losses on this scale. In October 2021, a Government-established Seafood Task Force rightly recognised that the end of the Brexit withdrawal period brought about the biggest change and disruption in EU-UK relations in 50 years. This was manifest across all aspects of trade and society, but most notably within the Irish seafood sector, where a savage loss of 26% of mackerel and 14% of nephrops quota, was wiped from the bottom line with the stroke of a pen.

“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 because of Brexit, resulting in loss of more than €52million.

“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.”





Existing Producers Organisation Scheme Needs to Be Adapted to Accommodate Newly-Approved Representative Organisations

The existing Producers Organisation scheme needs to be adapted to accommodate newly-approved representative organisations. This should be a priority under the new EMFAF operational programme; The importance of new entrants for generational renewal in our fishing communities; The uncertainty around offshore renewable energy installations, marine protected areas and other EU regulations are the topics in this month's column from IIMRO.

Report by Seamus Bonner

IIMRO participated in a meeting with Minister Charlie McConalogue recently along with other representative groups to discuss matters affecting the island, inshore and small scale fleets. The meeting was an opportunity for IIMRO to voice their concerns about the current state of fishing and to discuss potential ways forward.

IIMRO emphasised the importance of inshore and small-scale fishing fleets which are an integral part of Ireland's fishing community with island vessels making up over 5% of the national fleet. These fleets are made up of small vessels, operated by family-run businesses, fishing closer to shore from small piers and harbours. They are a large in number, diverse fleet segment responsible for catching a variety of species

and play a crucial role in food security and in sustaining island and coastal communities.

In terms of priorities IIMRO identified a number of issues with the producer organisation (PO) scheme for newly recognised POs. Highlighting the lack of any financial support received since the recognition of IIMRO despite a facility for a 50% advance in funding being available in the EMFF funding programme to aid start-up costs and cash flow. This advance is available in other EU member states and the lack of support here in Ireland is a major barrier to delivering approved plans and providing effective representation for members.

IIMRO emphasised that the existing PO scheme needs to be adapted to accommodate newly approved representative organisations and that this should be a priority under the new EMFAF operational programme given its importance.

The importance of new entrants for generational renewal in our fishing communities was raised as a key issue. The many challenges faced by fishers are having a cumulative impact on the ability to attract young people, with uncertainty and cuts to income making it more and more difficult to replace those leaving fishing as a way of life. A change of approach by the state agencies responsible for the governance of fisheries is needed to ensure that fishing remains a central part of life on the islands and elsewhere.

Onshore infrastructure to support small scale fisheries and short supply chains is lacking in many small piers and harbours. IIMRO informed the minister that funds allocated under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve Fund (BAR) were not reaching small piers and harbours. Many piers where small boats operate from do not even have basic facilities such as power, lights and water and that this needs to be addressed under the EMFAF operational programme. A specific EMFAF heading for small scale infrastructure to support direct sales and other essential priorities such as reducing reliance on fossil fuels and adding value to catches is urgently needed.

High fuel costs and the lack of support for vessel operators was raised by IIMRO representatives along who highlighted the recent BIM report "An Economic Analysis of the Irish Small Scale Fleet" and the disproportionate impact of the lack of fuel supports for the small-scale fleet segment which makes up the majority of the Irish fleet. The contrast of fuel supports provided in other member states was raised and IIMRO emphasised that the volatility and price increases for petrol and diesel which is eating into fishing incomes were likely to remain for the foreseeable future.

The lack of equitable access to fishing opportunities through quota and, what is in effect the de-facto privatisation of the public fishery resource in Ireland, was raised with the Minister and the department. IIMRO again pointed out that the use of track record as a fishery management tool was excluding most fishers access to more valuable quota species such as mackerel, herring and nephrops. We stressed the need to urgently implement Article 17 of the Common Fisheries Policy to ensure that quota is allocated in a fair manner and to ensure that low-impact fishing is prioritised when allocating quota. With this in mind IIMRO requested that access to any future bluefin tuna quota which is being sought by the Minister from the EU should be allocated to low-impact fishers and also available to new entrants.

The uncertainty around offshore renewable energy installations, marine protected areas and other EU regulations such as the Nature Restoration Law were raised as a particular risk to small scale operators who risk displacement with no ability to move to other areas. The implementation of these priorities needs to recognise the tenure of existing users and ensure that the fishing community is not impacted by poorly thought out policies and programme delivery.

The meeting was an important opportunity to discuss the many challenges and IIMRO emphasised the importance of an ongoing dialogue between the government and fishing communities, particularly the small-scale and inshore fleets. IIMRO stated that this meeting will hopefully pave the way for future collaboration and progress with ongoing more detailed discussions to develop solutions to the issues.

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MFV Shaunette, Arranmore Island © IIMRO

SFPA Issues Information Notice to Trade on Schedule of Controls for Export Consignments of Seafood from Ireland to Great Britain

The SFPA issued an Information Notice to trade on the 20th April 2023, in relation to technical requirements for Irish companies trading with Great Britain in an evolving third country regulatory environment. The UK Government has published a Draft Border Target Operating Model (Draft BTOM) outlining their vision for the implementation of border controls over the coming months and years following on from the United Kingdom's exit from the EU.

Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) controls are a central element in the framework set out in this draft which can be read in full on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-border-target-operating-model-draft-for-feedback>. UK border control authorities plan to implement SPS controls based on their classification of products and exporting countries as being either low, medium, or high-risk. This risk-rating will determine the necessity for official controls including Export Health Certificates, pre-notification of consignments and frequency of physical checks at the border among other SPS control procedures. This will be done across several milestone dates.

The UK Authorities are proposing the introduction of the requirement for Export Health Certificates and pre-notification for Medium-Risk Animal Products imported from the EU, which are likely to include Irish Fishery Products travelling directly from Ireland to Great Britain, from the 31st of October 2023. As controls in relation to

imports from Ireland are being harmonised with the UK's approach to imports from the rest of the EU, Export Health Certificates, and pre-notification of exports from Ireland of Live Aquatic Animals travelling directly from Ireland to Great Britain, will also be implemented from 31st of October 2023.

In relation to Transit, high and medium-risk consignments using the Great Britain land bridge will need to be accompanied by a simplified transit certificate from 31st of October 2023 as well as completing pre-notification procedures. Low-risk consignments will only require pre-notification. Based on current available information, the SFPA advise that all Irish stakeholders proceed on the basis that pre-notification and export health certificates will be required for all consignments of Live Aquatic Animals and Fishery Products travelling directly from Ireland to Great Britain from the 31st of October 2023.

Queries regarding this information notice may be addressed to: SFPATradeandAudit@sfpa.ie

The Value of the Irish Aquaculture Sector



IFA Aquaculture Executive Teresa Morrissey outlines the IFA Aquaculture Reaction to BIM's Seafood Report

IFA Aquaculture

Commenting on the BIM 'Business of Seafood Report' for 2022, IFA Aquaculture Chairman Michael Mulloy said the increase of 13% in value of Irish seafood can mainly be attributed to the high value of Irish organic salmon, oysters and rope mussels.

"They all showed strong recovery in demand and sales in 2022, despite the many challenges for the sector over the past few years, including the rising cost of inputs, labour shortages and market instability," he said.

Irish Aquaculture production is showing a value increase of 10% due to increased demand for seafood, despite a marginal growth in production volume by 1%. The value of Irish organic salmon increased to €124m, up 13% from 2021, with the value of Irish oysters increasing to €51m, an increase of 8%. Rope mussels also benefited from strong price growth to increase in value by 7% to €9m.

The report also shows significant losses in the trout and bottom mussel sectors, which could be attributed to the loss of sales to the UK market due to Brexit.

The report demonstrates the importance of the Irish aquaculture sector in terms of value and high-quality produce in the Irish seafood industry post-Brexit. Irish Aquaculture has a vital role to play in meeting the increasing demand for seafood produce and providing employment in coastal communities.

Oyster Workshop

BIM / IFA Aquaculture hosted an Oyster Industry Workshop, supported by the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund at the Dungarvan Park Hotel in County Waterford.

Over 100 of Ireland's oyster producers attended the two-day workshop which focused on the latest trends and innovations in the sector, including best practice husbandry methods both here and overseas. Delegates visited oyster farms in Dungarvan to view some of the new technologies in action which are currently being trialled, and also to take part in a short workshop on how to identify, record and report invasive alien species.

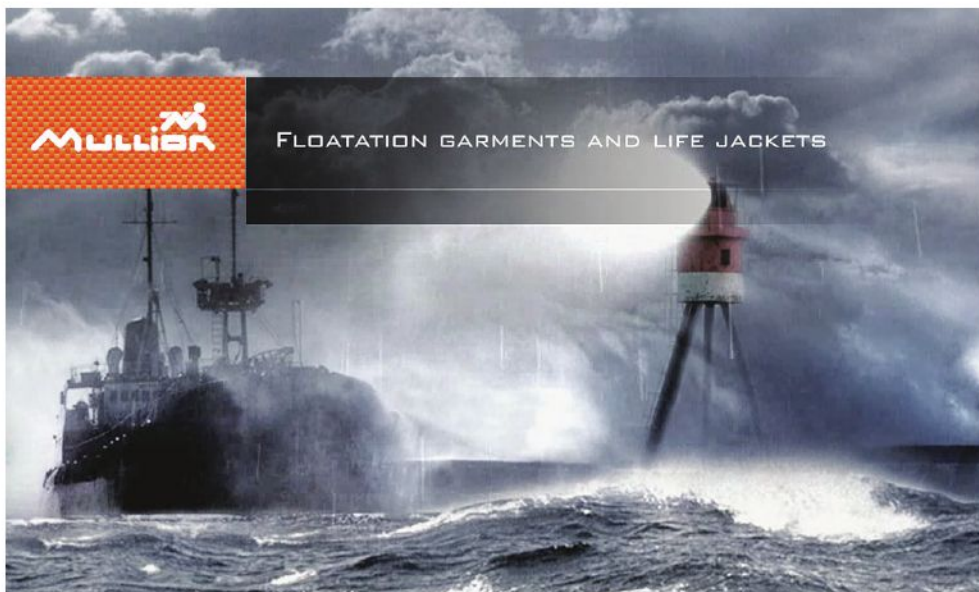


Lee Hunter, Oyster farmer and IFA Aquaculture Committee member giving a presentation about oyster husbandry practices.

The Oyster Workshop was hosted in association with IFA Aquaculture, who are delighted to support the event which allows members of the Irish oyster industry to engage and discuss the many challenges for the sector over the past few years, such as dealing with the rising costs of input, labour shortages and market instability, as well as a chance to focus on priorities for the year ahead.



Teresa Morrissey, IFA Aquaculture Executive; Cliona Mhic Ghiolla Chuda, Waterford Oysters and IFA Aquaculture Committee and Trish Daly, BIM.



Designed for and by fishermen

For further info contact Adrian Towey

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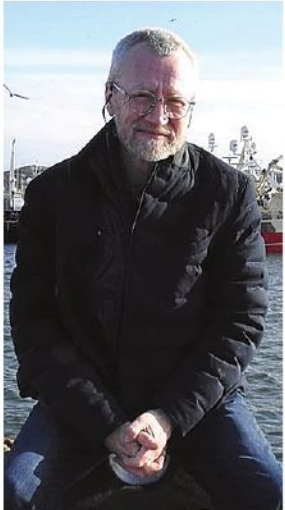
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SFPA Onboard Camera Control - Where Will It All End?



