

MARINE TIMES

IRELAND'S LEADING MARITIME NEWSPAPER - AUGUST 2020 - PRICE €3.00



The hauntingly beautiful Port near Glencolmcille - Photo by Alan Hennigan Photography

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Porcupine Bank Prawn Case Referred to European Court

Irish Supreme Court Decision in Favour of Fishermen Hailed as A 'Good Day for Fishing'

"This brings scrutiny to the policing of fishing in Ireland which is badly needed. It is a good day for fishermen" full report on page 20

There is Money for A Lot of Things But Not for Fishermen

"There is nothing specific and meaningful in the grants worth €1.2 million to 93 Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAG) Projects to help the hundreds of in-shore fishing enterprises that face a very uncertain future. We do not begrudge those who got the FLAG grants in their communities but the grants given have nothing to help fishermen" see page 6

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Marine and Coastal Communities

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the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

The Business Section of the Sunday Independent on the 5th July carried a Banner Headline "SMEs struggling to access Covid-19 loans and supports" I was really glad to see this as I was beginning to wonder if I was the only one complaining about the difficulties in sourcing Funds and Concessions from the Banks which are being trumpeted by our Government.

Both of the Main Banks have been advertising Supports for Small Business with or indeed without the benefits of the SBCI Funding. The SBCI Funding can reduce or remove the Security Requirement but it is still subject to the most rigorous Credit Assessment imaginable from the Banks who are asking us for predictions for the end of 2021 which they could not give for their own business.

Do the Banks not have their own "Experts" who are able to predict the future or are they simply content to question the predictions if those who are sufficiently well informed to make calculated predictions.

At the moment they are sickening me and bringing some of us to a point where we are losing the interest and desire to continue to swim uphill.....

I detect similar frustration amongst the Frontline Officials and must conclude that difficulties are being caused by people who do not interact face to face with the Clients.

Shame on you Ladies and Gentlemen .

You are driving the spirit out of your frontline staff on whom you will be relying to recover your business and status in the community when the storm blows over.

Everywhere I turn I am confronted by



Father McKee tuna fishing in the Bay of Biscay - Photo ctsy Francis Cavanagh

people with little to no knowledge of the Industry who manage to create barriers at every turn. Barriers are OK and even good if founded on knowledge.

The concept of creating Mountains from Molehills has become endemic.

I claim to be a professional banker based on my 43 years in the banking business and 12 years on my own and I fully understand that Credits must be fully assessed - but Lads - we are getting into the general area of having to name the entire attendance at the All Ireland Finals last year where previously simply knowing that 82,300 people were there would have satisfied.

Fishing Business is good business and Fishing Lending is good lending but is more satisfactory for everyone if everyone understands it.

I find that lack of knowledge on the banking side causes a measure of inquisitive aggression as they try to rationalize the lending proposals.

If you don't know what you are doing lads - please don't make it sound as if it is our fault. We do know what we are doing!!!

Why must everything provided by a Bank be made to sound as if it is a Favour????

It's being paid for Lads but all too often attracts a conditionality which rarely if ever attaches to other transactions.

It's a commercial transaction between consenting parties !!!!

I have always claimed that the ability of a fishing vessel to recover from a financial trauma which would have floored many other sectors is almost unique.

If for Instance a farming enterprise runs into difficulty because livestock cannot be sold or crops cannot be harvested potential substantial additional funding may be required

Livestock must be fed while awaiting sale. Un-harvested crops may need to be dug up and replanted. All requiring additional financing

A Fishing Vessel while tied up does not incur continuing running costs apart from Insurance, basic maintenance and generator fueling costs.

In adverse market conditions the effects

of any drop in fish prices or increase in fuel costs will be partially borne by the crews most of who are share fishermen. That is UNIQUE.

We have the situation now where almost every lending will require Legal Intervention or Approval.

It appears that "Bonus Points" are allocated to those who contrive even more "Conditions" many of them impossible to fulfill prior to drawdown of loans.

I believe that Lenders are going to run into a serious storm when Business Accounts for 2020 are completed. Financial Covenants which have become a feature of many Loan Approvals are certain to be unfulfilled due to the Global Effects of the Virus on Operational and Market Issues in the Seafood Sector. In particular Debt Service Ratios will not be met

Despite this I ask the Banks to bear in mind that the only concession most Fishermen will have requested will have been the Payment Holidays.

They have battled on without direct Financial Assistance and with little complaint.

Many years ago an eminent Senior Lender emphasized that "The Balance Sheet doesn't repay Loans - CASH repays loans."

When we started to get the Banks into seriously lending to Fishermen I had occasion to have one of the Senior Lenders at a Meeting with a Fisherman Client who in the course of the conversation asked How much the Repayments would be on the Loan Being discussed.

We calculated the figure and he rocked quietly on his chair- eyes closed- before announcing "That will be fine"

On the way back to the Office I pointed out to my Lender Colleague that the concept of someone about to borrow a large amount of money not understanding his Balance Sheet was uncomfortable for a Commercial Lender- but explained to him that while my client was pondering the Repayment figure he was in fact converting the Loan Repayment into Boxes of Had-dock !!!!

No Balance sheet required there

NOBODY understands their Industry like Fishermen Do !!!!

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Thousands of Illegally Caught Lobsters Seized

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) has seized thousands of lobster catches during July. The biggest was being 6,000 in a lorry at Rosslare which was destined for Spain.

Further investigations are underway as to the origin of these. The SFPA says that it believes some were collected from the North/West as well as from the West and Northern Ireland. According to the SFPA it "almost 800" of these were "illegally-caught" and returned to the sea alive. They included undersized and V-notched lobsters, which are protected from being caught, having been V-notched and returned to the sea to breed by licensed fishermen.

86 lobsters were seized from "a recreational fisherman" on the South-East Coast and also returned alive to the sea as were another 28 "illegally-caught" that were seized in Mayo. Files have been sent to the Director of Public Prosecutions, the SFPA says. Information from the public has helped in the seizures.

"The fishery for lobster is one of the most traditional fisheries among coastal communities and the mainstay of many small vessels fishing all around the coast of Ireland. The majority of inshore fishermen fish legally and work in conjunction with the SFPA and other state agencies to ensure the protection of the species which have been in decline in recent years," said Dr.

Susan Steele, Chair of the SFPA.

"However the actions of a few could undermine the future viability of the fishery. Steele added that illegal fishing also poses a risk to public health as the seafood may not be stored or handled in accordance with food safety regulations."



Commercial lobster fishing is only permitted by licensed fishermen under a range of conservation measures to support the viability of the inshore fishing industry and to ensure traceability of the product.

The allowance for recreational fishing is limited as such catches are intended solely for consumption by the person who caught them and their family.

"When purchasing crabs or lobster, we ask that people buy from commercial fishers only" the SFPA said.

By law, "recreational fishers" who do not have a fishing licence can only fish for lobster and crab from May 1 to September 30 every year, fishing up to a maximum of six pots. They are permitted to retain up to five crabs and one lobster daily, which cannot be offered for sale.



These two box crabs shown here by Maria Foley and Ciara O'Halloran of Dingle Oceanworld Aquarium were caught by Gary Brosnan's fishing vessel Coleen while gill netting north west of the Blasket islands. One, a male that was caught in early May which is called 'Arachnid' by the Aquarium's staff. The second one, a female, was netted more recently and has been given the name 'Box Crab Willie'.



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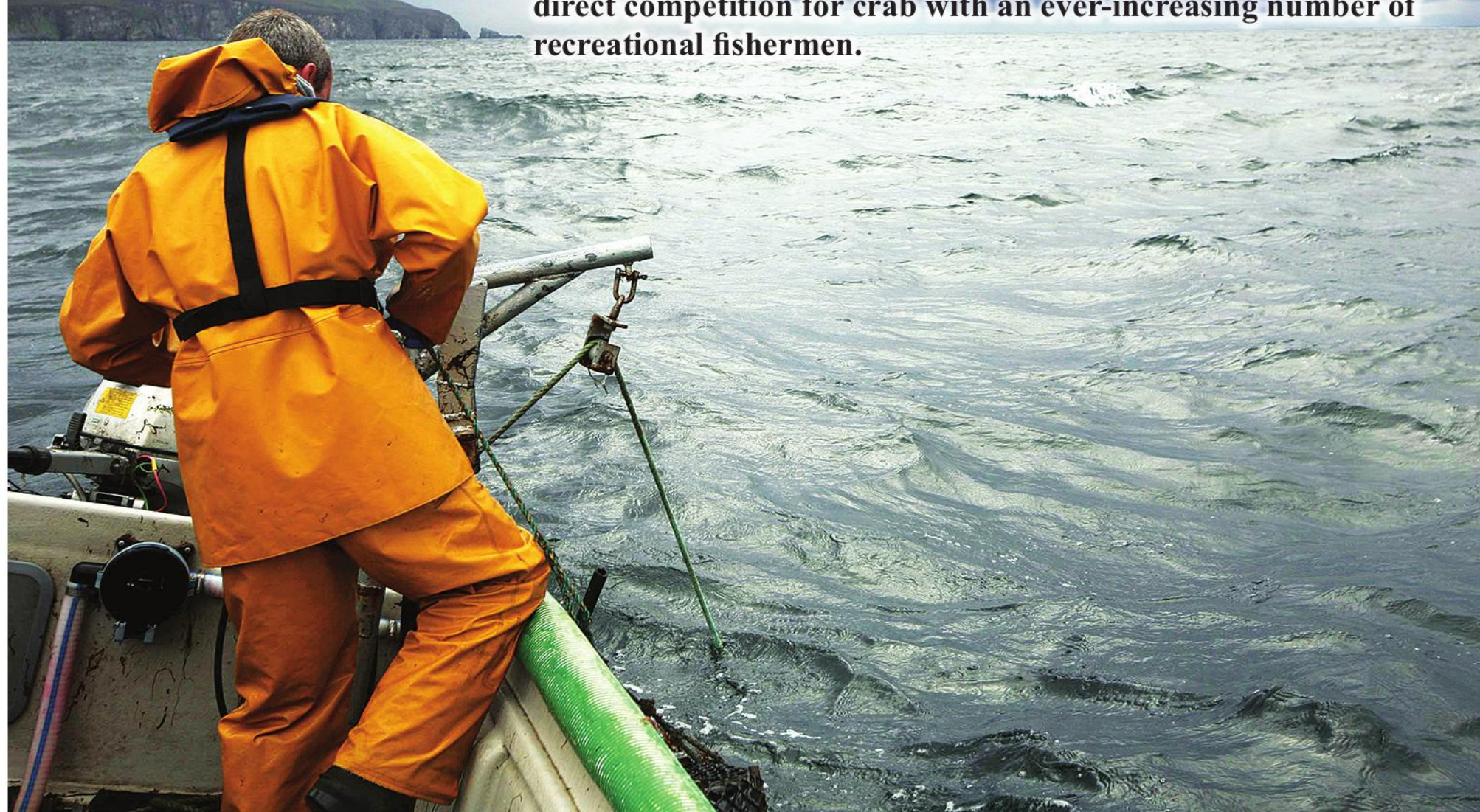
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Poor Catches and Even Poorer Prices for Brown Crabs

Inshore fishermen involved in the brown crab fishery are facing a multitude of difficulties including poor prices, low catches and direct competition for crab with an ever-increasing number of recreational fishermen.



Once only a by-catch for boats targeting the more valuable lobster stocks, brown crab has become an essential part of the shellfish industry and is now the most important species targeted by vessels in the inshore sector.

Prices have fallen by up to 80% due to the closure of the Chinese markets late last year, and the restrictions on the movement of goods caused by the Corona virus pandemic. Currently prices are as low as €1.50/kg for premium grade hen crab, this is in contrast to around €5-6/kg being offered just a year ago by live exporters.

The brown crab fishery is an open fishery, with little management and very little in terms of accurate stock data. Lower catch levels over the last couple of years have also added to the decline in profitability which in turn has led to an increase in effort. Amid fears that the stock is getting fished down to a level where it becomes economically unviable, the current drop off in catches has become a worry for fishermen.

Competition for marketable crabs with the recreational sector has also become a growing issue. Non-commercial pot

fishing has been somewhat of a contentious issue for commercial fishermen, who have claimed some recreational fishermen are fishing large amounts of pots, keeping undersized and v-notched lobsters for consumption, undermining the stock enhancement work of commercial fishermen and declawing all crab, even those under the MLS (Minimum Landing Size).



One fisherman told Marine Times, "We have a few so-called recreational fishermen fishing close to some of our gear and they have at least 50 or 60 pots out, this is highly unfair on licenced commercial fishermen who have invested heavily in trying to make their fishery a viable and sustainable one."

He added, "Since recreational fishing was put on a legal footing, the problem has definitely gotten worse. Under new regulations, recreational fishermen can fish up to six pots, and can retain five crabs and one lobster a day. They are not allowed to store crabs or lobsters at sea or sell any of their catches. But we know for a fact that many of them are selling what they catch, keeping undersized and v-notched lobsters

as well as declawing every crab they catch."

Legislation for non-commercial pot fishing includes a closed season during the months of October, November, December, January, February, March and April. A limit of no more than one lobster and five crab per fishing boat in a 24-hour period. A requirement that all lobsters containing a V notch and all mutilated lobsters taken by a fishing boat be returned alive to the sea without delay. Non-commercial pot fishing vessels are limited to a maximum of six pots in the sea at any one time, and are prohibited from storing in the sea a crab or lobster that has a nicked or banded claw. For edible crabs caught in pots or creels, a maximum of 1% by weight of the total catch of edible crab may consist of detached claws.

Declawing (toeing) has to some extent always been a part of the fishery. In the past, while prices for whole live crabs remained high, the practice of declawing was at the lower end of the scale. But due to the fall in crab numbers and extremely poor live crab prices, it has become a huge issue and its activity has seemingly increased exponen-

tially.

Crab fishermen are reporting that the current level of declawing of crabs is at a record high and is destroying their fishery, as substantial numbers of clawless crabs, often under-sized, are showing up in their pots day after day, often higher than the number of crabs with claws in the creels. Considering that crab numbers remain low, this is seen as a destructive act which goes completely against maintaining the stock and is totally unsustainable.

Crab fishermen want to see a ban on deliberate de-clawing, evidence shows that de-clawing reduces the overall value of



the crab fishery by wasting the de-clawed crab, as the survival rate of declawed crab is greatly diminished when returned to the sea. Prohibition would increase the value of the fishery through the landing of more whole crab. It would also close a potential loophole to avoid compliance with MLS and deter the abuse of derogations such as permitting the landing of claws that have accidentally become detached.

A spokesperson for the National Inshore

Fishermen's Association (NIFA) said, "It can be expected that during a time of unprecedented economic crisis that people affected from all walks of life will try and supplement their incomes whatever way they can, however when this involves illegal fishing it threatens the sustainability of the fishery and the jobs of genuine professional fishers."

"What's described, (and based on reports from members is definitely taking place), fits the description of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated or IUU fishing. IUU fishing is something that has been taken very seriously in other jurisdictions and at international level, in a high-profile manner."

"Ireland has made commitments to tackle IUU activity, yet for some reason the activities described seem to be met with little tangible efforts here. This lack of interest or actual results in tackling IUU fishing in our inshore fisheries has fostered a culture where non-compliance, even if considered unacceptable is just seen as the norm or par for the course. This in turn has made genuine operators reluctant to even try and bring instances of it to the attentions of the authorities."

In a recent statement issued by the SFPA (Sea Fisheries Protection Authority), it said, 'With the crab and lobster fishery having reopened for recreational fishers on 1st May, the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority, the sea-fisheries regulator, is reminding all fishers of the importance of compliance with the regulations and best practice that govern the catching, selling and buying of crabs and lobsters.'

Dr Susan Steele, Chair of the SFPA, is urging everyone involved to pay particular attention to the regulations regarding the size of shellfish caught and the quantity of crab claws without bodies which can be retained on board a vessel. These are regulations that go to the core of ensuring a sustainable fishery. Being physically large means, they have long enough to have a good chance of contributing to the next generation, and having the whole body landed ensures that such an assessment can be made. Taking small crabs out of the population damages future breeding potential and retaining only claws can be a method of evading the minimum size requirements.

The regulations concerning the size that can be caught in Irish water apply to all fishers. The minimum size for crab in Irish waters is as follows; edible/brown crab 140 mm, spider crab 120mm and velvet crab 65mm while European lobster have minimum size of 87mm and maximum of 127mm (carapace length). A crab or lobster outside these sizes limits must be returned immediately to the sea. Undersize shellfish cannot be retained on board for any reason including for use as bait. Furthermore, lobsters that have been V-notched or have mutilated tails must not be retained on board either. For edible crabs caught in pots or creels, a maximum of 1 % by weight of the total catch of edible crab may consist of detached claws.'

Dr Steele also urged anyone who had concerns around fishing activity that might be illegal or against best practice to contact the regulator directly or by calling the SFPA confidential telephone line at **1890 767676**.

Safety at Sea with SNG

With annual reports highlighting that many fishermen continue to be lost at sea this has further heightened awareness in the fishing industry for the safety of those at sea in dangerous conditions.

Given this focus, Swan Net Gundry (SNG) continues its strategy of providing fishermen and vessel owners with the latest technology in Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs), safety clothing, life rafts, EPIRB's & PLB's and the latest technology in lifejackets with integrated AIS system.

A long-established leader in design and supply of trawls for the international fishing industry SNG took the decision, in 2004, to not only cater for the catching sector but also to invest in R&D into safety aspects and, as a result, established a Dept. of Marine approved life raft service station at their Castletownbere depot, while also achieving SOLAS approval for sale & service of single and double chamber SOLAS lifejackets.

With life rafts available for sale or hire in all sizes from four-man to 50-man SNG are currently one of Ireland's leading life raft rental outlet.

Aiding inshore fishermen to comply with the current safety Code of Practice (COP) regulations, SNG supplies an extensive safety range from fire extinguishers and flares to first aid kits and, most importantly, handheld (mobile) VHF radios.

Testament to SNG's reputation is that they are an official Service and Distribution Centre (SDC) for Mullion's entire range of lifejackets and safety clothing.

A high level of interest from the commercial fishing industry has seen increased demand for, in particular, the Mullion 'Compact 275 Supreme lifejacket with AIS system' which, unlike other brands of

lifejacket, removes the two-step manual operation of releasing the signal aerial and this is now spring-released on inflation of

the jacket – this is vitally important as, in certain cases, the person in question may have a head injury and are unable to manually activate this aerial themselves.

This 275-Newton Compact Supreme jacket automatically begins to send a signal to the vessel's wheelhouse console where a 'man overboard' message alerts the skipper – or, in the unfortunate event of the vessel sinking, will repeatedly send this message to all vessels with AIS systems in a six-mile radius.

