

# MARINE TIMES

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



Bláth na hÓige at Purteen Harbour, Achill - Photo courtesy Purteen Harbour Fishermen's Group



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## Marine Minister Refuses To Help Fishing Industry

### Industry Denies Commission Allegations And Demands Production Of Evidence

by Tom MacSweeney, Deputy Editor

What, exactly, is the evidence which the European Commission has in its possession, on which it based its ruling that the Irish fishing industry cannot be trusted? Full report on page 3

## Blunt, Brutal & Wrong

“What has been brandished here is a very blunt instrument that was applied in a brutal manner against the wrong target.”  
Angry Reaction on pages 4 & 11

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# the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

## Note for the Bankers ....

We have all attended the occasional Pub Quiz. Imagine a situation where the Quizmaster favoured one Team over another!

So his question to Team A is "How many people attended the All Ireland Football Final in 2019"? Answer 92000. **Correct !!!**

Question to Team B – "92000 people attended the All Ireland Football Final in 2019 ... **Name them !!!!!**"

**What a stupid question – BUT-** It has striking similarity with the process of Loan Applications at the moment.

Credit applications must be processed and analysed – of course they must but when you are being analysed - like going to the Doctor there is comfort in knowing that the person actually doing the analysis knows what makes things work.

The old "Kick for Touch" is and always was one of the great escapes and the process of making one's own ignorance appear to be someone else's fault. If you don't know your game lads- it's YOUR fault.

The Banks have a System of Credit Grading.

That demonstrates the overall effectiveness of a particular Sector and certainly up to recent years Fishing Lendings were well up in the league table with relatively few failures.

Even when there were failures the Fisherman stepped up like a Man and sold his Vessel without the sale being forced.

That's how they are- Hardworking and Honorable in their financial dealings.

In bygone times (not too bygone) the basic formula governing lendings was :

How Much do we want ?

What For

How are we going to pay it back

What Security have we ?

Generally in a Fishing Project- in particular for an established business – significant Equity will have been built up placing additional risk on the Borrower.

The Fishermen will have Financial and Personal Skin in the Game more than any other industry because there is personal Risk everytime they put to sea.

If the Banks are half serious in their attitude to Fishing they need to learn the Business in the Way they have learned about Farming.

Lets take a simple comparison of what might happen in the event of Failures in the table below .....

Fishing inability to Earn due to Breakdown, Weather or Markets	Farming inability to earn due to Weather, Markets or Animal Test Failure
1. Tie the Vessel Up pro temp	1. Expense of digging up unsaved crops
2. Pay Insurance	2. Expense of Replanting
3. Basic Maintenance	3. Feeding of Livestock while waiting for sale
4. Diesel to run the Generators	4. Security will generally involve the Family Home which will be situated on the Farm so sale difficult.
5. Because of the Sharing System part of the loss is carried by the Crew.	5. Escape Valve- march on Kildare Steer with demand for extra relief payments???
6. Security will be the Vessel and Capacity all saleable	
7. Escape valve- you are on your own lads!!!!	

I dunno lads but Fishing probably for a variety of reasons is probably one of the safest Lendings at the moment- despite everything.

**Meanwhile we have the Special Task Force working away to try to find some way of mitigating the effects of the "Brexit" Quota Cuts.**

We might manage to get some additional quotas but I think everything must be considered and nothing dismissed out of hand as some are trying to do,

I understand that there are lots of Suggestions being lodged which is great. Lets give them every chance to at least hear what the Industry sees as a realistic solution

No matter where we turn nor no matter what anyone suggests- someone else will have a better idea????

In the Irish Dail Mail Letters page of 22 March there was an excellent comment from a chap in Waterford which read "Both Sinn Fein and the Labour Party have an answer for everything, and solutions for nothing"

I am afraid lads that there are far more than those parties with that particular Talent..... Can we as a people not for once try to pull together- and at least PRETEND we care.

## Fishers and Fish Farmers Being Invited to Take Part in BIM Safety at Sea Survey

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) has commissioned independent research agency, Red C to undertake a survey on its behalf to better understand behaviour and attitudes towards safety at sea among fishers and fish farmers in Ireland.



The state agency for the development of the seafood industry is interested to learn more from fishers and aquaculture producers who routinely work at sea.

The online survey takes approximately 10 – 12 minutes to complete and will be emailed to each respondent upon sign up.

Survey results will be anonymised.

**If you are a fisher or fish farmer and would like to take part in the survey, please contact BIM at [seafoodskills@bim.ie](mailto:seafoodskills@bim.ie) or on 01 214 4100 and we will send you a link to the survey.**



Work continues on the new vessel MFV Ella by Mooney Boats at the Blackrock Pier in Killybegs. Photo courtesy Alan Hennigan / Mooney Boats

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# Marine Minister Refuses To Help Fishing Industry European Commission Says Weighing Derogation Withdrawal Based On Three-Year-Old Audit

## Industry Denies Commission Allegations And Demands Production Of Evidence

by Tom MacSweeney, Deputy Editor

**What, exactly, is the evidence which the European Commission has in its possession, on which it based its ruling that the Irish fishing industry cannot be trusted?**

No evidence has been produced in public, or conveyed to the representative organisations of the fishing industry for the revoking of the derogation for the industry to weigh fishery products following transport away from the place of landing.

According to a press release issued by the Sea Fisheries Protection Agency on Friday, April 16, the Commission deemed that “the risk of industry’s non-compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy could not be minimised” and it was revoking the derogation with immediate effect from that date.

Based on this statement, the national media demonised the fishing industry with lurid headlines: “Fishing industry can’t be trusted says EC.”

No evidence was produced. The national media rushed to judgement on the basis of “the risk of non-compliance,” not “proven” non-compliance.

There is only one case of prosecution on record.

The audit, stated to have been carried out in 2018, claimed to have found 33 “suspected” fraud cases. The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority told the MARINE TIMES it was “conducted by the EU Commission and we would refer you to them for any questions in relation to their audit.”

The EU has not provided further information.

The MARINE TIMES understands that the audit was based on information supplied



Rogue Wave fishing off Skerries - Photo by Richard Guildea

by the SFPA, but neither the Commission, nor the Authority has indicated over what actual period of time that it was carried out, where it was carried out, at how many ports it was carried out, who was involved and what specific evidence was established.

As far as can be ascertained in regard to the 33 “suspected” cases, no further action had been taken, up to the time of the European Commission’s decision being announced. The SFPA said “prosecutions are a matter for the DPP (Director of Public Prosecutions).”

The Minister for the Marine and his Department have sought to deflect all questions about the audit away from them. “The Minister is precluded from getting involved in these matters,” was the response issued from the Department on behalf of Minister Charlie McConalogue.

Flanked by advisors and noticeably advised by Dr. Cecil Beamish, Assistant Secretary General for Marine, when the Minister met online with industry representatives on Friday afternoon, April 24, he refused to give any support to the industry on the issue.

“Effectively,” he wouldn’t stand up to the European Commission on behalf of the fishing industry. “His advisors were making sure that was the message he was giving. He and the Government are standing idly by as the fishing industry and coastal communities are destroyed, their reputation damaged, maybe beyond report,” one of those attending the meeting told the MARINE TIMES.

The SFPA issued its press statement headed “EU withdraws weighing derogation as a consequence to pelagic fisheries audit” on Friday, April 16, but there was no major media or public reaction for several days until Tuesday, April 20. The MARINE TIMES has established that a number of selected national media journalists were contacted in a manner known as “spin-doctoring” and their attention drawn to the press release, with suggestions that it should be reported.

“It’s all about control, the fish don’t matter that much,” a well-placed source in the SFPA told the MARINE TIMES, speaking on condition of not being named. “The intention is to bring the industry under the control that management here wants.”

The SFPA admitted, in replies to a series of questions from the MARINE TIMES (see page 8), of the 2,222 inspections of fishing vessels carried out during 2019, 81% were done on Irish boats. “Activities and fisheries that are considered to pose particular risks of non-compliance are monitored more closely and subject to focussed inspections at sea and in port,” it said.

“There appears to be an implied attitude of suspicion of Irish boats,” a boat owner told this paper but, because of fear that he could be “targeted for speaking out” declined to be named publicly. This ‘fear’ has been regularly cited to the paper when dealing with issues involving official control and regulation of the industry.

The MARINE TIMES has also been told about internal disagreements between staff and management of the SFPA and the paper has been told that particular ports have been targeted for action by staff members in disagreement with official policies.

“The accurate weighing of catches remains the responsibility of the industry,” said Susan Steele, Chair of the SFPA. “The EU’s decision will involve changes to weigh practices. We will be working to ensure that industry can introduce these efficiently and in a way that assures compliance.”

Dr. Steele is leaving her post in September to become Executive Director of the European Fisheries Control Agency.

One political party spoke out publicly in support of the fishing industry. “The Minister must ensure the immediate publication of the European Commission’s audit and the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority administrative inquiry,” said Sinn Féin Spokesperson on Fisheries and the Marine Pádraig Mac Lochlainn. *(Contd on page 4)*

## Harbour Master

### Castletownbere Fishery Harbour Centre

The Department seeks to employ a Harbour Master. The post will be located at the Castletownbere Fishery Harbour Centre, Castletownbere, Co Cork.

The Harbour Master has responsibility for the safe and efficient operation of the harbour as well as the day-to-day management and maintenance of the harbour and its installations. This will include the enforcement of Harbour Bye-Laws, Rules and Regulations and the collection of all monies due to the Department. The Harbour Master will be expected to contribute constructively to the development of the harbour and its facilities.

The Harbour Master is the Person of Responsibility for the Buildings (PRB) held within the FHC.

In addition, the Harbour Master will be expected to be able to act on his/her own initiative, and keep Headquarters informed of any matter that may require attention or action.

Further information including essential requirements, pay scale and an application form are available from:

[www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/a6f25-dafm-upcoming-competitions/](http://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/a6f25-dafm-upcoming-competitions/)

Closing date for receipt of applications is 4pm on Thursday 6th May 2021.

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“Media coverage in Ireland on the back of the leaking of these reports had suggested widespread illegality in the fishing industry here. How can an accused person or in this case, an entire industry, defend themselves if they have not been presented with the evidence? The Minister for the Marine must ensure that fishing representatives in Ireland are provided with the opportunity to respond and defend the reputation of their industry.”

The Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association, Brendan Byrne, said: “You have this body of evidence that nobody has seen, the leaks to the media, the damaging of the fishing industry. No one knows what we are accused of. We can defend our record in the Association and we will do this. Let’s see the charges against us.”

John Ward, Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Producers’ Organisation, disputed that there was fraud. “There was no basis for the allegations”, he said.

John Lynch, Chief Executive of the Irish South and East Fish Producers’ Organisation said: “We have not been given access to the audit report. I ask Minister McCool to make the strongest possible objection to the Commission and inform them that it is customary in law to present the evidence before passing sentence.”

Sean O’Donoghue, CEO of Killybegs Fishermen’s Organisation, said: “We have not been given access to any information to justify this crude action. In fact, we have been explicitly denied access to any reports or correspondence between the Commission, DAFM (Marine Department) and the SFPA on this issue.”

Patrick Murphy, CEO, Irish South and West FPO, said: “This will have massive negative impacts on the fishing industry. It is being painted in the worst light.”

As far as the MARINE TIMES could ascertain, the EC audit says it established that factory operators did not have suitable weighing systems and there was manipulation of those being used. It concluded that “therefore Ireland could not guarantee an effective control of landed quantities of catches and minimise the risk of non-compliance with the rules of the Common Fisheries Policy.”

The meeting between the Minister, his officials and industry representatives on Friday, April 23, heard vehement denunciations of the European Commission decision

and strong denials of the inference taken from the audit that there has been widespread fraud.

The MARINE TIMES has been told, from several sources in the industry, that there is a belief that the European Commission is angered at the Irish industry’s strong criticism of the Brexit deal outcome and complaints highlighting how hard it hit Ireland.

“Isn’t it rather peculiar that this decision comes out now – after an audit done three years ago and with only one case involved,” said one boat owner.

The European Commission’s decision has very serious consequences for the entire Irish fleet because “it applies to all species and all vessels, from the largest trawler to the smallest pot vessel,” said John Lynch.

Additionally, there will be a high cost for equipment to be installed “to weigh fish on piers around the country day and night and risk the excellent quality of Irish fish being compromised,” he said.

No ‘code of conduct’ has been provided for this aspect of quality control. Fish landings could be affected by having to be iced, boxed, then possibly, de-boxed, iced and boxed again. No one is sure about how this will operate, or whether there will be sufficient inspection officials immediately available when and where vessels land. If not, time delays could damage fish quality and result in less value for catches.

“When we raised these issues at the meeting with the Minister and his officials, we got no answers and no clear direction about what is going to happen, we were being sent around back-and-forth between the SFPA and the Department,” said Patrick Murphy.

The situation now facing the industry, which adds to the Brexit quota losses and the fears of further decommissioning, will have serious effects on coastal communities dependent on the fishing industry.

“There will be a massive negative impact on the pelagic, demersal and shellfish sectors,” said Sean O’Donoghue.

Eight other EU Member States still have a derogation similar to that removed from Ireland.

The European Commission ruling against Ireland will not affect European vessels that land their catches in Irish ports.

**More reaction on page 11**



Reflections at Howth - Photo by James Grandfield

# Blunt, Brutal & Wrong

## IFPEA Outraged at Decision to Revoke Control Plan

**The Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association (IFPEA) were outraged to learn of the EU decision to revoke their approval of the control plan that allows the Irish seafood industry to weigh fish at their processing factories.**

Speaking to the Marine Times, newly appointed CEO, Brendan Byrne said that; “This decision is in response to an EU audit carried out in Ireland aimed at monitoring the effectiveness of the SFPA and in particular their ability to implement their own control plan.

**“What has been brandished here is a very blunt instrument that was applied in a brutal manner against the wrong target.**

“The indiscriminate action offered no due process, right of appeal, advance warning or even a transition period to allow matters to be addressed. Worse still our industry has not been granted disclosure of any of the reports, documentation or correspondence that led to this draconian measure.

“We are left to draw our conclusions based on the facts that we are aware of. To that end we note the following;

- The derogation that allows for weighing in factories was included in the control regulation for good reason. The control plan that Ireland submitted in 2012 to allow our industry to avail of the derogation was accepted by the EU for good reason. It is fit for purpose. The problem identified is the implementation of those controls. This does not constitute widespread or systematic underreporting or noncompliance on the part of operators. It is a fundamental failure on the part of the regulator.

- The controls that exist in Ireland at the moment are even more comprehensive than those that are documented in the 2012 control plan. The seafood industry have embraced these controls despite the fact that they are markedly more cumbersome than those of our EU counterparts. The recent investment of €500k in a state of the art pier-side weighing system is a further clear endorsement of our members being willing to go above and beyond what is needed to protect the integrity of their industry.

- It is well documented and accepted that the SFPA have serious management and HR issues. This is clear from a recent PWC report commissioned by the Government. Indeed this Government has committed to reforming the governance of the SFPA in their programme for Government.

- Management tensions within the SFPA have led to malicious agenda driven internal campaigns to discredit the organisation, its operations and the effectiveness of its controls. The EU audit provided a platform to deliver those agendas to an unwitting audience.

- In other EU jurisdictions the fisheries control agencies work in harmony with the seafood industry. They operate in an environment of mutual respect where both the operators and regulators share a common goal of nurturing and respecting their seafood resources. Those agencies bestow the

virtues of their organisation proudly. They are eager to present their control systems and how effectively they are implemented. Their agenda is to do their jobs to the best of their ability so that they can herald their regimes as being a model for other jurisdictions to try to emulate. This is absolutely not the case in Ireland.

- The irony is that the Irish Seafood industry currently operates under the most robust and rigorous control regimes in the EU. The decent hardworking people of the Irish seafood industry are both compliant and accepting of those controls. Fisheries regulations are multi-layered, complex and cumbersome but nevertheless a culture of compliance and respect for the rules and regulations exists.

- The EU audit report can only document one transgression, but over the same period not one single prosecution was successfully initiated by the SFPA - that is hardly the basis for taking the draconian measures as witnessed last Friday, the reality is clear the most of what is referred to directly or indirectly in the yet unseen administrative enquiry or the EU Audit is speculation because there is no record or body of evidence to back any of these claims up. To put that in perspective it has been almost ten years since the control plan was adopted, the Irish Seafood industry has 160 processing companies and annual landings of seafood in Ireland are 290,000MT. In that period with that amount of volume being handled by that number of processing companies a single conviction is considered sufficient to derail an entire industry?! The reality is that the EU audit was based on conjecture and anecdotal evidence gathered through a flawed process that was delivered with malintent by disgruntled SFPA employees.

- It is even more concerning to note is that the EU Commission has unreasonably conflated the issue with ullage tables aboard vessels and the operation of the derogation for weighing in factories. This is clearly driven by the same malicious agenda campaign within the SFPA. Recent media leaks by SFPA whistle blowers support this contention.

“Our industry is already beleaguered following the outcome of BREXIT, the impacts of the COVID pandemic and the prevailing global economic crisis. We are calling on our Minister to stand up for the industry he represents on this very concerning issue. He has duty to act in the best interests of the industry he is mandated to represent. It is not acceptable for him to hide behind the excuse that he is precluded from intervening in SFPA matters. This issue requires his urgent attention and leadership.”

You can listen to Brendan Byrne discuss this situation on our Podcast available on [www.marinetimes.ie](http://www.marinetimes.ie)



# Gross Incompetence Allows Brussels to Sell Off Irish Fishing Interests

## Fishing sector is being slashed by at least an annual €43 million cut – simply due to a government sell out

**New evidence illustrates how our Fisheries Minister and the government blindly allowed Brussels to give away Irish fishing quota during crucial Brexit negotiations. In doing so, they have betrayed not only the sector and coastal communities – but the entire country.**

Rural Independent TD for Cork South West Micheal Collins, has angrily rounded on the Taoiseach, during leaders questions on the floor of the Dáil, about the manner in which he and his Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, sold out the Irish fishing industry during the Brexit negotiations.

The response provided by the Taoiseach was both flabbergasting and deflating in nature. The Taoiseach choose to take a defensive and elusive tone, which lacked any acknowledgement of the extent of the destruction done by his government to the Irish fishing sector. Clearly, the Taoiseach's response indicates a deep and uncaring lack of understanding for the sector. This was previously demonstrated when he signed into law a highly destructive penalty points system, when he was caretaker Minister for Agriculture in

August 2020.

Speaking during leaders questions, Deputy Collins stated: "Taoiseach, replies I have obtained from a series of parliamentary questions, confirm that the Government, blindly supported the EU negotiating mandate in respect of the Brexit negotiations. This provides infuriating confirmation, which means the Irish fishing industry must now pay the price for our Minister's opting to tow the Brussels line in the Brexit negotiations."

"The shocking and utter lack of engagement and dialogue with the EU side, on behalf of the Irish fisheries sector, by Minister Charlie McConalogue, in the months leading up to the Brexit deal is now glaringly obvious. In fact, at his first meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020 – the Minister failed to raise the Irish sectors pre-Brexit concerns."

