

# MARINE TIMES

IRELAND'S LEADING MARITIME NEWSPAPER - JUNE 2021 - PRICE €3.00



## Powerful Shot Across the Bows of the Government

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### Big Turn Out at Cork Demonstration

As dawn broke the flotilla appeared, heading for Cork Harbour. It was "like an invasion," commented one member of the public watching almost seventy fishing boats assembling at Roche's Point, the entrance to the harbour.

With the strength of their anger at the manner in which the industry has been treated by government motivating them, the boats from Dingle to Kilmore Quay, from the South West, South East and southern waters were a powerful statement that many fishermen feel they have taken enough from the State attitude and the EU. See inside this issue for more views and photos.

### Fishing Industry Expresses No Confidence in SFPA

#### Catch weighing fiasco is final straw for frustrated fishermen

The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority is not fit for purpose and needs to be reset as a matter of urgency, according to the representative groups for Ireland's fishing and fish processing industry. See page 7

Main photo - Vessels enroute to the Cork port demonstration by Bob Bateman Photography

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## the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

# Time to Reboot!

**I am reorganizing my office which involves the disposal of some out of date reading materials. I have come across a number of old BIM and other Government agency reports all trumpeting the potential for the Seafood Sector to expand and to increase its contribution to the state finances. ALL of these plans and aspirations assume a supply of Raw Materials – THAT’S FISH Lads !!!!**

During the past 20 years your quotas have gone up and down but the one thing which has remained absolutely consistent is the efforts of those who really should be encouraging the fishermen to put every barrier possible in their way.

Maybe I’m getting too old for all of this or maybe I have lost all understanding and perception of how business works.

For business to work we need the raw material, the staff / crew to develop it, the factories to carry out the process and the markets.

In the case of the Seafood Sector I believe we have all of these things on the industry side certainly.

I’m not so sure of where our Government and their various agencies fit into the plan.

We could nearly say that the sector has developed despite the best efforts of our regulators- but we are bigger than that !!!!!

Then in the business section of the Sunday Independent on 9th May two full pages were devoted to the development of the Seafood Sector with some of the agencies almost orgasmic in their enthusiasm for the development prospects.

The prospects are certainly there lads and the industry with some input from BIM have created a firm foundation on paper at least – because without fish that is where the plans will have to stay !!!!

I am very concerned about the new weighing rules which in addition to the inconvenience they cause will certainly adversely the final condition of the catch.

For years we have been pressing the crews to maximize the value of their catch by properly handling the fish immediately it taken on board.

Now we are taking the fish out of its ice wrapping to weigh it and then repacking it. Are we gone Stark Raving Mad ???

I spoke with an owner recently whose entire catch was unpacked and weighed and then packed again for transportation to Spain where they will pay top Dollar for premium fish.

Fish which has been interfered with is no longer premium fish and the markets know it !!!!

A contact of mine in Spain asked me last week if we have all gone totally mad here or have we a Death Wish for our industry.

**We are effectively offering Damaged Goods to the Market.**

How can anyone justify that????

Anyone at least with any interest in allowing the Catching Sector to be viable.

So the question must be asked - Is there anyone apart from the fishing people themselves interested in that ???

In addition to the financial costs of the additional weighing we have a human

dignity issue.

I know that the Fishermen gets very little credit for what he does – but now after spending over a week at sea- he must empty the fish and weigh each individual fish while the Fisheries Officer stands by noting the weights as they are declared.

The process could be compared to the counting of the lashes as a sailor was being punished on the Bounty. We all know what that led to !!!!!

Most of the effort of the Producers Organisations had been directed at getting increased quotas to fish which is a fair aspiration but in which we are taking on the might of the EU.

Our only real weapon in dealing with the EU is to exercise our Veto on some Law which they might consider important-like the admission of an additional member..... have we the Balls to do that??

Dealing with outside forces is important but it is becoming increasingly obvious that inside forces are eating away at the inners of the industry and I in my innocence cannot understand why.

We hear talk of previous misdemeanors - but they are in the past lads.

**The war is over and peace has been established** in places where we might have thought is impossible. Not here though certainly as far as the Fishing Industry is concerned.

Why can’t we draw a line under it here and get on with things to everyone’s benefit.

I understand that some difficulties have also emerged in the safety conditions being imposed on vessels now entering our fishing fleet.

Rules which are accepted everywhere else are not accepted here.

I suspect that phenomenon is similar to the measurement of vessels.

Why would a vessel registered in France and effectively on the EU Fishing Register grow by 15cm in the journey to Ireland.

As they say when is a Centimeter not a Centimeter

Everywhere we look there are forces conspiring against the Irish Fisherman and I don’t understand or like it.

They are not drug dealers or criminals.

They are decent people making a living and developing their industry and delivering FOOD.

YES – HEALTHY FOOD that people eat.

It stinks to High Heaven and the question must be asked what it driving our authorities here to effectively be supporting the competition.

That’s basically what it is Lads.

Pull our fleet in from an area which is still open to others is not preserving fish stocks.

Someone else will simply catch them !!!!!

Have the Sins of the Fathers been so bad that the Industry must now be sacrificed in revenge or jealousy or whatever other motive is driving things.

I absolutely believe that if the Task Group did nothing else it needs to insist that a Forensic Root and Branch Audit of the Fishing Industry and everything connected with it for the past 25 years.

That Audit needs to be carried out absolutely free and independent from interference from the Departments involved.

My mind is directed back to the now famous Beef Tribunal which exposed many things. I think that one of the big issues at that time though was that subsidies were being paid on beef being exported with a direct cost to the Taxpayer.

One of my clients in the Inshore Fleet in a desperate E Mail to me some weeks ago wondered if “we need protection from our own Government.”

Again I say the only way to establish the rights and wrongs is through a completely independent Investigation which neither the industry or the Departments should have anything to worry about assuming they have nothing to hide or be ashamed of ????

There will be rights and wrongs on both sides so lets get them out in the open and clear the Air so we can have an Industry into which the various operators have invest huge financial, personal and safety capital.

We need to Reboot here lads before it’s too late.



A recent visitor from Scotland to Ballycotton, MFV Acciona alongside local inshore vessel Emma Lou. Photo courtesy Brian Motyer

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# Powerful Shot Across the Bows of the Government Big Turn Out at Cork Demonstration

As dawn broke the flotilla appeared, heading for Cork Harbour. It was “like an invasion,” commented one member of the public watching almost seventy fishing boats assembling at Roche’s Point, the entrance to the harbour.

With the strength of their anger at the manner in which the industry has been treated by government motivating them, the boats from Dingle to Kilmore Quay, from the South West, South East and southern waters were a powerful statement that many fishermen feel they have taken enough from the State attitude and the EU.

Miserable quotas insufficient to maintain the Irish fleet, further reduced by Brexit and the dominance of the EU by nations such as France, Belgium; the reintroduction without discussion with the industry of penalty points and the withdrawal, without prior notice and insufficient evidence to prove the claimed allegations made by the EU with regards to the weighing of fish, all combined to lead to the staging of the demonstration.

There had been prior discussion with the Cork Port authorities and Gardai to arrange the “show and tell demonstration” which was intended to convey to the public what the industry has suffered.

Participation in the demonstration required a considerable commitment from fishing boats which sailed long distances to take part at Cork.

“A gentle but powerful shot across the bows of the Minister for the Marine,” was how it was described by Cormac Burke, Chairman of the Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance.

The media was told that Minister Charlie McConalogue would work with the industry to respond to their problems, but that did not impress those taking part in the demonstration.

There was clear anger amongst fishermen, their families and supporters, against the government and no doubt about the message – the Government is seen by the industry as anti-fishing, prepared to damage it and coastal communities.

That allegation was repeatedly made at the demonstration and conveyed also in the

submission handed into Taoiseach Micheál Martin’s constituency office when, after a rally and speeches on the city quayside in Cork, the fishermen marched to his office at Evergreen Road.

“We are seeking public support to save our fishing industry. There should be a renegotiation of the Common Fisheries Policy so that Ireland is allocated a fair

share of fish quotas that reflect the contribution of our fishing grounds to the EU,” was the strong message delivered. “The CFP is supposed to be a fair distribution of a common resource, but it is not to Irish fishermen who are the most badly treated in Europe.”

The disastrous Brexit outcome has faced the industry with a situation that leaves non-Irish EU boats with the biggest rights to catch fish in Irish waters.

The Taoiseach and government Ministers have acknowledged that Ireland got the worst possible deal of all EU nations from the Brexit outcome, but despite commitments and promises to seek to rectify that situation, they have achieved no improvement from the EU.

“Despite all their promises, the government has not achieved any improvement in the situation. The EU has continued to support the bigger fishing nations in exploiting Irish waters,” according to the Irish South and West Fish Producers’ Organisation which organised the “show and tell demonstration” to bring their case to public attention.

“This Irish natural resource is the major support for other EU nations, but not for Ireland. The government allows that to happen and is not doing enough to protect coastal communities in Cork and elsewhere around the country, so we have to show the public what our situation is.”

“We are disgusted that it had to come to this, that as fishermen of long experience our communities are being destroyed, by both the government and our so-called allies in Europe who are the worst problem

now because they have the biggest quotas,” said Seamus O’Flaherty from Kilmore Quay in County Wexford, from where several beamers joined the demonstration. For example, Belgians have twenty times the quota Irish fishermen have in our own waters for black sole. How did that happen? Where were our negotiators? Where is our government in protecting and helping Irish fishermen?”

“There is a time to say ‘no’ and it is time to say ‘no’ to the EU and the way they have treated the Irish fishing industry,” said Caitlin Ui Aodha from the Irish South and East FPO.

Fianna Fáil TD Christopher O’Sullivan from the Cork South West Constituency which includes Castletownbere, headquarters base of the demonstration organisers, the South and West FPO, implied criticism of government policy when he made a speech at the rally during the demonstration and said: “What’s happened to the fishing sector is wrong, whatever way you look at it.”

As a backbencher he might not have

great influence in higher party levels or in government, a point made by others, but he said he would take back to the Taoiseach what he had seen and heard, of which the main topic was strong criticism of government.

Also a TD for that constituency is Independent Michael Collins who told the rally of the difficulties he continues to find in trying to raise fisheries issues in the Dáil. He was critical of what had been said by Deputy O’Sullivan: “The root of the problem is the political parties who have turned their backs on fishermen. They have no interest in protecting fishermen, they sold fishermen out to the highest bidders. They have done that to fishermen.”

Patrick Murphy, CEO, Irish South and West summed it all up when he closed the rally with the words: “There is no way the fishing industry and the coastal communities will stand idly by and allow the government to destroy them. The government should take note of that.”

More demonstrations are not ruled out.



Pamela Deasy with her nephews Fintan and Oisín Deasy supporting their dad Niall. They are the 5th generation of Deasys destined for the sea. Inset photos from the demonstration courtesy Rose Hooper and Tom MacSweeney.

# Protest Must Be A Wakeup Call for the Government

Sinn Féin spokesperson on Fisheries and the Marine, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn TD, has stated that the flotilla of protesting fishers in Cork has to be a “wakeup call” for the Minister for the Marine, Charlie McConalogue and the government.

Teachta Mac Lochlainn said: “This protest will come as no surprise to anyone who has been paying attention to our fishing communities across the State. There was already outrage at the outcome of the Brexit EU/UK Trade Agreement, that took even more fish quota away from our Irish fishers.

“But the final straw has been the recent wilful failure of the Minister and the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) to defend the integrity of our Irish seafood industry, in the face of unpublished allegations by the EU Commission that there has been substantial overfishing and illegality in the industry.

“This failure to defend our industry has led to the EU Commission withdrawing the fishing Control Plan and insisting that all fish are weighed at piers and harbours across the State rather than at the factories.

“This is not just a huge inconvenience to our fishers; it also impacts on the freshness and the quality of our seafood product in a demanding international market.

“It is a standard not demanded of fishers

from other EU States as they land in their own piers and harbours.

“This protest in Cork must act as a wakeup call for Minister McConalogue and the government.

“The Minister recently engaged with fishers and fish producers around the coast in online meetings.

“He should have no doubt of what he needs to do. It’s time for our government and State agencies like the SFPA to show an urgency and a respect for our fishers and fish producers.

“They need to stand up for them in Europe.

“They need to speak the truth about the injustice of the huge amounts of fish taken from Irish waters over the years by the fishing fleets of other EU States, to the real detriment of the Irish coastal communities staring out at those waters.

“They need to demand fairness rather than to meekly allow our industry to be isolated, criminalised and unjustly punished.”



## YOUR INDUSTRY NEEDS YOU!

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

Established on February 12<sup>th</sup> this year as an independent nationwide voice for the fishing and seafood sectors in a bid to highlight this Government’s disgraceful neglect of Ireland’s marine resources and of the heritage and traditional rights of coastal regions, the IFSA has gained huge support already and has a strong social media following on the IFSA facebook group and the [www.irishfishingseafoodalliance.org](http://www.irishfishingseafoodalliance.org) website.

In a great show of unity, over 80 fishing vessels of all sizes and types, including inshore potters and trawlers, dredgers, demersal, polyvalent and pelagic boats have so far subscribed, making this organisation the largest vessel membership representative industry group in Ireland.

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

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

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

Bank details below and when you make a payment, please email [ifsacormac@gmail.com](mailto:ifsacormac@gmail.com) and a formal receipt will be issued for your files.

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



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Photos by Tom MacSweeney, Cormac Burke (IFSA) and Darren Lane Photography

# KFO Challenges Marine Minister on Penalty Points

## Demands Fair, Balanced and Equitable Administration

The KFO accepts the principle of Penalty Points for Serious Fishing Infringements both for the owners and the masters / skippers of fishing vessels, as per the EU and the requirement on Ireland to implement these measures, the Organisation's Chief Executive, Sean O'Donoghue told the Joint Committee on Agriculture and the Marine when fishing organisation leaders met it about the Sea Fisheries (Amendment) Bill 2021.

"However," he said, the KFO "will only accept a system of administrating penalty points that is – fair, balanced and equitable to all and in no way infringes on the rights of the individual fisher and or his/her livelihood and furthermore that it is in keeping with our common law principles.

"We do not accept that an individual has not the right of appeal to the High Court other than on a point of law. This matter is referenced in the Supreme Court decision following a previous case, the Supreme Court ruling clearly permitted for such a right on the basis that the sanction can eventually lead to removal of an individual's livelihood, therefore it is a realistic expectation of the citizen to have recourse to the courts.

"We fully accept that the points assigned to the master remain on the master's registration document until such time as the matter is finally determined by the High Court. Therefore, we are at a loss as to why the Minister is unable to allow the right of appeal to the High Court only on a point of law as there is no possible way in which this could be used as a delaying tactic, due to the fact points remain assigned to the master's registration document until the High Court determines the case before it. In such serious matters as penalty points, which can ultimately lead to the complete removal of an individual's livelihood then the right of appeal must be afforded to the individual, as a right without restriction.

"This is in keeping with our firm belief that as a right - recourse to the High Court must be guaranteed for the individual once the prescribed appeals mechanisms

contained within the Bill are exhausted. We cannot support a Bill, that has the potential cumulative long-term effect of removing an individual's income without him or her having recourse to the courts – bearing in mind our earlier acceptance that penalty points remain applied until the courts finally determine the case.

"Penalty Points must be allowed to be removed if the High Court rules in favour of the master. It is an incredible proposal that penalty points can remain on a master's registration document even when the court determines that they be removed, the reasoning for this defies logic. We do not accept that any law which has potentially serious consequences such as penalty points for serious fishing infringements; whereby the entire livelihood could be removed from the individual is based on a lesser burden of proof i.e., balance of probabilities rather than beyond a reasonable doubt."

Mr. O'Donoghue also told the Committee that it was a "serious anomaly" that the Bill as it stands only applies to Irish and EU- flagged fishing vessels as UK, Norwegian and Faroese vessels fishing in our EEZ are not covered and the penalty points system does not apply to these Third Countries vessels. As the UK is a Third Country since the first of January it exacerbates the situation with a large number of UK vessels fishing on the same grounds as our vessels but the penalty points system will not apply to them.

"This is contrary to one of the cornerstones of the EU Control Regulation which requires the implementation of an effective control system and the establishment of level playing field in control and enforcement amongst fishers."



**Bairds Smooth-head, *Alepocephalus bairdii* a deep water species (identified by Dr Declan Quigley in Howth). Caught by the Shauna Ann in ICES 6A North of Donegal. Measuring almost 1m long. The fish whilst not that rare, eats benthic jellyfish but its unusual to get one in such good condition. The specimen is going to the Natural History Museum in Dublin. Photos by Gerry McLoughlin (Shauna Ann)**

# Spanish Vessel Was Operating Inside 12-Mile Limit in Bantry Bay Attempted Ramming Alleged to "Intimidate Irish Fishermen"

## Spanish Challenge to Irish Authorities to Enforce Regulations

Report: Tom MacSweeney

**On Friday morning, May 28, a Spanish-registered vessel was "operating" within Bantry Bay in West Cork, clearly within the Irish 12-mile nautical limit.**

That has been acknowledged by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority and raises the issue of what further action will be taken about it.

The Spanish vessel has been identified on video taken by the Castletownbere trawler, *Lours de Mer*, the Skipper and crew of which alleged that it attempted to ram them.

The Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation described the incident as "intimidation".

It was filmed by the crew of the Irish trawler and shows the Spanish vessel coming dangerously close to the Irish boat.

The Irish skipper can be heard radio-ing the other vessel and telling them to 'stay away from us' as the foreign trawler – believed to be Spanish – is getting increasingly close.

The incident happened two days after fishermen staged a demonstration in Cork protesting at the dominant quotas held by non-Irish EU vessels in Irish waters.

"This was an attempt to force Irish boats off our own grounds. It is clear intimidation. Our authorities must take action against this vessel acting extremely dangerously at sea and endangering life," Patrick Murphy told the MARINE TIMES. "It is appalling. Gardai act on land when life is threatened. This was a threat to life at sea so action must be taken against the vessel which tried to do the ramming. The boat should be arrested and stopped from fishing in Irish waters."

Mr. Murphy said he had called the Chair of the SFPA, Susan Steele and asked for the SFPA to take immediate action.

Operating within the 12-mile limit and inside Bantry Bay constitutes a situation which requires decisive action, according to Irish fishermen.

