



Clogherhead children who travelled to the recent Dublin protest in support of their family and the wider fishing community



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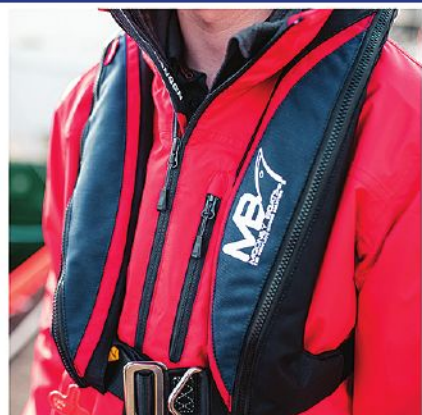
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Equality – It's Not Too Much to Ask For - Is It?

Government Destruction of Irish Fishing Sector Indefensible
Government Must Stand Up for Fishermen and End Unfair Treatment

EU Colonial Exploitation of Irish Fishing Waters Is No Longer Acceptable - More Reaction Inside

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the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

Scores Out of Ten for the Department??

Tuesday 22 June: I am writing this piece as I prepare to join with you for the Gathering in Dublin. Sadly, I was unable to travel to the Cork event but was delighted at the initiative which brought it about and proud of how you conducted yourselves.

I always believe that dignity and peaceful protest will always win through as it will always increase the potential to win the support of Sean or indeed Sheila Citizen.

I have long claimed that the Irish Public does not understand what you do and believe that the events in Cork and in Dublin this week will change that.

I believe that more now as I watch TDs who up to now have been silent joining in the clamor of support on the floor of the Dail.

As I scroll down the list of TDs I believe that there are 39 TDs who could be realistically classified as serving in Constituencies with a strong Coastal community - That is more than either Fianna Fail or Sinn Fein Lads !!!!!

We need our Coastal TDs to stay in the game and on the Ball and to keep the Seafood and Fishing Sectors on the agenda week after week.

I know the use of Seafood rather than Fishing does irritate some of you but as they say "A Rose by any other name etc....." and we all know that without the FISHING Sector there is no Seafood Sector at all.

It all starts with the Fish so why for God's sake do they take the lion's share of the Hassle.....?????

We have also an Issue with the Irish Banks Lads based on complete ignorance and lack of Understanding which has caused them to basically pull the shutters on the Fishing Sector.

Whatever issues and difficulties we may have on the Quota side, compounded by the over regulation by our own Department we now also have the issue of the Banking System running Scared.

Without the support of the Financial services sector the problem becomes worse so we need them to revisit their "Backing Brave" commitment.

There are none braver than our Fishermen.

oOo

Thursday 24 June: Yesterday was a good day lads and I was proud to stand with you.

I was particularly pleased with the line up of TDs all anxious to join in the campaign for whatever reason.

The important thing is that they keep the pressure up and speak at every opportunity in the Dail

The question of who is really in charge must be asked again as we look at the Article in the Examiner which tells us that "Department of agriculture refuses to release documents on contested fisheries inquiry"

So - we are going to hang you lads but we are not going to tell you why !!!!

Something like the motives and theories driving the Penalty Points ????

I'm just checking that we're not in Belarus lads - even though we're working to Belarussian rules.

In situations like these - particularly when we have had initial success the concept of jumping on the Bandwagon kicks in.

I am not being in any way disrespectful here lads- that is human nature but the matter of who scores the goal is not as important as the fact that the Goal is scored.

Lets make sure that whoever is in the best position to score has the Ball.

There is no "I" in TEAM

All of the POs, the Fishing Community and now the TDs can bring their own particular talents to the Game as you showed in Dublin yesterday but you must keep the front line attack team tight and focused in the knowledge that they have the support of

the General industry .

How many of your speakers yesterday preached "UNITY"???

I heard mutterings that yesterday was a waste of time.....whatever the success or otherwise lads- it certainly is not a waste of time and it will only bear fruit if you are all behind it.

Mutterings are useless and will generally come from Hurlers on the Ditch who never score as we all know.

UNITY will be your strongest weapon and while we will be disappointed at the limited coverage the Day appears to be receiving from the media you must believe that your cause is just- as it is - and use every opportunity to promote and publicize every bit of local success and Good news there is.

There was a lot of criticism being aimed at the Department yesterday and I thought you might be interested to see how the Department described itself on 20 November 2020:

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

"Over the next decade, consumption is projected to grow by 42 million tonnes per annum according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as the World population is set to reach 8 Billion by 2025. It is clear that a huge expansion in food production, including seafood, will be required worldwide to meet this need. The value of Irish Seafood exports in 2019 was estimated to be in the region of €577 million, maintaining the value of 2018.

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

Can we have a marks out of 10 for the score card here lads ??????



Jennifer Ann off Wicklow harbour - Photo by Richard Guildea
Verlaine pictured enroute to recent protest in Dublin - Photo by Donal Healy



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Equality – It’s Not Too Much to Ask For?



(Main photo) Cad a deir an teaghlach Minihane / What the Minihane family say Likewise this group of ladies from Kilmore Quay - people travelled from far and wide to show their support to their family, friends and colleagues in the fishing industry.

Fishermen, Family, Friends, Business and the Wider Coastal Community Protest in Dublin for Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Irish Fishermen

In the dark Dublin mist at 3.30am on Wednesday 23rd June, the Thomas Clarke bridge lifted its arms in welcome as the Irish fishing fleet cut through the dark waters of the Liffey. No horns blasting, just a respectful flotilla of vessels from all corners of the country – not looking for money or favours, but equality and fairness.

There is an obvious and distinct lack of a “level playing field” under the EU Common Fisheries Policy and it is destroying our Irish Fishing Industry and Rural Communities.

From 10.00am at John Rogerson’s Quay the fishermen welcomed the general public and media to come and view the fishing vessels and gave the opportunity to meet the men and women who work these vessels, Hear their stories and talk with their representatives and their family and friends.

At Noon, a ‘Protest and Unity Rally’ supported by all sectors of the Irish Fishing Industry and coastal & rural communities was held in Guild Street Park at the Spencer Dock beside The National Convention Centre where the Dail was sitting.

The Rally was addressed by Fishermen and PO representatives highlighting the issues facing the Irish Fishing community. (More photos & reaction in this issue)

After the rally, children and grandchildren of fishermen hand delivered a letter outlining the plight of the industry. Originally it was to be received by An Taoiseach Michael Martin TD but it was accepted on his behalf by a representative of his office instead.

The letter reiterates the demands made at the Cork Protest last month and serves notice on the Taoiseach and Government that further actions are planned if the only solution continues to be the decimation of the Irish Fishing industry at the expense of our rural communities.

Boxing Clever with a Novel Nephrops Trawl

Dr Ronán Cosgrove, Fisheries Conservation Manager, BIM

The fishing industry is inherently dynamic and open to change. Factors such as fish stock abundance, technical measures and market requirements are in a constant state of flux. Industry has shown time and time again that it is proficient in adapting to change once the process is managed in a fair and equitable manner and underlying supports are provided.



MFV Emerald Shore on trials in the Irish Sea

Climate change and the need for improved carbon efficiency are key drivers of change. Previous global assessments found fisheries are generally on the lower end of the carbon emissions scale for animal-based protein production, but fossil fuel dependence needs to be addressed.

Casting clouds over these findings, 'Bottom trawling releases as much carbon as the aviation industry' was the headline grabber from a recent high-profile global study on fisheries impacts. The new study provides 'preliminary best estimates' of CO₂ released from trawling over seabed sediments. Push back did not take long, however, from those

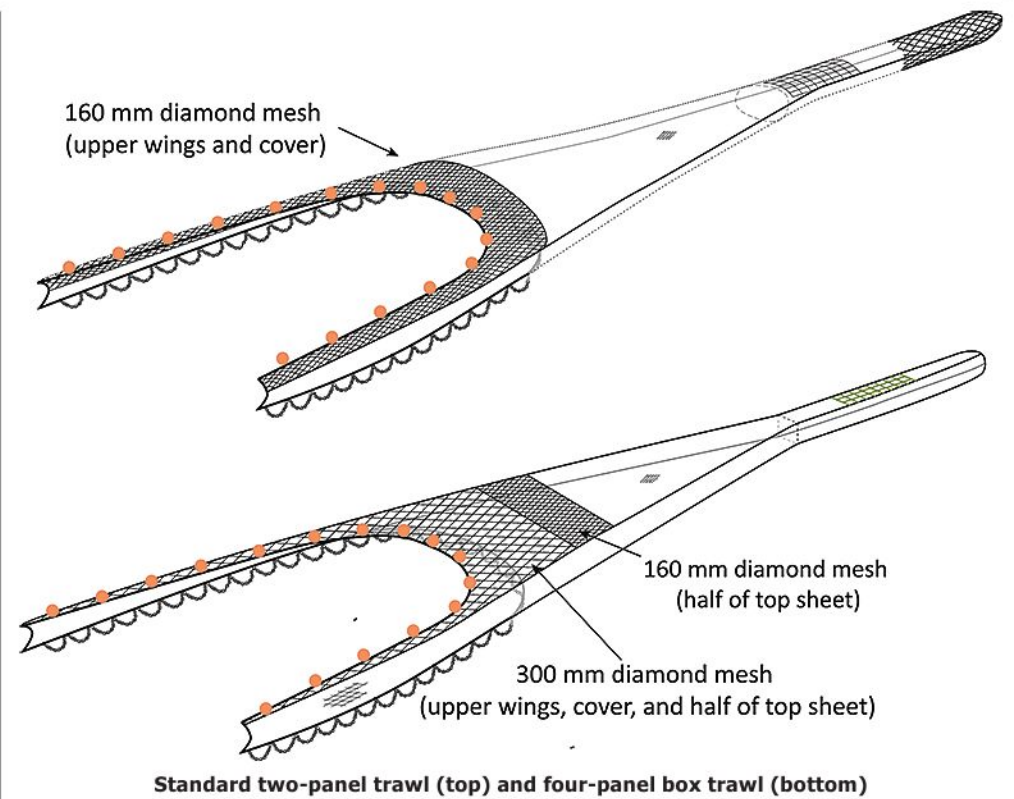
with a solid understanding of global fishing operations and datasets.

A consistent voice of reason in this field, Professor Ray Hilborn from the University of Washington says the study is flawed, contains inconsistencies, bizarre assumptions, improper conclusions and is a classic example of where the peer-review process totally failed. The UK National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) warned this was part of a disturbing trend of using over-simplistic scientific modelling with faulty assumptions as advocacy.

Some environmental NGOs and commentators used the analogy with the



Seamus Connolly, Matthew Mc Hugh and Eamon Howard with the newly designed Nephrops box trawl on the pier in Howth



aviation industry to call for an end to bottom trawling. Curiously enough, no such suggestions have been made for aviation. Instead, NGOs are seeking tighter controls around carbon offsets, and caps and reductions on airline emissions – an altogether more pragmatic and fair approach.

Around 3 billion people are reliant on seafood as their primary source of protein. Bottom trawls account for almost a quarter of marine landings and hundreds of millions are likely dependent on this food source. Hence, a more nuanced approach around carbon emissions would seem appropriate and in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal on Zero Hunger as well as Climate Change.



Potential gear modifications to improve carbon efficiency in trawls include off-bottom methods such as pelagic or semi-pelagic rigs. These have potential to reduce drag and fuel use in fisheries targeting demersal species such as whiting, haddock and hake which swim above the seabed. More incremental approaches are required for benthic species like Nephrops where ground contact needs to be maintained.

BIM recently developed and tested a new four-panel Nephrops trawl in collaboration with PEPE Trawls and the Connollys, from Supreme Fishing Ltd. The aim of this 'box trawl' is to provide more robust net geometry which facilitates greater use of enlarged mesh in the top sheet and wings. This can potentially reduce unwanted fish catches but also lower drag and fuel use by using less netting and through improved hydrodynamics from increased water flow.

Led by BIM's Dr Matthew McHugh, preliminary trials on board the MFV Emerald Shore in the Irish Sea have shown that

catch performance for Nephrops matches the standard two-panel trawl. Enlarged 300 mm mesh in the top sheet and wings had little effect on catches of small fish – an unsurprising result as other BIM trials have shown they are likely passive once they pass over the V sweeps in a quad-rig configuration. Effects on larger fish are unknown given low catches in both gears.