Cormac Burke, Chairman of the Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance asks what is the ultimate aim of yet more micro management and forensic control of fisheries monitoring in Ireland and for the SFPA to give us the facts



As the SFPA quietly set about trying to 'encourage' vessel owners to 'voluntarily' agree to have cameras installed on Irish demersal fishing boats, Cormac Burke, Chairman of the Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance says the question must be what is the ultimate aim of this yet more micro management and forensic control of fisheries monitoring in Ireland which is on a much higher level than anywhere else within the EU.

In a recent statement the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) announced that they were seeking a number of Irish registered fishing vessels to participate in a Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) pilot project, which is part of a larger European Union, North-Western Waters (NWW) REM initiative.

"REM is a technology that allows for the remote monitoring of fishing vessels, providing valuable information on fishing activity and compliance with regulative requirements, including the landing obligation. The SFPA has written to Fisheries Producer Organisations to encourage participation in the REM pilot project," the statement declared.

While it is reported that this move is in advance of upcoming new EU regulations, no one has been yet told to what extent the EU want to increase monitoring systems but, as always, Ireland wants to be the EU 'teacher's pet' in not only being ahead of the new regulations but to have even more stringent measures in place than the rest of Europe will be under.

But in what is being described as an apparent almost harmless REM pilot project, it is reported that the new system for Irish boats will not just include cameras throughout the vessel but also a range of sensors placed on hatches, net drums and other equipment in daily use.

Where will this all end? Will there eventually be sensors in the bunks to record how

many hours' sleep the crew have each trip? And sensors on the galley cupboard doors to monitor the volume and type of food being consumed?

In their eagerness to get this project underway, it is reported that the SFPA are willing to pay between 12,000 and 20,000 euros for the first year that a vessel owner volunteers to have the cameras and sensors installed - - and, alarmingly, it is rumoured that any vessel that accepts the offer will be immune from any prosecution for the first year.

Now if that last statement, although not verified as yet, has even a grain of truth in it then it is clear that the SFPA themselves believe that the installation of this system on vessels will definitely be leading to prosecutions in some form or another in the years to come.

The most obvious thought that jumps to mind here is that the SFPA expect the fishing industry to be 'a turkey voting for Christmas'.

I'm not saying that there are any illegal activities currently taking place on Irish fishing vessels, indeed it has been confirmed by the EU Commission that Ireland has the highest compliance rate in the entire EU fishing sector, but once the data (or as the SFPA describes it "valuable information") from onboard cameras and sensors is studied then it's clear that an entire new set of SFPA rules will come into force governing fishing procedures, hygiene, health & safety etc etc - and before long, when a vessel is boarded for inspection then it will be yet another case of some tiny infringement of one of these minor regulations that will give the SFPA the power to penalise or even arrest a vessel for 'offences against the State' and probably drag the owner off to court on another legally expensive trumped-up charge.

And, of course, given the SFPA's track record, once a system such as this would be bedded into the demersal fleet then it would only be a matter of time before a similar system would be forced upon the pelagic and inshore sectors.

Give us the facts!

As always, the SFPA appear to move in

the shadows and are extremely vague when it comes to the actual 'end-game' aim of projects like this.

While they [SFPA] are stating what the system is at present, they are not informing anyone of what the actual planned use and expected outcome or resulting prosecution may be.

And more to the point, why should Ireland be the first in the EU to agree to any such system until we see the exact requirements of any new EU Commission regulations - my own opinion on this is that it is yet another attempt to snatch even more power in that Ireland will eventually finish up with a system that not only meets the EU basic requirements but have a system that goes far beyond that.

If I thought for one second that the introduction of any such onboard system would be to the long term benefit to Irish fishermen in any form then I might understand it ... but when did we ever see anything that the SFPA attempted being done for the benefit of fishermen?

And when we see the EU Commission and the SFPA stand by and turn a blind eye to the large pelagic vessels of other EU Member States working off the west of Ireland and 'high grading' their catch and dumping thousands of tonnes of smaller fish back into the sea without a single mention of monitoring cameras on those vessels then I fail to see why Irish fishermen should agree to any such 'pilot project' until it is undertaken elsewhere (outside of Ireland) first.

In the wake of Brexit, the disastrous loss of national quota, the 'giveaway deal' of blue whiting in Irish waters, and then a tragic decommissioning scheme that is reducing the demersal fleet by one third, and a recent BIM seafood report that confirms the dwindling size of the Irish fishing industry, then isn't it time that the Irish fishermen were given a break -

- it is time for this Government to reign in this out of control body, call off the dogs and give people a chance to get on with their lives and try to make a living.

The Mayday Mile Can Be Done For A Month!

Usually, the lifesavers of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) answer mayday calls - it's the most serious call for help. But this May, they need YOUR help. The charity is calling on the people of Ireland to join the RNLI's Mayday Mile to help raise vital funds to keep you and your family safe this summer.



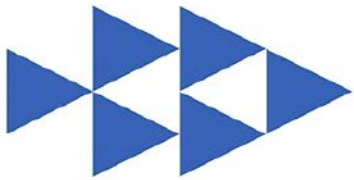
It's easy to take part and support the RNLI's lifesavers. Simply complete one mile a day, every day this May, wherever and however you like - walk, jog, hop or skip!

Money raised through the Mayday Mile could help RNLI lifesavers have everything they need to keep families safe this summer. Warmer weather draws more people to the water, and RNLI volunteer lifeboat crews will drop whatever they're doing when a call for help comes in.

Eilish Power, volunteer Lifeboat Press Officer at Achill Island RNLI says: 'Summer is our busiest time of year, with thousands of people at risk of getting into danger by the water. Ordinary people just enjoying days out with family or friends. 'Mayday' is our call for help, as we rely on the generosity of the public to take part in events like the Mayday Mile and raise the funds that allow us to be there when we're needed most. But we need to be ready. Training, kit, stations, fuel, these are just some of the things we need to save lives, and that your fundraising can help provide.'

The RNLI's Mayday fundraiser begins on Monday 1 May and will run for the whole month. Sign up for the 'Mayday Mile. More information at: rnli.org/SupportMayday





NIFA

National Inshore
Fishermen's Association

Offshore Wind Development

NIFA has been drawing attention to the concern of its members about the development of offshore wind projects and the effects they may have on traditional fishing grounds which our members have used for very many years as well as how underwater noise from bore holes drilled for survey work could have on fish and marine life.

NIFA has previously highlighted the need for full, concise and clear information and consideration for and liaison with fishermen.

It is one thing for boats to be ordered to keep clear, during survey work or construction in areas where our boats fished, but to be permanently forced out of our traditional fishing areas is not acceptable.



Dublin Array Kish Bank Survey Drilling

There is a duty and responsibility on the Government through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

which is overseeing development and, following the beginning of survey work on the Kish Bank for the Dublin Array, as it is known, one of our members has taken a judicial review request to the High Court, Commercial, Planning and Environmental Court which initial lodgement of proceedings was dealt with remotely in late April and a hearing date set for May 8th. Up to 30 boats could be affected in various ways in the area where the survey work, involving the drilling of a number of bore holes is involved. Their fishing grounds are in this area and already there has been some difficulty since the survey moved in.

There is a lot of concern where members are apparently expected to abandon their traditional fishing grounds and their equipment for the duration of survey work and the unknown effects of this on fish stocks and all this against a background where no mitigation agreement is in place. In other places where these surveys have taken place, fishermen have been better treated than they are in Ireland.

Recognition of the Inshore Sector

Inshore fishers make a significant contribution to our coastal communities and blue economy, but have been significantly impacted by Brexit and the Trade and Co-operation Agreement, Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue said when announcing €3.5 million in short-term funding for the sector. "While positive steps have been taken to support these fishers, the challenges in terms of operating costs and market access remain," he said. Recognition of the sector is welcome.

SFPA Meets With NIFA

The Chairman of the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority has congratulated Ireland's newest Producer Organisation being formally recognised for its role.

In early April the SFPA held its first

meeting with the National Inshore Fishermen's Association (NIFA) which was formally recognised as an EU Producer Organisation earlier this year.

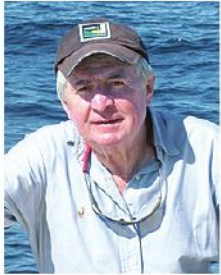
"Representing over 120 inshore fishers, NIFA, are Ireland's newest recognised Fisheries representative organisation," said SFPA Chairman Paschal Hayes at the meeting held in their head office in Clonakilty. "I congratulate NIFA on their recognition as an EU Producer Organisation. The promotion of compliance with Sea-Fisheries Law is an important element of the work of the SFPA. It is important to avail of the opportunity for on-going dialogue with the representatives of a large cohort of inshore fishermen. Such interaction provides the opportunity to build mutual understanding of each other's roles. I welcome NIFA's commitment to sustainable fishing and our mutual determination to eradicate illegal fishing and look forward to working with them in this regard in the years ahead."



Pictured at the NIFA meeting with the SFPA are: (l-r back row) Jonathan Hoare, SFPA; Kieran Healy, NIFA; Michael Foley, NIFA; Michael Finn, SFPA; (l-r front) Michael Desmond, NIFA Chairman and Paschal Hayes, SFPA Chairman.



Killala, Mayo - Photo courtesy Darragh Whelan



Tom MacSweeney's Maritime Diary

Who Speaks for The Fishing Industry?

The responses to my News section report in the April edition which explored whether there was a shift in attitude towards the fishing industry at the Department of the Marine and the EU were interesting and intriguing....

Descriptions of respondents had encountered with Department officials varied – “It’s dependent upon who you know” --- “There are good people there, but a minority ---

“Fishing is just a problem they don’t want to know about...” – “it’s at the top that there’s disregard for us fishermen...”

I was particularly intrigued by a question raised – ‘Who speaks for the fishing industry?’

There are many who speak for the industry, which is evident in the columns of the Marine Times. This reflects the various sectors of the industry and their different issues, needs and requirements. The question raised, as has often been done, “the contrast with farming and its greater strength of unity.” A fisherman from the West pointed out that “the public can see farming when they see cattle and sheep in the fields, so they know what’s being talked about, but they

can’t see fish swimming around”

In my early days in journalism working on regional weekly papers, I was told that fishermen were “the last of the hunters and you have to squeeze information out of hunters...”

The fishing industry has suffered from not having a strong public voice. That is changing and is a welcome development. It is particularly necessary that there are voices heard for the future of fishing, to preserve its tradition, its culture. Keeping it in public attention can help maintain the coastal communities by highlighting the importance of the industry to an island nation and, hopefully, encourage new entrants for generational renewal of fishing.

Tom MacSweeney’s monthly Podcast ‘Maritime Ireland’ is broadcast on all major Podcast services, on www.marinetimes.ie and on Community Radio Stations around Ireland.



Prolific 2 at Howth Harbour - Photo courtesy James Grandfield

Greencastle Breakwater Project Progress

Significant progress has been confirmed on the Greencastle Breakwater project with Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD approving the foreshore lease for the project and Donegal County Council confirming the appointment of Foyle & Marine Dredging as contractor for the project.



Next steps for the project include the contractor preparing for site entrance in April and May 2023, followed by in-water works commencing in May 2023 with expected completion in Q4 2023.

The community of Greencastle is dependent on the fishing industry and the marine industry in general with almost 200 people directly or indirectly employed. Greencastle is the 2nd largest white fish port in Ireland and is also home to a large inshore fleet mainly engaged in shellfish and crab, making it a key town in Ireland’s seafood sector. Greencastle has significant fishing support services including fish processing, marine engineering, boat building and net making.