The SFPA issued the following statement to the MARINE TIMES after this paper asked what action would be taken:

"The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority are aware of a situation that arose this morning when a Spanish registered vessel was encountered by an Irish-registered vessel operating within the waters of Bantry

Bay and therefore within the IRL 12 nautical mile limit. The situation continues to be closely monitored by the National Fisheries Monitoring Centre at the Naval Base, Haulbowline."

Having received that statement, the MARINE TIMES further asked the SFPA:

"What exactly is being done? 'Monitoring' what because the incident ended. Is the alleged offender being pursued? Will action be taken against the vessel? There is an allegation of intimidation and dangerous action at sea. Is this being investigated in a manner similar to an investigation of a land bound incident if reported to Gardai?"

• At the time of going to print an answer to these further questions was awaited.

Navy sources said they had checked and spoken to the *Lours de Mer* and were continuing investigations.

Dr. Susan Steele, Chair of the SFPA, has been appointed Executive Director of the European Fisheries Control Agency. She is due to take up the post in September. The EFCA's primary role is

to organise co-ordination and co-operation between national control and inspection activities, ensuring the rules of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy are "respected and applied effectively".

"The 12-nautical mile limit gives exclusive rights to Irish registered fishing vessels to fish in those waters. Between six and twelve miles some fishing vessels, flying the flags of the U.K., France, Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany, have historical fishing rights." This is the definition of the limit, published by the Irish Naval Service in Data.Gov.IE

Spanish vessels do not have rights to fish within this limit. There were unconfirmed reports that the Spanish vessel had cut longlines away after the incident.

Nautical miles limits extend from the baseline of a coastal state.

The incident presents a challenge to Irish authorities to show their capability to enforce fisheries regulations on non-Irish vessels.



# Letters to the Editor

## The Business of Fishing

Editor  
Marine Times Newspaper

Dear Sir,

Irish fishermen all around the coast are the primary producers in a billion euro business. Hardworking generations of men and women; boat owners, skippers, deckhands, engineers, processors and a new generation of aquaculture entrepreneurs risk their lives and livelihoods to bring ashore some of the best food that any human being will ever eat, fresh from the deep blue sea.

On this island we are uniquely positioned to harness the knowledge we have gained over hundreds of years at sea. Irish Fishermen know how to work in tandem with the sea. They take what nature provides but leave what nature needs, in much the same way as those on land each year harvest the fruit that nature provides, but leave the trees.

Irish fishermen know that next year is only a heartbeat away. Fish stocks are tomorrow's bread, and must be conserved.

I have never met an Irish fisherman who wanted to fish out the seas around our island. Irish fishermen are conservationists by nature, by their very pedigree. What would their sons catch in the future if they fished out the seas now? Who would take over their boats when they retire?

The trouble is that Irish fishermen and all their boats don't matter. Even if they doubled in size, they would still be virtually irrelevant, from a conservation standpoint that is.

Given that Irish fishermen land a single figure percentage of the fish in Irish waters, while other nationalities each land multiples of that, even a small child could quickly work out where the vast majority of fisheries protection activities would need to be directed in order to ensure conservation of stocks in our waters.

Has the authority tasked with conserving stocks in Irish waters got the resources and the political backing from the European Union to do the job effectively?

Can they make the kinds of decisions that even the aforementioned child might make, such as deciding that for a period of a year or two they would count out every fish caught every week by the nationalities with the largest fleets in Irish waters? Would there be loud objections from Europe?

The European Union has provided significant funds for the upgrading and extension of some ports and harbours in Ireland.

Who did they build these new piers for?

Was it for the Irish fleet?

Let's face it. A port in Ireland is no longer an Irish port. It is a European port. If the European nations that land most of the fish caught in Irish waters, (or European waters to give them their politically correct title), want a pier extension on the most western island of the EU, then they will just build it.

They will of course dress it up as a marvellous bonus and benefit for Ireland that they are giving us as a favour. And the worst thing is that as a nation we will largely believe it, and for a while even be delighted at all the concrete and steel we will sell them and the months of digger and lorry hire that an Irish contractor will get.

But soon the construction work will be finished. Soon the lorries on the new pier will be different lorries. They will arrive here every week full of oranges and leave this country in the night, full of the best of fish, caught in the

'European Waters' to the west of Ireland. They will be whisked away before anybody can even say Adios.

How can the authorities tasked with conserving stocks in Irish waters be sure that the fisheries protection authorities in the destination countries for these lorries will be as zealous in their controls as they would need to be?

Europe has spent a lot of money building these piers. They want to get their money back as quickly as they can; lorry load by lorry load.

### Hard to Believe it but .....

A photo sent to us in late April of Castletownbere by Reddy Whelan elicited quite a bit of anger – who would have thought a photo of the back of some trucks could create such a stir on our social feeds. The photo also appeared on the Nick's Fish of Ashbourne Facebook page – it was shared over 1,800 times amongst their followers. They contacted us here in the Marine Times commenting on the photo and its meaning to them .....



"This photo displays 13 Spanish lorries waiting to fill up with fish caught in Irish waters and landed into Irish ports, unchecked while Irish boats must weigh their catches on the quay side. Something is very wrong that this can happen, nothing here for the Irish economy, full trucks head for Rosslare and then for Spain full of fish that should be available for Irish fishermen to catch.

"If the Spanish fishing industry was in the state of ours do you think they'd be allowing Irish lorries and boats to freely take all their fish with not a single politician opening their mouths?

"I think that we are the only processor (that I can see) that has posted anything up about it. The industry lacks support, especially from processors back to our fishermen, its always been like that. Nobody wants to open their mouth in fear the SFPA will come down hard on them, but we've always made our opinions known.

"We tried to explain the magnitude of these trucks to someone one day so we related the following: **On the same road on the same day you could have a truck loaded up with fresh hake from Irish waters headed for Spain pass a truck load of frozen hake fillets from Namibia heading for an Irish processing factory!**

"It really makes no sense at all and it's in fact sad to see that's how it is."

Although we remain a sovereign nation, the reality of joining any political block is that economic interests are largely divided up at central level. Some of our European neighbours fully understood the asset that they acquired when we agreed to sign over Irish waters to Europe several decades ago. Very few Irish people understood then the value of what was being given away.

I think I only fully understood it myself a few weeks ago when I watched a long line of Spanish lorries on a new Irish pier with their engines revving, as the cranes swung the fish boxes straight from trawler to trailer, and this long line of lorries made straight for the ferry to the continent.

How would any authority even know whether or not this vast quantity of fish was within the prescribed quotas?

Is the whole system set up in such a way as that they cannot know?

Surely a better deal can be done on renegotiating the Common Fisheries Policy if Irish fishermen unite to inform the public of just what exactly we as a nation are allowing to happen every day and night of the year.

Lorry load by lorry load.....

Yours sincerely  
Sean Moroney  
Kilmore Quay  
[www.thefishersvoice.com](http://www.thefishersvoice.com)

### Coastal Town-Hall Webinar

Editor,  
Marine Times Newspaper

Dear Sir,

The following is my response to the Minister and the above webinar which took place this evening.

I attended the above webinar with some interest as I have been involved in the fishing industry in Donegal for over forty years. I am disgusted with the attitude of Government to the resource and its condescending attitude to all those involved in the industry.

Since our membership of the EEC began in 1973 it has been a continual betrayal of the people of Ireland, declining stocks, declining quotas, declining access to the resource itself. At the same time virtually unhindered access has been given to our EU 'partners' who have decimated the resource with little or no control.

Irish vessels face enforcement of regulations at sea and upon landing while vessels from France and Spain continue to land into Irish ports unchecked and unhindered. The situation that pertains in this country would not be tolerated in France, Spain or any other EU state for more than one day!

The Government of this country should stand in shame, the fisheries of this country are a shambles due to total mismanagement by successive Irish Governments and the rape of the resource by vessels from other EU states.

The fishery off the West Coast of Ireland is the equivalent of the Grand Banks of North America and it has been brought to the point of no recovery by the pillage of EU fleets; all to no direct benefit to the Irish state.

The answer to this decline from the Irish Government seems to be to force the Irish fishing fleet to the point of collapse, whilst watching the EU fleet continue to destroy the fisheries.

It is time for the Marine Minister from this state to stand up for the rights of his own population and for the future of this country's resources, European solidarity and unity is a nice ideal but not at any cost. Hang your head in shame Minister and grow a set of balls!!!

Yours sincerely  
Adrian Molloy,  
Kilcar,  
Co. Donegal  
[www.tuna.ie](http://www.tuna.ie)

# MARINE TIMES

## NEWSPAPER FOR IRELAND'S FISHING, MARINE AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES



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### What Are Micheál Martin, Leo Vardakar and Eamon Ryan Going to Do to Right This Wrong?

“What’s happened to the fishing sector is wrong, whatever way you look at it.”

The fishing industry has no disagreement with that statement. It was spoken at the Cork fisheries demonstration by a Fianna Fáil T.D. It is regrettable that neither Taoiseach Micheál Martin nor his Marine Minister, Charlie McConalogue, has made such a clear, unambiguous statement.

Backbencher Christopher O’Sullivan represents the Cork South/West constituency, which includes the major fishing port of Castletownbere, so he was watching his Dáil seat, but his words can be taken to indicate that his party, in government, has wronged the fishing industry.

The Cork fishermen’s demonstration was a strong, public declaration that the industry will be more outspoken and determined in its own defence. It showed that government no longer has the support of a wide spectrum of the fishing sector.

The government should take notice. Because of its failure to support, develop and structurally assist the industry, it could become the government which wiped out Irish fishing. That is not scare-mongering. At the Cork demonstration young fishermen, the lifeblood of the industry, said they had little confidence there was a future for them, even though they wanted to carry on the tradition and culture of fishing, the vital, life-sustaining base of the coastal communities.

The problems were clearly identified at demonstration. They can be summed-up in a few words: The Irish government has given away a natural resource, an industry with considerable economic potential, to other European nations.

Governance, management and support systems of the State do not support fishing. They are geared more to its destruction rather than ensuring a sustainable, fair and equitable industry. That must be changed.

The closest the government has come to acknowledging the damage done to the industry has been statements by the Taoiseach and Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Marine that Ireland got a very bad deal at the Brexit negotiations, regretting that had happened and giving undertakings, upon which they have not delivered, to remedy the biased and discriminatory attitude the European Commission has shown towards the Irish industry.

What are Micheál Martin, Leo Varadkar and Eamon Ryan, the leaders of the nation going to do to correct this wrong?



The next generation (hopefully) delivering their message to the Taoiseach’s constituency office during the recent demonstration in the Port of Cork - Photo by Pamela Deasy

# Fishing Industry Expresses No Confidence in SFPA

## Catch weighing fiasco is final straw for frustrated fishermen

The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority is not fit for purpose and needs to be reset as a matter of urgency, according to the representative groups for Ireland’s fishing and fish processing industry.

Speaking ahead of a Joint Oireachtas Committee hearing, industry representatives were scathingly critical of the organisation, which was established as independent statutory body responsible for the regulation of the sea-fisheries and the seafood production sectors but has failed miserably to do this in an effective manner. As a consequence, it has effectively wreaked havoc upon the industry.

The most recent example involves Irish fishermen, who were left completely stunned and extremely annoyed at changes in practices around weighing catch on piers which were foisted on the industry with zero consultation from 13<sup>th</sup> April last, based on a European Commission Decision.

“We are simply flabbergasted that this bewildering move which has such a direct and draconian impact on all aspects of Irish fisheries, could be considered without any advance notice. Moreover, we have not been given access to any information to justify this crude action by the Commission. In fact, we have been explicitly denied access to any reports or correspondence between the Commission, DAFM and the SFPA on this issue.”

“This ‘bombshell’ has the potential to have a massive negative impact on the

pelagic, demersal and shellfish sectors and will not be accepted by industry. We are calling on our line Minister and wider Government as well as the SFPA to immediately put right this ludicrous scenario which they should not have created in the first instance” stated the five organisations.

The committee will also probe the findings of a PwC report into the organisational capability of the SFPA published last year, which found that: “the SFPA is not working effectively and requires urgent attention.... Relationships and trust have been impacted by a range of issues.... Relationships with various stakeholders, to lesser or greater degrees, are challenging. These issues are impacting performance and the organisation is not operating as a cohesive unit.... In the short term, this will require the SFPA to reset the dial, both in terms of the strategic plan for the organisation and its interactions with staff and stakeholders. This is critical.”

This joint statement was issued on behalf of the Killybegs Fishermen’s Organisation (KFO), Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO), Irish South and East Fish Producers Organisation (ISEFPO), the Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation (ISWFPO) and the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association (IFPEA).



Celtic Oriel steaming south by the Rockabill - Photo courtesy Richard Guildea

## The South - West View



**Patrick Murphy**  
CEO Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation

*"This contribution to the Marine Times is done so after an extremely busy week for many of us in the Irish South and West, a week where we witnessed unity within our industry," says Patrick Murphy, Chief Executive of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation in Castletownbere, following the successful fishermen's demonstration in Cork.*

## This is the Beginning of a Campaign

This has given me an overwhelming feeling of pride in my fellow fishermen, giving me an emotional boost so badly needed following the harrowing effects of ever-worsening storms, Covid pandemic, introduction of unjust legislation, displacement of vessels into our already crowded waters, the horrific loss of our natural resources and the attack on our right to protect the hard-earned reputation of premium quality fish by forcing us to de-ice our fish to weigh them on our piers, all in the last year inflicting such damage on our Industry that it risks our very futures.

This is the beginning of a campaign where our Organisation is asking the people of our coastal communities to stand together to fight for the survival of our right to work live and raise our families like our fathers and mothers did before us - working so hard to give us our right to earn a living from the land and the sea.

I wish to personally thank the Port of Cork for their hospitality and assistance in facilitating the peaceful Show and Tell event held on Kennedy Quay on May 26; the Garda officers that came to ensure all participants felt safe and welcome so that we could put on our rally to highlight the current plight of our Industry and the communities from where we operate; their escort through the city ensuring all those who marched to hand in to the Taoiseach's office our 7 issues we feel need to be addressed immediately by our Taoiseach if our industry is to survive at its current low numbers.

### Irish Fishing Industry Issues for Government & EU Commission

- Re-negotiation of Common Fisheries Policy so that Ireland is allocated a fair share of fish quotas that reflect the contribution of our fishing grounds to the EU.
- The Brexit TCA Agreement

between EU and UK was both unfair and unjust and penalised Ireland's fishing industry. There must be equal Burden Sharing throughout the Member States.

- On Enforcement, we submit that Penalty Points for fisheries offences should only be applied to License Holders & Skippers following a Court Conviction.
- The revoking of Ireland's Fish Landing Control Plan by the EU Commission impacting the reputation of the entire Irish Fishing Industry must not be allowed to destroy Ireland's reputation in the production of Premium Quality Fish. This must be reversed with immediate effect.
- Traditional access to our fishing grounds at Rockall must be reinstated by EU negotiation with Scotland as requested by Ireland.
- The Migrant Workers Atypical Scheme governing non- EU/EEA Fishers must be reviewed to ensure a level playing-pitch for all those working in the Irish Fishing Industry & Agri-food sector.
- Brexit Adjustment Reserve Fund – now known as the BAR Fund – of which €1.2 Billion is said to be available to Ireland must be used to redress the damage to the Irish Fishing Industry caused by the unfair

loss of quota. A compensation package to be assessed and paid on the basis of the loss of earnings that will accrue from generation to generation and year after year into the future must be put in place by Government.

### Thanks From The Irish South & West

The Directors of the Irish South and West wish to thank every vessel, their crew and the families who sailed and drove to

Cork to support our event.

We all wish to thank all the media for their coverage of the event.

I wish to say to all those who read this article: **Please support your communities, support those who are working to support you and let's honour, those who have gone before us and been taken by the sea, by uniting to save our Industry.**

## €120m Green Energy Facility for Cork Hydrogen to decarbonise Cork's lower harbour

From the fishing port of Ballycotton in East Cork, Pearse Flynn once tried fishing. Coming from a fishing family that was not unexpected, but he switched to business and, in recent months, has announced a string of developments in Cork. The latest is his plan for what he describes as "Ireland's first Green Hydrogen facility."

His Green Rebel Group was established "to service the future needs of offshore wind farms" and bought Crosshaven Boatyard in Cork Harbour to serve as a base to survey, equip and service a network of planned wind farms. An investment of €10 million has included the purchase of two ships and a survey plane to service the "emerging industry."

The Green energy company - EI-H2 – which has been set up has announced it will seek planning permission for Ireland's first Green Hydrogen facility at Aghada in East Cork on the harbour shoreline. A 50MW electrolysis plant is proposed. The ESB already has a power station that was supplied by natural gas from Kinsale Head and it is near to the Whitegate Oil Refinery. When operational, the company says it will "remove 63,000 tonnes of carbon emissions annually from Irish industry and power generation. The site will be one of the biggest green energy facilities of its kind in the world. Over 85 full-time direct and indirect jobs will be created. The cost of construction and connection to the electricity grid is predicted in the region of €120m with the intention of being operational before the end of 2023.

"We chose Cork's Lower Harbour for its strategic location. The facility is designed to assist commercial customers to reduce carbon output. The technology being planned allows for surplus electricity from renewable generation, particularly offshore wind, to be utilised in a process of electrolysis to break down water into its component elements of hydrogen and oxygen," says Flynn.

The aim is to provide over 20 tonnes

of green, safe hydrogen per day to the commercial market. The green hydrogen produced at the plant can be safely added to existing natural gas supplies, helping high volume energy producers to reduce their carbon emissions.

"Ireland is starting to take leadership in tackling climate change. The production of hydrogen from excess wind capacity will play a significant role in Ireland's decarbonisation. Ireland could be generating 8 GW of offshore wind by 2030. There inevitably will be 'curtailed' energy that will go to waste unless we find ways of using it. EI-H2 will allow industry to decarbonise, creating and sustaining local jobs and helping Ireland meet its international obligations on climate change."

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, also a Dail Deputy for Cork South Central constituency which takes in part of the harbour area, was present for the announcement of the project: "Every business in Ireland should be looking at ways to decarbonise. The production of green hydrogen using surplus wind energy is one way that we can help put Ireland on a solid environmental footing."