Further trials of the novel Nephrops box trawl are planned in the Celtic Sea in autumn. We plan to further assess the effect of the large-mesh panels on unwanted catches and quantify potential reductions in drag and fuel use. BIM would like to thank Pepe Trawls, Niall and Seamus Connolly, and crew of the MFV Emerald Shore for a successful collaboration.

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



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Marine Institute is inviting personnel to submit tenders for

Catch Sampling Services

To sample and record catch data on board commercial fishing vessels

If you would like details of the tender specifications and conditions for the above tender please contact:

<http://www.etenders.gov.ie>
Tenders will be launched early July

The deadline for the tender submissions is the 6th August 2021

Interim Report of The Seafood Sector Task Force

Worrying Focus on Reducing the Size of the Irish Fleet

The Interim Report of the Seafood Task Force has 47 pages and a comment in its introduction which will cause serious worry amongst many boat owners about their future: “It is apparent that any transfer of quota share under the TCA (the EU-UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement) will lead to an imbalance between fleet capacity and resource availability and, without conceding the sector’s ambition for future prosperity, a consequent need to consider the short and/or medium-term development and restructuring of the fleet.”

This appears to presage a situation warned about by leaders of the industry – that the Irish fishing industry is again going to suffer a reduction in the size of the fleet, to satisfy the EU and the bias of the Common Fisheries Policy which favours the bigger European nations and their desire to catch more and more of the fish in Irish waters.

Three key priorities have been identified by the Task Force, all emerging from the impact of the TCA and which will be fundamental to deciding on future outcomes for the industry.

These are:

1. The issue of ‘burden sharing’ arising from the disproportionate transfer of quota share by Ireland compared with that from other EU member states to the UK, and the mechanisms that hold potential to address the loss of quota arising.

2. The funding streams available to

finance initiatives, the rules governing how funds are to be allocated, and the sectoral priority of seafood to access available funding; and

3. The opportunity presented by the forthcoming review of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) due to be finalised by the end of 2022, to renegotiate Ireland’s quota allocation post-TCA.

The interpretation of this summary is that Ireland’s fishing industry will be so badly damaged if it does not reverse the effects of the Common Fisheries Policy that it will not survive in its present form and will be reduced to a small inshore fleet while the bigger European nations continue to hold sway in Irish waters.

The Interim Seafood Taskforce Report has been published and can be read at: www.bim.ie

The Minister for the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, confirmed that he had received



the Interim Report and said he had “asked the Task Force to consider how all available funding streams could be used to address, to the extent possible, initiatives to mitigate the impact of quotas transferred to the UK under the Trade and Co-operation Agreement. While the Brexit Adjustment Reserve and the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund will be very important elements in the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force, they should not be considered the only sources of funding and, in the first instance, it is a matter for the Task Force to consider appropriate funding sources for recommendations they may make.”

The Task Force, chaired by Aiden Cotter, was charged with recommending initiatives that could be taken to provide supports for development and restructuring, so as to ensure a profitable and sustainable fishing fleet and to identify opportunities for jobs and economic activity in coastal communities dependent on fishing.

The Minister requested that an interim report to focus on arrangements for a temporary voluntary fleet cessation scheme to counter the impact of the reduction in quotas would be provided, followed later by the full report of the Seafood Sector Task Force. The Task Force was also asked to review the options and recommend actions that may be pursued which would assist in reducing the burden on Ireland from the transfers of fishing quota shares to the UK.

The Interim Task Force Report, supported by all Members of the Taskforce, has addressed the issue of burden sharing between Member States and recommends a range of initiatives to address the quota reductions in Trade and Co-operation Agreement. These include actions targeted at pelagic quotas and actions targeted at demersal quotas. After further consideration, these will be set down in detail in the main

Report. The Interim Taskforce Report also recommends that a voluntary temporary cessation scheme of one month’s duration be offered, to approximately 220 whitefish vessels impacted by the quota reductions, in the period from September to December.

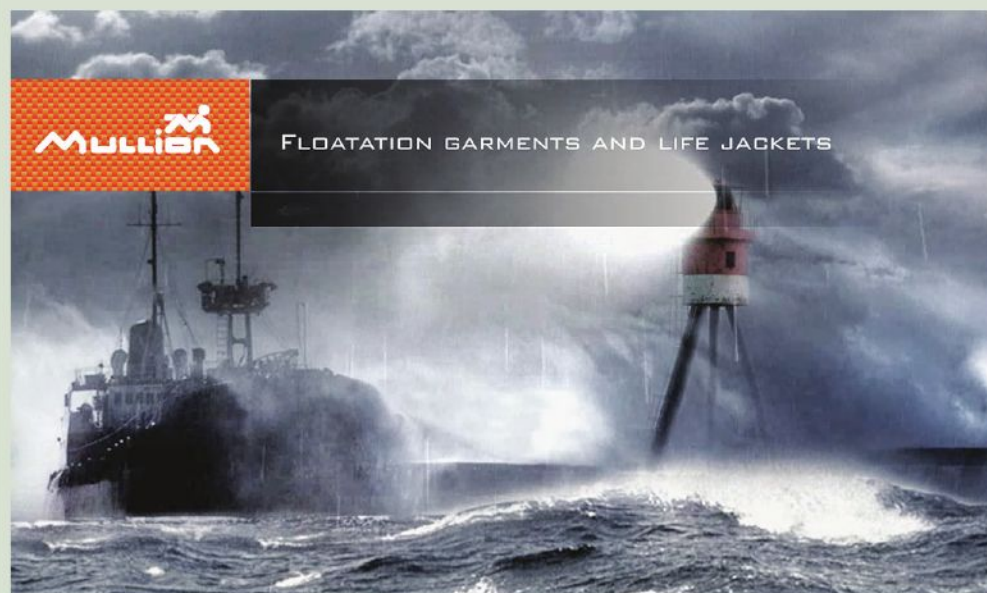
It is expected to be another four months before the final report is prepared by the Task Force.

The terms of reference ask the Task Force to outline the arrangements for a voluntary decommissioning scheme or other initiatives to address the implications of the Trade and Co-operation Agreement and outline other developmental strategies to strengthen and enhance coastal communities especially dependent on the seafood industry. The Task Force will also review the options and recommend actions that may be pursued which would assist in reducing the burden on Ireland from the transfers of fishing quota shares to the UK.

The Seafood Sector Task Force has met on seven occasions and received 57 submissions from its members and through the public consultation process.

The establishment of the Seafood Sector Taskforce is an Action in the Department’s Action Plan 2021 under the Strategic Goal to ‘Deliver a sustainable, competitive and innovative seafood sector, driven by a skilled workforce, delivering value added products in line with consumer demand’.

However, the most worrying aspect is what appears to be an increasing focus on forcing Irish vessels out of the fleet to satisfy the EU and the bigger European fishing nations whose dependence on Irish waters keeps them operational while denying Irish fishermen a fair share in the own waters.



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At the recent protest in Dublin on the 23rd of June, Chairman of the Irish Fishing & Seafood Alliance (IFSA), Cormac Burke addressed the attendees at Guild Square adjacent to the temporary home of Dail Eireann alongside the North Quays. His speech is reprinted here with his kind permission.

Unity in the Irish Fishing Industry

Before I start I'd like to comment that less than six months ago I was told that we would never see unity in the Irish fishing industry — well I hope those people are watching here this morning – boats from every sector and from every port in the country and people from every coastal community gathered here for this protest.

Although my communication skills are better suited to a keyboard and I may not be as eloquent a speaker as my learned colleagues here today, I feel it is my duty as Chairman of the Irish Fishing & Seafood Alliance to make a few points at this very important demonstration in our nation's capital.

Shakespeare wrote: "now is the winter of our discontent" but if this government thinks that we have gathered here for some kind of funeral for Ireland's fishing and seafood industries, then they are in for a rude awakening.

I'd rather think of this as a celebration of the rebirth of a new and wholly united industry – all fighting side by side against a mounting crisis that sees our fishermen and coastal communities virtually under attack from the combined forces of the EU Commission, our own Government, our own Department of Marine and the out-of-control Sea Fisheries Protection Authority.

Other speakers here today will cover important topics such as the outcome of BREXIT, where our Government sat back and allowed other EU nations to help themselves to quotas in Irish waters while our fishermen were left with just 15% of IRISH fish in IRISH waters – and the completely unjust penalty point system that Fianna Fail led the fight against when they were in Opposition but then signed off on it as soon as they got into power – and of course the unworkable proposal by the SFPA to enforce weighing at point of landing – a ridiculous notion that not only serves to again hamper fishermen but will cause a reduction in the value of Irish seafood worth millions of euros.

However, today I would like to focus on the damage to the industry and the coastal communities that the government's bean counters have thus far avoided talking about.

Its six months since our fisheries minister announced that the outcome of Brexit would cost this industry around 48 million euros in lost quotas – a figure which

we have by now calculated to be more in the region of 250 million euros when everything is taken into consideration – and indeed, working out the value of the quota that is lost today but over the coming decade, equates to more than 800 million euros.

In an industry that is worth two billion per annum – then losing 800 million is a lot more serious than our Taoiseach and marine minister is telling the public.

And that evaluation of this industry is purely in terms of quotas and seafood values – but when you add in all the investment in all of the vessels in Ireland's fishing fleet, all of the seafood processing companies and all of the engineering and net making companies that service this industry, then that evaluation can be more than doubled.

There have been many sins committed in the past few years by a government that refuses to defend its fishing tradition to the same level that other EU nations do – but the biggest crime of all is the apparent strategic neglect and decimation of Ireland's seafaring communities.

The populations of Ireland's coastal regions – for so long the lifeblood of this island nation – are experiencing first-hand the attitude

of shocking apathy by this government towards the fact that the socio-economic impact as a knock-on effect of a fishing industry in crisis will mean the loss of thousands of jobs – local businesses will close down, schools left with dwindling numbers of children and ultimately the death of many villages and towns.

Our pelagic industry is taking repeated hits in loss of BREXIT and coastal states' mackerel quotas – our demersal fleet is left with only 15 acres to work with while the other 85 acres it owns is being harvested by foreign companies, our seasonal inshore mackerel line fishery has been closed down due to the EU making no provision for a small separate quota for this fishery – a fishery which is the perfect example of the "sustainable, community-based artisanal

fishery" that the EU Commission prides itself on in ALL OTHER EU maritime nations.

– and meanwhile our crab fishermen and processors are facing bankruptcy as the SFPA will not sign off on the required health certificates for crab exports out of Ireland, even though these same crabs are meeting EU standards that are accepted in ALL OTHER EU member states ...

And our government's response? – "oh well lads, it's tough – here's some EU money to scrap your boats so we can reduce the size of the Irish fleet to match the last 15% of quotas we have left in Irish waters because we, without consulting anyone, gave the other 85% of a NATIONAL RESOURCE WHICH IS OWNED BY THE CITIZENS OF IRELAND to the rest of the EU fishing fleet".

Taking IRISH quota in IRISH waters and then offering the people of Ireland money for a vessel reduction scheme isn't 'decommissioning' – its acquisition of OUR marine resources.

The EU are literally buying up fishing rights in Irish waters and this government is standing idly by and paying no regard to the

fact that WE the people of Ireland, not the government, own these resources.

Shrugging shoulders and paying lip service to the industry with task forces and other forms of posturing to look at ways to 'restructure' what we have left of an industry is simply NOT ACCEPTABLE – this industry demands that, as our elected leaders, our government returns to the EU Fisheries Commission with a strong and clear message – THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND SAY NO TO THE STEALING OF OUR RESOURCES AND THE DESTRUCTION OF IRELAND'S FISHING AND SEA-FOOD INDUSTRY WHILE THE REST OF THE EU FISHING NATIONS BENEFIT FROM OUR RICH WATERS.

Are the inhabitants of our rural coastal regions to become the 'forgotten people' of Ireland?

And does this government even care that they will go down in history as the government who ended Ireland's entire marine heritage of the coastal communities?

One clear message today to Taoiseach Michael Martin, Fisheries Minister Charlie McConalogue, the Department of Marine and the SFPA:

If you aren't part of the solution then YOU ARE part of the problem!

The people of rural Ireland are fed up living in a world where the people must work for the government -- while in every other country the government works FOR the people!