"At his second meeting, since becoming Minister, on the 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020, he again failed to table or raise a discussion on the Brexit fisheries implications for Ireland. Instead, he chose to engage in a rather meaningless three-way bilateral meeting with Fisheries Ministers from France, Denmark and the Netherlands."

"Yet again, at his third EU fisheries meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020, no fisheries items whatsoever were raised. One would be forgiven for wondering what was being discussed at such fisheries meetings."

"Further meetings attended by the Minister on 27<sup>th</sup> November on the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> December, where the Brexit fisheries element of negotiations were discussed, point to the Minister acting as a protector of European quota interests, rather than as protector of the Irish share of quota. All in all, this new information serves to illustrate, the complete blindness to which the Minister entrusted the EU negotiators with."

"It also clearly demonstrates that the Minister and the government strategically and deliberately chose not to stand up for Irish fishing interests, instead they sought praise from the Brussels elites."

**"Sadly, at a time when Irish fishermen were depending solely on the Irish government to protect their interests – it did not occur."**

"In an overall context, data from Dublin City University estimates Ireland's share of total fish catch in the Irish maritime zone is at only 20 per cent. This means that the other 80 per cent are caught by foreign vessels. The Brexit fisheries deal means that Irish vessels are hit with massive quota reductions in neighbouring UK waters also, while other EU countries got sweet deals."

"Despite the fact that foreign vessels continue to extract 80 per cent of the fish from Irish waters, we now have a Minister who is hell bent on forging ahead with a wide-scale decommission of the Irish fleet, dressed up as some sort of review process. All the while, foreign vessels would be allowed to continue fishing in our waters."

"It is no wonder Irish fishing and coastal communities rightly feel let down by this government. The sector was only seeking a fairer distribution of quota – nothing more – nothing less. They were betrayed in that request. The government should have made the decision to adopt a much tougher stand during the Brexit negotiations."

"The Taoiseach today in the Dáil, failed miserably to clarify why he and his Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine chose to let the Irish fishery sector down. This arrogant and aloof attitude cannot be tolerated as it is destroying the livelihoods of our fishermen and women, while also destroying coastal communities."

"The only solution being offered by the government is a public relation exercise dressed up as a pathetic review after the fact. This review will have one long term objective – that is to decommission a large volume of Irish vessels."

"As a TD who has consistently stood shoulder to shoulder with our fishing industry, I will not be accepting this hoodwinking approach. I will continue to fight every day for our fishermen. Therefore, I am again now calling on the Taoiseach and his Minister to go back to Brussels and seek a greater share of the quota for Irish vessels (currently 20 per cent) in the Irish maritime zone, in order to make up for the mess created by their own inaction."

"Failure by the government to take this course will result in a decommissioned Irish fleet, with almost all fish in Irish waters being caught by foreign vessels, due to lazy policies by a Fianna Fáil Taoiseach and his Minister with the support of Fine Gael and the Greens," concluded Deputy Collins.

A Government of Ireland measure brought to you by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

## Public Consultation

### MPA Advisory Group Report entitled "Expanding Ireland's Marine Protected Area Network"

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, TD, and Minister of State with responsibility for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan, TD, invite submissions, observations and comments on the final report of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Advisory Group, entitled "Expanding Ireland's Marine Protected Area Network". In general terms, MPAs are geographically defined maritime areas with certain protections for conservation purposes.

Having a clean, healthy, diverse and productive marine environment will help protect marine biodiversity, our well-being and our economy. The Government is aiming to have 30% MPA coverage of Ireland's maritime area by 2030.

Full details on this public consultation, including the online survey, are available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultations/>

To have your say, please complete the online survey. You can download a PDF version of the survey form at the above web link as well.

If you are unable to use the online survey you can send your completed survey form by email or by post. You can also send in other views, observations or material as follows:

#### By post to:

MPA Public Consultation 2021,  
c/o Marine Environment,  
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage,  
Newtown, Wexford, Y35 AP90.

#### By email to:

[marine.env@housing.gov.ie](mailto:marine.env@housing.gov.ie)

Please note that this public consultation will close at 5pm on Friday 30 July, 2021.

This is a public Consultation and the Freedom of Information Act 2014 applies.



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Finnán and Luke Brown starting young as they take charge of their father Martin's wheelhouse on the Paulona. Fishing is in the blood!! Picture: Anne Marie Cronin Photography



# Letters to the Editor

## An Open Letter to the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine

The Chairman of the Irish Fishing & Seafood Alliance has penned an open letter to Minister MacConalogue in response to an answer given by him to a Dail question where the Minister has encouraged fishermen to work with more, according to the Minister, 'relevant groups' despite the support shown for the IFSA (see page 23)

Dear Sir,

This day (April 13th) marks the 8th-week anniversary since the formation of the industry group Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance (IFSA) – an organisation established to give the people of Ireland's coastal communities and fishing industry a platform from which to voice their concerns at the ongoing mis-management of the Irish seafood sector – an organisation with 4,250 petition signatures and with 65 vessels and 40 companies subscribing to it – an organisation that you have dismissed as "not being of relevance to the industry" in a recent reply to a Parliamentary Question.

Personally, I care little for your opinion of the IFSA as this voice will still be loud long after your political career has gone quiet, but I think your dismissive attitude is a slap in the face to the 4,250 people in Ireland's coastal communities who signed the IFSA petition and gives weight to the belief that this Government continues to ignore Ireland's marine sector and to neglect it to an almost criminal degree.

In the eight weeks since the IFSA was formed, some 28 articles have been produced (most of which were emailed to you and, I might add, without even the courtesy of a formal response) and these articles have posed a series of questions that are obviously causing some discomfort to you and your Dept. of Marine officials, including amongst others:

- How did Ireland end up being hardest hit of all EU nations in the bungled BREXIT deal i.e., an overall loss of 15% of Irish quota whilst other nations suffered only a 6% loss?

- Why have you consistently stated that you fought "tooth and nail" to protect Ireland's case in the BREXIT deal when that is clearly not true, as evidenced in Ireland, under YOUR care in this case, coming out with the worst fisheries deal in the history of the Ireland/EEC (EU) relationship? i.e. as quoted by TD Michael Collins during comments in the Dail:

"Fisheries Council meetings attended by the Minister on 27th November and on the 15th/16th December, where the Brexit fisheries element of negotiations were discussed, point to the Minister acting as a protector of European quota interests rather than as protector of the Irish share of quota".

- Why is Ireland not challenging the EU Commission on its rulings of the Irish fishing industry when it is clear that this same Commission continues to work towards the benefit of the EU fishing super powers of Netherlands, Spain and France, to the detriment of Ireland?

- Why is Ireland accepting EU Commission threats of penalising of minor infringements in the Irish fishing industry when the same Commission turns a blind eye to illegal fishing gear and undersized fish openly on market sale in Spain?

- Why is the Irish industry (and the public) being told that the loss of revenue as a result of BREXIT will be €43m when in fact it is more likely to be an estimated €860m?

- Why is the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) allowed to continue a regime of unwarranted prosecution and 'trumped up' charges against the fishing industry when even the Government's own Price Waterhouse Cooper independent report showed this body to be dysfunctional and out of control?

- How can the SFPA be allowed to reject a pelagic flow-scales system that is officially recognised as one of the most modern in Europe whilst continuing to insist that pelagic fish be 'dry weighed' and by doing so is vastly reducing the quality of this seafood, with serious knock-on financial ramifications for Irish pelagic vessels, processors and exporters?

- Why does the Department of Marine (and the general media) persist with belief in the story that Irish fishermen are guilty of overfishing and that they continue to break the law when it is commonly known that such comments in an EU Commission review report were largely based on biased information and suppositions furnished from the aforementioned dysfunctional SFPA?

- How can Department of Marine civil servants continually appeal court rulings which were in favour of fishermen plaintiffs by stating "we have deeper pockets than you" i.e., meaning that they have access to more funds than the average fisherman – "funds" meaning an inexhaustible amount of taxpayers' money with which they can use to cover their legal costs of repeated appeal cases even when the court ruling has clearly gone against their own case?

- How is it acceptable that the Irish fishing and seafood



industries have been governed for the past 25 years by two senior civil servants and, according to a recent IFSA report (April 10th), possibly at times in breach of the Irish Constitution?

- Why is your 'industry lip-service' Task Force only composed of people and groups who are unlikely to challenge your plans for a fleet decommissioning scheme and what was the point in establishing such a Force in the first place if you had already made clear to them that a decommissioning scheme was your preferred outcome of recommendation?

These are some extremely serious points of discussion and whilst you may attempt to dismiss the IFSA as an organisation, you are certainly in breach of your duties as a marine minister if you blindly refuse to address the questions being asked on behalf of Ireland's fishing and seafood industries.

You have an elected mandate to serve the best interests of those who have entrusted you to hold office and make representation on their behalf.

Why are you abandoning your constituents and the people of Ireland's coastal regions?



Yours sincerely,  
Cormac Burke,  
Chairman, Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance

## What Happened to Tuna Fishing?

Dear Editor,

While cleaning out my files I came across the enclosed article from the Marine Times, October 1991 which describes the success of Irish trawlers fishing for Tuna.

What went 'wrong' since then as we (Irish) are not permitted to catch Tuna.

How did that state of affairs come about?

Was there no one on the bridge to navigate the obstructions?

Your sincerely,  
Charles Breslin,  
Letterkenny,  
Co. Donegal.

## Waterford Estuary

Editor,  
Marine Times Newspaper

Dear Sir

Well done on highlighting part of the problem on the Waterford Estuary. It's been going on for years in a county with ample green party politicians. Is it the case the real environmental awareness comes from the fishing communities? The only issue I have with the article is the fact that the traditional fishermen who fished for salmon, eel, bass, herring, codling, mussel and green crab are not mentioned.

Kind regards

Keep up the good work

Sean Doherty  
Waterford



# MARINE TIMES

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



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## Justice and Fairness Requires Proof

**“The strategic goal of the Department is to deliver a sustainable, growth driven sector focused on competitiveness and innovation driven by a skilled workforce delivering value added products in line with market demands.”**

That is the declared policy of the Department of the Marine for the fishing industry.

*“The Irish seafood industry comprises of the commercial sea fishing industry, the aquaculture industry and the seafood processing industry. The seafood industry is based on the utilisation of a high quality, indigenous natural resource, which has excellent potential for added value and makes a significant contribution to the national economy in terms of output, employment and exports.”*

Published on the Government website on November 30 last, it is reflective to read, because a month later the Department and Government were admitting their failure to protect Ireland’s “indigenous natural resource” and to get Ireland a good deal in the Brexit negotiations between the EU and the UK. This was despite absolute assurances given to the industry that it would ensure Ireland got a good deal.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue admitted that Ireland had been treated unfairly, badly and got the worst of the deal. They have “huffed and puffed” a lot about it since not succeeding in doing anything to alleviate the damaging effects on the industry.

Now the European Commission has further damaged the Irish fishing industry with the removal of the weighing derogation and an implication of distrust in the industry which is internationally damaging.

It has not produced its evidence to prove this. Indeed its audit report, carried out three years ago and only released now – one has to wonder why – refers to the “risk” of fraud. Only one case has been proven in recent years.

Instead of standing up for the industry which “makes a significant contribution to the national economy in terms of output, employment and export,” to quote the Department’s own policy – he has side-stepped the issue - advised by his civil servants – that he “is precluded from getting involved in these matters.”

The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority has said the audit was carried out by the European Commission and refused any further comment or disclosure of the evidence. Neither has the European Commission issued any further explanation of how the audit was carried out, by whom, where and what ports were involved.

As the fishing industry has responded – justice and fairness requires proof before conviction. Acting as judge and jury is the action of repressive States and governments, not those of democratic institutions.

**The Minister and the Irish Government should stand up to the European Commission. However it has been quite unsuccessful in doing so before and there is not much reason to hope that it will do so now.**

## Inshore Fishermen Complain About Ministerial Approval to Offshore Developers

Marine Times Reporter

Inshore fishermen have protested to the Minister for Planning that they are being forced to take expensive legal proceedings because of approvals given by the Minister to developers for the construction of offshore renewable energy projects.

In a joint letter to Minister of State for Local Government and Planning, Peter Burke, the National Inshore Fishermen’s Association (NIFA) and the National Inshore Fishermen’s Organisation (NIFO) say they are concerned about “an emerging trend that we are witnessing, as a result, we believe, of various consents being given by Yourself, to developers seeking to construct Offshore Renewable Energy projects.”

They said the trend is that, “in the absence of any overarching guidelines in terms of how developers should interact with Inshore Fishers, in the absence of a formal structure where relevant stakeholders could meet and work with officials from your department, to develop and agree such guidelines and in the absence of an independent arbitrator to resolve conflict when one stakeholder feels those guidelines are not being adhered to or applied fairly, our members are finding themselves left with no option but to seek legal representation (at times of considerable cost to themselves), just to be, they feel, treated fairly.

We understand that our colleagues in the NIFF have written to your department highlighting the need for the above or similar to which we find absent.

“The fact that our members, private citizens and small business operators should have to resort to what we describe above, as result of the state giving consent to a prospective developer is from our perspective unacceptable. We believe the State has a duty of care to all its citizens and a responsibility to ensure they are all treated fairly in situation like this. Based on the above we respectfully request that you consider the plight of our members before issuing any further consents.

“We are of course willing to work with your Department and other stakeholder to put what we refer to as absent in place”

At the time of going to print with this edition the letter had been acknowledged as being received. There has not so far been any further response from the Minister.

## Integer New Ross raises €37,000 for Fethard RNLI to help save lives at sea

Fethard RNLI has received a generous €37,000 donation from Integer New Ross, after the company’s staff and management chose the lifeboat station as its charity of the year.



Volunteers at Fethard RNLI were delighted to be considered and chosen as Integer’s charity of the year in 2020 and have been overwhelmed by the amount raised.

Receiving the funds raised from Seamus Hamilton of Integer New Ross, Sarah Bates, from Fethard RNLI’s fundraising branch said: ‘We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the staff at Integer. As a charity, Fethard RNLI totally depends on the goodwill of the public to provide our lifesaving service. This significant donation will continue to help us save lives at sea on the Hook Peninsula and on the River Barrow up to New Ross.

‘These funds will now go towards providing the essential kit our volunteer crew needs to do their lifesaving work and to

helping maintain our lifeboat and lifesaving equipment. The funds will also support our crews training. In the last two weeks alone, 12 volunteers undertook training and were awarded with casualty care certificates.’

Walter Foley, Fethard RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager added: ‘Our station has remained operational throughout the pandemic and our volunteers have continued to be on call adhering to additional safety protocols including wearing extra PPE. We are so grateful for this extraordinary donation from all at Integer during a year when our own traditional fundraising activities had to cease due to Covid-19 restrictions. We would like to thank all the staff for their hard work fundraising and their generosity.’



## The South - West View



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

*Patrick Murphy, Chief Executive of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation in Castletownbere, in his always outspoken and thought-provoking column, says that hard-pressed fishermen and their families feel abandoned.*

## Irish Fishing Industry in a "Perfect Storm"

**If the ever well-known movie made famous by the actors George Clooney / Mark Wahlberg could be used by our Industry to describe the mountainous seas of threatening doom facing us in the Irish Fishing Industry, now is that time.**

The Covid Pandemic has for over one year seen the closing of societal and social norms such as dining and holidaying in and from countries around the world. This has resulted in a 50% reduction in the prices returned to our Vessels.

The theft of 20% of our fishing resources to allow the passing of the UK - EU TCA deal is now followed by the latest decision from our policy makers to set aside massive areas of our Maritime Resource of an as-yet unknown quantity but certainly with a loss of 10 - 30% or even 50% of our fishing grounds to what are to be classified as Marine Protected Areas (MPA's).

Off-Shore Wind generation involving the construction of enormous turbines that are to encircle the shoreline with as yet unknown, but probably disastrous effects of the entry of this new technology on our breeding and spawning stocks is indicative of the discriminatory nature of decisions made by our Government and our various Departments that divide our Industry rather than unite us with the banishing of boats of 18 metres and over from 6 miles outside of our country's Baseline being just one in a long list of arbitrary and capricious decisions affecting our industry and our coastal communities.

Now comes the latest blow to our entire Industry with the removal of our ability to protect the quality of our fish by being forced to de-ice and weigh our catches on the pier-side while then magically finding tonnes of fresh ice with which to limit the damage to the quality of our product and blackening the world wide Industry of Fishing.

While labelled as the biggest polluters of our oceans - although all of the evidence points to land-generated rubbish being the overwhelming source of marine wastes - hard-pressed fishermen and their families feel abandoned and those of us who are charged to speak for our brethren are accused of targeting the decision-makers for incorrectly articulating the mood of our members.

Is this response correct? Am I being unfair to our Government and our Department Officials? I will leave this to you, the reader to decide.

We, the representatives of our Industry, are not exempt from criticism but I say this by way of honest response. While I work hard in my role I continually ask myself

can I do better, and yes, absolutely I can for if I do not believe this then it is time for me to leave my position.

Anyone who looks at the destruction of our industry over the past three decades and says they are doing a good job needs to have a good long hard look in the mirror.

EU-dictated Decommissioning Schemes - one after another have decimated the numbers of vessels all around our coast. Although Stocks have recovered - not all of them it has to be said, but the vast majority of key stocks that have increased see no return in allocations to Irish Fishers due to mixed stock advice. Meanwhile new opportunities are not exploited as our Government and Public Servants believe the political capital used to bargain for these opportunities is deemed too high a price to pay.

Now we see that the potential compensation available through the Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) fund is out of our reach ..... unless of course we first ask if the same people who gave away our fish will now also decide if we can be properly compensated by allowing us to set aside EU State Aid Rules.

The Irish South and West have submitted to our Task force the following proposal for a potential tie up scheme getting money from the BAR to every fisherman affected by the disastrous TCA deal:

- Small Scale fleet Irish Vessels under 12 m. 1726 x 73 days x €100 per day = €12,599,800
- Under 55's Vessels under (16.66m). 70 x 73 x €1,000 per day = €5,110,000
- Vessels over 55's up to 71 m in length. 198 x 73 x €2,000 per day = €28,908,000

This is designed to meet with the current Minister for Foreign Affairs view that there should be no ITQ's in Ireland. (Irish Times July 2011)

As the year is passing quickly we believe the qualification criteria should be based on the full calendar year as the loss is based on the 2021 allocations. We advocate that a minimum of 73 days cessation during the 365 days should be required for a vessel owner to qualify.

We will await a reasoned response to our proposal.

# Sea Fisheries Protection Agency Primarily Inspects Irish Fishing Boats

The MARINE TIMES put a series of questions to the SFPA following the announcement by the EU Commission of the ending of the weighing derogation.

The SFPA said the audit was conducted by the EU Commission, but declined any further information about it. The Authority acknowledges that it concentrates inspections on Irish vessels: "Activities and fisheries that are considered to pose particular risks of non-compliance are monitored more closely," it says.

Does this indicate an official attitude at the SFPA of more suspicion directed towards Irish vessels?