In addition to these top-of-the-range lifesaving jackets, Swan Net Gundry's safety experts provide an assistance service to customers for radio licences, EPIRB and PLB registrations as well as beacon service and reprogramming.

As well as a vital tool for inshore fishermen, the ACR PLB have become popular with many hill and coastal walkers and hikers, rural recreational officers, and in many other sectors.

The extensive service range of SNG safety equipment and services

also includes the provision of quotations for fishermen applying for BIM safety grant aid.



SNG are the service and distribution centre for the full range of Mullion lifejackets. The ACR link integrates the Compact Supreme 275 lifejacket to the AIS system.



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National Inshore
Fishermen's Association

*We are focused on the
needs and wellbeing of boat
owners and their crews
involved in Inshore Fishing
and nothing else*

There is Money for A Lot of Things But Not for Fishermen

There is nothing specific and meaningful in the grants worth €1.2 million to 93 Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAG) Projects to help the hundreds of inshore fishing enterprises that face a very uncertain future. We do not begrudge those who got the FLAG grants in their communities but the grants given have nothing to help fishermen.

NIFA has been making a case since March but we have got nothing in return and our members are asking to know what supports are going to be given to them. We made submissions and a lot of representations and the previous Minister told us when we asked about EMFF money that there was not much left to be allocated and then we see that there is money for other projects, but not directly to help the fishermen who need support. The tie-up scheme has been a disaster really. Many schemes were not available when in the pandemic they were needed.

Then the €1.2 million in grants was announced by Minister Calleary for FLAG projects. There was grant aid for materials for painters and decorators by the looks of it and for paddle boardings and for other projects and with EMFF support, when we were told that that money had run out, that there was none left. Apart from the community efforts and we do not begrudge them what they got, there was nothing directly for fishing.

Those projects have probably worked hard for the grants they got but the question is that we were told that there was no money there to help fishing in the current crisis. Fishermen work hard too and there wasn't anything in the latest grants to help our members. But suddenly, there is money for all this other stuff. Maybe those projects were all decided before the pandemic came, but inshore fishing has been hit hard and NIFA had put forward its case.

If the EMFF money cannot be used to help fishing businesses survive and if Ireland's State fishing agency can't use that funding to help business get through this unprecedented crisis, why are other projects

getting money?

That is the question which NIFA members are asking.

When the FLAG system was set up each FLAG came up with its own strategy and if a project is within that strategy they can fund it. The point we are making, basically, is that fishermen are struggling to survive and pay their bills, they are not able to engage in projects for the future, they need to survive now. They are not able to look at projects to fund their business. The issue is that in the current crisis facing the industry, why is there not money to help them and, when we were told that no more would be available, how is it now available for other projects than directly for fishing?

That is the question our members are asking and we don't have an answer to it.

Perhaps fishermen should apply for grants for more projects, but right now they have enough to do to try to keep their heads above water. A lot of people are struggling to do that. FLAG projects have helped fishermen in the past, but the present situation is unprecedented and the latest grants announcements have not taken account of that.

We really need a bit of help and we have not got that so far. Most of the provisions which have been made available do not help fishermen the great majority of whom, as far as NIFA is concerned, are self-employed. We have asked for support under various headings and have not got them.

Really there is nothing there for us.

Fishermen are getting nothing and yet there is EMFF money there for these other projects but not for us.



Inshore gillnetters at Dingle - Photo by Adam Flannery

Letters to the Editor

Marine Times Back!

Editor,
Marine Times Newspaper

Despite the doom and gloom generated in recent months by Covid-19 some bright spots are now emerging. Not least, following a three month unavoidable sojourn the *Marine Times Newspaper* has re-emerged! Congratulations to its entire editorial staff who have arduously worked in challenging conditions to keep its readers up to date with current happenings in the world of the Irish fishing and beyond.

One common theme that has been prominent on the *Marine Times Newspaper* over the years is that of a largely unhappy relationship between the Irish fishing industry and successive Irish Governments. In sentiments expressed by those who harvest the seas and their correspondents with respect to our rulers, words such as disregard, disinterested, discrimination, turmoil, duped, disappointing etc. are commonplace. Sadly, during the three month absence of the newspaper nothing seems to have changed – the March edition front page carried the heading, *The State Needs to Wake Up to the Potential of Irish Fishing*, while the current issue leads the way with, *Government Discrimination!* The perceptible indifference by governments towards our fishing industry has gone on for years and years with **no apparent light at the end of the tunnel**. Were the seeds of ill feeling sown in 1972? Did government disinterest previously exist, and did the fiasco of 1972 simply add further fuel to fire? Widely believed by fishermen is that an Irish Government negotiated away the great resource we had in our fisheries to gain benefits for agriculture in the EEC access. On the terms offered in 1971 the Irish Government was warned on the consequences of surrendering our fishing waters. That warning put forward by Mr. Brendan O'Kelly, perhaps the top visionary of our time on matters relating to the Irish fishing industry, was ignored! Thereby hangs the tale!

Perhaps though government apathy shown towards the industry was in evidence previous to EEC entry! For example, away back in the late 1950s and early to mid-1960s it became clear to many observers that the Irish fishing industry was substantially under achieving in terms of the national economy. Irish vessels working from south coast ports reportedly landed less than 10% of fish caught off the south coast. Gradually it became clear that the boats in use were not designed, equipped or sufficiently powerful to fish at required distances off shore. Progressive fishermen at the time were of the opinion that boats of at least 70-feet in length and suitably equipped were required. While some attempts at reaching that goal became apparent, nevertheless successive governments did not take the economic underachievement situation seriously.

What is currently remarkable is that in spite of repeated dismissiveness and

obstacles placed in its way down through the years many aspects of the industry has progressed inordinately. Superior vessels, enhanced deck and fishing equipment, along with top class crew comforts have emerged. Amazing! Yes, indeed! Sheer resilience and optimism continues to win the day for those who against the odds continue to fish without fear or favour. I believe that the Brexit fallout, whatever it might be, will be faced up to and dealt with in the same manner!

Looking back over a past issue of the *Marine Times*, questions, rhetorical in nature, caught my eye. They were penned eighteen years ago (July 2002) by an obviously exasperated Tom Mac Sweeney and reads as follows, "Why is it, I ask, that an island nation cannot see the marine sector as vital to economic and national interest." The theme goes on, "Why is that the fishing industry is singled out for neglect and that those who farm the land are so well looked after while the fisherman is treated in a dismissive fashion? With a shake of my head and a sort of wry smile, I thought, after all those years little has changed to alleviate Tom's feelings of frustration and devastation.

On the July *Marine Times* issue Mr. John Ward, Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation again posed a rhetorical question, *Is Marine the Poor Departmental Relation?* Rhetorical or not, the minds of the vast majority of Irish maritime folk reading such a newspaper article heading, would I believe, reply positively.

Ah, but who knows, we have promises aplenty in the joint statement published by the current Dáil Éireann rulers. While wishing them good luck with the difficult task they now face, let's hope that the excerpt from the said document which states, "We are committed to prioritising the development of the marine", does really come to fruition. As a starting point it would be good, if the full title of the Government Department of which the Marine is part, was at all times fully quoted in communications. I believe it is currently titled The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Even though the answer to Mr. Ward's above 'question' is a no brainer we still have to keep fighting for the cause and maybe one day we will take our place amongst the highflying departments in Dáil Éireann. Hope springs eternal!

Yours sincerely
Pat Nolan

Marine Times Newspaper

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Slipway Closure in Miltown Malbay

Editor,
Marine Times Newspaper

I'm a big fan of yourselves, so I'll take this opportunity to complement you on your work.

My main reason for writing is a story you may be interested in. I live in Miltown Malbay in Co. Clare. We are a seaside town on the Clare coast and we have one slipway for boat launch. It's located in a small sheltered bay called White Strand. The slipway there has been in use for generations, but I don't know its original build date as its way too long ago.

Recently the Clare Council beach lifeguards located on the adjoining beach have been informing boat users that the Council have just introduced a new byelaw where powercraft are no longer allowed to launch or retrieve there. It's been confirmed since by the Council Water Safety Development Officer that this is the case.

There's uproar in the local community to say the least. It's been a public right of access for boats for generations and the only one the village has. There was no consultation, or notification.

It's so disappointing that local boat owners now can't put to sea in their own village. The ocean is to be enjoyed and shared. Barring one section of the population can't be the best option for all.

Yours sincerely,
Wayne Timmons

* Clare County Council has said that it is reviewing the new bye law amendments and that while this review takes place, the 2016 beach bye laws will be reverted to, allowing the launching of boats at the slipway at White Strand.

Front Page Photo

Editor,
Marine Times Newspaper

Thank you very much for putting my photo on the front page guys. Really appreciate it and chuffed to the moon and back.



Thanks again
Chris Feenan

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MARINE TIMES

NEWSPAPER FOR IRELAND'S FISHING, MARINE AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES



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The Fishing Industry Needs A Strong, United Voice

Much of political debate these days is dictated by those who shout the loudest, who complain, contradict, challenge and create as much controversy as possible. 'Let he who shouts the loudest be heard first' was a Latin dictat. Life seems to have moved into a world where influencing without authority has become the most sought-after skill.

Not just in Ireland, but throughout the world, political and business leaders are having to come to terms with needing to show more finesse and engage in a wider range of tactics and use personal power if they are to exert sufficient influence to take their organisations forward.

How stands the Irish fishing industry in this regard?

It does not have a united voice, which this paper has identified and urged as being necessary. It does have the people and the potential to achieve this, but the nature of fishing itself, the competition for catches, the essence of the industry being that of a 'hunter' mitigates against unity which State authorities have utilised to prevent a strong, determined, united industry.

From this follows neglect of the fishing industry at State level, national media disregard and ignorance and public lack of appreciation.

There are, however, signs that things may be changing.

The four Fishermen's Producer Organisations (Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation; Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation; Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation; Irish Fish Producers' Organisation) are working together in these unprecedented times.

The disgraceful government approach to the industry evident in its insulting 'temporary tie-up' scheme caused so much anger that the major fishing representative organisations united in the strongest criticism for many years of the then Minister for the Marine and his Department.

Being loud and passionate can be positive and inspiring and is at times necessary, but increasingly the most influential leaders use more subtle ways of engaging with those

who they need to influence.

The art of communicating with gravitas and authority, without resorting to merely using volume to reinforce the message, is how this paper seeks to convey the message of maritime and fishing industry importance.

In the pages of this edition you can read opinions from many sectors of the industry. Taken together they all convey a message - that the fishing industry deserves more support and attention from government. It is a vital part of the national economic sphere, as is the entire maritime sector.

Increasingly political and business voices refer to the island status of this nation, having come to the realisation that, as an island, there is huge dependence on the sea.

Food from the sea is part of that dependence and is an essential support to the people of Ireland.

That is why the fishing industry is so important to this island nation and why its voice must be heard. A united voice will be the strongest.

In saying this we hope that the new Minister for the Marine will hear such a voice.

Dara Calleary from Mayo, a county bordered by a long coastline and with a strong maritime tradition, has told the fishing representative organisations that the maritime sector is a major part of his Ministerial brief and that the new government "has huge ambition for building a sustainable fishing sector." We welcome him aboard and wish him well in his post and we look forward to delivery on that declared State intention for the fishing sector.



Dunmore East - Photo by Brian Motyer

United Nations Agency to Examine Ireland's Maritime Safety Regulations

European Court Declares Maritime Casualty Investigation Board Is Not Independent of Government

Public Inquiry and Garda Investigation Sought Into MCIB

Report by Tom MacSweeney, Deputy Editor

The United Nations maritime safety agency will be examining Ireland's safety regulations later this year. In the wake of the European Court of Justice decision which declared that the Maritime Casualty Investigations Board was not independent of government in its operations, this could create a further difficult situation for the State according to the Irish maritime lawyer who has led criticism of the MCIB.

Michael Kingston's father, Tim, was killed in the Betelgeuse oil tanker disaster at Whiddy Island in Bantry Bay in January 1979. For the past six years he has been the leading protagonist in demanding changes to the Irish maritime safety system and is seeking a Garda investigation into the workings of the MCIB.

"I have been to hell and back trying to convince the Irish Government that there must be changes," he told the *Marine Times* in the aftermath of the European Court decision, "but they would not listen to me. Now they have the result of a highly embarrassing and very serious ruling against the operations of the Board. Ireland is now in the deeply embarrassing and humiliating position on the world stage to have had such a judgement made against it. There must be changes and they must be implemented quickly."

Mr. Kingston has written to Taoiseach Micheál Martin and the Minister for Climate Action, Communication Networks and Transport, Eamon Ryan, pointing out that "it is Ireland's turn to be audited by the IMO later this year as to how we are implementing regulations."

He wrote: "We must now ratify all outstanding international maritime regulations to protect all those who use the sea and our environment. We have to act urgently to get our house in order or we are in line for an even broader world humiliation."

Last year he wrote to then Taoiseach Leo Varadkar about maritime safety, but no action was taken he says: "None of this would be happening if the outgoing Government

had sat down with me and we turned all this around. But the position was just ignored. There comes a point called stop, and we have reached it. Maritime Safety is basically a matter of life and death and this approach is appalling."

In his letter to the Taoiseach and Minister Ryan he said: "As an International Maritime Organisation Consultant working on maritime safety and with other Governments, it is a matter of embarrassment and shame for me that the country that I adore is operating like this."



The European Court of Justice ruled that the Marine Casualty Investigation Board is not independent of Government due to the presence on its board of two civil servants. These are the Secretary-General of

the Department of Transport under which it operates and the Chief Surveyor in the Marine Survey Office of that Department, Mr. Brian Hogan.

The MCIB describes its function as: "to examine and if necessary carry out investigations into all types of marine casualties to, or on board, Irish-registered vessels worldwide and other vessels in Irish territorial waters and inland waterways."

Responding to the European decision, Minister Ryan's Department of Climate Action, Communications and Transport issued a statement saying that it was "examining the judgment."

The Court finding was discussed in the Dáil where Hildegard Naughton who is Minister of State for Transport, said the Department is "seeking legal advice to address

the court findings and the concerns of the EU Commission."

Mr. Kingston retorted that the Government should "stop wasting time and money and deal with the issue of reforming the approach to maritime safety."

The Court ruling found that "in view of the functions performed simultaneously" by the two civil servants, Ireland is not fulfilling its obligations under Article 8(1) of Directive 2009/18 governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector."

The Government had argued otherwise which led to the European Commission that had already disagreed with it on the issue bringing the legal action against Ireland.

Mr. Kingston (inset photo) is an international lawyer based in London who has won several awards for his work. He has alleged that the Dáil was misled in government statements made about maritime safety. He has also called for a public inquiry into the workings of the MCIB.

Support has been given from others not satisfied with MCIB rulings. These include Dáil Deputy Mattie McGrath who has sought changes in the Act relevant to the MCIB.

Mr. Kingston has also been supported by Anne Marie O'Brien, sister of John O'Brien who drowned off Helvick Head in July 2010 with his friend Pat Esmonde. She has been seeking amendments to the Merchant Shipping Act, "an immediate re-investigation into the circumstances of my brother's death with his friend Pat Esmonde."

She has stated that the decision of the European Court confirming that Ireland's Marine Casualty Investigation Board is not independent "confirms failures of the MCIB Report into my brother's death."

Amidst accusations about changes to investigation reports, 'whistleblower' information and other issues raised, Mr. Kingston says he has been corresponding with the government about maritime safety concerns since November 2014.

"I have never received a response. What I have been saying all along, both from my

experience as an international maritime expert working with the United Nations International Maritime Organisation and on behalf of the families of the Whiddy Island Disaster victims, has been backed up by the European Court of Justice in this action brought against Ireland by the European Commission, who I have been working closely with on critical maritime safety regulations, in order to try and protect our merchant seafarers, pleasure craft users and fishermen.

The Dáil was told during a debate last October, by then Minister Shane Ross, that the MCIB was "an independent State agency."

"It defies belief that the Maritime Safety Directorate of (then) DTTAS would try and defend this position," Mr. Kingston said, "costing the Irish tax payer millions in legal fees, which could have been spent on rectifying our maritime safety framework. This reprehensible approach by the Department is a repeat of history, of failure to have correct structures in place for safety and to take responsibility. The proper analysis of maritime investigations is the fundamental right of those who die, as is the proper involvement of their families in inquiries, under the European Convention of Human rights.

"The Irish State has denied the victims and their families those rights and there must now be an immediate public enquiry as to how this has been allowed to occur and all MCIB investigations must be reviewed. No one treats my father and family and all the people I have had to comfort and others in later accidents, as if they were a nuisance and worthless. I have gone to unimaginable depths within my being to get to this point."

No further statement about the progress of the legal analysis which the Department of Climate Action, Communication Networks and Transport said is being undertaken, had been issued at the time of this edition of the MARINE TIMES going to press.

Listen to the MARINE TIMES WEEK-END PODCAST on our website www.marinetimes.ie to the interview with lawyer Michael Kingston.



Early morning wait for the tide at Ardglass - Photo by Chris Feenan

Garda Investigation of Alleged Misconduct in Public Office

Lawyer Michael Kingston announced late in July, as this edition of the MARINE TIMES was going to press, that he had been written to by the Garda Commissioner, Drew Harris, saying that he has directed the Garda National Bureau of Criminal Investigation to investigate DTTAS (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport) and Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB) officials for allegations of Misconduct in Public Office.

"This decision by Garda Commissioner Harris, in addition to the ECJ Judgement, is a great day for Ireland and those who have endured such torture through loss where the State, in an abhorrent dereliction of duty, have absolved themselves of any responsibility and had no empathy for those in grief," said Mr. Kingston. "Even with the ECJ Judgment there was no contrition, yet further prevaricating and covering up."

The South - West View



The Chief Executive of the South and West Fish Producers' Organisation, Patrick Murphy, is "delighted to hear the language the Minister used" when meeting fishing industry representatives and "genuinely hopes" the Minister will follow through on his promises.

Meeting the Minister

On July 22nd, Ireland's representatives of our Irish fishing industry were invited by the recently appointed Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Dara Calleary T.D to meet him in person in Government Buildings in Dublin.

We were given the opportunity to present our immediate concerns - the current and looming disaster the fishing Industry is facing in the next few short months.

Primarily the top item of our combined agenda was the ongoing EU/UK negotiations on both access and Quota share following the UK's full withdrawal from the CFP.

Secondly, the challenges we all are facing arising from the Covid-19 crisis.

Thirdly, the Programme for Government.

The four Fishermen's Producer Organisations (Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation; Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation; Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation; Irish Fish Producers' Organisation) who are working together in these unprecedented times put forward

an agenda agreeing to limit the amount of topics and so to impress the seriousness of what the industry is negotiating at present.

Also attending the meeting were the National Inshore Fisherman's Forum and the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association who echoed the serious challenges all in our industry are facing at present.