YOUR INDUSTRY NEEDS YOU!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 Acc No: 65603742
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 IBAN: IE29 BOFI 9049 0765 6037 42
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Thank you for your support and for becoming a part in this industry's rapidly growing fight for justice.



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MARINE TIMES

NEWSPAPER FOR IRELAND'S FISHING,
MARINE AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES



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EU Colonial Exploitation of Irish Fishing Waters Is No Longer Acceptable

Dig deep down into the reasons why Irish fishermen are prevented from catching their fair share of the fish in Irish waters and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the European Union and the stronger nations which dominate and dictate its fisheries policy are using Irish waters as a form of colonial exploitation.

How else to explain that Irish fishing is facing what sectors of the industry describe as terminal damage while other European nations prosper from their much bigger catches which the EU gives them to take from Irish waters.

Why are Irish fishermen so badly treated?

‘Colonialism’ is a practice of domination which involves ‘the subjugation of one people to another.’

While Ireland faces another round of what is described as ‘decommissioning’ but is in reality forced redundancy and expulsion of Irish fishermen from an industry which is the culture, tradition and history of the country, nations like France, Spain, Holland and Belgium, ensure the survival and development of their fishing industries by exploitation of Irish waters. This is approved, enforced by decision of the European Union.

The Irish industry has shown through its public demonstrations in Cork and Dublin, that this is discriminatory, unfair and exploitative towards Ireland.

In the Common Fisheries Policy, the term ‘common’ should relate to ‘a community at large, working for the common good, sharing with friends.’

In no regard can this be applied to the treatment of Ireland, of its fishing industry and its fishing people - the fishermen, their families, the coastal communities. The EU discriminates against Ireland, endorsing pressure applied by the stronger nations to use the richest waters in Europe – those off Ireland - for their own benefit, while destroying the Irish fishing industry.

Gradually, understanding and recognition of this has been brought to public attention, by pressure from the industry. This has resulted in the Taoiseach meeting fishermen where he has promised that he will “do right by the fishing industry” and work to convince Europe to let Irish fishermen catch more of their own fish.

Words are fine, deeds will provide proof.

Deeds would require the Irish government to stand up to the EU, highlight its discrimination against Ireland and make it clear that this form of colonialism is no longer acceptable.

Minister Must Step Up Following High Court Ruling on Fish-Weighing System

Sinn Féin spokesperson on Fisheries and the Marine Pádraig Mac Lochlainn TD has called on Minister Charlie McConalogue to engage with his Department of Marine officials, the Sea Fisheries Protection Agency (SFPA) and the European Commission to ensure that a fish-weighing system can be established at Killybegs.

Teachta Mac Lochlainn was speaking after the High Court ruled against the SFPA for its failure to approve the conveyor belt fish-weighing system.

Teachta Mac Lochlainn said: “The ruling is a welcome decision and vindicates what fishers and their representative bodies have been saying for quite some time now that there is no legal basis to concerns raised by the SFPA through the European Commission about this fish weighing system.

“The truth is that this should never have had to go to court. It is a reflection of the state of the relationship between the SFPA and the fishing industry. This ruling will only add to the widespread view amongst fishers and fish producers that the SFPA is an organisation that is not fit for purpose

and in need of urgent reform.

“This outcome must also be a wake-up call for the Minister for the Marine Charlie McConalogue. He must now urgently intervene in this issue and engage with his Department of Marine officials, the SFPA and the European Commission to ensure that a fish-weighing system can be established at Killybegs and across the state that is fair, reasonable and protects the freshness and quality of our seafood produce.

“He must also finally listen to our fishers and fish producers and ensure that the previous agreements on the weighing of fish in this state are reinstated.”

KFO Welcomes High Court Ruling Against SFPA - See Page 15



The large gathering of vessels in Dublin for the recent protest - Photo by James Grandfield



Chief Executive Officer
Irish Fish Producers Organisation
IFPO wish to appoint a
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Apply in writing to:

IFPO, No. 8 Anvil Court, Killybegs, Co. Donegal
Email: ifpo@eircom.net

The South - West View



Patrick Murphy
CEO Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation

In his always outspoken and strong monthly commentary on the fishing industry, Patrick Murphy, Chief Executive of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation in Castletownbere, says he was "a proud fisherman" at the demonstrations in Cork and Dublin where the fishing industry, their families and supporters "stood up for our industry."

The Cork and Dublin Fishermen's Protests May 26 and June 23

I wish to thank every single, Woman, Man, Grandmother, Mother, Grandfather, Father, Sister, Brother, Niece, Nephew and our Rural neighbour that helped make it happen that the voices of our United Fishing Industry was heard on every media outlet of our Island State.

I was a proud Irishman and feel personally privileged and humbled by the testimonies of those who stood up for our Industry, I will not be naming families, individuals or schools, businesses, Organisations nor our media people those working in Radio, Television or Print, but wish to thank them for helping us get the message 15% for us 85% for those visiting our waters is not right.

We ask for Equal rights and Equal Opportunities and a level playing field.

This will mean we as an Island Nation will secure a future for the future generations of our young men and women who wish to choose a future of hard work, receiving a fair reward for their sacrifices in bringing in the most nutritious of natural renewable food available to us sharing our Planet.

I must include, however an example of the challenge that faces us below.

My comments relate to a letter from an Association of which my Producer Organisation is a member.

What I read in this press release has me saying one word ... REALLY?

I will finish with this promise: So long as I draw breath I will speak for our Industry and for those who are involved in it on the condition there are people in our Industry who wish me to continue to do so.

'EU fishermen call consumers to boycott seafood products from Norway'

The UK departure from the EU has profoundly altered the fisheries governance and political scenario in the North East Atlantic. In a move to take advantage of the new

situation, Norway seems to have abandoned the path of dialogue and good cooperation, unilaterally deciding to unlawfully grab EU fish quota.

This action not only poses a serious threat over the future of a constructive partnership with the EU, but also over the sustainability of important fish stocks such as mackerel and cod. Since 60% of the fish caught by the Norwegians ends up on the European market, EU fishermen urge citizens to stop consuming Norwegian seafood.

According to the Europêche, the Norwegian government, in an opportunistic manner, is misusing the Brexit aftermath to unlawfully appropriate long-held EU fishing quota, first of cod and now of mackerel. Such a reckless and irresponsible behavior has spurred other countries, such as the Faroes, Iceland or Greenland to follow the same steps and unilaterally increase their quota share of mackerel.

Europêche argues that this attitude shows not only flagrant disdain for international law, but also a blatant disrespect for the EU as a partner and an ally. Furthermore, considering the mackerel situation, the unilateral quota increases will certainly endanger the sustainability of the stock in the next couple of years.

Javier Garat, President of Europêche, declared: "This unacceptable and disloyal behaviour shows no respect for the agreed and well-established EU fishing rights in

the Atlantic. This also sets a dangerous precedent of an important EU partner, such as Norway, unilaterally moving away from agreements for short-term economic gain. Unless a strong signal is sent from the EU to these countries, nothing will stop them from grabbing more and more EU quota of these and other fish species. EU citizens must realise that the legality and sustainability of the fish coming from this country are now put into question. EU fishermen call on consumers, retailers and food suppliers to halt seafood purchases for the survivability of the EU fishing industry and fish stocks."

In addition, the sector reiterates the call to EU institutions to close the single market to these products and remove trade preferences granted to Norwegian fishery products, especially for cod and mackerel. Europêche argues that this would not only be a strong retaliation measure but an important trade aspect to protect EU companies. According to the fishing industry, there is plenty of EU-produced mackerel quota so no shortage in raw material occurs and therefore there is absolutely no need for extra supply to the European market.

Mr Garat concluded: "It would be completely scandalous and outrageous to continue granting preferential market access to seafood products originating from a country that has illegally appropriated EU-quota and, on top of that, put at risk the sustainability of an entire fish species."

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Farm Tours and Oyster Picnics in Connemara Serving Up a Taste of the Atlantic

With the reopening of hospitality, the weather warming up the summer holiday feeling is finally in the air. This year the crowds are flocking to Connemara not the Costa. It promises to be a busy season for the west of Ireland region.



The good news is there is plenty to see and do and enjoy in the array of amenities, attractions and activities which carve Connemara out as such a special place along the Wild Atlantic Way.

This summer one of the great experiences on offer will be Farm Tours and Oyster Picnics at DK Connemara Oysters in Letterfrack in the heart of Connemara.



You can already feel the fresh air, see the stunning scenery and taste the succulent delight of fresh Connemara oysters, a truly memorable experience and well worth the wait.

"We are so looking forward to welcoming back visitors to Connemara and our oyster farm here on the edge of the Atlantic looking out over the unrivalled sprawling landscape," says a delighted David Keane, the man behind this enterprise.

"The first thing on the menu here for our farm tours and oyster picnics is safety. We're serving up safety first as we greet our guests and visitors along with fun times, good times and great oysters, but all the time conscious of the health and safety of our customers and staff," he emphasises.

"Visitors to the west are always on the lookout for interesting things to do, with friends and family and our offering is a safe and healthy experience in the great outdoors. Tourists can enjoy the experience, take away great memories, fantastic photos and of course fresh oysters, so it doesn't get much better than that," explains David, who is hands on as the long awaited summer season gets underway over the June bank holiday weekend.

The farm tours and oyster picnics at DK Connemara Oysters at Ballinakill Bay, Letterfrack are Origin Green certified and sustainability is central to the entire operation, whose employees are all from the locality. The farm tours and oyster picnics are all operated to the highest standards of sustainability and safety in accordance with Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) and Taste the Atlantic.

"We will be catering for families and groups in their own pods separately to ensure everyone is safe and the experience

is fully Covid protocols compliant. We have accommodated vintage rallies, groups of bikers, families from accommodation in neighbouring towns, amateur chefs and culinary enthusiasts, and photographic clubs with the stunning scenery and scrumptious oysters vying for centre stage," outlines David Keane.



The farm tours last for about one hour and fifteen minutes and cover all aspects of cultivating oysters from seed to plating up the perfect oyster for our customers and some of the country's leading hotels, restaurants and chefs. They cover the intriguing and extensive history of oyster growing in the Connemara region dating back to 1893 as well as oyster tasting and oyster shucking demonstrations. Of course oyster lovers can purchase their favourite food, fresh oysters to take home.

The oyster cultivation tradition here in Connemara is centuries old and the licence for these particular oyster beds dates back to Mitchell Henry in 1893 when it was part of the Kylemore Estate.

There's nothing David Keane looks forward to more than the oyster farm tours and oyster picnics in the summer months when tourists and visitors along the Connemara coast, taking in the delights of the Wild Atlantic Way from Galway, Clifden and Westport, drop in for a tour and a Taste of the Atlantic at DK Connemara Oysters.

There are plenty of other things to enjoy while you're at it in Connemara this summer such as Kylemore Abbey, Roundstone, Rossaveel, learn a cúpla focail in the Gaeltacht, fishing, golf, pony-riding, camping, kayaking, surfing, sea swimming, snorkelling, rock pooling. Leenane the location for the acclaimed film adaptation of John B Keane's 'The Field', Delphi Adventure Centre, Connemara Ponies, Clifden Arts Festival, Connemara National Park, Omey Island... the list just goes on, and of course did we mention a stunning Oyster Farm Tour or scrumptious Oyster Picnic?

Definitely one of the best things to do in Connemara this summer.

Connemara this summer, so much better than the Costa!!

Oyster Farm Tours cost €25 per person, with a family discount ticket available, and students under 18 for €15. Oysters can be purchased to takeaway, a dozen for €12.50 or you can enjoy an Oyster Picnic on the shores of Ballinakill Bay for €18 for a dozen oysters.

In the interests of safety and coordination of numbers all visits must be pre-booked at tours@dkconnemaraoysters.com or phone David at 0879186997.

SFPA Must Work with Fishermen, Not Against Them

Independent TD for Donegal, Thomas Pringle, said the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority must work with fishermen and fishing communities, and not against them.

The deputy also repeated his call for Government to renegotiate the Common Fisheries Policy.

Addressing the Dáil, Deputy Pringle said: "When communities can look to official support and proportionate rules, we then could have an industry that supports all in rural Ireland.

"That is not too much for anyone to ask and I think that's all that the fishermen are asking for at this stage. And it would do you well, minister, to listen to what they are saying and get the department and the SFPA on board and working with the fishermen, rather than working against the fishermen, because that's unfortunately the way things are in the industry at the moment and that is the root of the problem."