In 2022, Donegal County Council submitted an application for funding to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine under the Brexit Adjustment Local Authority Marine Infrastructure Scheme 2022-2023 for completion of the project and Minister McConalogue announced in 2022 that the application was successful. Donegal County Council will match fund the construction cost and all non-construction related costs. The current funding provision for this project for all associated costs is nearly €17M. The new breakwater will be a curving rock armour to the south-west of the harbour entrance.

Commenting on the project, Minister McConalogue said “It is great news that this important infrastructure project has reached construction stage and I am looking forward to the first sod being turned on the project. The new breakwater will be a game-changer for Greencastle and Inishowen and will significantly add to the marine infrastructure in the area. My thanks to all involved in making this happen, including Donegal County Council, my Department officials, Doran Consulting for the detailed design,

the Contractor Foyle & Marine Dredging and to Foyle Fisherman’s Co-Op and all who use the infrastructure at Greencastle. I am delighted that the BALAMI scheme under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve Fund has been used to complete this project.”

Inishowen Municipal District Chairman Councillor Paul Canning confirmed the Council’s commitment to deliver this project since work ceased and stated that “the identification of adequate funding to complete the project has been a real challenge for the Council. The allocation of funding from Minister McConalogue from the Brexit Adjustment Fund will now enable the works to be completed and change the landscape and operation of Greencastle Harbour for all its users and for the local community.”

Commenting, Seamus Bovaird, secretary of the Greencastle Harbour Users’ Group, which represents the vast majority of those using the harbour, welcomed the resumption of works on completion of Phase 1 of the Greencastle Harbour project.

“To see workmen and machinery moving around the Queensport is something that we have been looking forward to for many years.”, he said.

“There have been many changes in the fishing industry since 2008, when work on the breakwater ceased, not many of them good, but the harbour is still at the heart of the community. Further development of the harbour will create job opportunities to replace those lost in the fishing industry.”

The project will be administered on behalf of the Council by Doran Consulting who are “excited to be involved in such a milestone marine project in Donegal”.

Endorse your Certificate of Competency with BIM

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

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

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

Castletownbere College

National Fisheries College of Ireland,
Castletownbere, Co. Cork

Della O'Sullivan, College Administrator

T: + 353 27 7 1220

E: della.osullivan@bim.ie

Greencastle College

National Fisheries College of Ireland,
Greencastle, Co. Donegal

Maria McCarron, College Administrator

T: + 353 74 938 1068

E: maria.mccarron@bim.ie



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THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

Fostering Love of the Water

Irish Sailing's 'Volunteer of the Year' Dubliner Colum McCaffrey talks to Marine Times Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney, about Sea Scouting in Ireland

“We are fostering a love of adventure on the water, building the skills of leadership, encouraging understanding, appreciation and commitment to maritime culture,” Colum McCaffrey tells me at the annual national Sea Scouts Seamanship Competition held in the National Maritime College at Ringaskiddy in Cork Harbour.

It is a busy scene, with groups of young male and female competitors engaged in a wide variety of maritime activities from navigation to meteorology, oceanography and more.

“It is an amazing event, connecting young people to the professional maritime community while instilling lifelong boating skills, water safety, protection of the marine environment and the opportunity to consider a career at sea,” Colum, clearly full of enthusiasm, tells me as he shows me around the competition area. He is the Event Co-ordinator with overall responsibility for its successful running, so his unbridled enthusiasm is easily understandable.

“Promoting the community of the sea from a young age, which can start from the age of six years old,” is the concept of Sea Scouting which he explains to me. “This builds responsibility and leadership in young people, through introducing them to activities on the water and the skills needed.”

“The Sea Scouts approach is to give young people responsibility to gain skills, give opportunities to learn about the sea, how tides work, build a sense of leadership with the practicality of being taught about the resources which the sea offers. It’s a pathway by which young people can get onto the water. There is no better way than on the water to teach those values,” said Colum.

Activities for Sea Scouts focus on a strong commitment to water safety, building technical skills, dinghy and keelboat sailing, swimming, rowing, kayaking, windsurfing, boat maintenance, powerboating, marine science, meteorology and oceanography.

“It is probably harder to operate, needing more resour-



es, training and equipment, so it is a niche area with about 30 groups around the country focused on maritime studies and activities. About four to five thousand young people are involved. While, obviously, primarily coastally-located, there are units on inland waterways. We would like to develop more, encouraging youngsters into taking an interest in the maritime sphere,” said Colum.

The annual Seamanship Awards were supported by the Irish Institute of Master Mariners, which organisation is active in promoting careers at sea.

Colum McCaffrey, part of the Malahide Sea Scouting Troop in County Dublin, has also been chosen as its

‘Volunteer of the Year’ by Irish Sailing, the national representative organisation of the sport. “Through his work hundreds of young people have gone afloat. He never rests in his quest to spread the message around the country through the Sea Scout network,” Irish Sailing’s commendation of him declared.

The history of sea scouting in Ireland is intriguing. It goes back to the start of the scouting organisation in 1912. In the early years of formation, Sea Scouts were associated with the Navy and Coast Guard. The change-over from Britain to the Irish Free State caused difficulties, so did the turbulent effects of World War Two. At one stage it had a sea training centre in an old lightship, the *Albatross*, at Dun Laoghaire. The national scouting organisation at one stage dropped sea scouting, then re-examined the level of interest and it was revived.

“We operate the same as every other Scout Group, but perhaps there is just a little more magic, as some say, in Sea Scouts, though the only real difference is that the programme is designed to foster a love of adventure on the water alongside building technical activity skills and leadership afloat.”

Activities include; dinghy sailing, rowing, rafting, swimming, kayaking, windsurfing, powerboating, canoeing, marine science and oceanography, keelboat sailing, engine maintenance, chartwork and navigation, preservation of maritime heritage, water safety and seamanship; ropework, line-handling, meteorology, boat maintenance, communications.

“These give responsibility to young people in, on and about the water and that is a great training for life.”

All Irish Sea Scouting Groups are members of Scouting Ireland and deliver a Sea Scouting programme to their members, from age 6 to 26, a Nautical Training Scheme.

The 9th Port Malahide Sea Scouts, Dublin, won both the Captain Desmond Fortune ‘Founders Award,’ which was won by Cormac Eason and the Captain Cian Timmons award, won by Óran Ó hIrele.

For more information about Sea Scouting Email: sailing@seascouts.ie



Competitors at the annual national Sea Scouts Seamanship Competition held in the National Maritime College at Ringaskiddy in Cork Harbour

BIM Business of Seafood Report Confirms Further Decline Within Fishing Sector - IFPEA

Only for inflationary price growth this would be the worst ever fishing report

The recently published **Business of Seafood Report 2022** by BIM confirms that the Irish Fishing industry is in further decline, it is without doubt the worst report into Irish Fishing in recent times. When one drills down into the report and the actual figures, it is a damning report and is nothing short of shocking according to the CEO of Irish Fish Processors and Exporters, Brendan Byrne.

Jobs lost

“Employment within the fish processing sector has fallen from 3,873 in 2021 to 3,425 in this year’s report, although on page 22 (the regional breakdown of employment figures states there is only 3,295 jobs in the sector). The overall volume of exports has fallen by 13% in 2022, with the pelagic sector hit by a fall in mackerel exports of 31% and blue whiting by 20%, last year’s Eurostat fish processing figures showed Ireland falling to 10th place in Europe in its processing output.

“In just one year we have lost 448 jobs within the processing sector or 11.5% of the jobs within the sector; if this were to occur within any other industry it would result in a national outcry. Overall within the broader fishing industry employment has fallen by 8% within the past 12 months.”

Landings down across the board

“Landings of fish have declined very significantly within some of our ports – with Killybegs suffering an 18% fall in landings,

with non-Irish landings falling by 30% in to the port of Killybegs. This does not come as a shock, as throughout 2022 major issues surfaced with the SFPA and how non-Irish vessels were managed within the port. Castletownbere has also suffered a decline in fish landings of 7%; with Irish landings down 24%, while there was a slight increase in non-Irish landings into that port.

“Unless Ireland changes its ways immediately and becomes a friendlier destination to do business our fishing industry will continue to suffer, if vessels can land into any other EU port without hassle then the same rules must apply to Ireland – but, that is not the case. For too long the Irish have over interpreted and perhaps on occasions made up rules that simply do not exist anywhere else in Europe. It is this madness that is costing jobs, loss of income for our coastal communities and the decline within our industry for numerous years as confirmed by Eurostat in their recent report – the European common fisheries project is built on the principle of a level playing field

that is a concept the Irish authorities would need to realise before we are left without an industry.”

Price Inflation saves us from recording the worst returns in the history of our state

“Only for the on average 24% inflationary price growth on fishery products our actual loss within the fishing sector would be record breaking in the 100-year history of our state. We have reached this point because for the past twenty years we as an industry failed to drive the change that was necessary within our Department of Marine, we failed to put our case to Europe and we have regulated our industry to death.

“Meantime, within sight of our shores one can see factory ships land multiple times the quantities of any land-based fish processor and nothing is done to regulate them in a consistent and comprehensive manner. The IFPEA challenges any group or individual to compare and contrast the regime of control within our land based fish processing units to that of the large-scale factory vessels that fish off our coast - the results of such a study would send shock waves to the very hard of the European Commission.

“The IFPEA notes that in the 2020 and

2021 Seafood reports states there are 160 and 161 seafood processors whereas the 2022 report states there are only 101.

Open the window of opportunity

“The BIM Seafood Report confirms without fish our industry will continue to decline, without the raw materials further job losses will result and our industry will lose its position as a global player. This can be avoided now with the numerous new changes and promotions within our Department of Marine push a pro development and pro innovation agenda, the decline we witnessed over the past 20 years was because we failed to drive for change, quite the opposite was the case.

“Our ambition as a state must be to triple the capacity of the fishing industry within the next ten-year period, more than quadruple the number employed and support our coastal communities – if we are to do that; then everything that has lead to this point needs to be thrown out the window and a new window of future opportunities opened for all. That will require tough decisions but there is no alternative; and an entire all of Government approach will be required,” concluded Brendan Byrne.

Three Countries Take 63% of Irish Seafood Exports

Interesting Statistics in first SFPA protection report

Report by Tom MacSweeney

The first annual **Seafood Trade Report of the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority** has a few interesting statistics about how Ireland’s fishing industry is doing outside of the European Union. **Three countries account for 63% of Irish seafood exported to Third countries - Nigeria 30.7%, Egypt 21.8%, and China 10.5%. However, according to the Authority, there was a drop in these exports, which is put down to the “challenging year” for the sector due to the international situation.**

The SFPA ‘Protecting Seafood Trade 2022’ report says that last year was “challenging” for Ireland’s seafood sector, with the continuing repercussions from Brexit, the fall-out from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the continued impact of Covid-19 in export markets, the energy crisis and the cost-of-living crisis creating a challenging trading environment.

“This was reflected in the decrease in Third country (non-EU countries) exports from Ireland in 2022 to 78,171 tonnes. made up of 26 species from 47 Food Businesses to 48 countries outside the EU, from the 2021 figure of 121,395 tonnes. Last year, the vast majority (93.4%) of seafood exported consisted of pelagic species, including Blue Whiting, Mackerel and Horse Mackerel. 3,670 consignments of seafood totalling 78,171 tonnes and 26 species were

sent by 47 Irish exporters to 48 countries outside the EU.

