

IRELAND'S LEADING MARITIME NEWSPAPER

# MARINE TIMES

DECEMBER 2021 - PRICE €3



Carmarose fishing for scad - Photo by Paul Dirrane



## Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

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## Fishermen in Fifteen Countries Say CFP is a 'Systemic Failure'

The Common Fisheries Policy has been given another strong rejection, this time by the organisation representing thousands of small-scale fishermen across Europe. The Policy, they say, is failing to achieve its "socio-economic and environmental objectives" due to "systemic failure" - See Page 5

### Politics Is About Change So Let's Make the Political System Work for The Industry - See Page 12

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## the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

### What Would Joey Think Lads???

**We are approaching the end of another year and most of us are still standing. There has been so much trauma on health, business and personal fronts which certainly did not make life any easier.**

We read that our Banks are continuing their program of reduced service and presence and we now have the vista of having decent Country Towns with absolutely NO BANK.....

I am struggling with that concept but we must recognize that a Bank is not a Charity or a Social Service and that if it is to justify its physical presence in a town it must have the footfall and the business to justify.

I still recall when the decision to remove the South Donegal Mobile Bank was being made – a decision which I was resisting aggressively- the theory was that the Bank could afford to lose 50% of the Business attached to the Mobile and still be “up money” when the costs associated with keeping it on the road were removed.

I also have concerns and sadness to see talented young people taking severance packages and leaving the Banks. It is tragic that as an Industry the Banks can encourage and watch these people walking

away because the Public needs them.

Personal relationships still count Lads but it becomes more obvious every week that loyalty means absolutely nothing in these crazy times. The worm will turn lads – I am convinced of that !!!!!

<O]]]]-(

**We are still hearing talk about Burden Sharing and renegotiation of the Common Fisheries Policy both of which are excellent aspirations - but Aspirations is what they are Lads.**

I recently came across information on the level of Ownership of UK quotas not actually owned by UK nationals. We were all aware that there are numbers of what are described as “Flag Vessels” on the UK Register owned by non UK residents but it appears that the advantages which seems to accrue to the UK Fleet in the final days of the Brexit Negotiations last year.

It appears that the Spanish and the Dutch

are the big winners here Lads through their Ownership of the UK vessels acquired over the years.

You will be familiar with the concept of being on a “Hind Tit” to use an Agricultural Expression but I am afraid that we have No Tit at all.

A wise Old Manager many years ago advised that if you are unable to control a Rule - over extending in trying to argue round it can be wasteful.

In an unsatisfactory situation maybe it is better to operate as best we can within the unsatisfactory rules. Unsatisfactory Conditions we certainly have now lads and absolutely NO EVIDENCE that anyone in our Government cares.

I continue to believe that the Irish Public has no idea of what the Irish Seafood Sector contributes and how little it takes from the Government by way of subsidy.

I suspect that the greatest draw on the National Finances is the costs associated with “Policing” the Catching Sector to a point where it is being suffocated and unable to operate to its full potential.

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**The old catchphrases like “there is no ‘I’ in TEAM” and the “Hurler on the ditch never scores” need to be revisited Lads.**

If we behave like a Rabble- we will be treated like a Rabble. Without some more semblance of unity that is where we are Lads. Not enough of you are members of your POs. The strength of a PO is in its membership.

Many years ago I was involved in a number of Deputations into the Dail- and I was advised to make sure of who I was speaking for. Think about that Lads.

How can we speak for people who are not prepared to be spoken for by not joining with their peers in one group.

A kingdom divided within itself Lads will never prosper.

I thought that the concept of Unity outlined by Brendan Byrne with Sean Moroney in the Fishers’ Voice was relevant and a clear demonstration what can be achieved if everyone pulling together for a common goal.

**The whole Carbon Emissions issue is gaining more traction every week and on Sunday 21 November the Farmers “invaded” Dublin again to protest the possible curbs on their operations proposed by the Government in an attempt to reduce Carbon Emissions.**

One of those interviewed also said their protest was about possible reductions in the level of Subsidy they receive.

**SUBSIDY?????**

Fishermen get no Subsidies lads – as indeed Brendan Byrne pointed out in the Fishers’ Voice Interview.

I urge you all to watch that interview.

Speaking of Emissions I wonder what the Carbon Footprint of a Spanish Trawler entering Irish Waters and returning to Spain with a Catch taken off our West Coast might be? The Journey from our West Coast to the Porcupine burns far less Diesel than a journey from and to Vigo Lads !!!!!

Who is doing the “Carbon” Sums here when the Quotas are being dished out.

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**We are approaching the end of a traumatic year but our Industry is still standing - DESPITE EVERYTHING.**

Resilience is one of your greatest qualities for which I have always admired you- and always will.

In 1987 when I took over the AIB Office in Killybegs I depended on the industry to teach me about itself. Every Fisherman I met tried to do that but my main teacher at that time was Joey Murrin a fact which I have never failed to record.

He had the Ear of the National Media lads. Can we say that we have the ear of the Media now?????

We need the Ear of the Media Lads because Joe Public in Ireland has no idea what you have achieved with relatively little State Support and it is only right that they should!!!

Stay strong lads.

**Stay safe and let’s hope that 2022 brings us good fortune.**



St Jean Baptiste on the Porcupine - Photo courtesy Donal Healy

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New addition to the Irish fishing fleet 'Ambitious II' pictured off the Donegal coast with the dramatic Sliabh League as a back drop - photo by Damien McCallig

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## Cuan Beo launch “Economic Assessment of the Marine Resources of South East Galway Bay Catchment”

**Major one year report on the value of the sea in South East Galway Bay, finds marine industries are generating revenues of €105m and supporting 550 jobs**

Cuan Beo, a community based coastal organisation working in South East Galway Bay, have published a major 1-year report ‘An Economic Assessment of the Marine Resources of the South-East Galway Bay Catchment’. This report, the first of its kind, notes the value of marine related industries in the region which generated revenues of €105m and supported approximately 550 jobs. The ground-breaking report also delved further, in setting out to identify and value the ecosystem services of South East Galway Bay.



Ruairí Ó Conchúir – Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), Diarmuid Kelly, Gerry O Halloran, and Colm O Dowd at the launch of Cuan Beo’s report on the Economic Assessment of the Marine Resources of South East Galway Bay Catchment at the Golf Club at the Galway Bay Golf Resort Renville, Oranmore.

It placed a monetary value on the coastal environment and what it contributes to the human health and well-being of the region. The report was commissioned to highlight the importance of the marine resource of South East Galway Bay and to help better inform national policy making and local decision making. The report was presented at a regional event held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November attended by local politicians and policy makers, representatives of State agencies together with those working and living in this coastal catchment. It included farmers and fishermen, community groups, tourism and recreation groups, scientists, environmental groups and those who rely

on the sea and the coastal area of South East Galway Bay for a living.

A panel, including Ms. Elaine Donohue (Bia Innovator), Prof. Stephen Hynes (SEMUR), Ms. Ciara O’Halloran (Flaggy Shore Oysters), Mr. Alan Farrell (Galway County Council) and Mr. Ruairí Ó Conchúir (LAWPRO) provided an opportunity for those attending to open the conversation around the future development of the region in a sustainable way. The event was moderated by Dr. Micheál Ó Cinnéide (former EPA Director and now Corrib Beo).

The report is the first of its kind in Ireland to begin the process to quantify



Alec Reid, Cuan Beo Development Officer and Ciara O Halloran, Cuan Beo Education Facilitator, at the launch of Cuan Beo’s report

both established (market) industries and ecosystem (non-market) services and their value on a catchment wide basis. The South East Galway Bay Catchment is a very distinct geographical area. It is connected by a common drainage system, drawing all rainfall and run-off water in the catchment and discharging it into Galway Bay.

There are 46 catchments in Ireland according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The South East Galway Bay is known as Catchment 29 and covers an area of approximately 1,200 Km<sup>2</sup>. It includes about 117 km of coastline stretching from the Galway Harbour to Blackhead in Co. Clare and extends inland to Athenry, Loughrea and Gort. The report highlights the value and importance of data collection and management for the catchment.

The report also highlights potential growth areas across a number of key sectors where the resources available in the catchment could be developed in a sustainable manner to create new jobs and generate revenue. These growth areas include climate technology, blue health, marine and coastal tourism, research and local community development. These sectors offer unparalleled opportunities for growth and sustainable development, building on the circular economy and supporting climate resilient communities.

According to Mr. Diarmuid Kelly, Chairperson of Cuan Beo, ‘now that we have established market and non-market economic baselines, this report will heighten awareness with policy makers and planners

as to the true value of the resource base and the marine environment. It will promote this catchment as a location for research and development in sustainability and environmental enhancement. This will become increasingly important as social and environmental measures, such as carbon emissions and sustainability development goals, are established and monitored.’

The report was conducted by Dr. Colm O’Dowd. He noted, ‘valuing both market and non-market products and services from the marine environment is necessary if they are to be included in marine spatial planning and management decisions. For example, while we know that shipping and tourism are vital economic pillars in this Catchment, there is little awareness of the value of marine related recreation or the potential healthcare savings associated with activities such as sea swimming. Assessing the economic value of these activities and of marine ecosystems should influence decision making on marine spatial planning and support improvements in water quality and access to coastal areas.’

The report was funded by Cuan Beo, the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) and the EU EMFF under the FLAG West Programme. The report launch event also highlighted the activities of Cuan Beo including its Oyster Restoration project, the EU FORCOAST research project, and the Cuan Beo Environmental Education Project funded under the LEADER programme.

A copy of the report can be downloaded from [www.cuanbeo.com/reports](http://www.cuanbeo.com/reports)

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# Fishermen in Fifteen Countries Say CFP is a ‘Systemic Failure’

**The Common Fisheries Policy has been given another strong rejection, this time by the organisation representing thousands of small-scale fishermen across Europe.**

The Policy, they say, is failing to achieve its “socio-economic and environmental objectives” due to “systemic failure.”

“Eight years after the adoption of the reformed CFP in 2013 and its implementation in 2014, the intended improvement in sustainability outcomes for the small-scale low impact fleets across the EU are not being delivered and the opportunity to harness our potential to achieve wider social, environmental and economic sustainability goals is being squandered,” says the LIFE fisheries organisation that represents fishermen in fifteen European countries.

This is a salutary rejection of one of the foundations that the EU claims for the justification of the policy – that it provides economic benefits for all fishermen.

At their general assembly the Low Impact Fishers of Europe group called for major changes in the CFP.

This is strong criticism of the official attitude in the CFP which does not want to change the Policy. That attitude was exemplified by EU Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Virginijus Sinkevičius on his recent Irish visit when

he refused to countenance a re-opening and change of the Policy.

“We will do a review and will look at certain changes but I cannot promise we will be re-opening the CFP,” he said in Killybegs.

While Marine Minister Charlie McCauley has promised to set up a forum to review Ireland’s case for changes in the CFP and said he would strongly seek improvements to the low Irish quota, which the government has acknowledged is unfair to Ireland, little appears to have been done to advance this. There are indications that civil servants in the Department have not been wholeheartedly supporting demands for a total review of the CFP.

The Seafood Task Force recommended that “a substantial effort be made at Ministerial and stakeholders level to apply pressure to have the planned (CFP) review fully comprehensive, including setting out changes that are required to the CFP Regulations and a pathway for the Commission to propose the necessary amendments.”

Minister McCauley replied to that recommendation in terms which did not convince the industry that he was determined to achieve changes when he said: *“In terms of the CFP review it has always been a very difficult battle and that will be a challenge again.”*

**That appeared to many fishermen to be a defeatist attitude.**



This is what you call ‘full to the gills’ of Lough Foyle Herring - photo courtesy Enda Craig

Though there are differences in the industry between small-scale fishermen and larger boat owners, there would be general agreement that the CFP has a strong anti-Irish attitude

Relating the Minister’s stated attitude with the EU terminology used by the Commissioner on his visit to Donegal, it appears to mean that the powerful European fishing nations which exploit Irish waters remain determined to do so. It is also likely that they will frustrate any improvement for Ireland whose rich waters they continue to “colonise,” as fishing industry interests have described their attitude.

The Marine Times has learned that the Marine Minister’s views on the CFP may be formulated by Departmental advisors who want another “consultative group” to make recommendations about the Policy, rather than building on the momentum which the Seafood Task Force recommendation about the CFP offers. This continues the attitude of Departmental officials who are not totally committed to the industry nor to achieving

major changes in the CFP.

“Task Forces are a political instrument to take difficult decisions away from political masters,” according to the Irish Fish Producers and Exporters Association.

A “consultative group” is another arm of that Departmental strategy. Whilst seeking to convey willingness to listen. “What is said is rarely properly heard or listened to and certainly never acted upon. Listening but never really hearing or acting on what has been said,” an industry insider who has attended many meetings with Department officials told this paper.

There has been strong criticism during the past month of what was described to the Marine Times as “the small print deception” in the Seafood Task Force recommendation that any ‘tie-up’ funds received by a boat owner be deducted from any future decommissioning money received.

- More from the LIFE organisation in the IIMRO column on Page 8

## Government ‘Has Given Up On The Fishing Industry’

Independent TD for Donegal, Thomas Pringle, said reports of a Government scheme to shrink the size of the whitefish fleet show the Government “has given up on the fishing industry”.

It has been reported that Minister for Agriculture Charlie McCauley and Minister Pippa Hackett will seek Cabinet approval for a €66 million decommissioning scheme, following Brexit’s shrinking of Irish fishing quotas.

Deputy Pringle said: “This shows that the Government, sadly, have given up on the fishing industry. All they want to do now is manage its decline and end for Europe.”

The deputy has frequently called on the Government to renegotiate the Common Fisheries Policy, saying the Government

continues to “kowtow to Europe” when it comes to the fishing industry.

Deputy Pringle said: “Europe has never respected Irish fishing rights. When will this Government right the wrongs that were done to our fishing community when we negotiated to join the EU?”

The cost of the decommissioning scheme comes to about 60 fishing trawlers, or one quarter of the whitefish fleet.

Deputy Pringle said: “If the Government were serious they would go and fight for our rights in Europe and put it up to them, but they won’t.”

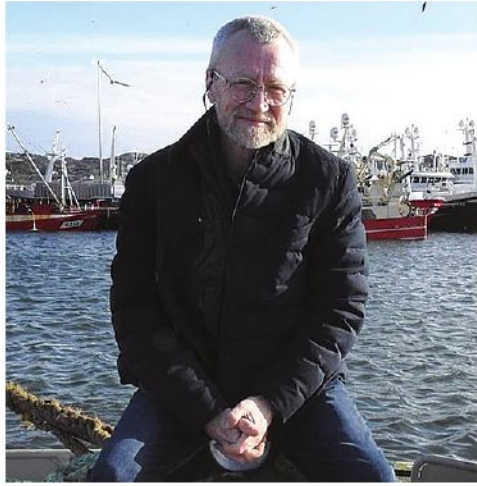
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# So many questions, so few answers ...



## Cormac Burke Chairman - IFSA

**I**n the wake of the BREXIT fiasco and the subsequent Trade & Co-Operation Agreement (TCA), it is obvious how badly the Irish fishing and processing sectors have suffered — but the industry must demand answers as to why additional suffering is being imposed by our own civil servants?

While the EU Commission has clarified that revisiting the issue of EU member states 'burden sharing' of the loss of quota back to the UK as a result of BREXIT (despite the Irish fisheries minister sadly being the only person in Europe who thinks this is still a "work in progress"), it is becoming tragically and painfully clear that "this is our lot" and that the Irish fishing industry has more or less been cut adrift by the EU Fisheries Commission who are happy to work under the pretence of fair play and a level playing field but who in fact actually employ a system that is anything but fair or just and serves only the heavyweights in

the international industry with interests in Ireland's rich waters.

Amidst the huge criticism of Fisheries Minister Charlie McConalogue, Foreign Affairs Minister Simon Coveney and their civil servants, to allow negotiations in the EU/BREXIT deal to proceed without any objection by Ireland in that Irish fish in Ireland's waters could almost be taken by anyone other than Irish vessels, there still remains some glaring questions that continue unanswered to this very day.

Chief amongst these is how an apparently uncontrolled Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine is allowed to continue in its blatant strategy of working against the Irish fishing industry instead of for it?

If asked, every single person involved in the Irish fishing and processing sector over the past twenty years or more could give examples of the anti industry attitude of the DAFM civil servants but the clearest one is occurring right now and seems to be slipping by almost unnoticed and without question.