Asked whether any prosecutions have been initiated by the SFPA against any non-Irish vessels for any offences arising from the landing of their catches at Irish ports? If so, how many and when? The SFPA said this was a matter for the Director of Public Prosecutions: "And we would refer you to them in relation to such data."

These are the questions which the MARINE TIMES put to the SFPA and the answers received.

**Q: Was the audit referred to carried out by the SFPA or by EU Commission officials coming to Ireland to do so?**

A: The audit was conducted by the EU Commission and we would refer you to them for any questions in relation to their audit.

**Q: Does the SFPA carry out checks on ALL landings of non-Irish registered vessels into Irish ports to the same extent as it checks Irish vessel landings? What are the latest comparative figures for such checks?**

A: The SFPA adopts a risk-based approach to fisheries control inspections. All vessels, whether they are registered in Ireland, an EU or a third country, are assessed similarly. Activities and fisheries that are considered to pose particular risks of non-compliance are monitored more closely and subject to focussed inspections at sea and in port.

During 2019, as 89% of all landings into Irish ports were from Irish registered vessels, inspections on landing by the SFPA were primarily focused on Irish registered vessels.

Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers of the SFPA undertook a total of 2,222 fishing vessel inspections in that year. 81% of these were of Irish registered vessels, with

French registered vessels accounting for 7%; vessels registered to the UK and Spain accounting for a further 10% of these inspections, with the remaining 2% of inspections pertaining to vessels from a further 9 different countries (reference SFPA Annual Report 2019).

**Q: Are landings by non-Irish vessels into Irish ports allowed to be loaded into transport for carriage to the European countries of these vessels without checking and weighing in/at any Irish location? If so, is this done by EU Commission direction?**

A: The procedures and protocols to be followed for landings into EU ports - including Ireland - by vessels registered to other EU countries is set out in EU regulations and the individual country's EU Commission-approved control plan. In terms of landings by non-Irish vessels, Ireland currently has two common EU Control Programmes in place with Belgium and France. These plans remain in place and allow weighing after landing of products in either Belgium or France for fish that is being transported to those countries for first marketing. Details of these common EU Control Programmes are available on the SFPA website.

**Q: Have any prosecutions been initiated by the SFPA against any non-Irish vessels for any offences arising from the landing of their catches at Irish ports? If so, how many and when?**

A: Prosecutions are a matter for the DPP and we would refer you to them in relation to such data. Where possible infringements of EU regulations are detected, including at landing, case files are prepared by Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers and are submitted to the DPP, whose office is responsible for the prosecution of these cases. Details of all case files opened by the SFPA can be found in our annual reports. In 2019, the latest year for which figures have been published a total of 52 case files were opened by the SFPA (Vessel Nationality / No. of Case Files): Ireland 42; France 1; Spain 5; UK 2; Others 2.

**Q: Does the SFPA have a policy of concentrating landing/port checks on Irish-registered vessels?**

A: Please see answer 2 above in relation to inspections.

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# Annual Health Check for the Atlantic on the Ocean Climate Survey

Scientists from the Marine Institute, Maynooth University and the National University of Ireland Galway were recently aboard the RV *Celtic Explorer*, for a 14-day scientific survey studying the shelf and deep water off the west coast of Ireland. This Marine Institute's annual ocean climate survey has been running since 2006 and facilitates long-term physical and biogeochemical observations of the deep water environment in the South Rockall Trough.

The Rockall Trough is an important region that provides a pathway for the transport of heat and salt from the North East Atlantic to the Nordic Seas, where waters are subjected to phenomena such as deep convective mixing that creates cold dense water. Water exchange and interactions in the Rockall Trough play a fundamental part in the overall thermohaline circulation in the North East Atlantic; as large volumes of warm water pass through the Rockall Channel, before flowing into the Nordic Seas with a return of cold dense bottom water outflow spilling into the region. Changes in the region's water properties, such as temperature and salinity, vary on inter-annual and decadal time scales.

Chief Scientist on the research survey, Dr Caroline Cusack of the Marine Institute said, "Scientific data collected on this

survey allows the assessment of inter-annual variability of physical and biogeochemical conditions that impact shelf and deep waters. This variability can have a range of impacts on ocean ecosystems, ocean circulation and weather patterns. The survey contributes to activities of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea and provides support to the Convention for the protection of the marine environment of the North East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive focused on protecting ocean health, and climate change assessments."

This year, Maynooth University scientists from the A4 project (*Aigéin, Aeráid, agus athrú Atlántaigh = Oceans, Climate, and Atlantic Change*) joined the survey to work with the Marine Institute oceanographic and climate services team. The A4 project, supported by Marine Institute funding, studies how changes in the Atlantic impact Ireland and north

western Europe through changes in ocean circulation and sea level and is developing predictive capacity for these regions. Recent research by the A4 project found that the Gulf Stream System, also known as the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), is at its weakest in over a millennium.

Scientists from the National University of Ireland, Galway were also on-board the RV *Celtic Explorer* working with Marine Institute chemists to collect supporting chemistry information. The NUI Galway scientists are currently working on the Marine Institute funded VOCAB project (*Ocean Acidification and Biogeochemistry: Variability and Vulnerability*) to enhance knowledge on the vulnerability of selected marine ecosystems in Irish waters to ocean acidification. NUI Galway scientists also collected samples relevant to the JPI

Climate and JPI Oceans CE2COAST project which aims to downscale global climate models to regional and local scales to provide information on the impacts of climate change tailored to local needs.

Mick Gillooly, Director of Ocean Climate and Information Services at the Marine Institute said, "Collaborative oceanographic research is very important to

help inform Ireland's response to climate change and underlines the importance of researching marine impacts of climate change, which could have a significant societal impact on Ireland. The Marine Institute's annual climate survey, with scientific experts from collaborating research groups, enables us to generate a long-term time series of key oceanographic data to further increase our knowledge about our changing ocean climate."

This year, 51 stations were occupied with 301 depths sampled. At each station, scientists profile the full water column

and collect measurements of temperature, salinity and oxygen. Water samples are collected at targeted depths and analysed on board to determine the salinity, dissolved oxygen, inorganic nutrients and carbon content (DIC/TA). The RV *Celtic Explorer*'s advanced underway data acquisition system gathers information on temperature, salinity, fluorescence, and pCO<sub>2</sub> in surface waters. This year, the Marine Institute also had a laboratory on board equipped with state-of-the-art analysers, enabling near real-time reporting of nutrients, oxygen and salinity.

The annual ocean climate survey, supports a number of Marine Institute ocean observation programmes. The Irish Marine Data Buoy Observation Network, managed by the Marine Institute in collaboration with Met Éireann, is a network of five offshore weather observing marine buoys around Ireland. The M6 Data Buoy, located hundreds of kilometres to the west of Ireland in the South Rockall Trough, was a station sampled during this scientific survey.

A Marine Institute glider, an underwater autonomous vehicle, was also deployed near the M6 Data Buoy during this survey. The glider can reach depths of

1,000 metres and collects oceanographic data on conductivity, temperature, depth, fluorescence, turbidity and dissolved oxygen. Since its deployment, the glider has travelled more than 350 kilometres collecting additional oceanographic data for the scientists involved.

Scientists also deployed two Argo Floats, which measure temperature, salinity and depth with one Argo Float also taking measurements of the water oxygen content. Argo Floats are autonomous instruments that remain at sea for a period of three to five years which provide high quality temperature and salinity depth profiles while ascending and descending to and from the surface from a depth of 2,000 metres, as it drifts through the ocean. There are currently about 4,000 Argo Floats in the world's oceans. As part of Ireland's participation in the Euro-Argo ERIC Programme, the Marine Institute deploys three Argo Floats each year. The track and data from current Irish Argo Floats can be viewed at <http://www.digitalocean.ie>

The annual ocean climate survey, the A4 project and VOCAB (Ocean Acidification and Biogeochemistry: variability, trends and vulnerability) are supported by the Marine Institute under the Marine Research Programme funded by the Irish Government.

**Photo inset: Oceanographic sampling with a CTD / rosette which measures conductivity (which helps determine salinity), temperature and depth. Photo by Tomasz Szumski, Marine Institute**



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# EU Withdraws Weighing Derogation as a Consequence to Pelagic Fisheries Audit - Strong Angry Reaction from the Industry

## Shell-Shocked at the Serious Consequences



**IS&EFPO - Working For The Fishermen**

**John Lynch,  
Chief Executive, IS&EFPO**

**“Weighing of fishery products decision is an incredible disregard for the Irish fishing industry**

“I was shell-shocked after reading a letter emailed to our office from the SFPA and an accompanying implementing decision from the European Commission stating that the approval of the Irish control plan and in particular the derogation to weigh fish at the first point of sale after transport from the vessel had been revoked.

“I cannot accept that the Commission could not have given Ireland some advance notice that this was about to happen and for the Commission of the European Union to send an implementing document on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April and inform us that it applies from the 13<sup>th</sup> of April shows an incredible disregard for the Irish fishing industry.

“This has very serious consequences for the Irish fleet where all fishery products will have to be weighed on landing and before transport from the port area. This applies to all species including non-quota species so will have a very serious impact on all vessels from the largest trawler to the smallest pot vessel. The reason for this unilateral action we are told is as a result of an audit carried out by the commission in Ireland in 2018. We have not been given access to the audit report to date so I will reserve comment until then.

“The Commission in their decision have placed a heavy burden on Irish fishermen who will have to weigh fish on piers around the country day and night and risk the excellent quality of Irish fish being compromised. This on top of the disastrous Brexit TCA cuts where the same commission gave away 15% of Ireland's quota share to the UK in a Brexit TCA agreement where Ireland paid 25% of the €160 million - double what would have been fair out of eight coastal states.

“For our part the ISEFPO is prepared to

work with the authorities to have a new or revised control plan put in place as a matter of urgency and would ask Minister McConalogue to make the strongest possible objection to the commission and inform them that it is customary in law to present the evidence before passing sentence.”

## Hung Out to Dry



**John Ward, Chief Executive, IFPO**

**“We received this notification from the SFPA on Friday evening and we have received no further communication from them about what the interim measures will involve. The industry is being hung out to dry on this matter and the spin being communicated from the SFPA is that this is matter for the fishing Industry.**

“However, despite numerous requests to the SFPA and the Minister we have never been given details of these so called irregularities found in the audit. I have no doubt that the reason for this is the incompetence and inadequacies found by the audit as alleged by their staff on the ground are in the governance of the SFPA senior management. What we have now is collective punishment for the fishing Industry.

“If this was a private company and such inadequacies were found then people would be accountable but this is a state body so its allowed to muddle on. The spin mentions issues with weighing but as far as I am concerned that was one case found and it was prosecuted so that proves the system was working. I am not aware of any other outstanding cases.”

## Flabbergasted!



**Sean O'Donoghue,  
Chief Executive, KFO**

**“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.**

“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 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.”

## Minister Must Publish the Evidence!

**Sinn Féin Spokesperson on Fisheries and the Marine,  
Pádraig Mac Lochlainn**

**“This is a very serious development for our fishers and fish producers and it comes at the worst possible time; when they are dealing with the huge loss of fishing quota following the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.**

“Media coverage in Ireland on the back of the leaking of these reports have suggested widespread illegality in the fishing industry here. This is rejected by fishers and fish producers who point to only one conviction of a fish producer in a period where the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority has been established to regulate and police the industry with their budget and staff numbers

**“Now comes the latest blow to our entire Industry with the removal of our ability to protect the quality of our fish by being forced to de-ice and weigh our catches on the pier-side while then magically finding tonnes of fresh ice with which to limit the damage to the quality of our product and blackening the world wide Industry of Fishing.”**

**Patrick Murphy, Chief Executive, ISWFPO (See page 8)**

## No Surprise in Commission Ruling Finding Irish Regulation Inadequate: MEP Grace O'Sullivan

**Green Party European MEP Grace O'Sullivan issued a statement about the ending of the derogation which said that “Control and enforcement of the Common Fisheries Policy rules has been wanting in Ireland. Year-on year we have failed to implement an effective infringements procedure, meaning rule-breakers face little consequences for their actions, which paints honest fishers in a bad light.”**

She is the only Irish full member of the Fisheries (PECH) Committee in the European Parliament and said: “The entire Irish fishing industry is in need of reform if we are to ensure that stocks are managed sustainably and transparently for generations to come.”

She said she “has been fighting for sustainable and fully-documented fisheries from day one. “The Commission findings, she said, were “disappointing, but to be expected.”

According to the MEP in her statement she says that; “An audit carried out by the Commission in 2018 found multiple cases of tampering of weighing systems and underreporting of catches, while the Sea Fisheries Protection Agency has uncovered underreporting of tank volumes and illegal discarding continues unabated. Given the

multiplying over those years.

“It is astonishing that our fishing industry have not been provided with the European Commission’s 2018 audit and the SFPA administrative enquiry that has led to this decision. How can an accused person or in this case, an entire industry defend themselves if they have not been presented with the evidence?”

“I am calling on the Minister for the Marine to ensure that these two reports are immediately published and the fishing representatives in Ireland are provided with the opportunity to respond and defend the reputation of their industry”.

## Cant Comment - Wont Comment

**A response from the Department for a statement on the situation for the Marine Times:** Under the Sea Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006, operational issues concerning sea-fisheries control are, as a matter of law, exclusively for the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and the Naval Service. The issue of the Fisheries Control Plan, the discontinuance of the Control Plan submitted by the SFPA in 2012 and the new arrangements arising from this Commission Decision are operational matters for the SFPA and the Minister is precluded from getting involved in these matters.

warnings about failures in the Irish fisheries control system that have been issued by the Commission since at least 2007, sadly the latest ruling should come as no surprise. In one incident alone, over 1,200 tonnes of discarded fish were found on the seabed of Killybegs harbour.”

The MARINE TIMES sent a series of questions to MEP O'Sullivan following her press release statement, which included asking for her comment about the issue raised by fishing industry sources that the EU Commission and the Irish Government had refused to produce/release evidence upon which the derogation decision is based and whether she knew of any similar European Commission audits being carried out in other EU Member States. She did not reply to these questions at the time of going to print.

## Marine Times WhatsApp and Signal



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# Calling for Help

**Frankie Horne. RNLI Commercial Fishing Safety Manager reports**

**Interestingly, the RNLI analysis data of commercial fishing fatalities between 2008 and 2017 shows that most “Calls for Help” came from phones, rather than VHF/DSC radio or even EPIRB/PLB.**

However, not all situations allow for someone to make that essential call for help. For example, if a lone working fisherman were to fall overboard, without a means of calling for help on his person. In this instance, it could be hours before the alarm is raised and a search and rescue operation for the person and vessel gets underway. Such time delays typically increase the search area and often reduces the likelihood of a successful outcome.

During any search and rescue mission, there is more likely to be a successful outcome if the “call for help” is initiated immediately. The first informant’s information is vital

for HMCG (UK) and ICG (IRE) to deploy the appropriate SAR assets. i.e. Lifeboats/Helicopters and any other vessels able to assist with the search and rescue.

**Location, time, the nature of incident, persons on-board**, if the rescue assets have these vital bits of information, it is invaluable to the rescue and can greatly impact the outcome. When they do not, it’s then down to a process of elimination to narrow down the possibilities of where and when the incident happened. From my previous experience as a Lifeboat crew/coxswain this can be a long process, and sometimes a best guess scenario.

## A Quick Summary of Calling for Help Devices:

**Fixed VHF/DSC Radio.** Very High Frequency / Digital Selective Calling - This is the preferred communication to the Coastguard. A DSC distress alert is a recognised emergency signal and it also transmits your position. Send a DSC alert followed by a voice call on VHF Channel 16 communicating the distress message to all vessels and shore stations in range. This means all are aware of your situation and can respond even before the rescue mission has been initiated.

**EPIRB.** Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon - This system is to indicate that a vessel has an Emergency and requires assistance. It can be float-free and automatically or manually activated. With worldwide coverage EPIRBs give rescue services a Time, Position and Vessel Identification, the position is regularly updated when activated. It is fitted with a flashing light and transmits a homing signal for Direction Finding fitted vessels. It is most important to make sure this equipment is registered on the EPIRB Registry with the Coastguard.