Flynn has been working closely with Energy Services, founded by Tom Lynch, who has been appointed CEO of EI-H2. Lynch has advised utilities and the banking sector on projects in Central and South-East Asia and Middle East

EI-H2 is to have pre-planning discussions with Cork County Council, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and other interested parties ahead of the formal lodging of planning permission later this year.



Demonstration flotilla - Photo by Bob Bateman



# Supporting the industry



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# Shining a Light on Irish Fisheries Conservation Work

Dr Ronán Cosgrove, Fisheries Conservation Manager, BIM



Foyle Warrior - Photo by Mark Daly

Fisheries discards have been high on the public agenda in recent months. Despite a slew of factual inaccuracies, the Netflix 'Seaspiracy' opinion piece has raised awareness around discards and other fisheries environmental challenges. The Journal.ie also published a recent exposé on discards – an age-old fisheries issue.

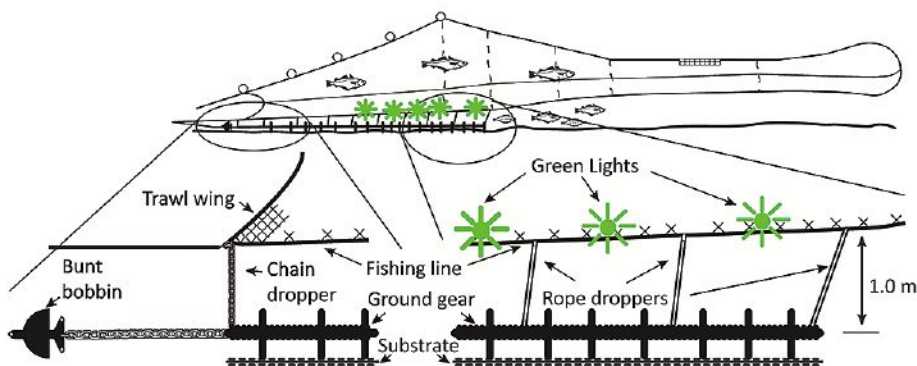
The Journal article focused on discard figures from an Irish report to the EC on implementation of the landing obligation in 2019. Unfortunately, no mention was made of the technical solutions developed by

the Irish Industry and BIM to reduce such unwanted catches, thereby omitting an important part of the picture on Irish fisheries conservation and sustainability.

A total of nine Irish solutions have been



Patrick McClenaghan and Martin Oliver with the lights which were placed on the Foyle Warrior's gear (diagram highlights placement of lights on the Raised Fishing Line)



implemented in EC legislation in response to the landing obligation with two more currently under review. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but measures such as the 300 mm square-mesh panel (SMP) and survival exemption in the Nephrops fishery greatly reduce unwanted catches and are now widely used and availed of. T90 mesh is increasingly deployed by seiners and trawlers targeting whitefish. In addition to being a highly effective conservation measure for undersize fish, T90 enhances fish quality and value, important attributes given the range of ongoing challenges affecting fisheries profitability.

As outlined in the landing obligation report, 2019 was a particularly good year for development and implementation of Irish technical solutions such as the dual codend in the Nephrops fishery; cuckoo ray survivability; 120 mm diamond-mesh codend, 90 mm T90 codend, and staggered or raised-fishing line (RFL) for mixed demersal fish.

The RFL was tested and developed by BIM and Industry through a series of field trials and a flume tank workshop. The gear significantly reduced low quota cod and plaice, undersize whiting and haddock, and skates and rays by allowing them escape at the mouth of the trawl. Importantly, catches of market-sized whiting and haddock were maintained.

Implemented in the Celtic Sea since last year, the RFL avoids the need for fishery closures so is of benefit to fishers as well as fish stocks. Like fishing, fine-tuning gear to optimise catch performance

forms an important part of the gear technology process. Recent research in a US shrimp fishery showed how artificial light can influence fish behaviour and reduce unwanted catches at the mouth of the trawl, suggesting potential application to the RFL.

Led by BIM's Martin Oliver, a preliminary trial on the effect of lights on the RFL was carried out in April in collaboration with Patrick McClenaghan Jnr. and crew of the MFV Foyle Warrior. The vessel targeted

mixed demersal fish species in the Celtic Sea using RFL gear with and without green LED lights, supplied by SafetyNet Technologies and Lindgren Pitman. Arrays of 10 lights were mounted on the fishing line with species catch weights recorded by the crew in line with COVID-19 sampling protocols.

Haddock, the main species encountered during the trial, clearly displayed a negative reaction to the lights. Substantially more haddock were caught when the escape gap was illuminated while substantially less haddock were caught when the fishing line or main body of the trawl was lit up. As expected, very few cod were caught with the RFL gear. The lights had minimal impact on whiting although catches of this species were low given the use of a 110 mm codend with a 160 mm SMP in line with current legal requirements. These different behavioural reactions to light are in line with preliminary findings from ongoing Scottish lab experiments.

Our results are encouraging given that quotas are substantially higher for whiting compared with haddock in the Celtic Sea. Codend and SMP mesh sizes have crept upwards in response to mixed species stock advice to the point where the commercial viability of a directed Celtic Sea whiting fishery is currently questionable.

The RFL is a proven cod avoidance measure. More comprehensive testing is needed but incorporating underwater lights

on the RFL seems to have great potential for minimising haddock catch. Effective avoidance of these low quota species at the trawl mouth would help towards a case for codend meshes which retain commercially viable quantities of whiting. A previous gear trial on the MFV Foyle Fisher demonstrated extremely good whiting selectivity and quality using 80 mm T90 mesh – worth a potential revisit in future RFL trials.

BIM would like to thank Patrick McClenaghan Jnr. and crew of the MFV Foyle Warrior for a

successful collaboration. We also wish to pass on our sincere condolences to the McClenaghan family on the recent passing of Patrick McClenaghan Sr., a great fisherman and a true champion of Irish fisheries conservation work.

**This work is supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Funding. A full trial report is available at: [www.bim.ie/publications/fisheries](http://www.bim.ie/publications/fisheries)**

## Recent Irish Technical Measures

### Nephrops

- 300 mm SMP ✓
- SELTRA ✓
- Sorting Grid ✓
- Dual codend ✓

### Whitefish

- 90 mm T90 ✓
- 100 mm T90 Review ✓
- 120 mm diamond ✓
- Raised-Fishing Line ✓

### Survivability exemptions

- Nephrops ✓
- Cuckoo ray (temporary) ✓
- Seine-caught plaice Review ✓

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# Collins Slams Taoiseach and Minister for Abandonment of Fishing Sector

## Government throws the Irish sector under the bus and protects interests of other member states

Cork South West Deputy Michael Collins has accused both the Taoiseach and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine of gross negligence and failing in their duty to protect the Irish Fishing sector.

Rural Independent TD Michael Collins stated: "Again, in the Dáil, I challenged the Taoiseach, the Minister and the SFPA on their campaign of imposing far reaching and destructive policies on the entire Irish fishing sector, wreaking turmoil.

"The Taoiseach showed absolutely no interest in listening to these deeply held and genuine concerns, which have been created by his own government, while the Minister, responsible for fisheries, acts as a casual observer, more interested in keeping bureaucrats in Brussels and the SFPA happy than actually doing his job.

"Our fishing communities are being disgracefully abandoned by this government on all fronts - through punitive criminalisation regime signed into law by the Taoiseach last August, the sell-out Brexit deal and now through the weighing of fish at the point of landing.

"All these measures were introduced at the behest of non-elected bureaucrats in Brussels. The government had the option of delaying or not accepting all these measures – but, they chose to run with the Brussels agenda instead. In so doing, this enables the agenda of misinformation about the sector to accumulate while the Minister stands idle.

"Cumulatively, this represents the biggest back-knifing exercise on the fishery sector since Ireland joined the EU in 1973.

"Clearly, the views of the sector mean very little to this government. If it did, they would have sought those views prior to making any decision on the three destructive policies they have inflicted.

"To add insult to injury, my questioning of Minister Charlie Mc Conalogue, at the Oireachtas Committee this week, gleaned that he knew that EU officials

were seeking changes to the weighting of fish since last December. Yet, instead of providing a copy of this audit report to the sector and enter into tangible discussions, he allowed the report to be leaked to the media and facilitated the SFPA to enforce a harsh new pier based weighing system at 5pm on April 16 last, with one hour of prior notice.

"The new regime involves a CCTV system linked into the SFPA office and potentially shared with EU officials. This is more Orwellian in nature than practical and creates a new "Big Brother is watching" experience, despite the Irish sector having been the most regulated in the EU, prior to this change.

"The Minister's approach is appalling, keeping in with the government agenda to tarnish and criminalise fishers. It shows an atrocious level of contempt for the entire sector. The Minister provided no consultation, transparency, or even a transitional arrangement.

"Any Minister that ploughs ahead with a raft of intimidating new arrangements, which are procedurally flawed, utterly unworkable, negatively impacting the quality of fish, and criminalising fishers on 51 per cent balance of probability, is no friend or ally of the sector.

"Irish fishers and the sector generally deserve much better. This government's approach to fishing policy is not only inappropriate from a policy perspective – it also contravenes basic protections under our constitutions and the EU Charter of fundamental rights.

"How can the Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael TDs from coastal and fishing constituencies be allowing this to happen or turning a blind eye?"



Ronan Ross leading the flotilla into the Port of Cork - Photo courtesy Gearoid Holland

# TY Students to Learn About Career Opportunities in Ireland's Aquaculture Sector

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D. spoke recently with a group of transition year students from schools in Buncrana, Carrick, Donegal Town, Milford, Letterkenny and Killybegs in Co. Donegal via a live Zoom broadcast to welcome the expansion of the Aquaculture Remote Classroom (ARC) programme to second level schools from September 2021 onwards.

Career opportunities in the aquaculture sector is the focus of the new programme that seeks to build greater awareness among second level students of the breadth of career options available. Skills and qualifications needed for diverse roles including commercial diving, science, sales and marketing will be brought to life in the programme by way of real-life profile interviews with some of the women and men who work in Ireland's seafood sector.

Speaking at the launch, Minister McConalogue welcomed the expansion of the programme to second level students and said: "I am delighted that this programme is being expanded to include students at second level and with a focus on careers in the seafood sector. Its online format also means it will get to audiences more swiftly and in bigger numbers. Attracting skilled and talented young people to work in Ireland's seafood sector is central to its continued development. My hope is that the new programme can help to inspire students considering their career options when they leave school and to realise the breadth of opportunities that exist within the sector."

The interactive mobile classroom is part of the Farmed in the EU campaign and was launched three years ago in 2018 by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood

Development. The ARC is supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and was initially developed to help younger audiences learn about aquaculture in a fun and interactive way using immersive technologies including VR headsets and augmented reality. The ARC programme also covers modules on the socio-economic and nutritional benefits of aquaculture.

Up until now, the ARC has been available to only primary level pupils in Ireland. In the last 12 months, the ARC has been adapted and delivered entirely online to ensure teachers and students have been continuously able to access the resource.

Jim O'Toole, CEO BIM highlighted the enduring importance of the seafood sector to Ireland's coastal communities and said: "The seafood sector provides a vital source of jobs and economic activity for coastal communities across Ireland. The continued success and development of the sector is contingent on being able to attract young talent from across different disciplines so that the sector continues to prosper and thrive."

For more information, go to <https://bim.ie/a-seafood-way-of-life/the-arc/>



Áine-lisa Shannon, Aquaculture Remote Classroom (ARC) facilitator during a visit to a seaweed farm, May 2021. (Inset photo): Áine O'Donnell, Aquaculture Remote Classroom (ARC) facilitator with students during a schools visit.

## IFA AQUACULTURE

In her monthly column, IFA's Aquaculture Executive, Teresa Morrissey, urges public support for the Irish seafood sector. Its value and production volume could be significantly increased with better licencing conditions.



### Taste the Atlantic this Summer – Support Irish Aquaculture where you can!

Now that the country is reopening and country-wide travel is permitted with Covid-19 restrictions, it's time to get out and explore all that Ireland has to offer and support local Irish businesses where possible.

With the imminent reopening of hospitality businesses, many of whom include local Irish Aquaculture produce on their menus, the time is coming for summer plans to be made and to support local hospitality, food producers and Irish Aquaculture businesses.

It has never been more important for the domestic market to support Irish Aquaculture producers, and the Irish Seafood sector in general.

The last number of months have seen a number of innovative developments among food and hospitality businesses in how they deliver their offerings with food trucks, outdoor dining options and ingenuity in making use of available space and local food produce being at the forefront.

There has been an upsurge with including Irish seafood as part of these outdoor food offerings which in turn benefits the Irish Seafood sector, including Irish Aquaculture, in creating visibility of the top-quality produce available from Irish seafood producers.

The resourcefulness and inventiveness of many in the hospitality industry has to be commended and their efforts in including Irish Aquaculture produce in their offerings are welcome – generating awareness of the Irish Aquaculture industry in doing so.

From Pizza with Irish Organic Salmon in Clare to Killary Fjord Mussels in Sambal in

Connemara, its all well worth supporting!

As we are encouraged to prepare for an 'outdoor summer' (weather permitting!!) our focus is being turned to the outdoors and seek out new experiences as domestic consumers that we may not have considered before. As domestic travel will increase over the course of the summer, many will venture West and look to see what is on offer. In an effort to support Irish Aquaculture as part of your summer travel plans, 'Taste the Atlantic – a Seafood Journey' is well worth considering.

A collaborative initiative between BIM and Fáilte Ireland to promote the fantastic seafood producers and their products along the Wild Atlantic Way, showcases the best Irish Aquaculture producers have to offer. The trail stretches from Malin Head in Co. Donegal to Kinsale in Co. Cork, a whole new way to experience the Wild Atlantic Way and to learn more about how Irish seafood is caught and farmed.

A particular mention for the 'Taste the Atlantic – the Salmon Experience' at the Burren Smokehouse in Clare which includes an interactive trip through the story of the Irish Organic Salmon industry providing some much-needed clarity and transparency into how Irish Organic Salmon is produced. For more info - <https://bim.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/BIM-Producers-2020.pdf>

## Start-Up Aquaculture Accelerator This October Seeks to Nurture New Talent

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's seafood development agency have launched its 2021 aquaculture accelerator programme. The programme is aimed at early stage tech, fintech and AI start-ups with ideas in aquaculture innovation and is taking place between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of October in the RDI Hub in the South West of Ireland in Co Kerry.

Richard Donnelly, Salmon and Shellfish Manager, BIM said: "The idea for an accelerator is to put start-ups on the path to growth and scale. We are at the birth of a new field of innovation in aquaculture. More people from different disciplines are getting involved, including those with backgrounds in AI and other areas of tech. They're beginning to think about systems and software that can transform aquaculture to help meet the growing demand for safe, nutritious and sustainable seafood."

The programme is being run by Hatch and supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. It will bring in between eight to twelve start-ups to connect with BIM and Hatch staff in addition to leading entrepreneurs and investors from the global aquaculture industry to leverage their expertise and to support their commercial ideas.

Applications are now open. For more details go to <https://www.hatch.blue/ireland-innovation-studios>

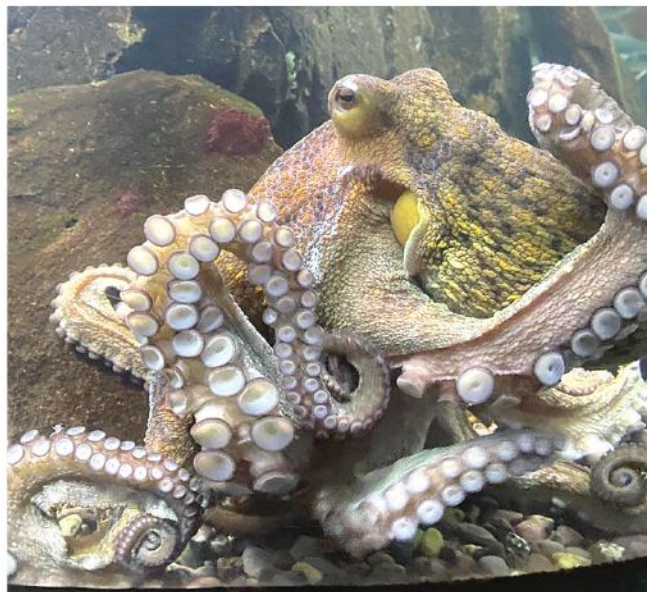
# Dingle Ocean World Sees Rare Catches

Oceanworld, Dingle Aquarium in County Kerry continues to receive support from the fishing industry.

Rare catches are often donated to the Aquairum and received with thanks for putting on display and for conservation. Information is also sought from the Aquarium about rare catches.



Some of the rare catches recently include the Stone Crab, caught by Liam Flannery on the MFV *Megan Sofia*.



Two Mediterranean Octopus were caught and presented to the aquarium. One was taken in Schull by Dan Griffin on the *Elena*. The other was caught off Sibel Head by Michael O'Connor out of Dun an Oir.



Also caught was a box crab by Michael Sheedy of the MFV *Star of David*, North west of the Blaskets.

The love of the sea and its inhabitants lives on through Dingle Oceanworld the work of its staff. Their symbiosis with the sea is continually reflected in the kaleidoscopic display of marine life that is Dingle's Oceanworld Aquarium, a project developed in association with enterprising local business people.

Oceanworld was officially opened to the public in 1996 and you can see more information on their website: [www.dingle-oceanworld.ie](http://www.dingle-oceanworld.ie)

# Review of the SFPA



*The SFPA is a dysfunctional organisation says Sean O'Donoghue, CEO of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation who also criticises "unfounded false accusations based on innuendo and conjecture in the removal of the derogation of weighing catches which forces them to be weighed at landing."*

**The KFO considers that the SFPA is a dysfunctional organisation that is not fit for purpose and must be completely reset. This is a widely held view across the entire Irish Seafood Sector. This view has also been confirmed in PWC report of April 2020 on the Review of the Organisational Capability of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority.**

In the PWC report which is a very damning report on the SFPA the overall conclusion is that the SFPA is not working effectively, requires urgent attention and as an organisation, needs to be reset and unified with a clear and agreed articulation of its mandate. The report goes on to highlight that the relationships and trust have been impacted by a range of issues, including some long standing industrial relations issues which have not been resolved and that a significant programme of change will be required.