### The Sting

As part of the TCA deal, the Brexit Adjustment Reserve fund (BAR) was established - a vast pot of money consisting of hundreds of millions of euros for every EU Member State effected by the loss of quota (and therefore raw material and revenue) - with each nation told to proceed to compensate their fishing industry as they saw fit.

Looking at France as one example: Immediately following the announcement of the BAR fund, the French Government established a system that would take the form of genuine compensation for its industry in that any vessel owner or seafood processor who could show a track record of catches (or in the case of a factory, its volume of purchased fish) then the difference between that record and the new reduced amounts as a result of Brexit could be considered a 'loss' - and 50% of this loss could be legally claimed back and awarded, up to a maximum compensation package of 300,000

euros per business.

There were no "ifs" or "buts", no conditions or criteria (other than proof of a track record) and certainly no mention of vessels having to tie-up or having to face decommissioning if they wanted some of this money - it was exactly as intended, straightforward compensation for loss of fish.

To ensure their fishermen weren't left suffering in the short term, France didn't even wait for the EU BAR funds to arrive in their government accounts and began paying out their fishermen and processors immediately and later recouped this money from the EU fund.

France is a much bigger country than Ireland but if their 10% loss is compared pro rata to Ireland's 15% loss, then Ireland has in fact lost four and a half times what the French industry has lost — but Ireland's "compensation" to the industry, according to DAFM officials, is: nothing for processors and a tie-up scheme only for certain sectors of the fleet - and even such a tie-up scheme is not compensation but merely a payment in lieu of being allowed catch fish i.e purely a substitute revenue and not a compensation.

Not only have the people of the Irish fishing industry been embarrassed since last December that our Ministers made Ireland look like the village idiot in the eyes of our EU neighbours but once again we are to be the laughing stock of Europe's fishing industry as our fish has been taken and our government isn't even going to properly compensate the industry with the money they have been given from the EU's BAR fund.

### A bitter joke

This week the report from the Minister's Task Force will get its final reading at Government — a task 'force' that spent hours and days holding no fewer than 14 meetings and came up with 17 strategies and not one of them put a single euro of real compensation in a fisherman or processor's pocket.

And after ten months of officialdom fudging around as only Irish administrators can do, Irish fishermen are still awaiting clear information as to what's going to happen.

The EU Commission very clearly instructed its Member States to use the BAR fund to "compensate their fishing industry" but, unlike pro industry governments in France and other EU nations who said "ok you've lost quota so here's compensation money", Ireland, run by civil servants, said "you've lost a lot of quota so if you stop fishing for a month we'll substitute your income" and "if you're not happy with the reduced quotas we'll use the EU compensation money to pay you the bare minimum to get out and never work in this industry again".

Compensation?? This is not compensation. It is giving with one hand whilst taking away with the other.

It is sticking a knife in the back of an already dying man.

The EU BAR fund is intended to give some small reward or recompense to fishermen who have lost something valuable to them and every other nation is treating it as such — but oh no, not Ireland — here it comes with conditions in that to receive this EU legally established money somehow Irish fishermen must "pay" something back in return, either in the form of stopping fishing for a month or to sell up and retire permanently.

To back this argument, during the Task Force meetings the industry asked why Ireland is not compensating its fishermen by giving them actual compensation payments without strings attached and the DAFM civil servants' reply was that "under EU and State Aid law employing such a system was not allowed" — until the industry produced the documents proving how France were doing it and then the response was "oh, didn't know that, we'll look into it..."

And, as in every other case when the DAFM are caught with their pants down, they are still "looking into it" and nothing has changed nor is it likely to unless we see intervention.

At the heart of the problem of compensation for Irish fishermen is that Ireland's DAFM civil servants are the ONLY ones in the EU who refuse to recognize that the BREXIT / TCA deal is 'a loss' in terms of fish quotas and, presumably, this gives them the get-out clause of not having to make genuine compensation payments to the industry.

Even leading politicians in the current government believe this to be unfair but, in doing so, are failing to see that they are admitting that, not just this industry but the country as a whole, seems entirely under the control of civil servants who unsurprisingly are often described as "the permanent government".

Once again this industry is calling for a full root and branch review of the Department of Marine and the operations of its senior staff over the past twenty years - only this will get to the core of the anti industry cancer that continues to inflict the Irish fishing and processing sectors.

**S**ince originally writing this article an Irish vessel owner has told me that if he opts to take the tie-up 'scheme' for the month of December then the conditions attached to the deal state that neither he nor any of his crew are allowed carry out any other form of paying work, nor are they allowed draw social welfare benefits during this time and, on top of this, the tie-up money will not be paid out until late January.

Therefore these men, most of whom have families that rely on them, will have zero income from the end of November until the end of January — so no money all over Christmas — that's nice treatment from the civil servants ruling this industry - EU 'compensation' my arse!!



Photo © Anne Marie Cronin Photography



(Above): Another recent visitor from Canada, Maeve Kearns on her first trip to Ireland and Inishbofin to to see her cousins and her first read of the Marine Times.

(Below): Shane Manning aboard the mfv Genesis in a force 8 gale during November hauling lobster pots - photo courtesy Jason Hand.



# MARINE TIMES

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

### Failed Political Promises and Systemic Failure of the CFP

**This time last year the Taoiseach, the Minister for the Marine, other Government representatives and the TDs of the Government Coalition parties were all promising that the fishing industry would be protected from the impact of Brexit.**

They assured the industry that they were giving its best interests the highest level of attention in the on-going EU discussions with the UK for a Brexit deal.

Christmas had just passed when they admitted that they did not keep their promises.

They failed the industry.

As a result it faces serious problems, nearly twelve months after those empty promises were uttered. More promises to rectify the damage over which they have presided also proved empty. The Irish government has not achieved 'burden sharing' by other fishing nations. No equality has been offered to Irish fishermen in the Brexit fall-out.

Ireland has the richest fishing grounds in Europe but other EU countries – France, Spain, Belgium, Holland, Portugal, Denmark, Poland take catches from Irish waters that are bigger than the entire quota allowed to the Irish fleet in its own waters.

How often have we heard that mantra?

It still applies.

It is what the European Union imposes on Ireland.

The Common Fisheries Policy is not 'common' in equality of treatment. It actively discriminates in favour of the bigger, more powerful countries which succeeded

in forcing into the CFP their demands for big catching quotas in Irish waters.

The EU, because of the CFP, which it has refused to radically alter, is failing to achieve its socio-economic and environmental objectives.

This is a systemic failure of the Policy.

It affects all fishermen and has been well identified by the Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) organisation in its call for changes in the CFP.

"Despite comprising around 75% of the active EU fishing fleet by vessel numbers and providing 50% of sea-going employment, the lack of sufficient fishing opportunities means that our sector is only able to land 5% of the EU's catch" LIFE declared at its general assembly.

Fifteen EU countries made a joint call on the EU for fishing rights to be given "to those who fish in the most sustainable way and who provide the greatest benefit to society with priority access to resources, rather than to those who fish the most, as is currently the case."

That is a clear call for equality and the concept of "burden sharing" in all sectors.

The EU and the Irish government should listen.

### INTRODUCING MARINE TIMES RADIO

Expanding further our services to readers, we are introducing MARINE TIMES RADIO which will be developing our website Podcast service by reporting on the news, comment and developments in the fishing industry and marine sphere, allied to the monthly edition of the paper. This will add to the all-round coverage of maritime matters by the MARINE TIMES, making it Ireland's leading maritime newspaper.

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Shauna Leon leaving Kilmore Quay - Photo by Richard Guildea

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**Seamus Bonner, Secretary IIMRO, has been elected to the board of the Low Impact Fishers of Europe organisation and he reports on the recent General Assembly of LIFE**

## CFP Is Not Meeting Socio-Economic and Environmental Objectives Due to Systemic Failure

IIMRO, the Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation, attended the general assembly of the Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE), which we have been affiliated to since shortly after IIMRO's foundation in 2014. LIFE was launched in 2012 on the eve of a newly reformed Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) to unite European small-scale fishers to achieve fair fisheries, healthy seas and vibrant communities. It currently represents thousands of small-scale fishers across Europe. The meeting was well attended by small-scale fishing organisations, 26 groups of low-impact fishers from 15 European countries with a series of presentations and discussions on various topics.

All the participants had common issues, despite their wide geographic spread and members noted with concern that due to systemic failure of Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) implementation, the CFP is failing to achieve its socio-economic and environmental objectives.

This is disproportionately affecting us - the small-scale low impact coastal fishers - and undermining the sustainability of our communities and the natural resources on which we depend. Eight years after the adoption of the reformed CFP in 2013 and its implementation in 2014, the intended improvement in sustainability outcomes for the small-scale low impact fleets across the EU are not being delivered and the opportunity to harness our potential to achieve wider social, environmental and economic sustainability goals is being squandered.

To address this, LIFE has called for a review of the implementation of the CFP in 2022 towards establishing:

- **Fair Access to Fishery Resources for Small-scale Low Impact Fishers**

Despite comprising around 75% of the active EU fishing fleet by vessel numbers and providing 50% of sea-going employment, lack of sufficient fishing opportunities means that our sector is only able to land 5% of the EU's catch. Fishing rights should be given to those who fish in the most sustainable way and who provide the greatest benefit to society with priority access to resources, rather than to those who fish the most, as is currently the case. Article 17 of the CFP provides a mechanism for achieving this. It needs to be implemented both in the letter and the spirit of the law.

The fishing rights of small-scale low impact fishing fleets should be ring-fenced against privatisation or transfer to larger-scale fishing companies. Legal provisions need to be put in place to prevent the concentration of fishing rights in the hands of relatively few companies and speculative trading markets for fishing quotas, which are activities that have detrimental environmental and socio-economic impacts.

The Commission and Member States have a duty to ensure full transparency on the allocation of fishing opportunities by making public the details of the companies and vessels to whom fishing opportunities have been allocated and the quantities allocated.

- **Secure Fishing Areas - and a say in how they are managed**

Our fishing areas are increasingly invaded by larger-scale intensive high impact fishing activities, which have a detrimental effect on both the fishery resources and the marine environment. This impacts negatively on our livelihoods, reduces our catches, disturbs the reproduction of fish stocks

and undermines the future prospects for our sons and daughters. We call for inshore fishing areas to be reserved for small-scale low impact fishing activities under co-management regimes. The CFP should recognise the importance of co-management and promote and support co-management initiatives. Public monies for public good not individual gain or the maximization of profits at the expense of the environment, to help us to fish better not to fish more.

The misuse of public funds through the European Structural Funds (EMFF) has created a distorted sea in Europe, benefitting fishing companies with larger-scale high impact fishing operations with windfall subsidies. This gives them an unfair advantage and contributes to overfishing and environmental degradation, contrary to SDG 14.6.

Fish stocks and the marine environment are public resources that need to be conserved in a sustainable manner if fishing is to have a future. This requires giving attention to the three pillars of sustainability – the environmental as well as the social and economic pillars. LIFE therefore urges that under the new European funding scheme for the maritime sector - the EMFAF - that priority is given to protecting the environment and conserving fish stocks, and to supporting collective projects that contribute to social and economic sustainability of fishing communities.

- **An End to By-catch and Discards**

An instrument like the Landing Obligation makes no sense for the conservation of fish stocks. Due to its poor implementation, it is of questionable use for scientific stock assessment and it is a huge burden to fishers. Discarding must be reduced through improved selectivity of fishing gears. Gears that have unacceptably high by-catch rates of non-target species and of fish below minimum size should not be licensed to fish.

- **Fisheries Control Based on Risk of Infraction**

Our fleet segment contributes 5% of the catch by volume; we have a comparatively low impact on the environment and we are happy to comply with sensible, practical and bespoke control measures for our fleet segment. We call for control measures to be applied proportionately, using a risk-based approach to fisheries control and enforcement that focuses on those fleet segments that have the highest risk of infraction and where infraction is likely to cause a significant breach of fishing regulations. For example, in fisheries activities where the risk of significant by catch and discarding is high.

- **Support for Fishers of the Future**

The average age of fishers is increasing faster than the population as a whole and younger generations are losing

interest in taking up fishing as a livelihood. Special effort is needed to encourage, train and support younger generations to take up small-scale low impact fishing either as a way of life or as a part-time activity combined with several other livelihood activities, including combining tourism and fishing.

- **Fair Access to Markets**

Small-scale low impact fishers provide the cream of the catch. We provide catch of the day fresh fish of a high quality for direct human consumption, supplied locally, seasonally diverse, caught in a sustainable manner, contributing to the socio-economic well-being of our communities and rooted in our shared maritime cultural heritage.

The inherent value of our fish catches is not being realised and we as fishers are losing out as price-takers in a market where supply and demand determine prices. These are set according to the volume of landings from the larger scale sector and the prices offered by large retailers. This is undermining the viability of our businesses. To obtain their full added value and a fair price, our products need to be differentiated on the market, with short supply chains as direct as possible to the consumer.

We ask for support and capacity building, and an enabling policy environment, based on value not on volume, so that we can form our own small-scale producer organizations and other appropriate commercial structures through which we can organize our activities and supply our products.

### CELEBRATE THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ARTISANAL FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE (IYAFA)

2022 is designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture (IYAFA). To mark the occasion, LIFE calls on the European Commission to incorporate SDG 14b – to provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets - into the CFP objectives.

### LIFE BOARD ELECTIONS

Elections were held to the board of LIFE with the following representatives being elected: **Baltic and North Sea:** Bengt Larsson, Wolfgang Albrecht, and Katarzyna Stepanowska; **Atlantic (North and South):** Gwen Pennarun, Fernando Gutierrez, Seamus Bonner; **Mediterranean and Black Sea:** Luis Rodriguez, Federico Gelmi. Christian Decugis and Bertrand Cazalet.

The first meeting of the new board will be held on December 16.

IIMRO will continue to work closely with LIFE to ensure that its priorities are adopted in Ireland and further afield for the benefit of all.

- More information: LIFE Statement: <https://lifeplatform.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/LIFE-Draft-Statement-on-the-Implementation-of-the-Common-Fisheries-Policy-short.pdf>

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# Mediator Attempting to Resolve Doolin Unit Suspension

## Only One of Four Search-And-Rescue Bases Trained to Use Night Vision Technology

### €76,000 for Each Coast Guard Vehicle Criticised by Auditor General

The former Director General of the Workplace Relations Commission, Kieran Mulvey, is involved in attempting to resolve the Doolin Coast Guard Unit dispute in County Clare.

This is one of the Units where disagreements and tension have occurred within the Coast Guard between management and volunteers over the past few years.

The Department of Transport, which has overall responsibility for the Coast Guard, said that Mr. Mulvey, had "agreed to assist in mediation with the Doolin Coast Guard".

The County Clare Unit was stood down from search and rescue operations in November after six volunteers resigned.

The Department said "it is important that we now give space and allow this process to take place with a view to getting the Unit back up and running".

The resignations arose following what are understood to be interpersonal disputes in recent years in the Unit, as well as grievances with Coast Guard management.

In 2016 Doolin Unit member Cairiona Lucas died while involved in a search for a missing man in Kilkee. A Marine Casualty Investigation Board report into her death was critical of safety management systems. The reaction from Coast Guard management to this report has been criticised by volunteers in several coastal units.



### Comptroller and Auditor General Critical of Vehicle Expenditure and Night Vision Training

The Comptroller and Auditor General, Seamus McCarthy, was critical of Coast Guard expenditure when he addressed the Oireachtas Committee of Public Accounts last month.

He said he was "not persuaded that good value for money" had been achieved.

Referring to the purchase of vehicles for the Coast Guard, he told the Committee: "The vehicle requirements had not been adequately set out in advance of the procurement process. There were also major gaps in the Department's records of the tendering process, in particular in relation to the evaluation of bids. As a result, we found there is no reasonable basis to conclude that the Department conducted a fair and impartial procurement process for the vehicles.

"I have presented reports on two matters relating to the operations of the Coast Guard, arising from audit work on the 2019 and 2020 appropriation accounts. One report relates to the helicopter search and rescue, SAR, service, which is contracted out to private sector providers, at an annual cost of around €60 million. The other report relates to procurement for the cliff rescue service, which is provided substantially by volunteer service members.

"The Department (Transport) paid €4.305 million to the search-and-rescue service provider in 2013 to fund an upgrade of the five search-and-rescue helicopters then in use to equip them with night vision technology. In addition, in November 2015, the Department bought 24 sets of night vision goggles for €527,000. In November 2018, the Department made an initial payment of €1.714 million for the provision of training in the use of the night vision technology. That training commenced in November 2019 and it is still ongoing. As at June 2021, only one of the four Coast Guard search-and-rescue bases had been approved to operate the technology and to provide a night-vision enabled service. It will be some time before the other three search-and-rescue bases are operating in the same way.