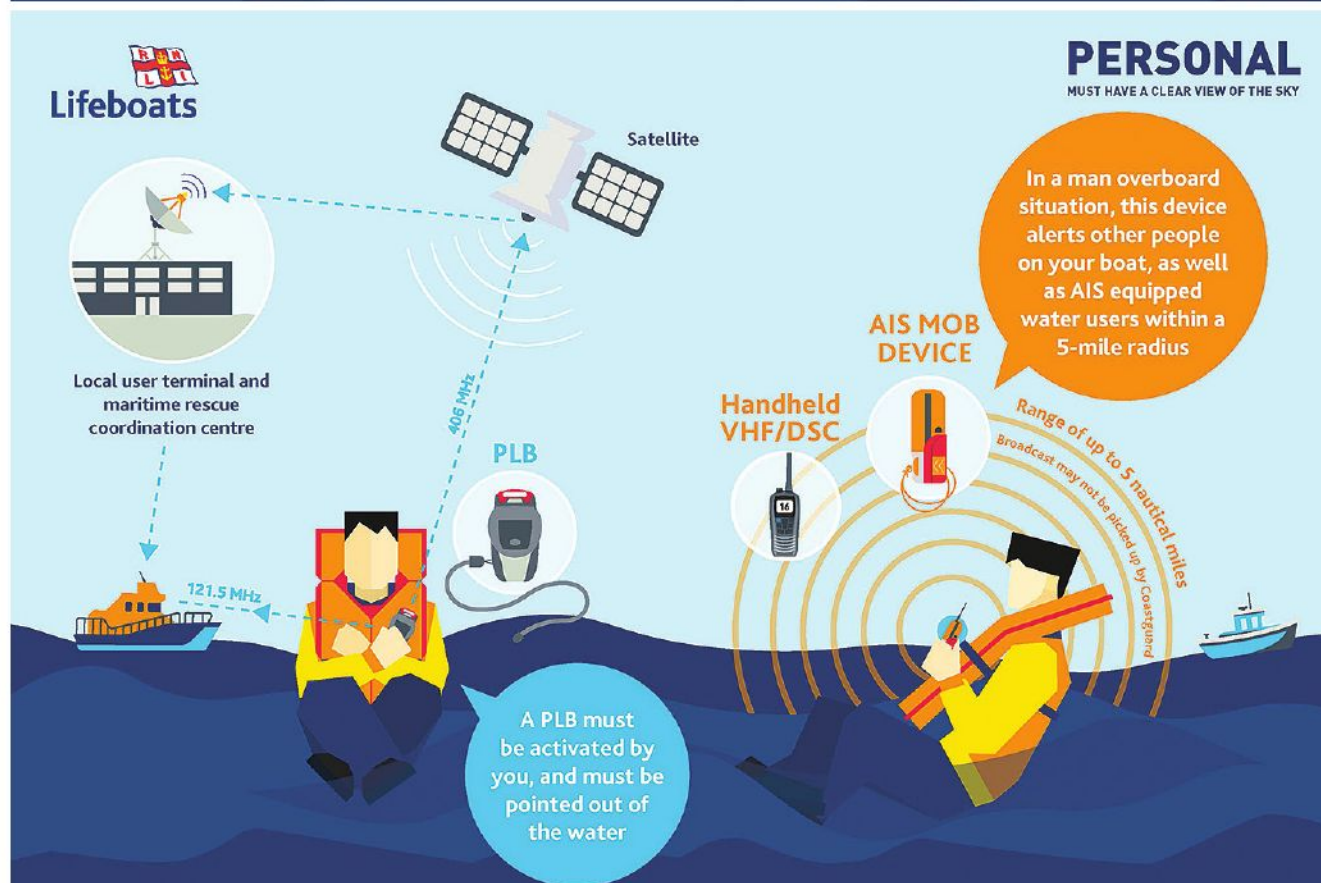
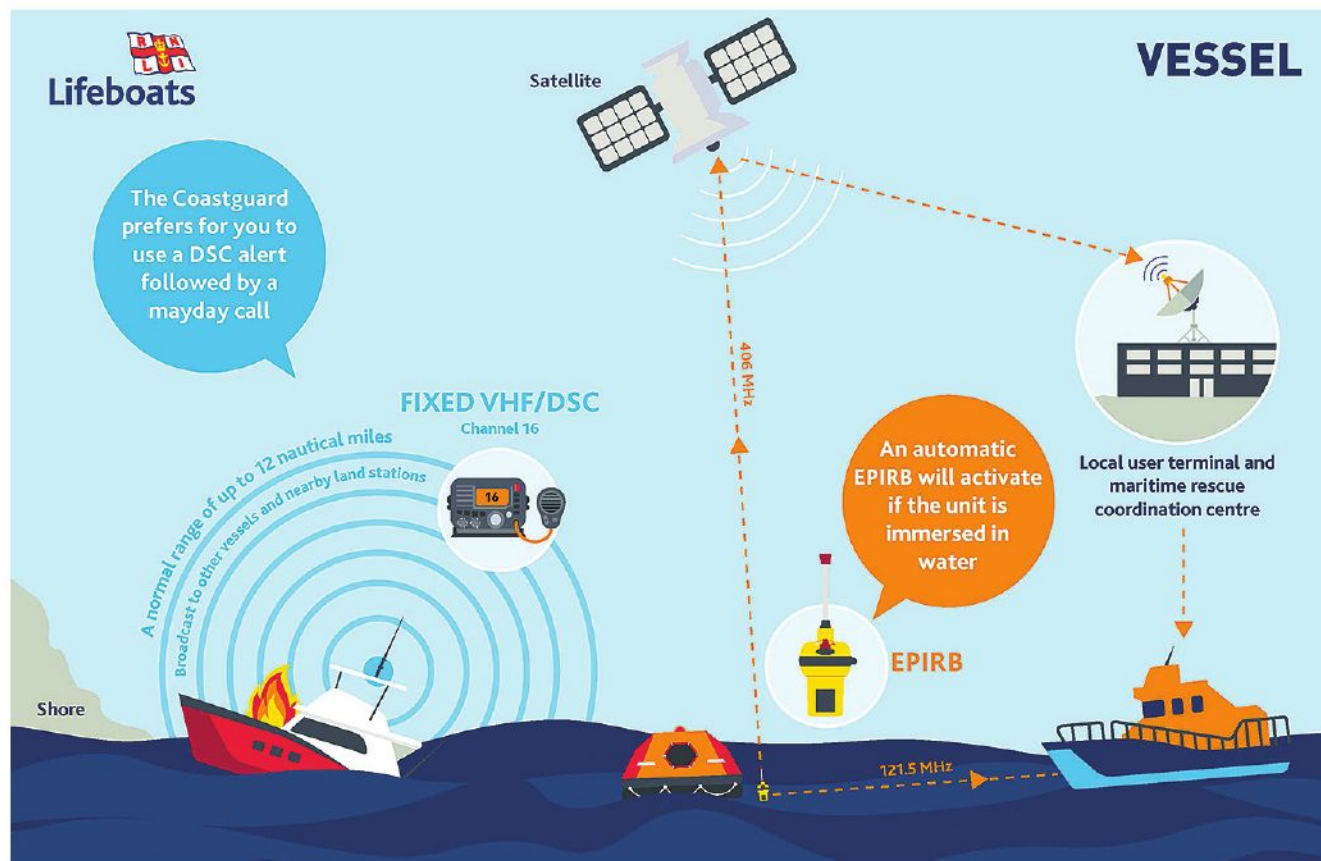
**PLB. (Personal Locator Beacon)** A recognised emergency signal with worldwide coverage. PLBs are manually activated, so the owner should make themselves fully aware of how to use and maintain the PLB. It should be kept on your person and in a position where it is easily accessible to be held out of the water to activate if not already attached to your Lifejacket. PLBs should be registered with HMGG/ICG with the correct details to aid in rescue coordination.

**AIS/MOB** Automatic Identification System Man Overboard Device. Communicates by electronically exchanging data with AIS Receivers on vessels and base stations. In a man overboard situation this device automatically alerts all AIS Receivers within range which is 5nm or less dependent on antenna height and obstacles. Although not GMDSS approved some vessels with several crew onboard or working 80nm to 100nm offshore (where rescue will be a long time coming) are now using AIS/MOB Devices attached to their PFD’S so they can track a man overboard and effect a rescue themselves where possible.

**Pyrotechnics (Flares)** These are a visual indicator that assistance is required. Parachute Rocket Flares can be seen for up to 28nm in good visibility. Red Paras, Handheld flares and Buoyant Smoke markers are perfect for calling for help provided someone can see them. For instance, if you are fishing in an area where there is a lot of activity and you lose all your electrics or drifting close to shore any one of these will alert someone to your situation. Please remember that all out of date pyrotechnics (flares) should be disposed of correctly.

**Fishermen all over the UK and Ireland have an unwritten rule to help each other in times of need or distress. They tend only to call for help from others as a last resort. I am sure this will continue for years to come. However, when a situation is becoming life threatening, or is likely to escalate to life threatening a call must be made early. As someone who has served in the RNLI as a lifeboat crew/coxswain, I’m sure I speak for all in the rescue services by saying I would rather be there 10 mins early as 10 mins late.**

## Safe Fishing





**PUBLIC NOTICE OF FURTHER INFORMATION FURNISHED CONTAINING SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL DATA IN RELATION TO THE EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Greenlink Interconnector Limited**

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 19B of the Foreshore Act 1933 (as amended), that Greenlink Interconnector Limited, 70 Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2, D02R296 (previously of c/o Mason Hayes and Curran, South Bank House, Barrow Street, Dublin 4) has to the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Heritage furnished further information that contains significant additional data in relation to the effects on the environment in respect of the proposed foreshore licence application for the purpose of an Interconnector between EirGrid's Great Island substation in County Wexford (Ireland) and the National Grid's Pembroke substation in Pembrokeshire (Wales).

The following map shows the location of the proposed work.



The co-ordinates of the proposed works are set out in the table below:

ID	WGS 1984 Latitude (°)	WGS 1984 Longitude (°)	ITM Eastings (m)	ITM Northings (m)
1	51° 54' 32.960" N	6° 38' 24.536" W	693562	573876
2	52° 01' 48.220" N	6° 43' 54.361" W	687024	587211
3	52° 01' 53.017" N	6° 44' 39.189" W	686167	587345
4	52° 03' 39.469" N	6° 46' 45.167" W	683711	590593
5	52° 08' 50.021" N	6° 47' 07.332" W	683128	600182
6	52° 10' 02.678" N	6° 48' 16.186" W	681782	602406
7	52° 10' 22.757" N	6° 48' 22.507" W	681652	603024
8	52° 10' 49.568" N	6° 48' 11.146" W	681854	603856
9	52° 10' 57.889" N	6° 48' 17.953" W	681720	604111
10	52° 11' 02.379" N	6° 48' 34.325" W	681407	604245
11	52° 10' 51.304" N	6° 49' 06.304" W	680805	603893
12	52° 10' 43.517" N	6° 49' 49.035" W	679997	603639
13	52° 10' 35.141" N	6° 49' 48.661" W	680009	603380
14	52° 10' 36.575" N	6° 48' 56.009" W	681008	603441
15	52° 09' 55.573" N	6° 48' 40.210" W	681329	602179
16	52° 08' 37.458" N	6° 47' 29.378" W	682715	599787
17	52° 03' 33.747" N	6° 47' 09.716" W	683246	590409
18	52° 01' 38.341" N	6° 44' 50.249" W	685964	586888
19	52° 01' 34.452" N	6° 44' 08.154" W	686768	586781
20	51° 54' 34.090" N	6° 38' 54.129" W	692996	573900



A copy of the additional material, is available for inspection for the next 30 calendar days, between 06 April 2021 and 06 May 2021, free of charge at:

- Wexford County Council Planning Office, Carricklawn, Wexford, Y35 WY93. Appointment necessary due to Covid19 restrictions, please email [siobhan.doyle@wexfordcoco.ie](mailto:siobhan.doyle@wexfordcoco.ie) to arrange. Opening hours are: 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. Monday to Friday (Bank Holidays and Public Holidays excepted).
- Waterford Garda Station, Patrick St, Waterford, X91 A076. No appointment necessary. Open 24hrs. For additional information call +353 51 305300.
- New Ross Garda Station, Marshmeadows, New Ross, Co. Wexford. Appointment necessary due to Covid19 restrictions, please call +353 51 426030 and ask for Sergeant Richie Daly. Open 24hrs.

*In light of National Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions Regulations published under the Health Act 1947 (Statutory Instrument No. 448 of 2020) have identified planning-related activity within the schedule of what is considered to be 'essential services' in order to ensure the continued and safe operation of all aspects of the statutory planning system. The Regulations permit a person to attend the offices of a planning authority or An Bord Pleanála to engage in a statutory planning process. There is no specified restriction on the distance that persons engaging in a statutory planning process, may travel.*

A hard copy of the additional information may be requested from the applicant at the address stated above or by emailing [energy.water.bst@intertek.com](mailto:energy.water.bst@intertek.com)

The additional information may also be viewed on the following dedicated website [www.greenlink.ie/foreshorelicenceconsultation2](http://www.greenlink.ie/foreshorelicenceconsultation2) and is available on the Department's website at:

[www.gov.ie/en/foreshore-notice/a6150-greenlink-interconnector-wexford/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9ed2f-greenlink-interconnector-wexford/](http://www.gov.ie/en/foreshore-notice/a6150-greenlink-interconnector-wexford/?referrer=http://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9ed2f-greenlink-interconnector-wexford/)

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage is responsible for making a decision on this application and he may either grant, approve or consent to the application with or without covenants, conditions or agreements, where applicable, or refuse the application.

Section 19C of the Foreshore Act does not apply to this application.

Submissions or observations regarding, the effects on the environment related to the further information can be made in writing, giving reasons, between 06 April 2021 and 06 May 2021 (quoting ref: FS007050) to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage at Foreshore Section, Department for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Newtown Road, Wexford, Co. Wexford or by e-mail to [foreshore@housing.gov.ie](mailto:foreshore@housing.gov.ie). The closing date for the receipt of submissions is therefore 17:30 on 06/05/2021.

All objections and representations received will be forwarded to the applicant for comment prior to any decision being made in the matter. Material upon which the Minister shall determine this application may be published on the Department's website. In this regard the Department wishes to draw attention to its policy on defamatory material that may be contained in submissions it receives, which may be found at:

[www.housing.gov.ie/planning/foreshore/public-participation-foreshore-consent-process](http://www.housing.gov.ie/planning/foreshore/public-participation-foreshore-consent-process)

Dated this day of 06/04/2021.

Greenlink Interconnector Limited, 70 Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2, D02R296 (previously of c/o Mason Hayes and Curran, South Bank House, Barrow Street, Dublin 4)



# news from Northern Ireland

editor@marinetimes.ie



Katie Grace B99 arriving back at Ardglass port after a day at the prawns

## 'Further Discussions Needed With EU'

Stormont's agriculture minister Edwin Poots has said the UK will resist Northern Ireland fishermen being subjected to further checks when landing their catches. He has blasted what he described the EU view that there is a need for customs and regulatory requirements for fish caught in UK territorial waters claiming that this potentially could mean additional controls for landing fish at Northern Ireland's fishing ports.

"This would be extremely burdensome and totally unworkable for most of the smaller vessels as some of these requirements mean they have to land in a port under customs control which may be a considerable distance from their home port," he told the Stormont Assembly.

Mr Poots said customs formalities are not a devolved issue, but that advice has been sought from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

"The UK Government has provided us with a different legal interpretation on these customs formalities and I'm advised that Northern Ireland vessels will only be required to meet pre-existing obligations such as those contained within the fisheries control regulations when landing into ports in Northern Ireland until further notice.

"This is in line with the approach taken to the implementation of the protocol more broadly where there is a need for pragmatism as traders and fishers adapt to new requirements.

"The UKG have assured me that they would robustly defend this approach should any challenge to it be raised by the

European Union, though it is important to note that this has been the subject of engagement between the UK and EU during the course of joint committee proceedings.

"It is accepted that this approach will require further discussions with the EU, however the UK position is clear, that Northern Ireland vessels should not be subject to any new customs requirement until further notice."

## Loughs Agency Announces Deployment of Europe's Largest Fish Counter

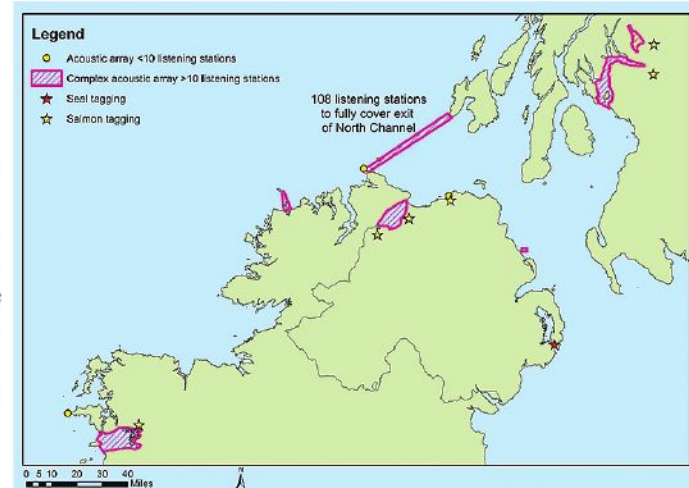
A unique marine research project led by Loughs Agency is underway to study the seas around Ireland and Western Scotland with the deployment of 'Europe's largest fish counter'.

The SeaMonitor project - which is supported by eight leading marine research institutions located in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, the US and Canada - will use innovative marine species tracking technology to better understand and protect vulnerable marine life in our oceans. Listening stations from Malin Head

- Ireland's most northerly point - to the island of Islay in Scotland will record transmissions from a variety of mobile marine species tagged by the project's scientists.

The data collected using acoustic telemetry will be used to support the conservation of vulnerable species such as salmon, basking sharks, skate, dolphins, whales and seals.

Sharon McMahon, Loughs Agency CEO, said the deployment of the fish counter marked a major achievement for the SeaMonitor project. She added: "Loughs Agency is proud to be leading the way alongside expert colleagues to deliver such amazing marine research infrastructure that will ultimately help protect some of our most important species."



Funding for the €4.6m project has been provided by the EU's INTERREG VA Programme (Environment Theme), which is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). Match-funding comes from the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland and the Department of Housing, Planning

and Local Government in the Republic of Ireland.

Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body, welcomed the announcement. She said: "I'm delighted to see such a significant achievement for the SeaMonitor project, made possible through the EU's INTERREG VA Programme and the efforts of all its partners in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Scotland working together collectively."

"This is a much-needed step forward for the conservation of a number of vulnerable

species within our shared oceans. It only serves to highlight the benefits that are created through strong, mutually beneficial cross-border partnerships in the management of marine protected areas and species. Well done to all involved for advancing our understanding of our seas," she added.

Dr. Fred Whoriskey, Executive Director of the Ocean Tracking Network explained: "This project is important in so many ways. It will unite and empower scientists from



Europe and abroad to tackle pressing management issues, provide global networking for scientists to efficiently use resources, and engage the public in project outcomes. We are pleased to provide technical support and counsel, as well as tracking infrastructure to SeaMonitor which is contributing to the conservation of Europe's valued marine animals."

Dr Ciaran Kelly, Director of Fisheries Ecosystems and Advisory Services at the Marine Institute added: "We are delighted to collaborate with partners on the SeaMonitor project and provide technical support and ship-time on the Marine Institute's research vessel, the RV *Celtic Voyager*. Tracking the migration of species and identifying environmental signals influencing their movement is essential to effectively protect and manage our marine ecosystems."

**Forty Eight Mile Fundraiser Raises £800 for Kilkeel RNLI**

Craig Boucher of Hybrid Health and Performance completed a 4x4x48 challenge to raise funds for Kilkeel RNLI. Craig ran four miles every four hours for 48 hours and was generously supported by friends who donated a total of £800.

Speaking after his effort, Craig said that he had to walk the last eight miles because his knees were in 'complete agony' with every step and he didn't want to force an injury.

John Fisher, Kilkeel RNLI Lifeboat

Operations Manager in receiving the cheque said: 'It was a fantastic effort by Craig – that was almost two marathons in 48 hours – an unbelievable achievement from only three weeks of training. The donation is very welcome and the £800 will be put to good use in saving lives at sea.'

**Beautiful Boat Planter Raises Funds for Kilkeel RNLI**

G Smyth Boats Ltd., Kilkeel, created a beautiful boat planter named Hope, to raise funds for Kilkeel RNLI.

To be in with a chance of winning the planter, £5 donations were accepted by Martin (Tiddles) Trimble, Siobhan Trimble, and Ceara Russell of G Smyth Boats.

The draw for the winner took place on Saturday 10 April and the lucky winner was Esther Shields from Annalong, who gratefully accepted the planter *Hope* which had been filled with plants supplied by David Campbell of the Kilkeel Garden Centre. In accepting the £1,840 cheque, John Fisher, Kilkeel RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager, thanked Gerry Smyth of G Smyth Boats Ltd. for the work involved in producing the planter which was a novel way to raise funds for the RNLI and which has allowed the local community to show, once again their continuing support for the charity that saves lives at sea.