Executive Chairman of the SFPA, Paschal Hayes, highlighted concern about illegal fishing and Ireland’s reputation: “As fish is highly traded in international markets, illegal fishing is a significant threat and Ireland a food exporting nation places significant emphasis on our position as a supplier of safe, traceable, sustainably produced high-quality food. Seafood is a valuable part of this offering. We are conscious of our role in ensuring the integrity of our seafood and strategically in terms of how Ireland’s reputation as a food exporter of choice is dependent on all links in the chain.

“Fish is highly traded in international markets. IUU (illegal) fishing is a significant threat to the future of fishing. It creates



Pictured at the launching of the SFPA report in Union Hall: Paschal Hayes, Chairman, SFPA; Bernard O'Donovan, National Director Trade Compliance, SFPA and Diarmuid O'Donovan, CEO, Glenmar Shellfish.

an uneven playing field and jeopardises the development of sustainable fisheries on which many coastal communities globally rely for their livelihoods, including in Ireland. We are committed to utilising all the controls available to us to help detect and deter IUU fishing and fishery products within our jurisdiction.

“Regulation, including health certification, also underpins confidence in the safety of Irish seafood products, providing vital reassurance to retailers, hospitality businesses and consumers at home and abroad. Retaining Ireland’s growing reputation for

producing superior seafood is essential, and the integrity of the supply chain will be all-important. Everyone in the supply chain has a role to play in protecting it. This includes importers and exporters who can ensure the goods they handle have the correct documentation. It may be difficult to distinguish between a legally and illegally obtained fish, however robust inspection processes and accurate paperwork will tell the tale. Protecting seafood trade by ensuring highly functioning levels of regulatory assurance is a critical element of SFPA’s role.”

news from the **North West**
 editor@marinetimes.ie



Bunagee Pier, Culdaff - Photo courtesy Catherine Turner

Fishing Industry Making Gains in Europe, Killybegs Meeting Hears

The voice of the Irish fishing and seafood industry is now being heard in Europe, which is starting to deliver positive gains at home. That was the key message emerging from a special meeting in Killybegs, which was addressed by Fine Gael MEP, Colm Markey.

The meeting was co-hosted by Aodh O'Donnell of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO), Brendan Byrne of the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association (IFPEA). Manus Boyle of the Dunkineely, Bruckless and Killybegs Branch of Fine Gael chaired the event, which was attended by a broad cross section of the seafood sector including stakeholders from other ports in Donegal, Galway and Cork.

"The catching and processing sectors pulled together to run a highly effective lobbying campaign," O'Donnell told the meeting. "This succeeded in keeping Norway out of the Irish Box. We still have a long way to go to secure our fair share of EU fishing quotas, but we are engaging directly with both the European Commission and the EU Parliament."

Mr Markey agreed that there were still many issues to address at EU level. However, he added that attitudes in Europe to the Irish fishing and seafood industries had changed, and Irish voices were now getting a more receptive hearing.

Aodh O'Donnell thanked Colm Markey MEP for his support at EU level, and the IFPEA's Brendan Byrne for his co-operation and support for the lobbying campaign. He also thanked members of the fishing and seafood industry for taking part in the Killybegs event. "This meeting is not just a once-off, it is part of a process of engagement which we intend to maintain."

Brendan Byrne of the IFPEA said he was delighted to co-host the meeting and it was important for the industry to stay united. "There was a frank and open discussion and exchange of views on the need to continue the fight at European level. We need to secure better outcomes, as we face the ongoing adverse impacts of the Irish transfer of quotas to the UK under Brexit. But together, we are a stronger voice, and we can achieve more for our industry and our coastal communities."

Proposed Porcupine Bank and Southern Canyons SAC Designations Have Little Scientific Basis

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) published a Notice of intention to Designate Porcupine Shelf and Southern Canyons as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in November 2022. These large areas (the Porcupine Shelf SAC is c.14,718 km² and the Southern Canyons SAC 14,448 km²) are being proposed based on the suggested presence of 'Reefs', which is an Annex I habitat of the EU Habitats Directive.

In a Response to the Proposed Porcupine Bank and Southern Canyons SAC Designations the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation have said that; "Whilst fishing is not immediately excluded from the proposed SACs or listed as an 'Activity Requiring Consent' (ARC) there is concern that once designated as SACs this will ultimately lead to closure of the areas to fishing or restriction of particular fishing activities. There is precedent for this in the case of other offshore SACs (Belgica Mound Province, Hovland Mound Province, Southwest Porcupine Bank and North-West Porcupine Bank), which were designated in 2016 and

in 2019 were closed, under Regulation (EU) 2019/1241, to 'bottom trawls or similar towed nets, bottom set gillnets, entangling nets or trammel nets and bottom set longlines'. Further restrictions on pelagic fishing vessels were also incorporated in the regulation including having to give four hours advance notification to the Irish Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) of their intention to enter the areas. These concerns have recently been confirmed with the release of the 'EU Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries', which includes the stated aim of prohibiting mobile bottom fishing in MPAs and SACs by the end of March 2024. While the Action Plan has no legal basis and is being strongly contested by member states it is indicative of the wider drive to phase out bottom trawling.

It should be noted that the KFO recognises the need for conservation and restoration of sensitive marine habitats and ecosystems. This is important not only for addressing the biodiversity crisis but also for supporting sustainable fisheries which are critical for food security. The KFO is not opposed to designations provided that due process is followed and that such designations are based on robust scientific evidence which is applied at the finest spatial scale possible. Unfortunately, this was not the case with the proposed designations and as there was no consultation process, the only option for engagement was by lodging an objection on the scientific basis of the proposed designation, which the KFO did within the allocated time.

The KFO spent considerable time reviewing the underlying data for the proposed SACs and preparing a scientific objection to the proposals in their current form. As detailed in the objection (available through the link below) the evidence supporting the delineation of the SACs ranges from weak to non-existent. It largely consists of observations

made on the 2017 and 2019 *Sensitive Ecosystem Assessment and ROV Exploration of Reef* (SeaRover) surveys undertaken by the Marine Institute. Whilst no details of the results of these surveys or the data underlying the proposed designations was provided with the Notice of Intention to Designate, with some searching it is possible to access the data through various open access repositories and reports. It transpires that only a tiny proportion of the proposed areas were actually surveyed at all and that in the areas surveyed only a tiny proportion actually had any evidence of 'Reefs' habitat. In order to illustrate this point the KFO conducted its own basic analysis of the data. We estimated the % observed reef habitat within the Porcupine Shelf and Southern Canyons SACs, based on the evidence presented, to be 0.0013% and 0.000017% of the total area delineated areas, respectively. Further, none of the areas surveyed were shallower than 500m depth in the Porcupine Shelf area or 900m in the Southern Canyons area, so the inclusion of these areas in the proposed SAC polygons has no basis.

If the SACs are being proposed based on scientific evidence then they should align with that evidence and any extrapolation of this must be justified, which in this case it is not. Such extrapolation of evidence has also been seen in the identification of areas where Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) are known or are likely to occur according to ICES. Everyone will be familiar with the large number of closed areas that the EU implemented in September 2022 on the basis of the ICES VME advice.

Given the high-resolution catch, VMS and survey data available to scientists this kind of broadscale generalised approach should not be taken and should not be used as the basis of policy or management decisions.

Donegal RNLI Lifeboat Crews to Complete Mayday Mile on Errigal

Volunteers from the three Donegal based RNLI Lifeboat stations at Bundoran, Lough Swilly and Arranmore will climb the highest mountain in the county, Errigal, as part of the charity's Mayday fundraising campaign. Six crew (two from each station) will climb the 751 metres (2,464 ft) of the Donegal mountain in full lifeboat gear in a combined fundraising effort for the three stations.

The idea for the challenge came about after three members of the Bundoran crew walked the Bundoran 10 mile event last year in their full kit, raising over €6,000 for the charity. This year they wanted to do something different, while involving their fellow lifeboat crew mates from Lough Swilly and Arranmore.

Aisling Cox and Brian Proctor from Arranmore RNLI, Chris Fox and Brian Fowley from Bundoran RNLI and Stephen Quigley and Barry Nixon from Lough Swilly RNLI have all volunteered to complete the climb on May 13th.

Bundoran RNLI volunteer lifeboat crew member Chris Fox was one of those who took part in last year's event. Chris said,

'while the blisters didn't settle for a few days it was still a great experience and a really great fundraising event for Bundoran lifeboat station. We wanted to change it up this year and put the challenge out to our two other stations in Donegal to see if they would help us complete the Mayday Mile on Errigal.'

Stephen Quigley of Lough Swilly RNLI added, 'we jumped at the chance for this challenge with our fellow crew members from around the county. There is nowhere more iconic in Donegal than Errigal – walking up it in full kit will be quite the challenge but it will be a great to come together as one crew with this fundraiser for the three stations here in Donegal – Bundoran, Lough Swilly and Arranmore.'

Arranmore RNLI's Aisling Cox is hopeful that the climb will help to raise the funds needed to keep all three stations running, 'Mayday is our own call for help,

as we rely on the generosity of the public to take part in events like the Mayday Mile and raise the funds that allow us to be there when we're needed most. But we need to be ready. Training, kit, stations and fuel, these are just some of the things we need to save lives, and that people fundraising can help provide.'

With the three stations in County Donegal expected to be busy this summer, the RNLI is asking people to support the Mayday Mile throughout the month of May. Our supporters are being asked to cover a distance in any way they choose and raise vital funds to keep people safe.

Donations to the Errigal challenge can be made via a special Just Giving page which has been set up - www.justgiving.com/page/one-crew-climb-errigal - the final sum will be divided equally between the three Donegal stations.

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RNLI crew from Bundoran, Arranmore and Lough Swilly who will be taking part in the climb of Errigal for the Annual RNLI May Day Mile - (top to bottom): Brian Fowley & Chris Fox - Bundoran RNLI; Brian Proctor and Aisling Cox - Arranmore RNLI and Barry Nixon & Stephen Quigley - Lough Swilly RNLI.



Northern Eagle heading into Kilkeel - Photo Leslie Campbell

Home Office Causing Crisis Within Northern Ireland Fishing Industry

DUP EFRA Spokesperson Carla Lockhart has written to the Home Secretary to urge her to reconsider a Home Office decision to refuse a request for a time limited concession to allow the UK fishing industry to transit overseas crew to the Skilled Visa route.

The Upper Bann representative said: "The availability of crew has been an issue for the fishing industry for many years now, and not too long ago I joined with my colleague Jim Shannon MP and representatives of the Northern Ireland industry in meeting with Robert Jenrick MP, Minister for Immigration, to express the concerns we hold for the future of the industry if such a concession was not granted.

"Once again the Government have refused to adopt a common sense, practical approach to a very solvable problem. These schemes are in place for crew employed on work boats in the aquaculture industry and in the construction and servicing of offshore windfarms. It is inexplicable that the Government are singling out the fishing industry for a separate, damaging policy.

"Not only does a large part of the UK's fishing fleet face a cliff edge because of this decision, but supplies of UK caught seafood are being put in jeopardy, with knock on consequences for UK seafood processors. Welfare concerns and allegations of abuse have been highlighted as areas of concern within the Home Office. Within the UK these can be answered. The UK has one of, if not the highest standards of crew health, safety and welfare controls worldwide. Yet the Home Office decision risks overseas fishing crew being redeployed to fishing fleets where it is well known that abuses are not just allegations, but are fact.

"We need the Government to rethink this decision, and to

stop with their inconsistency. The fishing industry has huge potential, but this can only be achieved with the workforce being available to utilise opportunity. The Home Secretary must intervene."