Deputy Pringle was speaking during statements on fisheries and coastal communities.

He said: "The fiasco of the weighting system and how it is being dealt with by the department and the SFPA is a telling case in point. Why is it that rather than deal with supposed wrongdoers the SFPA and the department damn all of the industry? Surely the thing to do would be deal with the problems and let everyone else work on.

"We have had the crazy situation where the pelagic industry has had to take a judicial review to get a fair hearing in relation to a solution to the problem because the SFPA would not make a decision."

He said: "We continue to be left with the treatment of the whitefish fleet and the weighting disaster. For example look at how monkfish have been treated when they land in order to get an accurate weight. If the ice is not removed fully that will be taken as the weight of the fish and the boat will lose out, but they don't matter really it seems. That certainly is the way that fisher-

men feel and I have to say I don't disagree with them.

"Why is it that the SFPA, if they have a job to do, cannot work with the fishermen to achieve the aim? There is an attitude apparently that they are all out to do the system and so we will behave that way.

"The problem is that the system has always outdone the fishermen. The root of all these problems can be found at our negotiations to join the EEC as it was then," he said.

The deputy said: "But then according to Garrett Fitzgerald 'they never treated us as badly again' as they treated fishing and

fishing rights on our accession to the EEC.

"The reality is, and it can't be said often enough, that they didn't have to treat us as badly again because we became net contributors to the EEC on the day we joined."

He concluded: "Unless we deal with that and deal with that through the negotiations on the Common Fisheries Policy next year, unless we actively deal with that and an Irish government goes to Europe and says they're going to deal with this and deal with this properly, this problem will be ongoing, unfortunately."

Fishing Industry's Message Still Not Resonating with the Government

The IFPEA wish to thank all those who travelled and participated in the protest in Dublin, it was a massive outward demonstration of the sheer frustration there is at present within the industry. "The event highlights again that this Government just do not understand fishing and to date the Government have offered neither solution or proposals to deal with the mounting challenges in the fishing sector" stated Brendan Byrne CEO of IFPEA to the Marine Times.

"Immediately after the protest the Minister for the Marine met with the fishing sector representatives for two hours, it is unfortunate that the same Minister was unable to meet the thousands of people that left their homes to travel to Dublin and protest outside of the convention centre. Like every meeting recently much talk no action, and so it goes on and on without the ability to take any decisions.

"The message still has not resonated with the Government and more will need to be done in order to bring this Government to its senses, as a fishing community in the months ahead we must retain the unity shown in the past months, we must continue to organise ourselves and most importantly of all we must continue the campaign in order to get the level playing field and equality we rightly deserve.

"The Government can show their commitment to this by releasing both the 2018 Audit and the 2019 Administrative

enquiry to the fishing sector, it is a national scandal that the Government retain this evidence and information from us in the fishing sector, while all the time refusing

to defend us in the fishing industry. In many ways its nothing short of treason on the part of our national Government. The fishing industry strongly refute any charges against us, but until such time as there is visibility of all

information, it is virtually impossible for us to defend ourselves.

"We have a farcical situation whereby Europe find us guilty without any information being shared with us, and the Government are at a loss not knowing where they are in terms of the sanctions being imposed on the industry – even too weak to lodge an annulment action against the decision of 13th April. Yet, the Government stand idly by and side as it seems on face value with Europe or perhaps they are too weak to take a position on anything in terms of fishing," concluded Brendan Byrne.



Supporting the recent protest in Dublin were Fiona Flynn, Trudy McIntyre and Clare Healy.



Beara Fisher off Portmagee - Photo by James Grandfield

IFA AQUACULTURE

In her monthly column, IFA's Aquaculture Executive, Teresa Morrissey, has a blunt and direct message for the Government.



This Government Must Give Serious Support to The Future of Coastal Communities

IFA Aquaculture Chairman Michael Mulloy offered his support, on behalf of the Irish Aquaculture sector, to the Fisheries Protest which took place in Dublin on Wednesday, June 23.

"The Irish fisheries fleet has been dealing with a significant blow to the fisheries industry as a result of Brexit negotiations and the current scenario threatens the very existence of some coastal communities.

"The Irish aquaculture sector fully supports the fisheries industry in highlighting the impact of the demise of fisheries on rural Ireland. The Irish Seafood industry is comprised of fisheries and aquaculture and, in many ways, are interdependent on each other to sustain ancillary marine services such as seafood processing.

"The vitality of the seafood industry is imperative to sustain coastal communities" Michael said.

He described the crisis facing coastal communities as 'extremely difficult for the future of rural Ireland.'

"It is almost impossible for young people to consider making a living in rural areas, there are far too many impediments with housing, public transport and local services not being provided for. This lack of basic infrastructure is strangling rural coastal communities. Both aquaculture and fisheries sectors are essential in providing employment and sustaining rural coastal economies. Sustaining these industries will be vital to ensure the development and survival of these communities."

This current Government must recognise their responsibility in sustaining rural and coastal communities.

Too many Government policies over the past 10 years or so have strangled parts of Rural Ireland. Attempting to live and work in rural areas is littered with numerous difficulties – from inadequate transport options, insufficient infrastructure, poor connectivity in terms of broadband and mobile coverage, lack of employment opportunities and deficient availability of housing.

The list is endless.

There are many advantages to living and working in rural areas, particularly along the western seaboard in coastal communities, where the work-life benefits have been widely recognised during the Covid-19 pandemic following the relocation to the west of many younger people seeking a better-quality life.

It has been no secret that rural Ireland has been under threat in recent years, with struggles to retain and attract a younger population due to lack of job opportunities for one thing. Younger generations **want to live and work in coastal communities** and this Government **must** provide the resources to facilitate this choice.

Supporting our primary production industries like Fisheries, Aquaculture and our colleagues in Agriculture would go a long way in sustaining local economies and communities to allow the next generation the chance to make their contribution to rural Ireland.

Irish Fishers, their families and supporters are protesting to highlight their concerns about the crisis facing Irish coastal communities – IFA offers their full support in delivering this message to Government.



Harvesting oysters at Letterfrack - See page 10 for an interesting project with DK Oysters

Marine Institute Calls on Fishers to Participate in Development of Fish Mapping App

Oceans of Learning Focus on Research

Researchers at the Marine Institute are calling on fishers from around the country to participate in a new project aimed at reducing unwanted catches across harvesting practices, in an ecological, economic, and socially sustainable way.



Three Fishing Boats at Garinish, Cork. Photo Coast Monkey

The project, IFISH, will use a behavioural approach involving near real time on-line mapping of unwanted catches in order to simultaneously help fishers adhere to EU quotas and promote sustainability of fish stocks. Effectively the system aims to help fishers reduce the amount of catch they don't want, avoiding discards. The project is funded by a Science Foundation Ireland SIRG grant.

According to Dr. Julia Calderwood, Principle Investigator on the project, over the past few decades fishers and the wider public began to realise that discarding of fish was a significant issue throughout fisheries worldwide.

"Discarding is the throwing back of dead or damaged fish into the sea, which can undermine sustainability," she says. "That's why legislation was introduced by the EU meaning the discarding of many fish species is no longer allowed."

Dr. Calderwood explains that quotas are set on how much fishers can land each year. This is rolled out initially at an EU level and is thereafter divided out between the member states to manage their own stocks accordingly. In that way the species populations should be capable of replacing themselves.

Methods to Control Stocks

In order to adhere to quotas, fishers adopt an array of solutions that help increase selectivity in a fishery. Technical measures include using more selective nets such as those with larger mesh sizes or escape panels so that unwanted catch aren't retained in them. However, marine researchers around the world are now considering ideas at a more sophisticated level of planning. For example, scientists at the Marine Institute have previously worked on a project to develop probability maps to help understand where and when the species subject to quotas were most likely to be caught.

"The maps didn't reveal anything truly surprising," says Calderwood. "Fishers told us that they were generally useful as a reference tool, and broadly agreed with their own knowledge. But they were limited because they were based on catch information collected over broad areas, and over broad timeframes or seasons."

"So, the fishers said it might be

something that they would check in on every now and then, but the maps weren't going to be used every day, because they weren't giving them the up-to-date information on where the fish are right now."

The IFISH System

Dr. Calderwood and her team then decided to try something more innovative. The idea is to create a mobile phone app using a near real-time mapping system to provide advice to fishers about where they might avoid fishing to not catch unwanted species or sizes of fish, helping them to stay within their quotas and improve their catch efficiency so they are still making a viable living.

"That's the IFISH project," she says. "The idea is for skippers to provide live information on unwanted catches they encounter using our app. So, for example, they could log in and very simply and easily click on the map to indicate that, say, right here, right now, we're catching lots of something that we don't want, like undersize fish or species which aren't marketable."

"The app would then create an alert that would be shared among vessels who are signed up to use the app together, helping them to avoid areas with this unwanted catch. It's a win-win situation for everyone, but we need fishers to help us by signing up to help develop and test the app."

The project aims to have an app in use during 2022 but is currently designing what is needed for this app alongside industry so that the final product best addresses their needs. The project is currently asking fishers to sign up and join in the design process. Further information and contact details can be found at www.i-fish.org

This focus on research is presented as part of the Marine Institute's four week Oceans of Learning campaign, which will enable everyone to engage with our ocean from anywhere. Oceans of Learning includes a new podcast series, videos and short films, news and online resources all about our ocean. There's something for everyone and the Oceans of Learning series will explore all aspects of our marine resource - from our rich marine biodiversity, to our changing ocean climate, and our oceans future.

Court of Appeal Decide to Temporarily Extend the Exclusion of Large Fishing Vessels Trawling in Inshore Waters Within 6 Miles of the Coast

Following a full hearing by the Court of Appeal on Tuesday 22nd June, the Court has decided to temporarily extend the Policy Directive excluding large vessels from trawling in inshore waters within 6 miles of the coast, save for a restricted sprat fishery.

This decision applies until at least the 4th of October (the first day of the Court of Appeal's Michaelmas term) and/or until a determination in relation to the stay is delivered by the Court of Appeal. Minister McConalogue commented "I am grateful that the Court of Appeal has allowed the extension of this important Policy Directive. This decision will mean that vessels over 18 metres in length remain prohibited from trawling inside our 6 miles zone over the coming period, except for a restricted sprat fishery, which would usually not occur during Summer/ early Autumn."

The decision of the Court of Appeal follows a decision by the same Court to reinstate the Ministerial Policy Directive on 19th March last, when the Court was persuaded that the balance of justice leaned in favour of the State and granted a stay on the order of the High Court up until the hearing of the substantive appeal this week.

The Policy Directive excluding large vessels from trawling in inshore waters within 6 miles of the coast was introduced in March 2019, following the decision of the then Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine that from 1st January 2020 all trawling by large vessels, over 18 metres in length overall, in coastal waters inside Ireland's 6 mile zone was to cease, other than for a sprat fishery which was to be phased out during 2020 and 2021.

A Judicial Review was taken by two applicant fishermen who successfully challenged the validity of the Policy Directive. On 6th October 2020, the High Court made an order in favour of the applicants and the Policy Directive was declared void/or of no legal effect. The substantive hearing before the Court of Appeal was completed on Tuesday 22nd June and judgment is reserved.

6th Annual All Ireland Fishermen's Golf Championship

The 6th annual All Ireland Fishermen's Golf Championship will take place in Greencastle Golf Club on Friday the 27th of August. The successful event brings together fishermen from all over Ireland.

The keenly fought competition is both a team of four event and an individual competition for the accolade of being crowned All Ireland Fishermen's golf champion. Prizes are 1st, 2nd, 3rd, team, 1st, 2nd, 3rd individual, longest drive, nearest the hole, and the main prize for the top fisherman.

John Histon skipper of the Westward Isle is the current holder but according to insiders in the Killybegs golf society after the new handicapping arrangements he will find it difficult to retain his title and will face stiff competition as the travelling competitors get used to the Greencastle course.

The Westward Isle completed a double in 2020 as they also won the team event. All golfers are welcome to take part in the event and fishermen's handicaps can be arranged for the team event.