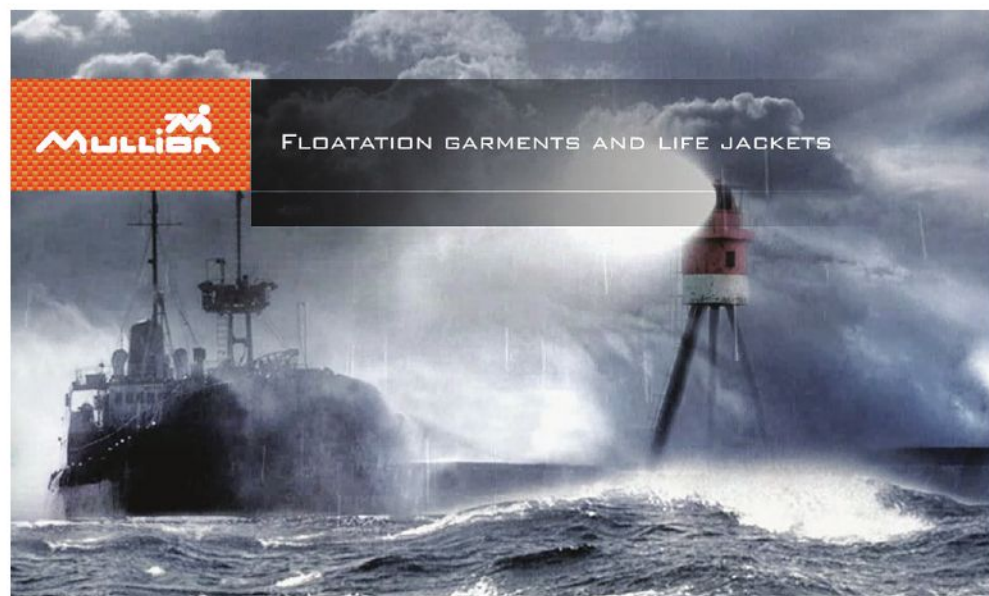
**Also: Donaghadee RNLI volunteers receive Long Service recognition (page 28)**



SeaMonitor deployment team from the Loughs Agency and Marine Institute



Winner of the Hope planter was Esther Shields, Annalong, who gratefully accepted the planter Hope which had been filled with plants supplied by David Campbell of the Kilkeel Garden Centre. In accepting the £1840 cheque John Fisher, Kilkeel Lifeboat Operations Manager, thanked Gerry Smyth of G Smyth Boats Ltd. for the work involved in producing the planter which was certainly a novel way to raise funds for the RNLI and which has allowed our local community to show, once again their continuing support for the RNLI.



**Designed for and by fishermen**

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Sioen Ireland

**SIOEN**

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[www.mullion.be](http://www.mullion.be)





# THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

## Joe Silke, Director of Marine Environment and Food Safety Services at the Marine Institute

**Predicting the impact on the Aquaculture sector of harmful algal blooms that can seriously affect shellfish production and often involves what is known in public as the 'red tide' is the focus of a three-year study that the Marine Institute has co-ordinated, investigating ocean climate changes that cause these harmful blooms. The Marine Institute is also lead partner in a second project, which will be completed in July, aiming to predict the impact of changes in regional, coastal waters on aquaculture.**

**In this month's MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW, Deputy Editor Tom MacSweeney, hears about the two projects from the Director of Marine Environment and Food Safety Services at the Marine Institute, Joe Silke.**

My education in maritime research is improved considerably as this interview progresses and I learn two things that I did not know – shellfish are vegetarian and phytoplankton which they eat are essential in providing the oxygen which we breathe.

This information I glean from Joe Silke as we discuss CoCliME – the acronym for the project with a long name - 'Co-development of Climate Services for adaptation to changing Marine Ecosystems'. It was funded by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency, the European Commission and other European national funders and involved researchers from 12 institutes in seven European countries - Norway, Sweden, Germany, Ireland, France, Spain and Romania.

The Marine Institute is also lead partner in a second project, which he tells me about and which will be completed in July, aiming to predict the impact of changes in regional, coastal waters on aquaculture. This has resulted in the development of a web portal which provides early warning of harmful algal blooms along the Atlantic coast. The 'Primrose' project forecasting system "provides shellfish producers and official authorities with advance warning that allow them to take rapid mitigating measures for affected shellfish beds and, if necessary, post warnings in coastal areas where there is a direct health risk."

My first experience of algal blooms was many years ago in West Cork when reporting what was described as a 'red tide' that had been seen in coastal waters.

So I was interested to find out from him what caused that:

"The red colouration that sometimes appears in the sea", he tells me, "is from plankton in the water," Joe tells me.



"These are the plants and animals that float around in ocean currents. Plankton is broken into two main groups – the animals, zooplankton and the plants, called phytoplankton. The phytoplankton, in summer, as with plants on land, they grow and you get blooms of them in the sea. When we look at the water, we can see a greenish tinge to the water but they also can produce many different colours and those red tides come from blooms of phytoplankton in the water, a purely natural event and part of their lifecycle. But it can be quite dramatic when we see it from land."

So I learn that phytoplankton are at the bottom of the food chain and that they provide a vital service without which humans could not live and that shellfish are vegetarian! That I did not know.

"They are the food that shellfish feed on and they also produce most of the oxygen that we breathe on the planet, so they are very important to keep the planet healthy. At the bottom of the food chain, though, they are producing a lot of vegetative matter and shellfish are actually vegetarian. They eat the plants' algae in the water. They filter out the microscopic plants that are floating and that is their food, a very nutritious source for shellfish to feed upon and that is where they get all their nutrition. But, just as on the land, there are a number of species which are toxic. We know that a small number of plants on land produce toxins that can be harmful and it is the same in the sea. Again, it is a purely natural thing that happens, but there are certain species of phytoplankton that produce toxins and when they are prevalent in the water they can be transferred into shellfish which could pick up the toxins from them temporarily and so the shellfish would then become unsafe to eat."

The Marine Institute has a weekly programme testing shellfish production areas around the coast to ensure that production is top quality and there are no problems before they go to market. That is an all-year-round programme to ensure safe quality for consumers.

"We test the water to check the phytoplankton that are in the water, which is a microscopic analysis and if we detect any toxins we also test the shellfish to make sure they haven't picked up any toxins," Joe says, explaining EU legislation and restrictions on marketing which can require the closure of waters temporarily.

Why a temporary measure I ask?

"Fortunately shellfish will come around again once the cycle of Nature changes the species in the sea and we get non-toxin phytoplankton replacing the toxin ones and the shellfish feed then on the non-toxin and flush themselves out, so they are safe to eat again. So all is not lost. It is generally a temporary closure that is needed to ensure that consumers are kept safe."

Satellite monitoring is even used in checking the situation in these days of always-improving technology. So hence the new project that is increasing advance knowledge for the industry and enabling researchers to monitor with increasing effectiveness the sea conditions, even taking satellite photographs of the sea for their analysis.

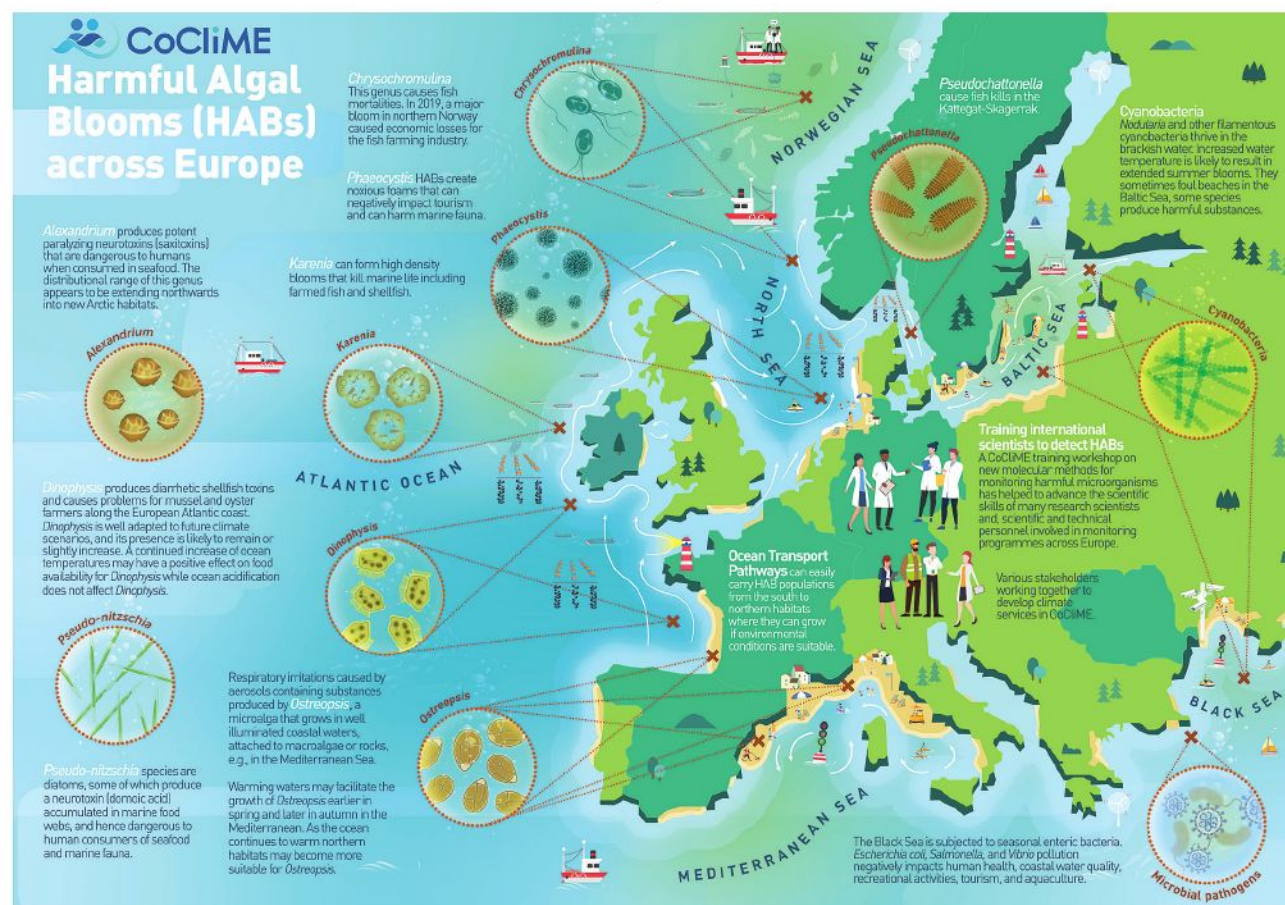
All of that helps, together with mathematical modelling of water flows in and out of bays to detect if blooms are transferring from one area to another. It is a sophisticated scientific approach to ensuring the safety of shellfish for consumers.

Consumers could benefit a lot from knowing about all the safety measures around shellfish production, I reflect, as Joe tells me more about how changes in temperature can be detected with satellite technology.

"Putting it all together we are able to make a very good estimate of what is likely to happen over coming weeks and what areas might or might not be affected."

All of that work is of particular importance to coastal areas where aquaculture is an increasingly important part of the economy, worth €51m. to Ireland according to the latest BIM statistics.

"Producing shellfish that is safe and can go on the market and attract premium prices, that is what all of the work is about," Joe Silke concludes as we end our interview.







## From Pirates to Salty Water and a Message to a Howth Trawler

**It has been a month of varied topics on the programme, the biggest 'hit' with listeners being memory of the 'pirates' who had a different approach to using waves – one kind they could use effectively – air waves - the other, the watery ones, scuppered them.**

We were back in the “swinging Sixties” when the BBC and RTE held broadcasting monopoly and ‘pop’ music was played widely only on Radio Luxemboug. Hard to imagine that now! Many people didn’t even know about the days of Radio Caroline, the ship-based radio studios, anchored off the UK coast.

This was started by Irishman, Ronan O’Rahilly, the first anniversary of whose death was on April 20. His grandfather - Michael (The O’Rahilly) - was killed by British soldiers in Dublin during the 1916 Easter Rising. So, perhaps, he had ‘rebel’ blood. He had run a night club in London’s Soho district and become acquainted with major figures in the music business who were not happy with restrictions on playing ‘pop’ music on radio, which he decided to change. His family owned the port of Greenore in County Louth and he raised funding to have an old ship fitted out there with studios and a 180-foot high transmission mast. So began Radio Caroline and the radio ‘pirates’ which eventually led



to the end of State monopoly broadcasting in the UK and Ireland. When illegal radio stations began broadcasting in Ireland they were land-based, but were dubbed ‘the pirates’. Many people didn’t realise that it was from ship-based radio studios that their sobriquet came.

O’Rahilly described himself as a ‘marine broadcaster.’ Radio Caroline had 25,000-watts power. It covered all of England, Scotland, Ireland and parts of Europe. The playlist featured the Rolling Stones, Beatles, the Animals, Lulu and Bob Dylan. It drew millions of listeners, using vessels anchored off the UK, mostly named *Mi Amigo* (pictured). There were legal battles with the authorities, House of Commons debates, restrictions on advertising, prohibition of services to the ‘pirates’. Their days were numbered when the UK government brought in the Marine Broadcasting Offences Act. BBC broadcast more music and developed local stations. But O’Rahilly had started a trend that was unstoppable, leading to the licensing of commercial radio.

If you haven’t heard the programme tune in to the Podcast on the MARINE TIMES website and listen to the final broadcast from *Mi Amigo* as Radio Caroline was blown aground on the Longsands Bank off Kent on March 19, 1980 when its anchor chain broke in a Force 10 storm. She drifted for 10 nautical miles before running aground on the Longsands Bank.

The crew were rescued by Sheerness Lifeboat and you can hear the very last broadcast as the waves engulfed the ship. The ship sank the following day. Thanet District Council in Kent announced plans to refloat and turn her into a museum ship at Ramsgate, but these were not developed and the ship remains a wreck in eight to sixteen feet of water.

### South West Waters Will Get Less Salty And Warmer

On the South/West coast they’d better start preparing for a change, because scientists in the Marine Institute are convinced the waters off there are going to get less salty and warmer. That was conveyed to me in a press release for the programme follow-

ing a twenty-year study of algal bloom. The researchers developed computer models to investigate the regional oceanic climate which indicate that, under future projected medium and high greenhouse gas emissions, the ocean off the South/West will become warmer and less saline by the year 2035.

### Three Hours Out on The Caledonia Rose

Anne McDonald wrote to me: “I am a spoken word artist and writer and have written this poem about a true story from when my husband worked on the *Caledonia Rose* out of Howth. Several people have suggested I forward it to you as it has relevance for fishing families everywhere. It is the first poem from my debut collection with Crows’ Books.”

Evocative and emotional it recalls a message with bad news from shore to one of the trawler’s crew - “Remembering Baby Ryan Minto, born April 18th, 1996 and died in June 1996, aged 9 1/2 weeks.” You can hear Anne read it on the programme.

### THREE HOURS OUT

We got the call three hours out to sea

I know that we were thinking all the same  
I wonder is it him or is it me?  
We had no choice but wait the hours out  
with endless cigarettes and cups of tea,  
too harsh for crackling radio to explain  
I hope that it was them and wasn’t me.

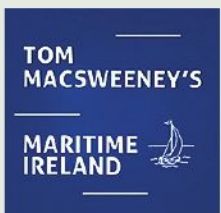
We made talk so small it meant nothing;  
the haul we got, the time we lost the nets,  
and when I won the each way bet  
but still the time dragged every minute single  
out of three excruciating hours,  
coated in the sour smell of oilskins mixed with salt.

I listed all the possibles for heartache  
knowing each man counted out the same.  
Was the family affected theirs or was it ours?  
Strong men rendered naked in the rain.  
As we turned for home and braced against the wind  
a small crowd gathered silent on the quay,  
my head spun somewhere between fear and hope  
I wished that it was them and wasn’t me.

Our hearts broke for the man whose news it was,  
as hands reached down to haul him from the deck,  
words whispered on the winds were “cot” and “death.”  
Feeling glad then sickened with the shame,  
but knowing it was not my news to claim.  
We got the call three hours out to sea  
I wished it wasn’t him, that it was me.

STATION
CRY 104 FM YOUGHAL
DUBLIN SOUTH 93.9 FM
DUBLIN CITY FM 103.2 FM
DUBLIN NEAR FM 90.3 FM
DUBLIN LIFFEY SOUND FM 96.4FM
DUNDALK FM 97.7 FM
ERRIS FM 90.8 FM
KILKENNY CITY RADIO 88.7 FM
RADIO CORCA BAISCINN
SOUTH WEST CLARE 92.5-94.8 FM
UCC RADIO CORK 98.3 FM
CONNEMARA COMMUNITY RADIO 87.8 FM and 106.1 FM
ATHLONE COMMUNITY RADIO
WEST CORK FM ONLINE
BERE ISLAND 100.1 FM
KINVARA FM ONLINE
COMMUNITY RADIO CASTLEBAR 102.9FM
WEST LIMERICK 102 FM
TIPP MID WEST RADIO 104.8 & 106.7 FM

BROADCAST TIME
MONDAYS 6.10 pm
THURSDAYS 6 p.m.
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.
TUESDAYS 6.30 p.m.





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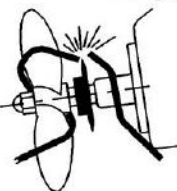
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# Making a Currach – Michael Conneely

## New National Museum of Ireland online exhibition reveals unique currach building video and archive material

The currach, with its primitive design of wooden frame and waterproof skin, is the best known of all the Irish boats. By mid-twentieth century this once common boat was noticeably disappearing from our shores, and rarer still were the currach builders who held a knowledge passed down from generation to generation. In 1968, the National Museum of Ireland recognised the threat to the traditional currach and given the Museum's role in preserving heritage objects for the benefit of the Irish people, began the process of having one commissioned for the national collection.

When asked by the then Director of the National Museum of Ireland, Dr AT Lucas, the renowned Irish folklorist Ciarán Bairéad identified Michael Conneely for the job - a carpenter and farmer who learned the craft from his own father, who was mostly self-taught. Michael Conneely was best known locally as *Mikey*, but he was also known as *Mac Johnny Tom Andie* (son of Johnny Tom Andie), *Mikey an t-siúinéira* (Mikey of the carpenter, as his father was a carpenter) and he signed his name *Michael Conneely (John)*. He made currachs for people on the other two Aran Islands as well as the mainland and had the craft well honed.

The finished 19 and a half feet, three-man currach complete with mast and sail, over two hundred photographs and video footage documenting the build, along with details logged in the NMI team's notes and correspondence, have left us with a significant and complete record of the vanishing skill of traditional Irish currach building.

The unique footage, following Michael Conneely carefully and craftfully through the step-by-step building process, is now available to view on the National Museum of Ireland's website for the first time in an online exhibition called *Making a currach – Michael Conneely*.

Broken down into nine parts on [www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie) the video documents the process from preparing and fitting the 29 oak ribs that cross under the seats and preparing and nailing 20 laths lengthways, to measuring and fitting the canvas skin, which was then coated inside and out with tar to make it waterproof. Despite the fact that people on the islands didn't 'get the sail' at the time, he also fitted a mast and sail at the request of the Museum, made from calico, a type of unbleached cotton that is lighter than canvas.

Lynn Scarff, Director of the National Museum of Ireland, said; "What is commonplace today, is the history of tomorrow and an important part of the National Museum of Ireland's remit is take an active and ongoing role in ensuring that our traditions and culture are preserved for future generations. The detailed documentation undertaken of Michael Conneely's creative process in 1968 is a fine example of this, and our national collection is richer today



as a result of his talent, and the foresight of my predecessors at the Museum in capturing it for conservation.