The serious long-term issues that Ireland's coastal communities would face in the event that the UK's demands for a greater share of fish stocks and restricted access to UK fishing grounds were granted were articulated by Sean O Donoghue (KFO).

Minister Calleary gave his assurances he would be pressing for a fisheries agreement with the UK that upholds both existing quota shares and existing reciprocal access to UK waters and also continue to press for the maintenance of the linkage of fisheries

to the overall economic partnership agreement.

In response to myself raising the current challenges facing the sector arising from the Covid 19 crippling effect on Markets and our request to seek assistance to re-boot the Market, Minister Calleary told all present it is the Government's clear intention to provide supports that help to re-vitalise all areas in the economy including the seafood sector to devise measures to support jobs and communities over the coming period.

I for one am delighted to hear the language the Minister used in our meeting and genuinely hope this Minister will follow through on his promises.

There is no doubt to the reader of the Programme for Government it has huge ambitions in their plans for building a sustainable fishing sector, but I fear we will not have much of a sector if it does not get the immediate intervention it so desperately requires.

To emphasise the severity I advised our new Minister that, like a determined boxer the courageous hard-working people of our Industry have been knocked to the canvass - once after months of bad weather - for a second time from the blow of Covid 19 that we are struggling to stay on our fleet and we could not survive another blow from a bad deal from our UK and EU negotiators.



Marine Minister "Wants to See the Project Proceed"

There is "much discussion under way" between the Department of the Marine and the contractor for the development of Dinish Island Pier in Castletownbere fishing port.

That was what Marine Minister Dara Calleary said in the Dáil when questioned about whether the project was going to proceed.

"It is a significant improvement but there are fears about the works, including that they may have been paused and that the contractor has not been seen on the site in a while," said Cork South/West Fianna Fail, government party, T.D., Christopher O'Sullivan.

He questioned Marine Minister, Dara Calleary, in the Dáil, seeking to know "whether the extension will proceed?"

"An extension is underway at the Dinish wharf to allow for larger hauls of fish and so on. It will be a significant improvement but there are fears about the works, including that they may have been paused and that the contractor has not been seen on the site in a while, from what information I have," said Deputy O'Sullivan. "Will the Minister clarify that? There are smaller contractors there who are concerned that the works have been stopped. They are worried about the future and whether they will have a position when that pier is extended. The most urgent question is whether the extension will proceed."

Minister Calleary replied: "My Department is engaging with the company and much discussion is under way. I am anxious

to see the project proceed. Marine is very much part of my brief and I look forward to engaging with the Deputy's community about marine issues."

The Department of the Marine announced in August 2018 that L&M Keating had been appointed for what it described as "the €23.5m. investment for a major quay extension in Castletownbere."

The Department issued a statement which said: "In addition to doubling of the Dinish Island facility through the provision of 216 metres of extra landing berth, the project will deliver approximately 2.2 acres of highly usable reclaimed quay storage area, two new major breakwater structures at the entrance to the harbour, the dredging of the navigation channel to -6.5mCD and the dredging of a berthing pocket to -8.5mCD to further facilitate landings by vessels up to 100m length overall (LOA).

"The project will double the workable quay space on Dinish Island in Castletownbere and will enable significant expansion in fish landings, on shore processing and general marine activity at this major port," said former Marine Minister Michael Creed when the contract was signed.

At that stage the project was described as entering "an 18-month construction phase."

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Union Hall Pier Safety Developments Causing Anger

Cork County Council's decision to erect a barrier at the entrance to Union Hall Pier in West Cork is being opposed in the village.

The dispute was discussed in the Dáil when Fianna Fáil Deputy Deputy Christy O'Sullivan accused the Council of "shoe-horning the installation of a barrier against access onto the pier which will prove disastrous for residents and for most of the pier users. The pier mainly facilitates the fishing community, is used by the RNLI and also facilitates many leisure users, including the local rowing club. There is huge opposition to the installation of this barrier," he said. "There are alternatives."

The County Council got a grant for improvement works at the pier.

Marine Minister Dara Calleary responded to Deputy O'Sullivan that "installation of the pier barrier is a safety measure to highlight to the public they are entering a working pier." He said that the matter was one for the Council and his Department had no role in it.

Deputy O'Sullivan responded: "if this barrier is installed it will create an even bigger health and safety nightmare. I am asking the Minister to reach out to the local authority. I am aware that it is the local authority's remit, but the funding for this barrier is under the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Minister's Department. I ask that the Minister would ask the local authority at least to pause the installation of the barrier until residents and all stakeholders have been liaised with."

Minister Calleary said that "in the Council's view, there is currently no means of controlling access. I do know, however, from the Deputy's contact, that alternative proposals have been laid and I will certainly inquire from Cork County Council as to why it is not possible to proceed with those alternatives," the Minister said.

Further developments are awaited.

Arrested German Fishing Boat Turns Out to Be Spanish Owned

By the end of last month the Naval Service had detained seven vessels for alleged breaches of fishing regulations.

The seventh, detained on July 16, 250 nautical miles north-west of Malin Head was German-registered.

The photo from the Naval Service shows the challenging conditions in which a Naval Service boarding party has to get onto a trawler in difficult sea conditions.

However, it was later learned that the 29-metre Pesorsa Dos, a Spanish-owned gill-netter operating out of La Coruna, which had been the subject of complaints by Scottish skippers

over an incident in the previous month with a Scottish vessel, Alison Kay, 30 miles west of the Shetland Islands.

Video footage showed the incident on June 11 which the British Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) was urged to investigate. Scottish skippers claimed it to be the latest in a series of such confrontations over fishing grounds.

The MCA said it had no jurisdiction to investigate it as it was outside the 12-mile jurisdictional limit in which it could take action against foreign-flagged vessels.

Orkney and Shetland MP Alistair Carmichael publicly highlighted the Irish

detention of the vessel. "The fact that Irish authorities were able to detain the Pesorsa Dos entirely undermines the argument of the UK and German authorities that there was nothing to be done about what the incident."



"It is yet another reminder that local fishermen should not have to wait until next year for us to have proper enforcement of basic norms of safety at sea. We can and should be getting this sorted now," Mr. Carmichael said.

He wrote to the MCA stating that "the actions of Spanish fishermen have caused a great deal of anger and frustration for trawlermen in my constituency and across the north of Scotland in recent years due to both aggressive acts and the wider use of gill-nets which can cover large areas and thus prevent other fishermen from working in those areas".

A detention order for the vessel was granted at Carrick-on-Shannon District Court in Co Leitrim, pending action over the alleged fisheries offences.

The arrest of the vessel by the Irish Naval Service was not in connection with the incident reported in Scottish waters.

Leading Irish Offshore Wind Developer, Simply Blue Energy, Seeks Opportunities for Co-Existence with the Fishing Industry

Simply Blue Energy, a leading Irish early stage developer of transformative and sustainable marine projects, are taking the first steps in commencing the proposed Emerald project, a floating offshore wind farm that will harness the enormous wind potential of the Celtic Sea. An application has been made to the Irish Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage for a license to carry out initial site investigation works in the vicinity of the Kinsale gas field, which is currently being decommissioned. The objective of the site investigation survey is to inform on options for the layout of the wind farm.

This investigative Foreshore Licence application seeks permission to conduct surveys to establish the potential for offshore wind development off the Cork coast. This is not an application for a windfarm development. If the proposed survey work, together with desktop studies and stakeholder engagement, indicates the feasibility of bringing a project to the next step, that step will need to be progressed in accordance with the national marine planning framework and relevant legislation in due course.

This application focuses on investigating a location situated off the southern coast of County Cork, including a portion of Cork Harbour, and extending out to the 12 nautical mile limit legislated for by the current Foreshore Act which does not provide for marine licences beyond that distance. The objective of the proposed site investigation works is to determine detailed site conditions including seafloor geology using, among others, multibeam echosounder (MBES), side-scan sonar (SSS) and magnetometer survey works, while also analysing metocean conditions and environmental characteristics.

The focus of the survey is to investigate options for bringing cables ashore, for a wind farm that is envisioned circa 35km to 60km from the Cork coast. This distance from shore reduces the potential for visual impact. Furthermore, the project envisions the transformation of the maritime landscape in the area of the Kinsale gas platform into a zone for the production of clean, renewable offshore wind energy, in support of Ireland's need to decarbonise the economy and ensure security of energy supply.

The project is intended to be delivered as a staged development starting with a pre-commercial array of approximately 100MW and building to an overall capacity of 1GW upon final completion. This "stepping-stone" approach is designed to encourage the growth of the local supply chain, bringing as many jobs to the local area as possible, while building the infrastructure necessary to deliver a project of this scale in a manner that will benefit the community, local stakeholders and the country.

According to Sam Roch-Perks, Managing Director of Simply Blue Energy

Ltd. "With a sea area 10 times that of our land mass, we have a chance to catch and become a leader in offshore wind energy production both in Europe and globally, allowing us to become the "Green Gulf" of renewable energy. As an Irish company Simply Blue Energy is committed to listening to the voice of coastal communities, welcoming engagement and supporting stepping-stone developments, to



allow local supply chains flourish and to create skilled jobs. This includes working with the fishing industry to understand implications for existing marine users, and to identify opportunities for co-existence, where possible."

Floating offshore wind technology allows wind turbines to be deployed in much deeper waters (greater than 60m) than fixed bottom alternatives freeing them to be situated in otherwise unviable areas off the south and west coasts and enabling them to be placed further off shore, thereby reducing visual impacts. The Emerald project will deploy Principle Power's WindFloat® technology in water depths of around 85 to 90m.

The Irish Government's Climate Action Plan published in 2019 set a target capacity of at least 3.5 GW for offshore wind energy production by 2030 and the new Programme for Government intends to raise this target to 5 GW by 2030. An ambitious 7% per annum reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions has also been targeted, raising the importance of renewable energy production projects such as this. Dr. Val Cummins, who will be leading the Ireland team on behalf of Simply Blue Energy, said: "With the new Programme for Government here in Ireland, offshore wind energy production and cuts in greenhouse gas emissions have been given renewed focus. Innovative and ambitious offshore wind energy projects such as this are vital to help us meet our goals and ensure our children benefit from a sustainable future."

Emerald envisions the transformation of the maritime landscape from fossil fuel production to a clean renewable energy source. The proposal will allow Ireland to reduce its dependence on foreign fossil fuel imports while helping in the creation of a clean, sustainable future for generations to come.

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Shocking Catch in the Celtic Sea - 200 Volt Marbled Electric Ray

Report by Declan Quigley



James Tate from the MFV Tilly with his Marbled Electric Ray

During the first week of July 2020, the MFV Tilly (WD3) [Kilmore Quay, Co Wexford] captured a Marbled Electric Ray (*Torpedo marmorata*) while beam trawling at a depth of 120 m in the Celtic Sea (North West Bank), off SW England.

The adult-size female, which measured 55 cm TL and weighed 4.0 kg, was retrieved by James Tate (Dunmore East, Co Waterford). This unusual specimen, which represents the westernmost record of *T. marmorata* from NW European waters, was donated to the Natural History Museum in Dublin.

The Marbled Electric Ray is common in the Mediterranean Sea and along the European Atlantic coast as far north as the Western English Channel, including the Channel Islands. Although occasional vagrants have been recorded from the North Sea as far north as the Kattegat (Denmark) and the Shetlands (Scotland), the species has not been recorded from Irish waters to date.

However, since the current specimen was captured only 50 km south of Irish territorial waters, there is every likelihood that the

species may also occur off the south coast of Ireland.



Although the Marbled Electric Ray is relatively small, attaining a maximum length and weight of 100 cm and 6.3 kg respectively, it can deliver a potentially fatal electric shock of up to 200 volts at 8 amps, so live specimens should be handled with extreme care.

Apart from its distinctive brown colouration, the Marbled Electric Ray is distinguished from the Common Atlantic Electric Ray (*Tetronarce nobiliana*) by the presence of tentacles around the margin of the spiracles, situated behind the eyes.

Declan is interested in receiving reports about any

Marbled Electric Rays captured in Irish waters (Mobile: 087-6458485; Email: declanquigley@eircom.net).

news from Castletownbere

Helen Riddell

Louis Dillon RIP

Louis Dillon, a well known and popular Castletownbere based fisherman and author, passed away in Bantry Hospital on July 1st. Originally from Cobh, Louis started fishing aged just 14 during his summer holidays before going on to study journalism and graduating from the School of Journalism Rathmines, Dublin in 1970.

Louis came from a strong maritime background, his grandfather was a master mariner and the last man to command a vessel leaving Cobh under sail and over the years his work would combine his two loves, fishing and writing. As a journalist wrote for the News of the World and worked as a court reporter for the Irish Press as well as contributing to a number of local publications. In the late 1970s Louis returned to fishing and worked on deepwater vessels fishing out of the Faroe Islands, Iceland and Newfoundland.

Louis later returned to Ireland in the 1980s and settled in Kerry with his wife where they reared their family. Louis worked for a time on a pilot salmon farm in Caherdaniel before returning to sea, working as a skipper on a number of Irish vessels.

Louis and his family went onto move to Castletownbere, where during his retirement he published a collection of short stories, Tales of Beara and Iveragh giving an insight into a period of change in rural Ireland as modernisation crept into the Irish countryside and how it's people embraced it with humour. In 2018 he published a historic novel, The Saga of Fiach.

In accordance with Government guidelines, Louis's funeral service in Castletownbere was private, however, as the cortege made its way through Castletownbere for his final journey along the town's main pier, his friends and fellow fishermen lined the route to pay their final respects.

Louis was pre-deceased by his wife Vera. The Marine Times offers sincere sympathy to his children Róisín, Fiach and Sadhbh, his grandchildren Tadhg, Aoibheann and Meara and his siblings Amelia, Ann Marie and Robert.

Dursey Cable Car

Due to Government restrictions on social distancing there is currently a maximum of 4 people permitted to travel on the cable car, unless those travelling are all in the one

family in which case there is a maximum of 6 permitted to travel. As the cable car is a form of public transport, the wearing of facemasks is mandatory. Cork County Council, who operate the cable car will not be providing face masks and members of the public will need to provide their own. There is no booking service available for the cable car, those intending to travel are advised to turn up and wait. The cost for travel on the cable car is €10 per adult and €5 per child. For further details contact 027 73852.

Drive in Bingo

A new fundraising drive-in-bingo initiative by the Castletownbere Development Association has proved to be a huge success. The event takes place fortnightly at the West End of the Pier, Castletownbere. Those attending are asked to follow all Covid-19 Government guidelines. Bingo proceeds go towards the Castletownbere Development Association's Capital Projects Fund. For dates of the next event see the group's Facebook page.

Ger Kelly Memorial Walk

The annual Ger Kelly fundraising memorial walk which takes place in Allihies in August will not go ahead this year due to Covid-19 restrictions. However, those who wish to remember Ger by donating to the Mercy Cancer Appeal can do so by taking part in their own walk wherever they

may be in the world on Sunday August 9th. Donations can be made to the appeal at www.idonate.ie/CatherineKelly

Castletownbere Coast Guard

The Castletownbere Coast Guard team undertook a cliff training exercise in Allihies in the past week, wearing face masks in addition to their usual PPE. Whilst the team weren't permitted to assemble for training during lockdown they were fully operational for all taskings and answered to three callouts during that time.

A Doctor's War Podcast

A BBC podcast series, Legacy of War will feature the story of Dr Aidan MacCarthy Castletownbere on episode 8 of the series. Presented by Sean Bean the series explores the ways in which wartime experiences have filtered down through the generations. Dr Aidan MacCarthy served as an RAF doctor in World War Two offering medical support to the sick and dying from Dunkirk to the Far East and was himself imprisoned in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. For details to listen to the podcast see www.bbc.co.uk

Fundraiser

A cheque for €1,000 has been presented to the Bantry Hospice Project by the Wild Atlantic Bar, Adrigole from money raised during a pool tournament. The tournament was sponsored by Chief Building Services.



Finnán Browne, son of Martin Browne (owner and skipper of MFV Paulona) working on deck. Photo courtesy Marie Browne



THE VIRTUAL ISLAND SUMMIT

September 7-13th 2020

For more information: www.virtualislandsummit.com

Why Do Some Fish Migrate to Sea and Others Do Not?

UCC Research Shows Climate Change Impact

Researchers at University College, Cork, have found that increased water temperatures and reduced food supply strongly affect where trout decide to live – with more trout opting to stay in rivers as things heat up. This could seriously decrease the sea trout population as the climate continues to change, according to the research findings.

Little is known about why some fish migrate to sea and others do not - some brown trout make the decision to leave the river where they are born and head to the sea in search of more food, or mates, or to get away from unpleasant river conditions - conditions which will be made much worse by climate change.

Researchers from UCC asked the question - how changes in water temperature and the amount of available food (both affected by climate change) influence the migration of brown trout. By rearing young of wild trout for two years under conditions of reduced food and increased temperature and then recording the numbers of future sea-going migrants, the team found that food reduction increased the numbers of migrating fish, but warm temperatures had the opposite effect, where fewer fish chose to migrate to sea, instead remaining resident in fresh water.

Lead author on the study, Louise Archer of the Environmental Research Institute in UCC, said: "Brown trout are iconic for their ability to undertake impressive migrations to sea, yet we still know little about why some fish choose to migrate, and why oth-

ers remain resident in fresh water rivers and lakes. What makes a sea trout has been an ongoing source of interest for biologists."

With conflicting pressures mounting, trout will become under increased pressure to make complex decisions about whether they should migrate. The study noticed that fish choosing migration were smaller and in poorer condition than fish that remained in fresh water, indicating sea migration occurred when the fish urgently needed to consume more food. But how will they balance this with the urge to remain in the ever warmer rivers?

"Understanding how climate change will affect migratory "sea trout" is crucial to successful management and conservation of the species," notes Archer, "particularly since many sea trout populations have shown dramatic declines across Europe in recent years. Our study sheds some light on this enduring question by highlighting how warming temperatures cause fewer fish to migrate to sea, with more fish remaining in fresh water to reproduce earlier. Worryingly, our research suggests that with climate warming, we may see further declines in sea-going trout."

Lack of Sales Notes Leaves Some Fishermen Ineligible for Tie Up Scheme

The COVID-19 Tie-up Scheme which is intended to assist fishermen to voluntarily opt to tie up for one or two of the three months from 1st June to 31st August has been described by fishermen as an abject failure on almost every level.

According to figures released by BIM, who launched the temporary voluntary fleet tie-up, uptake on the scheme has been low, only 104 applications were received for the month of June. Out of those applications only 65 of the applicants were ultimately successful due to the strict criteria being sought from vessel owners for eligibility to the scheme.

A number of the scheme's unsuccessful applicants has their applications rejected due to their buyers failing to submit sales notes to the SFPA (Sea Fisheries Protection Authority) for them. To qualify for the scheme, sales notes are required to demonstrate a minimum of €5000 in financial activity by their vessel in the calendar year 2019, by reference to the Irish Sales Note System, administered by the SFPA.