For the singles competition the player must have a current GUI handicap. The cost of entry including meal is €200 per team. For further information or to book a tee time contact Jimmy on 086 6686539

Closure of the Line Caught Mackerel Fishery



"IIMRO and its members are very unhappy at the sudden closure of the hook and line mackerel fishing. We feel that more quota must be made available for this fishery and also a better management system put in place to ensure all those wishing to enter the fishery have quota to fish." Jerry Early, Chairperson, IIMRO

The Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation have recently been in contact with Minister McConalogue to request that he urgently address the recent closure of the line caught mackerel fishery as this year's small quota allocation has been caught. Line caught mackerel quota is currently 400 tonnes per annum, or 0.7%, out of a total of 58,539 tonnes (2021) of Ireland's Total Allowable Catch for mackerel. This amount of quota for the 1,176 under 12 meter small scale fleet (SSF) polyvalent boats on the Irish fleet register is inequitable and is nowhere near enough to provide a high quality product for islands and coastal communities, where tourism is reliant on the availability of locally caught mackerel during peak tourist season.



Distribution of the under 12 metre, small-scale polyvalent fishing fleet.

Issues of access to the fishery resource have been highlighted many times by IIMRO in the past; during the Island Fisheries Heritage bill process and the previous mackerel quota consultation in 2017. The use of track record as a management tool rewards those who impact the stocks most, is not an environmentally sustainable metric to use and is not in line with current climate policies. Quota is a national public resource managed by the Minister and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the current fishery quota arrangements are not a fair distribution of a public resource. This has resulted in the Irish small

scale fleet being over reliant on non-quota species due to inadequate access to the fisheries resource over many years. At the same time 1,583 tonnes of Irish mackerel quota was swapped to other EU member states by Ireland in 2020.



Line caught pollock and mackerel

Short fishery supply chains with high value, low volume species are vitally important for island and coastal communities and it is imperative that we spread the economic benefits of access to our renewable fishery resources across the country as per Article 17 of the Common Fisheries Policy. There has been much talk of burden sharing in relation to fisheries in recent times and it is long past time to allocate quota resources under Ireland's control in a fair and equitable manner.

Article 17 of The Common Fisheries Policy. Criteria for the allocation of fishing opportunities by Member States. "When allocating the fishing opportunities available to them, as referred to in Article 16, Member States shall use transparent and objective criteria including those of an environmental, social and economic nature. The criteria to be used may include, inter alia, the impact of fishing on the environment, the history of compliance, the contribution to the local economy and historic catch levels. Within the fishing opportunities allocated to them, Member States shall endeavour to provide incentives to fishing vessels deploying selective fishing gear or using fishing techniques with reduced environmental impact, such as reduced energy consumption or habitat damage."

--- Seamus Bonner, Secretary, Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation



Pictured at the recent protest in Dublin are Edward and Paula Gallagher, Arranmore Island; Fr John Joe Duffy and Brendan Byrne, CEO of the Irish Fish Processors and Exporters Association (IFPEA)

Unmanned Miniature Sail Boat 'Seoltóir Na Gaillimhe – The Galway Sailor' Deployed from the RV Celtic Explorer

On Monday 31st May, a group of students from 5th and 6th class from Kilglass National School in Co Galway delivered their 1.5 metre unmanned mini sailboat called 'Seoltóir Na Gaillimhe – the Galway Sailor' to the Marine Institute's research vessel, RV *Celtic Explorer*, in Galway Harbour. Marine Institute scientists will deploy the mini-boat from the RV *Celtic Explorer* into the Atlantic Ocean, near the M6 Weather Buoy, during the AIMSIR (Atlantic In-situ Marine Scientific Infrastructure Replacement) survey.

including Seoltóir Na Gaillimhe – the Galway Sailor. The project webpage is available to children, teachers and their classes. This is a really fun way of connecting people, and predicting where the boat may land is part of that experience. At least 11 mini-boats have landed in Ireland since 2009, and some have been

recovered, fixed, and relaunched. Currently there are six actively reporting boats in the Atlantic, and some in the Pacific as well. Both the Explorers Education Programme and Educational Passages are absolutely delighted to see another boat leaving Galway, and look forward to seeing how it can connect more people around our world ocean," said Cushla Dromgool-Regan, Explorers Strategic Education Manager, Camden Education Trust.

To follow the mini-boat Seoltóir Na Gaillimhe – the Galway Sailor, visit: https://educationalpassages.org/boats/seoltoir_na_gaillimhe/

Teachers, children and parents can also follow the Explorers Education activities on Facebook: @ExplorersMarineEducation and Twitter @explorersedu for great ideas and fun facts about the ocean. The team in Galway will also be tracking the Seoltóir Na Gaillimhe – the Galway Sailor.

The Explorers Education Programme is funded by the Marine Institute, Ireland's state agency for marine research and development.



Peter Kane, teacher with Padraic Creedon of the Explorers Education Programme, Christine Loughlin, Marine Institute and Kieran Reilly, Marine Institute with 6th class students (from the same pod) Rosie Dolan, Olivia Cotton, Ruby Glynn, Naomi Faulkner, Sophie Kelly from Kilglass National School in Co Galway delivered their 1.5 metre unmanned mini sailboat called 'Seoltóir Na Gaillimhe – the Galway Sailor' to the Marine Institute's research vessel, RV *Celtic Explorer*, in Galway Harbour.

The mini-boat is equipped with a sail and a satellite tracker, or transmitter, which allows the students to track it as it sails across the ocean and gain a better understanding of ocean currents. This initiative is part of the international Educational Passages programme which connects schools from across the globe through the mini-boat activity.

Congratulating the collaborative effort of the Explorers Education Programme team, Kilglass National school, the infrastructures team at the Marine Institute, as well as Educational Passages in the USA, Patricia Orme, Joint Acting CEO said, "The Explorers mini-boat project is a wonderful example of marine science literacy and citizen engagement with the oceans. It supports the Marine Institute's Oceans of Learning campaign which highlights the value of partnerships essential for sharing marine science with the wider community. For children, this project provides an exciting way of seeing real life examples of how the ocean has an influence on all our lives, learning how the ocean influences our weather and climate, and the types of technology used."

Peter Kane, teacher at Kilglass National School, Galway highlighted that working with the Explorers Education team and Educational Passages has helped to provide children with a better understanding of the ocean through real life hands-on activities. "The project involved more than 100 children in our school. Students have painted and decorated the boat, created artwork and good luck messages, and named the boat 'Seoltóir Na Gaillimhe –

the Galway Sailor'. Alisha McHugh from 4th class explained that the Irish term recognises the tradition of fishing in Galway and Ireland."

Thanking the Marine Institute and the Explorers team for coordinating the delivery of the boat and teaching resources, Peter Kane said, "It has been a comprehensive STEM project and cross-curricular in nature. Using the boat as a focal point provides a great example of how teachers can integrate marine themes through a range of cross-curricular activities. This included learning how the boat was built, to covering a range of science and technology concepts using GPS and satellites."

Padraic Creedon, Explorers Education Officer, Galway Atlantaquaria said, "It was great to see the children increasing their understanding of the ocean, completing science experiments and producing amazing class presentations about our ocean. The children also learned about marine biodiversity in the ocean from the smallest microscopic plankton to the largest animals in the world – the blue whales migrating across the Atlantic."

The provision of the boat has been funded as part of the EU Interreg iFADO project, in which the Marine Institute are partners. Engaging in the mini-boat project, the iFADO consortium of researchers are launching five mini-boats this year around the Atlantic from Ireland, Portugal, Spain, France, and the UK.

"People all over the world can monitor and track the mini-boats in the ocean,

marine.ie

Our ocean is our greatest national resource

Ár n-aigéan an acmhainn náisiúnta is mó atá againn



KFO Welcomes High Court Ruling Against SFPA

Authority acted 'ultra vires', states judge

The Chief Executive of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, Seán O'Donoghue has welcomed the High Court ruling which found against the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) for its failure to approve a new state-of-the-art conveyor belt fish weighing system.

The judicial review was taken jointly by the KFO and Pelagic Weighing Services Ltd (PWS) in response to the SFPA's refusal to consider and determine the application for approval of the 'Flowscales' built on the pier in Killybegs at a cost of €409,000.

In his ruling, Justice Garrett Simons stated: "The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority has acted ultra vires by continuing to withhold approval for the pier-side weighing facility at Killybegs Port by reference to the 'ownership' concerns raised by the European Commission. There is no legal basis for these concerns and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority has not sought to argue otherwise."

Commenting on the outcome, KFO Chief Executive, Seán O'Donoghue said: "We stated that the SFPA acted outside of its powers, the relevant regulations and Irish and European law in determining on December 4th last the Flowscales must be owned, operated and used by a public body and in refusing the PWS request for approval for the Flowscales. We also correctly claimed that the SFPA acted in breach of fair procedures, arbitrarily, unreasonably and irrationally in refusing that approval."

"We had put on record on numerous occasions, that we were outraged that an SFPA diktat to unilaterally impose a new policy of unpacking and weighing fish on the pier before repacking and ultimately spoiling the fish could have been considered without any advance notice. This was ultimately what led to us having to take legal recourse on the matter. Moreover, we had been and are still being, explicitly denied access to any reports or correspondence between the Commission, DAFM and the SFPA on this issue."

"Fundamentally, this is about landing and processing catch as efficiently and expediently as possible to ensure the fish is fresh and ready for market thereby allowing our members to make a living."

"We are very pleased that our position has been vindicated and that such a comprehensive ruling was reached. While we

were completely and utterly convinced that our case was sound, we regret that the only avenue open to us to counter SFPA moves to impact punitively on our livelihood, is to resort to legal action. Nonetheless, we in the industry have, and continue to be, more than willing to work with the SFPA on finding workable solutions to all and any issues which arise," said Mr O'Donoghue.

The Flowscales involves a conveyor belt type system onto which fish are discharged. The system allows the water containing the fish to drain off to a sump where it is collected and pumped into another recipient during which time the fish are transported along the conveyor belt to be accurately weighed and are then deposited out the other end of the weighing instrument. In the present context, that means the fish will be transferred into a bulk tanker where they are reunited with the water in which they were previously immersed.

In Killybegs, pelagic fish, in this context principally mackerel and herring, have since 2013 been subject to a specific weighing regime allowing transport after landing to nearby fishing processors where they are then weighed in licenced factory premises on certified Flowscale systems under the SFPA's Control Plan as approved by the European Commission (this Plan was revoked by Commission Decision C(2021) 2423 on 13th April 2021). In December 2019, the SFPA indicated its intention to carry out the most exacting form of monitoring of landings ('full monitors') by obliging pelagic fishery products landed to be weighed on landing (WOL) over the pierside weighbridge at Killybegs port despite the existence of the Control Plan. Until then such "full monitors" of landings had been done by supervising weighing over the relevant factory flowscales. The pierside weighbridge is owned it appears by the Department of Agriculture. This new approach by the SFPA caused serious concern in the local industry due to the damage/losses which weighing over the pierside weighbridge caused historically to fishing vessel owners and/or fish operators / buyers / processors. A group, entitled the "Pierside Weighing Group" was therefore formed to try to find a

satisfactory solution in conjunction with the SFPA to carry out the minimum percentage of landings required by EU law to be fully monitored immediately on landing rather than as hitherto, after transport in the factory.

Between March and June 2020, there was significant engagement in the Pierside Weighing Group in which the SFPA fully participated between the relevant stakeholders and the SFPA with a view to designing and building the flowscales and it was contemplated at the time that the SFPA would own the same. Indeed the SFPA expressly said this at one stage. After the SFPA withdrew from the Group, ostensibly due to separate legal proceedings, the first Applicant was incorporated on 17th August 2020 by the relevant stakeholders - with a large part of the pelagic fishing industry being subscribers - in order initially to commission and fund the construction of the equipment which cost €409,000 plus VAT.

The first Applicant's Flowscales was completed in November 2020 and was inspected by the Irish legal metrology service, the National Standards Authority of Ireland (hereafter NSAI) and as the SFPA is aware was subsequently certified by the NSAI on 9th December 2020.

The SFPA however decided that it would not approve or proceed with the approval of the Flowscales it had helped design citing the objection of the European Commission that the equipment should be both publicly owned and publicly operated. In a meeting on 3rd December 2020, a senior SFPA official repeated the Commission's stance and said inter alia that the SFPA itself would not buy or operate the Flowscales. The SFPA's decision was confirmed by email on 4th December 2020 and the oral communication as confirmed in writing is the decision impugned in these proceedings.