Noel Campbell, curator at the National Museum of Ireland - Country Life, Turlough Park, said, "Mikey Conneely was a well-respected currach builder who received orders for his dependable currachs from the Aran Islands and the coastal communities of counties Galway and Clare. We are very fortunate that over fifty years ago Dr Lucas, curator John O'Sullivan and photographer Brendan Doyle saw the importance of recording one of the west coast's currach building masters. The Mikey Conneely recordings and other boat related material from the NMI's Archive are currently being researched as part of the development of a new gallery at Turlough Park which will focus on traditional boats of the west coast. The National Museum of Ireland - Country Life has begun a new programme of fieldwork and outreach along our Atlantic coast to further document traditional boats and building techniques. The findings will add to our Archive and greatly inform our future work and exhibits."

In *Making a Currach – Michael Conneely*, Michael's daughter Máire Conneely recalls the excitement from the week the Museum visited their home on Inisheer; "The currach was being made on the sand outside the house, so we children were able to keep an eye on all the work. We

were surprised they were so interested in the work, they were writing down every word that my father said. Of course, pictures were being taken of the work. My mother had a job chasing us away, telling us not to be getting under their feet!"



The Irish Folklife collection of the National Museum of Ireland amounts to over 37,000 objects. The collection contains over thirty traditional Irish boats, 19 of which are currachs. Michael Conneely's currach is on permanent display in the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life, Turlough Park, Castlebar'.

**Making a Currach – Michael Conneely, can be viewed on the National Museum of Ireland's website [www.museum.ie](http://www.museum.ie)**

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## IFA AQUACULTURE

Irish Aquaculture production is very good value for the amount of licenced area it has writes the IFA's Aquaculture Executive, Teresa Morrissey, in her monthly column. Its value and production volume could be significantly increased with better licencing conditions.



# Irish Aquaculture Must Be Facilitated to Move With the Times

Aquaculture production will be key to meeting global demands for seafood produce in the coming years. As such, Irish Aquaculture production needs to be part of the global move towards meeting these demands.

There is a growing emphasis on circular economy and sustainable, efficient food production systems emerging from EU and National policy. Innovation, technology and efficient aquaculture farming practices will drive the adaptation needed to fulfil EU Green Deal goals of developing sustainable food production systems and ensuring food security.

Innovation and efficiency are central elements to achieving these ambitious targets. Smarter, more efficient food production systems are what is needed in order to increase production sustainably and ensure secure food sources into the future.

Irish Aquaculture producers are continuously adapting and looking at new, more efficient ways to continue to produce their high-quality products – for example, diversification to floating bags and hanging bags in the oyster industry and adapting to technology such as automatic feeding systems for fish feeding. In addition, there have been efforts to move Irish Aquaculture towards more innovative aquaculture farming practices over a number of years, which would require amendments to licence conditions or changes to licence conditions through the licencing renewals process.

Facilitating Irish Aquaculture to adapt, become more innovative and improve efficiency will have to be matched by licence conditions to allow Irish Aquaculture to move forward.

Irish Aquaculture production is very good value for the amount of licenced area we currently have.

In the recently-published BIM Business of Seafood for 2020, we see that 90km<sup>2</sup> yields 38000 tonnes which is worth €180 million in value to the Irish economy, the majority of that value (€120 million) coming from the Irish Organic Salmon industry.

This value and volume of Irish aquaculture production could be significantly increased by optimising the licenced aquaculture space we already have and allowing licence conditions to adapt to innovative, efficient aquaculture production systems.

There should be flexible licence conditions to allow for adaptability, where the licencing system facilitates amendments to licence conditions within a reasonable timeframe; Improved dialogue between the aquaculture industry and decision makers to aid better understanding that licence conditions have to reflect modern-day aquaculture technology and innovation to allow for a progressive Irish aquaculture industry.

Innovation is key to meeting global seafood demands, but aquaculture licences must also be innovative.

The Seafood Taskforce now provides an opportunity for Irish Aquaculture to contribute to initiatives and developmental strategies to build a platform for meaningful development of a sustainable Irish Aquaculture industry.

As part of this work, we must also examine how innovation in Irish aquaculture can play a very important role adding real value to produce.



# Online Shellfish Portal A First For The Industry!

Sligo-based Seafood Traders Triskell Seafood Ltd have announced this month that their new Online Shellfish Sales Portal is live. They are inviting growers across the country to get in touch and get involved!



The portal allows overseas customers to view photos taken by the growers. Details given for each batch include bay of origin, quantity available, grades of shellfish and availability dates. It's a very visual tool, allowing interested customers to search by image or category. And it isn't just limited to one species; currently Triskell are advertising batches of Pacific oysters, "spéciales", flat oysters, winkles and scallops. But this is just the start, with the new system Triskell can easily expand the selection to include any type of seafood that Irish growers have to sell. With 1 click, the buyer can express an interest and Triskell Seafood organise the rest.

Triskell Seafood have been in business for over 20 years trading live shellfish across Europe. With a French Director it is not surprising that they have a sizeable customer base in France where the market for Irish oysters is particularly strong. Director Marie-Aude Danguy explains the concept behind the new website;

"We wanted an opportunity to showcase the range and quality of Irish oysters available to buy in Ireland and with a static website that wasn't possible. We developed a 'portal' to allow us to quickly upload batches of shellfish online which our customers abroad can view and easily express an interest in." The customer portal, which is the first of its kind for the industry, can be viewed at [www.triskellseafood.ie](http://www.triskellseafood.ie). It is aimed squarely at the export market and is written in French for that reason, although customers from other countries can use a built-in translation tool to read it in any language.

Marie-Aude again on why the innovative

idea is so important for her clients. "Most of our customers work to the rhythm of the tides, not the clock and our portal allows them to view which seafood batches are available at a time that suits them. It's also been optimised for mobile users which is important as our research shows that more than half our customer view our main site on their mobile devices." The customer portal was primarily conceived to present batches of oysters, in which the company specialise. However, following interest from growers the listings have already expanded to include winkles, clams and scallops and they see that range expanding further over time. From one farm to the next, and from one bay to the next, we know the quality of products can vary hugely and the online catalogue is an effective way to give a fast visual of the broad selection available.

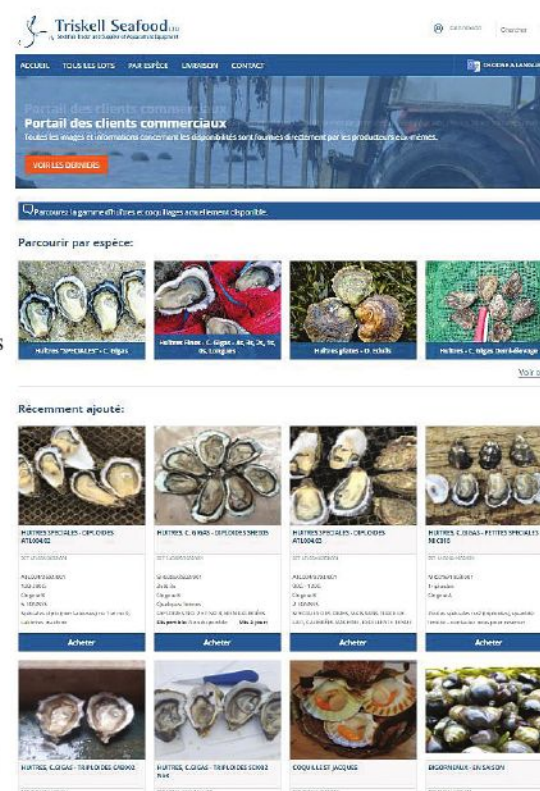
So how can an Irish grower get involved and get their shellfish batch online? Any growers interested in having their product listed free of charge should contact the team at Triskell Seafood at [info@triskellseafood.com](mailto:info@triskellseafood.com) with full details and photos of what they have to sell. That information will be uploaded to the portal for you and marketed abroad on your behalf and all you have to do is update Triskell as your available stock changes. It's that easy!

They look forward to hearing from you soon.

For more information and to follow the other activities of the company, check out their regular website [www.triskell-seafood.com](http://www.triskell-seafood.com)

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# No Coddling – It’s Another Coddock!

**Declan Quigley reports**

During early March 2021, the MFV Eblana (D379) [Skipper: Brendan Lynch, Howth] captured an unusually coloured Cod-like Haddock measuring 385 mm TL, 370 mm FL, and weighing 602 g, while trawling at a depth of 82m in the Celtic Sea, off SE Ireland.

Externally, there were no overt signs of either physical damage or disease and its condition factor (1.05) was well within the seasonal range for normally coloured Cod and Haddock in NW European waters. This aberrantly coloured specimen was donated to the Natural History Museum in Dublin.

On 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016, a similar Cod-like Haddock measuring 540 mm TL, 520 mm FL, and weighing 1.23 kg (gutted) was captured by the MFV Le Dolmen (DA 69) [Skipper: Barry Kirwan, Clogherhead] while demersal trawling at a depth of 110-120 m on the Smalls Bank in the SE Irish Sea (below).



Haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinis*) are normally dark greenish-brown on the back, greyish-silver on the sides, white ventrally, and exhibit a conspicuous black blotch between the pectoral fin base and the black lateral line (below).



The background colouration of Cod (*Gadus morhua*) is variable, greenish or sandy brown with darker or lighter mottling on the back and sides, white

ventrally, and with a conspicuously light lateral line (below). Although the Eblana and Le Dolmen specimens exhibited a visible, albeit rather faint black blotch and a typically dark lateral line, the sandy brown mottling on the back and sides was distinctly Cod-like.



Abnormally coloured Cod-like Haddock have also been recorded from the NW Atlantic. During March 1938, two specimens of suspected Cod x Haddock hybrids were captured off Lockeport, Nova Scotia (Canada) and presented to the Royal Ontario Museum of Zoology. It was noted that although the specimens resembled Haddock more strongly than Cod, they exhibited some resemblance to Cod, especially in the spotting of the upper sides. More recently, the term ‘Coddock’ was coined to describe two suspected Cod x Haddock hybrids which were captured off Cape Ann (Massachusetts, USA) during March 2007 (Rockport) and July 2011 (Gloucester).

Although the aetiology of this rarely recorded abnormal Cod-like colouration in Haddock is currently unclear, DNA analysis of the Le Dolmen specimen ruled out the possibility of inter-species hybridization.

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



Coddock captured by the MFV Eblana in the Celtic Sea off SE Ireland (March 2021)

## Importance of Foodservice, Diversification and Sector Resilience Key to the Seafood Industry Performance In 2020

**Despite the challenges of the global Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the seafood sector remained resilient and adapted to the significant market disruption it faced, according to an economic assessment of the sector carried out by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM).**

The total value of Ireland’s seafood economy in 2020 was just under €1.1 billion. As with many other industries and sectors the pandemic has had an impact, and when compared year on year it represents a decrease of 12% (-€142million). This was driven mainly by the severe disruption in global markets. In addition, the continued uncertainty of the UK’s departure from the EU made for challenging trading conditions. These factors, as well as the effective closure of the foodservice sector for much of 2020, saw a reduction of 18% in domestic consumption. While exports to key markets in Europe and Asia fell, opportunities in other global markets emerged as the value of exports to Africa growing by 87% and by 43% to the Middle East driven by increased exports of mackerel.

Despite the pandemic, and even with reduced demand in the foodservice sector, employment in the seafood sector remained stable in 2020, and there continued to be more than 16,000 people employed directly and indirectly in the seafood industry. Employment remains high in coastal regions, generating significant socioeconomic value in these areas (16% in Donegal, 7% in Cork, 6% in Galway-Clare and 6% along the coastal region of the east coast).

Speaking about the resilience the industry has demonstrated in the face of adversity BIM, CEO Jim O’Toole said, “There is no doubt that 2020 was a difficult year for the seafood industry with many markets experiencing reduced demand, directly related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Irish seafood sector sells a lot of its produce to foodservice markets in Europe and in Asia which experienced lengthy lockdowns significantly impacting sales. The industry showed great agility during the year and looked to alternatives for its products, switching where possible from supplying hospitality to supplying the retail market and online sales. Looking ahead, there are many reasons to be hopeful and the sector

is set to avail of the opportunities that will emerge as markets reopen and we can look forward to some recovery as 2021 progresses, notwithstanding the new challenges introduced by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the UK.”

The estimated value of the seafood industry in 2020 was €1.1m, down 18%, mainly due to a fall in sales in foodservice, however this was somewhat offset by a 6% increase (€18m) in retail sales.

Domestic consumption amounted to €406m, down 18%, exports-imports were valued at €263m, down 10% and private investment was valued at €213, down 17% reflecting the uncertainty in the markets leading to cautious activity from many seafood businesses. However, there was an increase of 9% on government investment – an increase to €203m.

It’s worth noting that overall investment in the sector was €416 million, equivalent to 39% of seafood GDP, a slight increase compared to 2019, underlining the importance of strong public-sector support through times of economic turbulence.

Key factors in 2020 saw a value of €346m landed by Irish vessels into our ports. The biggest fishing ports are Killybegs at €112m and Castletownbere at €104m.

The volume of seafood produced by the Irish seafood sector surpassed 220,000 tonnes with a value of €394m. While less than 20% of this volume was produced by the aquaculture sector it contributed 46% of the total value.

Landings of Dublin Bay prawn declined by around 40% in volume and value terms after a difficult year in which many of the main international markets for this species were shut down.

A full copy of the report and statistics can be downloaded from [www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie)

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# International Fishing and Maritime News

## Herring Survey Finds Hope for the Future in Scotland

Different stocks of herring spawn off Scotland to those that spawn around Ireland. This has been revealed in a five-year study that scientifically sampled the composition of fish stocks.

“The study on the genetic make-up of herring revealed that there are indeed different stocks, with those spawning in the Northern Sector off Cape Wrath and adjacent areas being genetically identical to North Sea herring, while those spawning further South around Ireland are a discrete, separate stock. Such knowledge is important because it greatly aids decision-making in fisheries management to ensure stocks are harvested sustainably,” according to Steven Mackinson, Chief Scientific Officer at the Scottish Pelagic Fishermen’s Association.

“The importance of scientific sampling to assess the composition of fish stocks and their status has been underlined by the results of this international five-year study on Western herring, in which Scottish fishermen played a key role,” he says, writing about the research on the Association’s website.

The Scottish Pelagic Fishermen’s Association has been investing in its own marine science projects “to further enhance our knowledge of herring and mackerel stocks and ensure a sustainable future.” Dr. Mackinson has been heading that work, in a role that is supported by the Scottish Fishermen’s Trust and the Scottish Government under the auspices of the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund (EMFF). There are 22 fishing vessel members of the Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group. The SPFA says that its “primary activity, is to represent its member vessels at both the political and fisheries management levels and to ensure a sustainable future for pelagic fisheries.” The membership is based in three branch-

es located at Fraserburgh, Peterhead and Shetland.

For the last few years, no commercial fishing has been permitted for Western herring because, for undetermined reasons, levels of the various stock components are low. Later this year, the results from this new five-year data set will be considered for the first time by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) to assist in a full ‘stock-take’ of the information available to assess the status of Western herring, which will aid the development of an effective rebuilding plan.

“This is a ground-breaking development as it shows how fishermen working collaboratively with scientists can play a crucial role in survey work, which can then be fed into the official assessment process,” says Dr. Mackinson, “thus helping ensure that the best available information is applied to addressing issues of shared concern. Industry’s support for scientific data collection means that there has been a higher intensity of monitoring than would otherwise have been possible, which is providing information to help make the stock assessment more robust.

“Due to constraints on financial resources, there is often a shortfall in information from marine scientific surveys carried out by national governments. It therefore makes good sense for the fishing industry to contribute to the scientific process. The scope of the activities of our fishing boats, and the wide sea area they cover, offers the ideal platform for collecting relevant marine data.

“With regards to the ongoing Western herring survey and once ICES reaches its

conclusions from the benchmark meeting in early 2022, it is uncertain whether this will result in commercial fishing being able to resume in the short-term by Scottish boats.

“There are, however, grounds for optimism over the longer period, with the most recent survey last September finding an abundance of one and two-year old herring on the spawning grounds to the West of Cape Wrath. These fish were not mature enough to spawn, but they will be able to do so this year and in subsequent years, so our hope is that these fish will return and give a sign that the stock will begin to increase.

“Indeed, previous experience has shown that it takes just one good year-class of herring to boost stock levels for several years afterwards.

“After all the tremendous effort by a variety of stakeholders in producing this dataset, we believe in advance of the ICES ‘stock-take’ meeting in 2022, it is more important than ever that this survey work continues to monitor the stock this year, looking for signs of new spawners and confirming the results from the genetic study. The more we understand the complicated population dynamics of our fish stocks, the better our management response and ability to implement recovery programmes. Scottish fishermen are now at the heart of that process and this is something we should all welcome.”

### ‘Lots of Promises’ Leave Scottish Processors Claiming Governments Have Failed Them

Scotland’s seafood processors allege they have been failed by both the Scottish and UK Government in their “hour of greatest need.”



The Scottish Seafood Association has welcomed the promise of financial support in the stg£23m ‘Seafood Disruption Scheme’ pledged by the UK government to offset the impact of Brexit and Covid-19, but pointed out that it only represented 50%

of losses. It also excluded larger businesses and those exporters which decided not to send larger consignments because the cost exceeded the value

Chief Executive, Jimmy Buchan, said: “The truth is that while the financial support that has been forthcoming has been gratefully received, its partial nature means that businesses are being left in great difficulties in their hour of greatest need. There have been a lot of promises relating to smoothing the export path post-Brexit, but very few of them have been delivered.”

He also criticised the UK government for failing to “spell out how the £100m funding scheme promised for fisheries when the Brexit deal was signed at Christmas would work and which businesses would benefit.”

“This funding package now looks like a convenient headline designed to appease the sector. When will they start taking bids, who will be eligible, when will payouts be made? We need to know, but we are greeted with silence on this at every turn.”

He also accused the Scottish Government, which has set up its own scheme to compensate seafood producers and ports, for failing to use its devolved powers or funds to help the processing industry:

“They have a £14m fund, yet there are no guidelines and application process in place. We know only that all projects must be for SMEs and completed by 31 March 2022 – far too tight a timetable for major works. It is time for both government to step up to the plate and back their promises with meaningful action.”

### New Fish Counting System Being Developed in Japan

Yanmar Marine Systems Co. Ltd. has developed a new automated fish counting system. It utilises image recognition technology to count the number of fish. The initial development has been designated for usage in tuna farming in Japan.

This is being done as it is being developed in collaboration with the aquaculture division of Maruha Nichiro Co., Ltd. In preparation for mass production, Maruha Nichiro arranged several sites for Yanmar to conduct trials under various environmental conditions to evaluate the product’s performance.

The initial development has been designated for usage in tuna farming in Japan.



Scottish pelagic vessel ‘Pathway’ at Killybegs recently - Photo by Ronan Cunningham

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## Icelandic Government Shows Aquaculture Transparency

The Icelandic Government has published online details about the country's aquaculture industry which give the number of fish under cultivation, salmon lice numbers, operating licences, locations where fish farming is being carried out and the results of various inspections.