And some of those whose applications were rejected claim that they have declared well over the required €5000 in financial activity to revenue, but because no sales notes were apparently submitted by their buyers to the SFPA they have no official track record for landings.

In regard to the unsuccessful applicants for the June period due to insufficient SFPA registered sales notes. BIM said, "In such cases BIM advises applicants to check/ confirm with their buyers that their registered sales notes are fully up to date on the SFPA sales notes system."

But surely the onus of a current and accurate sales note system must be up to the SFPA and the buyers. Questions are now being asked as to why the SFPA are not rigorously enforcing the sales notes regime which has been in operation since 2007.

Furthermore, the lack of sales notes has grossly undervalued the inshore sector's contribution economically, and in terms of overall landings. It also unbalances the scientific advice because those landing figures are what's used for stock assessments etc.

The tie up scheme has also failed numerous fishermen in that applications to the scheme can only be completed online, this has caused immense difficulties for some that don't have a great level of digital literacy, and for others who have no access to email at all.

A Spokesperson for National Inshore

Fishermen's Association's (NIFA) and its sister group the National Inshore Fishermen's Organisation (NIFO) told Marine Times, "A number of our members informed us that their applications were rejected on the basis that there weren't sales notes submitted to demonstrate a minimum financial activity of €5000. This is despite the fact that they had declared income in excess of this, to the Revenue Commissioners when making their income tax returns.

"A failing has been highlighted here with the sales notes regime, something we have had suspicions on for some time now. Members had previously reported various anomalies regarding harbour dues, where fees were based on landings from sales notes data.

"Also, in some fisheries where data from under 10m vessels is important, like the lobster fishery for example, national landing figures seem low. Official landing figures say Ireland has landings of about 400 tons of lobster per annum. At an average market price of €15/kg this means the first sale value of our lobster fishery is just around €6 million, it's a figure that seems low given the effort in and the importance of this fishery.

"The legislation behind sales notes has been in place since 2007 so it's hard to excuse the level of noncompliance that apparently exists. Ultimately, it's the inshore fishing sector once again that suffers due to the failings of the state on this issue. Inaccurately low landing figures, feed poor data into the scientific advice that is required to manage our inshore fisheries but also means these fisheries are grossly undervalued in terms of the economic contribution they make to coastal communities. This undervaluing has no doubt led to poor policy decisions being made in the past and is likely to continue to do so, until this issue is rectified.

"Only being able to submit applications on line has also created difficulties for people. A lack of digital proficiency in the sector and the problems it is causing is something we highlighted in our work on the Inshore Strategy Implementation group. We recommended a number of actions be taken to address this issue area last year, but to date there is no indication from BIM, who are responsible for the strategies implantation, that they are going to actually do something."

There Could Be Chaos at Sea



Sean O'Donoghue, Chief Executive of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, warns that there will be huge job and financial losses if there is no access to UK waters after January 1 in the event of a 'No Brexit' deal.

The BREXIT negotiations have now passed the point of extending the transition period and will drag on over the remaining months with the possibility of a "No-Deal BREXIT" becoming more and more likely. The crucial points of having a level playing field regarding standards and regulations, fisheries and governance continue to keep both parties apart and, in particular, the UK remains obdurate that there will not be a link between a fisheries agreement and a trade agreement.

A failure to reach an agreement would have disastrous consequences for Ireland which relies heavily on its trade relationship with the UK and would be completely devastating for our fishing industry. We are very dependent on access to UK waters for our most valuable species such as mackerel and prawns and there is a very real danger of serious conflict at sea if we are prevented from entering traditional fishing grounds.

We are heartened by the continued support of the government and all our politicians in their support of our demand for a link between fisheries and the overall trade deal.

Underlying all our problems with BREXIT we have the on-going problems created by COVID-19. This pandemic has completely undermined our society structures and the way we go about our daily lives.

The Irish producer organisations are of one voice regarding keeping our core fishing industry alive and, if not prosperous, surviving until we turn the corner with COVID-19. This industry is of huge importance in many coastal communities where opportunities are limited and "working from home" is not an option.

We were disappointed when our combined proposals submitted to Minister Creed resulted only in the Tie-Up Scheme which, by now, has been shown to be a non-starter.

We hope the new government will give the Irish fishing industry the consideration and recognition it deserves as a major exporter of Irish produce and a

very significant economic driver in our coastal communities. There are a number of problems besetting the industry which have been included in the Programme for Government.

If it transpires that on the first of January next year that we have a 'no deal' Brexit then there will be chaos at sea.

It won't be just along the Irish line as such, there will be the lines of the English Channel and the North Sea and fishermen will be at loggerheads with each other and that will be involving control agencies and Navies.

This will be an unmitigated disaster.

We are very much dependent on the pelagic species, mackerel and horse mackerel, blue whiting, herring in Killybegs.

If we lose access on the first of January all our factories here in Killybegs would be affected and our vessels would be tied up or they would be catching mackerel of a low quality and for a low price and it would be uneconomic.

So if this was to drag one for one or two years I could see the Irish industry, not alone the industry here in Killybegs, dropping by 40 to 50 per cent from €1.2 billion down to six or seven hundred million and a loss of four to five thousand jobs.

That is what could be happening right around the coast out of the 16,000 jobs that are there at the moment.

• *Writing in the KFO Newsletter and recent interviews.*



Peadar Elaine II at Mooney Boats.

Your Community. Your Industry.
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Donegal Trawler Told to Leave Fishing Area by British Navy

Apart from a statement that it was investigating the incident, the Department of Foreign Affairs had not, at the time of this edition of the Marine Times going to press issued any further statement about the incident in which the Greencastle based trawler, 'Marliona', was confronted by a British Navy vessel and ordered away from a fishing area off the Donegal coast.



The Marliona which is based in the Inishowen port of Greencastle was fishing off Tory Island when it was confronted by HMS Lancaster.

According to the Royal Navy the Portsmouth-based Type 23 frigate HMS Lancaster was on a training exercise with a submarine 60 miles off the Irish coast when it made the call to the Marliona.

The Royal Navy insisted that exchanges between the two vessels were 'courteous' and that Lancaster's presence in the waters and actions were 'lawful'.

Sinn Féin accused the British warship of "endangering" the Irish vessel and said the action was arrogant, outrageous and a disregard for Irish sovereignty.

According to reports the Air Corps maritime patrol aircraft was sent to the scene and the Naval Service was alerted to it.

A Royal Navy spokesman said: "Courteous and professional exchanges between the fishing vessel and frigate operating within the designated exercise area enabled this lawful exercise to continue and conclude safely. The safety of all mariners is taken

extremely seriously by the Royal Navy. At no time was there a risk to safety to either the fishing vessel or submarine.

"The frigate operated throughout in accordance with the UN Convention of the Law of Sea and with due regard for other vessels operating in the area. HMS Lancaster had issued a warning to mariners over VHF radio about the presence of a submarine."

The incident with the Marliona occurred as the result of an investigation into an incident two years ago involving a ferry and a submarine off the Northern Ireland coast was released.

That investigation revealed how a ferry crossing between Scotland and Northern Ireland had to dodge a nuclear submarine to avoid a collision. There was no collision during the incident, on November 6, 2018. However, it was the third accident or incident between a diver Royal Navy submarine and a surface vessel in four years.

The report recommended that an 'independent review' should be undertaken by the Royal Navy to ensure future near-misses are avoided.

High Court Quashes Razor Dredging in Waterford Estuary

The environmental organisation, Coastwatch has welcomed a High Court decision closing the Waterford estuary to razor shell dredging without environmental assessment.

Coastwatch Director Karin Dubksy said the ruling "has implications for fishing activity on marine sites which are designated as Natura 2000 locations"

The High Court ruling quashed permis-

sion already given for dredging for razor shells in the Waterford estuary. The Court decided that permission was given without screening or appropriate assessment under the EU Habitats.

Ireland to Connect With 10,000 Islanders Across the Globe with Virtual Summit Next Month

By Marine Times Reporter

Dr. Noírin Burke chuckles to herself when I suggest that, as she comes from a land-locked county, is it not "a bit unusual" that she should be Director of Education at the National Aquarium of Ireland in Salthill, Galway.

"I suppose it is really. I grew up on a farm where my father was very Nature-conscious and my parents were very aware of the importance of understanding Nature widely. Then there were the exciting family trips to visit the beach at Tramore in County Waterford. My memories are very powerful of when we'd come up over the hills and see down to the sea. Then when I went to college doing ecology the projects I worked on brought me down the marine road and led me to where I am now."

Noírin completed her PhD in the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, where she researched Herring Stocks in the waters around Ireland. She joined the education team in Galway Atlantaquaria in 2008, working in formal and informal education, outreach, ocean literacy and stakeholder engagement. She is part of the current secretariat of the Irish Ocean Literacy Network and has been a member of the board of Directors of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group for over 6 years.

The Aquarium has a wide-ranging education programme and its owner, Liam Twomey, is very open, she says, to working with other organisations and collaborating with groups to widen understanding of the maritime sector.

"As someone who has grown up on an island, as Ireland is, I didn't really become aware of what that meant until I was much older."

She is now involved in preparing a project to connect Ireland with an estimated 10,000 other islanders around the world next month through the Virtual Island Summit. This seeks to build digital bridges between island communities around the world, regardless of size, political status, or

location. It is run by Island Innovation, an international social enterprise, supported by 140 Virtual Island Summit Ambassadors across the globe.

"The Ambassadors serve as bridges between their communities, connecting distant islands to ignite conversations about their complex and evolving issues," according to Founder and entrepreneur James Ellsmoor. "This allows for global exchange in expertise without geographic limitation and looks for opportunities to collaborate with each other."

"I am fascinated to learn how we can connect with Islanders all over the world, celebrate our Island connections and work together to create sustainable islands for the future," Noírin tells me, as one of two Irish Ambassadors for the summit which will be held online from September 7-13.

With her is Trish Hegarty from Donegal, a former BBC and Irish Times journalist who was the first woman President of the Union of Students in Ireland. In 2004, she set up Inis Communications, a Public Relations, social media and online content agency which has worked on a range of marine, tourism and regional economy projects.

"We are an island nation set on the edge of Europe, with over a dozen populated offshore islands," she says. "We need to constantly act positively and innovatively to limit the effects of this peripherality. This summit gives offshore islanders the chance to connect with other islanders across the globe and share lessons in island innovation."

Further information contact: Noírin Burke Email: Noírin@nationalaquarium.ie or Trish Hegarty, Email: trish@iniscommunications.com

Aquaculture Shows 'High Level of Compliance' with Fish Health Controls in Ireland

Irish aquaculture businesses have 'a high level of compliance with statutory requirements,' according to the Marine Institute's fish health inspection.

IFA Aquaculture has welcomed the Institute's fish health inspection and monitoring activities for 2018 and 2019. It says that Irish aquaculture businesses have 'a high level of compliance with statutory requirements in the EU Fish Health Directive and associated national legislation'. Ireland continues to maintain its high health status for aquatic animals, with 98% of the 384 aquaculture sites inspected having 'no compliance issues' or compliance issues considered 'minor'.

IFA Aquaculture Chairman Michael Mulloy said, "Aquatic animal health regulations apply to all Irish aquaculture operators, finfish farms, shellfish farms and put-and- take fisheries. The regulations require these businesses to obtain a Fish Health Authorisation from the Marine Institute. It's of great credit to Irish aquaculture

producers that there is such a high level of compliance with these obligations acknowledged by the competent authority".

The report is the first published record of activities related to aquatic animal health.

It summarises the activities undertaken by the Fish Health Unit (FHU) of the Marine Institute (MI) in 2018 and 2019.

"The aquaculture industry hopes to build a greater understanding of the issues relating to aquatic animal health in Ireland to increase engagement with all stakeholders," says the IFA.

A full copy of the report is available on the Marine Institute website: <https://oar.marine.ie/handle/10793/1597>

See also the IFA Aquaculture Column by Teresa Morrissey on page 19

THIS ISLAND NATION RADIO MARITIME RADIO FOR MARITIME IRELAND

Supported by the MARINE TIMES, the programme about Ireland's maritime culture, history, tradition and development



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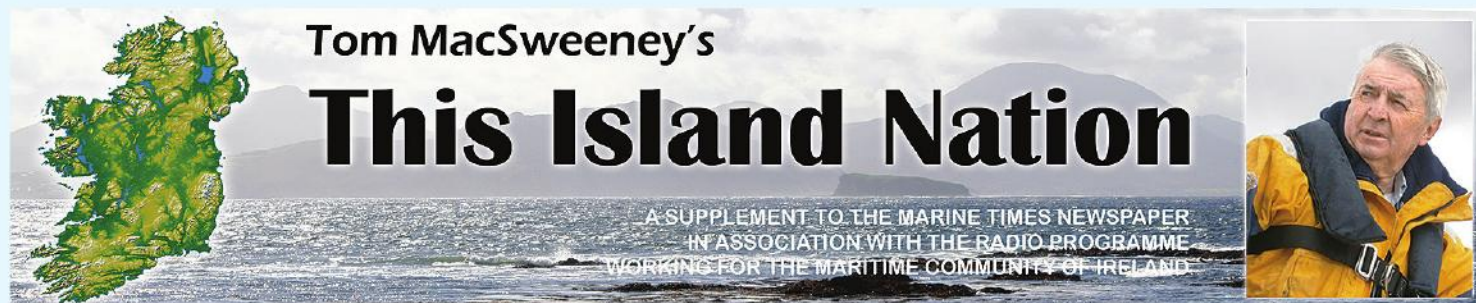
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You can also hear the Podcast of the current programme and archived past editions on the Marine Times website www.marinetimes.ie

I'm always interested to hear your stories, comments.

Email: thisislandnation@gmail.com



Tom MacSweeney's

This Island Nation

A SUPPLEMENT TO THE MARINE TIMES NEWSPAPER
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE RADIO PROGRAMME
WORKING FOR THE MARITIME COMMUNITY OF IRELAND

A Marine Scribe's Diary

About the culture, history, tradition and developments in MARITIME IRELAND

It is always nice to be noted, though sometimes where that happens can be surprising.

Indeed, I was surprised to hear my name used during the Dáil debate on the nomination of Micheál Martin for Taoiseach.

Watching the live transmission on RTE Television, I shot "bolt upright" as the saying goes when Tipperary T.D. Michael Lowry wished him well, by referring to me as a fellow Corkman like the Taoiseach and quoting my well-used broadcast words "Fair Sailing" as a wish for the incumbent's progress in office.

Wow, I wondered why did a Deputy from a landlocked county?

Has that done the Taoiseach any good, you might ask?

Out of courtesy I wrote to Deputy Lowry to thank him and express my wonderment about being mentioned. There hasn't been a reply, but other comments have come my way, such as: "You're part of history now..." and "at least the marine got one mention..."

There have been other comments, expressing appreciation about our work on this paper to keep the fishing sector and the marine sphere in the public mind: "This is Irish men and women who brave the elements to earn a living, a tough job whatever the weather. You are a great voice for our Industry a champion for the Marine, please never stop. With the next storm 'Brexit' we need the people of Ireland to understand

that losing our Fishing Industry, even one boat is too much..." "...Unfortunately over the past forty years the various Government Departments have turned their backs on every aspect of the marine industry..." "...The fishing community need to come together, or is it in them to join forces and do so? They are too fragmented."

I am in agreement with that latter point. The industry does need to come together. It needs a single voice and that is difficult to achieve. It is one of the points I have made for many years but, as I was told by one older fisherman many, many years ago and warned to remember and I have – "fishermen are still the hunters and that is a lonely way..."

Minister and Tipperary Piers

Harking back to Tipperary ...During a debate in the Dáil about piers in West Cork (which you can read more about elsewhere in the paper) Marine Minister Dara Calleary told FF TD Christopher O Sullivan from West Cork that he looked forward to "engaging with the Deputy's community about marine issues."

"Marine is very much part of my brief and I look forward to engaging," Minister Calleary said. That was presumed by Acting Ceann Comhairle Mattie McGrath to mean a Ministerial trip to West Cork, so he intervened: "The Minister might call at Tipperary when he is passing through," to which Mr.Calleary responded: "There are no marine piers in Tipperary" and Mattie shot back: "We will organise something."

A meeting around Lough Derg comes to mind. The lordly Shannon, our largest river, pours through Tipperary and there are a few piers along the way as far as I know. The inland waterways are pretty big, but as the marine is such a fractured area under government administration and has been for a long time – that's the way the civil service bureaucracy has sought to destroy the power of the marine sector – those waterways may not be under marine jurisdiction in our island nation!



Just what I've been saying about the national media and its attitude to fishing. Promoting its Ocean Week approach The Irish Examiner got a bit mixed up about Farming and Fishing... Or showed its view that Farming is more important than Fishing. Wrong Irish Examiner!

Turning Oyster Bags Is Tough Work

Many news stories, comments and opinions come across my desk each month. I was talking to Hugh O'Malley of Achill Oysters for our monthly interview which you can read in this edition, an impressive story of a man who changed his lifestyle.



Coincidentally, as happens in newspaper work, a story arrived from a public relations agency telling me that their client would turn oyster farming on its head. He had invented "a revolutionary device allowing for three times more oysters within the same area of seabed." That is some claim and achievement if it's possible.

Grzegorz Skawiński says it is in the product he has developed over three years - a rotating cage system. "Oyster sacks are placed one above the other, rather than traditional farming of side-by-side on trestles, saving space on the seabed and increasing production," he says. "And when the device rotates, it allows the oysters to move freely, aiding growth. Normally each oyster bag is turned by hand – five in a row on a trestle. My system allows 16 to be turned in one rotation. Because of the rotating system, back

pain is relieved, common in the industry."

I can appreciate that, having turned oyster bags on trestles in Clew Bay on cold winter mornings for a family member then engaged in the business. It was tough work.

Grzegorz says he has been developing the project since 2017, after having worked in oyster farming in Co. Waterford for eight years. It is currently at prototype stage. He claims that it could enable farming in deeper waters and also "eliminate any pollution as rubber bands that hold bags in place on a trestle, are not required on the device."

It's patented in Ireland, along with patents expected in the UK and France.

THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

“Home to me is Achill Island. Our family has been living on Achill for five generations at least. We come from a long line of people who have made a living from the seas off Achill”



Five generations of O'Malley's have made a living from the sea in Achill. Following a successful career running his own technology firm, Hugh O'Malley is the latest to be doing so. He talks to Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney, about his company, Achill Oysters.

Hugh O'Malley has no doubts about where he comes from. That is Achill Island in County Mayo. “I, like any other Achill Island person, we see ourselves as being from Achill, even though we might have been born in England or we might have been educated in England or we worked all the way around the world. Home to me is Achill Island. Our family has been living on Achill for five generations at least. We come from a long line of people who have made a living from the seas off Achill.”