Portrush RNLI Name Inshore Lifeboat The Ken Blair at Harbour Ceremony

Portrush RNLI hosted a special ceremony on Saturday, 15th April at the harbour when their D class lifeboat was officially named The Ken Blair by Sylvia Blair.



The lifeboat was funded by Sylvia in memory of her late husband. The lifeboat D-871 *The Ken Blair* arrived at the lifeboat station in November 2022 and has already been on service.

Ken spent his school holidays on the Copeland Islands off the coast at Donaghadee, and his grandfather was friendly with the local lifeboat crew. It was this, which initially fuelled Ken's interest in the RNLI and the couple were Shoreline members of the charity for many years. Ken had told Sylvia it would be lovely to have a Lifeboat named in memory of a person.

Sylvia said 'He was such a wonderful, caring, dearly loved husband, whose sole aim in life was to help others. He was so contented and happy with his lot, I felt it a fitting tribute, following his death in July 2020 to fund The Ken Blair in his memory. It will provide a very valuable rescue service on the North Antrim Coast, a place that he loved dearly.'

Deputy Launching Authority and former volunteer lifeboat crew member Charles Grossie was Master of Ceremonies. Attendees included family and close friends of Ken and Sylvia, former crew and their families, fundraising volunteers, and raft race teams as well as representatives from RNLI Flank stations at Lough Swilly, Red Bay, Larne and Donaghadee. Other guests included Northern Ireland Fire Service, HM coastguard and the Mayor.

RNLI Head of Region Anna Classon accepted the Lifeboat from Sylvia Blair on behalf of the Institution, during the ceremony before passing it into the care of Beni McAllister Lifeboat Operations Manager for Portrush RNLI, who represented the station.

Ballywillan Band, who are closely associated with the station, provided a wonderful ensemble of music and the local Sea Cadets assisted with seating the guests and handing out programmes. Local Clergy conducted the service of dedication before Sylvia officially named 'The Ken Blair' with a bottle of Bushmills Whiskey. For the occasion, the lifeboat displayed maritime flags which spelled out the letter 'K' and 'B' in honour of Ken Blair.

Portrush Lifeboat Operations Manager, Beni McAllister added, 'The naming ceremony was a very proud day for everyone associated with Portrush RNLI Lifeboat Station. We are incredibly fortunate that, thanks to the generosity of Sylvia Blair and the relationship they have with the RNLI, we have this wonderful lifeboat to bring our volunteer crew members, and the casualties that need them, home safely, time and time again.'

Beni concluded, 'The naming ceremony to mark our new inshore lifeboat marks new chapter in saving lives at sea on The North Coast. We will keep Ken and Sylvia Blair in our thoughts. Such generosity and support is the lifeblood of our charity and ensures that we're able to continue our vital role of saving lives at sea, today and for future generations.'

Marketing Local Seafood Through Education in Northern Ireland

The Marketing Seafood Through Education (MaSTE) project aims to see seafood featuring on more menus across Northern Ireland over the long term. The aim for the project is to inspire the next generation of chefs and foodservice professionals.

Sally Chamberlain, Regional Manager for Seafish in Northern Ireland talks about a project promoting local seafood to inspire the chefs of the future. "Over the past 4 years we have been collaborating with Belfast Cookery School on the MaSTE project. We worked with colleges and schools from across Northern Ireland to educate students and teachers about locally available seafood.

"Between 2019 and 2023, 637 home economics teachers, college students and chef lecturers have taken part in 44 seafood MaSTERclasses delivered by Belfast Cookery School. These classes were funded by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (administered by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs).

"Participants learned from the experts about various types of seafood and where to source it. They got hands on in the kitchen to prepare different species of shellfish, have a go at fish filleting and created some delicious seafood dishes.

"The feedback we received was very positive, with Home Economics teachers pledging to share their learnings with pupils, for example:

"The Seafood MaSTERclass was an excellent experience. I was able to increase my knowledge and understanding of fish preparation and cookery and learnt so many new skills that I can take back to the classroom."

"Alongside the practical kitchen-based sessions, participants also received a copy of our Seafood Guide. These comprehensive guides cover everything from species provenance, seasonality and responsible sourcing, to processing and handling techniques, nutrition, yields, cuts and quality indicators. Essentially everything that chefs, retailers and caterers need to know about seafood!

"But the learning doesn't stop with the classes. We also created a suite of videos which students and teachers can use to continue to practise their seafood cookery skills and learn about the Northern Ireland seafood industry.

"We hope that as a result of MaSTE, new entrants to the sector will bring with them an enhanced understanding, knowledge and passion for seafood and in doing so, support our local seafood industry."

For further information about this project, please contact sally.chamberlain@seafish.co.uk or call 07866 141 872. There are also YouTube videos available to watch on the seafish.org



Torn net - no problem to Gregory Campbell and Kenny Pue at Kilkeel. Photo courtesy Leslie Campbell



Following the recent robbery at the Sea Source Seafood Shop in Kilkeel, Alan McCulla OBE CEO of Sea Source / ANIFPO along with Shop Manager and part-time First Responder Michelle, present a cheque to Norman Bridges of Mourne Community First Responders. Sadly, the Mourne Community First Responders donation bucket was stolen during the break-in which is an unthinkable act, depriving people in their time of need. This money and future donations will help with the tremendous work being done around the clock by the good and great within our community. Keep up the good work folks. It is thoroughly appreciated. (Photo: Sea Source Facebook page)

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Clifden's St. Christopher



Pictured alongside the Clifden RNLI crew with the new St Christopher are the daughters of Christopher Harris, Gill and Philippa and daughter-in-law Julie and son-in-law Steve.

Niamh Stephenson, Media Manager reports that the naming ceremony for the Shannon-Class lifeboat, St. Christopher at Clifden was a gathering of lifeboat people from all over the country.



The lifeboat was funded by a legacy, from Christopher Harris and the name is apt for a donor who loved to travel. There to represent him were his daughters Gill and Philippa with daughter-in-law Julie and son-in-law Steve. Clifden RNLI welcomed them into the family and I think it's safe to say they will be back.

A beautiful bodhrán was presented with an image of the lifeboat painted on it, among other local gifts from the volunteers. They tasted the best of smoked salmon and had a tour of the lifeboat when it was brought in alongside the pier, the night before the ceremony.

Coxswains (and brothers), James and John Mullen explained the workings of the Shannon, with the whole station turning

out to welcome them. The gratitude could not have been lost on them and it made me think that while it must be sad for the donor's families to be present and talk about their loved one and see their name on the lifeboat, how great it must be to see what a legacy has funded and to hear the loveliest tributes to them.

On naming day, the rain held off and the lifeboat was brought onto the beach. James, along with station mechanic Joe Acton, had no water touch their feet as they got onboard to pour ceremonial champagne over the side. Being in Galway, we had our Trustee and Irish Council Chair, John Killeen and the former Chair John Coyle with us. Head of Region, Anna Classon made the journey from her native Donegal and Fundraising Director Jayne George was there to accept the lifeboat into the care of the institution before handing it to the lifeboat station. A small stage was erected outside the station with a podium and over the

shoulder of every speaker was the lifeboat, in spectacular relief - the scene-stealer.

If I've left someone out by mention, my apologies, but if you were there, you were there, and blessed you were to be so. Recently retired Courtown Operations Manager Sam Kennedy was there with his wife Anne. They have their son's name, Marc, on the lifeboat, through the 'Launch-a-Memory' campaign which saw 10,000 names of loved ones no longer with us, recorded onboard. Blondie was there too, not the singer, but Kilmore Quay's former Mechanic Brian Kehoe, with his wife Theresa.

Brian said that for months after retirement he was itching to go on call-outs with the crew. Walking across the beach after the ceremony, I heard a shout and saw Howth Coxswain Fred Connolly with his wife Dara. 'Dubs' always find each other! Howth RNLI Water Safety volunteer, John McKenna, also made the journey. Youghal was represented too. Erik Brooks is at nearly every naming ceremony and Kevin Daly also attended from the station. Portrush RNLI volunteer and Council Member, Judy Nelson made the road trip with husband and crew member Tim and Crosshaven RNLI

was there with Phil Maguire and her son Stephen O'Flaherty. Stephen is the RNLI's Casualty Care Trainer.

The lifeboat is an investment in lifesaving on the West coast of Ireland but it's only as good as its crew. Then look at the crews, they're magic. Enniskillen is next ceremony and then Courtmacsherry later in the year.

Remembering Paddy From Achill

A great friend of the RNLI has left us - Paddy McNulty from Achill Island RNLI was the station's Box Secretary from the arrival of the Lifeboat in 1995.

Paddy would travel anywhere to raise funds for the Lifeboat. He was passionate about the history of the RNLI and of ensuring that people were aware of the work of the lifeboat. His family was an RNLI one, with his wife Catherine, a member of the branch and son Stephen, a former Station Mechanic and now an Assessor Trainer with the RNLI. His name was spoken of with great affection by many lifeboat people attending the Clifden ceremony.



International Fishing and Maritime News

Northern Ireland Fleet to Benefit From UK-Faroes Deal

The UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has confirmed a Coastal States Agreement with the Faroe Islands. UK Fisheries Minister Mark Spencer said that "as an independent Coastal State we have the power to secure deals which deliver better outcomes for both our fishermen and the marine environment."

According to DEFRA, under the deal UK fishermen will get 2,500 tonnes of fishing opportunities worth around stg£5m. including cod, haddock and saithe. The deal allows the Faroe Islands to request a quota review meeting once they have fished at least 90% of the UK's initial haddock transfer of 400 tonnes. If requested by the Faroe Islands no later than June 15, an additional transfer of up to 1,600 tonnes of haddock in UK waters to the Faroe Islands, bringing the total transfer to 2,000 tonnes and commensurate further transfers of stocks in Faroese waters to the UK, will be discussed. This deal follows an agreement last year.



The Faroe Islands is a self-governing part of Denmark, comprised of 18 rocky, volcanic islands between Iceland and Norway in the North Atlantic, connected by road tunnels, ferries, causeways and bridges.

The Scottish White fish Producers' Association said that under the deal its vessels which "have lost most of the monkfish this year will have an alternative place to go which takes pressure away from other areas."

DEFRA indicated that as well as the English sector of the industry, "Northern Ireland will benefit by receiving quotas in Faroese stocks providing fleets with the flexibility to manage their Faroese fishing opportunities or seek quota exchanges for other stocks."

The deal refers to licensing of third-country vessels to fish in what is known as the 'Special Area' between the North of Scotland and the Faroes which has been used by Russian boats targeting pelagics swapped to Russia by the Faroes in return for cod and haddock in Russian waters. It is believed that most of this Russian-caught fish has would up marketed in the UK, evading impositions imposed on Russia because of its invasion of Ukraine.

The UK and the Faroe Islands have also agreed to co-operate on "scientific matters of mutual interest related to commercially exploited fish stocks and

their associated ecosystems." The species and stocks of interest are to include pelagic, demersal and deep-sea stocks. Potential research topics could range from stock structure to shifts in distribution due to changes in climate and ecosystem productivity.

EU Changes Course on Bottom Trawling but French Inshore Fleet Objects

The French fishing industry was regarded as the major opponent to the EU Commission's plan to restrict bottom trawling and, after a meeting between its State Secretary for the Sea, Hervé Berville, a delegation of French fishermen and EU Commissioner, Virginijus Sinkevicius, there are indications that it had achieved a change.