Fisheries Minister Kristján Þór Júlíusson said the intention is to highlight everything connected with aquaculture: "It is a ground-breaking step."

Called an "aquaculture dashboard" it is a response to the sport fishing sector which runs a campaign to oppose fish farming.

Iceland has a vociferous sports fishing lobby which is strongly opposed to fish farming, claiming it is a threat to wild salmon stocks.

"All the main information about the state of aquaculture in the sea and on land is accessible in one place for the benefit of the public through the Aquaculture Dashboard," the Minister said. "Publishing this information is in line with the policy of amending the Aquaculture Act 2019 to increase transparency in the sector's activities."

## Russians Claim Dominance of Chinese Crab Market

The Russian Crab Company claims that it has become leader in the supply of live crab to the Chinese market. Fishing vessels operated by the company have landed 2,400 tonnes in the first three months of this year, an increase of 19% up on last year and making up 21% of overall crab catches in the Russian Far Eastern region.



Between January and March, Russian crab's fleet fished for opilio snow crab, blue king crab, golden king crab, and horsehair crab in Primorskiy, West Kamchatka and West Bering Sea subzones of the northwestern Pacific. It has supplied over 800 tons of live snow, blue king crab and horsehair crab to buyers in China so far this year. It has also shipped a first consignment of blue king crab to the European Union.

## Assessing Norwegian Attitude to Seaweed Consumption

NOFIMA, the Norwegian Institute of Food, Fisheries and Aquaculture Research, the country's food science research institute headquartered in Tromsø is studying Norwegians' attitudes towards eating seaweed as

part of the Nordic collaborative project, SUREAQUA. Florent Govaerts, a doctoral research fellow at NOFIMA, is leading the project and completed a nationwide survey in 550 people participated.

"Norwegians have positive expectations regarding seaweed-based products. Despite not knowing much about the products, the majority say they are willing to try," he has reported. Many consumers were unsure about the difference between seaweed and kelp. 'Seaweed' in the survey, as a collective term for both seaweed and kelp products

"A third of the participants were sceptical about how it would taste, but the vast majority believed that it is both healthy and safe to eat seaweed products. As much as 72 percent also believed that seaweed products are organic," he said.

A number of projects are growing seaweed and kelp along the Norwegian coast for use in food products.

## Fish Farms Win Court Judgements in Canadian Farms Row

In the on-going row between aquaculture and the Canadian Government over the order by Federal Fisheries Minister, Bernadette Jordan, to close 19 farms on the Discovery Islands, British Columbia by June next year, two operators have won Court cases against the government.

The Minister had also ordered that farms in the Discovery Islands region should not be restocked in the interim before closure.

Mowi has won an injunction allowing it to restock two salmon farms in British Columbia with young fish. The company has been at loggerheads with the Minister, The Canadian Federal Judge who granted the injunction to Mowi granted a similar injunction to Saltstream, a smaller business which mainly breeds Chinook rather than Atlantic salmon.

In a written ruling Justice Peter George Pamel said: "The harm to Mowi and Saltstream, as well as their employees, their families and other businesses in the community, in particular First Nations businesses, will be real and substantial if the injunction is not granted, and if Mowi and Saltstream are not permitted to proceed with the transfer of fish they require to undertake as part of their operations."

The decision is likely to save Mowi around CAN\$26m and, at least temporarily, the jobs of more than 70 employees.

## Algal Bloom Toxic Outbreak In Chile

Chile, the world's second largest producer of farmed salmon, with a value of over €4bn annually, has been fighting an algal bloom causing toxic algae which has killed over 4,000 tonnes of salmon.

It is described as the worst in five years. Algal blooming is a natural phenomenon.

(Read more about it and how the Marine Institute in Ireland is dealing with the issue in the MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW on Page 16.)

# Anger as Minister Classes National Industry Voice as "Not Relevant"

**"It's an insult to all the people in Ireland's coastal regions to try to simply dismiss this organisation because it is clearly rattling a few cages in Government" – Cormac Burke, IFSA Chairman**

The 4,600 people in Ireland's coastal communities who have signed up to a petition, as well as the 60-plus vessel owners and 40-plus industry companies who have already subscribed to the Irish Fishing & Seafood Alliance (IFSA) will be angered at the Parliamentary response by fisheries minister Charlie McConalogue that he appears not to see the organisation as a "recognised body", nor is it a "relevant representative group".

Responding to a Parliamentary Question from Sinn Fein Spokesman for Fisheries, Pdraig MacLochlainn, to the Minister for Agriculture, Food & Marine to ask if his attention has been drawn to the establishment of an independent organisation (IFSA) last February and if the IFSA will be included in future rounds of consultation that he holds with the industry, Minister McConalogue confirmed that he was aware of the existence of the IFSA.

"There is already a significant number of fisher's organisations representing the interests of the fishing fleet, namely, the National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF) and the five Producer Organisations (Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, Irish South & West Fish Producer's Organisation, Irish South & East Fish Producer's Organisation, Irish Fish Producer's Organisation and the Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation).

"Therefore, I would urge industry to work within the recognised bodies of the Producer Organisations and the NIFF at the Task Force and other relevant representative consultative groups to ensure that it has a coherent and clear voice, particularly during this challenging period for the fleet," he said.

No doubt under instructions from the Department of Marine, the Minister's response is a particular snub to those in Ireland's fishing and seafood sectors who have strongly welcomed the establishment of the IFSA which has finally given them a platform to publicly voice their concerns

and dissatisfaction with the Minister, the senior civil servants in his marine department, the SFPA and the Government's general mismanagement of Ireland's fishing resource.

"Although I'm not surprised that the Minister will not invite the IFSA to participate in his Task Force as it is clear he only wants a group who will support a fleet decommissioning scheme to cover up the fact that he threw away a big chunk of Irish quota in Irish waters in the farcical BREXIT deal, I do feel that it is an insult to all the people in Ireland's coastal regions to try to simply dismiss the organisation because it is clearly rattling a few cages in Dublin," said IFSA Chairman Cormac Burke.

It's also somewhat amusing that the Minister refers to six other 'representative organisations' when, at this point, the IFSA already has more member vessels and other subscribers than any one of those organisations he mentions.

"If anything, the Minister's conclusion that the IFSA is "not relevant" vindicates that serious questions are being posed by this organisation in the past two months which are making certain politicians and civil servants very uncomfortable.

"Charlie McConalogue's notion of attempting to exclude the people at the grass root level of the Irish fishing and seafood industry is consistent with this Government's strategy of ignoring the will of the people, no matter how strong the voice," Cormac Burke said, adding that in aiming to somehow weaken the IFSA by ignoring it, this open rejection of the organisation, and of its large numbers of supporters, will result in even stronger public support for the IFSA as it continues to put pressure on the Government to halt its neglect of Irish coastal communities and for Ireland's marine resources.

To subscribe as an individual, vessel or company, please email [ifsacormac@gmail.com](mailto:ifsacormac@gmail.com) for details



Oilean an Oir heading west passing Eeragh Lighthouse on the Aran Islands - Photo courtesy Stephen Lantry. (If you have a photo that you would like to see published in the Marine Times please email us at [editor@marinetimes.ie](mailto:editor@marinetimes.ie))



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MFV Rona leaving Killybegs following work at Mooney Boats - Photo by Alan Hennegan / Mooney Boats

### Ted Breslin Retires

**Ted Breslin, Executive Assistant and Deputy CEO at Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation retired on February 26, after 38 years working for the prominent fishermen's representative body.**

Ted is known and respected by all sectors of the seafood industry; his career has spanned very important years for the entire fishing industry but particularly the pelagic sector based in Killybegs.

Ted joined the KFO in 1983 and was responsible for implementing and operating the EU Withdrawal Scheme. His calm and level-headed approach led him on to represent KFO at many discussions - local, national and European - against a backdrop of growth and ever-increasing regulation for the fishing industry.

In recent years Ted has been the face of KFO for many representations at government and fisheries management level.

Ted grew up in the Ardara area steeped in a love of all sporting activities but above all his love of football has never waned. He has passed on this love of sport to successive generations with his unstinting work coaching young footballers in his local area.

His sporting interests are wide, including golf and archery, and he hopes his upcoming retirement will provide freedom to pursue all those interesting hobbies he has been putting on the long-finger these past years.

All staff and members of Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation wish Ted, his wife Jacinta, sons Simon and Nicholas and their daughter Evanne, many happy and fulfilling years to enjoy a very well earned retire-

ment. Go n-eirí an t-ádh leat, Ted.

### Ailt an Chorráin Rural Regeneration Programme

**Burtonport has been successful in the recent round of funding from the Rural Regeneration Programme and will get €2 million, following earlier funding of €3.1 million to improve the infrastructure around the mainland harbour and amenities in Árainn Mhór in late 2019.**

The Ailt an Chorráin Harbour Redevelopment will deliver the next phase of the Burtonport/Árainn Mhór project to regenerate a maritime gateway to the island. The project will deliver opportunities for economic, social and cultural renewal, increasing footfall in the area and improving the overall experience of those using the harbour, in turn strengthening the emerging tourism potential of the area and driving economic recovery through the creation of employment opportunities.

### Ireland's Seafood Sector Must Receive Its Fair Share of Quotas

**Independent TD for Donegal, Thomas Pringle, has told the Seafood Sector Taskforce that the Government must ensure that Ireland's seafood sector receives its fair share of the quotas available to EU member states.**

Deputy Pringle said: "It is only by actively negotiating on behalf of communities and on behalf of Ireland with a clear direction from our communities that we can strive to change the direction of EU policy in relation to Ireland."

Deputy Pringle addressed the issue in his submission to the taskforce, which was established earlier this year to make recommendations to the minister on measures to mitigate the impacts on the Irish fishing industry of the fishing quota share reduction stemming from the EU/UK trade and cooperation agreement.

The Killybegs-based deputy has repeatedly raised his serious concerns over these quotas, in the Dáil and in committee meetings with the minister. Speaking earlier this year, he said, "It is well beyond time that the wrongs that were done to our fishing community as we negotiated to join the EU were corrected."

In his submission, Deputy Pringle reminded the taskforce that on joining the EU, the ability to negotiate on fishing was unilaterally removed from Ireland, England and Denmark, as part of those negotiations by the European Economic Community.

Deputy Pringle said: "This had the impact of directly hampering the west of Ireland's development and led directly to Dublin-focussed development within Ireland that has hampered and hindered the development of Ireland since we joined the EU.

"The value of fish taken from Irish waters by other EU member states far outweighs any subsidies that we have received, including CAP, which has led to the situation that we are a net contributor to the EU rather than a net receiver of EU funding and should be recognised as such."

Deputy Pringle also said Government action on these crucial issues for Irish fishing will confirm the level of its

commitment to fishing communities in Donegal and around the country.

He said: "Any promotion of a fleet tie-up scheme will be a direct recognition that the future of the fishing communities within Ireland is not a priority for Government and will confirm and show that the Government is intent on the decline and ending of those communities."

### Potential for a Deepwater Port at Rathmullan?

**It has been reported that Donegal County Council's Piers & Harbours Section is to assess Rathmullan's suitability for use as a deep water port.**

Raised at Letterkenny and Milford Municipal District by Cllr Ian McGarvey, he told members that he has been advised that Rathmullan has potential to be considered as a deep sea port to service Northern Europe and the North Atlantic and a study would be the first step in a potentially long process, but he is adamant that there is potential for tourism, freight and fishing related traffic if properly developed and realised.

### RIP

**The Marine Times Newspaper would like to extend their sympathies to the family, friends and the communities of Muckcross and Greencastle. Sadly, we have lost two great fishermen from our fold: Dennis Meehan, (Muckcross) well known traditional fisherman from years gone by and Patrick McClenaghan, (Greencastle) owner of the Foyle Warrior. RIP**





## IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP IWDG NEWS

*The first sightings of basking sharks in Irish waters this year have been reported to the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group whose Chief Executive, Dr. Simon Berrow, says they have a long historical association with coastal communities along the western seaboard of Ireland and now is the time to give them protection.*

## It's Time to Protect the "Great Fish of the Sun" in Ireland



Basking Shark - Photo: Emmett Johnston, IBSG

**'Liadhán chor gréine' or the 'Great Fish of the Sun' (basking shark) is the second largest fish in the world's oceans. The first sightings of them this year are being reported to the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group.**

The fact that, unlike most fish, you can regularly see them on the surface, makes them relatively easy to report to schemes like the IWDG Sighting Scheme. The IWDG runs the basking shark sighting scheme on behalf of the Irish Basking Shark Group (IBSG). The IWDG hold nearly 2000 basking shark sighting records, which makes this the largest collection of basking shark sightings data in Ireland. Sightings can tell you when and where a shark occurs, but obviously only when it's on the surface. What happens below the surface was a mystery until recently.

Telemetry data has shown a regular and reciprocal movement of sharks between Irish and UK coastal hotspots and further afield (e.g. West Africa and the USA). Not all sharks move inshore in the Spring or dispersal from coastal waters in the Winter with many individual sharks remaining in Irish coastal waters throughout the year. Genetic tagging has shown individual sharks occur multi-annually at or near the same location.

Recent work by Emmet Johnston of the IBSG has shown that basking sharks only spend up to 48% of their time on the surface at foraging hotspots during the day. Surfacing was not linked to the state of the tide, but was linked to global solar radiation and wind speed. They also surfaced more during daytime than at night. So basking sharks or "sunfish" do live up to their name, by surfacing when the sun shines.

Population estimates have estimated

only 8,000 to 10,000 individuals occur worldwide, while other studies suggest the number of basking sharks in the Northeast Atlantic are unlikely to exceed 10,000 individuals. This suggests that Irish waters conservatively may host year-round in the range of 10-20% of the global population.

The basking shark has a long historical association with coastal communities along the western seaboard of Ireland.

Although it is no longer hunted in European waters, there is still a market for its fins in Asia, where it is targeted on the high seas. Basking sharks are still regularly by-caught in fishing nets, but it is illegal in the EU to land by-caught individuals for sale.

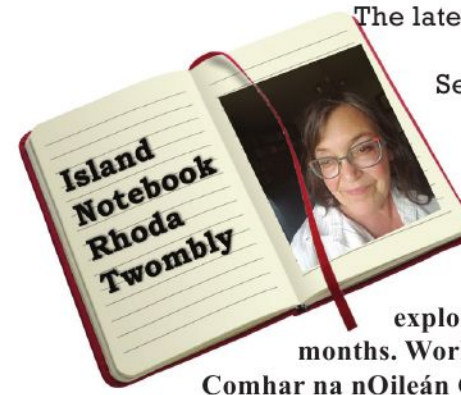
Sharks are also struck by ships with about 1% of the population in Ireland presenting with evidence of collisions. Close quarters disturbance and harassment from boaters, jet-skis, divers, and snorkelers is occurring regularly during summer months in hotspots off the Irish Coast.

The IBSG suggests the time is right to afford basking sharks legal protection under the Irish Wildlife Act.

They are protected in the UK, including Northern Ireland and around the Isle of Man. Protection within the 12 nautical miles by listing on the Firth Schedule of the Wildlife Act would assist in ensuring these wonderful animals from the deep are protected in Irish coastal waters to ensure they continue to visit our waters for generations to come.



For more information about basking sharks please visit [www.baskingshark.ie](http://www.baskingshark.ie) and sign up to the free IBSG Newsletter.



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

## Lack of Housing is Still the Top Priority on the Islands

The main challenges facing islands were explored through several platforms in recent months. Work was initiated by Comhdháil's and Comhar na nOileán CTR participation in the Smart Islands project involving consultations and training where Islanders from Ireland and Scotland worked together to gain information from networking and increase their skills as well as identifying needs and goals of our islands.

Members of Comhdháil with their colleagues in ESIN (European Small Islands Federation) then ran a fringe workshop for the EU Rural Vision Week that concentrated on issues facing small islands throughout Europe.

Islander's main concern was the lack of available, affordable housing: this was top of the list not only in Ireland but on many other European islands. Last week Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann and Comhar na nOileán CTR held an online workshop, "Housing on Ireland's Islands." The attendance exceeded expectation, highlighting the seriousness of the lack of year-round, affordable and suitable housing on most of the offshore islands.

Several issues were prominent in the discussions.

Most rental properties are available only for the off-season as owners can charge higher weekly rates during the summer. This creates insecurity for full-time residents – so much so that several families have had to give up their dream of staying on their island. Property prices are prohibitive and increasing as people look to the islands for holiday homes.

The small number of houses for sale also contributes to high prices and those looking to build a home are confronted by many challenges. Planning permission is chief among these issues: it is a long and expensive process with permission very difficult to achieve. Houses are also about 40% more expensive to build: there is added cost of shipping materials and possibly having to pay accommodation for builders. Cost also impacts on the ability to renovate old or derelict properties of which there are many on the islands.

The workshop also discussed ideal housing situations and possible solutions.

Community Housing schemes should be investigated, as well as creation of an Island Housing Trust which is a success on the Scottish islands.

It was the opinion of many that there has to be a national housing policy that can be realistically applied to the offshore islands. There should be more balance between holiday homes and houses for full-time residents. Additionally, planning guidelines need to be clarified and pre-planning clinics reinstated. There should also be more efficient, smaller and less invasive building to agree with environmental regulation and lessen cost.

Other aspects of housing, both positive and negative, were discussed and it was agreed that a baseline inventory of dwell-

ings currently on the islands and what the housing needs are must be done to know how to proceed.

This work will begin as soon as possible.

## Improvements to Inis Oírr Pier at Last!

The residents of Inis Oírr have campaigned for improvements to their pier for 15 years plus and they now have news to celebrate. Minister Heather Humphreys has announced that the case for pier works has been approved and the required works can now go to tender.

The project is listed on the Government's infrastructure commitments in Project Ireland 2040 and had been held up for years by funding and other issues. There is no doubt that this pier faces the extremes of weather and the full power of the Atlantic and badly needs structural improvements to survive into the future. Not only is nature playing a part in the wear and tear on the structure, but with increased tourism the pier is no longer fit for purpose. Larger landing, embarking and disembarking areas are badly needed as a matter of urgency. The importance of the pier to the community is recognised by Minister Humphreys and she was delighted to approve the project.

## Island Youth Forum

Comhdháil Oileáin na hÉireann is eager to attract more input from younger island residents and is in the process of setting up an Island Youth Forum.

It is hugely important to garner the opinion and ideas of the island's youth, to see challenges through fresh eyes and create a welcoming environment for the input of ideas and possible solution. Creating sustainable islands involves including all members of the community, therefore Comhdháil will be advertising news of this forum in the near future.

Hopefully many of you will be available for Comhdháil's next housing workshop: dates will be announced on social media.

So until then it's slán from the islands!







The Carol Ann at Castletownbere. Picture: Anne Marie Cronin Photography

## news from **Castletownbere** Helen Riddell

### RNLI

A unique fire-pit which has been upcycled from a disused gas cylinder has been donated to Castletownbere RNLI Lifeboat station to raffle in a fundraiser for the station. The fire-pit, which features a cut-out silhouette of a boat, was made by Sean 'Dubs' O'Sullivan. Tickets to win the fire pit are on sale at €25 each and are available from lifeboat Coxswain Dean Hegarty on WhatsApp at 083 8080848. All proceeds will go to Castletownbere RNLI and the draw will take place on Saturday May 1st 2021. The lifeboat station extended their thanks to Sean for his very generous gesture and support.