Since February 2020, the SFPA's officers have commenced obliging a percentage of fishing vessels landing catches of pelagic fishery products in Killybegs to use the pierside weighbridge which is precisely the situation which the Applicants and their members/shareholders were attempting to avoid due to the resulting damage and delay. This has caused fishing vessels to avoid landing their catches in Killybegs and to land in other ports such as certain ports in Norway.



Pictured at the recent protest in Dublin were (top l-r) Michael Doyle, Tony O'Hara and Donal Haughey (MFV Paula) and (below) the Callaghan family (MFV Pacelli).



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A days fishing over heading through the Dursey Sound as Irelands only Cable Car passes overhead.
Photo by Anne Marie Cronin (www.annemariemcroninphotography.ie)

news from **Castletownbere** Helen Riddell

Fishing Protest

A flotilla of 55 trawlers from all around the coast, travelled to Dublin on Wednesday June 23rd including a number from Castletownbere. Members of the local community and business owners from Castletownbere also travelled to Dublin to support the local fishing industry. The trawlers travelled up the River Liffey in convoy through the East Link Toll Bridge to Sir John Rogerson's Quay. A letter was delivered to Taoiseach Micheal Martin at the National Convention Centre where the Dail was sitting.

The letter outlined the protesters' concerns and calls for change, including the renegotiation of the EU Common Fisheries Policy. Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Charlie McConalogue met producer organisations and fishing industry representatives involved in the protest.

Castletownbere RNLI

Castletownbere RNLI were launched on the afternoon of Saturday June 5th as part

of a joint rescue with the Coast Guard helicopter Rescue 115 of an ill woman on board a local angling boat off the Beara coast.

Castletownbere RNLI lifeboat was tasked by Valentia Coastguard Radio at 1.42pm with a report of a 25 foot boat near the Dursey Sound with a woman on board who had taken ill and was unresponsive. The Shannon-based Coast Guard helicopter Rescue 115 was also sent to the scene.

The lifeboat launched within minutes under the command of Coxswain Dean Hegarty with mechanic David O'Donovan and crew Joe Cronin, John Paul Downey, Aaron O'Boyle, Kyle Cronin and Donagh Murphy.

The lifeboat located the casualty near Blackball Head and two lifeboat crew volunteers boarded the vessel to undertake a first aid assessment. Oxygen was administered and the casualty became responsive. The woman was then transferred to the lifeboat.

The helicopter winchman was lowered to

the deck of the lifeboat and the casualty was airlifted to the helicopter at 3.05pm and was transferred to Kerry General Hospital.

Commenting on the callout Castletownbere RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager Paul Stevens, complimented the coxswain and crew on its rapid response, the high level of teamwork and stated that the rescue was an 'excellent example of joint collaboration between the RNLI and the Coast Guard'.

Garda Martin Hegarty

Good wishes were extended to Garda Martin Hegarty, based at Castletownbere Garda Station, who retired on June 30th following 34 years of service with An Garda Síochana.

Berehaven Golf Club

Congratulations are extended to the victorious Berehaven Golf Club team who won the All Ireland final against Baltinglass in Donegal on Thursday June 10th. The team were welcomed home to Beara the following day with the Jimmy Bruen shield by bonfires lit on the approach roads and a car parade through main street Castletownbere.

An Taoiseach Visits Castletownbere

An Taoiseach Micheal Martin made an unannounced visit to Castletownbere on Saturday June 19th, accompanied by Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan. The Taoiseach met with a delegation of local fishermen to discuss the severe challenges facing the industry. He also met with the managing director of the Castletownbere Fishing Co-op.

Beara 3k a Day Win Award

Paul O'Shea, one of the organisers of the Beara 3k a Day walking group has won the

Active Community Champion category in the Active Cork Community Awards 2021 which were announced a virtual awards ceremony on Friday June 18th. The Beara 3k a day group was set up at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 in a bid to encourage people to stay active by walking 3k a day and posting a photo and brief description of their walk on a dedicated Facebook page.

The group now has over 3,000 members including many Beara people living overseas. The Active Cork Community Awards were established by Cork Sports Partnership under its Active Cork Communities initiative to honour, recognise and celebrate the individuals and groups in Cork that go above and beyond in their efforts to promote community sport and physical activities opportunities.

Coast Guard

Castletownbere Coast Guard team undertook helicopter training at the Castletownbere GAA pitch in June with the Shannon-based Rescue 115 helicopter.

The session allowed the team's new recruits to have a tour of the aircraft and an introduction to various techniques such as stretcher transfer, hi-line, and winching.

Stories from the Sea

BIM are hosting a webinar where a panel, which includes a fisherman and storyteller, a writer and two historians specialising in maritime history will share their stories of the sea and outline how coastal communities have been shaped by the activities of small-scale fisheries.

The event will be held on July 14th from 3.00pm to 4.00pm. To register see www.eventbrite.ie/stories-from-the-sea

The event is free.

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Taoiseach Says He Will 'Do Right By The Fishing Industry'

Mr. Martin Met Fishermen and FPOs Prior to Dublin Demonstration

The FPOs have put a formal document to the Taoiseach outlining the main issues for the industry and what they want done to protect and ensure its future and that of the coastal communities.

Irish Fishing Industry Issues for Government & EU Commission

- The Brexit TCA Agreement between the EU and the UK was both unfair and unjust and specifically penalised Ireland's fishing industry. There must be equal Burden Sharing between all Member States concerned.

- The revoking of Ireland's Fish Landing Control Plan by the EU Commission that impacts the reputation of the entire Irish Fishing Industry must not be allowed to destroy Ireland's reputation in the production of Premium Quality Fish. This must be reversed with immediate effect.

- Traditional access to our fishing grounds at Rockall must be reinstated immediately with a Bilateral Agreement between Ireland and the UK/Scotland similar to the arrangements in place in 2019.

- On Enforcement, we submit that Penalty Points for fisheries offences must be based on a burden of proof that is beyond a reasonable doubt, to be able appeal to the High Court on more than just a point of law and that penalty points cannot remain on licence if successful in the High Court.

- Brexit Adjustment Reserve Fund – now known as the BAR Fund – of which €1.2 Billion is said to be available to Ireland must be used to redress the damage to the Irish Fishing Industry caused by the unfair loss of quota. A compensation package to be assessed and paid on the basis of the loss of earnings that will accrue from generation to generation and year after year into the future must be put in place by Government.

- The Migrant Workers Atypical Scheme governing non- EU/EEA Fishers must be reviewed to ensure a level playing-pitch and equality of opportunity for all those working in the Irish Fishing Industry & Argi-food sector.

- Fundamental Renegotiation of EU Common Fisheries Policy in accordance with UNCLOS – UN Convention on Law of the Sea, so Ireland is allocated a fair share of Fish Quotas reflecting the disproportionate contribution our fishing grounds make to our fellow EU Member State Fishing Fleets & Fishing Communities.

There have been many promises made to the fishing industry in the course of the Brexit negotiations that have not been delivered on. During a weekend visit to Union Hall and Castletownbere fishing ports in West Cork Taoiseach Micheál Martin made another – that he would “fight for a better deal in Europe for fishermen.”



Taoiseach Micheál Martin travels to Castletownbere to meet Fishermen John D O Sullivan, Jason Sheehan Chariman of Castletownbere's Fishermans Co-op, Paddy O Sullivan Skipper, John Nolan Manager of CTB Co-op, Patrick Murphy Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation CEO, Taoiseach Micheál Martin, Christophor O Sullivan TD, Senator Tim Lombard, Damien Turner Skipper and Chairman of Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation. Picture: Anne Marie Cronin Photography

The visit and a meeting with FPOs on the following Monday came in the days before the Dublin demonstration and just after the presentation of the first interim report by the Seafood Task Force to Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue.

Mr Martin assured fishermen he would “do right by the Irish fishing industry” and work to convince Europe to let Irish fishermen catch more of their own fish.

While there was satisfaction that Mr. Martin had journeyed to the ports and discussed the serious problems facing the industry with organisation representatives and fishermen, there was also the view expressed: “Will he deliver on what he has promised this time?”

Having met at the Castletownbere Fishermen's Co-op, arranged by Cork South West T.D., Christopher O'Sullivan, who had said “what has been done to the industry is wrong” at the Cork fishermen's demonstration, Mr. Martin repeated what he had said last December, after the conclusion of the Brexit negotiations. He said he was “not happy with the share of the burden carried by the Irish fishing industry post-Brexit.”

“He has said that before and done nothing to follow up and change anything,” a Castletownbere fisherman told the Marine Times. “Deeds mean more than words which are easy to say.”

The Taoiseach said that “the whole issue around Ireland's allocation of quotas is challenging” and that he needs “to see if I can redress the balance in the interests of the Irish fishing industry.”

After a two-hour meeting in Castletownbere he said: “It was very important we had this meeting today. We have already signalled to the European Commission that we are not happy with the unfair burden-sharing that occurred as a result of Brexit. We want to do right by the Irish fishing community.”

“Then do it,” was a general response from several fishermen in the port who told this paper that they have become more convinced that the government is prepared to see the industry lose more boats “to satisfy the EU and the bigger European fishing nations.”

Christopher O'Sullivan TD said: “We need to step up to the mark and take action. We have to go back to Europe and fight for and lobby for a fairer share of the European fishing quota. We need to do whatever it takes.”

Castletownbere Co-op Manager John Nolan led the presentation of the fishing industry's problems to Taoiseach Martin. The meeting was held in the Co-op premises.

“This was a welcome engagement with many issues presented by Co-op Manager John Nolan to the Taoiseach,” said Patrick Murphy, CEO of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation. “It was unfortunate, however, that he had only an hour to raise the issues as this passed too quickly. All credit is due to the Taoiseach for staying on for an additional thirty minutes to engage with the fishermen present giving their personal views and explaining the difficulty they are facing each and every day struggling to pay their bills and pay their crews,” said South West Fish Producers' Organisation CEO, Patrick Murphy.

On the following Monday – and two days before the Wednesday Dublin demonstration, a meeting was arranged between the Taoiseach and the fishing industry.

It was established that the meeting was

proposed as part of Mr. Martin's interest in having “a social dialogue forum with various industries.” It followed on the publication of the Interim Report of the Seafood Sector Task Force on which there are industry and which was established by the Marine Minister, Charlie McConalogue.

There were different opinions afterwards about the meeting, varying from “positive” on the basis that the Taoiseach had met with and listened to the industry and that “more notice is being taken” to “not impressed with the lack of understanding shown” and “failed to appreciate what he was being told about the damage to the industry” and “curious that it came just before the Dublin demo.”

“Open discussion and two-way dialogue,” was a PR ‘spin’ put on the meetings from the Government side and “Taoiseach and Minister happy with meeting with the fishing representatives”

Minister McConalogue was quoted through his office: “It has been a tough year for our fishers. It is important that there are open channels of dialogue between government and the industry, and it is important to note that we are listening to the industry.”

FPO representatives sought changes to the Common Fisheries Policy to allow more access for Irish fishermen to more quota in their own waters. The Interim Report by the Seafood Task Force was discussed and what incentives would be available for a voluntary fleet cessation scheme for demersal vessels to counter the reduced quota share due to Brexit. A voluntary decommissioning scheme to remove boats from the Irish fleet was mentioned, but with strong resistance to the concept from some of the FPO officials who told the Taoiseach that this was putting Irish fishermen out of work to satisfy the EU and the bigger European fishing nations.

Government Destruction of Irish Fishing Sector Indefensible

Since assuming office, the government have crucified the €1 billion Irish fishing industry, which employs over 16,000, through massive fish quota losses and a raft of new stringent regulations and penalties according to Michael Collins TD.

The Rural Independent Group have again slammed the government's gigantic failures - to protect Ireland's fishing interests, to support coastal communities and to listen to the concerns of ordinary fishermen and women.

Speaking from his Cork South West constituency, Deputy Michael Collins said; "European national governments have done everything possible to protect their fishing sectors during the Brexit discussions. In Ireland, the opposite is the case, as our government have accepted a sell-out Brexit deal that will cost an average fisherman between €5,000 and €20,000 in lost annual income."

"In overall terms, the Irish industry will lose €43million worth of quota shares by 2026, according to the government's own figures."