"On the basis that significant payments were made as long ago as 2013, and that the planned capability has not yet been delivered across the service, I am not persuaded that good value for money has been achieved from this expenditure.

"In the procurement of vehicles by the Irish Coast Guard for use by the cliff rescue teams. The Department signed a contract in November 2015 for the supply and fit-out of a number of vans to carry crew members and equipment. Between 2016 and 2020, the Department purchased 18 vans, costing almost €1.4 million, under this contract. The average all-in cost was around €76,500 per vehicle.

"The examination found that the vehicle requirements had not been adequately set out in advance of the procurement process. There were also major gaps in the Department's records of the tendering process, in particular in relation to the evaluation of bids. As a result, we found there is no reasonable basis to conclude that the Department conducted a fair and impartial procurement process for the vehicles.

"This report makes four recommendations aimed at strengthening the Depart-

ment's procurement procedures for the future. These are that a strategic plan for equipment requirements be developed; that all procurements of equipment should involve technical and user input at the planning stage; that all significant procurements be based on a formal assessment of operational needs; and that the Department carry out regular reviews of its procurement procedures and processes. I am glad to report that the recommendations have been accepted by the Department."

Deputy Cormac Devlin (Dun Laoghaire) asked when all search-and-rescue bases would be trained in the use of night vision: "Will that be done within the next twelve months?"

Eugene Clonan, Acting Director of the Coast Guard replied: "The training started in late 2018. The aircraft were modified in 2013 and these issues were put in on a phased basis. The aircraft were modified, the sets of NVIS (night vision) equipment were purchased and the training commenced in late 2018. This is the first time a commercial operator in Ireland has gone for NVIS and the first time the regulator has regulated for same. When you are training crews for NVIS, you need darkness so summer is problematic. I would also not want the service to be shut down while the crews are training.

"This means that training is done parallel with the service continuing, and that adds another bit of time. CHC (service provider) started training its people in 2019, but it had problems with one of the instructors. They had started training in the simulator but Covid stopped all international travel, which also stopped the NVIS training simulators. We have been readjusting the programme since then. CHC has been

working with the IAA (Irish Aviation Authority) to get regulatory approval for the training and the manuals. Assuming we get all of the regulatory approvals from the IAA for SAR-NVIS, personnel in Shannon and Dublin should be trained up by May 2022 and those in Waterford should be trained up by December 2022. That is assuming we get all of the regulatory processes in place and CHC informs me that the approvals to commence training on SAR-NVIS will soon issue."

### Waterford Helicopter Base and Increased Rosslare Shipping Traffic

Deputy Verona Murphy (Wexford) asked for assurances about the operation of Coast Guard helicopter R117 from its base at Waterford Airport and referred to its location as having particular importance because of increased sea traffic at Rosslare Europort. She wanted assurances that "the people in the South-East Region, and those who traverse the high seas, that there will be no interference or diminution of the Coast Guard service in the south-east region at Waterford Airport?"

Ken Spratt, Secretary General, Department of Transport, noted her comments on Rosslare and said her would "come back to her" about the matter.

Deputy Catherine Murphy (Kildare North) asked about insurance liability in regard to the R116 Coast Guard helicopter tragedy and the loss of life of the four crew: "The Air Accident Investigation Unit's Report did not set out to apportion liability and rightly so, given it was about the prevention of accidents. Are there insurance implications for the awarding of the SAR contract? Has that been considered? In the context of an outsourced service, where does liability lie and has the Department taken advice on that?"

The Secretary General replied: "As I understand it, once we go out through a procurement process to procure a service, matters relating to being sued or liability are matters for the service provider that is bidding into the system."

• As the MARINE TIMES went to print it was learned that the new Coast Guard Volunteers' Representative Association may be presenting its views to an Oireachtas Committee this month.

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# “We cannot live only for ourselves ....”

**Herman Melville wrote those words about human connectivity. He went to sea in the role of a basic crewman on a merchant ship in 1839, even though he was the son of a prosperous New York merchant. He had to because the death of his father had left the family in dire financial straits.**

From that ship he joined a whaling vessel which would, eventually, lead to him writing the classic *Moby Dick* in 1851. It was not an immediate success. His other extensive list of literary works included travel books, romances and adventures based on his experiences at sea. Some were successful others, like *Moby Dick*, not for very many years and he turned from prose to poetry and eventually finished his working career as a United States Customs Inspector.

American songwriter Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech of 2017 cited *Moby-Dick* as one of the three books that influenced him most. Dylan's description ends with an acknowledgment: "That theme, and all that it implies, would work its way into more than a few of my songs."

It was published by several different publishers in Britain and the US, with and without the hyphen used in some editions of *Moby-Dick* and was also called 'The Whale.' When Melville died in New York in 1891 it was out of print. *Moby-Dick* is now considered a great classic of American literature and contains one of the most famous opening lines in fiction: "Call me Ishmael" and was made into a film in 1954 with Youghal in East Cork, incidentally the town from where my radio pro-

gramme has been broadcast, transformed into a New Bedford, Massachusetts whaling village in John Houston's film, 103 years after the author of the story was born.

Melville's experience of life led him to the summation: "We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibres connect us with our fellow men and among those fibres, as sympathetic threads, our actions run as causes and they come back to us as effects."

Quite a good philosophical reflection on life and its interconnections, which is the point I found in the pages of my Diary this month. I am fortunate enough to have an interconnection with readers of the Marine Times and listeners to my radio programme and Podcast that provides stories about the marine sphere. One of them came to me this month about the huge anchor that adorns the national memorial to Irish seafarers on the City Quay at the edge of the River Liffey in Dublin. What I was told showed me that there is always something new to learn about the marine sphere.

I have several times reported on the annual commemoration at the memorial in the month of November which underlines how many lives and losses of lives are interconnected through it. But I did not know the origin of the anchor until it was told to me this past month.

The memorial was unveiled by then President Patrick Hillery in 1990 after a 13-year campaign by the Irish Seamen's Memorial Committee to recognise and remember nationally the Irish Seafarers who lost their lives while serving on Irish merchant ships during World War II from 1939 to 1945. Most of these were Irish Shipping vessels, the company formed by the Government to maintain vital supplies to Ireland, to whose then isolated island nation location many nations would no longer send their ships while warring nations dominated the seas. Desperately needing supplies, the Irish Government had no alternative but to set up its own shipping fleet to traverse the dangerous oceans to keep the nation supplied. Irish seafarers rallied to the flag and operated the ships.

The Government closure of Irish Shipping are dark examples of neglect of seafarers. The memorial ended one aspect of that, inscribed as it is with the names of those who died. In recent years that has been expanded to remember all Irish seafarers lost at sea

These connections are all encompassed by the memorial, but I never knew that the anchor came from Cork Harbour.

Robert Allison kindly wrote to me from the Tyn-dall Institute at UCC with information about it.

The anchor dates from the 18th century, is 17 feet high and came from a Naval 'man-o'-war' and was dredged up at Passage West.

A newspaper clipping which Robert sent to me reported about



it: "That it should have been found off Passage West in Cork Harbour was very fitting, for there were many Passage men on the Irish Shipping vessels during World War Two and others involved in the maintenance and repair of the ships at Rushbrooke Dockyard."

So, human connections in the maritime world, in particular, are wide and wonderful.

As Herman Melville wrote – "we cannot live only for ourselves." It is a philosophy which, in these difficult and challenging times, can be embraced with communal benefit.

**As another Christmas arrives and another New Year beckons, amidst the difficulties threats to health and life these days, I wish all readers a Happy, Holy, Peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year and, most hopefully, that 2022 brings us all a better year than the past two.**

Paddy Launders was Chairman of the Memorial Committee and delivered a powerful speech at the unveiling, where he said those honoured were "patriots in the truest sense," prepared to work for Ireland under appalling conditions and in so doing made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives.

"They were drawn into the conflict between the great powers resulting in heavy loss of life with a casualty rate of 17% the highest ratio among the combatants and neutrals. Their remains are scattered over the world's oceans, but seemingly forgotten by their fellow countrymen until this memorial."

Many times in the past and now, the vital role of seafarers in our lives is forgotten.

During the war Irish merchant ships were as much a target for German U-boats as British, American and Canadian ones. Many were sunk and Irish seamen died.

The State neglect of their memory and

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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.	



# Politics Is About Change So Let's Make the Political System Work for The Industry



**The Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association, Brendan Byrne says that NOW is the time to set an agenda of change for the industry and to fight for an agreed future for all in the industry**



**Unless we transform our anger and frustration at the inaction of the Minister and the Government into setting an agenda of change then we will find ourselves no further forward than we are at present in a year from now.**

It must be clear to all that there is no real natural drive to change anything in the Department, within our relationship with the EU, the Minister may well want to change the narrative or agenda but hitherto nothing is happening; well not that we in the industry can see outwardly identify. This is not to be unexpected, basically since the decentralising of the Department of Marine nothing really changes there anyway – its secure in its own isolation regardless of whether it is responding to ever changing landscape of the Irish Fishing industry or not. When we compare ourselves to the successes of other coastal member states we are a very poor comparison, that is despite the great drive we have within the fishing industry but that is not replicated at political level nor has it been for some time in this country.

Change is only to be feared if you are part of the present failures and shaped the past lost opportunities, those that want to

change the present and shape a different future will embrace what is needed, and as I have stated time and time again – the Irish fish industry has been and continues to be a political failure at all levels.

I welcomed An Taoiseach Micheal Martins reply to Deputy Collins last week in the Dáil that a debate will take place on fishing before Christmas, but that is only the start of where we need to go. It is time Dáil Eireann took a sharper interest in all matters relating to fishing, and that includes getting a better understanding as to how this is the industry that continues to fail to develop or expand under our membership of the EU - We must establish are those failures as a result of policy inaction on our part nationally or is there an anti-Irish policy on the part of the EU - to quite simply keep the industry down, it will be easy to out the weakest links once we set about focusing on this. My own view and I confess, I am pro-European; is that we as a member state no longer have the methodology that actually works in Europe for fishing and that is our real failure.

I would hope this debate which An Taoiseach is now committing to will lead to a much deeper self-assessment of the failures of the industry, and from that a new pathway and agenda can be set that will restore confidence in both the political side of the industry because at present, for some time,

our faith in politicians delivering for the fishing industry is even lower than our faith in the EU and that really does say a lot – it's time for them to set up and take leadership on the issue. Any other sector, that would experience the level of failure, decline and set back as we have would be front and centre in analysing and debated almost immediately, but in the fishing industry it is never the same and that is what we must challenge.

## December Council talks and quotas for 2022 – but what about Burden sharing?

**We wish our Minister well as he prepares for the December talks as it is that time of year again. We are now 12 months from the dreaded loss of the TCA, and our immediate solution to the disproportionate hit was going to be solved by Burden sharing, a concept that sounds good but has yet to deliver.**

Perhaps, entering these talks as there is further cuts on the table for Ireland based on ICES advice an idea might be to introduce the concept of “levelling up”, instead of seeking quota directly from other Member States and bearing in mind we do not have Council of Ministers approval for burden sharing or so Commissioner Sinkevicius told us all while he was in Killybegs. It would be easy for us to make a case that Ireland due to the disproportionate hit we took through the TCA, should be subject to a lesser cut on the key quota species that were disproportionately hit due to TCA, and that other member states carry a slightly higher cut to off set the Irish lesser cut, this concept of levelling up was used many times by the British while they were members of the EEC. Basically, what we as a member state would be doing on the hardest hit species would be drawing a red line beyond which we could not fall any further until such time as the equilibrium is restored and that the impacts of the TCA are shared fairly by all. In our favour we have the support of our Government, our EU partners in theory but as of yet not in practice, we must ask ourselves which is the easiest passage to deliver a result.

It is 12 months since the deal that took our fish was signed – it is simple we would need to be seeing results otherwise time is no longer your ally, with the passage of time we will lose the initiative and moreover the argument.

## Outcomes must lead to action and time is not on our side

**The Taskforce initiatives need to be set in place before the Christmas break if the industry is to have a chance. Massive work was put in by all that took part in the 14 meetings of the taskforce, but since then time is ticking and impatience is growing and we have nothing tangible to show for it.**

With the deadline of the sunset clause for all Brexit Adjustment Reserve funding requiring all funding to be spent by 31/12/23, then every week is an essential time-block if we are to effect the change we need in our processing capacity to focus on value add, diversifying and doing more with less, and all other improvements we require right across the entire industry. It must be factored in the impacts that Covid will have also in terms of labour shortages, supply constraints and time lapses in deliveries – all of these factors will be significant challenges when the funding package of €90 million will be confirmed by the Department following the recommendation of the Taskforce.

The processing liquidity programme also requires to be implemented, it is clear as we come to the end of the final quarter of 2021, how the real impacts of Brexit/TCA are affecting the fish processing sector. This particular scheme should have ideally been made available in order to assist processors prepare for the critical period running up to Christmas 2021. When we reflect on our French colleagues they have a second tranche of their scheme ready to roll out at present, they of course starting aiding their fishing sector last May.

The same arguments I make for processing can be made for all other initiatives in the taskforce, so the reality is – it is time to implement the recommendations and see the positive impacts these initiatives can make across the board.

## Last weekend's podcast – When facts come second to sensationalism

**I do not wish to overly dwell on this sad episode, but regrettably in the course of this podcast made by an independent film maker - 4 individual members of our association were singled out in name, that was wrong and the events that followed that were completely wrong when these individuals were vilified on social media.**

Let us never lose sight of a few cogent facts – we are a very small community; our industry is equally important to all of us that work in it. These same people that some of you incorrectly turned on, are the same people you have known most of your lives. Never fail to use your own judgement before you believe anything you see on social media, remember the entirety of the time you know these people instead of the few seconds of sensational video clips that you may watch. Social media is a useful object but it does not have a filter for telling us what is the difference between truth and spin, or between reality of sensationalism – Our strength is our unity and more will worry that we are together as one than when we rip ourselves apart, I will leave it at that.



Saint Rosa on the Porcupine - Photo courtesy Donal Healy

# 32,000 Lobsters V-Notched for Protection

**Bord Iascaigh Mhara has announced that this year 32,000 lobsters are being V-notched before being returned to sea to breed again. This involves having a V-notch removed from the tail which is a mark that protects the berried lobsters.**

“Since 1994 inshore fishers in Ireland have actively participated in this important conservation measure where a small V-notch is made in the tail of mainly female lobsters before they’re returned alive to the sea to continue to breed and produce young,” says BIM. “By year-end, it’s estimated that more than 32,000 adult female lobsters caught by Irish inshore fishers will have a v-shaped notch removed from their tail by trained BIM staff.”

The National Inshore Fishermen’s Association responded: “This year our members V-notched over €6,000 worth of lobsters through a scheme we administered for them. Other members V-notched more through their local groups.”

The ‘V-notch’ marking is supported by legislation that makes it illegal to land, hold or sell these lobsters. As a result, if they are caught again they must be returned to the

sea. This allows the female lobsters to continue to reproduce and is helping maintain and safe-guard Ireland’s lobster fishery.

“Great scheme that has worked for many years and will keep the lobster fishery sustainable into the future,” said a public comment on the NIFA/NIFO Facebook page. “These fishers are showing their respect for a fishery they depend on. Fair play to them all.”

The Tralee Oyster Fisheries Society Ltd. season runs from September to April. The Society was established

and registered in 1979 and had an Oyster Fishery Order vested in it in 1981. “We are a non-profit Fishermen’s Co-op involving 78 boats and over 200 fishers. Our annual catch ranges from 100 to 300 tonnes per year, depending on the settlement level of the spat/juveniles from four years previ-

ously. Ensuring the protection of this stock is of the highest priority to us, ensuring we have one of the most sustainable seafood products on the market. The Tralee Bay Oyster fishery is one of the few self-seeding Native Wild Irish Oyster Fisheries one of the largest self-reproducing oyster beds in Western Europe, which is something we work extremely hard at protecting.

“Oyster fishing has taken place around Tralee Bay for hundreds of years, in various forms and is mentioned in literature in the 1850’s. The current fleet is based out of

Fenit Harbour, but most villages and townlands along the shore of the bay, such as The Spa, Kilfenora and Barrow have their own stories and history related to oysters. There are also oyster middens present in the bay area which could possibly date back to the Stone Age.

“It’s very possible”, the Society says on its website, “that St Brendan, who was said to have been born in Fenit, brought some Tralee Bay Oysters with him on his voyage across the Atlantic!”