The Secretary of State announced, after the meeting, that he had obtained confirmation that the intended ban on bottom trawling in marine protected areas would not be imposed. He said that this had been confirmed by the Commissioner.

It appears that the restriction will now be regarded as advisory, for guidance, rather than mandatory as had been sought by environmental organisations.



There had been port blockades and other protests in France. There was also opposition to the ban from Ireland and Spain. The State Secretary had told France's National Assembly that if restrictions were implemented in France, it would lead to the cessation of many small-scale coastal fisheries such as scallop fishing in the bay of Saint-Brieuc, flat oysters in Quiberon Bay, langoustine, or seaweed in the Iroise Sea natural park. "These fisheries use tools in contact with the bottom and have proven that it is possible to reconcile the preservation of marine habitats and fishing activities," he had indicated. He described the meeting with the Commissioner as 'constructive dialogue' and that Sinkevicius had noted management measures and

efforts made by French fishermen in marine protected areas.

However, the State Secretary has been accused by the Paris-based non-governmental organisation, BLOOM, of giving in to pressure from the larger-boat sector of the French industry at the expense of the inshore fleet. BLOOM has filed a complaint against him at the Court of Justice of the French Republic. It claims that speeches he has made, media statements and other comments have "fabricated an imaginary danger for the entire sector in order to satisfy a trawl and industrial lobby opposed to any questioning of its practices, so he has failed in his core duty to carry out his functions with dignity, probity, integrity and impartiality and must answer for his inflammatory remarks."

The Secretary of State should have taken responsibility in the face of the collapse of marine biodiversity, the destruction of marine habitats and the social depletion in the fishing sector, now under a drip-feed of fuel subsidies, in order to orchestrate a peaceful dialogue aimed at protecting the marine environment and the climate while ensuring the socio-environmental resilience of fishing activities. The irresponsible remarks made by the Secretary of State in the press and within public and European institutions have bred disorder with serious consequences, including the burning, of the offices of the French Office for Biodiversity in Brest, responsible for the management of the Marine Protected Areas."

Norwegian Salmon Tax Continues to Cause Dispute

The Norwegian Government's 'salmon tax,' introduced at the behest of environmental non-governmental organisations, is causing increasing anger and bitterness between the farming industry and the State.



Proposed design for offshore Norwegian fish farm

The Norwegian business employers' organisation NHO has joined in criticism of the Government, calling it "the "ground rent salmon tax plan "and said, at a public hearing about the issue at Norway's Parliament, [the Storting], Finance Committee, that it must be re-examined. NHO's Deputy Managing Director, Anniken Hauglie, told the hearing: "We have one main message: The plan should be sent back to the government for further investigation and the tax postponed until 2024."

The new tax bill, which mostly affects larger companies like Mowi and SalMar, is now in force even though it has yet to be approved by a full parliamentary decision.

Seafood Norway [Sjømat Norge], representing farming companies, has accused the government of "fundamentally lacking an understanding" of how the value chain

and the farming industry worked. It is not about the industry not wanting to pay more in tax, but that the model will not work. It is about what kind of tax burden we can tolerate."

The Norwegian Centre Party which shares government with Labour, has rejected any changes and claims that a majority of Parliamentarians want what is being proposed. This has yet to be tested in a vote at the Storting.

While this controversy is on-going the Norwegian Directorate of Fisheries has opened a new consultation to assess views on the potential impact of offshore aquaculture. It has proposed three possible areas for development - one on the Northern coast, the second off central Norway and the third in the South. Originally eleven areas were proposed. Eight have been temporarily shelved pending further consideration. "Offshore fish farming is one of the next major developments in aquaculture," according to the Directorate.

Nova Scotia Restricts Farming

The provincial government of Nova Scotia, part of Canada, has imposed what the farming sector has describes as "a moratorium" on further fish-farm development until it carries out further studies of a proposal to introduce a licensing system which would rate sites as environmentally green, yellow or red, depending on their suitability for fish farming.



The Progressive Conservatives Party which won the last general election campaign, held in 2021, included this as part of their governing policy. Shellfish and seaweed have been excluded from the process.

"The classifying of coastal areas is being carried out prior to any further decisions," according to the governing party.

Salmon farming generates Canadian \$2bn [£1.19bn.] in total economic output annually in Atlantic Canada of which \$213.5m [£127m.] is in Nova Scotia, where nearly 900 are employed in the industry.

Sushi Interest in USA May Be Driving Illegal Eel Exports

Increased American interest in sushi has been blamed for a smuggling trade in European eels according to a UK scientific report.

Exports of European eel products are banned and stocks are protected, but the report from Exeter University suggests that they are being included in sushi products in the US and, possibly, in other locations. While Japanese eels are farmed and can be legally imported and exported, the Exeter scientists have reported finding that 40 per cent of eel samples in the USA contained DNA from illegal European exports.

news from Castletownbere

Helen Riddell



David Kelly giving the Sea Spray a clean at Dinish pier, Castletownbere. Photo: Anne Marie Cronin Photography

Darkness Into Light

The Castletownbere Darkness Into Light event will take place on Saturday May 6th at 4.15am. Those taking part are asked to be aware that there is a new starting point, at Catcha Coffee, on the town's main pier. Parking will be available by the Harbour Master's offices. The event will be returning to the old route, up the North Road, down to Foildarrig and back to the pier. Catcha Coffee will be open for refreshments after the event. To register or make a donation see www.darknessintolight.ie. All funds raised will be used for suicide prevention.

Peadar Lowney RIP

Tributes were paid to Peadar Lowney of Main Street, Castletownbere who died on April 18th. Castletownbere RNLI said, "everyone in Castletownbere lifeboat was saddened to learn that one of our team, Peadar Lowney left us peacefully last night. Peadar was a central figure in the opening and running of our lifeboat shop and the annual sale of Christmas cards. We will miss his unfailing support to the lifeboat, his endless positivity and good-humoured banter.

Castletownbere GAA said; "Peadar Lowney will be sadly missed by all at Castletownbere GAA. A proud "Town" man whose wit, humour and interest in GAA earned him so many good friends. He held roles as secretary and PRO over the years and supported all age groups from under age up to intermediates. He would have been so proud of the turnout for his removal with the GAA teams from under age to committee members lining the street all the way from the funeral home to his house to say their last goodbyes. We have no doubt that there will be many discussions between Peadar and the many great "Town" men who have gone before him."

Following requiem Mass at the Church

of the Sacred Heart, Castletownbere, Peadar's funeral cortège travelled past the lifeboat station where the flag flew at half-mast. The cortege proceeded along the town pier, before heading to his final resting place in Droum and was accompanied on the way by the RNLI crew and the Castletownbere GAA team and committee members. Ar dheis Dé go raibh anam dílis, a cara.

Broadband Upgrade for Castletownbere

Work has recently started on delivering a 10-gigabit broadband system for Castletownbere. A launch of the project took place in the town recently and was attended by Mayor of Cork County Cllr Danny Collins and Cllr Patrick-Gerard Murphy, along with representatives from local businesses and the fishing industry. KNN, on behalf of Eir, have begun installing fibre around the town, and it is hoped that the new system will be completed in the coming months. Over the past few years, the availability of WiFi has

led to the creation of 85 new online jobs on the Beara peninsula and has enabled a number of local emigrants to return to Beara to work online.

Engine Upgrade for Dursey Boat Trips

Dursey Boat Trips, which launched in 2019, and provides tours of the Dursey Sound in high-speed RIBs has now upgraded their fleet so that it is more fuel efficient and more sustainable. The operation which is run by Paul O'Shea and Jason Sheehan have installed new Suzuki engines in their fleet which includes a micro-plastic collecting device. Paul O'Shea explained that as seawater is pumped through the engine, any micro plastics in it are collected into a canister which is then emptied on a weekly basis. The engine also has a lower emission and is 33% cheaper on fuel. Commenting on the upgrade Paul said "sustainability is very important to us as a business and doing anything we can to leave this world in a better place for the next generation".

Daffodil Day

The Irish Cancer Society have extended their thanks to all those who supported the recent Daffodil Day collection in Castletownbere. The amount raised was €2,314. Thanks were also extended to Lorraine, Chris and staff at SuperValu for hosting the collectors.

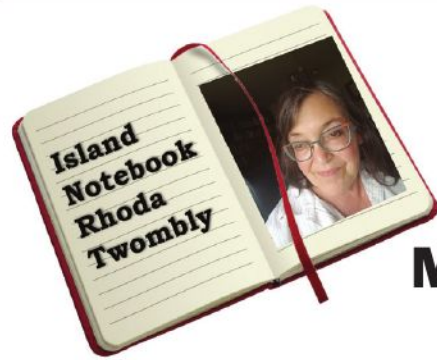
Book Launch

A Cluster of Seaweed by Emma Verling was launched in Beara recently and contains a rich body of stories, historical lore, songs and stories from the area. The collection brings together traditions of landlords and land agents, stories of the devastating Great Famine, trade and commerce, legends of the fairy host and otherworld animals, folk cures and popular beliefs, as well as tales of mythological figures, such as the Old Woman of Béarra.

A Cluster of Seaweed is available for purchase at €30 in venues throughout the peninsula.



Business people gathered in Dinish to get information on the new 10 Gigabit broadband service which will be a welcome boost for everyone. They were joined by The Mayor of the County of Cork Danny Collins, Cllr. Patrick Gerard Murphy, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael Cllr Caroline Cronin Cork County Council. (Back Row l-r): Ian Murphy, Paul O Shea, Fionn Murphy, Monica Lynch, Stephen Martin Sullivan, Tim Marks, Derry O Donovan, Mary D O Sullivan. (Middle Row) Lorraine Sugrue, Vince Power, Noel Murphy, Olivia Wiseman, County Mayor Danny Collins, Damien O Sullivan, John Murphy, Conor Towmey, Michael Popovici and Bruno Letao. Photo: Anne Marie Cronin Photography



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

What Does The North Sea Summit Mean For Ireland's Offshore Islands?

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar and Minister Eamon Ryan attended the North Sea Summit in Ostend, Belgium on the 24th of April. Joined by the President of the European Commission, and leaders of Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Norway, the meeting led to the Ostend Declaration. This builds on the previous declaration signed in 2022 and states not only the importance of increased green energy production and use but also the co-operation needed between European countries.

The declaration states: "Underlining that energy security and the fight against climate change are crucial to the future of Europe, we need to strengthen our co-operation to ensure affordable, secure and sustainable energy, while at the same time, continuing our efforts to protect the marine ecosystem. In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and attempts of energy blackmail against Europe we will accelerate our efforts to reduce fossil

fuel consumption as well as dependence on fossil fuel imports and promote the rapid upscaling and deployment of renewable energy for an energy resilient Europe"

Central to the summit were discussions on decreasing the time currently needed to increase green energy available across Europe. Part of this will mean decreasing the amount of red tape involved while at the same time keeping an eye on all environmental, ecological factors: the necessity to lessen dependence on fossil fuels must be linked to preserving and improving the environment, biodiversity, quality of life, and fuel security.

An eight-fold increase in capacity of offshore wind farms in the North Sea before 2050 is the target, which will turn the North Sea area, including the Atlantic, Celtic and Irish Seas into the green powerhouse of Europe.

What does this mean for our offshore islands?