The May Day Mile is a fundraiser for the RNLI, which will run during the month of May. Everyone is invited to walk, run, swim or skip a mile during May. Participants can do it just the once, every

day or once a week. For further information and details on how to donate see [www.themaydaymile.rnli.org](http://www.themaydaymile.rnli.org)

### Darkness into Light

The annual Darkness into Light event in aid of Pieta House will take place on Saturday May 8th. Due to current restrictions there will be no organised events, people are asked to run or walk from the darkness into the sunrise on the day, within their own area and will observing all Government guidelines. To register for the event see [www.darknessintolight.ie](http://www.darknessintolight.ie)

### Beara Ladies Football

Beara Ladies Football has resumed training and the club are inviting new members to join them. They train at the pitch behind Beara Community School, any girls aged from 5 to 18 years are welcome

to join. For further details and the training schedule see the club's Facebook page.

### Adrigole GAA Club

Adrigole GAA Club extended their thanks to everyone who took part in the 24 hour exercise marathon which the club held over the Easter weekend and also to all those who made donations towards the fundraiser. From America and Australia to Adrigole and many other parts of the world, people took part in the day and night event to acknowledge those who have given their time, day and night to the club. A total of 1280km (800 miles) was covered by those taking part. Proceeds from the event will go towards providing a heart screening session within the club and also towards the player's fund. Online donations will remain open for the month of April through idonate with the link available on the club website [www.adrigolegaa.com](http://www.adrigolegaa.com)

### Castletownbere Sewerage Scheme

Work on the new sewerage scheme and wastewater treatment plant for Castletownbere is now well underway. The Brandy Hall and Hospital rising mains have now been installed and pressure tested successfully. Work on the Foildarrig gravity main is almost complete and work has now started on the quay gravity main which will involve the installation of 750mm of concrete pipe to a depth of over four metres. Work on installing the Came Woods pump station is due to start in the next few weeks. The project is being delivered by Glan Agua MEIC on behalf of Irish Water and is due to be completed in mid 2022. Further details of the scheme are available

at [www.water.ie](http://www.water.ie)

### Bere Island Radio

Bere Island Community Radio have received their new FM licence from the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and will be back on the FM network from Sunday April 25th on 100.1FM locally. Mass is broadcast by Fr Noel Spring at 10am followed by the station's regular Sunday programme Bera and Beyond at 11am. The station is also available online at [www.bereisland.net](http://www.bereisland.net)

### Karyn O'Donoghue RIP

Tributes were paid to the family of Karyn O'Donoghue, Castletownbere who tragically passed away on Saturday March 27th. Castletownbere RNLI lifeboat station said "it was with great sadness that members of Castletownbere RNLI learned of the tragic passing of Karyn O'Donoghue, daughter of Deputy Launching Authority Felix O'Donoghue, niece of lifeboat mechanic Marney O'Donoghue and cousin of crewmember John William O'Donoghue. The station management, coxswain and crew extend its heartfelt sympathy to Felix, Rosemarie, John and Fiona and to the extended O'Donoghue family at this very sad time. May Karyn rest in peace."

Staff and pupils at Scoil Phobail Bhéara also gave tribute "a beautiful, caring and kind person. We were all privileged to teach and know Karyn. May her gentle soul rest in peace and may God comfort her parents Rosemarie and Felix, her brother John and sister Fiona and all her extended family. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis, from all the Scoil Phobail Bhéara school community."

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news from the **RNLI**  
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## Two New Deputy Coxswains Appointed at Wicklow RNLI

Report by Tommy Dover, Wicklow RNLI Press Officer

Wicklow RNLI volunteers Graham Fitzgerald and Alan Goucher have been appointed as Deputy Coxswains after undertaking months of training and completing a rigorous exercise on the all-weather lifeboat in Wicklow Bay.



Graham Fitzgerald who has been a volunteer crew member for the past eleven years, and Alan Goucher who joined Wicklow RNLI in 2011, launched on an operational exercise with a RNLI Assessor during the week. The exercise involved boat handling tests and various emergency situations to test their skills. Both volunteers successfully carried out the tasks and were passed out as deputy coxswains by RNLI Trainer Assessor Alan Pryce after completing the exercise (pictured above).

Over the last decade Alan Goucher and Graham Fitzgerald have been involved in many rescues and in July 2014 they were praised for their bravery when they pulled a woman from the water and saved her life at the Silver Strand Beach. Graham and Alan received letters of commendation from the Operations Director of the RNLI George Rawlinson, for their actions during the rescue in 2014.

In the letter to Alan, Mr Rawlinson wrote: 'Your willingness to swim into the cave and use of your local knowledge to extricate the casualty safely ensured a good outcome on this rescue. I commend

your commitment and professionalism.'

Mr Rawlinson commended Graham Fitzgerald on his quick decision making, saying: 'During the rescue, you demonstrated calm and sound command of the incident, quickly gaining the required information and assessing the risks involved in committing your crew to enter the water.'

Wicklow RNLI Operations Manager, Mary Aldridge said: 'Alan and Graham have over 22 years' service between them as volunteers at RNLI Wicklow, and we are delighted with their achievement this week. Both have gained a lot of experience and have been involved in numerous rescues resulting in the saving of many lives. They have both worked extremely hard during the assessment to become deputy coxswains. This was made more difficult in recent times with Covid-19 and the suspension of training for a time. Great credit for Alan and Graham's achievement is also due to the support from their families, trainers, assessors, and the crew who generously shared their knowledge and experience to prepare Alan and Graham as deputy coxswains.'



Philip McNamara, Coxswain. John Petrie, Crew Member of over 30 years. Michael Field, Crew Member of over 30 years. Mark Nelson, Crew Member of over 20 years

## Donaghadee RNLI Volunteers Receive Long Service Recognition

Report by Margaret Ramm, Donaghadee Lifeboat Press Officer

Three Donaghadee Lifeboat volunteer crew members have had their long-term service to the institution recognised by RNLI headquarters in Poole in the form of long service medals.

The three crew members have together accrued over 80 years in service to the RNLI and in turn to the community in Donaghadee and its lifesaving heritage.

Crew member Michael Field has been awarded his 30-year service medal and has been involved in many call outs over the years, all whilst working and raising a family with his wife Dawn. Michael commented 'Even after so many years, I still very much enjoy the training exercises and the continual learning. Of course, the comradeship with the other crew over the years has been a big part of the satisfaction I get from being a volunteer. After a particularly difficult shout, of which I have seen many, we are all there to support each other and get ourselves prepared for whatever the next shout may bring'.

Mark Nelson has been awarded his 20-year service medal as a volunteer crew member, Mark has juggled his career as a chef as well as being a busy family man for many of these years. When asked what he has noticed most about the RNLI in his time he said 'The abilities of the boat, technological advances and the equipment we work with has been impressive and continues to change and challenge us all to maintain our training and skills. No two training exercises or call outs are the same, always interesting and keeps us on our toes!'

Crew member John Petrie has also been awarded his 30-year service medal and has seen many changes in his time also. John joined at the age of 23 and has volunteered on two of the RNLI lifeboats City of Belfast and the current Saxon, he has also volunteered under three coxswains, Graham McConnell, David Martin and current coxswain Philip McNamara. Reflecting on his time with the lifeboat John commented on his most memorable call out 'On the 20th of April 1993, we were called out to the fishing boat Berachah, they had a man overboard 20 miles south of Donaghadee. We searched for 5 hours in atrocious conditions, 10 metre swells and sometimes more.

Definitely a shout that stands out for me'.

Philip McNamara who has been coxswain for 22 years, said of his crew members 'The dedication shown by all the crew members at Donaghadee station is remarkable, but to be able to be a volunteer and turn up time and again for training and exercises over such a long period of time is a true measure of their character. They drop everything and leave their families and jobs to go to sea to help someone. I am delighted that Michael, John and Mark have received their long service medals, they are well deserved. I am very proud of the team we have at our station and honoured to work with them. I am sure we will have many more long serving volunteers in the future. A big well done and thank you to Michael, John and Mark and of course all the crew members at the station.'

Donaghadee lifeboat station has been operating since 1910.

## Michael Hurley - The 'Big Fellow' Retires at Courtmacsherry

After 44 years of uninterrupted service Michael Hurley has retired from the Courtmacsherry Lifeboat crew. He was Station Mechanic for 22 years and for the past 11 has been voluntary Station Coxswain.



"He has also found time to serve as a Relief Coxswain all over the UK, including at the most northerly station in the Shetlands. Over a lifetime of service he has visited all 238 lifeboat stations in the UK, along with those in Ireland. He has been a superb ambassador for the RNLI," the Courtmacsherry station said in a tribute. Michael also wrote a history of Courtmacsherry lifeboat, the book was launched by Phil Coulter who composed the Lifeboat Anthem 'Home from the Sea'. He described Michael as 'the Big Fellow'

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# Irish Nautical Trust Launches “Liffey Sweeper” to Clean Capital’s Rivers

## Environmental vessel operational four days a week collecting debris & data

The Irish Nautical Trust has launched the “Liffey Sweeper”, a new environmental vessel designed to collect large amounts of non-natural debris such as plastic, cans and bottles from the city’s waterways.

The newest addition to Dublin’s nautical fleet is part of the River Liffey Cleaning Project, the brainchild of Irish Nautical Trust Director Jimmy Murray, whose ambition is to remove all floating debris from the Liffey, the Dodder and the Tolka estuary.

“This is an ecological and environmental development research project which has been designed over the last two years to help prevent the accumulation of all non-natural debris such as plastics, cans and disposable coffee cups, and to stop it getting into the sea and the Dublin Bay biosphere, where it affects marine wildlife”, explains Jimmy Murray.

The Liffey Sweeper will initially operate four days a week, sweeping from the upper part of the River Liffey at Butt Bridge to the mouth of the River and Clontarf area, including the basins and all the shipping berths within Dublin Port.

Fitted with a deep cage, the Liffey Sweeper is able to catch a range of material from the water, including floating plastic and debris just below the surface. Once lifted from the water, debris is separated and sorted into designated recycling bins and the balance of the assorted materials, i.e. that which cannot be recycled, is removed by a licenced contractor for treatment before disposal at the Covanta Waste to Energy Treatment Plant on Poolbeg, while any organic matter collected is returned to the water.

Its launch follows a successful grant of €180,000 from the Dublin Waste to Energy Community Gain Projects Grant Scheme which enabled the Irish Nautical Trust to purchase the former environmental vessel from the UK. The pilot project is further supported involving collaboration between the Irish Nautical Trust, Dublin Port Company, University College Dublin, School of Biology and Environmental Science, Dublin Waste to Energy/Covanta, and Dublin City Council. The Irish Nautical Trust is currently part of Google’s Employment Task Force which works with a wide range of local community groups and has also

approached Google as a potential partner for the project.

The launch coincides with Earth Day 2021, which continues its focus on the ongoing climate emergency, with events taking place virtually due to Covid-19 between April 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>. This year’s theme of “Restore Our Earth” sees Jimmy and the Liffey Sweeper urging people to leave no trace while enjoying the amenities of Dublin Bay.

“We’ve noticed more disposable coffee cups, plastic bottles and food packaging appearing in the River during lockdown. With bank holiday weekends and the summer months approaching, I would really encourage people to plan ahead and be prepared to bring your rubbish home. Everyone’s contribution adds up and can make a difference”, said Jimmy Murray.

“We call it the river that never sleeps. Every six hours, the tide changes and even while we are asleep, whatever is coming down the Liffey will float down and out to sea or else get caught up around port berths, slipways, steps and other areas where it can get trapped. Our goal is to prevent that from happening by gathering enough data on the debris in the water to put together a programme to prevent any debris entering the Dublin Bay Biosphere.”

“This project is badly needed,” Jimmy concludes. “The Liffey is an extension of the streets; a lot of the waste that is on the city’s streets ends up in the river, whether it is thrown in or blown in by nature and being carried out to sea. This project is a win for the environment, the beaches, the wildlife and the local communities, in terms of cleaning them up and hopefully creating employment with an expanded programme in the near future.”

The Irish Nautical Trust is a registered charity which began in 1986. Its Mission is to ensure the Maritime Heritage & future of maritime skills in the environs of the Dublin Port area.

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



‘Liffey Sweeper’ at work with Jimmy Murray, Irish Nautical Trust Director.



Poolbeg and Irish Ferries leaving Dublin Port - Photo by James Grandfield

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# Stray Cat Plucked from the Central Irish Sea: Blackmouth Catshark (*Galeus melastomus*)

Declan Quigley reports

During February 2021, the MFV Eblana D379 (Skipper: Brendan Lynch, Howth) captured a mature male Blackmouth Catshark (*Galeus melastomus*) measuring 480 mm TL and weighing 300 g while demersal trawling at a depth of 146 m in the Central Irish Sea off Co Wicklow. The specimen, which represents the southernmost record of *G. melastomus* from the Irish Sea, was donated to the Natural History Museum in Dublin.

Although *G. melastomus* commonly occurs in relatively deep-water habitats (200-500 m) along the NE Atlantic continental shelf and upper slopes from Norway southwards to Senegal (NW Africa), including the Mediterranean Sea, the species has rarely been reported from Irish inshore waters (depths <200 m), and there are relatively few records from the Irish Sea.



During 1902, it was reported that Blackmouth Catsharks were sometimes taken off the Lancashire coast (NE Irish Sea). During 1954, 1955 and 1958 three specimens were captured at a depth of 91 m W of the Isle of Man. On 28 April 1960, a single specimen measuring 344 mm TL and weighing 143 g, was captured by the former Irish research vessel Cu Feasa at a depth of 91 m 40 km E of Dunany Point, Co Louth (NW Irish Sea; c.53.8°N, 5.7°W). During

July 1962, a further specimen was reported from an unspecified area of the Irish Sea. The species was last reported from the Irish Sea during April 1980, when the MAFF research vessel "Clione" captured five specimens (including three males and two females) while carrying out a stock survey of *Nephrops* prawns 19.2 km E of Peel, Isle of Man (NW Irish Sea, c.54.2°N, 5.0°W).

*G. melastomus* was historically regarded as rare in the Irish Sea northwards of latitude 54.5°N, but is now known to be relatively common in deep water habitats in the North Channel between Co Antrim and Mull of Galloway (SW Scotland). Indeed, over the last decade (2007-2019) at least 130 specimens weighing ≥ 1 kg and measuring ≥ 600 mm TL, have been captured by anglers fishing at depths of >100 m off the coast of Co Antrim (Red Bay, Islandma-



Blackmouth Catshark (*Galeus melastomus*) captured by the MFV Eblana in the Central Irish Sea (February 2021). (Inset photo): Large aggregation of Blackmouth Catsharks and their egg cases observed on the Porcupine Bank (Photo courtesy of Marine Institute)

gee, Carnlough, Larne, Ballylumford and the Causeway Coast). The Irish rod & line record, weighing 1.33 kg and measuring 670 mm TL, was captured off Red Bay, Co Antrim during August 2011. The World Record, weighing 1.37 kg and measuring 745 mm TL, was captured off Mausundvar (c. 63.9°N, 8.7°E), Trondheim, Norway during September 1994.

Blackmouth Catshark feed on a wide range of prey, including molluscs, cephalopods, crustaceans and fish. Males and females mature at average TL of 340-420 mm and 390-450 mm respectively. The species attains a maximum TL of 900 mm. Exceptionally large aggregations of females and their egg cases were recently observed during the Marine Institute's *SeaRover*

*Survey* (sponsored by the Irish Government & European Maritime Fisheries Fund) of deep-water coral habitats off the west coast of Ireland.

Although the Blackmouth Catshark has no market value in northern European waters, small quantities are landed as a by-catch by some western Mediterranean countries (Tunisia, Italy, Spain & Portugal). According to FAO statistics, a total of 1782 tonnes was landed during 2018; 90% by Tunisia.

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)).

# Marine Casualty Investigation Board Being Reviewed

Marine Times Reporter

There is to be an organisational review of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board. A company appointed by the Department of Transport is working on an "independent review of the current organisational structures underpinning marine casualty investigation in Ireland," according to a statement from the Department.

The key objective of the review is to assess the current organisational structures for marine casualty investigation in Ireland and set out recommendations "to achieve the most appropriate and effective marine casualty investigation structures for Ireland, taking into context and account national, EU and international obligations.

On March 29 the Department published a notice on its website inviting written submissions from "interested parties on matters pertinent to the review."

The time allowed for submissions was short. It closed on April 21, less than a month later.

Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan has said that the review could take several months; "This is by no means a criticism of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board and its members past and present, its secretariat or its investigators and the valuable

work they have undertaken," he told the Oireachtas Transport and Networks Communications Committee in January. "However, circumstances have changed since the Policy Review Group's 1998 report and the enactment of the 2000 Act and in light of the European Court of Justice judgment, I consider it to be an opportune time to have such a review," he said.

Last year, the European Court of Justice found that the MCIB was not independent, as its board included the Department of Transport secretary-general, or his or her deputy, and the Marine Survey Office (MSO) chief surveyor. These two post holders resigned.

International maritime lawyer Michael Kingston, whose father died in the Betelgeuse oil tanker disaster in Bantry Bay in 1979, has been critical of the MCIB, has demanded an investigation into it and lodged complaints with the Gardai.



Fishing Razors - MFV Emulate, skipper Martin Guildea Jnr. Photo by Richard Guildea

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All the crabbers ready to go for the new season at Ardglass port - Photo by Christopher Feenan

## Lamprey in the Liffey Channel

Dublin Port Company are undertaking a programme to monitor the movement of river lamprey in the Liffey Channel as part of the Alexandra Basin Redevelopment Project in the interest of wildlife protection and to broaden scientific knowledge of this elusive species.

Lamprey is classified as a fish but lack paired fins and possess a circular sucking disc instead of jaws. They have a single nostril and seven small breathing holes on either side behind the eye.

known as ammocoetes, spend several years in soft sediment before migrating to the sea as adults. It is thought that these fish spend two to three years in marine habitats before making the return trip to spawn.

Adult river lampreys measure from 25 to 40 cm. The very elongated body is a uniform dark grey above, lightening to yellowish off-white on the sides and pure white below. It feeds similar to a parasite, clinging on to the flanks or gills of larger fish with its sucker and rasps at the tissues below.



Based on previous survey data collected by Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) in the Lower River Liffey, sampling took place during the dark phase of the moon, which is the time when research indicates that river lamprey is most likely to migrate upstream.

Its reproduction cycle is similar to that of a salmon. River lampreys migrate upstream from the sea to spawning grounds in autumn and winter. Spawning activity is greatest in the springtime and after spawning, the adults die. The young larvae,

The results are very encouraging with the capture of our first lamprey in February 2017 providing solid evidence of their presence and an indication of an improving healthy ecology. The captured lamprey was safely returned to the waters of the Liffey Channel unharmed.

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