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## 'Tom Crean' Makes its First Splash

The hull of Ireland's new state-of-the-art marine research vessel, *RV Tom Crean*, was launched on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November at Astilleros Armon shipyard in Vigo, Spain.



The launch of the hull is a significant milestone in the build process, with the vessel on schedule to be completed in summer 2022. The build of the *RV Tom Crean* received funding of €25 million from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, as approved by the Government of Ireland.

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the

Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D, said, "I am pleased to note the significant progress being made to date on the construction of Ireland's new marine research vessel, *RV Tom Crean*, and welcome this significant milestone in the construction project. This new research vessel, when delivered in 2022, will be an important infrastructural tool in acquiring data and information sup-

porting the sustainable management and development of Ireland's valuable marine resource. The vessel will support key national and international programmes in fish stock assessment, climate change related research, environmental monitoring, seabed mapping and marine spatial planning, supporting the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and delivery of the National Marine Planning Framework and other important marine related activities."

His Excellency Frank Smyth, Ambassador of Ireland to Spain and Andorra, joined Marine Institute Chairman Dr John Killeen and Interim CEO Michael Gillooly to view the hull of the 52.8 metre vessel glide into the water.

Michael Gillooly, Interim CEO of the Marine Institute said, "It is remarkable to see the launch of the hull of the *RV Tom Crean* today, which marks an important stage in the construction of this modern, multipurpose vessel. It will carry out a wide range of marine research activities including expanded fisheries surveys, seabed mapping and marine spatial planning, climate change related research, environmental monitoring, deep water surveys, and support increased research in the Atlantic Ocean.

"The *RV Tom Crean* will enable the Marine Institute to continue to lead and support vital scientific surveys that contribute to Ireland's position as a leader in marine science."

The *RV Tom Crean*, which will replace the 31 metre *RV Celtic Voyager*, will provide a year round service, enabling 300 operational days at sea each year, and up to 3,000 scientist days of research per year. The new research vessel will be a silent vessel, capable of operating throughout the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The *RV Tom Crean* will be able to go to sea for at least 21 days at a time and is designed to operate in harsh sea conditions.

Based in Galway, the vessel will be used by the Marine Institute, other state agencies and universities to undertake multidisciplinary surveys. It will also maintain and deploy weather buoys, observational infrastructure and our Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) *Holland I*.

Ireland's new marine research vessel has been named the *RV Tom Crean*, after the renowned seaman and explorer who undertook three major ground breaking expeditions to the Antarctic in the early years of the 20th Century; which sought to increase scientific knowledge and to explore un-reached areas of the world, at that time.

Spanish shipyard Astilleros Armon Vigo S.A. were awarded the contract to build Ireland's new state-of-the-art marine research vessel in 2019, following the completion of the design by Norwegian ship design consultants Skipsteknisk AS. The construction of the new national research vessel continues on schedule and on budget in 2021.

## "Help Map Ireland's Marine Life" - SFPA Call Out to Play a Role in Documenting Fish Species in Irish Waters

Coinciding with World Fisheries Day on Nov 21st, the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), are asking the public and particularly those in the fishing community to assist in efforts to gather more information around the species of fish that come into Irish waters and add to the knowledge bank on Ireland's marine life.

Although 577 species have been recorded to date in Irish seas, more information is sought as part of conservation monitoring efforts. Further to that, a recent UN Food and Agricultural (FAO) report highlighted that nearly a quarter of species, monitored across the globe, are at risk of overexploitation or on the verge of depletion.

Closer to home, once commonly sighted species such as Skates and Rays are now facing challenges, according to Declan Quigley, biologist, and Senior Port Officer with the SFPA in Howth, Co Dublin.

"For instance, of the 33 recorded species in Irish waters, nine are currently regarded as threatened and a further six as near threatened. Tracking this decline is a challenge and one of the main difficulties in assessing the on-going conservation status, specifically of threatened Skates and Rays, is the previous lack of reliable species-specific data. Commercial fishers, recreational anglers, citizen scientists, and public aquaria have a very important role to play in contributing to the conservation of these threatened species in Irish waters."

In addition to surveying patterns in declining fish species, the public are being

asked to keep a look-out for species new to Irish waters because much of the current knowledge bank relates to "over the counter fish species" in fishmongers and supermarkets and fished commercially.

"We really want to build our knowledge base around the non-commercial fish species in Irish waters and to establish the biology behind these species of fish that are an important part of our National Marine Biodiversity and of the overall marine ecosystems," said Mr. Quigley who has published more than 423 fisheries related research papers.

"There is a wonderful opportunity for people, who regularly explore our coastline, for those who are in our seas such as the recreational scuba divers, not to mention our 2,000 strong commercial fishing community and nearly half a million recreational fisheries to be part of this great initiative to map and record what species are visiting our shores. Their contributions will complement the work of Ireland's marine scientists."

For a full list of the SFPA port offices, please visit [SFPA.ie](http://SFPA.ie)

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# THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

The development at Castletownbere of a 46-year-old barge as a platform for marine innovation has exciting possibilities, the Principal of BIM's Castletownbere National Fisheries & Diving College tells Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney.

**From his office on the quayside at Castletownbere Shane Begley takes me on a barge journey from the former Verolme Dockyard in Cork Harbour to Northern Ireland, Dublin Port and Bere Island.**

I've seen the barge outside Bere Island Boatyard, across the waters of Castletownbere fishing port from his office. The 46-year-old vessel, with a lot of nautical miles under its hull, assumes a new identity as I hear about its development leading to potential widespread beneficial effects in the marine sphere.

Shane is Principal at the National Fisheries & Diving College in the West Cork fishing port, originally opened in 1999 as the second fisheries college in the country after Greencastle in Donegal. He was then a staff instructor.

He is excited about what is being achieved in a three-way liaison between Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Bere Island Boatyard and Daretech Technologies, a company in the maritime sector hub at the Beaufort Building in Ringaskiddy, Cork Harbour, where a lot of marine research work is going. He talks about the barge as a pilot project that began two years ago when it was bought from Dublin Port and towed to the island boatyard.

"We thought about how 'green' could we make it in environmental terms as a diving platform and moved on from that, starting from a blank sheet, marrying a lot of innovation with a lot of forward thinking."

The College, running Commercial Scuba and Surface Supplied Diving Programmes, refurbished the barge to run by a hybrid battery-powered system.

"This is the first known time such a system has been used for marine training in Ireland and the results have exceeded expectations. The project was a pilot to test the viability of using a battery and generator-powered system in a marine training environment. We set out to reduce the carbon footprint and operational costs of the barge and measure the emission offsets and possible cost savings. It has a decompression chamber, surface-supplied diver unit and welfare accommodation. Being run by the hybrid battery system it is unique."

Noise can be a problem in commercial diving work. Shane describes how systems were devised to change this. I'm being told about amazing innovation and development of marine technology on this old barge.

"What's exciting now that we've seen the results is that we can begin to explore how the system might be applied to other parts of the seafood industry such as aquaculture feed barge vessels and possibly fishing vessels in the future. A unique feature is that the power management of the system, the battery and generator monitoring happens remotely, more than 70 miles away."

The European STREAM project, a collaboration on both sides of the Irish Sea to bring together communities to better understand the impact of climate change and related technology usage is now linking into the Castletownbere barge project. This includes Swansea University, Waterford Institute of Technology, UCC, the Welsh Government and the European Commission, developing sensors capable of providing real-time environmental data through web portals, mobile applications and mass-produced sensors for organisations responsible for protecting and improving Welsh and Irish waters. Data collected will



be shared to keep coastal communities informed about the local impacts of climate change.

"They want to put pumps and sensors on the barge, to see how they work in the marine environment, solar panels to improve battery power and we're more than delighted to be involved. Projects like these will help the total marine community. We have come a long way, but there is more to do and more to achieve. This barge can be used as a proving site for new marine technology developments."

The Department of the Marine has been supportive since the barge was bought, he says. The overall cost of the project, moving the barge to Cork and all the refurbishment and development is between €350,000 and €400,000. The payback will be over 8-10 years, with big savings, he says. "The lifespan of the barge is another 20 years, so the whole project ends up in the black as well as what we are learning and we now have a platform that we can use, not just for diving, but for marine development. There is a carbon emission offset and this development has other possible applications in the aquaculture sector, for fish farms, even for fishing vessels

in downtime when they are not actively fishing, using the hybrid system which we are developing, to save and improve battery dependency. There is huge potential."

BIM has been teaching diving or many years. Commercial diving

needs qualifications and there is demand for qualified divers.

"This project can work 365 days a year. With what we have been able to do so far, we can go further with this development with this innovation. All this was done locally on the coast."

That is a good point and underlines coastal sustain-

ability, which BIM is focusing on.

"We have the expertise and ability locally and we're looking at, maybe, a marine technology apprenticeship for local communities. This is where BIM is strong because we reach local communities.

**"Who knows where we can get to?" he asks, concluding our chat. It is a question which will have an exciting answer.**



## A Tribute to Skipper Brian Crummey

by Richard Mc Cormick

**M**any fishermen encountered during the course of a lifetime impress you with their sheer strength of character which helps them overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The fishing industry abounds in such personalities otherwise it could never flourish. One of these was the Dún Laoghaire born Skipper Brian Crummey who was recently laid to rest in Dunmore East.



Like other East Coast fishermen, Brian and his younger brother Leo could hardly fail to notice the large Milford Haven side trawlers fishing locally and regularly berthing in Dún Laoghaire Harbour. Leo subsequently fished aboard them to gain further experience. Brian's first vessel, the 1960 BIM Meevagh Boatyard built *Aird Ailbhe* was replaced in 1967 by the more powerful 65 foot Norwegian trawler *M.F.V. Nordkap*. Her 230 H.P. Scania engine made her eminently suitable for white fishing and prawns, while her larger fish room proved ideal for the Dunmore East winter pelagic herring fishery.

Brian was a natural leader, uncompromising in his standards and, with Jack Doyle as Mate, *M.F.V. Nordkap* was as well maintained as any yacht in Dún Laoghaire Harbour. BIM's Chief Executive and Chairman, Brendan O'Kelly, quickly identified Brian Crummey as a pioneering innovator, willing to travel far afield to test and adopt new technology to benefit the fishing industry.

Brian was also a founder member of the Irish Fisherman's Organisation. As elected IFO Chairman he was regularly quoted in Arthur Reynold's *Irish Skipper* and other media informing the Irish public and politicians alike of the immense employment potential of the fishing industry. Instigating a peaceful 2-day blockade of Dublin Port in 1982 to highlight the plight of the sector was a challenging decision. Ultimately dispersed by the military might of the State, the blockade succeeded in generating significant visibility for the rapidly evolving Irish fishing industry.

I was privileged to crew aboard *M.F.V. Nordkap*, the Swedish built *M.F.V. Vingaffjord* skippered by John Poole and Leo Crummey's French built *M.F.V. Quitte ou Double* in the late 1960's and greatly

benefitted from the accumulated knowledge of their experienced skippers and crews. A genius at fine tuning trawl gear, Brian's ability to regularly earn good wages ensured that he attracted highly motivated crew, who recognised his innate fishing skills and appreciated his honesty, integrity and inherent decency.

Many like Denis Harding and Trevor Simson left to skipper their own boats. John Poole, Brian Lonergan and Mick Mc Gillacuddy joined the new Killybegs RSW pelagic trawlers. Declan Donohue now trains fishermen on BIM's Coastal Training Units, while others flourished in seagoing and shore based positions. Leo Crummey settled in New Zealand and corresponded until his death in 2019.

After successfully fishing and managing a variety of other boats and witnessing the *M.F.V. Pere Charles* tragedy, Brian finally came ashore in 2007 aged 70 to spend more time with his wife Frances. A fond memory remains of his granddaughter Ciara's wedding in the Maritime Museum, where at her request, a meticulously scaled replica of *MFV Nordkap* had pride of place on the altar. After the wedding, Brian presented me with this beautifully crafted wooden model made by the renowned Ringsend Shipwright Joe Murphy, the last Foreman of Dublin Port's historic Diving Bell.

Despite the disruption of the Covid pandemic, half a century after his top earning trawler *MFV Nordkap* graced Traders Wharf, her model will go on display in a bespoke case in Dún Laoghaire's National Maritime Museum as a fitting tribute to Skipper Brian Crummey in his home port. And Brian will always be remembered by those privileged to work with him as a pioneering fisherman and a thoroughly fine gentleman.

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a h-anam dílis.*

## New Principal Appointed to National Fisheries College at Greencastle

Garvan Meehan has been appointed Principal of the National Fisheries College in Greencastle, Co. Donegal.



He brings a wealth of experience both at sea and onshore to the post. A qualified Chief Engineer with a BEng in Naval Architecture, he has held posts as Chief Engineer at sea and as a Marine Technical Superintendent ashore. He was also previously a marine engineering skills instructor with Bord Iascaigh Mhara.

BIM announced his appointment to the College where, it said, "he will play a key role in the further development and enhancement of the college curriculum and

the services it offers to the seafood sector, as well as overseeing capital investment projects within the College."

Garvan also has a strong personal family link to the facility. The building was built by a local builder and furniture maker, who was also Garvan's maternal Grandfather.

In fact, a lot of the furniture is original.

"My desk was one of those supplied by grandfather, which seems fitting," he said.



# Designed for and by fishermen

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## Clean Coasts Celebrates the Winners of the Love Your Coast Photography Competition



**Clean Coasts announced the winners of the 12th Love Your Coast photography competition during their virtual awards ceremony that was premiered on Friday, 12th of November on Clean Coasts' social media channels.**

The Love Your Coast competition is an integral part of the Clean Coasts programme. Ireland has some of the most spectacular and diverse coastlines in the world. For the past 12 years, the 'Love Your Coast' competition has been about capturing the essence of the Irish coastline, its beauty, and its diverse character. For the Love Your Coast 2021 competition, almost 1,300 entries were received – the most entries the Love Your Coast competition has had to date.

Clean Coasts' Love Your Coast Photography awards were held virtually for the second year in a row, where the winning photographers for the Love Your Coasts Photography competition were announced. The competition had a prize fund of €5,000 for the amateur photographers competing in five categories: Coastal Heritage, Coastal Landscape, People & the Coast, Wildlife & the Coast and the introduction of a brand-new Love Your Coast Category for 2021, Creativity and the Coast.

The 50 best shots were shortlisted by the Love Your Coast judges for an online gallery. Winning images showcased the stunning coastlines of Wexford, Donegal, Waterford and Galway.

Declan Roche's winning image from the Wildlife and Underwater category, entitled *Let Me Out*, was the overall winner for 2021 Love Your Coast photography competition. When asked about the image Roche said; "A regular talking point with people getting their "5k" exercise on Wexford's Marina during lockdown in 2021 was this Otter.

I was there most days each week over a 6-week period, and this shot with a shore crab in his mouth was one of my better photos."

Michael John O'Mahony, director of the Environmental Education Unit said: "This is the 12th year of the competition and it has been very successful and very well received and we have seen some of the most amazing photographs of our coast over the last number of years. This is more than just a photography competition: we are an island nation and our coast and marine environment are incredibly important

to us. Clean Coasts has almost 2,000 volunteer groups who are doing amazing work when it comes to managing and protecting our marine environment, so these photographs are a way for everybody to appreciate and celebrate our coast and be inspired to get involved too."

Clean Coasts would like to wish a huge congratulations to Declan Roche and the rest of the prize winners and thank all the entrants for submitting their photographs.

A gallery of the winning photographs can be found on [www.cleancoasts.org](http://www.cleancoasts.org)



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# Greater Spotted Dogfish (*Scyliorhinus stellaris*) – more or less

Report by Declan Quigley

On the 5th of October 2021, the *MFV Eblana* (D397) [Skipper: Brendan Lynch] (Fig. 1) captured five unusually coloured Greater Spotted Dogfish (*Scyliorhinus stellaris*) [GSD] exhibiting large widely dispersed dark leopard-like spots while demersal trawling at a depth of 99 m in an area known as “The Peaks” in the central Irish Sea off Co Wicklow (ICES VIIa, 35E4; 53.0333°N, 5.5347°W).

One of the retained specimens was a mature male, measuring 103 cm total length (TL) and weighing 5 kg. Another darker coloured mature male measuring 105 cm TL and weighing 6 kg exhibiting densely distributed small dark spots was captured in the same haul (Figs. 2-3). Both of these unusually coloured specimens were donated to the Natural History Museum in Dublin.