The importance of renewable energy, and offshore renewable energy generation, must not be understated. Neither can the development of other green fuels and technologies. Green ferries, for example, are integral to lessening the carbon footprint of the islands. Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications recently conducted a public consultation on the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Development Plan II (OREDP II). This plan covers the huge

potential of Ireland's offshore waters, not least because our water area is seven times that of the land. The OREDP II encompasses the waters of the EEZ – up to 370kms off the coast – and considers the potential of offshore renewable energy development and maps areas deemed appropriate for this technology.

The offshore islands fit into this consultation on several levels.

Referring to islands... In the submission from IIMRO (Irish Islands Marine Resource Org), the importance of small scale fisheries was emphasised as "vitaly important for island and coastal communities and need to be preserved and promoted." Additionally, the smaller boats which fish close to their home ports are very vulnerable to displacement. Importantly, it is felt that the structures associated with ORE should be placed at no less than the 12-nautical miles-limit, avoiding nurseries and rich fishing grounds.

There is insufficient data on several island-related considerations – for example, the effects of ORE generation and infrastructure on seaweed, an important island resource. Tourism is central to the economy of many of the offshore islands: will the visual impact of wind farms have a negative effect? Not if the structures are placed outside the 12-nautical mile limit.

There will be positive outcomes to the development of OREs – but careful consideration must be made of how the technology is designed, sited, and monitored as well as possible negative impacts on the offshore islands.

"Currently-Looking" – But Not Finalised

Retrofitting of islands homes and businesses could be a hugely beneficial step, both environmentally and economically so it was encouraging that there is the 50% top-up scheme for island homes on the SEAI grants. However, this is only for their Better Energy Homes Scheme. At a meeting with the Minister a year ago, Minister Ryan said that his department was "currently looking" at measures to be applied to targeted areas and the offshore islands *may* be one of these.

However, this has not been finalised yet.

Also discussed was the fact that an in-depth, realistic study on the true cost of retrofitting and a scope of energy specific projects on the islands needs to be done. Minister Ryan is aware that the islands can be used as models for sustainability and have already proven themselves to be keenly interested in greener living noting a range of successful environmental projects across several islands that increase employment, decrease living costs and improves living conditions.

Aisling Moran, Chair of Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, stated that the islands were looking for equity with the mainland in terms of retrofitting: higher costs, difficulties in attracting contractors to work on the islands and the need to Island-proof all energy policies needed to be resolved in order to move forward.

Despite follow-up letters to the Minister over the past year, no island costing has been done and there has been no contact from the Minister's office to answer queries. Frustrating to all those islanders who need to retrofit their homes.

Well Done Gola

Good news from Gola Island, Donegal: They won in the Tidy Towns Awards a few weeks ago – Well done! Noted by Máirín Uí Fhearraigh of Donegal Small Islands Development: "The island has been doing well in the competition in the last few years but this is the first time we got an award."

The Weeks Ahead On The Islands

There are island activities to note for the next few weeks:

- The Inishbofin Walking Festival 9-21 May. Please see <https://inishbofinexperiences.ie/experiences/walking-tours/> for more information.
- From Clare Island, Mayo there's the Jiving Weekend May 19-20th. The All-Ireland Football Competition is eagerly anticipated across the islands from year to year. This is the 25th year and it's being held on Clare Island May 26-27th. There will be teams from Arranmore, Clare Island, Inishturk, Inis Boffin, Inis Mór, Inis Meáin, Inis Oírr, Whiddy and Bere Island. There will be lots of football and loads of craic so do organise your accommodation early!
- A huge event on Clare Island this summer will be the O'Malley Clan Rally, 24-25th of June. Luka Bloom & Niall McCabe will be performing during the weekend but more on that in the next edition.

Time to get out and enjoy the islands – so it's slán for now!

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IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP IWDG NEWS

The Value of Long-Term Recording Schemes

Report by Dr. Simon Berrow, CEO of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group

The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group have been co-ordinating an All-Ireland stranding scheme since 1991. To date we have collected 5,400 stranding records, dating back to 1753 of at least 23 species. All records are vigorously validated and entered onto the stranding database, which can be accessed online at <https://iwdg.ie/browsers/strandings.php>.



As top predators, whales, dolphins and porpoises have been identified as important indicators of our oceans health. Stranding schemes may provide a tool for monitoring changing ocean conditions and pressures. The UK recently reported an increase in warm water adapted species and a decrease in cold water adapted species stranded in the UK. Interestingly common dolphin strandings have been increasing significantly over time in Ireland, while stranded Atlantic white-sided dolphins have been decreasing.

The IWDG received a total of 122 stranding reports between January and March 2023. The majority (60%) were common dolphins. This continues a trend started in 2011, where increasing numbers of common dolphins have stranded on our shores. Many mariners, including fishers, are commenting to the IWDG that they never used to see so many dolphins when they were at sea years ago. There is recent evidence of an increase in common dolphin abundance in inshore waters to the south of Ireland in the Bay of Biscay which has been associated with changes in climate indices and prey.

When comparing trends with neighbouring countries, they are quite similar suggesting similar pressures are occurring

over a much wider area than just Ireland. However, without an established post-mortem scheme in Ireland, we are unable to investigate the cause of death of these strandings. A scheme between 2017 and 2019 recovered 84 common dolphins for post-mortem in Ireland suggested around 13% of deaths were caused by bycatch, compared to up to 35% by infectious diseases and 13% starvation. Clearly if common dolphin abundance is increasing in inshore waters this will lead to more strandings.

Long-term datasets such as the IWDG Cetacean Stranding and Sighting Schemes are extremely valuable and must be protected and supported. Ireland would have very little data on the occurrence of cetaceans in Ireland and their trends were it not for these schemes, and the support of our army of recorders. Download the IWDG Reporting App (<https://iwdg.ie/iwdg-reporting-app/>).

Read the full article here : <https://iwdg.ie/winter-stranding-2023/>

**Irish Whale
and Dolphin Group**



www.iwdg.ie

Good News Keeps on Landing for The Good Fish Co.

One of Cork's leading seafood producers and retailers is celebrating on the double this month. The Good Fish Company recently broke ground on its next-generation processing facility at Shanbally in Cork Harbour and were confirmed as a finalist for the 2023 Seafood Excellence Global awards, which took place in Barcelona on April 25th.



Donagh and Denis Good

Good Fish Processing employs over 100 staff in Cork, supplying many of Ireland's and Europe's major retailers and food service operators with seafood that is sourced from the most trusted and respected Irish & Worldwide sources, steeped in their own sustainable practices.

Whilst the awards went elsewhere, a nomination is a wonderful achievement. "This awards news is coming at an exciting time for the Good Fish Company, as our new facility will be a leading development of its kind and will allow us to utilise the very latest in sustainable technologies to produce the highest-quality Irish seafood for our clients, here at home and overseas," Donagh Good, Managing Director, said.

"While we have a very specific focus on enhancing the future of the company by leading out on industry developments, being the only Irish company nominated for a Seafood Excellence Global award in the Best Hotel/Restaurant/Catering product category for our Cooked Lemon & Pepper Salmon recipe is a brilliant acknowledgment for our whole team."

Founded by Denis Good in 1988 and celebrating its 35th year in business in 2023, the company currently operates out of two processing facilities in Carrigaline and has four other retail locations across the county in Douglas, Kinsale, Carrigaline and Ballincollig.

The new processing development will be strategically located next to Cork Container Terminal to facilitate immediate export, as well as allowing for quick access to the M28 and Ireland's motorway network. The

construction project will deliver additional capacity for the company, increasing its current operating floor space three-fold.

The factory's build will be underpinned by a specific focus on achieving excellence across a range of energy efficiency measures, while continuing to deliver on sustainability requirements as a Bord Bia Origin Green and Fishery Improvements Project member. It will include a dedicated Research & Development (R&D) area, with the very latest cutting-edge technology installed as part of the upgrade. The additional space will also permit the acquisition of larger-scale and more effective production machinery.

"This investment is the result of key strategic decisions we made to ensure we are leading the way in terms of research, development, and creating a sustainable way forward for our business within the industry," Donagh added. "We are very much looking forward to the busy times ahead both for the Good Fish family and the local Shanbally area through the increase of direct and indirect employment, and we'll continue to share updates as the project continues over the coming months."

An increasing demand for high-quality frozen seafood products in Europe and further afield means the company will immediately be able to leverage the benefits of its newly fitted value added technology and packaging capacity to deliver cost effective, premium seafood products to retail customers in Ireland and elsewhere.

Visit: www.goodfishprocessing.ie

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Letters to the Editor

Another Irishman 'Wintered In The Antarctic' And Is Still Alive

Deputy Editor
Marine Times Newspaper

Dear Tom MacSweeney,

Reference your claim in April edition of having met "the only living Irishman who wintered the Antarctic", I am happy to correct you and to confirm that Danny McFadden is alive and well and living in Creeslough!

I attach a piece about Danny which was part of a display shown in the Inishowen Maritime Museum, Greencastle, called "Paddies at the Poles", about the Irish explorers and seamen who helped open up the polar regions to research and trade.

Danny will be known to many fishermen and leisure sailors as a member of the Lough Swilly RNLI crew and for his mobile VHF training gigs.

Robert O'Brien, retired MSO surveyor, who was based in Ballyshannon, served as Second Engineer on RRS "Bransfield" for a research season with the British Antarctic Survey. The ship was named after Ernest Bransfield who was born in Ballinacurra, Co Cork, in 1785.

On 30 January, 1820, at 1500, Bransfield and his men sighted "immense mountains, rude crags and barren ridges covered with snow". The expedition had discovered the north-western slopes of the Antarctic Peninsula, which Bransfield named Trinity Land, after Trinity House, the maritime body. The peak rises to 2,500ft and is now called Mount Bransfield.

Regards
Seamus Bovaird

+ Thanks for your letter Seamus and great to hear about Danny McFadden and noted that is a living Irishman who wintered in the Antarctic. Fergus O'Gorman, the subject of our April interview, spent three years and three Winters there, so we should correctly have stated that he is the only living Irishman who wintered for three years in the Antarctic. We didn't know about Danny then. We do now!

- Tom MacSweeney

Danny McFadden, Creeslough

Danny is a lecturer in ATU, Letterkenny and was a member of the Lough Swilly RNLI lifeboat crew.

He worked in Antarctica from October 2014 to April 2016, 555 days on site.

His work took him to the South Pole, Deception Island, in the South Shetland Islands, King Edward's Point and Bird Island, on South Georgia, and to the Falklands Islands.



Danny at Shackleton's grave



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Open Day at Marine Institute Newport Facility Attracts Hundreds of Visitors

The Marine Institute was delighted to welcome over 400 visitors to its research facility in Furnace, Newport, Co. Mayo at a recent Open Day in early April.

On Sunday, 2nd April, the Marine Institute opened its doors to give visitors the opportunity to view the facility located in the Burrishoole Valley. The research facility forms one of the greatest natural laboratories for studying migratory fish in Europe. Visitors had the opportunity to tour the state of the art facilities on offer and to meet with researchers and scientists and hear about

some of the exciting research projects taking place at the site.

The Institute organised a series of interactive exhibitions which were designed to introduce visitors to some of the innovative work of the Marine Institute in

areas including research vessel operations and oceanography, as well as fisheries and the marine environment. A number of PhD candidates were also available to talk to students about their subject choices and potential careers in the marine sector.

Speaking about the event, Marine Institute CEO, Dr Paul Connolly said: "We are delighted that over 400 visitors availed of the opportunity to visit our Newport facility and see some of the innovative work that is being undertaken on site. It is so important that we raise awareness about the Institute's work and inspire communities on the importance of scientific research. A special word of thanks to our staff for their support and hard work in making the Open Day

such a success."