The KFO fully endorses the PWC report and its 46 recommendations. The immediate implementation of these is a must particularly the short-term measures as covered in the PWC executive summary.

"In the short term, this will require the SFPA to reset the dial, both in terms of the strategic plan for the organisation and its interactions with staff and stakeholders. This is critical, as without establishing these essential building blocks it will be challenging to manage the SFPA in an effective manner to build on these foundations and further develop the SFPA over the medium to long term and deliver on core obligations."

Furthermore, the KFO is of the firm view that a major impediment to establishment of fit for purpose SFPA is the absence of independent board. This will require primary legislation. The Sea Fisheries (Amendment) Bill 2021 affords an opportunity to rectify that situation.

## European Commission revoking Irish control plan for weighing of fishery products

The industry was notified by the SFPA about this "bombshell" on Friday evening, April 15, without any warning whatsoever that the Commission had published an Implementing Decision on the 13th revoking the approval of the Irish control plan. This is a major problem for the entire fishing industry as all species will now have to be weighed at the point of landing rather than in the premises that had acquired weighing permits to weigh after landing. This is totally unworkable from time, quality and logistics point

of view. It will destroy our reputation on the markets and deliver a catastrophic blow to the Irish industry from which it may not be able to recover.

What is even more galling is the inclusion in the Implementing Decision that the findings of the 2018 Commission's Audit Report in terms of control irregularities were subsequently confirmed also by the Administrative Inquiry conducted by the SFPA. The first we knew that the SFPA had confirmed the control irregularities in the Commission's 2018 Audit report was when we read it in the Decision. We have requested the SFPA to rectify this statement if it is not correct, but to date they have been unwilling to do so.

All the parties involved here the Commission, DAFM and SFPA have refused on several occasions to give the industry access the Audit reports, and the correspondence and data in relation to the Administrative Inquiry.

The only information we have is the leaked information in the media accusing the industry without any factual back-up that there is widespread illegality in the industry. We are not afforded the opportunity to able to defend ourselves against these false accusations as we will not get access to information these unfounded accusations are based on. This runs totally contrary to the democratic process which provides that you are innocent until proven guilty. If the leaked information is the basis for these accusations and the Commission's Implementing Decision, there does not seem to be a scintilla of proof. These accusations are unfounded, false and based on innuendo and conjecture.

**It is of the utmost importance that an immediate solution is found by the SFPA to sort out this disastrous situation of weighing all fish at the point of landing. This was not caused by the industry; the blame lies entirely with the SFPA.**

- This is an edited review of Sean O'Donoghue's address to the Joint Committee on Agriculture and the Marine on the Sea Fisheries (Amendment) Bill 2021



MFV Ella undergoing sea trials at Killybegs. Photo courtesy Alan Hennigan / Mooney Boats Ltd.

news from **Northern Ireland**  
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Fear Not II arriving at Ardglass. Owned by the Wills family and skippered by Thomas Bell - Photo by Christopher Feenan

## £336,000 Support Scheme for Lough Neagh Fishermen

**DAERA Minister Edwin Poots MLA has announced a funding package of £336,000 to support fishing vessels operating in the Lough Neagh eel and scale fishery, in recognition of reduced market demand due to Covid-19 in 2020.**

It brings the total support the Minister has directed towards Northern Ireland's fisheries sector throughout the pandemic to £3.4million after he allocated £2.64million to the sea fishing sector and a further £425,000 was given to support the aquaculture sector.

Eligible vessels will be able to apply for a proportion of income lost during May and June 2020 (when the fishery was closed) and support for a voluntary tie up period between July and October of that year to reduce fish landings in recognition of limited market demand arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Announcing the Scheme, Minister Poots said: "The fishing sector on Lough Neagh has been particularly hard hit by the severe market disruption in Europe by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The closure of many markets and disruption of established distribution channels, particularly to restaurants and the food service industry internationally, has seen market demand and sale prices drop substantially. It is vital to give the Lough Neagh fishery a means of matching supply with demand and to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of

an industry which is very important to the local economy."

Minister Poots explained: "The new Covid-19 Lough Neagh Financial Support Scheme I am announcing today will support the owners of fishing vessels who have experienced loss of income in the 2020 season. The Scheme is designed to complement the other Covid-19 support mechanisms already being provided by Government to the fishing sector and indeed other sectors of our economy. The voluntary scheme will cover the period from May up to the end of October 2020 which is the traditional end of the brown eel fishing season. My Department will contact Lough Neagh fishermen who have held a DAERA commercial fishing licence in any of the years 2017 to 2019, to invite them to apply to the Scheme."

### Mallon Announces New Community E-Transport Scheme for Rathlin Island

Infrastructure Minister Nichola Mallon has announced that Rathlin Island is to get Northern Ireland's first community e-transport scheme.

The Minister said: "Rathlin Island is a unique and special place. It has the ambition to be a carbon neutral island and wants to continue to develop its blue green infrastructure. I am fully supportive of the strategic aim of the Executive's Rathlin Island Policy to advance a sustainable island community and I am delighted to announce the development of a community led e-transport scheme for the island which is a major step forward for islanders and visitors alike."

"This community e-car scheme will benefit the wider community, especially the younger and older populations on the island and the e-bike scheme of 20 bikes will initially be available to all islanders and visitors working on the island. In the future the Development Association would like to see it extended for visitors coming to sample the island's natural beauty."

"This is an exciting development for the people of Rathlin and I am very pleased to be providing this investment through my Blue/Green Fund to help bring about lasting change for people here. This initiative will support sustainable living; protect the environment; and also promote active travel as an everyday

form of transport and in doing so, will improve physical and mental health and our local environment."

Michael Cecil, Chair of the Rathlin Development and Community Association said; "I welcome Minister Mallon's visit to the island today. We share her vision of a sustainable living and working environment and are delighted to hear of her support for a community e-transport scheme for the island."

The Minister also visited the East Lighthouse and met staff from NI Water's Treatment works on the island. This award-winning facility has just had a £1million upgrade. The project involved the construction of a new improved water treatment facility to enhance the water treatment system on the island. The upgraded treatment process, which is the first solution of its kind across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, consists of a 'mini' Magnetic Ion Exchange (MIEX) system, which uses a combination of resins to effectively treat the water with no chemical waste produced. This innovative solution secured second place in this year's Institute of Water (IoW) NI Innovation Awards. The Minister congratulated NI Water on their success.

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**Seamus Bonner, Secretary of the IIMRO reports that the Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation has been busy engaging in a number of forums since they received recognition as a Producer Organisation.**

These meetings give the opportunity to raise important issues relevant to island fishers and the wider small scale fleet. Work is continuing on the development of a catch logging and direct Sales App for fishers in partnership with the South African non-profit Abalobi and field trials are due to commence shortly. Work is continuing on the preparation and development of an island-focused production and marketing plan for IIMRO members which will look at opportunities for increasing the value of seafood catches from the islands.

### Quota Management Advisory Committee

IIMRO have been recently appointed to the QMAC which meets monthly to discuss quota allocations and to advise the minister on quota species.

We aim to ensure that quota is distributed in a fair manner and that all fishers

have equitable access to adequate fishing opportunities into the future.

### European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Monitoring Committee

IIMRO has attended the most recent EMFF monitoring committee with other stakeholders, the EU Commission and the Department.

Work is underway on reviewing the last EMFF programme which is coming to an end this year and preparations are underway to develop a new operational programme for the new EMFAF programme which runs from 2021-2027.

### EU Weighing Derogation

The sudden imposition of new weighing practices as a result of the removal of the EU weighing derogation will have



Back to the island - Photo courtesy IIMRO

### a disproportionate impact on the small-scale island fleet in both the cost, and complexity of compliance.

By their nature these fisheries take place in small piers and harbours across the thirty island communities in four counties. Small volumes of landings are taken back to home ports for onward sale to mainland markets or buyers. Many small scale vessels are economically marginal at best and there is a real danger that the proposed control measures could drive many from the industry. The lack of an adequate grace period to allow fishers to adapt to the changes will mean many will struggle to comply in time. The majority of Ireland's fleet are small scale boats (1,506 vessels under 12 meters) that work from their home ports and are recognised as being at low risk of non-compliance with the control regulation as has been the case.

IIMRO are proposing that work commence immediately with national and EU control authorities to develop a practical and workable control plan, which is cognisant of other related requirements, such as food safety regulations, and which will comply with Ireland's requirements under the regulations. This new control plan needs to work for the vast majority of the fishing fleet that are compliant with the regulations. IIMRO are engaging with national authorities so that a new control plan can be put in place as soon as possible.

### Brexit Seafood Task Force

IIMRO have attended a number of Brexit Seafood Task Force meetings and an interim report is due to be sent to the Minister in May and a final report due in July.

Discussions have centred around potential supports for the fleet segments affected by Brexit. IIMRO have been making the point that the loss of a large amount of

quota to the UK will have an affect on the entire Irish fleet due to a further loss of fishing opportunities as well as indirect effects including:

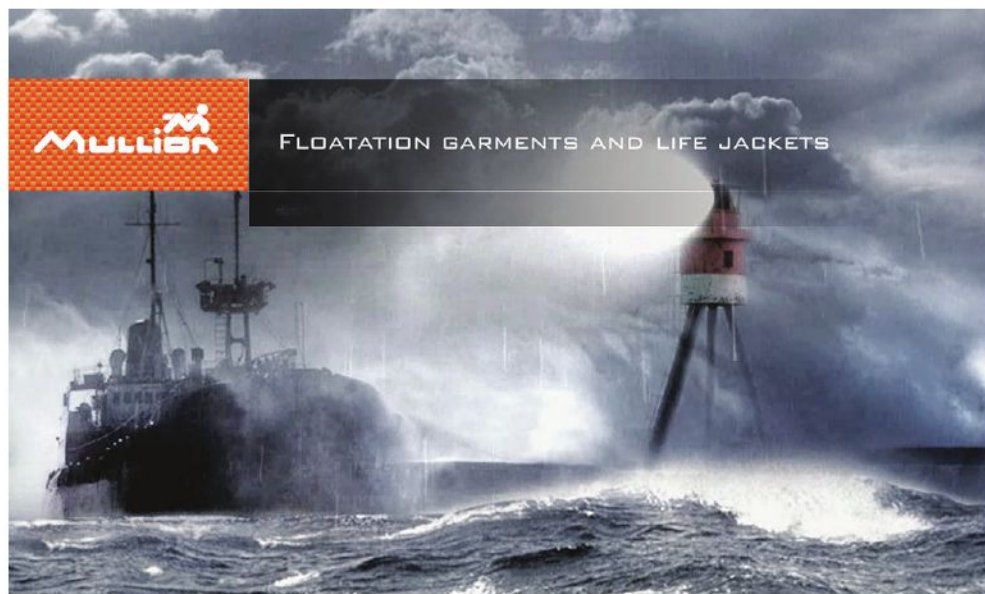
- Access to markets through the UK with time-sensitive, quality produce.
- Moving UK-registered vessels to the Irish Register is both expensive and difficult.
- Additional constraints on vessels on the Northern Irish register due to IUU regulations.
- Displacement of effort into both the area and species targeted by the Small Scale Fleet.
- Lack of access by the Small Scale Fleet to diminishing fishing opportunities.
- Market constraints and reduced prices due to the extra bureaucratic burden for UK markets.

IIMRO have made a number of submissions to the Task Force which have included the proposed tie-up scheme and onshore infrastructure.

### Support for Fishing Communities

IIMRO would like to strongly support the coastal and fishing communities in the South who took part in the protest at Cork to highlight long-standing and on-going issues affecting the fishing industry in Ireland.

These structural problems need to be addressed urgently at a political level to ensure that governance and management systems are up to the job of meeting Ireland's obligations, to ensure we have a sustainable, fair and equitable fishing industry and to remove the uncertainty that is preventing many young people from earning a living from the rich seas that surround us.



## Designed for and by fishermen

For further info contact Adrian Towey

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## THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

**“There is no way the fishing industry and the coastal communities will stand idly by and allow the government to destroy them.”**

This month our INTERVIEW feature is a compilation of interviews by our Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney at the fisheries demonstration in Cork, where strong, critical views were expressed about the attitude of the political parties in Government towards the fishing industry.

**Seamus O’Flaherty, Kilmore Quay:** “We are disgusted that it had to come to this, that as fishermen of long experience our communities are being destroyed, by both the government and our so-called allies in Europe who are the worst problem now because they have the biggest quotas. For example, Belgians have twenty times the quota Irish fishermen have in our own waters for black sole. How did that happen? Where were our negotiators? Where is our government in protecting and helping Irish fishermen?”

**Caitlin Ui Aodha, Irish South and East FPO:** “Look at the boats here and what has been put into this industry. It is not fishermen who are at fault it is the Irish government that gave up too easily looking after their own people. France didn’t do that, they stood up and got the

best for their fishermen. The French don’t take being badly treated, they fight back. We are too easy a push over. There is a time to say ‘no’ and it is time to say ‘no’ to the EU and the way they have treated the Irish fishing industry.”

**Cormac Burke, Chairman, Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance:** “Some people want a more militant nationwide approach. This demonstration is a gentle but powerful shot across the bows of the Minister for the Marine. He will have no excuse if it comes to more militant action.

“Minister McConalogue could have come here today and listened and spoken to the fishermen. But, as ever, the government ignores the fishing industry and that has to come to an end.”

**Tony O’Sullivan, Castletownbere:** “I’ve had 35 years in the industry and I’d like another 35. We don’t know anything else but fishing, that’s what keeps us and the coastal communities going. We need more quota and the government should be doing that for us, not ignoring and badly treating us.”

**Pat O’Connell, Cork Fish Merchant:** “There are dangers now going onto piers under the new regulations to buy fish for my staff. Those new systems have been put in place by people who don’t understand or appreciate what it is like to work on a quayside. Who is going to be held responsible when people suffer injuries because of these regulations? The fishing industry has taken enough and it is well past time that the attitude of government towards it changed.”

**Shirley White:** “I am here to protest on behalf of my brother and nephew who are fishermen. They are as entitled to their rights as equal to those that foreign trawlers have in Irish waters, but those foreign boats have been given better rights in Irish waters, with the agreement of the Irish government which is so unfair and so wrong. We must stand up for the rights of fishermen.”

**Robert Russell, West Kerry:** “The Taoiseach and Minister for the Marine need to wake up and be fair to fishermen and coastal communities. The future of our industry, the future of our children, the future of our communities are being destroyed by the attitude of the government. Fishing provides for everything in coastal communities. They are dependent on the industry which is suffering from government policies and attitudes which are preventing anyone getting into the industry and are destroying and damaging those who are in it. We have had enough, fishermen can’t take anymore. We are entitled to equal treatment and we are not getting it.”

**Denis O’Flaherty, Kilmore Quay:** “Without fishing Kilmore Quay would largely die. That is the fact, that is what we are facing from the way the industry is being treated. We are being discriminated against and nothing is being done about it. The EU commitment was supposed to be to fair and equal treatment, but that is not what has happened. We are not given fairness, Irish fishermen are not treated equally.

“The whole thing is about discrimination, inequalities. Where is the fair access to a common resource that was promised? That does not happen. The Government should be challenging the EU on that. We do not want to lose our industry, to end up on the dole. We want to work, to be treated fairly. We want a future for our communities. We are being denied that.”

**Christopher O’Sullivan, Fianna Fail TD, Cork South West:** “What’s happened to the fishing sector is wrong, whatever way you look at it. I will take back to the Taoiseach what I have heard and seen at this demonstration.”

**Michael Collins, Independent TD, Cork South West:** “The root of the problem is the political parties who have turned their backs on fishermen. They have no interest in protecting fishermen, they sold fishermen out to the highest bidders. They have done that to fishermen.”

**Patrick Murphy, CEO, Irish South and West Fish Producers:** “There is no way the fishing industry and the coastal communities will stand idly by and allow the government to destroy them. The government should take note of that.”



Caitlin Ui Aodha, Cormac Burke, Seamus O’Flaherty - Disgust at the attitude of government towards the fishing industry.  
Shirley White - So much unfairness and injustice.



Robert Russell - Taoiseach and Minister for the Marine need to wake up.  
Tony O’Sullivan - Fishing is what we know.







**My diary over the past month had a lot in it that referenced history, nostalgia, memorabilia and protecting Ireland's maritime culture.**

Several of the items came from listeners to the programme who sent me Emails, texted or phoned about story lines that interested them and which they thought might have interest attraction for other listeners.

That gives me great encouragement towards the creating of a maritime community which could span this island nation from coast-to-coast. It is possible, but there are difficulties. Worst of these is the attitude in government which still does not grasp fully, or seem to appreciate, that Ireland is an island nation.

Surrounded as we are by water and with no way off this island without crossing the sea, it is disappointing that our political leaders are still in that mindset. I fear it is also promulgated by their civil service advisors. That raises the issue of who governs? Who is the government - the elected politicians or the permanent civil servants? Therein is a core question that was highlighted at the major diary fixture I had in the past month - the Cork "show and tell" demonstration by fishermen from ports ranging from Dingle, through Cork to Waterford and Wexford.

I met a lot of old friends at that demonstration and recurring in every conversation were frustration, disappointment, disgruntlement. It is hard for fishermen not to feel like that when the effort they put in, the dangers they face, the tough, hard life, is not shown the appreciation it should have in the highest levels of State governance.

Whatever causes that - ignorance, disregard, - or other reasons, it does not convey a caring government. Am I too critical? Maybe, but seeing some 70 vessels at the Cork City quays and considering the

amount of investment in them and hearing fishermen tell me time and again when I asked them the question - what keeps them going when they face such official obduracy - that it is their tradition, culture, lifestyle, that they want to work, they don't want to be forced out of the industry, brought me back to the point I made at the outset. As a people, an island people, our maritime history and culture should have a much higher priority as should the marine sector in economic and political terms.

It is very hard to understand how an Irish government can stand over disregard, neglect and failure in regard to fishing to protect Irish people, an Irish industry, an Irish natural resource, which has been given away to other nations. How can it be right that Irish fishermen have the least rights in their own waters?

The answer is that it is not right and that politicians in Government who have not corrected this have failed Irish people.