Although the dorsal colouration of GSD is normally sandy-brown or greyish-brown with sparsely distributed large rounded dark blotches, the species frequently exhibits a variable range of phenotypic colouration patterns, most likely reflecting adaptation to specific local environments. Exceptionally black (melanistic) specimens have occasionally been recorded (Fig. 4). There is only one known record of a pure white (leucistic) specimen, which most likely represented a genetic mutation rather than environmental colour adaptation (Fig. 5).

The Greater Spotted Dogfish, also known colloquially as Bullhuss or Nursehound, ranges from southern Norway (North Sea) to southern Portugal (and possibly NW Africa), as well as the Mediterranean Sea. However, despite its widespread distribution, relatively little is known about its biology compared with its smaller relative, the Lesser Spotted Dogfish (LSD) *S. canicula*.

GSD are the largest species of catshark (Scyliorhinidae) in the NE Atlantic, with a maximum recorded TL and weight of 190 cm and 10.801 kg respectively. The species is generally found in relatively shallow coastal rocky habitats with algal canopy cover, at depths of 1-60 m (but possibly down to 800 m), and appear to occur in small aggregations. The species can acclimatize to relatively low salinities and is occasionally found in estuarine waters. Acoustic tagging studies indicate that GSD use different habitats within a small home range, moving between different rock refuges between nocturnal and diurnal cycles. GSD are generalist predators that feed on a wide range of

invertebrates and fish.

Male and female GSD reach maturity at a TL of 77-79 cm. The oviparous females lay a single egg capsule (Fig. 6) at a time per oviduct (possibly 9-41 egg capsules are laid throughout the year), either attached to macro-algae in the subtidal or extreme lower intertidal, or on sessile invertebrates in deeper water. Fully formed juveniles hatch from the egg capsules after 9-12 months at a TL of 10-18 cm. The maximum reported age for GSD is 19 years.

Due to their low commercial value, GSD are generally discarded at sea (most likely with a relatively high survival rate), or landed and used as whelk bait. Unknown quantities are also utilized either fresh or dried-salted for human consumption.

Although not specifically targeted, GSD are not infrequently captured and are now generally released alive by increasingly conservation-minded recreational anglers (Fig. 7). Over the last 63 years (1958-2020), the *Irish Specimen Fish Committee* (ISFC) has ratified a total of 572 specimens weighing  $\geq 7.257$  kg (Fig. 8). In the interests of promoting the species conservation, an alternative minimum qualifying TL of 125 cm (along with photographic evidence) was introduced by the ISFC during 2016. Although specimen-size GSD have been captured from all around the coast, over 73% were recorded from the south-west (Cork & Kerry), particularly from Valentia (25%) and Kenmare Bay (24%).

The current ISFC GSD record, weighing 10.801 kg, was captured in Kenmare Bay, Co Kerry during September 2003. The current British GSD record, weighing 10.092 kg, was captured off Minehead, Somerset (Bristol Channel) during 1986.

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



Fig 3. Unusually coloured GSD captured by the *MFV Eblana* in the Central Irish Sea (October 2021).  
Fig 4. Melanistic GSD (Valentia, Co Kerry, 02.09.2017) Photo to Rosemary Hill.



Fig 5. Leucistic GSD (Hollyhead Bay, Irish Sea, 20.10.2010).  
Fig 6. GSD egg case (Photo Sarah Varian).



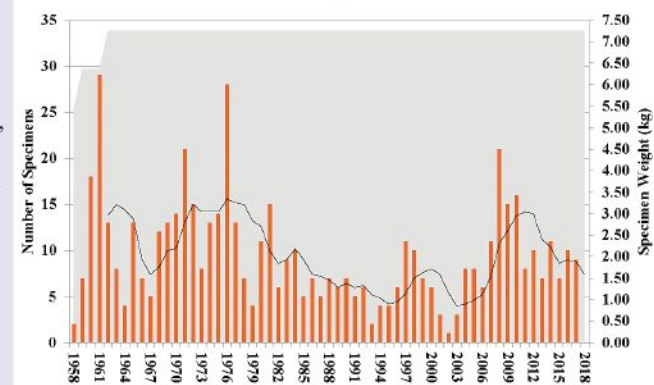
Fig 7. Specimen GSD, 7.82 kg, captured by Peter Schiffer off Wicklow, July 2013 (Photo Kitt Dunne, [www.wicklow-boatcharters.ie](http://www.wicklow-boatcharters.ie)).



Fig 1. *MFV Eblana* (D379).  
Fig 2. Andy Nealon (*MFV Eblana*) with two unusually coloured GSD (October 2021).



Figure 8. Annual numbers of specimen GSD  $\geq 7.257$  kg (ISFC 1958-2020) N=572



news from the **Portside**  
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## Shell Partners with Simply Blue Group to Develop Western Star Floating Wind Project

Shell has signed an agreement with Irish leading blue economy developer Simply Blue Group to acquire a 51% share of their Western Star venture, which seeks to develop a floating wind farm off the Clare coast. This follows a similar agreement earlier this year to jointly develop the Emerald floating wind project off the south coast of Ireland. The Western Star Joint Venture will be developed by Simply Blue Group personnel and Shell floating wind experts, with the project office based at Simply Blue Group Headquarters in Cork.



Val Cummins, Managing Director & Director, Simply Blue Group, Gordon Shearer, Commercial Manager Offshore Wind, Shell, and Hugh Kelly, Co-Founder & Chief Commercial Director, Simply Blue Group, at Loop Head lighthouse for the official announcement of Simply Blue Group's JV Partnership with Shell on the Western Star floating wind project.

The project aims to harness the vast floating wind potential in the Atlantic Ocean off the west coast of Ireland. The joint venture will seek to co-develop up to 1.35GW in total: 300MW-450MW in the first phase with 700MW-900MW to follow. This is equivalent to powering over one million Irish homes.

Hessel de Jong, Offshore Wind General Manager Europe, Shell, said: "Shell has a clear ambition to be a net-zero emissions energy business by 2050, in step with society. We aim to provide more renewable power to consumers and businesses alike. Working alongside coastal communities to create shared value is key to success for both the Western Star floating wind project and the previously announced Emerald

project, which is why we have chosen to work with Simply Blue Group."

Hugh Kelly, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Director, Simply Blue Group, said, "There is tremendous wind potential off the West Coast of Ireland and Simply Blue Group are delighted to partner once again with Shell to jointly develop the Western Star project. The project will utilise floating offshore wind technology to produce zero-carbon electricity and will greatly help Ireland progress towards a green energy future with domestically sourced sustainable electricity delivering both environmental and economic benefits to the entire country. Simply Blue Group are committed to developing floating offshore wind projects in Ireland."



Pictured at the Dunmore East pontoon taking receipt of the new Port of Waterford Pilot Boat the 'Port Láirge' are from left; Captain Darren Doyle Port of Waterford, Joeify Murphy from Dunmore East, John Glody from Dunmore East and Sean Whitty from Passage East.

Floating wind technology can be installed in deeper waters than fixed wind turbines allowing this project to be placed 35km – 60km offshore, keeping visual impact to a minimum. The first phase of the project could include between 15MW and 18MW turbines. The assembly, installation and deployment of these turbines could stimulate hundreds of high-quality jobs in the local supply chain. Long-term operations and maintenance of the turbines will also require local skills and services to support this industry.

## New Pilot Boat 'Port Láirge' received by Port of Waterford

In 2019 the Port of Waterford Company commissioned a new Pilot Boat on November 19<sup>th</sup> 2021 it has been received by the Port of Waterford crew at the Dunmore East pontoon.

The new state of the art vessel is a 15-metre interceptor which has been christened 'Port Láirge' a name of well known maritime heritage in Waterford. The previous namesake was a much-loved steam-powered dredger that served on the Suir for over 70 years until the 1980s.

Port of Waterford currently operates two pilot boats, one based in Dunmore East at the primary boarding position and one in Passage East. The new vessel replaces the 'Dun Mór' a purpose-built pilot boat, designed and built by Halmatic in 1996. The new all-weather boat will provide safer working conditions for pilotage personnel. The vessel is self-righting and capable of recovering if capsized by a large breaking wave.

Taking delivery of the new vessel Capt Darren Doyle, Harbourmaster, Port of Waterford, said, "We along with the maritime community here in Waterford are delighted with the new addition to the fleet of Port vessels.

The work of the pilot crew is highly skilled and it requires a state-of-the-art vessel to ensure that this work can be carried out year-round in all weather conditions.

Shipping companies are commissioning deeper vessels for larger cargo loads and therefore the requirement of a well-equipped vessel for our skilled Pilot crew is essential in order for them to be able to carry out the operational and navigational requirements to get these vessels in and out of port safely."

Training on the new vessel will now take place with the 4 person pilot boat crew at the Port and the Port Láirge will officially enter service in the coming week as the Dun Mór is retired.

Piloting the new vessel on her maiden voyage to the pontoon at Dunmore East following the completion of her sea trials was boatbuilder Frank Kowalski MD of Safehaven Marine in Youghal. She is the 48th pilot boat Safehaven have supplied to ports globally. Port Láirge is powered by a pair of Scania D13 500hp engines, has an operational speed of over 25 knots and can carry five pilots and two crew in comfort.

The vessel will be berthed at the Pontoon in Dunmore East. The new vessel offers a reduction in fuel emissions and is a more sustainable boat for the Port of Waterford. For further details see [www.portofwaterford.com](http://www.portofwaterford.com)

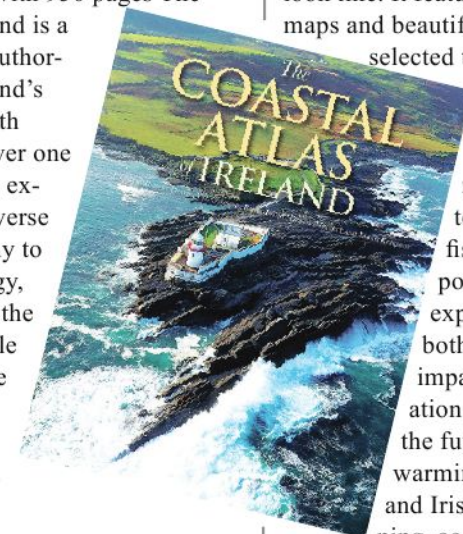
## Coastal Atlas of Ireland Wins Best Irish Published Book of the Year 2021

The Coastal Atlas of Ireland has won TheJournal.ie Best Irish Published Book of the Year 2021. TheJournal.ie Best Irish-published award was set up to reward the excellence of native publishing and submitted titles must emanate from an Irish-based publishing house, with the public asked to vote on a shortlist of titles.

Published by Cork University Press, organised into six sections, comprising a total of 33 chapters, with 950 pages The Coastal Atlas of Ireland is a comprehensive and authoritative tribute to Ireland's spectacular coast. With contributions from over one hundred scholars and experts in a range of diverse fields, from geography to biology to archaeology, geology, and history, the Atlas is the only single publication to explore the coast of Ireland as a whole, from both the physical and social perspectives.

and its people be in 2200, or even next year, and what will its different landscapes look like. It features hundreds of original maps and beautiful illustrations, carefully selected to bring the text to life.

The Atlas examines the importance of the coastal zone to Ireland across a range of themes, including tourism and recreation, fishing, aquaculture, energy, ports and linked industries. It explores these themes across both space and time, from the impacts of Quaternary glaciation on the Irish landscape to the future impacts of climate warming on coastal communities and Irish society. Visually stunning, accessible and an academic tour de force, the Atlas will resonate with everybody who has a connection to Ireland and anybody with an interest in coasts.



Edited by Robert Devoy, Val Cummins, Barry Brunt, Darius Bartlett & Sarah Kandrot, the atlas presents views of the island's coastal future: where will the coast

# Aquaculture Innovation Studio Attracts Start-Ups from Varied Backgrounds

A total of 9 start-ups with backgrounds in areas including engineering, IT and farming took part in BIM's Innovation Studio at the RDI Hub in Killorglin recently.



At the BIM and Hatch Irish Aquatech Community Day at the RDI Hub in Killorglin: Jim O'Toole, CEO BIM with Kevin Honan, Innovation and Development Director, BIM; Wayne Murphy, COO Hatch; Brian Quinn, Wellfish Diagnostics; Tanja Hoel, Innovation Manager at Hatch; Tom Prins, Director of Investment at Aquaspark; Einar Wathne, former CEO of Car-gill Aquanutrition; Terri Smith, Enterprise Ireland; Kate Dempsey, Aqualicence

The programme, formerly known as BIM's Aquaculture Accelerator, is run by BIM in partnership with global accelerator Hatch and took part as an in-person event over two weeks.

To date, 38 such start-ups have taken part in BIM's Innovation Studios, raising more than €9million and generating more than 40 jobs in aquatech in Ireland.

An Aquatech Community Day was held during this year's Innovation Studio at which Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D. gave the opening address.

Guests at the Open Day event included aquaculture industry members, Irish and international investors, government representatives and the 2021 Innovation Studio participants plus alumni.

Speaking to the audience via a live-streamed video, Minister McConalogue referred to how major technological advances have been recurring features in our history and how this emerging innovation and new technology focus for the aquaculture industry is already transforming the industry, on this island and around the world.

The Minister also spoke of the role the Innovation Studios are playing to help achieve the ambitious goals set out in his Department's *Food Vision 2030 Strategy*, namely 'Attract global investment in aquaculture technology' and to 'Promote Ireland as a knowledge base for aquaculture tech-

nology and research and attract investment on our knowledge base'.

Jim O'Toole, CEO BIM, presented on the future of aquaculture in Ireland, highlighting Ireland's unique and fortunate position to have a young, skilled and dynamic population, where the average age is 38 and where almost 6 in every ten adults has a third level education.

The continued purpose of BIM's Innovation Studios is to create a dynamic environment for start-ups with new ideas for aquatech where they can innovate, experiment and test their ideas with leading experts from backgrounds in aquaculture, finance and marketing. The Studios are also giving these start-ups access to funding from venture capital - where they can secure early-stage funding quickly - and where they can quickly and with agility fill gaps in the global aquaculture market. The fastest growing protein sector in the world.

BIM is currently working to create a dedicated Irish Aquaculture Fund to further support the growing aquatech businesses that have already taken part in their Innovation Studios. Hatch are also in the process of raising a €75million fund for global aquaculture innovation.

The Innovation Studio is supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and is helping to nurture early-stage ideas in aquatech.

## IFA AQUACULTURE

In her monthly column, IFA's Aquaculture Executive, Teresa Morrissey, discusses the issue - Will Irish Aquaculture be key to future Food Security?



## Food Security - What Are We to Eat?

In light of recent media coverage on food production systems and its potential climate impacts around the world, it begs the question - What are we to eat?

There is increased focus on where our food comes from, how it's produced, on food production systems and the distance food exports travel around the world. There is ever-increasing pressure here in Ireland on the agricultural sector to reduce production with the Climate Action Bill, Nitrates Directive and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) all unfairly pointing towards reducing current agri-production levels in an effort to mitigate potential emissions.

Likewise, we also see a reduction in the Irish fishing fleet due to reduced quota, an issue well documented by this publication and rightly so.

Some of the outcomes of COP26 in Glasgow earlier this month highlighted the issue of carbon leakage between countries and indeed sectors. If less food is produced in Ireland, more food will need to be produced elsewhere, likely in countries with a higher carbon footprint.

### So Where Does This Leave Irish Aquaculture?

**While we are seeing increased pressure on other food producing sectors, the world still needs to eat healthy food, particularly the world needs more than ever sustainable sources of protein. Both fisheries and agriculture have a major role to play and are more than willing to play their part in this regard.**

Irish Aquaculture also has its role to play in providing sustainable, carbon efficient seafood - which it has already been proven to be very good at, in producing a high-quality product recognised around the world and there is an ambition among industry to further develop this. However, true political backing is needed for Irish Aquaculture to really play its part and provide the food security that is needed into the future.

The final report of the Seafood Taskforce which was published last month, recommended a proposed €60m. fund for Irish Aquaculture being made available for initiatives in the Irish Aquaculture sector. The report describes the Government's ambition to 'Develop Irish aquaculture to mitigate against the negative impacts of Brexit that

have been most pronounced in other sectors of the Irish seafood industry.' This represents an opportunity to invest in developing the Irish Aquaculture industry, fulfil the ambition to assist in providing food security and also offers mitigation against the negative impacts that have occurred in other sectors of the seafood industry due to Brexit.

The true test of these recommendations for Irish Aquaculture will only be borne out in the actions that should follow to allow such proposed initiatives to become a reality.