He describes how a British radio programme he heard while in university in Cardiff, about changes that would affect local fishing communities, first made him think about oyster farming on Achill.

“I grew up in a fishing community. My Dad was fishing for a time as I was growing up and when I was doing my degree, as a result of what I heard, I looked at what could be done in Achill and one of the things I looked at was indigenous industry and aquaculture

to me was the future. My career in high tech firms blossomed, but I always knew I wanted to be a fish farmer.”

He tells me that he “talked about that for a long time” and eventually decided that he had to do something about it. That decision took him to Castletownbere in West Cork where Bord Iascaigh Mhara was running courses. After three months he “realised that oyster farming was a far better option than cod farming” which he had been considering.

He got a licence, but life changes got in the way, he recounts - marriage, children, the need for a dependable income, moving to Clare to run a tech company, the disposal of which eventually provided funding for the oyster farming. Achill Oysters has won several awards for its produce.

“It was the bones of 17 years between deciding I was going to do it and putting the first trestle out and I have been seven years doing it now. It was a project that I thought was a good idea. It was always supposed to be a sideline, but it has turned into very much what I do, what my family does. It bounds everything about us and it's magnificent, brilliant, it's fantastic. Definitely a challenging job, particularly

when you leave a nice job in a comfortable office where there are no 4 a.m. starts and you're not battling a storm trying to tie bags back onto a trestle. I do question every so often why I made that leap.

“But it's very fulfilling. I'm down at home in Achill around my neighbours, my family, my Dad still very much works in the business with us and you are part of the community. It gives far more back than any of the challenges that are put in front of you.”

The challenges are many and varying, as many fish farmers have told me, encompassing financial, marketing, natural threats arising from toxins and phytoplanktons, so there is a lot to deal with. Amidst the challenges he quotes what is for him a guiding line - “Adversity is the mother of invention”.

“I thought I had done everything that needed to be done, I went to university, got my degrees, my Masters, I researched it and within six weeks of starting I realised that there was one thing I knew – and that was nothing. It is a business that has stretched and challenged me but it is fulfilling. I am very lucky in the community I work in. There are other farmers who have helped me and put their shoulder to me when I have wobbled. There are environmental issues, logistic issues that we have to deal with from where we are on the edge of Europe. We have to work very hard for what we get but we have the advantage of the latitude where we are and the waters we work in and we produce some of the best oysters in Europe. We work well as an industry.”

Hugh believes that Irish seafood is a huge benefit to the country, economically and for the creation of job opportunities, but must get more public understanding. He says that the pandemic which affected exports and foreign markets has generally created more public understanding of the importance of supporting Irish produce.

“It is very important that we get the message out to the public the importance of Irish seafood, the sustainability of our seafood industry, what aquaculture can do for local communities, the husbandry of the business. The aquaculture industry is a huge benefit for Ireland and that needs to be told to the public.

“This is all on our doorstep, it is our native produce.

“I first saw Achill Oysters as a hobby that would pay for itself. But as time goes on, I found myself drawn ever further into this way of life. Becoming gradually more familiar with both farmers and consumers, I saw a need to bring them closer together. Before I knew it, we'd moved from growing oysters, to packing oysters, to marketing oysters, to marketing other farmers' oysters, to marketing other species. The business has grown a life of its own and the consumer is leading the firm to a whole new industry.

“Our oysters take three-and-a-half years to reach market size, defined by how well they are tended to and the quality of their environment. We couldn't have a better location than Achill Island.”

Today, the farm is ten times the size of where it was envisaged and it has its own vehicles, a processing facility in Ennis and an expanding workforce, he says. “We're moving away from artisan oyster farming and working towards building a co-operative seafood business that connects Ireland's suppliers directly to customers, at home and worldwide. I decided to bring my technology experience into the oyster farm to create an e-commerce approach to deliver oysters to market and use global channels.”

As we conclude our chat, Hugh tells me that his family story with the sea and the oysters “continues to go on.”



Hugh and Aidan of Achill Oysters turning the oysters at low tide.

NEWSMAKERS of the Month



PLENTY OF FISH TO GO AROUND! 100KG WHOPPER: Cork Fishmonger Pat O'Connell had a huge catch to display at his renowned K O'Connell Fish Merchants seafood shop – a 100kg halibut caught off Donegal by a Castletownbere trawler. "Enough to supply 160 people with a 250gram portion each of tasty fish fillet," said Pat, pictured here kneeling in the front of the photo with fishmonger, Krzysztof Karasiewicz and butcher John Boyling at his stall in Cork's famous English Market. "It is rare enough to catch a halibut that size in Ireland, you would normally get that off the coast of Canada. It's a real thick fish that has a lot of oils, so it is very healthy and tasty, very good for you and lovely flavoured." Photo: Courtesy THE ECHO – Larry Cummins

IN THE WHIRLPOOL: The Corryvreckan Whirlpool is situated off the West Coast of Scotland between the islands of Jura and Scarba. It is the third largest permanent whirlpool on Earth and one of the most dangerous stretches of water around the British Isles. This photo was taken from a drone as the Safehaven Marine company put the first of their class 22m XSV20 demonstrator 'Thunder Child II' through the whirlpool on its long-range test run. A TransAtlantic crossing had to be postponed because of Covid 19, so this run was substituted. "We timed it with particular weather and tide conditions so that we would be able to experience the standing waves and whirlpools that it's famous for," Safehaven said. "The standing waves were amazing. We couldn't go ashore in Scotland due to the quarantine issues so stayed on the boat on a breakwater overnight and then went back to Corryvreckan under different tidal conditions and experienced the whirlpools one of which you can see in this photo. The boat performed really well so a good result overall. We still hope to do the TransAtlantic trip next summer if all goes well." Photo: Safehaven Marine



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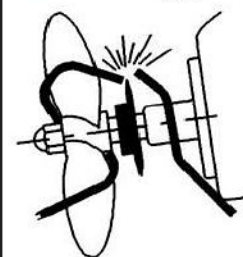


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Irish Aquaculture Must Be A Priority for New Minister



'Programme for Government' fails to recognise significant opportunity for Irish aquaculture says Teresa Morrissey, IFA Aquaculture Executive

In the past month we have had the approval of a new 'Programme for Government' by three political parties; the formation of a new Government partnership and the appointment of Ministerial positions in the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. While it was disappointing to see that neither the 'Super Junior' appointment of Pippa Hackett, Green Party or Junior Minister appointment of Martin Hayden, Fine Gael were given any responsibility in their new roles for Marine priorities, IFA Aquaculture would like to wish them well in their new roles and look forward to working with them.

IFA Aquaculture would also like to congratulate the newly appointed DAFM Minister, Dara Calleary and wish him well in his new brief, but would also like to highlight that there is need for urgent attention for Irish Aquaculture as part of his Marine brief.

The 'Programme for Government' fails to recognise the significant opportunity for Irish aquaculture in light of the increasing global demand for seafood, more sustainable food sources, and carbon-efficient food production. There is no clear recognition of the place Irish aquaculture has to pay in

relation to the 'EU Green Deal' and 'Farm to Fork Strategy', which can provide a real opportunity for the Irish aquaculture sector to position itself as part of the solution to these growing demands and the Covid-19 recovery plan.

While the commitment to implement ALL recommendations of the Independent Aquaculture Licensing Review is welcome, this must be matched by meaningful action and resources to achieve this. Taking immediate action to implement a functioning aquaculture licensing system must be a key priority for Minister Calleary.

The Irish Aquaculture sector needs the support of policy in order to achieve any realistic sustainable development and to unlock any future potential of the Irish aquaculture industry.

To this end, IFA Aquaculture welcomes the development a new integrated marine sustainable plan for the Marine sector (successor to Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth), which must have a cross-departmental approach and commitment from the Dept. of the Taoiseach is welcome, in particular the reference to a 'greater focus on stakeholder engagement. This must include the Irish Aquaculture sector as stakeholder with a significant contribution to make to sustainable marine development. However, such a Marine development plan must be meaningful, with realistic targets and accountability for the Departments involved.

Covid-19 Supports

The impact of the Covid-19 crisis continues to cause major concern to large parts of the Irish Aquaculture sector. The shellfish sector in particular continue to face market uncertainty with saleable stock now accumulating on many sites across the country. The Irish shellfish sector, many of whom are price-takers, are either heading for a distressed state now or will be if markets do not stabilise later in the year. In addition to loss of business, employment and potentially entire operations, there is the looming prospect of potential shellfish health issues - algal blooms, biotoxin and water quality issues, with potential consequences to the State if meaningful support is not offered to producers who need it.

IFA Aquaculture have continuously highlighted the short, medium and long-term effects on the Aquaculture industry to DAFM since the crisis started to take

hold back in March and we still await a meaningful response to our submissions and requests for State support. This must be an urgent priority for Minister Calleary to address the needs of the Irish shellfish sector and implement measures which allow for redirecting of available EMFF funds allowing for financial assistance to be granted to aquaculture farmers and processing enterprises.

July Stimulus

The Government announced its €7.4bn July Stimulus package with a number of measures aimed at kick-starting the economy. Some of the measures will aid the Aquaculture industry and incorporate some of the 'asks' we have lobbied for in numerous IFA submissions since March.

Some of the points to note in relation to Aquaculture include; Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme has been extended until April 2021 and eligibility criteria widened to include seasonal workers and new employees; Pandemic Unemployment Payment (PUP) has also been extended until April 2021; additional waiver of commercial rates until the end of September 2020 and a reduction in the standard rate of VAT from 23% to 21%. Aquaculture, as a primary producer, has now been included in the eligibility for both the €2bn. Credit Guarantee Scheme and the Future Growth Loan Scheme, where previously Aquaculture had been excluded from these schemes.

IFA Aquaculture continues to lobby for Covid-19 support for Irish Aquaculture and would be hopeful of positive developments in the coming weeks.

- To sign up for IFA Aquaculture newsletter go to: www.ifa.ie/sign-up-for-ifa-updates/

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New Marine Minister Meets Fishing Industry Organisations

In his first week in office the Minister for the Marine, Dara Calleary, held what he described as a "detailed and informative meeting with fishing industry representatives."

He said that he made clear to the country's major fishing organisations that the government "has huge ambition for building a sustainable fishing sector."

"I set out this to them. It is included in the Programme for Government for building a sustainable fishing sector. The continued ambition for the development of a sustainable fisheries sector is a significant feature of the new Programme for Government. I look forward to working with the sector to delivering on that objective."

That was what Minister Dara Calleary said after the meeting with the country's four fishermen's producer organisations – the Irish South and East FPO, the IFPO, the Irish South and West FPO and the Killbegs Fishermen's Organisation. Also at the meeting were the National Inshore Fishermen's Forum and the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association.

The only public statement issued after the meeting came from the Department of the Marine to the media.

Following that meeting Minister Calleary also had a discussion with EU Fisheries

Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius about Ireland's fisheries priorities. This was by video link and focussed particularly on the Brexit negotiations.

Mr. Calleary said: "I emphasised the absolute necessity that fisheries not be negotiated in isolation from the other elements. We are facing very challenging negotiations on fisheries and are seeking that the EU leverage the wider EU/UK future relationship to secure the interests of the Irish and EU fishing sector."

The discussion also covered other fisheries priorities - the EU funding package for the seafood sector, COVID 19 related supports and negotiations on a new EU Control framework, according to a Department media release.

The Chief Executive of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation, Patrick Murphy, says in his monthly column in this edition of the MARINE TIMES (on page 9): "I for one am delighted to hear the language the Minister used in our meeting and genuinely hope this Minister will follow through on his promises."

Porcupine Bank Prawn Case Referred to European Court

Irish Supreme Court Decision in Favour of Fishermen Hailed as A 'Good Day for Fishing'

"This brings scrutiny to the policing of fishing in Ireland which is badly needed. It is a good day for fishermen."

That was the summary of solicitor Dermot Conway, a leading legal figure in the case, when the Supreme Court announced on the last day of July that it was referring the Porcupine Bank Dublin Bay Prawn fishery case to the European Court of Justice.

The Supreme Court, which had allowed an appeal against a High Court decision in favour of the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, had heard further legal submissions in February about the case which has been going on for several years.

These concerned aspects and information sought by the Court Judges in relation to making a decision about whether the case should be referred to the European Court of Justice.

A decision had been awaited since the last hearing of the case in February where two fishermen, Pat Fitzpatrick and Michael Flannery, have been agreed applicants in the case after the Irish fish producer organisations decided that legal action would have to be taken to determine the matters at issue. These centred on the interpretation

of the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority relating to its introduction of "time spent" methodology to assess catches made in the Porcupine when fishing. The SFPA had rejected Logbook returns which had previously been the determinant factor, raising challenges to the methodology introduced by the SFPA involving time spent at sea and catches made in the Porcupine Bank area, or allegedly in adjoining areas.

The dispute at the Porcupine Bank Dublin Bay Prawn fishery dates back to 2017 when the SFPA told the Minister for the Marine that they could no longer rely on Log Books to certify catches. The Authority maintained that considerably more catches had been made than recorded. As a result changes were made in their assessment of catches and reported returns by the SFPA. With resultant closure of the area, losses encountered by prawn boats were claimed to be up to €6m.

This was a substantial blow to the fishing vessels involved but the SFPA maintained that it was entitled to make the decision that it had, though the contrary point was

made by fishermen that this was different to other European countries and their interpretation of the EU requirements. This raised the issue of equality of treatment of Irish fishermen compared with those in other countries.

There were several legal and technical issues in the entire case.

When the High Court held with the SFPA and the advice which the Authority had given to the Minister, the fishing industry response was to seek a "leapfrog" from the judgement to a Supreme Court hearing of the issues.

The Supreme Court then decided to allow an appeal against the High Court decision in favour of the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority over the introduction of "time spent" methodology to assess catches made in the area when fishing and rejecting Logbook returns which had previously been accepted.

At the Supreme Court's request both sides in the case had made further submissions.

The appeal to the Supreme Court was lodged on behalf of the two Irish fishermen who lost the case they had taken against the Minister for Agriculture Food and Marine and the SFPA in the High Court. This claimed that the SFPA changes were an obscure system used by the SFPA to determine how much prawns any particular vessel had caught in a specific location. The fishermen challenge to the methodology used by the SFPA to assess the catches of prawns from the Porcupine Bank lost their case. In that High Court case, fishermen were accused of under-reporting, in their electronic fishing logs, the amount of prawns actually caught in Functional Unit Area 16. The SFPA said that this was a serious problem. After receiving advice from the SFPA that, accord-

ing to their new method of calculation, that section of the Porcupine Bank was being over-fished, then Minister Michael Creed issued a closure order in November 2017 to Area 16.

Fishermen maintained that this resulted in the loss of some six hundred tonnes of catch to Irish fishing vessels, estimated to be worth in excess of €6 million. The High Court found in favour of the State.

Subsequent to the loss of the case in the High Court the fishing industry's claim was that the SFPA and the Minister failed to point out where, in law and in particular under the control regulations, they were allowed to do what was described as 'make up the data and alter fishermen's log books.'

The Supreme Court accepted the fishing industry's appeal from the High Court decision as a matter of public importance and sought further submissions in relation to whether to make a referral to the European Court of Justice.

The Supreme Court, in its latest ruling also did not accept a submission by the SFPA that the case should have been taken not by the named fishermen but in the names of the companies involved in operations of the boats.

There has been a general welcome from fishermen to the Supreme Court decision which means that the issues involved will now be decided by the European Court of Justice in Brussels.

"We have gained what we wanted," said Mr. Conway. "It has been a long and involved case. The decision by the Supreme Court is what we were seeking and that makes it a good day for fishermen."

Now the issues involved will be decided by the European Court of Justice.

BIM Launches Water Stewardship Programme for Seafood Processors Supporting Irelands Seafood Processors in Sustainable Water Use

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's seafood development agency will launch a new Water Stewardship Support Programme for seafood processors on Tuesday 25 August 2020. The launch event will be live streamed and is aimed at members of the seafood processing sector that are interested in developing action plans to increase the sustainable use of water on their sites.



Sandra Hennessy, Green Programme Co-ordinator, BIM, Nadine Bonner and Michele Bonner of Irish Fish Canners and Ken Stockil, Central Solutions following the successful pilot of the Water Stewardship Support Programme.

The BIM Water Stewardship Support Programme, run in partnership with Central Solutions and funded under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, aims to assist Irish seafood processing businesses to undertake a series of onsite actions for improving their water management practices and reducing water related impacts. The programme which will also be accepted as part of Bord Bia's Origin Green pro-

gramme, was successfully piloted last year delivering significant efficiencies and cost savings for participating firms.

The innovative Programme will be officially unveiled by BIM CEO Jim O'Toole via a live streamed event at 9.30am on Tuesday 25 August 2020.

To register for the free event visit www.smartwater.ie/bim



IIMRO is the Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation, representing Irish island communities across the marine sector. Effectively, the representative organisation for marine resources on the offshore islands of Ireland.

The Organisation has its origins in the long struggle by Donegal island fishermen for recognition of their rights following the offshore ban on salmon fishing in 2006. This was followed by a ban on all net fishing in Area VIa in 2008 which added further pressure to fragile island communities.

Since then the fishermen have met with their counterparts on all of the Irish islands in order to organise as a national organisation. They have taken their campaign to Europe and to government in Dublin to highlight the effects that a "one-size" fits all legislative approach has had across the islands of Ireland.

IIMRO represents islanders from Counties Donegal, Mayo, Galway and Cork.

"Small offshore islands which are dependent on fishing should be especially recognised and supported."

"We are working to implement recognition of small offshore islands in the new EU Common Fisheries Policy which came about largely as a result of our work in Europe.

"Small offshore islands which are dependent on fishing should, where appropriate, be especially recognised and supported in order to enable them to survive and prosper in the future."

Seamus Bonner posts on the page about a project he noted on Inishbofin: "I came across the really nice #adoptagrave idea from the Inishbofin Island Work Fund, Co. Galway, recently. It involves adopting a grave which has no one to look after it any longer and giving it a clean and tidy."

Last month IIMRO members participated in the @PericlesProject webinar on their online portal for mapping coastal and maritime cultural heritage.

IIMRO is working on a number of new initiatives at present. More details in the next edition of the MARINE TIMES.

“Catchy” New Idea from Donegal Businesses

Two Donegal businesses have teamed up to create a unique seafood experience in the popular fishing port of Killybegs. Atlantic Treasures – The Fish Stop and Hughie’s Bar launched the new Hooked & Cooked Seafood Experience. Available from Tuesday to Saturday, the new taste experience will invite visitors to hand-select their own fresh fish and seasoning from The Fish Stop, before taking their cook-bag to the newly revamped Hughie’s Bar, where it will be cooked, garnished and plated.

Local businessmen Hugh O’Donnell of Hughie’s Bar and Michael O’Donnell of Atlantic Treasures – The Fish Stop, developed the idea earlier this year to give visitors an opportunity to sample fresh Atlantic catch and experience an authentic Donegal welcome along the Wild Atlantic Way.