On the topic of what else was in my diary and what listeners and readers told me about - the lovely photograph of Ireland's historic sail trading ketch, ILEN, on this page is one. The photo was taken by Dermot Lynch as ILEN recreated trading on the Shannon which she has been doing and, through it, providing an educational programme for young people about maritime transport as it was before mechanisation overtook life.

Maritime Museums are important stores



of memorabilia, history and culture.

Valentia Heritage Museum on the Kerry island does a good job in this regard. It makes great use of the space it has and I'm happy to be a member and supporter of what that voluntary group does. If you're down that way, do look in.

Another diary event was to attend the opening of an exhibition highlighting the town of Passage West on the edge of Cork Harbour, as being "the birthplace of the Irish steamship industry."

The first steamship built in Ireland was the 'City of Cork', which was launched in 1815 at the actual site where the Passage West Maritime Museum is now located. The exhibition recalls 200 Years of the Royal Victoria Dockyard which built the vessel. That yard acquired the 'Royal' designation when then Queen Victoria named it during her visit to Cork in August 1849. This is recorded by a plaque on the wall of the for-

mer dockyard at Dock Street in the town.

My attention was drawn to that by a man who wrote to me pointing out that the plaque wasn't always painted in the colours which it now displays - green, white, and yellow - a reflection of Republican traditions in Passage.



That too is part of our history and culture!

The steamship exhibition will be on for two months. If you are down that way it is worth a visit.

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- FRIDAYS 3 p.m.
- THURSDAYS 4.30 p.m.
- THURSDAYS 6 p.m.
- SATURDAYS 9 a.m. - SUNDAYS 5 p.m.
- FRIDAYS 4 p.m.
- MONDAYS 9.30 p.m.
- WEDNESDAYS 1.35 p.m. & 6.30 P.M.
- MONDAYS 5 p.m.
- FIRST FIRDAY OF EACH MONTH
- HOUR-LONG PROGRAMME AT 6 p.m.
- MONDAYS 5/6 p.m.
- SATURDAYS 9.30 p.m. SUNDAYS 5.30 p.m.
- SATURDAYS 9.30 p.m. SUNDAYS 5.30 p.m.
- SATURDAYS 1 p.m.
- SATURDAYS 1 p.m./WEDNESDAYS 10 p.m.
- SATURDAYS 2 p.m.
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Steamship exhibition at Passage West Maritime Museum

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## RNLI REPORT

**Niamh Stephenson, RNLI Regional Media Manager, Ireland and the Isle of Man, answers the question to .....**

### Why Are Lifeboats Orange?

A question posed to the RNLI online recently provoked a strong reaction and a lot of interest. "Why are lifeboats orange?" I've worked for the RNLI for years and I've honestly never asked that question and my

maritime knowledge was poor back then. I was just trying to learn what all the acronyms meant so I could follow along with conversations in lifeboat stations.



Now I can hold my own in that world. Of course, the answer is obvious now; it's so you can see them out on the water but if that was the case, why were they not orange from day one, because they weren't and it was to be the 1950s before they found the colour we know and love them for and which the RNLI has stuck to ever since.

Lifeboats started life in ultramarine blue in the 1800s, before going a deeper shade in 1923. Before the Oakley class lifeboat in 1958, lifeboats were painted Blue, White and Red, colours that were easy to get hold of in those times. Then came the huge change in the 50s, taking the superstructure from grey to 'safety' orange. Simply put, the colour was more visible in the water. I've lost count of the number of times I've heard a casualty speak of their joy when they saw the orange lifeboat coming towards them, they always mention the colour first. You don't see the lifeboat crew until they are on top of you but you do see the lifeboat coming towards you and it's orange. So now you know.

Hopefully you had no difficulty seeing the RNLI during May as the charity's annual fundraising appeal, Mayday ran throughout the month. To raise awareness of the campaign we shared some of the charity's rescue figures for last year. They showed that 53% of the 945 lifeboat launches took place in the months of June, July and August. That's not too surprising when we remember we were in a lockdown for much of the year. Lifeboat crews were busy, bringing 1,145 people to safety. Thirteen of those people were classified as lives saved by the RNLI, meaning that without the actions of the lifeboat crew, they would not have survived. Lifeboat crews are expecting an even busier summer this year with people staying home and holidaying in Ireland. Last summer 747 people were aided by volunteer lifeboat crews during the summer months, an increase of 13% on the previous year.

And lifeboats are launching to a range of activities. Twenty-two lifeboat callouts were to swimmers in difficulty, another 22 were to kayakers and canoeists, while 20 launches were for anglers, 15 were to jet-ski

related incidents and there were 26 launches to people who were walking or running near the coast. 55 callouts were to fishing vessels. For the causes related to lifeboat callouts, machinery and equipment failure still accounts for a significant number, 196 in total. Grounding or stranding of vessels necessitated in 24 launches and getting swept out to sea accounted for 26 callouts. Figures also show that people becoming cut off by the tide is becoming more common with 20 lifeboat calls out to people finding themselves cut off and stranded by the tide. You'll see a lot of safety messaging going out from different agencies over the summer and hopefully we will have a safe season. Please share a safety message when you can and where you can. The RNLI local ambassador scheme is asking businesses and organisations to be our safety spokespeople in the community. Sign up and receive information that you can share and we will keep you up to date with our campaigns at [rnli.org](http://rnli.org)

### Joe Houlihan

**Finally, it was with heavy hearts that we said goodbye recently to Joe Houlihan, formerly of Valentia RNLI but also involved with many organisations on the island. For this tribute there are no better words than from the station themselves.**

Joe joined the Valentia Lifeboat as a Junior Crewman in May 1954. In August that year he was appointed as second mechanic. He served in that post until August 1962 when he was appointed reserve mechanic which involved serving other stations around the coast. He was mechanic for the Valentia Lifeboat over 38 years. During his time, he had been involved in over 300 callouts and helped numerous people. In 1963

Joe received the RNLI's Bronze Medal in recognition of rescuing two men from a canoe that capsized in a northerly gale. He found the two men in the water, dragged one who was near to collapse into the boarding boat and told the other to hold on to the transom. He then, with great difficulty, returned to the beach. The Maud Smith award for Gallantry was presented for this service.



In 1983 the Thanks of the Institution inscribed on Vellum was accorded to Joe in recognition of the promptness, sound judgement and seamanship displayed by him when he proceeded in a fishing boat to Culloo Head and rescued an angler who had been washed off rocks in a strong westerly wind and a very rough sea on 26th of August 1982. Joe was also involved in the operations following the Air India crash in 1985. His son, Leo, succeeded him as mechanic and in recent years his grandson Jamie also joined the crew. The memories of Joe will live on forever in the station. Sincere sympathies to all at Valentia RNLI.

## HRU (Hydrostatic Release Unit)

**Fishing Safety Manager for the RNLI Frankie Horne reports on the importance of the correct fitting of HRU's**

**The correct fitting of any Hydrostatic Release Unit (HRU) is vital to the successful deployment of a vessels Liferaft or EPIRB should the vessel have a rapid capsized or foundering.**

During my visits to fishing ports, it is one piece of safety equipment that I can visually see on board a vessel from the quayside, more so than from the deck of the vessel in some cases. I personally have seen up to 50% of rafts in some ports fitted **incorrectly**. While the unit is easy to fit correctly, it is also easy to fit incorrectly, even though the manufacturers have put great effort into producing guidance. You can find images of correctly fitted HRUs on the MCA website.

**Incorrect fitting of HRU'S** has, in the past resulted in the liferaft / EPIRB not deploying to the surface, therefore no emergency signal has been sent to the rescue services to assist fishermen in difficulty, resulting in long delays in starting a Search and Rescue (SAR) mission, sometimes resulting in loss of life.

**Correct fitting** has resulted in fishermen's lives being saved.

Two reasons an incorrect fitting can occur are either **(1)** When a Life-raft or EPIRB has been returned to the vessel from

servicing and is being resecured to the vessel or **(2)** when the HRU expiry date is up and it has been replaced with a new unit.

The most common HRU used in the fishing industry for Liferrafts and EPIRB's are the Hammer units. There are two different coloured units, Yellow and Green.

The yellow unit is for a larger raft's up to 25 persons and is also used on a vessel coded under SOLAS regulations.

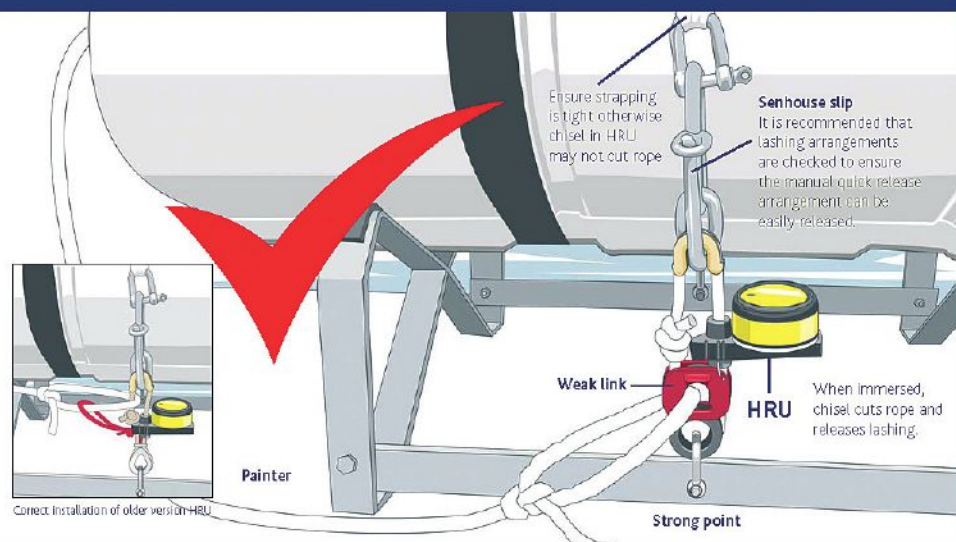
The GREEN HRU is for small liferafts 4 to 12 persons. NON SOLAS regulations.

**Remember;** The activation of the Hydrostatic Release Unit (HRU) is the last resort method of life-raft / EPIRB deployment if fishermen are unable to manually deploy the life-saving equipment themselves so **"Get Rigged and Ready"** for such an incident.

**Consult manufactures guidance on correct fitting of your HRU.**

Please take time to look at examples to identify **correct fitting**.

### RNLI FISHING SAFETY HYDROSTATIC RELEASE UNIT (HRU) INSTALLATION



# Angel Shark (*Squatina squatina*) Captured off the Skellig Islands

Declan Quigley reports

On 13th April 2021 the *MFV Trinity* (SO729) [Skipper: Declan O'Sullivan, Portmagee] captured an Angel Shark (*Squatina squatina*) measuring c. 90 cm TL and weighing c.7.5 kg while trawling at a depth of 110 m, 11.2 km south of the Skellig Islands, Co Kerry, SW Ireland. After taking some quick photos, the specimen was released alive. Declan remarked that this was the first Angel Shark that he had captured over the last 25 years.



During 1871, Mary Francis Cusack noted in her History of the Kingdom of Kerry that Angel Sharks were frequent on the west but scarce on the east coast of Ireland. Between 1958 and 2002, a total of 139 specimens weighing >22.68 kg were recorded by recreational anglers, particularly from Tralee Bay (99) and Clew Bay (32). The Irish rod-caught record, weighing 33 kg was captured by James Boyd in Tralee Bay (Fenit) during June 1980. However, following a dramatic decline in rod-caught numbers from the early 1990s, the species was eventually suspended by the Irish Specimen Fish Committee's (ISFC) from its list of eligible species during 2005. However, for data collection purposes, the species was relisted by the ISFC during 2016, albeit only for catch & release specimens measuring  $\geq 125$  cm TL. During August 2020, a specimen measuring 120 cm TL was captured on rod & line (and released alive) in the Shannon Estuary.

Between 1970 and 2011 a total of 1019 Angel Sharks were tagged and released (mainly by anglers) in Irish waters (92% in Tralee Bay). However, the number of fish tagged declined sharply during the late 1980s, and since 2006, only four fish have been tagged, all by the *MFV Eblana* (D379) in the Irish Sea (January 2011, August 2016, October 2020, December 2020) [Pictured below].



Although the recapture rates were historically relatively high (c.20%), none have been recaptured since 2004. The vast majority (c.95%) of tagged fish were recaptured off the west coast of Ireland (as far north as Inishbofin), frequently close to where they were initially tagged, indicating the species

rather localized distribution. However, a small number of tagged fish (c.5%) were recaptured further afield, including the English Channel (Goring-by Sea, Sussex), NW France (Brittany) and the north coast of Spain (San Sebastian), the latter specimen having travelled a distance of 1160 km from Tralee Bay. The longest number of days between tagging and recapture was 4325 days. The latter fish was tagged in Tralee Bay and was recaptured almost 12 years later close to the same location (3 km north of Kerry Head), and recaptured again 27 days later off Bunmahon, Co Waterford, a distance of c.345 km from Kerry Head.

Angel Sharks were historically described as widespread and 'common' in European seas, with a distribution extending from southern Scandinavia (Skagerrak-Kattegat), North Sea, British Isles to north-west Africa (Mauritania), including the Mediterranean Sea. However, following a dramatic decline in its abundance throughout its range during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Angel Shark is now regarded as Critically Endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and is designated as a 'prohibited species' under European Union Regulation No. 2019/1241, which states, inter alia, "When caught accidentally, the species shall not be harmed and specimens shall be promptly released back into the sea, except for the purpose of allowing scientific research on accidentally killed specimens".

Commercial fishers and recreational anglers are encouraged to contribute to the species long-term conservation by reporting details on any specimens captured and getting involved in tag and release programmes operated by Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), supported by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), and Irish Elasmobranch Association (IEA).

**Declan is always interested in receiving reports about rarely recorded and unusual specimens (087-6458485; Email: [declanquigley2021@gmail.com](mailto:declanquigley2021@gmail.com))**

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

## Minister Calls on the EU to Firmly Reject Norway's Unilateral, Opportunistic and Unsustainable Claim

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Charlie McConalogue T.D., said that Norway unilaterally announced that it would give itself a 55% increase in its share of the Mackerel Stock in 2021. In tonnage terms, this means an increase from 191,843 tonnes to 298,299 tonnes – an increase of 106,456 tonnes for 2021. The Norwegian decision seeks to increase its share of the Mackerel Stock from 22.5% to 35%.

Mackerel has been managed under a UN Coastal States Agreement that involved the EU, Norway and the Faroe Islands for the period 2014 to 2020. Iceland had refused to participate in the management agreement and the three parties set aside a share of the stock for it. In 2021, after Brexit and the UK departure from the EU, the new parties involved have not been able to put a new Coastal States Agreement on Mackerel in place.

Minister McConalogue said, "This declaration by Norway to hugely increase its fishery for mackerel is a direct threat to the sustainability of the mackerel fishery and the future of the Irish pelagic fishing industry. There is no justification for this unilateral, opportunistic and unsustainable move. This is all the more disappointing because it undermines the critically important arrangements for joint management of mackerel by the Coastal States under the UN structure. As the scientific advice sets the sustainable level of fishing each year on mackerel, an increase by Norway means either the stock is overfished or other parties must take a smaller share. Neither option is acceptable."

Under the EU /UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement, there was a 26% reduction in our mackerel quota within the EU by 2026, with 60% of this reduction applied in 2021. Mackerel remains Ireland's most important fishery with a quota for 2021 of 60,849 tonnes valued at approximately €80m and it underpins the important Irish pelagic fish processing industry in the North West. Ireland is the largest Mackerel quota holder in the EU.

Minister McConalogue made clear that; "I am calling on EU Commissioner Sinkvičius to reject completely this unilateral

action by Norway to claim a much higher share of the mackerel stock. I am writing to him immediately to ask him to respond without delay to this provocative and irresponsible action. I will ask him to outline what actions the European Commission will take to protect the important EU mackerel fleets and mackerel processing industry. It is vital that the EU Commissioner takes urgent steps to counteract this irresponsible action by Norway. Norway must understand that responsible partners do not get rewarded for such unacceptable action."

Minister McConalogue added, "Our mackerel fishermen have already taken unacceptable cuts to their share of the mackerel stock under the EU/UK TCA. I am working with them to pursue all avenues to deliver a more equitable burden sharing within the EU. I am very concerned that this action by Norway will add further uncertainty to the mackerel industry already trying to adjust to reduce quotas after Brexit."

## €12m Allocated to Complete Stalled Greencastle Breakwater

**In limbo since 2011 the Greencastle breakwater is to be allocated just under €12m to restart and complete the project. Minister McConalogue announced the funding commitment following a letter from the Minister to John McLaughlin, Chief Executive of Donegal County Council, and meetings between the Minister and the Greencastle fishing and harbour development groups hosted by the Foyle Co-Op.**

The Department previously co-funded the development of a rock breakwater at Greencastle Harbour between 2007 to 2011 along with the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs and Donegal County Council. The total project includes a 290m breakwater with 155m constructed when works ceased in 2010. The estimated costs of completing the capital works is €11.9m and the co-funding will be on the basis that DAFM will provide 75% of the funding of €9m with Donegal Council providing the remaining 25% funding.

The Minister stated that "Completion of the Greencastle Harbour Breakwater Project has been a priority of mine since

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The Rona, leaving Lough Foyle on her way to Warrenpoint - Photo by Christy McLaughlin

entering politics and since assuming office I have reviewed the entire project and am delighted to announce the funding of capital works necessary to complete the project. Greencastle is the home port for many fishers and is an important gateway harbour to the North West and North West City Region. The purpose of the project is to improve the storm shelter characteristics of the harbour, increase the harbour area and provide new berthage. Overall, the investment will make Greencastle harbour a safer and even better place to work and visit and will open new economic opportunities for the area”.

“I look forward to working with Donegal County Council and to seeing the result of this funding in the years ahead”, he concluded.

### New €4.84m ‘Killybegs 2040’ Regeneration Project

Donegal based McCabe Architects have been appointed by Donegal County Council to deliver the new €4.84m ‘Killybegs 2040’ regeneration project that will see the transformation of the town centre environment. Killybegs 2040 is a transformative town centre regeneration project with place-making at its core and is being led by Donegal County Council as part of its ambitious programme of Regeneration and Development of town centres across the county.