### IFA Aquaculture AGM To Take Place Online in February

**It was hoped the IFA Aquaculture AGM would take place in person in February 2022 at a suitable venue - should Government restrictions allow.**

In light of continued uncertainty of Covid restrictions the IFA Aquaculture Committee has decided to host the IFA Aquaculture AGM online in February. This is in order to facilitate ease of planning.

Should Covid restrictions allow for larger in-person events closer to the time we may look at that option as it is preferred to meet in person if at all possible.

### Elections

**The 2-year term of the current IFA Aquaculture Committee is currently coming to an end and elections may be held for any vacancies on the committee that may arise.**

Notice of the AGM and all relevant documents will be circulated to members no later than 14 days in advance of the AGM as per IFA Aquaculture rules.

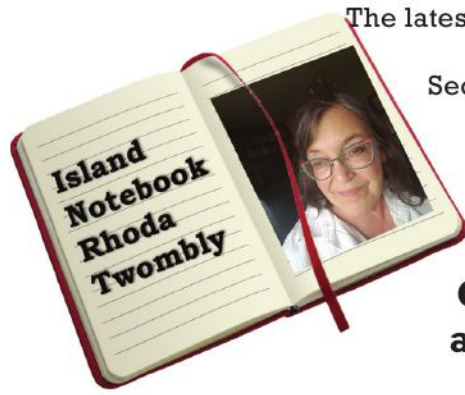
Looking forward to, hopefully, seeing you all in person in February 2022!

**IFA Aquaculture would like to wish all its members, stakeholders and supporters of the sector a Very Happy Christmas and a bright New Year for 2022!**

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

## Giving Youth Their Voice in Island Decisions

**Greetings to all the islands and lovers of the islands ....**

**Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann has long been keen to start an 'Islanders' Youth Forum'.**

The Board was really impressed with the number of young people who attended workshops on housing and visioning the future for islands – as well as the positivity and foresight expressed in their input. The 'Islands Youth Forum' will be a way for younger islanders to meet, albeit virtually for the moment, discuss issues and have some fun. As the youth ARE the future, it is so important that they are heard so we are keen to get their ideas on a range of island issues. More details are on the Comhdháil Facebook page.

### Football Will Be Back!

I am sure that islanders and visitors have been missing the annual Inter-Islands football competition which has been cancelled for the past two years due to Covid restrictions. Good news, everybody! The competition will be held, all being well, the weekend of the 21<sup>st</sup> of May on Bere Island. The organising committee is determined to make this an extra-special event so keep your eyes peeled for more details.

### Tidy Islands

Once again, West Cork scooped the Tidy Towns Island awards. For 13 consecutive years Bere has been named as overall Islands winner – that's some record! Sherkin Island was named as Highly Commended, so congratulations there as well. Sherkin's score has increased year-on-year and this year there was only 5 points in the difference - I have it from a reliable source that Bere had better watch their backs!

### Tory Island Planning Officer

Great news for Tory Island as well: Seanán Mac Aoidh of Caiseal na gCorr, Do-

negal has been appointed as their Language Planning Officer which is a big help in finalising their language plan. Importantly, Tory's Scoil Naomh Cholmchille has been given approval to advance to the tender process for an extension to the school, which will provide two extra classrooms.

### Island Business

Comhar na Oilean is currently organising training sessions for all those involved in local business and/or social and community development. There is a wide range of session topics from Strategy and Business Planning, Branding, Marketing, and Idea Generation to name a few. The series of workshops will run from December 1 through February 2022 and as noted by Comhar's CEO, Maire Uí Mhaolain, "The training is very participant based and deals with actual experiences rather than the usual training format." For more information on this programme please contact Maire at 099-75096.

Christmas is creeping up on us and I would encourage all to visit their island markets and shops, not to mention online businesses, for locally produced gifts. Not only is it vital to support our island artisans especially during these difficult times, but there is a lot of fine, healthy and prize-winning crafts out there. Jumpers, jackets, paintings, seaweed products, cheese and fudge, gin and whiskey to name just a few. All producers will appreciate your purchase – as will the recipient of your gift. And while we're at it, don't forget the Lifeboats – please, where possible, purchase RNLI cards and gifts and donate to this vital service.

**Till next time, from Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, stay safe, stay local, Happy Christmas and New Year.**

Slán from the islands.



**BirdWatchIreland**  
protecting birds and biodiversity

## Are Seagulls Losing the Run of Themselves?

**Niall Hatch of BirdWatch Ireland discusses the complaints about Seagulls and points out that every Gull isn't a Seagull**

In recent years, and especially over the past 12 months, BirdWatch Ireland has been inundated with emails, letters, phone calls and social media messages about gulls in urban areas. Many of these are complaints, others are expressions of concern and some are from people who want to know how to help these birds. Dublin and Waterford are the cities most frequently mentioned to us, though reports have also come in from many other cities and towns across the country.

So, what is going on? Well, part of it is what scientists refer to as "confirmation bias". Gulls have always been a feature of urban locations in Ireland, particularly in areas close to the coast, and their appearance in places such as Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford is nothing new. In many cases, people may have subconsciously overlooked the gulls, but they have always been there. Once they hear others discussing them or read news reports about them, suddenly they, too, start to spot gulls and believe that this is something that began just recently.

Now, while the presence of gulls in our coastal cities is nothing new, some of their behaviour certainly is, and these behavioural changes are perhaps the main reason that people are concerned or unhappy with the birds' presence. There are really two major issues, which need to be considered separately. One is the increasing number of gulls – and a species called the Herring Gull, in particular – nesting on urban rooftops. The other is the fact that some gulls have learned to associate humans with food and are begging or even stealing it from people as they eat outdoors.

I'll address both of these phenomena shortly, but before I do, I would like you to notice that, until this point, I have deliberately avoided using the term "seagull". This is because, while all of our Irish gull species are often keen to live in coastal and marine habitats, and indeed some do so exclusively, many are by no means compelled to be near seawater. Some, such as the Black-headed Gull, the Lesser Black-backed Gull and the aforementioned Herring Gull, habitually travel and even breed well inland, feeding along our inland waterways and often occurring well away from water. A catch-all term like "seagull" is misleading, therefore, and can lead people mistakenly to believe that encountering a gull away from the coast is a cause for concern. It also masks the fact that Ireland is home to over a dozen different species of gull, all of which have their own distinct appearances, habitats and behaviours.

With increasing numbers of gulls nesting on rooftops in some areas, we are seeing them coming into conflict with people as never before. Many object to the loud calls that they make, especially early in the morning, and also to their territorial nature: gulls are very protective parents, and will swoop and scream at any human whom they think is too close to their nest. This has even led to calls for gulls to be culled in some locations; something that, it's important to point out, would be illegal under both

national and EU law.

This antisocial nesting behaviour only occurs during the summer months. The phenomenon of urban feeding, however, is a year-round problem. A small minority of Herring Gulls, in particular, have learned that humans often have food, and also that our overflowing bins and black plastic refuse sacks can provide easy meals. Their aggressive behaviour is understandably worrying to people.

These are not signs of birds that are thriving, or that are "losing the run of themselves", as politicians and the media often put it. Rather, they are the signs of species in crisis. Far from increasing in number, as many people assume, Ireland's Herring Gulls have suffered a decline of 90% over the course of just 30 years. As their offshore nesting islands have become overrun with non-native predators, such as rats and mink, and as increasing numbers of human visitors have been traipsing through their breeding colonies, so some have decided that tall buildings – or 'urban islands', as they must see them – are a safer bet for their precious eggs and chicks. To compound their woes, as our marine ecosystems deteriorate, fish disappear, plastic pollution abounds and climate change disrupts ocean currents, so they must resort to scavenging food in our towns and cities.

The gulls themselves are not the problem. Their rapidly changing behaviour is instead a symptom of a much larger problem, and clear evidence of an ecological crisis that is poised to affect the lives and livelihoods of us humans too, as well as many other species. Rather than bow to pressures for apparent 'quick-fix' solutions such as culls and nest destruction, BirdWatch Ireland is urging government to protect the gull's nesting grounds, to reduce emissions, to eliminate plastic pollution, to support our marine ecosystems and to realise that the gulls are shouting a warning to us that we would be fools not to heed. We also urge people not to feed gulls, so that they don't learn to associate our species with easy hand-outs and retain their healthy natural wariness of us.

At the end of the day, it's not the gulls' behaviour that is the real problem . . .

It's ours . . .

*Ireland's birds need your help. If you would like to support efforts to conserve and protect both them and their habitats, please become a member of BirdWatch Ireland, Ireland's largest and most active conservation charity. With Christmas on the horizon, it's worth noting that BirdWatch Ireland membership also makes a great gift. For full details, please visit [www.birdwatchireland.ie](http://www.birdwatchireland.ie)*



Bere Island - awarded Ireland's tidiest island for the 13th consecutive year!

# Danny Murphy RIP

By Carol Gilbert



**The flotilla of boats escorting Danny Murphy to his final resting place on Friday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, were testament to the high regard and stance the Heir Island and Skibbereen man was held in.**

Danny was one of the founder members of Skibbereen Rowing Club and remained committed to the very successful club over the years. So it was fitting that members of the club, including Olympian, Fintan McCarthy, formed the vanguard of his escort. They were joined by West Cork ferries, and small boats along the route which was lined at piers and slips with others paying their respect.

Danny died unexpectedly on November 2nd, following a tragic accident. His final voyage began down the Ilen River from Old Court, to Heir Island and concluded at Cunnamore Pier.

Danny Murphy had been a committed community man all his life. He was one of those brave men who was on call the night the oil tanker, the Betelgeuse, exploded in Bantry Bay in January 1979 with a massive loss of life.

Following this tragedy, a new commercial marine enterprise was born, Aquaculture in the form of mussel lines cultivation.

Danny started his farm in Roaringwater Bay a decade later and fought for the infrastructure needed to develop this industry which would grow to sustain up to 100 jobs in a calendar year by meeting with five different Ministers for the Marine. Funding was finally awarded in 1996 to build a pier to service the men who built their businesses around that industry. Today that same industry is being farmed by a third generation.

Danny Murphy also founded and chaired one of Ireland's first lobster conservation co-operatives, which is still v-notching lobsters along our South West coast. Today this has in turn created one of the largest fishermen's organisations at the time, i.e., the Southwest Inshore Fishermen's Association which had 300 registered and paid up members and successfully lobbied for the addition of 7000 GTs for unregistered vessels in the Irish fleet. This subsequently saw another sector being created, the P-licence that allows 410 families continue their tradition of fishing using pots all around our coastline.

Danny also fought for the electrification of Heir Island and the piping of mains water into Heir Island in the early 1970s.

Danny as a ferry man, skippered the ferry boat, "Boy Colm" sailing from Heir Island to Cunnamore, Sherkin and Baltimore. He owned the angling and ferry boat the "Norvic", jointly with his son Daniel and delighted in showing marine wildlife to young and old for over twenty years.

Danny Murphy was part of the legacy of men who manned small craft when pickings were lean. But he had the vision and tenacity to improve conditions for others.

He was a very sociable man too, a great dancer, nimble of feet and danced the night away on many occasions.

He was an avid fisherman and instilled his love of the sea, his belief in fairness and respect for others to his family. He was immensely proud of the achievements of his children and his extended family.

It was at Cunnamore Pier the last time I met him. He always was the utmost respectful although there was always a glint of mischief in his eyes and a smile on his lips which would often explode into laughter.

**The Marine Times extend their deepest sympathy to Danny Murphy's family and friends.**

## news from Castletownbere

Helen Riddell

### Christmas in Castletownbere

The Castletownbere Development Association will host a Christmas market at St Peter's Church on Sunday December 5<sup>th</sup> from 11.00am to 3.00pm. Anyone who would like to pitch a stall in the grounds of St Peters (the inside is already fully booked) is asked to text Sandra on 087 2927534. The town Christmas lights will also be switched on the same evening.

On Sunday December 12<sup>th</sup> a drive through Santa visit will take place at the pier side of St Peter's Gardens. To book a spot, text 086 8959321 with your name, car registration, child's name, gender and age. The cost is €7 and bookings will be taken up until Monday December 6<sup>th</sup>.

The annual fundraising Christmas Jumper event will take place at O'Sheas Bar, Castletownbere on Saturday December 18<sup>th</sup> at 8pm. The annual St Stephen's Day Treasure Hunt challenge will take place on Sunday December 26<sup>th</sup>.

### New Cable Car and Visitor Centre for Dursey Island

An Bord Pleanála has given the go ahead to Cork County Council for a new cable car and visitor centre for Dursey Island.



Dursey Island cable car - Anne Marie Cronin Photography

The existing cable car system brings just over 20,400 visitors to Dursey annually, Cork County Council had proposed a cap of 100,000 for the new system, however, An Bord Pleanála has put a cap of 5,000 visitors per month during the busy tourist months. The new two cable car system will also include a visitor centre and interpretative centre on the mainland with an 84 seat café and a 100 space car park.

An Bord Pleanála gave the go-ahead in spite of a recommendation by a senior planning inspector to refuse planning permission on the basis that "the scale of the development is excessive and as proposed, would enable a significant increase in visitor numbers, risking unsustainable impacts to the highly sensitive ecological environment."

An Bord Pleanála said that the 5,000 per month visitor number cap and additional measures proposed to protect the biodiversity in the vicinity of the cable car and on the island would address the inspector's concerns.

The original cable car was erected in 1969 and is Ireland's only cable car, part of the conditions attached to the planning permission specify that the existing cable car is preserved at a location on the site.

### Castletownbere RNLI Fundraising Raffle

Castletownbere RNLI's fundraising branch are holding a raffle to win a framed limited edition of Roanearrig Lighthouse by artist Ian Strachan.

The closing date for donations is Monday December 20<sup>th</sup> at midday, the draw will take at 6pm that evening, live on the Castletownbere RNLI Facebook page. To purchase a ticket see: [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/castletownberernli](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/castletownberernli)

### Tidy Towns

In the 2021 SuperValu Tidy Towns competition Castletownbere was awarded a total of 320 points out of 470.

The town has been taking part in the competition for 40 years, and the adjudicator commented on how it has helped to create good community spirit and helped to promote better awareness of the environment.

### Beara Film Fest

Submissions are now open for the 2022 Beara Film Fest. The festival is open to all directors who are living in or from Cork. Films must have been filmed from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 and must have been filmed in the county of Cork.

They should be a maximum of 25 minutes in duration and in the English language, or subtitled if filmed in Irish or a European language. All films should be submitted in MP4 format via WeTransfer or Vimeo (download enabled) to [bearafilmfest@gmail.com](mailto:bearafilmfest@gmail.com) The closing date for all submissions is 5pm on February 25<sup>th</sup> 2022.

### Beara West Family Resource Centre

On Wednesday December 8<sup>th</sup>, Teddy Black, Seánacháí, will be at the centre for an evening of story-telling. Tea, coffee and sandwiches will be provided.

The team are particularly inviting men to this event as they would like to invite them to join the conversation about developing a men's group in Beara. The event will take place in the Beara West Family Resource Centre, Unit 4, The Courtyard, Castletownbere and pre-booking is encouraged by phoning Claire Kelleher at 083 1599 748 or emailing [info@bearawestfrc.ie](mailto:info@bearawestfrc.ie)

The Centre can also offer confidential, individual, and family support across a wide range of areas. They can assist with finding and navigating the right community services for the individual and can provide access to low-cost counselling through their links with a number of local counsellors and therapists. They also offer admin support with tasks like completing application forms such as housing support, medical card and much more.

Appointments are held in line with National Covid guidelines and must be pre-arranged by calling 027 70998.