Speaking about the new foodie experience, Michael O’Donnell said: “We’re over the moon to launch the Hooked & Cooked Seafood Experience. We’ve been working hard behind the scenes, perfecting the seasoning and glazes and designing an experience that will give visitors the ultimate foodie day-out. It combines the perfect mix of tasting fresh catch from the boats, meeting locals, including our popular fishmonger Ronan Cunningham, exploring the area and enjoying a warm Donegal welcome.”

“Given the town’s location between Donegal Town and Sliabh Liag Cliffs on the Wild Atlantic Way, Killybegs is already a

very popular destination with day-trippers, but we want to encourage visitors to stay in the area and explore the history and culture all-year round. Of course, Covid-19 has impacted tourism, but the Hooked & Cooked Seafood experience can be enjoyed by small groups and couples, and Hugh and the team have done great work at Hughie’s Bar to get the venue ready. We look forward to welcoming local and international visitors to Killybegs this summer and throughout the year.”

Adding to this, Wild Atlantic Way Food Ambassador and owner of Hughie’s Bar, Hugh O’Donnell said: “I’m delighted to be collaborating with Michael on this fresh new seafood initiative. Visitors to Killybegs can now avail of a fresh and innovative way to sample local fish – bringing them right to the source of Irish produce and our community. From starting the journey at The Fish Stop, visitors will meet the famous singing fishmonger Ronan Cunningham, who is

well-known for his singing videos on social media, and from here visitors will take their cook-bag and make their way across the road to Hughie’s for the taste test! Visitors have the choice of five different fishes and five different seasoning and glazes, so there’s plenty to choose from.”

The Hooked & Seafood Experience will also be available nationwide in the coming months with a new online delivery service from Atlantic Treasures. The online initiative was created after Michael O’Donnell spotted a gap in the market: “When we were developing the Hooked & Cooked Seafood Experience, we were in the midst of the pandemic, which saw a huge rise in

fish sales. We already offer an online delivery service for our smoked mackerel and herring products, so we thought, why not give people the opportunity to get fresh fish straight from the Atlantic that they can pop into the oven and enjoy. We hope to have it live in the next few weeks and people from around Ireland can enjoy the Hooked & Cooked seafood experience from the comfort of their homes.”

The Hooked & Cooked Seafood Experience costs €15 per person and is suitable for children and adults. For more information and to book visit www.atlantictreasures.ie or call 074 9731057.



Ronan Cunningham at Atlantic Treasures - Fish Stop ready to help you with your excellent choice of seafood for the Hooked & Cooked Seafood Experience in Killybegs

Regional Marine Research Project Stays On Track Despite Pandemic

Important research that will help advance the management of our seas around Ireland, Western Scotland and Northern Ireland has not totally ceased during the Covid-19 pandemic. The EU INTERREG VA-funded SeaMonitor project, which is led by the Loughs Agency and supported by another eight leading marine research institutions, was able to deploy some of its innovative species tracking technology to better understand and protect vulnerable marine life in our oceans.

Since April, scientists from across the partnership have managed to safely tag and release over 250 fish from 5 rivers in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The technology, called acoustic telemetry, involves deploying a series of listening stations from Malin Head, Ireland to the island of Islay in Scotland that will record transmissions from a variety of marine species tagged by the project’s scientists. The data, which is due to be downloaded from the receivers in the autumn, will be used to support the conservation of a variety of vulnerable species such as salmon, basking sharks, skate, dolphins, whales and seals.

Loughs Agency Designated Officer, Sharon McMahon, explained: “Loughs Agency are proud to be leading the way alongside expert colleagues to deliver such significant and innovative marine research infrastructure that will ultimately help protect some of our most important and vulnerable marine species. The Agency’s team together with project partners are continuing to work hard to ensure project objectives are delivered during these unprecedented times, while maintaining the appropriate social distancing and health and safety protocols

for field work.”

Funding for the SeaMonitor project has been provided under the environment objective of the European Union’s INTERREG VA Programme, which is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB), to the tune of €4.7m. Match-funding for this project has been provided by the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in Ireland.

Welcoming the deployment Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body, said: “I’m delighted to see such significant achievements for the Sea Monitor project given the significant challenges faced by all involved. This is a much-needed step forward for the conservation of a number of vulnerable species within our shared oceans. It only serves to highlight the benefits that are created through strong, mutually beneficial cross-border partnerships in the management of marine protected areas and species. Well done to all involved for advancing our understanding of our seas,” she continued.



Staff from the SeaMonitor Project getting ready to deploy equipment on the Marine Institute’s RV Celtic Explorer prior to lockdown in March of this year. (Left to Right): Diego del Villar and Caroline Finlay (Loughs Agency), Nathan Glenn (Ocean Tracking Network), Morgane Pommier (Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology), Joseph Pratt (Ocean Tracking Network) and Ross McGill (Loughs Agency).

Pádraig Mac Lochlainn Appointed Sinn Féin Spokesperson for Fisheries and the Marine

Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald TD has appointed Sinn Féin Chief Whip and TD for Donegal Pádraig Mac Lochlainn as Sinn Féin spokesperson for Fisheries and the Marine.

“Pádraig Mac Lochlainn will be a strong voice for fishing and coastal communities. He has fought for them with passion and determination for the two decades that he has served as a public representative.

“It is clear that the immense potential of

our marine resources, as an island nation, has never been fully realised. Sinn Féin are committed to changing this in the time ahead. I wish Pádraig the very best in his new role.”

International Fishing and Maritime News

The Cape Town Agreement for Fishing Safety

The United Nations agency for safety at sea, the International Maritime Organisation, has said that the entry into force of the Cape Town Agreement on fishing vessel safety will be crucial for improved safety at sea for fishermen and will support the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

Legally this will happen twelve months after at least 22 States, with an aggregate 3,600 fishing vessels of 24 metres in length and over operating on the high seas have expressed their consent to be bound by it.

IMO Secretary-General Kitack Lim has highlighted the “urgent need to bring the Cape Town Agreement into force.”

“Entry into force is expected to improve safety at sea in the fisheries sector worldwide. It will also be a useful tool in combating illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and reducing pollution from fishing vessels, including marine debris,” according to the IMO.

AUSTRALIA Protecting Marine Giants



Scientists in Australia have succeeded in identifying the babies of one of the world's biggest fishes — the mola, or sunfish. They are so small that a dozen of them could fit on a fingertip. Adult sunfish are the heaviest bony fish in the world, measuring up to 10 feet (3 metres) long and weighing more than 4,400 lbs. (2,000 kilograms). The adults look like flattened pancakes topped by a massive dorsal fin like a shark's, with short bodies and no tail fin, which most fish have. Sunfish have a long structure at their rear end, called a “clavus.”

The scientists are now comparing the larva to unidentified Mola larvae in the collections of the Australian Museum and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation in Hobart, Australia to see if there are more matches, said Marianne Nyegaard, a research associate at the Auckland War Memorial Museum and one of the scientists who analysed the tiny fish. In addition to the bump-head sunfish, four more species of sunfish live in waters around Australia: the oceanic sunfish (Mola mola), the hood-winker sunfish (Mola tecta), the point-tailed sunfish (Masturus lanceolatus) and the slender sunfish (Ranzania laevis). “If we want to protect these marine giants we need to understand their whole life history, and that includes knowing what the larvae

look like and where they occur,” Marianne Nyegaard said.

UNITED KINGDOM Anti-CFP Measures

The UK's first major piece of fisheries legislation in nearly forty years, The Fisheries Bill, is designed to create powers for the UK to operate as an independent coastal state and manage its fish stocks outside the EU. It was introduced to the House of Commons in July after being passed through the House of Lords. The Bill ends automatic rights for EU vessels to fish in British waters. “If access to UK waters for foreign vessels is negotiated, the Bill will also enable the Fisheries Administrations to ensure that foreign vessels follow the same rules as UK vessels,” according to UK government sources. Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis, said: “The Bill gives us the powers to protect our precious fish stocks while enabling our seafood sector to thrive. Now that we have left the EU, we have the opportunity to create a more resilient and profitable fishing industry, leaving behind the outdated Common Fisheries Policy.”

The NFFO - National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations - is opposing Amendments to the Bill tabled by environmentalist MPs who would make it compulsory for all fishing vessels to carry CCTV cameras. “Making cameras compulsory is the wrong approach. Policing of fishing activities by such means should be undertaken only with the consent and co-operation of fisherman,” according to the NFFO.

HUNGARY Birth By Accident

It shouldn't have been possible, but it has happened - the birth of a long-nosed, spiky-finned hybrid of Russian sturgeons and American paddlefish. Hungarian scientists have announced that they “accidentally” created hybrids of the two endangered species. It has been called a “sturdlefish.” There are about 100 of the hybrids in captivity now, but the scientists said they do not have plans to create more. “We never wanted to play around with hybridisation. It was absolutely unintentional,” said Attila Mozsár, a Senior Research Fellow at the Research Institute for Fisheries and Aquaculture in Hungary.

NORWAY Seeking Free Trade Deal With Brexit UK

Norwegian Trade and Industry Minister Iselin Nybø, has made it clear that the country wants to negotiate a comprehensive free trade agreement with the UK by the

end of this year so that it can continue to sell its salmon and whitefish without serious disruption. The UK is Norway's fourth largest export market for seafood, mainly cod, haddock, farmed salmon and shellfish, and is currently worth almost seven billion kroner (£600 million) a year. But there is also considerable trade in machinery and marine and agricultural products.

“We are talking about billions of kroner in goods and services that cross our borders annually,” said the Minister. “But the agreement will unfortunately not be able to replace the EEA agreement and the business community must prepare for the fact that they will experience new trade barriers when the UK leaves the internal market.

An important priority for Norway in the negotiations with the British is that Norwegian companies get at least as good access to the British market as what EU companies get.”

She also said that Norway will seek full free trade for seafood. “This will be an improvement from the current situation where Norwegian seafood exporters do not have free trade into the EU, but must comply with different quotas and tariffs and ensure that modern and efficient customs procedures are facilitated. We want at least as comprehensive a negotiated result as in any agreement between the UK and the EU.”

NORWAY People Want To Eat More Fish

The Norwegian Seafood Council publishes an annual Seafood Consumer Index compiled through international surveying which is claimed to be the world's largest seafood consumer study. This year's study records the “seafood behaviour and preferences of 25,000 people survey,” according to the Council. “The pandemic has changed everyday habits which provide great opportunity for seafood because of increased focus on healthy eating. There is an overall desire amongst people to eat more seafood. Health and taste are the most important aspects stressed, with focus on sustainability and food safety.

In Italy 81% of those surveyed said they would like to eat more fish, in Portugal the figure was 80%. Overall 76% of consumers questioned said they wanted to eat more fish than they do at present. However, the study also found that only half of the people who said they ate seafood did so two or more times a week, which is the amount generally recommended by health authorities. Analysing the findings, the Norwegian Seafood Council said that older people valued the importance of seafood consumption more than those younger. 81% of people aged between 50 and 65 said they wanted to eat more seafood, compared with 73% in the age group 20-34.

SCOTLAND Going Local

Seafood Scotland has launched a campaign to help Scottish seafood businesses attract more customers through the use of free marketing directories to reach a greater consumer audience. With huge swathes of the seafood export market closed off due to the Covid-19 crisis this is intended to establish markets closer to home that maximise the appetite for local produce, developing a

consumer offering for the first time, home delivery options and click and collect services.

Called the ‘Net Income’ campaign it is aimed to help fishing and seafood processing businesses via direct Email and social marketing to encourage businesses to add details of their retail offerings using direct selling directories which provide consumers with information about where they can buy food online, locally and at the quay-side. Seafood Scotland has worked with these sites to create a one-step application process of listings across the Scotland Food and Drink ‘Support Local’ hub, such as Seafish's ‘Fish is the Dish’ and ‘Fish on Friday’.

GALAPAGOS ISLANDS Chinese Aggression



The Galapagos Islands are a volcanic archipelago in the Pacific Ocean, a protected area regarded as the world's foremost destination for a wide diversity of plant and animal species. A province of Ecuador, about 600 nautical miles off its coast, the archipelago inspired Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Its isolated terrain shelters a diversity of plant and animal species, many found nowhere else. It is a UNESCO world heritage site. In late July Ecuador issued an international warning after its Navy discovered a “huge fishing fleet of mostly Chinese-flagged vessels” 200 miles from the Islands. Chinese fishing vessels come every year to the seas around the Galápagos, but this year's fleet is one of the largest seen in recent years. 260 fishing vessels were sighted in international waters just outside a 188-mile wide exclusive economic zone around the island.

Ecuadorean sources said “their presence raises the prospect of serious damage to the delicate marine ecosystem. This fleet's size and aggressiveness against marine species is a big threat to the balance of species in the Galápagos. Unchecked Chinese fishing just on the edge of the protected zone is ruining Ecuador's efforts to protect marine life in the Galápagos.” Diplomatic protests to China were expected. That country has been expanding its presence in several maritime areas, claiming rights which are rejected by other nations.

EUROPE Most Consumers Seeking Sustainability

75% of European consumers are favouring environmentally sustainable and socially responsible products and are starting to take a stronger attitude against illegal fishing according to a study from the Spanish tuna industry group, OPAGAC. It was carried out for them by Deloitte.

Sustainable sourcing is becoming the most important factor, even above price, amongst most Europeans who buy fish products, the study said. It divided its findings into 35% who said they have started to consume only responsibly-fished

products, a similar number who said they do so with “certain categories of products” and those who said they consume only responsibly-fished products.

ICELAND Salmon Farming Drive



Iceland wants to become a big part of international salmon farming. Indicated by the addition of another 7,000 tonnes of biomass through the planning clearance for a new farm at the fishing community of Stöðvarfjörður, 385 miles east of the capital Reykjavik, It has less than 200 residents, which is blamed on the loss of conventional fishing and younger people leaving to find work elsewhere.

The Ice Fish Farm company which already has an operating licence for over 20,000 tonnes at two locations in the region, has been granted provisional clearance to develop the third farm. An environmental impact study concluded that there would be no significant risk to the habitat or any wild salmon population because the farm will produce infertile fish. It also recorded that “Iceland has a good record on containing salmon related diseases through vaccination.”

RUSSIA Protecting the Barents Sea

In what has been described as an unexpected and unprecedented move, a number of Russian fishing groups have agreed to protect vulnerable species in the Barents Sea. They have combined with scientific organisations to reduce the impact of bottom trawling on the marine environment. The groups involved have been named as Norebo Holdings, Arkhangelsk Trawl Fleet, FEST Group and the Fishing Industry Union of the North have signed an agreement to protect vulnerable Barents Sea species.

UNITED STATES Single Fisheries Voice Wanted

The Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee in the USA has recommended the establishment of an industry-led National Seafood Council. It says that this would, “improve consumer confidence and increase the consumption of, U.S. seafood by speaking with one unified voice for the industry. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA Fisheries, which is responsible for the stewardship of USA. ocean resources and their habitat and US Department of Commerce has been considering the recommendation.”

GERMANY Boom In Fish Finger Sales

According to the German Frozen Food Institute, the first fish fingers made there were in Bremerhaven and sold in 1959. The country's frozen food product companies have reported a boom in fish finger sales, up 50 per cent. Possibly due to consumers stockpiling due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

news from **Howth** **Tracey Floyd**

Farewell Our Lass II

We are very sad to say farewell to Our Lass II this July. This lovely 21.7 metre vessel has been the pride of Ivan and Eamon Wilde for the past nine years. This immaculately kept vessel will be leaving our shores and travelling with her new owners, Fraizer, Craig and Ryan Smith to Buckie in Scotland.



All involved, including long time skipper Rory Wilde and her most recent second skipper Cahill Lavery, will all be very sad to see her go. Although the lads are no doubt looking forward to a well-deserved holiday.

While, it is a real shame to see her leaving Ireland and she will be sadly missed. Everyone would like to wish Fraiser, Craig and young Ryan every success, fair seas and safe fishing in this endeavour, you have got one fine vessel there folks.

Will It Ever Stop?

Words are powerful, and words in print are even more powerful. In the verses of Stan Lee via Spiderman “With great power there also comes great responsibility”

This is something that the recent publications mentioning the Irish Fishing Industry, seem to have missed with the most recent article which randomly mentioning the Fishing Industry within an article centred around sex trafficking. Entitled - Ireland on par with Saudi Arabia and Romania for human trafficking, new report says. The writing would be amusing if it was just a joke but considering that the report goes on to say, “Most of the victims were female (38) and nine were children. No victims were identified in the fishing industry.”

Ken Fleming from the International Transport Workers Federation said Ireland's downgrading did not come as a surprise. “The report is a vindication for everyone outside of the government agencies, who have repeatedly highlighted trafficking issues,” he said.

There were examples cited of Indonesian fishermen being paid \$600 per month and no action being taken or investigation being pursued when they came off their boats in Dingle, Co Kerry late last year. What was

omitted in the comment is that this was not an Irish Flag Vessel.

It was added that it was “beyond belief” that no prosecutions had been taken on behalf of victims of sex trafficking to date: “With all that we know about the sex industry and there are still no prosecutions. So there's not been a single male or female prostitute that has been brought to Ireland that has been trafficked? That is simply a phenomenon beyond belief”

I think we can all find it “beyond belief” that the Irish Fishing Industry was even mentioned in the first place.

The frequent and very public assassinations on the character of every person working within the Irish Fishing Industry are difficult to stomach.

In trump terms, using ludicrous and unsubstantiated claims as a means to get your way, has become the norm. Surely, the Fishing industry is guilty of something!!!! There is no proof. Wait, it must be a conspiracy!

Given that since 2016, enormous energy has been put into claiming that the A-typical crewmembers work 22 hours, every day, on the boats. It would seem reasonable to suggest that there would be little time left to be a sex slave too?

It just seems unlikely. Yet the intimation has now been made.

While the industry itself would welcome the calling out and indeed prosecution of any individual guilty of these horrible crimes. We have seen, too many hard working vessel owners, being tormented by the repercussions of these claims.

When you think of the difficulties encountered by vessel owner in adjusting to the heavy compliance imposed on it within this scheme, it is actually almost comical.

The most recent publication claims that.

“The report is a vindication for everyone outside of the government agencies, who have repeatedly highlighted trafficking issues.”

While it is unclear as yet, what the real agenda is, there is no doubt that these fictions are going to keep coming and the industry will continue to pay the price.

The industry is fighting for its life right now and everyone involved in it is literally just treading water in order to survive.

We cannot as an industry, nor individually just suck this up..... Again. Consider that we have families who add value to and make their living in the coastal regions of this country. Do we just continue to let this sort of nonsense go un-challenged? It is unacceptable for the industry to be tarred for evermore with the shame put upon us by these fictitious smears.