It aims to transform the urban fabric

of the town through targeted renewal and environmental improvements that will contribute to a more attractive place for residents, visitors and business and be a catalyst in creating jobs, increasing revenue and activating the private sector. The project has a value of €4.84m and is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development under the Rural Regeneration & Development Fund, which is a flagship element of Project Ireland 2040. The project is the result of collaboration with the local community, Donegal County Council and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Welcoming the progression of the project to this important milestone Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council, Cllr. Rena Donaghey acknowledged the importance of town centre investment and regeneration at this time, saying: “the Council is committed to the development of transformational regeneration projects of this nature which drive investment in the renewal of our town centres and make a real difference to the attractiveness and liveability of our towns. This particular project comes at a vital time for Killybegs and its wider community as they respond to the challenges of post-pandemic recovery. The new public realm environment, tourist information centre and Innovation Hub will create wonderful opportunities and new possibilities for job diversification, social purposes and commercial functions.”

An iconic element of the project will see the dramatic redevelopment of Island House as a new tourism facility in conjunction with a digital hub targeted at fostering further business, enterprise and innovation in Killybegs. The Island House redevelopment will be complimented by the proposed transformation of the existing public car park at the Diamond to a civic space with multi-user capacities that will encourage visitors and residents to the town

centre. In this regard Cathaoirleach of the Donegal Municipal District, Cllr. Michael Naughton said: “the town is on the route of the Wild Atlantic Way and the regional route to Sliabh Liag, a Fáilte Ireland Signature Discovery Point. Capitalising on this market and the increasing number of visitors to the area through the new Tourist Information Centre at Island House and associated outdoor civic space has the potential to elevate Killybegs to more of ‘a destination in its own right’ with related expenditure in the Town”.

Speaking about Killybegs 2040, Liam Ward, Director of Community Development and Planning Services with Donegal County Council says: “The proposed development forms part of a broader strategy for the regeneration of Killybegs and supports both the identification of Killybegs as a Strategic Town in the County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024, and the implementation of the specific regeneration objectives of the Seven Strategic Towns Local Area Plan 2018-2024. The project has been led by the Councils Regeneration and Development Team and is also match funded by the Council, representing a significant commitment to the regeneration of Killybegs and south Donegal.”

The Detailed Design Stage has now commenced and will complete, together with the Construction Tender Process, over the next period of approximately 26 weeks. Declan McCabe, Managing Architect at McCabe Architects said “we are looking forward to working with the Council, the community and all stakeholders to deliver this exciting project to the highest standards of completion in line with community expectations and the Council’s regeneration ambitions.”

## 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.

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# International Fishing and Maritime News

## US Fish Farming Sector Pressurising Biden

'Stronger America Through Seafood' is a representative organisation for the US aquaculture industry which has written an 'Open Letter' to President Joe Biden, to get more support for fish farming. "More farming in the seas could help mitigate climate change, as well as meeting the world's increasing demand for food," it says. The letter was signed by more than 70 aquaculture advocates, including American scientists, environmental advocates and industry leaders.

"Well-managed marine aquaculture development could increase the resiliency of our food systems to future environmental, social, and economic shocks, including the impacts of climate change. Certain types of marine aquaculture, such as seaweed farming, also have the potential to sequester carbon and may be used as a tool to mitigate global warming by removing CO2 from the atmosphere. In addition to carbon sequestration, aquaculture can provide other ecosystem services such as improving water quality, regulating ocean acidification, protecting coastlines, providing habitat for other species, and more."

Under the administration of President Trump, an Executive Order was signed encouraging the development of seafood production, including marine aquaculture, but there is also vocal opposition in the US to net-pen farming at sea.

'Advancing the Quality and Understanding of American Aquaculture (AQUAA) Act,' has been introduced to the Senate. It has bipartisan support and seeks to open up selected US Federal waters for aquaculture.

## Vietnam and Norwegian on 'Industrial Scale' Joint Projects

Norway and Vietnam are to work closer together to develop aquaculture on what has been described as "industrial scale" projects.

The Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Norwegian Embassy in Vietnam, Innovation Norway and the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce and Industry were involved in a digital meeting which focused on Vietnam's strategy over the next decade and beyond to expand aquaculture into an industry producing large volumes of products both for export and home consumption.

Vietnam's fish farming sector has increased production annually by over 20 per cent and is now put at over 600,000 tonnes a year. To advance further it has been seeking international support and advice on infrastructure, technology and biological issues.

Grete Lochen, the Norwegian Ambassador to Vietnam told the meeting that Norway had the experience to promote the sustainable development of industrial scale fish farming. As Vietnam had considerable potential in aquaculture growth, her country's aquaculture businesses were

ready to help with proposed development.

Back in Norway aquaculture has been facing increasing pressure from environmental interests seeking to prevent expansion of the sector.

## EU Commission Consultation on Algae

The European Commission has launched an open public consultation until August 11, on what is called the 'EU algae initiative.' This is planned for next year, intended to increase sustainable production of algae and algae-based products, ensure their safe consumption and boost their innovative use in the European Union.



"This will help in achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal, the transition to a green, circular and carbon-neutral EU and a post-Covid recovery," according to a Commission spokesperson.

"The Commission wants to collect facts and opinions about current challenges related to algae production and consumption as well as ways to resolve them. Algae is a largely untapped resource that can be used – with a limited carbon and environmental footprint – to produce food, feed, pharmaceuticals, bioplastics, fertilisers and biofuels."

The consultation is targeted at EU citizens, relevant stakeholder groups, including industry, NGOs, public authorities, civil society, research and academia.

## Salmon Industry Leaders Claim Major Sustainability Strides

The Global Salmon Initiative is a CEO-led initiative of 13 salmon farming companies, representing 40% of global salmon production. It says all of its members are "fully committed to showing measurable progress in the sustainability of their operations through greater collaboration, transparency and innovation."

Its Annual Sustainability Report for last year has been published, containing eight years of data across fourteen key indicators. Ten are environmental and four social.

It says that there has been a 60% reduction in the average use of antibiotics since GSI's foundation in 2013. "This can be attributed to improvements in antibiotics stewardship, disease control and fish welfare led by GSI members. A shift towards a more holistic approach to preventing and managing sea lice resulted in a 50% decrease in medicinal use on average among GSI members since 2013, with a 96% decrease in in-feed treatments as companies shift to non-medicinal management practices. When compared with other animal proteins, farmed salmon represents an environmentally conscious choice, with a lower carbon footprint, requiring less land, and more efficient use of feed resources."

## Scottish Salmon Exports to EU Increase Despite Brexit

Scotland's salmon exports to European Union countries in the first quarter of this year increased by 74% in by volume, compared with the same period in 2020, despite the impact of Brexit and Covid 19.

The Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation compiled the figures from information supplied by all of Scotland's salmon producers. The statistics show that 19,410 tonnes of Scottish salmon, worth more than £100m, were exported to the EU in the first three months of this year.

It was an increase of more than 8,200 tonnes on 2020 and is a record for the first quarter of any recent year. However price levels did not increase at the same rate. Exports to the EU account for 69% of global sales for Scottish salmon.

## 14,000 Sharks Caught in British Territory

Illegal shark fishing in a protected zone around a British Indian Ocean territory is much greater than previously believed, according to new research.

A Marine Protected Area (MPA) was established in 2010 around the Chagos Archipelago, a collection of tiny atolls in the Indian Ocean owned by the UK as the British India Ocean Territory. The MPA bans all fishing inside the 640,000 sq km zone, but illegal fishing – mostly of sharks – has continued as enforcing the enormous conservation area is limited to a single aging vessel.

New research by a team led by the University of Exeter and the Zoological Society London has concluded the estimates of illegal shark fishing are significantly undercounting the reality.

Enforcement data suggests about 14,000 sharks were caught in the Chagos MPA from 2010 to 2020.

## Improving Fisheries in America

Demand for funding from the US aid programme to develop fishing communities has been high so far this year, according to NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which is the American scientific agency within the United States Department of Commerce that focuses on the conditions of the oceans.



For more than 40 years, NOAA has awarded grant funding for projects under the Saltonstall-Kennedy program to individuals, institutions, organisations and businesses across the USA. These funds help address the needs of fishing communities, support economic opportunities and build and maintain resilient and sustainable fisheries.

NOAA Fisheries has recommended more than US\$11 million for 43 projects under the 2021 Saltonstall-Kennedy Competitive Grants Program. The projects fall into two categories – one related to promotion, development, marketing and science and the other concerned with technology that promotes sustainable US seafood production and harvesting.

The aim of the Saltonstall-Kennedy program is to fund projects that address the needs of fishing communities, optimise economic benefits by building and maintaining sustainable fisheries and increase other opportunities to keep working waterfronts viable.

"Demand for funding was high again this year. Initially, NOAA received 276 pre-proposals. Out of that number, at least three subject matter experts reviewed 158 full proposals requesting more than US\$42 million during the technical merit review phase," according to NOAA.

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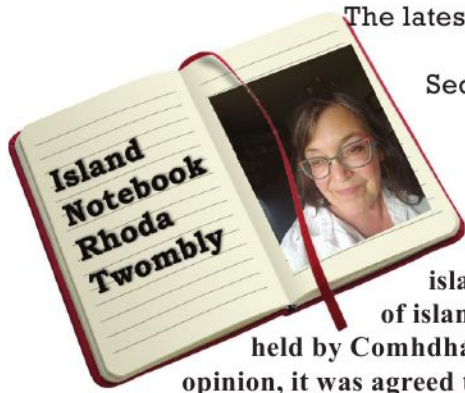
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The latest developments on the offshore islands reported by Rhoda Twombly, Secretary Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, the Islands' Federation.

### Housing Baseline Study

The lack of suitable housing on offshore islands is a major factor in the sustainability of island communities. In the workshop recently held by Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann to gather Islander opinion, it was agreed that a baseline study needed to be done to discover what housing already exists and the housing needs on each island.

It is encouraging that the Irish Research Council has announced a study of the housing situations across the West Cork Islands is to be undertaken through UCC. Islanders are encouraged to participate as it is vital to have a base to build future housing plans on. It is felt that it would be hugely beneficial if similar studies could be set up in Donegal, Galway and Mayo.

### Bere and Inishbofin Engaging in Energy Projects

The introduction of sustainable, green and efficient energy is not only part of Europe's decarbonisation requirements but core to the future growth of offshore islands. Foundation work - energy audits, refitting for greater efficiency and overall island energy plans - are some of the steps needed for a more efficient future. It is extremely good news that two islands are to be included in separate projects.

Cork's Bere Island was accepted as the only Irish island to be included in a project through the Secretariat of Clean Energy for EU Islands which will provide technical support to help Bere design a new renewable energy plan. Part of this process will be an island-wide survey to assess where the island is currently with its energy consumption and where it needs to be in the future.

Inishbofin, Co. Galway, has been chosen as one of six European Islands to participate in a NESOI (New Energy Solutions Optimised for Islands) project directed specifically at small islands (<5,000 population) that do not have the expertise or funding to optimise their energy plans or transition

work. Recognising that small islands have specific and unique challenges to transitioning to renewable energy, ESIN (the non-profit representative group for European small islands of which Comhdháil is a founder member) applied for this grant for assistance to work plans on member islands Inishbofin as well as Île aux Moines (France), Nagu archipelago (Finland), Fur and Venø (Denmark) and Ulva (Scotland).

Both projects require the support of islanders and other relevant stakeholders. A major key to success will be the island community's involvement and input. Local media will soon be publicising the projects and requesting input.

### Harbour to Island on Arranmore

Lockdown has meant the cancellation or delay of projects throughout the country. The people of Arranmore were thrilled when the first sod was turned on their €4.1 million rural regeneration project. "Harbour to Island" will create outdoor amenity and recreation area as well as an amphitheatre for all manner of cultural performances.

Lack of capital funding held up the project that originated from the Comharchumann Oileán Árann Mhór Teo island development plan. The Co-op owns the land, had the plans drawn up and was granted planning permission. Recently a funding partnership between Donegal County Council, the Department of Rural & Community Development and Comharchumann Oileán Árann Mhór secured the future of this promising development. It is felt that this project will open the doors to new businesses in the hospitality, tourism and leisure sectors as well as supporting existing enterprises. It is envisioned that the project will be finished in 31 weeks.

Islanders, generally through necessity, are innovative and multi-skilled as well as being "jacks of all trades." During the lockdowns, some islanders have taken the opportunity to develop their entrepreneurial ideas for tourism, crafts, arts and artisanal foods.

Arranmore Co-Op with Donegal County

Council and Udaras na Gaeltachta have been working for over a year to develop a Blueway which will promote water and land-based trails and activities between Burtonport and the island. This will be a regeneration project for both Burtonport and Arranmore. When completed the Blueway will stimulate activity in a range of businesses from tourism and hospitality to outdoor activities, craft, and artisan food creation as well as specialist training in providing guided tours and trail walking adventures.

### Square Miles of Gin from Cape

'3 Sq Miles' gin is made by Cape Clear Island distillery - the only offshore island distillery in Ireland. While in production for about three years, Covid-19 obliterated their restaurant and pub sales. The company spent this time improving their distillation process and increasing off-licence sales.

Their acceptance into the Food Academy (made up of Musgraves, Bord Bia and the local Enterprise Office) was a turning point for the company and they are now distrib-

uting their product in Supervalu stores in Cork and hopefully further afield in the future. Their gin is unique, using plants foraged on the island. This island gin has also won several prestigious awards on both sides of the Atlantic. 3 Sq Miles gin is set to become world renown and will help to increase Oilean Chleire's profile into the future.

### Different Summer Season

As Ireland moves ever closer to loosening the pandemic restrictions, islanders are preparing for what will undoubtedly be a different sort of summer season.

"Staycationers" will want to explore their country even more and many will discover the delights our offshore islands have to offer. Especially in fine weather our islands are pieces of paradise. Hikers, cyclists, sailors and water sport aficionados will all find delights on our islands. Craft works, artworks and premium knit wear are all on offer. So much for visitors and locals to enjoy and appreciate safely.

To all of those planning to visit our offshore islands - be safe, stay healthy and be happy!



(Above): Inis Oírr fishermen standing strong in support of fishermen across Ireland. They are not satisfied with the new restrictions that have been put in place because of Brexit. The fishermen of this country are not being treated fairly. We hope that Taoiseach Micheál Martin and the Government are listening to us today and will take action to solve this problem. Photo courtesy Cormac Coyne.

(Below): Cathaoirleach of Donegal County Council, Cllr. Rena Donaghey and Bainisteoir, Comharchumann Oileán Árann Mhór Teo, Ms. Nóirín Úimhaoldomhnaigh turning the sod on the Aranmore Island Shore Front Amenity Development. Back Row (L-R): Cllr. Marie Therese Gallagher, Cathaoirleach of the Glenties Municipal District, Joseph McMenamin, Contractor, John McLaughlin, Chief Executive of Donegal County Council, Cllr. Noreen McGarvey, Chairperson of the Islands Committee and Liam Ward, Director of Service, Community Development & Planning Services, Donegal County Council".



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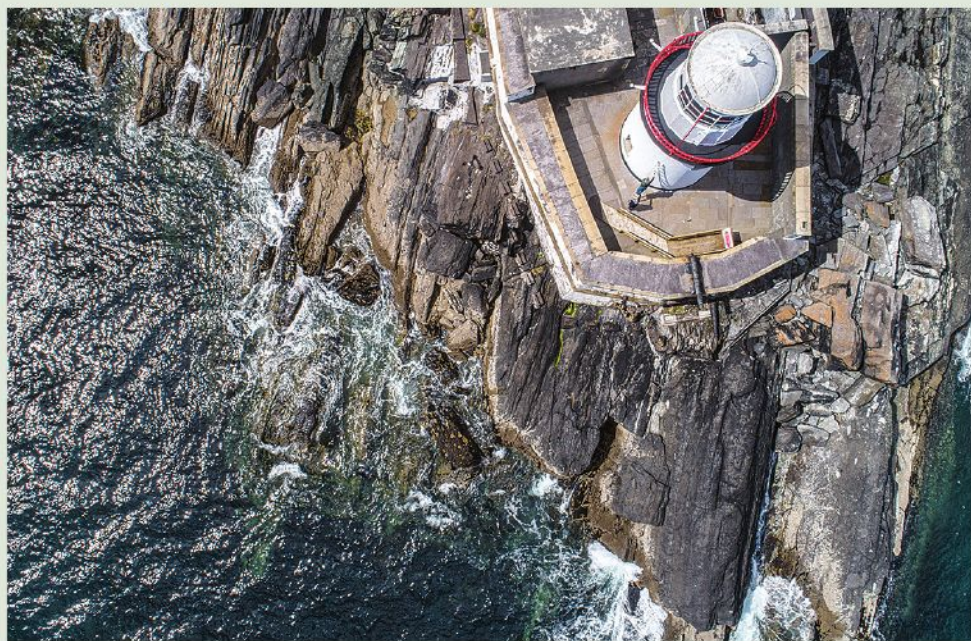
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## New 'Leading Lights at Cromwell Point' Visitor Experience Launched as Valentia Island Lighthouse Reopens

Valentia Island Lighthouse has announced the launch of a new visitor experience, 'Leading Lights at Cromwell Point' and the re-opening for the 2021 season.



'Leading Lights at Cromwell Point' will deliver a whole new experience to the visitors, a journey through time and history, featuring the bronze age standing stone, the 17<sup>th</sup> century well preserved Cromwellian fort, the Lightkeeper's House with a 1920's feel, and the Lighthouse Tower with fantastic 360-degree views of the area and across the Atlantic Ocean. The visitors will learn about how life was for people living on the edge of Europe and in particular what was like for a lightkeeper to live at the Lighthouse with his family. The rich history of the area is also presented at the Lighthouse from early Christianity until modern days. There is also a new Eco-room that displays information about marine life in the area and raises awareness about our seas. The new Interpretation project covers a vast spectrum of information and it is very appealing for visitors with different areas of interest.

The Lighthouse project is managed by Valentia Island Development Company, a community group established by volunteers from Valentia Island.

Speaking about the new visitor experience, Lucian Horvat, Manager at Valentia Island Lighthouse said: "Despite these unprecedented times, the Lighthouse Committee and Management were determined to deliver the project in time for the return of domestic tourism in line with Government guidelines. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Fáilte Ireland for their vital support and guidance, the South Kerry Development Partnership who have supported us since Valentia Island Lighthouse opened to the public in 2013, the Great Lighthouses of Ireland group, an initiative of Irish Lights, and Mirador Media who worked around the clock to implement our vision for the historical site at Valentia Island Lighthouse. 'Leading Lights at Cromwell

Point' is a great example of collaboration between agencies, stakeholders and local community groups."