Wishing everyone a very Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year

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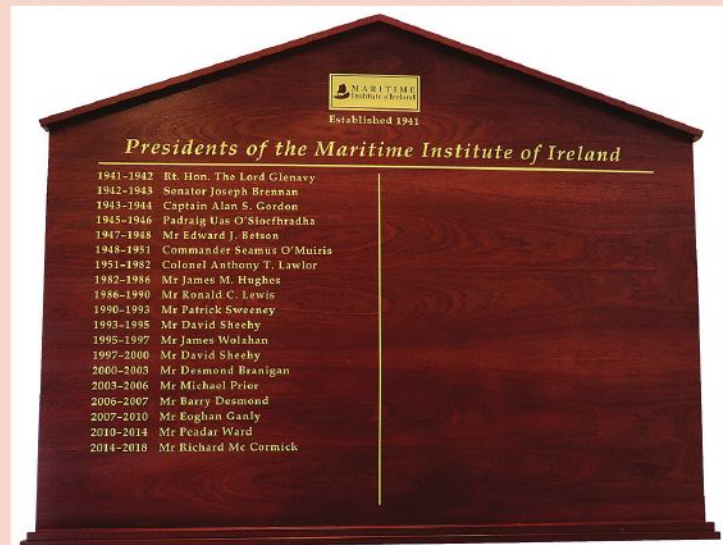
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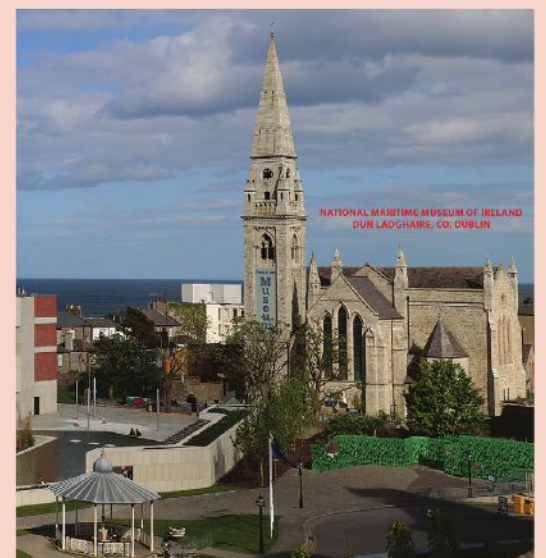
(Top): National Maritime Week in the Mansion House May 1943. (Below): British Sailors Reading Room in Kingstown.



Maritime Institute Presidents 1941 - 2018



Seal of the Maritime Institute of Ireland



National Maritime Museum



## The Maritime Heritage Column

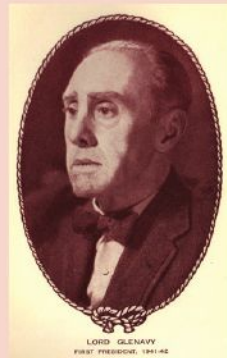
# Maritime Institute Of Ireland's Eightieth Anniversary

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



**The origins of long established volunteer organisations occasionally get lost in the mists of time. Endless struggles for funding, changes of trustees and premises and the loss of corporate memory risks blurring memories of the original founders and their lofty ambitions. The Maritime Institute has moved premises four times since it was incorporated as Foras Muiridhe na hEireann. Thankfully its First Annual Report of 1942 – 1943 sheds light on the origins of the very first Maritime Institute of what was by then the embryonic Republic of Ireland in the midst of the Emergency.**

Between 1922 and 1940 there was virtually no public or official interest in Irish maritime affairs. The First Annual report credits Irish Army Colonel Anthony T. Lawlor with gathering around him a small group of 17 prominent individuals “for the purpose of re-awakening the latent interest of our people in maritime affairs”. The Institute’s Constitution was approved on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1941 and it was incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1941. To honour their memory, the names of eighty-one “Founder Members” remain enshrined in the Institute’s current 2017 Constitution. On 19<sup>th</sup> November 1941 an elected ‘Council’ of 21 Members elected the following officers:



**President** - Lord Glenavy

**Deputy President** - Senator Joseph Brennan

**Vice Presidents** – Captain Alan S. Gordon and Mr Thomas O’Connor

**Honorary Treasurer** – Mr. R.W. Sinnott

**Honorary Secretary** - Mr. Henry M. Murphy

An Executive Committee was then elected consisting of the Deputy President as Chairman, the Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary, plus four other Council members namely:



Colonel Anthony T. Lawlor

Lieutenant Commander A.J. O’Brien – Twohig,

Mr. J.P. Reihill and Mr. J.J. Flanagan

The Council fixed the Members annual subscription at £1 and 1 shilling (one Guinea). Members serving in the Defence Forces not holding commissioned rank paid 10s/6d per annum. A £10 prize was awarded for the design of the Institute’s seal embodying a Viking ship under sail

“representing the first real sea-going ship adopted by the Irish people”.

In its first year the Council held 6 meetings and the Executive Committee 27 meetings. Their ambitious portfolio included Revenue, Extension Work (Regional Groups), General Welfare of Seamen, Navigation and Seamanship, Library and Reference, Archives and Research, Irish Language, Maritime Sports, Post-War Plans and Maritime Propaganda.

Eighteen thousand brochures were circulated “throughout Eire” seeking members and subscriptions to the ‘Foundation Funds’. Regional Groups were formed at Cork and Limerick and initial contacts made with other Harbourmasters. So great was the initial enthusiasm that when 400 members were registered, it was thought the 500 Members limit in the Articles of Association might have to be increased!

Political support was evident when Mr. Oscar Traynor T.D., Minister for Defence, deputising for the Taoiseach, formally opened the Institute’s first permanent office at 8 Merrion Square, Dublin on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1942, Minister Tray-

nor wished the Institute “God speed in its work” and urged it to commence “planning to meet post-war conditions”.

The scope of the Institute’s Seaman’s Welfare programme was tempered by limited funding and the need for co-operation from employers, employees and government. A tall order in wartime. Its Navigation and Seamanship Committee focused on training for seamen and officers for the Irish mercantile marine. Yacht clubs were invited to join as Members, though proposals to organise an Institute annual regatta, award a cruising yacht cup and form “a nursery class of small boats with the object of training young people in sailing” were deferred due to financial considerations.

The Library and Reference Committee appealed for donations of books and periodicals because “a good maritime library is essential”. The enthusiastic Archives and Research group hosted 12 maritime lectures and planned to convene a “Conference of Professors of History in the Universities to obtain their assistance in furthering its work”. It was reported that an *Irish Nautical Dictionary* compiled by Mr. P. O’Siochradha was well advanced.

The Institute’s Post War Plans for merchant shipping were reported to be at the early investigation stage. Fisheries and training were included and there was genuine interest in establishing a “Sea Training Home for Boys” in Ireland, based on a successful UK equivalent.

Along with other Maritime Propaganda initiatives, a

copy of the *Maritime Magazine* was sent to each member and Colonel Anthony Lawlor gave a radio broadcast on “The Aims and Objects of the Institute” on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1943. Amongst its public duties, the Institute was represented at a ceremony commissioning “New Ensigns in the Maritime Inscription”.

A permanent maritime exhibition was always a top priority. The Institute’s first National Maritime Week in the Mansion House in 1943 displaying 190 models and exhibits, garnered valuable publicity for the fledging Institute and so was repeated again in 1945 and 1947.

The Office of Public Works leased the former British Sailors Reading Room on St Michael’s Wharf Dún Laoghaire for a Maritime Museum in 1959. When it was regrettably demolished in 1965 to make way for a new ferry terminal, the deconsecrated Mariners Church was leased from the Representative Church Body of Ireland in 1974 and converted to a Maritime Museum by the Institute’s volunteers. Purchased outright in 2006 this historic 184-year-old building now proudly serves the public as the National Maritime Museum of Ireland.

There is little doubt that the Institute’s founding members would be pleased that their far-sighted ambitions are now professionally discharged by State funded Agencies such as BIM, the Marine Institute and the Irish Maritime Development Office, none of which existed in 1941. This permits the Institute to focus on promoting awareness of and raising the profile of Ireland’s maritime heritage by interpreting the Museum’s collection of original maritime artefacts plus education and research through its extensive maritime library.

Looking beyond the vicissitudes of Covid-19, the restoration of normal visitor revenues plus grant support will continue to complement the excellent work of its enthusiastic Community Employment staff, talented volunteers and trustees as it has for eighty years. Thus will the Institute confidently approach its 2041 centenary as a financially secure entity, still promoting knowledge of Ireland’s rich maritime heritage.

First Council of the Maritime Institute of Ireland 1941 – 42





## RNLI REPORT

**Niamh Stephenson,  
Ireland Media Manager for the RNLI**

### New Boathouse for Arranmore

**The lifeboat crew on Arranmore Island off Donegal are set to get new facilities with a new boathouse in the planning. It is a station steeped in history and the new facilities will be welcomed by the lifeboat crew who launch at all hours of the day and night to help those at sea.**

The RNLI has operated a lifeboat station from Arranmore Island since 1883 when the station's first lifeboat *Vandeleur* was powered by sail and oars. One of the previous boathouses was in Aphort and was the scene where the bodies of those recovered from the Arranmore Disaster in 1935 were laid out. A yawl carrying twenty passengers left Burtonport harbour for Arranmore. However, it ran up on a rock and nineteen souls drowned in the freezing water. The only survivor was the late Paddy Gallagher, who himself lost his father, four brothers and two sisters in the tragedy.

The current boathouse is based at Poolawaddy and has been used as a lifeboat station since 1994. It was partially funded with a donation from the relatives of young students who tragically lost their lives off Arranmore in 1989. Four Edinburgh University students were drowned when their dinghy sprang a leak and sank, only two of the group survived. They were

crossing from Arranmore to the tiny Isle of Iochtar when the tragedy occurred.

One of the station's most famous rescues happened in December 1940 when the crew of the lifeboat rescued 16 sailors from the *Stolwijk*, a Dutch merchant ship which got into difficulty in horrendous weather conditions. Arranmore RNLI crew members were awarded gold, silver, and bronze medals by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands for saving the lives of her fellow countrymen.

The proposed new facilities at Arranmore will provide storage for the boarding boats along with space for a new tractor to enhance and improve the safety of the launch of the lifeboat in an emergency call out. There are also plans for a purpose-built workshop and the provision of a new crew changing room to provide each member of the lifeboat crew with their own locker space for their personal crew kit. A new crew room on the first floor will provide the crew with a proper space to train and

run emergency call outs while providing a hub for search and rescue operations in this area. The space will also be available for water safety talks and will welcome other community groups. The provision of a new lifeboat facility on Arranmore is an investment by the RNLI in lifesaving for the next fifty years and beyond and has been designed to adapt to the changing search and rescue environment.

### Equipment Gives Insight into Lifeboating

**The RNLI recently answered the question, 'why are lifeboats orange?' Looking at the story behind some of the equipment the RNLI uses can give you an interesting insight into lifeboating. And so it is with the tiny pager every RNLI crewmember and launching authority carries with them.**

It goes to work with them, to family occasions and at night it stays near them, always on and always ready. It's the other member of the family. They omit a high-pitched sound to signal that the crew should assemble at the station and launch the lifeboat. I'm told it can induce an adrenaline rush like nothing else and the 'drop everything response' it elicits is the envy of Olympic sprinters. But crew haven't always had pagers. The expression 'out on a shout' which means out on a lifeboat callout, came about from the earliest days of needing to launch the lifeboat. Crew were alerted by someone knocking on their door and shouting the call to the lifeboat. Or a bell would be rung in the town. It was said that horses knew the difference between the bell for the lifeboat and the bell for fire service.

Then came an old favourite, the maroon, fired twice to call the crew to the lifeboat with a boom heard throughout the community. Telephones too had their place and now there is an app which works in conjunction with the pagers to send out the alert. I've been on the phone to crew when I've heard the familiar sound of the pager going off and we make a hurried goodbye and good luck, there's no time for enquiries then. Lifeboat pagers have sounded at weddings, in classes, during the weekly shop and just after you've shut your eyes after a long day. They can be a disturbance, but they are a little lifesaver too. It's another important piece of kit for the lifeboat crews, an evolving piece of technology but it's need has never changed.

### Dun Laoghaire RNLI Shop to House Community Defibrillator Donated by Family of Much-Loved Local Man

**Dun Laoghaire RNLI shop, located in the harbour beside the busy East pier is the location for a new community defibrillator, donated by the family of Larry Costello, who died following a cardiac arrest in 2016. The family have funded six defibrillators which are located around the local area. Dun Laoghaire RNLI is a fitting final location, as volunteer lifeboat crewmember Gary Hayes**

**has helped the family with the project, through his role with the Dalkey Community First Responders Group and as a RNLI crewmember.**

In funding the defibrillators, the family wanted the community to have access to them in busy public areas and in doing so, to take away the fear that people have in using them. The Dalkey Community First Responders will undertake the upkeep and maintenance of the defibrillators and this one will remain charged by the RNLI's electricity supply for the shop, which is located behind the lifeboat station.

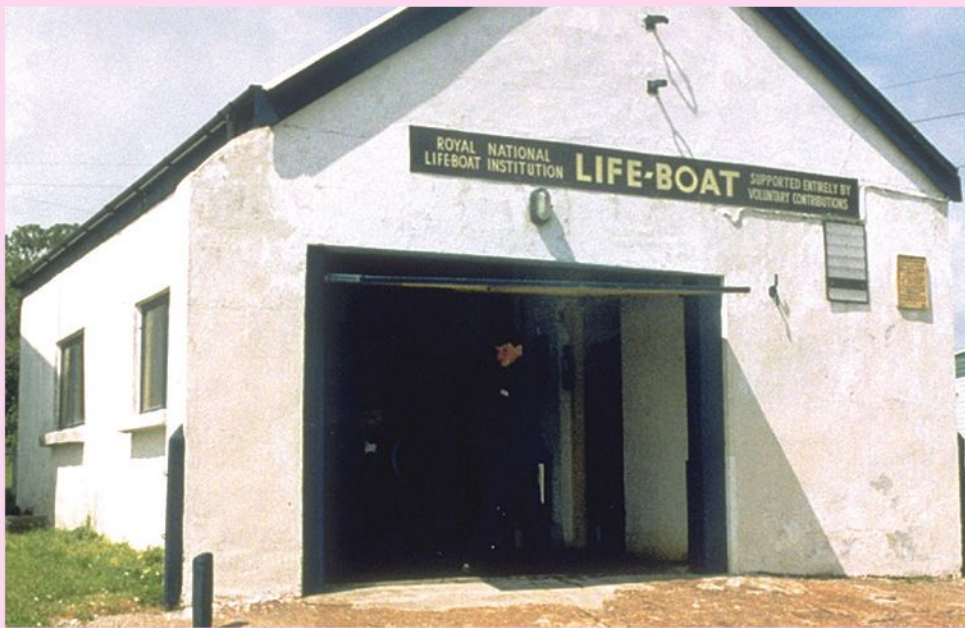
Larry was born and raised in Dun Laoghaire and raised his family with wife Audrey in Glasthule. A much-loved member of the community, Larry worked in Blackrock Park and coached a local football team in Presentation College. When he died of a cardiac arrest, his family wanted to do something in his memory that could help another family in a similar situation. With the support of their friends and the people Larry coached and helped during his life, the family raised €14,000 and bought six defibrillators. They are placed at McCauley's Chemist in Glasthule, the Sallynoggin Inn, the Igo Inn in Ballybrack, Eden Villas in Glasthule, Dun Laoghaire Marina and finally at the Dun Laoghaire RNLI shop beside the East Pier.

Larry's family recently visited the lifeboat station to officially unveil the final defibrillator along with some members of Dun Laoghaire RNLI, including lifeboat crewmember Gary Hayes, who the family credits with helping them put their plan into action.

Larry's wife Audrey visited with their four children, Graham, Jennifer, Emma and Ian, along with in-laws and grandchildren. In welcoming the installation of the final defibrillator, Audrey said, 'Our hope is to save lives and we are grateful to the local RNLI for letting us put the final defibrillator at their shop, which sees so many people walk by every day. We never thought we would raise enough to fund six of these and it's all thanks to our friends and neighbours in our local community and beyond. Larry was so well-loved, and I think people wanted to show that. We are so grateful for their generosity. Thank you too to Gary Hayes from Dun Laoghaire RNLI and Dalkey Community First Responders who helped us with this endeavour and suggested the station for the final defibrillator. It is a very fitting location.'

Dun Laoghaire RNLI volunteer lifeboat crewmember Gary Hayes added, 'We are delighted to have the RNLI be home to one of Larry's defibrillators. While the lifeboat crew are here to save lives at sea, we are happy to have a lifesaving piece of equipment on land too, at the wall of our retail shop and available for any member of the public to use should they need it. There is no training necessary, and the instructions are clear and easy to follow. Well done to the family and friends of Larry for this fantastic gift to the community.'

The family have asked that if anyone would like to donate to the upkeep and maintenance of the defibrillators, they contact the Dalkey Community First Responders.



(Above): The current boathouse on Arranmore Island is based at Poolawaddy and has been used as a lifeboat station since 1994.

(Below): The Costello family, Graham, Jennifer, Audrey (Larry's wife), Emma and Ian with Dun Laoghaire RNLI crew Gary Hayes, Andrew Skyes and Deputy Launching Authority Paul Nolan.