"This deal means that foreign vessels now catch over 85 per cent of all fish in Irish waters. It also means that an estimated 4,000 people will lose their jobs either on boats or within the processing sectors. By comparison, Britain received a Brexit deal ensuring their boats can catch 75 per cent of all fish in their waters."

"Such gross incompetence is reprehensible, especially as every plea so far from the industry has been utterly dismissed by the Minister and the government. This dismissively arrogant attitude is shameful and will wipe out already pressured coastal communities."

"This arrogance was again on display by the Minister during a fisheries debate in the Dáil recently, as he treated it as a casual box-ticking exercise rather than with the degree of seriousness and sincerity it deservedly required. In fact, that debate served to illustrate how far removed this government is from the views of ordinary fishers."

"Perhaps what is most perplexing from the outcome of that crucial debate was that on two occasions, the Minister actually mislead the Dáil using trickery. Firstly, he tried to illustrate that a new control plan, which is out for public consultation, included the entire sector. This is totally incorrect, as only whitefish

and shellfish plans are out for public consultation, with the pelagic sector - the most valuable to the Irish fleet and most impacted by the Brexit quota deal - completely excluded."

"This means the Minister's actions further jeopardise the entire sector, as any such plan can now be rejected by the Commission, due to its incomplete nature, as each member state can only have one such control plan."

"Minister McConalogue also stated that the SFPA would be submitting the control plan to the EU Commission, to distance himself from the process. Again, this is incorrect and deliberately misleading, as article 43 of the Sea Fisheries and Maritime Act 2006 confirms that it is, in fact, the Minister who must submit the control plan to the Commission, following cabinet approval."

"Playing political games with the fishing industry will not be tolerated. More than 16,000 people depend on this sector for employment. It is reckless, careless and extremely arrogant for the Minister to act in this way."

"The disastrous Brexit deal and the weighting of fish at the pier are both a direct result of Minister Mc Conalogue's utter failure. This Minister is now allowing foreign vessels to arrive at Irish ports without any checks, while Irish boats are treated like criminals."

"My colleagues and I, in the Rural Independent Group, stand firmly with the Irish fishing sector. We want to see a re-negotiation of the Brexit quota carve-up, to include a much higher quota deal for Ireland and to put an end to the latest requirement that Irish-vessel caught fish be weighed on arrival in a port."

Deputy Collins was extremely proud to stand with the Fishermen, their families and the communities on Wednesday 23rd June, "My colleagues and I stood shoulder to shoulder with Irish fishermen and women, when they brought their protest campaign to the capital. The government must listen and end their deceit of the sector. The time for games has long since passed," concluded Deputy Collins.



(Above): Patricia O'Leary and Eileen McNulty from Bray, showing their support for the Irish fishing industry.
(Below): Darren Kilbane, Achill Island; Hugh McClenaghan and Mark Reynolds (crew of Northern Celt).



Sarah Wong: "I was happy to attend because it is wrong that the Fishermen of Ireland are being left with not enough quota of fish in national territory to the point where their livelihoods are at risk. It's wrong!"

Minister Statement Regarding Flotilla

The Minister and the Government fully understands and appreciates that the impact of Brexit on Ireland's seafood sector and the coastal communities dependent on it, is a major concern. On Monday, an Taoiseach and the Minister met with fishing industry representative groups to discuss some of the current issues and challenges facing the sector.

Both the Taoiseach and Minister welcomed the positive engagement and open dialogue with industry and took the opportunity to re-affirm the Government's commitment to support a sustainable seafood sector that provides for our coastal communities. This engagement followed an Taoiseach's visit to Castletownbere and Union Hall recently, the Minister's series of Virtual Townhalls for Coastal Communities and a recent three hour debate in an Dáil on fishing. The Minister has offered to meet the Producer Organisations and industry representatives today, on behalf of the Government, to receive a letter from those involved in the protest event. He has also announced that he will visit ports and harbours and meet with fishers and coastal communities on a tour of Ireland over the coming months.

On the flotilla today and in advance of his meeting with the fishing organisations, the Minister commented "The Government and I stand with our fishers and we continue to welcome all engagement with fishers, their representatives and with coastal communities, I welcome fisher representatives to the Department today to hear their concerns in person. I recently met with coastal communities on a series of Virtual Townhalls. Now, in line with COVID-19 restrictions, I look forward to meeting with fishers and coastal communities in person at their ports and harbours. We recognise the challenges facing the industry as result of Brexit and the pandemic and I have established the Seafood Sector Task Force to report to me on the future of the industry."

The Minister set up the Seafood Sector Task Force in March to examine the implications for the Irish Fishing industry and coastal communities particularly dependent upon it arising from the EU/UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The Task Force involving representatives of the seafood sector and coastal communities dependent on fishing under the guidance of the steering group (Aidan Cotter, Margaret Daly and Micheál O'Conneide) submitted an interim Report to the Minister last week which recommended a range of actions that may be pursued to assist in reducing the burden on Ireland from the transfers of fishing quota shares to the UK and a voluntary tie-up scheme for whitefish vessels impacted by the quota reductions at the latter part of the year. The Seafood Sector Task will continue its work with a view to producing a final report for submission to the Minister to recommend a range of actions and initiatives for those directly impacted by the TCA and outline other developmental strategies to strengthen and enhance coastal communities especially dependent on the seafood industry.

The Minister is pursuing every opportunity at EU level to increase the available quotas for our fishing fleet. The Minister and the Government will continue to keep the focus on the disproportionate quota reductions for Ireland and in line with the recommendations of the Task Force Interim report is using any opportunity available to seek constructive solutions that would help to alleviate this unacceptable position. The Minister is working on progressing the recommendation for a tie-up scheme and seeking the required EU State Aid approval and the EU funding under the EU Brexit Adjustment Reserve fund.

Government Must Not Go 'Cap in Hand' to Europe Over Fishing

Independent TD for Donegal, Thomas Pringle, said the recent protest by fishermen in Dublin should bring home to Government the impact of its policies on the fishing industry.

Deputy Pringle also questioned the Taoiseach on Government attitude toward the review of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). The deputy has called on Government to push for renegotiation of the CFP.

"It was a very successful protest by the fishing industry and it was great to see

people there from every port in the country. There is a lot of empathy from the general population for the plight of fishing communities and that can be used to make the case to the government.

"Government now needs to listen and act. It is not enough to try to restore cuts caused by Brexit or undo the SFPA weighting situation.

Those measures are necessary but are really only sticking plaster solutions we need in fishing communities a complete

renegotiation of the CFP that recognises that the EU stole our rights from us as we joined the EEC and it is only by rectifying that situation that the fishing industry and communities can develop to their full potential. We have funded the EU for years through fishing so that has to change and it

is time for payback."

Addressing the Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, in the Dáil, Deputy Pringle said he was interested in the Taoiseach's comments in relation to the Government attitude toward the review of the Common Fisheries Policy that will be coming up in the next year or

so.

Deputy Pringle said: "You said you wanted to reset the relationship with Europe and with the review of the Common Fisheries Policy. How are you actually going to reset that relationship?"

The deputy said: "I believe Europe actually stole our access to fishing from us as we were negotiating to join the European Union. Is that the relationship you're going to reset, or are you going to go cap in hand?"

Europe received

more than €100bn euro worth of fish from Ireland in the years since Ireland joined the EU, the deputy said.

When the Taoiseach said, "We can't just keep going on, attack, attack, attack," Deputy Pringle replied, "Yes, we can."

Government Must Stand Up for Fishermen and End Unfair Treatment

Sinn Féin spokesperson on Fisheries and the Marine, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn TD, has urged the government to stand up for Irish fishermen and end the long-running injustices in the EU's Common Fisheries Policy.

His comments followed the protest of fishing families outside the Convention Centre in Dublin. Teachta Mac Lochlainn said: "I am calling on the government to stand up for Irish fishermen and end the injustice of the current Common Fisheries Policy. This terrible policy has devastated Ireland's fishing communities.

"This government has failed to act and stand up for our fishing communities.

"They have sat idly by again while an injustice has continued whereby Ireland has 12% of the waters in the EU but our fishermen are only allowed to catch 4% of the fish"

"This costs our State thousands of jobs and hundreds of million worth of seafood every year. It is shameful and the government has shown it is totally unwilling to act and stand up for our fishing communities.

"We now need a statement of intent from our government that they will fight tooth and nail for Ireland's fair share of the fish in our waters when the Common Fisheries Policy is revisited.

"We also urgently need an equal burden sharing of the loss of fish quota arising from the EU/ UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement amongst the fishing fleets of all EU Member States. This quota loss amounts to tens of millions of euro each year to our fleet.

"Our fishing community came to the centre of power in Dublin to send a strong message to those in power that this disgraceful situation cannot continue any longer. I am calling on the government to listen to their calls.

"Sinn Féin will stand with our fishing communities and stand up for their rights."



Lough Swilly fishermen John and Damian Harkin and Gavin Brown. The Sharkey family from Clogherhead at the recent protest in Dublin.



Fishermen and processors protesting together in Dublin for the survival of our fishing and coastal communities.



THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

“I will never forget the first time I saw the *Titanic*”

RORY GOLDEN made a major career change in his life – from the music industry to become an active explorer, diver and researcher. He is Managing Director of ‘Flagship Scuba’ a specialist company at Sandycove, Co. Dublin, providing sales and servicing of diving and marine equipment for commercial and recreational diving, which he founded in 1999. He is a member of the Explorers Club and the Royal Geographic Society and was the first Irish diver to go down to the wreck of the *Titanic*, to which he is returning this month as part of Titanic Survey Expedition 2021.

Interview by Marine Times Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney

Rory Golden has a lot of diving experience, going down subsea to deep depths in submersibles. He had key roles in *Titanic* expeditions in 2000 and 2006. Now he is making a third visit to the scene of the wreck in an expedition which is testing a new type of submersible.

“I didn’t expect to be going back again, but it is an exciting opportunity to be invited to join this new expedition which is using new technology to go down to the deep ocean where there is so much to learn and see.”

Rory Golden was working in the music industry in Ireland and was MD of Virgin Records Ireland for 15 years. At the same time he was also interested in diving and was a member of the committee of CFT - Comhairle Fo-Thuinn – the Irish Underwater Council. At that organisation’s annual Dive Show in 1988 he met *Titanic* cameraman, Ralph White, who had been on the French-American expedition to find the *Titanic* in 1985. Their friendship resulted in Rory becoming involved in *Titanic* expeditions.

“Life is all about connections, about people you meet and those you help, and it is through those connections and from my involvement in other deepwater expeditions that I have had the opportunity to go down to the *Titanic* wreck site.

“I will never forget the first time I saw the *Titanic*. It was a rush of emotion. We were travelling along the flat ocean floor towards the ship and we came upon a wall of mud. We were at the forward section, near the bow, and we slowly rose up a steel wall that was covered in rivets and rusticles. Eventually we ascended over the top and there she was. She is massive and awe-inspiring. You are excited, amazed and, at the same time, you feel a deep sadness for all those lost. It is unlike anything else I experienced in



Rory Golden at the unveiling of the memorial to Edward Bransfield, the Corkman who discovered Antarctica

over 45 years of diving.”

Rory Golden takes a particular interest in those who travelled on the *Titanic* from many parts of Ireland – “the people who you don’t hear much of, the people that perhaps are not thought of that much who were on the *Titanic*. We hear about the rich people who were on board *Titanic*, but those people that who you don’t hear so much about, they mean a lot more to us in Ireland.”

This year’s expedition will be comprehensive, operating out of St. John’s in Newfoundland, using a newly developed type of submersible. Ocean Gate Expeditions in Seattle, USA, has developed a new deepwater submersible made of carbon fibre, capped with two titanium domes and which has the largest viewing port of any deep-sea submersible. Scientists, marine archaeologists and biolo-

gists are involved in the expedition which will carry out a comprehensive survey of the wreck. The last time there was a comprehensive survey was in 2010.

“The wreck is going to be 3D-mapped, there’s going to be a laser-mapping of the whole wreck site, a comprehensive survey of the whole site, the physical structure of the wreck and to examine the marine life that has flourished in the dark down there.

This type of submersible has never before been used in this situation, so it is exciting stuff.