Additionally recent reports suggest that there is a current Garda investigation ongoing and that a number of past and present Fishing vessel owners are being monitored and scrutinised in relation to Human Trafficking. The details of the claims are vague and have as yet not been clarified with regards as to whether they are coming from a state agency or individual nor indeed the exact details of the claims. It has however been suggested that the investigations are centred around historical employment of non-EEA persons. These were workers who pre the instigation of the permit scheme presented at vessels with the relevant qualifications and were given jobs.

While reluctant to give these unpleasant claims any oxygen, we do have a right and indeed a responsibility to respond and defend this tarnishing of our families and children and our entire way of life.

So please Owners, Skippers and Crew, continue to hold your heads high, believe in who you are, remember how hard you work and appreciate the highly skilled work that you do. Don't forget you are an essential service for our Island Nation and you have a duty to preserve it.

Words are powerful.

DORANS **Skippers Mate** **Giving Skippers Peace of Mind**

With an ever growing list of rules and regulation, fishing vessel owners and skippers are finding it more time consuming and complex to adhere to the many rules and regulations covering fishing vessels and their crews.

Doran's are offering a service to assist skippers in complying with these regulations and to give them a “Go to Person” to act as a buffer between the MSO, SFPA, HSA and BIM etc. Talk to us today for a no obligation assessment.

Contact us to learn of our extensive range of services - Let us be your “Go to Person” to ease the burden on busy Skippers and Owners.

Contact - Tracey Floyd Mobile: 00353-(0)862752784
e-mail: doransskippersmate@gmail.com

Website: www.doransskippersmate.wix.com/doransskippersmate

Let us help you and your crew stay safe at sea



IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP IWDG NEWS

"We might look back at 2020 as a watershed year where we got instilled with a new awareness of the fragile world around us, of our place in it and of those with which we share it."

Despite all the Covid 19 restrictions, perhaps this year might be a watershed that instilled a new appreciation of Nature, says Dr. Simon Berrow, CEO of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, as he suggests exploring the Irish coastline and reporting what you find.



Dolphin enjoying a bow-ride. Photo by Dr. Simon Berrow

Due to the travel restrictions associated with Covid 19 and the more time people have had on their hands there has been a big increase of interest in Biological Recording, that is recording the wildlife you see in your area, your garden, your neighbourhood and along the coastline.

Such recording requires minimum effort to ensure that it is useful. This includes the date and location and your name, as well as what you think it was that you saw. It is not essential to know what a species is if you provide enough information on what you saw and then these records can be identified. Even a misidentification can be helpful.

With top quality cameras on Smartphones it has never been easier to film what you find.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre has seen a huge increase in the number of records submitted to their Online portal as people spent more time at home and outside in the good weather of the months of April and May. Perhaps this may be a positive outcome from these troubled times!

The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, however, saw a decline in the number of reported sightings in the first half of this year. That is understandable. To record sightings of whales and dolphins you have to be living near the sea, or be going along the coastline or out on the water. Recreational boats were restricted and

there were no commercial boats active for viewing expeditions. And people could not travel to the coast even from a few kilometres away.

Now this has changed and people are planning to holiday in Ireland this year.

We still need social distancing and to take personal responsibility, but where better to explore than a coastline? Sit on a headland and take time to watch out to sea.

Invest in a good pair of binoculars or a spotting scope and you will be amazed at what you see.

And please send your record to the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, even if you carry out a watch in good sea conditions and see nothing. This can be useful information if we are to conserve our biodiversity and develop marine tourism to share the wonders of Irish marine wildlife. Helping to identify habitats and times for whale and dolphins provide records we need of what occurred where and when.

We might look back at 2020 as a watershed year where we got instilled with a new awareness of the fragile world around us, of our place in it and of those with which we share it.

**Irish Whale
and Dolphin Group**



www.iwdg.ie

Seabirds Need Your Help!

Niall Hatch, Development Officer, BirdWatch Ireland



BirdWatchIreland
protecting birds and biodiversity

During the summer months, a lot of BirdWatch Ireland's time and energy goes into its tern conservation work, which we have discussed several times in the past. This year, despite some initial delays due to the COVID-19 restrictions and some problems with wet weather, I'm glad to report that Ireland's tern colonies seem to be fairing well.

The same cannot be said on the other side of the Irish Sea, unfortunately. The Skerries, a group of islets off the coast of the Welsh island of Anglesey and not to be confused with the north Co. Dublin town of the same name, are usually home to the UK's largest nesting colony of Arctic Terns. Last year the islands hosted a total of 2,814 breeding pairs of this remarkable and beautiful seabird, which is the longest-distance migrant in the world. This year, however, the colony has completely been abandoned: the birds have vanished, and nobody knows where they have gone.

The causes of this disaster are unknown.

Arctic Terns nest in many other locations in Europe, including here in Ireland, but no significant population increases have so far been recorded at any of these this summer. BirdWatch Ireland has noted an unexpected increase in Arctic Tern numbers

at the breeding colony it warden on Dalkey Island in south Co. Dublin, but that would still only account for a tiny fraction of the missing Welsh birds.

Many of the missing terns had previously been fitted with special orange leg-tags, each bearing a unique black alpha-numeric code. If any tagged terns are spotted, alive or dead, BirdWatch Ireland would be most grateful to receive any information and, if possible, details of the codes themselves.

Terns are long-distance travellers and do occasionally turn up in unexpected locations. A case in point involves the completely unprecedented recent appearance of a bird called a Cayenne Tern at Our Lady's Island Lake in Co. Wexford. This yellow-billed, black-crested, white-bodied seabird is supposed currently to be nesting somewhere along the Caribbean coast of South America.

This is the first time this species has been seen anywhere in Europe, and it has already generated a lot of international interest from birdwatchers. The COVID-19 restrictions have curtailed the travel plans of most, however, so there are a lot of fingers currently being crossed that the Cayenne Tern will stick around. There is a good chance that it might: it is a female bird and has paired up with a male Sandwich Tern, and it currently appears to be sitting on a clutch of eggs. It will be interesting to see if they

hatch and, if so, what the hybrid chicks look like.

Although it is a first for Europe, the Cayenne Tern isn't even the most unexpected seabird visitor to Irish shores in recent weeks. On June 22 a local birdwatcher called Arlo Jacques was walking at Tramore Bay, Co. Waterford in poor weather conditions when he came upon a medium-sized and very bedraggled and dirt-covered bird on the beach. Assuming it to be a stricken Manx Shearwater, a common breeding species in Irish waters, he and another local birdwatcher, Adrian Allen, managed to rescue it, and it was taken to a wildlife rehabilitation facility.



The bird received the best possible care, but unfortunately it was too emaciated to survive and it died shortly afterwards. Once the bird had been cleaned and its plumage had become visible, it had become clear that it

wasn't a Manx Shearwater at all. Its dusky belly feathers suggested that it might instead be a Balearic Shearwater, a critically endangered Mediterranean-nesting species that is occasionally seen off the Irish coast. The wing feather measurements didn't fit for that species either, however.

It transpired that what Arlo had actually found was a Short-tailed Shearwater, a species that breeds only along the coastline of southern and eastern Australia and Tasmania. At this time of year, the southern winter, the species is supposed to be in the north Pacific Ocean, somewhere from northern Japan to the Bering Strait. This is another first for Europe, and quite what this unfortunate seabird, about the size of a crow, was doing so far off course and in entirely the wrong ocean is anyone's guess. It goes to show that seabirds, more than any other animal group, can travel astonishing distances and turn up in completely unexpected locations.

Seabirds need your help.

If you would like to help to protect Ireland's seabirds and support efforts to conserve their populations, please become a member of BirdWatch Ireland, Ireland's largest and most active conservation charity. For full details, please visit www.birdwatchireland.ie

(Inset picture: Arctic Terns on Dalkey Island - BirdWatch Ireland photo)



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

"It would be hugely retrograde should the development of an action plan for the islands and the formation of Island Policies be put on hold indefinitely."

For the first time in many years the Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann AGM was not held on one of the off-shore Islands. Plans were underway to visit Aranmore for the event but Covid-19 put a stop to that. The Board had to meet via Zoom instead. While we got the business of the AGM done, we really missed meeting with all our Island friends. So next year we'll really look forward to catching up with everyone.

In his comments at the AGM, Chairman Simon Murray noted the frustrations Comhdháil had encountered over the past year: lack of progress with policy formation by the Department; only last-minute consultation on the lock-down and opening of the Islands relative to the Covid pandemic and the subsequent confusion over the opening date; the splitting off of the Gaeltacht in the formation of the new Government and the inactivity of the Interdepartmental Committee on Islands. These were a few examples.

Some of these delays are the result of the pandemic causing the necessary redirection of Government priorities.

However, it would be hugely retrograde should the development of an action plan for the islands and the formation of Island Policies be put on hold indefinitely.

All Island businesses face economic challenges now and into the future.

Comhdháil has made representations to Government (both the previous and newly-appointed) to provide supports not only to the tourism sector but to Island Communities as a whole to increase sustainability and aid in business recovery. As the islands have a particularly vulnerable population, it is requested that all possible supports be given to Island medical practitioners and that their opinions are taken into account in all decisions.

Regarding economic supports, it is requested that direct and indirect tax rates including VAT, PAYE, capital gains and commercial rates be reduced for a period to allow Island Communities and businesses to recover. Additionally it is believed that Covid support payments should continue until early 2021 for island businesses unable to open this season. Comhdháil also urges that Covid support payments be available to seasonal businesses. A recovery fund is also needed to assist in the reopening of businesses. If businesses are allowed to fail the ultimate cost will be far greater.

All the offshore islands have seen the number of visitors increase since the unexpected opening of the islands on June 29. This has resulted in a mixed response by Islanders. Some businesses are delighted to be welcoming tourists while others are not opening this season at all.

Recent rain has eased some of the water supply concerns on Inis Mór and Inis Oírr, but increased tourism means increased water demand and that is a worry. Some have seen such an increase in tourists that fear of contagion stops them bringing their children to crowded playgrounds and beaches. Inish Turk decided as a community to close all accommodation for overnight stays although their Community Club is open for food during the day.

Tourism is the lifeblood of many islands and islanders have been welcoming visitors for generations. It is heartbreaking for many that they cannot offer the traditional Island welcome and tourist providers are working hard to provide a safe experience for those that visit.

By behaving as safely as possible now while anticipating a vaccine, Islanders cautiously anticipate a brighter future.

So for now it's slán from the Islands!

See below letter sent from Simon Murray, Chair, Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, to An Taoiseach, Micheál Martin.

Dear Taoiseach Martin,

Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann - The Irish Islands Federation is the representative body for the offshore islands of Ireland. We would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Taoiseach and also welcome the commitment in the programme for Government to develop an Islands Action Plan; *"We will publish the Islands' Action Plan this year, so that action can be taken on improving connectivity, transport links, education, job creation and fully exploiting the potential for tourism on our islands."*

We are writing in this instance to raise our concerns about the ongoing serious impact of COVID-19 on the islands. The necessary restrictions put in place to slow the spread of the virus have had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable island communities and urgent supports are needed to ensure the islands can manage the challenge presented by the virus across all sectors.

Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann is proposing the following short-term measures to protect island communities and ensure they are able to respond to the recovery when it comes:

As this situation is first and foremost a public health issue and the virus is still active we call for all possible supports to be made available to medical practitioners on the islands and that their opinion be taken on board in all decisions.

- Direct and indirect tax rates including VAT, PAYE, capital gains and

commercial rates to be reduced for a period to allow Island communities and businesses to recover. Tax reductions will enhance the ability to attract teachers, doctors and other essential frontline staff to island based services and businesses. Removal of commercial rates from Island businesses will remove a major overhead for businesses which have lost income due to COVID-19 restrictions.

- Covid support payments to continue until early 2021 for island businesses unable to open this season. This will ensure that seasonally dependent enterprises, both private and community operated, their employees and service users are supported to "build back better" when the COVID threat eases. It is strongly urged that Covid support payments be available to seasonal businesses.

- Provision of a recovery fund that is simple and swift to access to assist survival and reopening of businesses including the costs associated with moving online where appropriate: The costs of allowing communities to fail will be far greater.

- The mechanism of delivery of island programmes such as LEADER, SICAP, Walks to be urgently reviewed and simplified in light of the threat posed by COVID to ensure any funds reach the intended recipients as efficiently as possible.

- Initiatives such as fibre optic cable rollout under the National Broadband Plan should be fast tracked for delivery to peripheral areas, including the islands, to ensure that communities can avail of the opportunities presented by remote and flexible work.

- The economic and community recovery plan for Islands can be a pilot scheme to test supports for applying to the broader community if a surge emerges causing localised or national shutdowns while a cure is being sought.

- Traditional industries such as Fisheries and Agriculture must not be left behind in the coming recovery and appropriate island specific supports should be prioritised.

- Fast-tracking of public investment in infrastructure projects such as piers, water reservoirs and distribution systems, sewage treatment systems in order to upgrade and prepare for recovery while providing much needed employment in the short term.

Representatives of Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann are available to meet with you (under the current parameters allowed) to discuss these options at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,
Simon Murray
Chair, Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann

**Comhdháil
Oileán
na
hÉireann**
Irish Islands Federation

The Spirit of Cape Clear



There is no limit to the initiative of islanders. Cape Clear in West Cork, the southernmost offshore island, says that its Island Distillery has been "extremely hard hit by the collapse in the pub, hotel and duty free trades" due to Covid 19. "Showing innovation and agility," the island Co-op says "our distillery is the first in Ireland to offer its gin in engraved and personalized bottles." To do this it has developed "nautical labels" naming 'The Fastnet' (Rock); 'The Beacon' (at nearby Baltimore) and 'The Cléire' (for the island). Gin from the island fetched \$15,000 per bottle for 2 bottles at a Charity Auction in California and now the distillery has also won Silver at the San Francisco and London International Spirits Competition Awards. Cape Clear has "always been good for developing ideas," say the islanders! Pictured are Joe & Patsi O'Driscoll at the Charity Auction in California.

Smart Lobster Collaboration Between Ireland and Spain

The Marine Institute is collaborating with scientists in Spain as part of a new project, Smart Lobster, to monitor the digging activity and maintenance of burrows of the *Nephrops norvegicus*, commonly known as the Dublin Bay Prawn, using the EMSO SmartBay Observatory located in Galway Bay.

Current methods for counting populations cannot account for variability in the animals emerging from their burrows. This study will solve that problem by helping to understand the magnitude of that variability and lead to more accurate assessment of population numbers to ensure a sustainable fishery into the future.

International collaboration is key to advancing ocean science research, and is the focus of this week's Oceans of Learning series – 'One Shared Ocean, One Shared Future'. Over the past 10 weeks, the Marine Institute and partners have been celebrating our ocean by sharing news, online activities and downloadable resources on a new marine topic each week.

Smart Lobster is monitoring the burrow emergence behaviour of *Nephrops norvegicus* by using the underwater camera on the EMSO SmartBay Observatory. The Observatory is located on the seabed (20m to 25m depth) off the coast of Spiddal in Galway Bay and this area is one of the North East Atlantic fishery grounds for this species. The project will also involve the use of a new autonomous imaging device, which has been designed for long-term deployment.

The project's Chief Scientist, Dr Jacopo Aguzzi from the Institute of Marine Sciences (ICM-CSIC) in Spain is working with Marine Institute scientists Jennifer Doyle and Dr Colm Lordan to provide specialist fishery management and policy knowledge. The scientists will evaluate and analyse the video footage provided by the camera to assess the digging activity and maintenance of burrows by *Nephrops*. Scientists will also analyse the role of ecological and environmental factors that modulate burrow emergence, such as the presence of prey or predators.

The results of the Smart Lobster project will have implications for stock assessment of this species, allowing standardisation of demographic data obtained with trawl nets

(fishery-dependent sampling) and towed sledges (fishery-independent sampling) upon animals' burrow emergence variability.

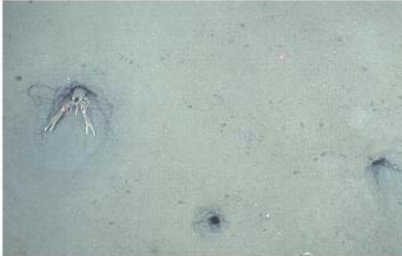
Dr Paul Connolly, CEO of the Marine Institute said, "Off the coast of Ireland, the behaviour of *Nephrops* are being tracked using video-cabled observatory technology for the first-time. *Nephrops* are one of the most important commercial fishery resources in Europe, and the knowledge from the Smart Lobster project will assist in the sustainable management of this species. It is vital that countries come together to work on international projects like these, so we can share data, expertise and infrastructure, and deepen our knowledge on our marine resources."

The Marine Institute is also coordinating the operational aspects of the project. A steel frame was constructed to assist with monitoring the activity of the *Nephrops norvegicus* and was deployed by a team of divers. The camera and the imaging device will record the activity of up to 15 *Nephrops norvegicus* within the frame over the next 12 months.

Commenting on the EMSO SmartBay Observatory, Dr Aguzzi said, "Coastal cabled observatories of this kind represent an excellent opportunity to provide pilot studies to technologically advance more classic stock assessment approaches, providing new ecological data in multidisciplinary and highly-integrated fashion."

Alan Berry, Marine Institute's Research Infrastructure Manager said, "By supporting and promoting national research infrastructure such as the EMSO SmartBay Observatory in Galway Bay, the Marine Institute facilitates world class scientific research and supports new knowledge for improving marine ecosystem management."

The Smart Lobster project is one of three transnational access projects funded by the EMSO-Link project.



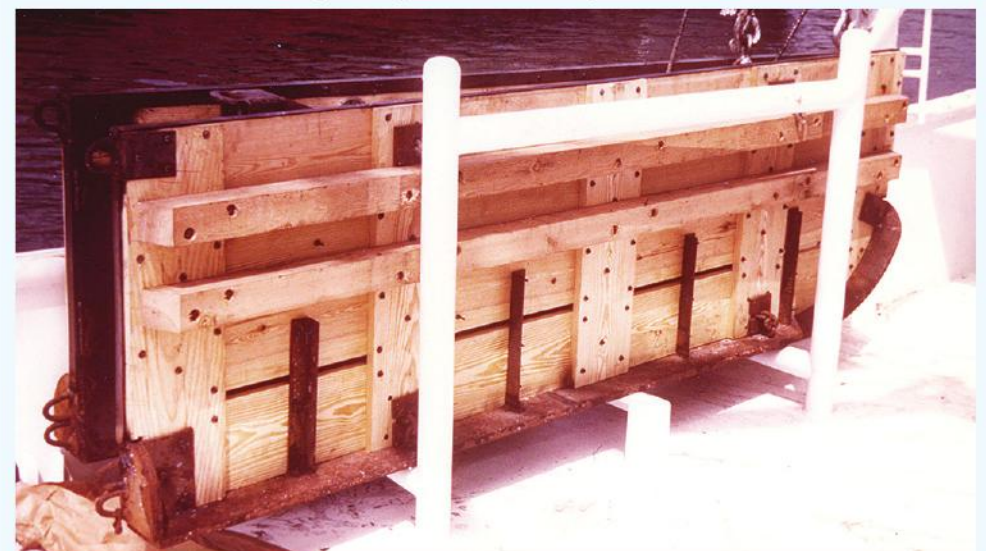
Kittiwake on the Sean Cheibh in Inis Mór - Photo courtesy Tommy Dirrane



(Above): MFV Super Star boarding the catch (Below): Port doors away



(Above): Manual guiding on gear; Fish excluder device (Below): Slatted Shrimp doors





The Maritime Heritage Column

Double Rig Shrimp Trawling in the Gulf of Mexico

by Richard Mc Cormick, President Emeritus, Maritime Institute of Ireland

Irish fishermen are familiar with double rig trawling and some deploy multiples of trawls to improve horizontal ground coverage. This technique which emerged during the 1950's transformed the viability of the Gulf of Mexico shrimp fishery and later BIM introduced a modified technique for Irish waters initially for prawns and later for white fish which proved very successful.