## Environmentally Friendly “Cold Ironing Project” in Killybegs, Will Eliminate 2,000 Tonnes of CO2 Emissions Each Year

Cold ironing, a shipping term that first came into use when all ships had coal-fired engines, describes the situation where a ship, tied up at port, no longer needed to continue to feed its fires and its iron engines cooled down, eventually going cold – hence, ‘cold iron’. The days of coal-fired engines may be behind us, but an environmentally friendly cold ironing project is being spearheaded in Killybegs Harbour. This project is aimed at reducing emissions by allowing diesel engines on trawlers, that would normally be running to heat and provide power, to be replaced by clean mains power while in port.

Welcoming the project, Minister McCauley who was on a visit to the harbour said, “The reality of the impacts of climate change, and particularly for our seas and oceans, is becoming ever more visible. With that comes the need to drive the development of climate actions that deliver a sustainable, competitive and innovative seafood sector. This prototype project delivering cleaner power supply to fishing vessels in port is one such action.”

The Minister went on to say, “I am delighted to have been able to co-fund this project with the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme for 2014-2020. Killybegs Harbour is Ireland’s premier fishing port and as such can be an exceptionally busy port. This project provides plug-in electric facilities so that large trawlers no longer have to run diesel generators while in port. The result is a reduction of 2,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year – equivalent to taking almost 500 cars off the road and improvements in the local environment through reduced noise and air pollution.”

The Department commissioned the “Cold Ironing Project” in July 2020 at a cost of €1.7 million. Working closely with the local pelagic fishing industry, the system was designed by White Young Green Consulting Engineers, Belfast and constructed by Tiernan Engineering from Balinrobe, Co. Mayo. Previously, trawlers in port relied on diesel generators to main-

tain their power supply. Significant quantities of diesel were needed to operate these generators, making for a noisy and polluted environment along the pier. The introduction of mains power will deliver significant savings of diesel and reduce the harbours annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2,000 tonnes per year, reduce noise pollution, improve air quality and benefit vessel owners through the provision of reliable shore power, while reducing vessel fire risk and maintenance requirements.

This project is aligned the Government’s Climate Action Plan 2019 and demonstrates an ongoing commitment to delivering measurable emission reductions and sustainable developments across the six Fishery Harbour Centres. The current Climate Action Plan 2021 builds on this commitment and sets out a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050. This includes actions through which marine-environment mitigation and adaptation actions can be progressed and implemented.

Concluding, the Minister said, “Climate action is actively being embedded in policies, programmes and work streams across my Department and within the agencies under my remit, and progress will continue to be made to implement meaningful climate actions to ensure that our coastal communities and maritime sectors can continue to play their role in contributing to our climate change goals.”



John Campbell, Regional Engineer, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM); Noel Clancy, Chief Engineer, (DAFM); Fergal Hegarty, Harbourmaster, Killybegs and Minister McCauley.

## BIM’s Remote Classroom Focuses on Importance of Local Seafood Production and Healthy Eating in Support of Listowel Food Fair

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland’s Seafood Development Agency recently contributed its Aquaculture Remote Classroom (ARC) to the students of Listowel and its environs as part of the Listowel Food Fair.



(Above): Students from Principal Presentation Secondary School, Listowel, (l-r) Aine Fitzmaurice, Stephanie Sheahan, Isobel Stack, Eimear Buckley, Grace Whelan, Jessica O’Sullivan and Niamh Buckley. (Inset photo): Niamh O’Keefe, Erin Kennelly and Katie Walsh.

The huge, interactive remote classroom normally visits our schools, but has moved to online webinars, that have proven equally as popular with students, under Covid-19 safety guidelines.

BIM hosted a series of webinars over three days as part of the Food Festival, with 60 primary and secondary schools, registered to attend, reaching over 1,000 students in the area. The expert presenters talked about aquaculture production in the Kerry area and the important socio-economic

benefits to the local community from the sustainable production of seafood. For example, Tralee hosts one of the largest native



oyster fisheries in Europe and Cromane produces €5-6 million worth of premium quality mussels and oysters every year!

The webinars also highlighted the nutritional benefits of eating seafood as part of a healthy diet,

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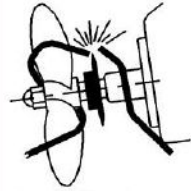
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# International Fishing and Maritime News

## Signs of British – French Agreement

While official government statements on both sides continued to highlight British-French disagreements over fishing licences for French boats in Channel Island waters during November, behind-the-scenes political indications are that UK Premier Boris Johnson and French President Macron have been trying to settle their differences to resolve the fishing row.

Emmanuel Jean-Michel Frédéric Macron has been President of France since May 2017 and faces an election contest with strong rivals in April. A resolution would not be politically popular for him at present, unless it improved the French position. However, political 'insiders' in London indicate that since the G7 meeting in Cornwall, "the relationship between the UK and France is about more than fish and boats off the Channel Islands."

France has been demanding that the European Union take the frontal role in resolving the issue but, for consumption by its home audience, the French Government has been making different statements.

When French Sea Minister Annick Girardin said on radio that: "We will fight boat-by-boat, licence-by-licence against the British to get our fishermen their rights. We need to be with them," the public reaction was that this was not showing strong enough support for fishermen.

It seemed, from an Irish perspective, to be as strong as any statement by any Irish Government Minister, but the public criticism in France was so strong that President Macron had to issue a public pledge that France would "continue to fight" for its fishermen and give an assurance that it "would not abandon" them.

"The stakes are high for Macron and fishing is one of the major issues. It is a national concern in France," according to government politicians there.

Such are the different political attitudes to their fishermen between the Irish and French governments.

## World First in Portugal

The world's first open-sea clam farm is operated off the Algarve coast in Portugal by Oceano Fresco of Nazare. The company describes itself as "a sustainable seafood company using innovative aquaculture techniques."



It has raised €6m. investment from the Portuguese conglomerate holding company, Semapa, with interests in cement, pulp, paper and environmental services sectors and from the sustainable aquaculture fund, Aqua-Spark in Holland. This

is one of the biggest European investments in the shellfish sector. With it the company says it will develop and build new storage and packaging facilities. Initially, expansion will focus on Spain and Portugal, but also look to creating a global business.

## UK First for Crayfish

The first redclaw crayfish farm is to begin operating in Britain. It will be located at Dorset by a company called Noola Redclaw, using an indoor recirculating aquaculture system (RAS).



Elena Piana, company founder, formerly managed Goatsbridge Trout Farm at Thomastown in, Co. Kilkenny. She later joined the Seafresh Group involved in aquaculture, growing king prawns in Central America and Asia. These are distributed through its processing, manufacturing and sales operations in North America, Europe and Asia. She was the company's environmental and social sustainability technologist.

"We're developing an environmentally friendly technology to produce redclaw year-round for high end restaurants with a stable and high quality product," she said about the new company. "Our technology was developed with high animal welfare standards in mind to ensure that our crayfish are handled in the best way from hatch to harvest."

## Seals Costing Scottish Farmers Twelve Million

Salmon Scotland, the trade body for Scotland's farmed salmon sector, has published a report which claims that damage by seals is causing st- g£12m losses annually. Chief Executive of Salmon Scotland, Tavish Scott, said: "Seal predation is getting worse. Government Ministers must sit down with sector leaders to discuss possible solutions. There is no easy fix, but we need a dialogue with Ministers and the leaders of other sectors affected to find ways of tackling what has become an increasingly serious issue."

Salmon Scotland's issued figures claim that, in 2020, 516,443 fish were killed directly in seal attacks and that "many hundreds of thousands more were so stressed they died later."

The organisation has also claimed that, in the eight months to the end of August this year, a further 347,917 salmon were killed directly by seals, taking the total since January 2020 to 864,360.

"Scotland has 210 active salmon farms, of which about 70% will be stocked at any one time. This means that on average, 2,792 salmon were lost per farm in 2020 and a further 1,955 fish (with an expected harvest revenue of £47,399) in the first eight months of 2021."

Until the start of this year, salmon farmers in Scotland could shoot seals. About 50, are believed to have been shot every year. Scottish Government legislation removed permission to shoot seal.

Acoustic deterrent devices have been used to keep seals away from farm sites, but are claimed to potentially cause harm to protected marine mammals such as dolphins and porpoises. Some farms have removed or switched them off pending a decision on licensing from Marine Scotland.

Salmon Scotland said that farmers have a statutory duty to protect their stocks but "many feel they are powerless to do anything about seals, which are now a protected species."

## Sacked From Football but Investing in Fish Farming Eggs

Sacked by Manchester United after poor team performances in the UK Premier League, Manager Ole Gunnar Solskjær owns a 20% stake in the investment company Akvakulturpartner AS, which has invested £2m in Hauge Aqua Solutions, the company developing what is known as the Egget Project.



This involves the construction of enclosed fish farm projects, in the shape of a 21-metre tall egg-shaped fibre-glass unit. Hauge Aqua has taken over a former lifeboat factory in Norway for the project. It maintains that current farm production platforms, based on the open pen system, are too weak to sustain significant growth and to achieve environmental performance.

## 'Ghosting' For Lost Fishing Gear

Several marine conservation groups have joined efforts to deal with 'ghost fishing gear.' Ghost nets are a major form of marine plastic pollution, killing marine animals, according to Ghost Diving UK organisation. This is a registered charity founded in 2012 run by volunteer scuba divers to remove lost fishing gear and other marine debris. It was previously known as Ghost Fishing Foundation.

"In order to reduce the response time to reported sightings of ghost gear and to widen the geographical reach, Fathoms Free, Ghost Diving UK, NARC and Sea Shepherd Ghostnet Campaign have decided to form a coalition to combine their resources and improve efficiency," it has been announced.

The new coalition will be named the UK Ghost Gear Coalition.

## New Chairman for NFFO

Longstanding member of the NFFO's Executive Committee and vice-chairman of its South-East Committee, Paul Gilson, has been elected as the next chairman of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisation. He has also been chairman of Leigh and Southend Fisherman's Association for many years. The NFFO chairman is appointed for two years before usually being elevated to the president's role.

Paul comes from a family that has fished the Thames estuary and southern North Sea for over 200 years. Over his time in the fishing industry he has owned and fished seven trawlers and currently has one more vessel under construction. With 30 years as a lifeboatman, and senior helmsman for 20 years, he has received numerous awards, including one from the royal humane society.

NFFO Chief Executive, Barrie Deas, welcoming the appointment said, "One of the strengths of the NFFO is the pool of diverse talent around our table that we can draw on to support our work. Paul recognises this and has personally made an enormous contribution as Vice-Chairman of the NFFO's South-East Committee. I have no doubt that he will make a similar contribution as chair of our Executive Committee. Given the pressures facing our industry, this is a very demanding time to lead the national federation but as well as his direct fishing experience, Paul brings with him a wealth of knowledge based on his time as local councillor and chairman of his local town council. His time spent as vice-chairman of the Kent and Essex Sea Fishery Committee will also provide valuable experience."

In accepting his new position Paul said, "I would especially like to thank Tony Delahunty and Andrew Pascoe who have been acting as co-chairs following the regrettable departure of former chairman Andrew Locker, who was obliged to seek employment outside the industry. It is comforting to know that I can turn to them for guidance at any time. Although I have my roots in the inshore sector, like others in the NFFO, I appreciate the importance of a diverse and profitable fleet in the UK, embracing all sizes of vessel and sustainable methods of fishing."

Paul was amongst the first to flag up the ecological changes observed in the Thames Estuary that have led to a dramatic drop in the catches of some customary commercial species like sole and the rise of other non-commercial species – giving rise to an industry crisis in the area.

# Leucistic Blonde Ray (*Raja brachyura*) Captured in the Central Irish Sea

Declan Quigley reports

On 15 October 2021, the *MFV Eblana* (D397) [Skipper: Brendan Lynch, Howth] captured a female leucistic Blonde Ray (*Raja brachyura*) measuring 66 cm total length (TL), 50 cm disc width (DW), and weighing 2.5 kg, while demersal trawling at a depth of 140 m in the Central Irish Sea (53.1014°N, 5.2333°W) [Figs. 1-2]. The specimen was transferred alive to *Galway Atlantiquarium* where it is now on display.



Figure 3. Normally coloured Blonde Ray (13.07.2016).



Figure 4. Albino Blonde Ray (11.10.2016).

Figure 5. Abnormal yellow eye colour in albino Blonde Ray.



Figure 6. Albino-xanthochromic Blonde Ray (31.08.2019).

Figure 7. Abnormal yellow eye colour of albino-xanthochromic Blonde Ray (31.08.2019).

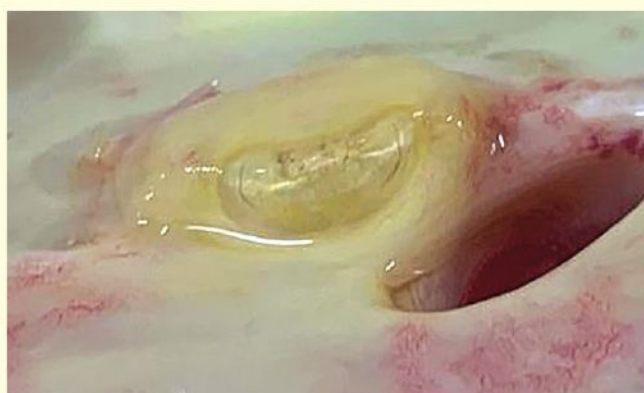


Figure 1. Leucistic Blonde Ray captured by the *MFV Eblana* in the Central Irish Sea (15.10.2021)

Blonde Rays are normally light brown in colour with a few creamy-white blotches and dense dark spots which extend up to the very edge of the disc and on to the tail (Fig. 3).

Apart from its unusual colouration, the current leucistic specimen was morphologically and meristically identical to normally coloured Blonde Rays. Externally, there were no overt signs of either physical damage or disease. Indeed, its condition factor ( $K=0.8$ ) was well within the range of  $K$  values (0.7-0.8) recorded for normally coloured conspecifics of similar dimensions in NW European waters, which suggests that its aberrant colouration had not compromised either its growth or survival.

Since 2016, the *Eblana* has recorded seven unusually coloured Blonde Rays in the Central Irish Sea, including five leucistic, one albino (Fig. 4-5), and one albino-xanthochromic specimens (Figs. 6-7).

Leucism is a genetically inherited disorder controlled by a single recessive allele which generally results in either complete or partial lack of pigmentation of the skin, but normal dark pigmentation of the eyes. Leucism has only been reported in 13 (c.2%) of the 633 species of Bathoidea (skates and rays)

currently recognised worldwide, including three from Irish waters: Blonde Ray, Thornback Ray (*R. clavata*), and Cuckoo Ray (*Leucoraja naevus*).

Albinism is also a genetically inherited disorder but is controlled by several different genes in which the pigment melanin is either absent or non-functional, resulting in a lack of normal pigmentation in both the skin and eyes. Albinism has only been reported in 14 (c.2.2%) species

of Bathoidea worldwide, including two from Irish waters: Blonde Ray and Homelyn Ray (*R. montagui*). Indeed, these are the only two species of ray in which albino-xanthochromism has also been definitively described to date.

Blonde Rays are commercially important in NW European waters, particularly in southern Irish and UK waters, primarily at depths <100 m. The species attains a maximum TL and weight of at least 120 cm and 18 kg, and reaches sexual maturity at a minimum TL of 55 cm and 60 cm for males and females respectively.



Figure 2 Normal eye colour of leucistic Blonde Ray from the Central Irish Sea (15.10.2021).

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



Strathlyre N85 arriving back at Ardglass port after a wee spruce up at the Killkeel slip - Photo by Christopher Feenan

## The National Seafood Survey is Moving Online

**Deadline extended to Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

The National Seafood Survey is conducted annually by Bord Iascaigh Mhara, BIM, Ireland's Seafood Development Agency. All active fishing vessels are invited to submit economic, employment and operational details for their previous year's activities.

This year, BIM has moved this paper-based survey to an online system. The aim is to improve the ease at which fishers can provide National fisheries data to demonstrate the positive economic impact of the sector in our regional, coastal communities.

Providing the economic information requested is of particular importance to every fisher in Ireland, due to the fact that the EU sees economic data as a critical and necessary component in the development of long-term management plans, policy direction and allocation of funding. The National

Seafood Survey is supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

The Survey is now live. To begin, you will need to register your details by logging on to: <https://bim.ie/fisheries/advisory-services/national-seafood-survey/>

A series of 'how to' videos will soon be available on [www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie) and participants can email [dcf@bim.ie](mailto:dcf@bim.ie) or call 087 394 0763 for assistance, if required.

**The deadline for receipt of surveys is 12 noon on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2022.**



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