The 'Leading Lights at Cromwell Point' visitor experience was developed through Fáilte Ireland's 'New Horizons on the Wild Atlantic Way' Grants Scheme. Wild Atlantic Way Manager at Fáilte Ireland, Josephine O'Driscoll, said: "The Visitor Experience Development Plan for the Skelligs Coast, which was developed in consultation with local stakeholders, tourism businesses and the community, identified a number of development projects to bring local experiences along the Skellig Coast to life to help drive and sustain tourism in the area. Following the launch of the plan, we invested in a number of projects including €120,000 in the development of 'Leading Lights at Cromwell Point' at Valentia Island Lighthouse and it is fantastic to see the project come to fruition just in time for the summer season. Innovative visitor experiences such as this are hugely important in attracting visitors and encouraging them to stay longer in the area and will be critical as we look towards the recovery of the tourism sector."

Brian Morgan – Director VIDC and Lighthouse Committee Chairperson said: "Best wishes to Lucian and our team on the re-opening of the Lighthouse for the season 2021. Tremendous work has been done to create a new experience at the lighthouse. The visitor will see for themselves what life must have been like for the lighthouse keeper and his family, to live in such an isolated place under harsh conditions. The new and improved visitor attraction is looking forward to welcoming even more visitors this year."

**For more information on Valentia Island Lighthouse and to book your experience, please visit [www.valentialighthouse.ie](http://www.valentialighthouse.ie)**

## Sustaining Livelihoods And Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth - Oceans Of Learning Explores Ireland's Blue Economy

As part of the national Oceans of Learning campaign to celebrate our seas, the Marine Institute and partners are offering a new podcast series, educational videos and short films, news and online resources all about our ocean. The latest Oceans of Learning resources, available on the Marine Institute's website at **Our Ocean: Our Livelihoods** focuses on how the ocean is key to our economy, and essential to sustaining livelihoods and Ireland's coastal communities.

Our ocean is a national asset – supporting a diverse marine economy with vast potential to tap into a global marine market for seafood, tourism, oil and gas, renewable ocean energy and new applications for health, medicine and technology. With an annual turnover of approximately €5.8 billion Ireland's ocean economy makes a significant contribution to the Irish economy, and provides full-time employment for 31,000 people.

Established marine industries account for 93% of total marine turnover. This is dominated by both shipping and maritime transport, as well as tourism and leisure in marine and coastal areas. Ireland's seafood resources also have a significant role in our ocean economy, with Bord Iascaigh Mhara reporting the consumption, net exports and investment in Ireland's seafood industry was worth a combined total of €1.1 billion in 2020.

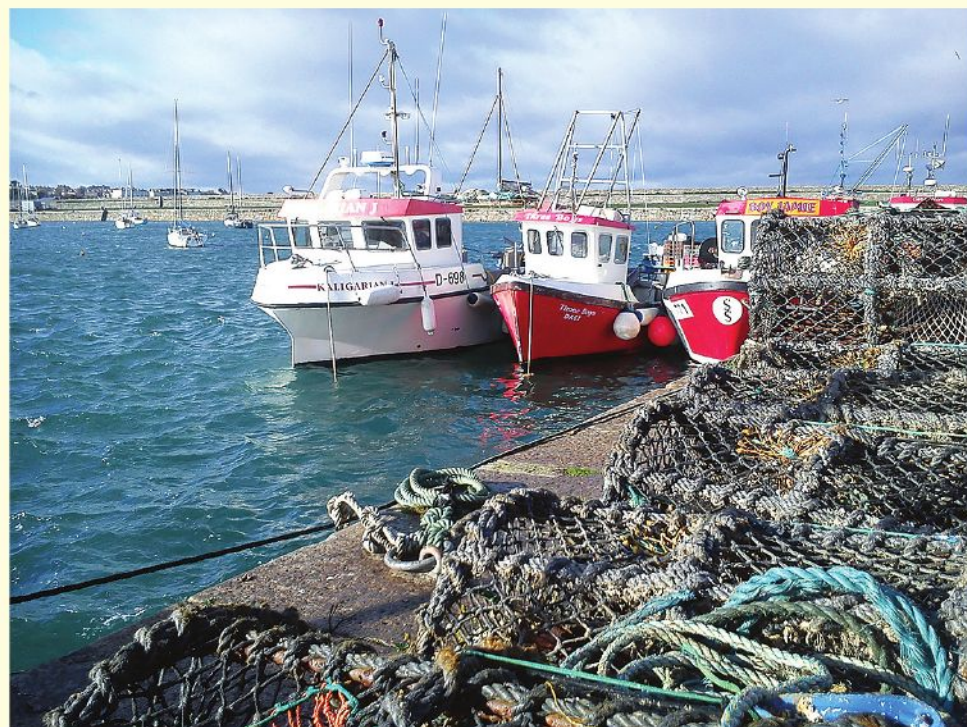
Ireland's marine territory has the potential to support a wide range of economic activities and to tap into global marine and maritime markets. Emerging industries in the marine and maritime sector include advanced marine technology products and services, marine commerce, marine renewable energy, and marine biotechnology and bio-products. To support Ireland's marine sector, the Marine Ireland Industry Network provides collaboration and promotion opportunities for its members, both nationally and internationally. The network includes a diverse array of companies, state organisations, research groups and higher education institutes, working in Ireland's

blue economy.

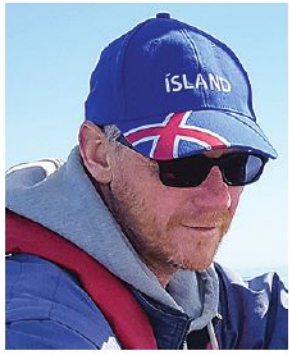
Mick Gillooly, Joint Acting CEO at the Marine Institute said, "With a marine territory ten times the size of our landmass, our ocean plays an important role in our economy through sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, ports and shipping, technology, tourism and marine renewable energy. Many communities, but in particular our coastal communities, depend on our vast ocean wealth for employment, leisure and wellbeing. The Marine Institute works with partners to support a sustainable blue economy through research, infrastructure, advisory services and maritime development opportunities."

This Marine Institute has also partnered with Teagasc, the state agency providing research, advisory and education in agriculture, horticulture, food and rural development in Ireland and Seavite, the Irish seaweed-based skincare range to bring you some interesting insights into seaweed in Ireland. Seaweed harvesting is a traditional occupation in many coastal areas around Ireland, and seaweed has many valuable uses including its use in food products, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

**To view the suite of resources available for Oceans of Learning this week, visit **Our Ocean: Our Livelihoods** at [www.marine.ie](http://www.marine.ie) The Oceans of Learning podcast is available to download from Apple Podcasts and Spotify.**



Fishing boats and pots at Dun Laoghaire - Photo Coast Monkey.

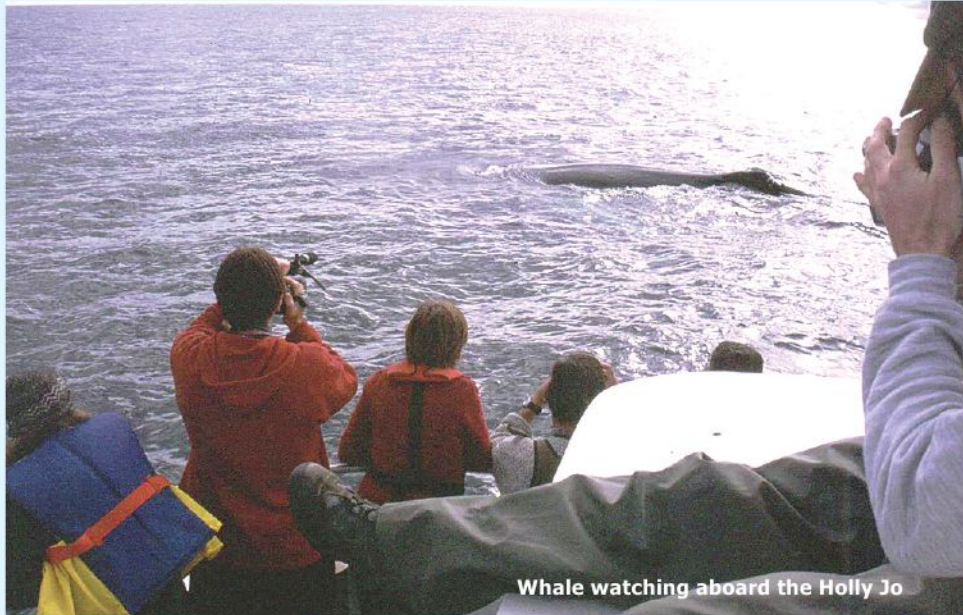


## IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP IWDG NEWS

*The CEO of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group describes the introduction of a new way of reporting sightings of whales and dolphins*

### Biological Recording with Citizen Scientists Comes of Age

One of the good things to come out of the Covid pandemic was an increase in interest, and engagement, with wildlife. People were discovering their local patch, spending time watching and listening to wildlife, and starting to try and identify species.



This is the first step to becoming a biological recorder. Biological recording attempts to describe the presence and abundance and changes, both in time and space, of wildlife. Recently the term "Citizen Scientist" has been coined to describe research carried out by members of the public who volunteer to collect scientific data.

The Irish Whale and Dolphin Group have been running Citizen Science Biological Recording Schemes for 30 years. The Stranding and Sighting Schemes are at the core of the IWDG, but we run other citizen science schemes such as Whale-Track Ireland. These schemes are used by the IWDG to identify important areas and times of year for whales and dolphins, explore trends in their abundance over decades and support marine wildlife tourism by sharing their current locations in real time to those who want to see them.

Through these recording schemes we have shown, for example, an increase in strandings of common dolphins during the winter since 2011 and an increase in the number of humpback whales in inshore Irish waters during summer and autumn.

In order for these data to be useful for developing conservation policies and actions the data has to be reliable. This requires robust validation, to ensure the record is what it is and if there are doubts, records are downgraded to protect the reliable records and provide quality assurance.

The IWDG were one of the first NGOs in Ireland to embrace the digital revolution and all our recording and data access has been online for 20 years. This month

we have launched a new **Reporting App** to make it easier for people to send in their sightings and strandings, but without reducing the information required to validate these records. Recording is very similar to submitting records through our website, but it's now in the palm of your hand.

Fishers, mariners, sailors and other marine users can record their observations as they happen, save them on the App which will then send to the IWDG once a signal is received. Short video can also be uploaded. The information is fed into our existing database for validation, with records then available through <https://iwdg.ie/>



We are in a new digital era where technology dominates our life. Hopefully this new tool now available from the IWDG will make contributing to whale and dolphin conservation and actions that bit easier. The App can be downloaded for free from <https://iwdg.ie/iwdg-reporting-app/>



**BirdWatchIreland**  
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## Dublin Port is Specially Treating the World's Longest-Distance Migrants

Niall Hatch Reports

This is the busiest time of year for BirdWatch Ireland's seabird conservation teams, with the breeding season now in full swing at colonies right around the Irish coast. The first eggs have been laid at the tern colonies on Rockabill Island, Co. Dublin, and Kilcoole Beach, Co. Wicklow, and, thanks to the support of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, our wardens are in place to give them 24-hour protection and to monitor their progress.

It seems natural enough that migrant seabirds would choose to nest on an isolated island or on a pristine shingle beach, but on the face of it bustling Dublin Port would seem to be an unlikely location for them to breed. Yet, tucked within this industrial landscape, beneath towering cranes and in the wake of passing cargo ships, hundreds of fledgling Common and Arctic Terns take to the wing each summer. There have been terns nesting in Dublin Port since at least 1949, and since 1994 they have used isolated pontoons for this purpose.

This year, thanks to Dublin Port Company, an upgraded tern nesting pontoon has been deployed at the Great South Wall. The pontoon has been subdivided into compartments with wooden chick shelters in the corners, which help to keep the tern chicks safe in poor weather. The adult terns are laying their eggs there at the moment, as well as on three other pontoons around the port. Despite their apparent ease nesting in such a busy location, it is still an incredibly delicate balance between nature and human activity.

Approx. 600 pairs of terns have nested each summer in Dublin Port in recent years, and we are hoping that 2021 will be another bumper year for these beautiful seabirds. It's amazing to think that, in just a few months time, the chicks that are currently still developing inside their eggs will travel so far. The Common Terns will spend the winter off the coast of West Africa, while the Arctic Terns will go even further, to Antarctica, making them the longest-distance migrant in the world.

This is also the time of year when other seabirds, such as Gannets, Fulmars, Kittiwakes, Razorbills, Guillemots and the ever-popular Puffins, are nesting. In recent years, BirdWatch Ireland has grown increasingly concerned about the impacts that visitors, and especially some photographers, who visit their breeding islands have been having on these very sensitive birds.

The nesting birds on Great Saltee Island in Co. Wexford and on Ireland's Eye in Co. Dublin have been under particularly intense pressure from photographers and day-trippers in recent summers. These islands are

easily accessible and provide a fantastic opportunity to see large numbers of amazing seabirds coming and going during the breeding season. Indeed, those of us lucky enough to have done so can probably still remember the first time we saw a Puffin or the sights and smells as we approached a large Gannet colony. Allowing visitors to access these islands is undoubtedly a good thing, as it engages people with seabirds, nature and conservation. It makes them care about wildlife, and we need more of that.

Unfortunately, most people don't realise when they are causing disturbance at these colonies, and what can look like a fantastic photo of a Gannet, Puffin, Shag or Guillemot might actually be depicting a bird that is very stressed and in fear for its eggs or chicks. Research has been conducted on seabirds which shows that they have elevated heart rates and stress levels for hours after a human has approached their nest, even though they didn't fly off and, on the surface, might appear to have been happy to tolerate the human. So, just because a bird remains placidly on its nest when a person approaches doesn't mean that it's happy about the situation. Really what it's thinking is that it has put months of work into getting to this stage of nesting, and it doesn't want to give that up unless it absolutely has to. Remember, as far as that bird knows, you're a predator!

BirdWatch Ireland would like to remind everyone that, under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2018, it is against the law to disturb nesting birds or to take photos of them, their eggs or their chicks without a licence from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. So, this summer, we hope you will take the opportunity to enjoy watching some of Ireland's magnificent seabirds... But from a safe, respectful distance, please.

• **Seabirds need your help. If you would like to help to protect Ireland's seabirds and support conservation efforts to restore 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](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie)**



Vessels heading to Port of Cork for recent demonstration - Photo by Bob Bateman Photography

## news from **Castletownbere** Helen Riddell

### Fishing Protest

A flotilla of over 50 trawlers from around the south of the country, including a large number from Castletownbere steamed into the quays in Cork City Centre on the morning of Wednesday May 26<sup>th</sup> to protest against quota cuts.

The Castletownbere fleet sailed out of the harbour mouth just after 9pm the previous evening, meeting up with other vessels at Roches Point the following morning before heading into the city centre quays. The group are demanding a reversal of quota cuts and for the EU Common Fisheries Policy to be renegotiated in Ireland's favour.

A number of local businesses who rely on the fishing industry also travelled to the city to support the fishermen. A rally was held on the quay side in the city, and the vessel skippers and crew members then marched to the city office of Taoiseach Micheál Martin in the city to hand in a list of their demands.

### €11.77m Funding for Castletownbere Harbour

Minister Charlie McConalogue TD, has announced details of a €38.3m Capital Investment Package for the ongoing development of Ireland's publicly owned harbour network including 79 local authority harbours across 12 coastal local authorities, which will include an allocation of €11.77 million in funding for the completion of harbour facilities at Castletownbere.

In announcing the 2021 programme, the Minister said, "I am delighted to announce this €38.3 million capital investment package in our six Fishery Harbour Centres and 79 local authority owned piers and harbours around our coast which underlines the importance this Government places on the contribution of the wider Seafood sector to Ireland's economy and to rural coastal communities in particular."

The Local Authority programme which

forms part of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marines' 2021 Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme, whereby the Department co-funds up to 75% of the total cost of approved projects with the Local Authority providing the balance. The funding for Castletownbere will be used for the Dinish Island pier extension, the Castletownbere slipway, repairs to the mainland quay wall, re-routing of the Dinish sewer network, dredging upgrade works to the synchrolift and safety and maintenance work. Other piers in Beraa set to benefit from the funding include pier improvement works and safety signage for Ballycrovane pier, pier remedial and safety improvement works and safety signage for Traavarra pier and safety improvement works and safety signage to Zetland pier.

### Castletownbere RNLI

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, Castletownbere RNLI lifeboat was tasked to assist a stricken fishing vessel whose propeller had become fouled one mile south of Mizen Head.

The lifeboat was launched within minutes under the command of Coxswain Dean Hegarty with crew Marney O'Donogue, Sean 'Bawn' O'Sullivan, Kyle Cronin, Aaron O'Boyle, John William O'Donoghue and Donagh Murphy and proceeded to the 18-metre Castletownbere based trawler which had six crew on board. Conditions on-scene were described as a 2-3 metre swell and with Force 5 south-westerly winds. The lifeboat crew secured tow line onto the trawler and towed it back to Castletownbere without incident.

Commenting on the callout Castletownbere RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager, Paul Stevens, stated: 'The fishing vessel made the right call in seeking assistance –

given the boat's proximity to the shore and the prevailing wind conditions, the lifeboat ensured that a potential critical incident was averted."

He also complimented the crew on its rapid response, maintaining strict COVID-19 protocols and the successful outcome of the call-out

### Castletownbere Development Association

The Castletownbere Development Association have resumed their fundraising car bingo on the East End Pier.

Dates and times are announced on the group's Facebook page. All funds raised will go to the Castletownbere Capital Projects Fund.

### Beara 3k a Day Nominated for Award

Paul O'Shea, one of the organisers of the Beara 3k a Day walking group has been nominated in the Active Community Champion category in the Active Cork Community Awards 2021.