In addition to the public open day, the Marine Institute welcomed over 120 primary school pupils and their teachers earlier in the week for special tours. Speaking on their visit St. Brendan's National School, Myna, Kilmeeena said: "We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to the Marine Institute. It was fantastic! The children gained so much from it. They got to do some sampling in the labs, and see some deep water fish species that had been captured during surveys onboard the RV Celtic Explorer and RV Tom Crean.

"They learned how weather data is recorded for Met Eireann. They saw fish and eels in a fish trap and salmon smolts that will be released in the next few weeks. What a great day! Thanks so much to all of the staff."

Marine Institute Newport is a unique facility, where data on climate, ecosystem and environment has been collected since 1955. Founded on this unique time series of data, a broad range of innovative research has been developed, giving insights and understanding to contemporary issues such as the impacts of climate change on coastal aquatic systems. For more information on the Marine Institute's Newport Facility visit marine.ie



Conor, Kate and Aoife listening to the waves and getting to hold some coral and 'shark teeth' at the Newport Open Day.
(Inset photo): Grainne, Jasmine, Jamie, Dara & Liliana with the deep-water crabs.

Explorers Education Programme Sees an Increase in Ocean Literacy in Schools

The Marine Institute's Explorers Education Programme, which engages with primary schools, teachers, children and the education sector, recorded the largest number of participating children in 2022, reaching more than 15,000 throughout Ireland.



Congratulating the team, Dr Paul Connolly, CEO of the Marine Institute said: "This outcome is reflective of the quality of the Explorers outreach programme which promotes marine education and the how well the programme is delivered by Explorers outreach teams in schools around the coast."

"Marine projects, seashore safaris, STEM workshops, aquariums in-the-class and the healthy ocean school projects, are excellent examples of how teachers can use marine content to and develop children's key competencies to enable them to become active citizens.

The most recent *Explorers Engagement & Impact Report* also shows that the programme increased ocean literacy among pre-service teachers, children and school teachers where 463 modules were delivered, focused on aquariums-in-the-classroom, seashore safaris, marine project and STEM workshops, as well as new healthy ocean school projects".

Delighted with the progress during 2022, Cushla Dromgool-Regan, Manager of the Explorers Education Programme, said: "Outreach officers adopt an integrated approach to delivering the wide range of activities available, supported by the Ex-

plorers education resources. This enables teachers to complete cross curricular marine themed projects in the classroom and helps children to take a greater lead in their learning and to becoming ocean literate.

"Applying an integrated approach also reflects the principles set out in the new Primary Curriculum Framework launched earlier this month by Norma Foley, T.D., Minister for Education, Norma Foley," explained Ms Dromgool-Regan.

The Framework introduces key competencies for children's learning, and sets out the main features and components for a full redevelopment of the primary school curriculum. The new Healthy Ocean School Project module is an excellent example of how learning can be expanded through STEM, languages and the arts.

With the objective of creating marine leaders and ocean champions, the 'Healthy Ocean Projects & Ocean Champion Awards' - attracted twenty-six schools in fourteen counties who submitted 28 projects covering science, artwork and beach cleans.

More information about the Explorers Education Programme is available at www.explorers.ie

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Snipe Eels (*Nemichthyidae*) in Irish Waters

Report by Declan Quigley

Snipe Eels (Family: Nemichthyidae) represent a small group of highly modified meso- and bathy-pelagic eels distributed worldwide in tropical and temperate seas at depths down to 4337m. They characteristically have very elongated, scaleless bodies, and non-occlusible, beak-like jaws with curving tips (except in fully mature males).



Figure 1. Slender Snipe Eel (*Nemichthys scolopaceus*) [Photo James Reid, Fisheries & Oceans, Canada]



Figure 2. Pale Threadtail Snipe Eel (*Nemichthys curvirostris*), NW Atlantic, 17.06.2006 (Photo Karsten Hartel)

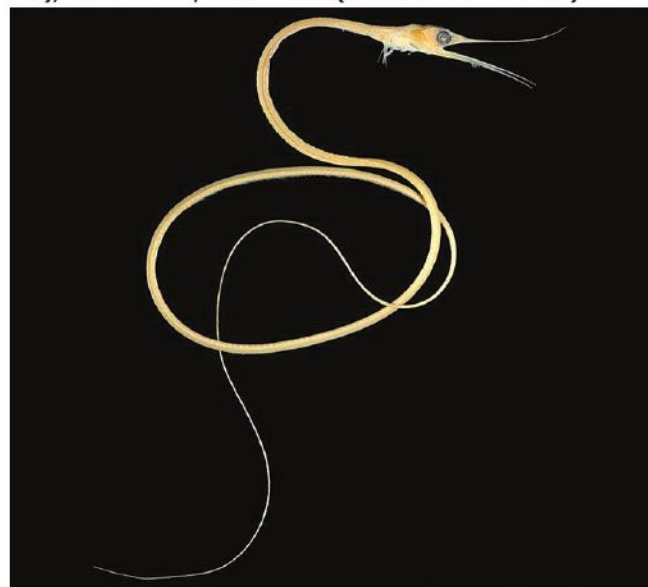


Figure 3. Avocet Snipe eel (*Avocettina infans*) [Photo Kala-peedia]



Figure 4. Shortgut Fintail Snipe Eel (*Labichthys carinatus*) NW Atlantic, 16.05.2003 (Photo Karsten Hartel)

Three genera (*Nemichthys*, *Avocettina* and *Labichthys*) and nine species are currently recognised, four of which are known to occur in the NE Atlantic: Slender Snipe Eel (*Nemichthys scolopaceus*) [Fig. 1], Pale Threadtail Snipe Eel (*N. curvirostris*) [Fig. 2], Avocet Snipe Eel (*Avocettina infans*) [Fig. 3], and Shortgut Fintail Snipe Eel (*Labichthys carinatus*) [Fig. 4].

Due to their slender bodies, occurrence in deep-water habitats, and non-commercial value, Snipe Eels are probably rarely captured, landed, or reported by commercial fishing vessels. Indeed, due to their fragility, specimens captured in commercial gear are generally badly damaged and can be morphologically difficult to identify to species level. Most of the intact specimens have been recorded during short tows in fine-mesh nets used by research vessels.

Slender Snipe Eel (*Nemichthys scolopaceus*)

The Slender Snipe Eel is widely distributed throughout the North and South Atlantic, ranging from Iceland and Greenland southwards (via the Mediterranean) to South Africa and Argentina. Although the largest specimens only weigh a few ounces, the species can attain a total length (TL) of at least 150 cm, supported by a vertebral column containing up to 700 minute vertebrae – a record number for any known vertebrate (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. X-Ray of Slender Snipe Eel (*Nemichthys scolopaceus*) (Photo Sandra Raredon, Smithsonian Institution)

Since 1935, at least 36 specimens of *N. scolopaceus* have been recorded from Irish western offshore waters, at below surface depths ranging from 260-1800 m. The average TL of the Irish specimens was 85.25 cm (range: 56-152 cm).

Although the vast majority of the specimens were reported by UK, Scottish and Irish research vessels (e.g. *RV Cirolana*, *Charles Darwin*, *Scotia*, and *Celtic Explorer*), a few were recorded by Irish commercial fishing vessels.

During June 1986, the *MFV Antarctic* (D97) captured an exceptionally long specimen measuring 152 cm (TL) while mid-water trawling at a depth of 260 m about 160 km west of Galway. During July 1997, the *MFV Shannon* (Skipper: Michael Flannery, Dingle) and

MFV John Colm (T32) [Skipper: Andrew O'Connor, Dingle] captured two specimens measuring 101 cm and 46.5 cm (tail damaged) respectively while demersal trawling for *Nephrops* prawns on the Porcupine Bank. On 20 July 2011, the *MFV Maria Magdalena III* (G482) [Skipper: Steven Connolly] captured two specimens measuring 107 cm and 98 cm TL while demersal trawling at a depth of 380 m in the same area (Fig. 6). More recently, the *MFV Apollo* (Skipper: Mike Reid) captured two more specimens (one measuring 98 cm TL) while demersal trawling on the Porcupine Bank during July 2017 and June 2018 (Fig. 7).



Figure 7. Slender Snipe Eel captured by the MFV Apollo on the Porcupine Bank (July 2017)

Although the Slender Snipe Eel (*N. scolopaceus*) would appear to be the most frequently recorded species in Irish offshore waters, it is possible that a number of other species may also occur, and all specimens should be critically examined to confirm their identification.

Pale Threadtail Snipe Eel (*Nemichthys curvirostris*)

Although the Eastern Atlantic range of the Pale Threadtail Snipe Eel generally ranges from the Azores southwards to Namibia, there is one recent isolated record from the Gulf of Lion in the Western Mediterranean.

Avocet Snipe Eel (*Avocettina infans*)

Although the Eastern Atlantic range of the Avocet Snipe Eel generally ranges from the Madeira Islands southwards to Namibia, there is one confirmed stranding record from Borth, Dovey Estuary, Cardigan Bay, W Wales, dating from 10 October 1926. There are also seven subsequent, albeit unconfirmed records dating between 1981 and 2019, from the southern Welsh coast northwards to the Isle of Uist in the Outer Hebrides (Scotland).

Shortgut Fintail Snipe Eel (*Labichthys carinatus*)

Although the Eastern Atlantic range of the Shortgut Fintail Snipe Eel generally extends from the Azores southwards to South Africa, there are two isolated records from Irish waters, both of which represent the most northerly records from the NE Atlantic to date. On 9 July 1986, two specimens were captured during the German research *Sargasso Expedition* at a depth of 1800 m off the west coast of Ireland (c.53.0000°N, 16.4500°W).

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



Figure 6. Slender Snipe Eel captured by the Maria Magdalena III (G482)



Guiding Star II - Photo courtesy Anthony Arundel

Minister's Selective Memory on Keelbeg Pier Funding Application Should Embarrass Him Into Action

Independent TD for Cork South-West Michael Collins has strongly criticised what he has called the unwillingness of Minister Charlie McConalogue to 'come clean on the nature of the advice given by him to Cork County Council with respect to funding works for Keelbeg Pier at Union Hall.'

Deputy Collins was speaking after he raised the matter with the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine in the Dáil.

The Independent TD said he had a letter in his hand which blatantly contradicted the position of the minister as well as his insistence that he did not receive an application for repair works from Cork County Council, despite the Council asserting that they did indeed make such an application following a recommendation from the minister about where to send it:

"The minister's position on this matter is utterly unacceptable and an insult to the people of Union Hall who desperately want to see funding provided to enable the necessary preparatory works and repairs to proceed," said Deputy Collins.

"Surely he could just man up and admit that he did in fact advise Cork County Council, who, it must be said, have now been left in an invidious position because of his own selective memory."

"The pier at Union Hall is a valuable local asset and it must be protected at the structural level for this and future generations. I am therefore once again appealing to Minister McConalogue to process as a matter of urgency the funding application made to him by Cork County Council," Deputy Collins concluded.

A written question was raised by Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan on the 20th April to the Minister asking if consideration will be given to Cork County Councils request for funding to carry out the necessary work to reconstruct Keelbeg Pier in Union Hall. The Minister's response included; "Cork County Council has secured a scheme contribution of €6.032m for the funding of 20 projects. In total the Scheme has approved 164 project for funding of up to €55.3m. Cork County Council had applied for funding for Keelbeg Pier under the Scheme but the proposed project did not meet the Scheme criteria and so was ineligible."



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