The fishing village Bayou la Batre in Alabama is known as the Seafood Capital of Alabama. In the 1970's, local 70 – 80 foot shrimp draggers were mainly family owned and the transition from traditional wood to single chine all welded steel construction was underway. Steel eliminated the need for constant vigilance against the notorious teredo shipworm, which thrives in the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico and can reduce wood to dust.

Fishing aboard the steel 78 foot (24 metre) *Captain Tony* owned by Bubba Thompson gave a unique insight into shrimp boat operations which supported numerous thriving local processing facilities, shipyards, trawl manufacturers and chandlers. The *Captain Tony* which had a 365 HP Cummins main engine was fitted with a Kort Nozzle. By contrast, a belt driven winch and chain transmission mechanical steering was preferred for simplicity of repairs at sea.

Captain Tony deployed two 2 inch mesh vinyl dipped nylon shrimp trawls from each of her two 50 foot (15m) outriggers. Stabilizers towed from the extreme ends of the outriggers by a length of chain just shorter than the distance from the towing block to the rail (to prevent jumping inboard), provided a stable working platform in all weathers.

Her four trawls were fitted with floats and mud rollers on the footrope and chain ticklers with the emphasis on simplicity and ease of repair at sea by highly prized 'web men'. Flat slatted chain rigged low aspect 9 ft (2.75m) yellow pine wooden trawl doors spread the extreme wingends

while the interior wingends were attached to a triangular steel 'dummy door'. To eliminate by catches, skippers were experimenting with fish excluder panels and turtle excluder devices as brown and white shrimp were the main quarry.

Captain Tony's three man crew worked two-week trips with essential air conditioning in the wheelhouse, galley and accommodation due to the oppressive heat and humidity of the Gulf of Mexico, where capped oil rigs, hurricanes and water spouts are occupational hazards. As shrimp cannot be detected by echo sounder, tow duration was dictated by regular sampling of the small try net's contents. Once the doors were simultaneously hauled to the blocks, the codends were boarded rapidly to minimise shark damage. In some areas stainless steel cover bags proved necessary. The

tailed shrimp were promptly washed and dipped in sodium metabisulphite before being thoroughly mixed with ice and carefully bulk stored in the insulated hold.

Much of the daily routine aboard shrimp trawlers would be familiar to Irish fisherman, but the four trawl rig was a revolutionary new concept then and though rare, gear foul-ups were an unholy mess to untangle. The twin rig concept was later adapted for Irish conditions and more than 4 decades later is firmly embedded in the ever evolving heritage of Irish commercial fishing techniques as though it had always existed.



For information on the National Maritime Museum's exhibitions and events see www.mariner.ie



(Above): MFV Miss Debbie towing (Inset pictures on left): New steel shrimp trawler in Alabama, MFV Laurentine III; deck and belt driven winches.



(Above): Port doors & Dummy door. (Below): Starboard rig & Try net.



Sorting the catch of Brown Shrimp

Marine Times Classifieds



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(08)

A Technical Advance with Innovative Pelagic Gear from SNG

Applying their latest innovative pelagic gear technology of a new design concept which incorporates additional meshing into the side wing panels of the trawls, which has proven such a success in the current Albacore tuna fisheries, Swan-Net Gundry (SNG) are busy with many orders for this technology to be included in trawls for the pelagic fisheries of herring, mackerel and horse mackerel (scad).

The company's feedback from no fewer than seven different customer vessels currently at the annual tuna fisheries in the Bay of Biscay has been extremely positive as these innovative trawl designs are reducing the possibility of fish escaping through the sides of the trawls as, with traditional designs the fish can escape through the side gaps, but by now incorporating extra meshing in the wings means closing this exit route and, importantly, this process does not alter the opening of the trawl.

At present the gaps in the side wing area can vary in length, but can range from 30m up to 250m and SNG have addressed this problem with the design of two versions using the new 'closed sides' concept - one for pair trawling and the other for single boat trawling.

When pelagic vessels are working as a team (pair trawling), the SNG trawls are designed with the side wing panels filled out with extra meshing and finish with a short side rope which still allows the trawl to have the standard conventional finish.

And similarly, for single trawling, SNG have filled out the side wing panels with the extra meshing but also with the wing-end finish on the trawls built to incorporate attaching two extra bridles - which changes the bridle arrangement from the standard four bridles to an eight-bridle setup (four per side).

The lay-out of incorporating the extra bridles closes the sides of the trawls all the way along which reduces the area of potential escape for fish.

The two options above can be used in either single or pairing as pair trawl teams can see the benefits with using the extra

bridles in their standard setup will still remain user-friendly when passing over the lug ends of the bridles from one vessel to the other.

General feedback comments from skippers currently using these newly adapted design of trawls include; *"when pair trawling, the new wing panels have resulted in*

a wider spread of the gear without the vessels having to increase their distance apart when towing"; "the smaller marks of fish that we used to see on the monitors but then miss in the trawl are now being picked up due to the built-up wing sections"; "these new wing & bridle set-ups are particularly advantageous in strong tides or when the vessel is turning as there is no longer any loss in the spread".



Innovation and not imitation!

This latest advancement in pelagic trawls is one of many that Swan Net-Gundry have come up with in recent years and the company say that they are proud of the fact that their R&D department continue to strive to improve trawl technology for fishermen and not just reproduce versions of concepts that are already out on the marketplace.

SNG's prediction that this new design concept would result in significant improvements in the trawl performance and catch success rates at the tuna fishery has proven correct and, as a result and the adaptation of this design for other pelagics, their confidence that the same will apply for all pelagic fishing in the future has led to a substantial number of orders (in excess of 15 trawls in total thus far) from top pelagic and polyvalent vessels from Ireland, N, Ireland, Scotland and Shetland.

www.sng.ie

Fishermen, Brexit & Covid



The major fishing organisations are co-operating closely in dealing with the industry's future says Hugo Boyle, Chief Executive of the Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation

Brexit and the effects of Covid 19 continue to be major issues for the industry.

Though it may have slipped somewhat from the public mind as the pandemic and its health threats were dealt with, for the industry the outcome of the EU negotiations with the UK on Brexit and the impact on fisheries is of the greatest importance.

The meeting between the industry organisations and Minister Calleary was a positive step and a good interchange. He heard the industry's views put in a strong, determined manner, reflecting the challenges which face all fishermen, the important food source it supplies and the onshore ancillary activities and employment which depend upon it.

He appeared very definitely interested in and concerned for the points which the industry was making. There was a pragmatism and reality about the interchanges at the meeting. The four fish producer organi-

sations are working closely together on the issues. The inshore sector and processors and exporters were also at the meeting. It is necessary for the industry to have a strong voice about its future. There will always be local issues for each FPO but overall we want to show that the industry is important nationally and economically and to get this message across.

I told the Minister that he would be welcome to visit the South-East and to see how much effort and commitment there is amongst fishermen and the modern processing facilities that we have. He indicated that he hoped to go to see the industry around the country. This is a good step.

Overall, these are and continue to be difficult and challenging times, but we are determined that the future of the industry must be secured. That is vital.

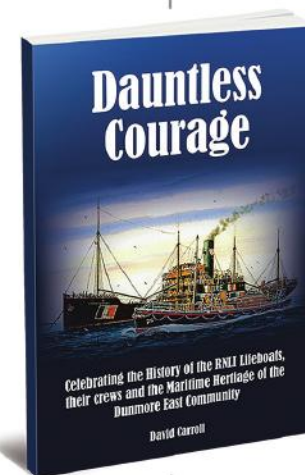
Dauntless Courage: Book Celebrating the History of the Dunmore East RNLI

Dunmore East RNLI has been saving lives off the South East coast since 1884. Since then Lifeboats based in the village have launched nearly 1000 times and saved over 305 lives and aided 1315 people in distress on the seas along the Waterford and Wexford coast.

David Carroll the son of Captain Desmond Carroll, a former Harbour Master in Dunmore is currently completing a book on the history of the Dunmore East RNLI Lifeboats and the community from which the crews are drawn. David grew up in Dunmore East and whilst moving from the village in his 20s to pursue a career he has always retained a great love for the maritime heritage he inherited growing up in the village. David has spent nearly two years researching this book which is now near completion. The book, which is based on archives both here in Ireland and the RNLI archives in Poole, England, will detail the boats that were stationed in Dunmore and the stories of the rescues they carried out. Also included in the book will be many interesting and unique photographs that have not appeared in public before. The story of the village itself, and its link as a fishing community with the Lifeboats and crews, brings the reader from the earliest times of saving lives at sea in the area up to the present.

David Carroll, author of Dauntless Courage said: "I feel that I have been extremely fortunate to have been given this wonderful opportunity of writing a history of the Dunmore East RNLI Lifeboats and

their volunteer crews. As a small boy, I used to see the names of the *Henry Dodd* and *Fanny Harriet* on the records boards that were in a small fuel store on the pier. I never could have imagined that one day, I would be researching and writing about these famous lifeboats".



Brendan Dunne, RNLI volunteer crew with Dunmore East RNLI said: 'As crew we are delighted to see a book of this calibre been written. It is a testimony to the maritime history of the village and the volunteers who go to sea to rescue people in distress. David has ensured that the legacy of RNLI volunteers and supporters past and present will always be remembered in times eye and that the Lifeboat is an integral part of the community in Dunmore and surrounding areas.'

Dauntless Courage: Celebrating the History of the Dunmore East RNLI, their crews and the Maritime Heritage of the Local Community. All proceeds from the book will be going to the local Dunmore East Lifeboat Fundraising Branch to support the saving of lives on our seas.

For pre-orders and further information on the book please see website: www.dunmorelifeboatbook.com or email - dunmorelifeboatbook@gmail.com

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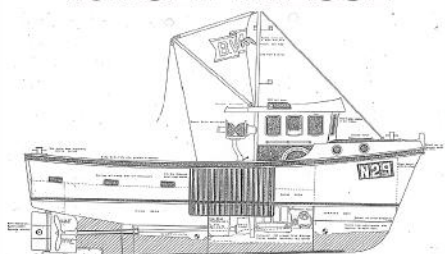
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The Next Generation at the Heart of Our Ocean's Future

The health of our ocean relies on the next generation to be ocean leaders, striving for change and inspired to work together to sustainably protect our marine resource. Many organisations across Ireland have been raising awareness about the importance of our ocean and our influence on the ocean to our young people. Now, through the Irish Ocean Literacy Network (IOLN), these organisations are working together to increase our understanding of our ocean wealth, not just in Ireland but further afield.

Our ocean is vital to life itself, providing us with more than half of the oxygen we breathe. The ocean is the world's largest ecosystem and home to nearly a million known species. As well as providing us with food, the ocean is a gateway for shipping and has an influence on our weather and climate.

Dr Noirin Burke of Galway Atlantaquaria and Co-Secretariat for the IOLN said, "While our ocean covers two-thirds of the Earth's surface, the vast majority of people know very little about our ocean and its influence on our lives. Since the Irish Ocean Literacy Network formed in 2016, we have facilitated collaborations, supported initiatives, grown our network and engaged with others to increase ocean literacy in Ireland. To ensure a healthy ocean for us now and for future generations, we all need to be better informed about how the ocean affects us and how what we do affects the oceans."

The IOLN, which involves 40 organisations and 100 individuals from industry, education, government organisations and charities, are working

together to achieve an 'Ocean Literate Society' across Ireland. An ocean literate person is someone who understands their influence on the ocean and its influence on their daily life, and can make positive choices for a sustainable ocean for the future.

In Ireland more than 12,000 primary school students each year learn about our ocean through the Marine Institute's Explorers Education Programme. Primary school students and teachers take part in marine projects, seashore safaris and have aquariums in the classroom to learn more about our ocean. The Explorers Education Programme also offers lesson plans for teachers, teacher training activities and engage families at festivals and events year-round.

Dr Paul Connolly, CEO of the Marine Institute said, "It is really important to cultivate an interest in the ocean from a young age, so that they understand how important the ocean is to our society. The Marine Institute, along with the IOLN and the Explorers Programme, aim to inspire the next generation of ocean champions,



Two-year-old Eila Murphy and mum Angela get up close to a Spider Crab demonstrated by Rory McAvinney of the Marine Institute at the Marine Institute's Wild Atlantic Expo "What Lies Beneath" at last Summer's SeaFest in Cork.

encouraging them to pursue marine and maritime careers and to become the ocean leaders and marine champions of the future."

The Marine Institute also hosted the first All Atlantic Summer School in 2019, which involved 23 Youth Ambassadors from 15 countries. The Youth Ambassadors engaged with political, social, economic and scientific leaders to develop their skills to become actors for change for the Atlantic Ocean. Following the Summer School, the ambassadors pitched their achievements and campaigns at the All Atlantic Ocean Research Forum in Brussels earlier this year.

One of Ireland's All Atlantic Ocean Youth Ambassadors Eimear Manning said, "Being part of the All Atlantic Summer School was a unique opportunity to engage with experts and leaders in ocean science, and other young ocean activists. It is so important for young people to have a voice for ocean sustainability, and be empowered to create change and share their concerns and priorities and offer suggestions and solutions."

As well as raising awareness about the importance of the ocean across Ireland, the

IOLN is now collaborating further afield, and connecting with platforms across Europe. As a member of the EuroGOOS (European Global Ocean Observing Systems) Ocean Literacy Network, the IOLN is cooperating with experts from 20 organisations across eight countries. The EuroGOOS Ocean Literacy Network aims to broaden ocean literacy efforts globally.

The IOLN also participated in the first Ocean Literacy Summit on World Oceans Day in June 2020 where the successes of the Ocean Literacy community worldwide were celebrated and shared, enabling collaborations to transform scientific knowledge into action at a local level.

"We are delighted to connect with other organisations across Europe - as a collective we can reach broader audiences and generate a larger impact. We can join our efforts in achieving ocean literacy, share knowledge and best practice, and collaborate on projects and initiatives," Dr Noirin Burke said. "After all, our ocean connects us all."

For more information on the IOLN or how to become a member, visit the IOLN website at <https://irishoceanliteracy.ie/>

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Michelle and Nicholas, with Caoimhe, Cormac and Evie Doyle. Caoimhe's picture (inset) recently won first prize in the Marine Institute's #SeatoMe competition.



Stevie "Mhaidhle" Joyce on the Winifred in Killeaney Bay - Photo by Tommy Dirrane

Lobster V-notching Scheme Now Open

The lobster V-notching scheme is now open for applications. Lobster fishing is a highly important economic activity for Irish coastal fishing communities; around 1,700 vessels target lobsters each year.

The V-notching scheme, run by BIM is helping to improve the sustainability of Ireland's lobster stock and its overall objectives are to increase the reproductive potential of the Irish lobster stock through the protection of mature female lobsters, allowing them to breed a number of times and to collect data to inform stock assessments.

The V-notching scheme is open to all owners/operators of Irish registered fishing vessels less than 15 metres in length and registered in the polyvalent (including Polyvalent-potting) segment of the Irish Fishing Boat Register. The scheme provides for grant aid to approved groups - and in exceptional cases individuals - to implement local lobster V-notching programmes.

Two levels of grant aid will be offered under the V-notching support scheme:

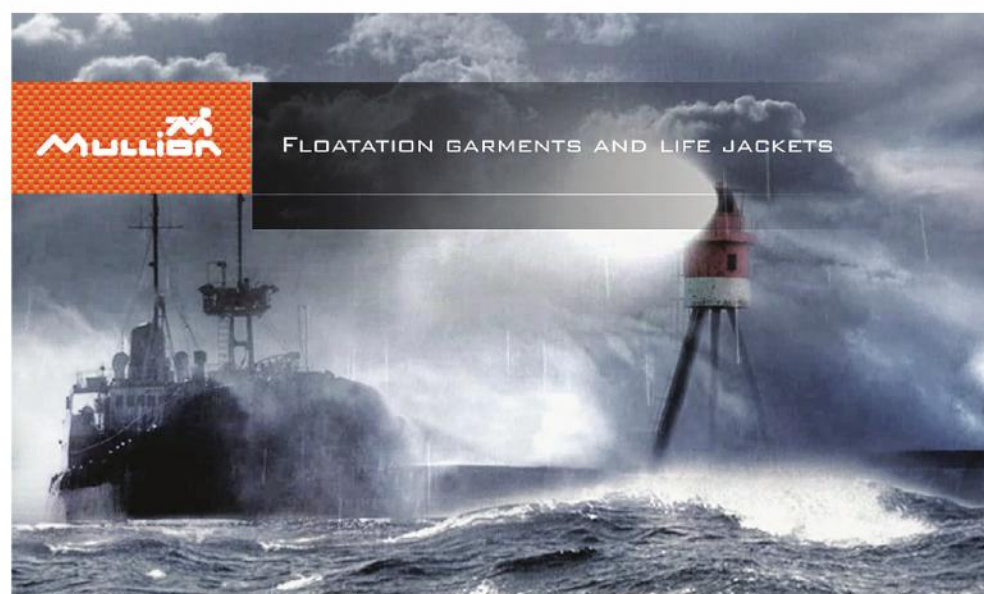
1. To an individual or group applications, involving solely vessels 12m or less and using non-towed gear - Individual applications - 70%, Group applications - 75%. In certain circumstances, agreed in advance with the managing authority, these rates may be increased to a maximum of 80%.

2. And, vessels greater than 12m and less than 15m the following rates shall apply - Individual applications - 50%, Group applications - 60%.

Funding to successful applicants will be allocated on a first come first served basis until all the allocated budget has been committed.

The scheme is now open for applications. For more

information or to get an application form go to the BIM website and download the 'V-Notching Scheme Application Form' at www.bim.ie. Alternatively, contact your BIM regional officer.



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