The Beara group was set up at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 in a bid to encourage people to stay active by completing a daily walk and posting a photo of their walk on a dedicated Facebook page. The group now has over 3000 members. The Active Cork Community Awards were established by Cork Sports Partnership under its Active Cork Communities initiative to honour, recognise and celebrate the individuals and groups in Cork that go above and beyond in their efforts to promote community sport and physical activities opportunities. The winners of each category will be announced at a virtual awards ceremony on Friday June 18<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

## Marine Times WhatsApp and Signal



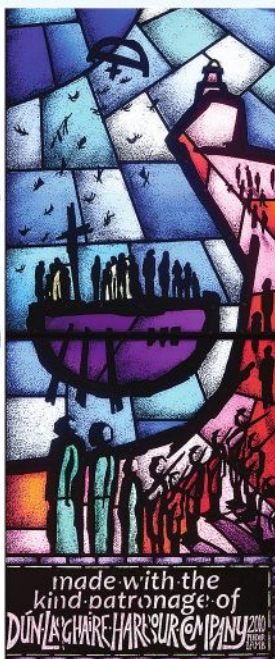
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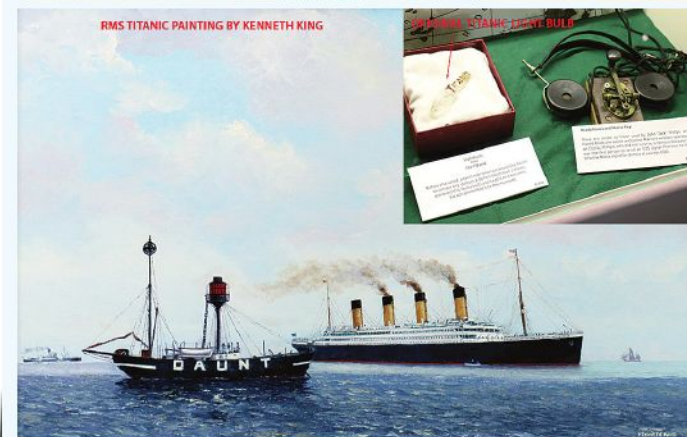
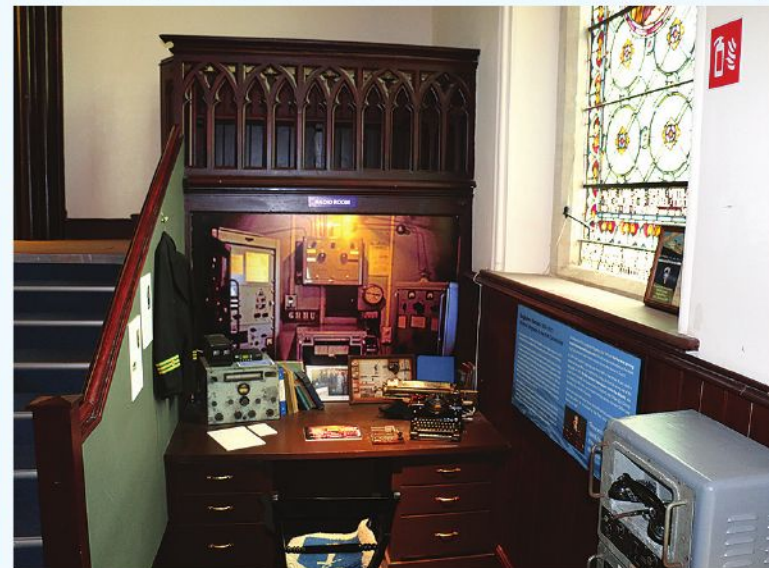
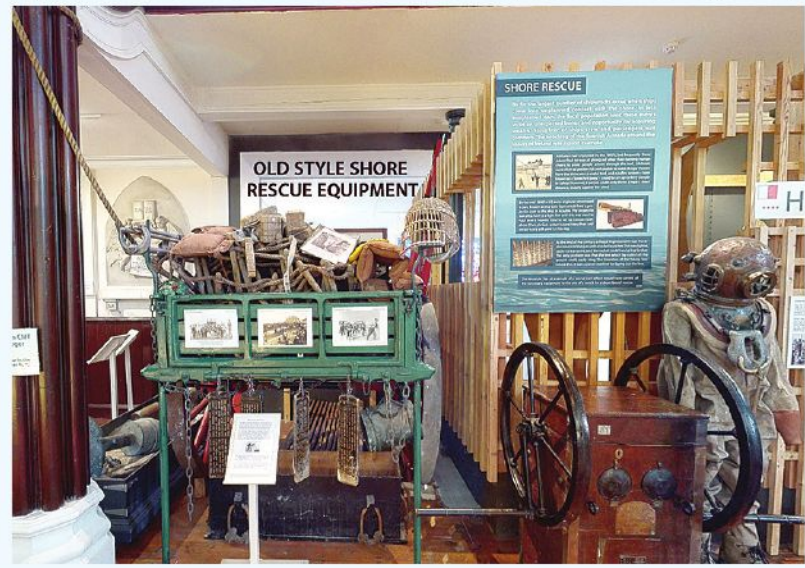
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(Clockwise): RMS Leinster Exhibition; Captain Robert Halpin Uniform & Sword; Tayleur Wreck Crockery, Painting & Medal 1844; Kenneth King's Painting & Original Titanic Bulb; A small section of the 5,000 Books in the Maritime Library (WWII Secret Lloyds Registers); Glenans 50th Anniversary Reunion 2019



## The Maritime Heritage Column

# Dun Laoghaire's National Maritime Museum

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

The foundation stone for Dun Laoghaire's Mariners Church was laid in 1836 by Act of Parliament to cater for the spiritual needs of the officers and sailors of vessels in Kingstown Harbour as well as the Church of Ireland families of local boatmen, fishermen, Coast Guard, Revenue Service and Royal Navy officers and crew. Deconsecrated in 1973, it opened in 1978 as the National Maritime Museum of Ireland, the Patron of which is Mr Michael D. Higgins, the President of Ireland.

At the entrance to the museum is a restored Hotchkiss High Angle Naval Gun from the Royal Navy Submarine Hunter *Guide Me II*, sunk in 1918 after colliding with *SS Glengariff* off the Muglins with the loss of a crewman. On entering the museum, visitors marvel at the impressive 10 tonne revolving Baily Optic on the altar, mentioned in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Once projecting light from Howth Head far out to sea to guide sailors to safe harbour, it is now a favourite backdrop for weddings. Behind the optic are three Waiiles of Newcastle stained glass windows modelled on the Five Sisters in York Minster Cathedral. A beautiful stained glass rose window adorns the gallery, while two inspiring Peadar Lamb windows are also on view.

Numerous ship models are displayed, the oldest being a sixteenth century Portuguese sailing Carrack. Models of well-known Irish Sea ferries plus historic Irish Lights, Irish Naval Service and square rigged ships and RNLI lifeboats will delight model makers. Full size currachs are also on display. The name board from the wrecked sailing clipper *Palme* commemorates the tragic deaths of 15 local lifeboat men on Christmas Eve 1895, one of the highest losses of lifeboat crew in the distinguished history of the RNLI.

Visitors can examine Wicklow's horse drawn rescue cart which once carried rockets propelling the connecting line of a breeches buoy to haul stranded ship's crews to safety. Alongside is a manual surface-supply brass helmet diving suit. Boating enthusiasts will appreciate the immaculately varnished Water Wag dating from the 1890's; the first one-design racing dinghy in the world. Professional seafarers are usually attracted to the large display of historic navigational instruments while marine engine enthusiasts operate the 1908 built dredger *Saxifrage's* compound steam engine and study rare vintage outboard engines.

Artefacts belonging to Wicklow born Captain Robert Halpin (1836 – 1894) commander of *SS Great Eastern*, the world's largest ship at the time, which linked continents with international oceanic communications cables has pride of place in the Museum, while his exploits are detailed on a nearby touch screen.

Poignant artefacts and memorabilia recall the Royal Mail Ship *Leinster*, torpedoed by *UB-123*, killing 569 passengers and crew just twelve nautical miles from the Museum on 10<sup>th</sup> October 1918. The stories and fate of all 813 people onboard during her final fateful voyage are preserved on an adjacent touch screen.

Spode crockery commemorates the ill-fated iron sailing clipper *RMS Tayleur* wrecked on Lambay Island on her maiden voyage to Australia in January 1844, claiming 350 lives, many being women and children. The Brendan Neary Library holds a unique research collection of 5,000 rare maritime books from the 1700's to the twenty-first century.

An original light bulb and a Ballard Expedition fragment of *RMS Titanic* can be seen in the upper gallery. The Wexford Steamship Company's *MV Kerlogue* which rescued 168 German sailors from a watery fate in 1943 is celebrated by a model of the ship and her RAF bullet holed Irish flag, accompanied by a grateful official German testimonial. Flanked by two original Royal Navy prisoners' docks, Kenneth King's dramatic Irish Shipping paintings illustrate the company's losses during WWII, in which 20% of its neutral seafaring crews succumbed to hostile actions. Nearby is a replica ship's Radio Room while a fully functional amateur Radio Station is diagonally opposite.

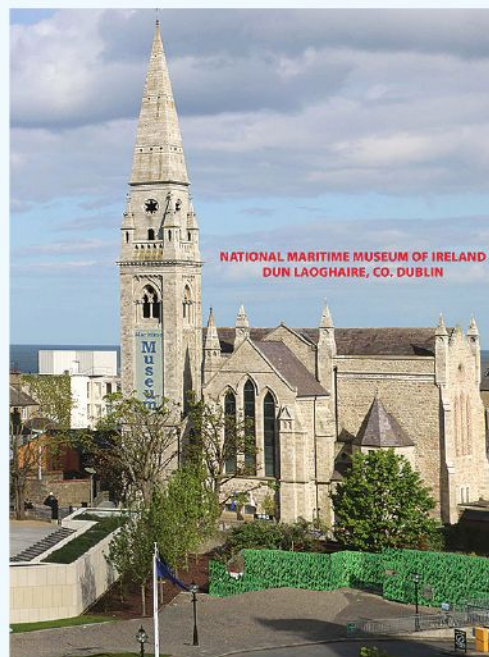
Open all year round, the museum has something for all ages. Younger generations can indulge their artistic talents, signal one another with Morse Code lamps and flags, tie a variety of knots and enjoy Science and Maths Week events. The Museum's ever popular volunteer guided tours, in-house lectures, concerts and musical events are temporarily suspended due to Covid restrictions. Nevertheless, for a modest entry fee visitors can enjoy an immersive maritime experience knowing that every Euro received is dedicated to maintaining and improving the National Maritime Museum for future generations.



For information on the National Maritime Museum's exhibitions and events see [www.mariner.ie](http://www.mariner.ie)



The Baily Optic ready for a Wedding inside the Museum; WWI Hotchkiss Naval Gun



WWII Irish Naval MTB; MV Kerlogue and Bullet holed Irish Flag; Boyne Currach and Dredger Saxifrage's Steam Engine



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# Gannets Choke on Dog's Dinner

Declan Quigley reports

On the afternoon of 27 April 2021, Terry Hanna (Dromore, Co Down) discovered a freshly dead Northern Gannet (*Morus bassanus*) stranded on Murlough Beach, Co Down. The tail fin of a Lesser Spotted Dogfish (*Scyliorhinus canicula*) was protruding from the Gannet's beak. It was clear that the Gannet had choked while attempting to swallow the Dogfish. A similar discovery was made on 21 April 2014 by Eoin O'Flynn (Termofeckin, Co Louth), at Baltray, Co Louth (Inset photo below).

The Lesser Spotted Dogfish (LSD) is a common bottom-living shark which is usually found at depths of 3 to 110 m and less commonly down to 400 m in NW European waters. Although Gannets generally do not penetrate more than 3.5 m while diving in pursuit of prey, they can descend to 12-15 m by using their wings as 'flippers'. However, reports of Gannets diving to 30 m are considered to be erroneous. Since LSD have not been previously reported in the diet of Gannets, it seems that both species rarely, if ever, come into contact in the natural environment other than opportunistically when LSD are discarded by demersal trawlers.



Although the predominant natural prey of Gannets in NW European waters includes near-surface pelagic fish species, particularly Herring (*Clupea harengus*), Sprat (*Sprattus sprattus*), Pollack (*Pollachius pollachius*), Saithe (*P. virens*), Sandeels (*Ammodytes spp.*) and Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*), they are also known to scavenge opportunistically on a wide range of both bottom-dwelling demersal and pelagic fish species discarded by commercial trawlers. During 1998, Gannets were observed to be the most abundant seabird foraging on discards derived from

pelagic trawlers in the Celtic Sea Herring fishery. In 2005, it was estimated that Irish beam trawlers discarded up to 67% of their catch by weight in ICES division VIIa (Irish Sea) and that Dogfish (*Scyliorhinus spp.*) represented one of the top four

species discarded by all demersal fleet segments in Irish waters. During 2007 it was reported that LSD represented one of the top ten most commonly discarded demersal fish species in the English Channel, Western Approaches, Celtic and Irish Sea. During 2002-06, it was estimated that English and Welsh commercial fleets discarded 58-100% of LSD.

Gannets are generally quite selective with regard to which species and sizes of discarded fish that they target, especially if the abundance of preferred prey species may not be particularly limited. For example, during 2007 it was noted that Gannets tended to avoid discarded benthic invertebrates and fish that are difficult to swallow, especially species with long spines or large flatfish. Although LSD lack spines, its skin is quite rough due to the presence of numerous posteriorly pointed denticles, while the Gannet's beak is sharply serrated.

Since discarded LSD are known to have a high survival rate, it is possible that they were still alive when snatched up by the



Gannet choked by Lesser Spotted Dogfish on Murlough Beach Co Down Photo Terry Hanna

Gannets. Indeed it is likely that the LSD may have put up a significant struggle to dislodge themselves from the Gannet's gullet. The Gannets inability to either successfully swallow or voluntarily extricate themselves from the LSD undoubtedly led to the fatal entanglement of both predator and prey.

The Gannet's general preference for fish species which are easy to swallow may account for the relatively few reports of Gannets choking on fish. Indeed, over a thirty year period, between 1970 and 2000, it was noted that the cause of mortality of dead Gannets (c.450) found stranded on Dutch beaches was mostly attributed to either oiling or entanglement in fishing nets. There would appear to be only one previous report regarding Gannets choking on fish. Gray (1871) [*Birds of the West Coast of Scotland*] noted that 'At various times I have discovered dead birds (Gannets) at the base of the cliffs there (Girvan, Ayrshire, SW Scotland), with Gurnards (*Triglidae*) firmly wedged in their throats, and have been obliged to use a knife for cutting the spines before the fish could be taken out. Individuals have also been picked up on the water similarly situated'. Clearly, some Gannets are not too choosy which prey species they target, possibly because they are either inexperienced and/or there is a high level of competition for a limited food source.

At least 70% of the world's total population of Gannets breed in Britain (56%)

and Ireland (14%), supporting 293,200 and 48,000 breeding pairs respectively. Six colonies occur in Ireland and 15 in the UK. Based on the most recent census (2013-14), the Irish Gannet population had increased by c.33% from 36,000 breeding pairs during 2004 to 48,000 during 2014. At least six Gannet colonies supporting a total of 77,610 breeding pairs occur either in or near the Irish Sea, including three in Ireland, two in Scotland, and one in Wales (Table 1). Gannets are known to forage for food over long distances from their breeding colonies, with some birds travelling up to 540 km during expeditions lasting from 13-84 hours.

Although ornithologists frequently express concerns about the negative effects of 'over-fishing' on sea birds, ironically some recently suggested that the EU Fisheries Landing Obligation (which is designed to reduce the level of quota species discards), is likely to impact on Gannets and other seabirds that feed on discards. How did these seabirds survive long before the advent of large-scale commercial fishing, and why, in particular, have Gannet populations significantly increased since the 1970s despite the continued development of large-scale commercial fishing?

Declan is always interested in receiving reports about rarely recorded species and/or unusual records from Irish waters (087-6458485; [declanquigley2021@gmail.com](mailto:declanquigley2021@gmail.com)).

## BIM New Fishermen Scheme

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Table 1. Gannet breeding colonies in or near the Irish Sea

Location	Number of breeding pairs	Census Year
Grassholm Island, Pembrokeshire, SW Wales	36011	2015
Ailsa Craig, Firth of Clyde, South Ayrshire, Scotland	33226	2014
Great Saltee Island, Co Wexford, SE Ireland	4722	2013
Scar Rocks, Luce Bay, Mull of Galloway, Scotland	2376	2014
Lambay Island, Co Dublin, Ireland	728	2013
Ireland's Eye, Co Dublin, Ireland	547	2013
<b>Total</b>	<b>77610</b>	<b>2013-15</b>



Portavogie resplendent in sunshine - Photo by Christopher Feenan

## Taste the Atlantic Young Chef Ambassador Programme Announced

Applications are open for the Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Taste the Atlantic Young Chef Ambassador Programme in partnership with Chef Network. The three-month programme is being supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and seeks to drive awareness of the provenance of Irish seafood among young and aspiring chefs.

Máirtín Walsh, BIM spoke about the seafood trail and how it is helping to build awareness of sustainably produced seafood; “A newfound appreciation for provenance is growing. People want to know where their seafood comes from, how it is produced and who is producing it. The Taste the Atlantic seafood trail was developed in partnership with Fáilte Ireland on this premise and this new programme aims to inform and educate the new generation of chefs about Irish seafood at the outset of their careers.”

Four places will be made available on the three-month programme that includes mentoring from some of Ireland’s leading seafood producers located along the Wild Atlantic Way and from Master fishmonger, Hal Dawson and chef JP McMahon.

Chris McMenamin, Head Chef at Harvey’s Point in Donegal and member of

the Chef Network Advisory Council said: “Chef Network is committed to developing the next generation of culinary talent in Ireland, and to working with everyone who contributes to bringing great food to the table in Ireland. There is no better way to inspire young chefs than connecting them with our wonderful food producers. We have a wealth of incredible seafood along our Wild Atlantic Way, and we have a wealth of energy and creativity amongst our young chefs just waiting to be explored. The Taste the Atlantic Young Chef programme is an exciting opportunity to bring all of that together and create something really special.”

**The deadline for nominations is Friday, the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 2021. For more information, please go to: [www.chefnetwork.ie/events/ta-young-chef](http://www.chefnetwork.ie/events/ta-young-chef)**

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