“The *Titanic* site is changing. It has been described as many things. The site is treated with respect. It is a memorial to a tragedy. There is a sense of profound sadness. The ship is dying, decaying, the wreck site is dying, Nature is taking it back to itself, but the main features of the ship will be there for a very long time. The results of this expedition will help science. Two-and-a-half miles deep, nearly four kilometres deep in the ocean can be a very dangerous place to be, so great care has to be taken. There is 6,000 lbs of pressure per square inch. It is not without its risks. But they are calculated risks.

“It is pitch black down there. Nothing down there can see anything. All creatures are blind. But, with the lights of the submersible you do see small crabs, you do see in particular rat-rail fish which, from my previous dives, follow the subs around, possibly because the noise of the motors attracts them. The lights show up things, they have some effect on the water temperature because it is practically zero outside. There is lots of plant life growing on the ship. So it is a marine biologist’s heaven as well because of the unknown areas down there in terms of growth. On the way down you see all these luminescence creatures. So, the whole area is a micro-eco system which is another area that people do not equate with the *Titanic*.”





My diary can often include unusual aspects of maritime life and so it did this month when the unveiling of the anchor from the Swedish ship *Saga* at a beach on the East Cork coastline led me to think that a 'chain of maritime memories' around the Cork coastline would be a unique and unusual attraction.

The diary occasion was a fixture for Ballybrannigan Beach by Cork County Council, in the Ballycotton Bay area and involved the creation of a memorial from the anchor of a shipwreck which arrived there, unmanned, 126 years ago – and not far from another unmanned shipwreck which arrived near Ballycotton, a good fishing port, just last year!

Now, my diary may be considered quirky, but so can be aspects of maritime history and this one was definitely unusual, even at one stage being associated with the *Marie Celeste* mystery!

There are many and varied approaches these days to developing 'visitor' and 'heritage' attractions. There is even a proposal to turn the ESB Ardnacrusha Hydro-electric dam on the River Shannon between Limerick and Clare into a major visitor attraction which, it has been suggested, could rival the 'Titanic' Exhibition Centre in Belfast, though I think that might be a shade of over-enthusiastic thinking! Eel fishermen would have different views about Ardnacrusha.

I highlighted the story of the *Saga* earlier this year when comparing it to the *Alta*, the vessel which grounded, having been abandoned by its crew in the Atlantic and which still remains decaying on the shoreline near Ballycotton. It is likely to be there for a long time, with the cost of removal estimated at several million Euros. Both had mystery attached to them as to where they came from and how, without any crew aboard, they both wound up shipwrecks, not too far apart, along the same shoreline.

The *Saga* crossed the Atlantic unmanned in just over a month, arriving in East Cork and becoming a wreck on February 16, 1895. It was Swedish and the crew had been rescued by another Swedish vessel after it was abandoned in the Bay of Biscay. Goods recovered from the *Saga* were sold at a public auction, but the anchor remained unwanted in East Cork until it has now become a memorial and tourist visitor attraction.

A bit of research showed me that there are about a hundred shipwrecks listed around the Ballycotton area, the harbour from which the most famous rescue in Irish lifeboat history was carried out. That was to the Daunt Rock Lightvessel off Cork Harbour in 1936. The *Mary Stanford*, the lifeboat which carried out that rescue is preserved as another memorial on the Ballycotton coastline, on the cliff top outside the village after intense work to do so by the local community, proud of its history.

The *Saga*, the focus of the new memorial, drifted ashore and was wrecked at Ballyshane near Ballybrannigan Beach in 1895. With nobody on board, nor any statement ever issued, the fate of the ship and her crew was an unresolved mystery until a local lady, Patricia O'Connell, undertook research and, with the support of local historians, as well as records obtained in Stockholm and the Oskarshamn Maritime Museum in Sweden, revealed the 126-year-old story.

While sailing from Sweden to South America, the *Saga* was hit by a series of storms during a two-week period when it lost its rudder and the crew were rescued



Unveiling the *Saga* anchor – Councillor Michael Hegarty, Chairman East Cork Committee; Patricia O'Connell who researched the project; Mayor of Cork County, Mary Linehan-Foley and Cork County Council Senior Executive Officer, Sean O'Callaghan.

without loss of life and got home safely. Communications at that time were not as good as modern times and the ship carried its own way to East Cork and grounded there, being compared in media reports of that time to the mystery of the *Marie Celeste*.

The story, when revealed, was less mysterious.

The anchor of the *Saga*, donated to Cork County Council, has been installed with an information board detailing the story.

Cape Clear Vessel to Tour Cork Harbour

The iconic orange and white colours of Cape Clear Ferries are a familiar sight around Cork Harbour these days, thanks to the expanding interests of the islanders from West Cork.



Their *Cailin Óir* has been upgraded to cater for 100 passengers and is running Cork Harbour Cruises, excursions from the city marina and Crosshaven, including a service to Spike Island. "Since Cork is a bustling harbour with a great range of activities, wildlife, scenery and weather conditions no two days will be quite the same and there will be evening sunset tours to end a perfect summer's day," says Cape Clear Ferries in a nicely hopeful outlook for the season!

Whales Are 'Social Touching' When Humans Can't!

In what might appear to be a quirky

diary which I keep, I noted this month reports from a new study by marine biologists that killer whales rival chimpanzees, macaques and even humans when it comes to "social touching" an act which indicates strong bonds, the scientists say.

Their study has been published at a time when humans are warned not to engage in such behaviour because of the Covid pandemic.

Killer whales travel in extended, varied family groups, care for grandchildren after menopause and even imitate human speech according to the scientific research.

Though the whales only swim at about 6 kilometres per hour, it's hard to fully observe them so Michael Weiss, a behavioural ecologist at the Center for Whale Research in Friday Harbour, Washington, USA, teamed up with colleagues to launch unmanned drones from a motorboat on the shores of the Pacific, flying them 30 to 120 metres above a pod of 22 killer whales. That was high enough not to bother the whales and it is the first time drones have been used to study physical contacts in any cetacean.

The researchers recorded more than 800 instances of 'social touching' contacts between whales which included slippery hugs, back-to-back and nose-to-nose rubs and 'flipper slaps' between pairs of whales, all between bouts of leaping out of the water. Other whales playfully tossed calves into the air, letting them splash back into the water next to them.

Those interactions weren't just random, Weiss says. "The drone images revealed clear preferences among individuals, usually for one best friend," Weiss said.

Doesn't my diary have a varied look at life?

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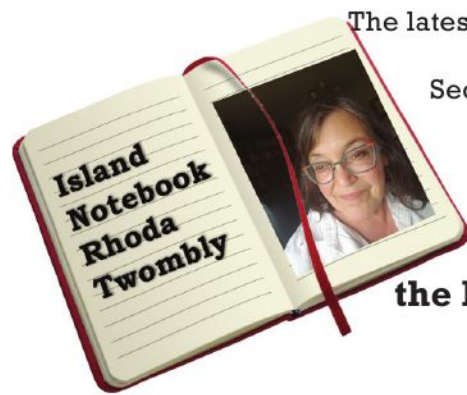
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The latest developments on the offshore islands reported by Rhoda Twombly, Secretary Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, the Islands' Federation.

“If Islands are going to have a future, we need to address the housing problem as a matter of extreme urgency...”

That is the precursor statement to the report of the ‘Housing Seminar/Workshop’ held by Comhdháil Oileán hÉireann in April which highlighted this vital issue for the future of the offshore islands.

The general consensus of the seminar was that a large-scale preparatory study and plan should be put together on behalf of all the islands. Included in this there should be a detailed report on all necessary housing data from across the islands and a comprehensive, cohesive plan combined with solid, workable plans/steps that would allow the necessary actions to take place.

The possibility of setting up a National Island Housing Association, whose remit would be to buy and build homes for permanent island residents, was suggested. Home ownership would be kept within the community.

The possibility of such an organisation buying the homes of older islanders, homes which are likely to fall derelict when they die, should also be investigated. The islanders would of course be free to continue to live in their homes until they die but could benefit from the funds released. Such an organisation should prioritise the renovation of old and derelict buildings where appropriate and should use designs which maximise energy efficiency and which are in keeping with the unique features of the island.

Amongst the other conclusions reached in the report:

- While plans are being drafted for an all-islands approach, all efforts should be made to ensure that participation on the formulation of the islands policy is fully established and input on this issue is fed into the Interdepartmental Committee on Island Development. The main purpose for this is to ensure a national approach/(re)solution so that any difficulties and issues that occur

and vary from one local authority to another are removed and a streamlined approach is taken. All this would be most effective if done while adhering to island specific planning guidelines.

- Grant aid should be provided for the renovation of old houses for use as homes.

Some suggested actions

1. Think-tank on each island in order to feed into national islands housing forum.
2. Input to all relevant county development plans (County Councils) with regards population targets
3. Work towards the establishment of an island-specific planning procedure which includes the planners being trained correctly having visited the islands.
4. Housing survey to be carried out on each island and collated into one full report
5. Ensure input to the island policy development via the Interdepartmental Committee On Island Development
6. Government lending scheme/Rural and Islands Fund (Scotland)
7. Community Land Trusts
8. Discussion around the compulsory purchase of houses in long-term dereliction
9. Concentrate efforts on greater diversification to facilitate a move from high tourism dependency
10. Establishment of an island housing association
11. Tax incentives for landlords (longer term/year round lease)/VAT parity with mainland to have cost equality
12. Innovative/experimental government housing schemes to be piloted on islands
13. Non-profit/community owned and island-controlled housing scheme.
14. Efforts to encourage industry diversification to reduce the dependency on tourism thus encouraging greater year-round residencies and giving landlords reason to rethink short-term letting.

Comhdháil
Oileáin
na



hÉireann

Irish Islands Federation

Over 600 Tonnes of Marine Waste Has Been Collected by Ireland’s Seafood Sector Since 2015

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D has paid tribute to the men and women working in Ireland’s seafood sector for their continued efforts to reduce Ireland’s marine waste as part of the Clean Oceans Initiative.



Frank McClenaghan, skipper MFV Foyle Warrior, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D and Jim O’Toole, CEO, BIM

To date, the collaborative efforts of the sector have resulted in more than 600 tonnes of mainly plastic waste being collected at sea and during shore and pier clean-ups. A new focus for the Initiative is the drive to help Ireland’s fisheries harbours with their waste management systems in collaboration with local gear manufacturers to manage fishing gear throughout its life cycle.

Speaking at the pier in Greencastle, Co Donegal, Minister McConalogue commended Irish fishing, aquaculture and coastal communities for their achievements in helping to reduce what he described as “the plastic pollution pervading the marine environment.”

The Minister also highlighted the collective and ongoing work of the sector to better manage gear to prevent it from entering oceans in the first place and their efforts to remove waste from the Marine environment.

He stated, “The Irish seafood sector are a leading example of what can be achieved through collaboration. This collective approach is the key ingredient needed to tackle the plastic pollution pervading the marine environment. I am ever-impressed by the level of ingenuity being taken by the sector and this new focus to address the problem of marine waste is helping to protect Ireland’s marine environment for future generations.”

The Clean Oceans Initiative is being led by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland’s Seafood Development Agency, and supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

Jim O’Toole, CEO BIM spoke of the learnings being gained from the sector’s involvement in the pilot project to better understand the benefits of a circular economy and said, “BIM is proud to support the work of Ireland’s fishers, aquaculture producers and other members of the seafood sector in their continued Clean Oceans Initiative activities. The sector has assumed a leadership role in the protection of the marine environment through marine litter retrieval. BIM will continue to work with industry to ensure they are prepared for new waste management requirements under impending EU legislation.”

In January 2019, The Department of Agriculture, Food the Marine launched the Clean Oceans Initiative. The first collaborative effort at sea and on land to reduce marine waste to protect Ireland’s marine environment. By year-end 2019, 244 Irish registered fishing trawlers were registered to the Fishing for Litter programme as part of the Clean Oceans Initiative, committing to collected marine waste when working at sea.

BIM is leading the Initiative and supporting the Irish seafood sector and local coastal communities to work together to ensure waste impacts are minimised and mitigation efforts are developed and recognised.

Involvement in the Clean Oceans Initiative demonstrate the Irish seafood industry’s commitment to sustainability and contributes towards Ireland’s responsibilities under the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the EU plastics strategy.

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Why Is Everybody Complaining About the Outcome of Brexit on Fisheries?

“It will take time for the UK to find its place as a new coastal state, during which time Northeast Atlantic fisheries management is going to be turbulent,” according to the Chairman of the European Union Fisheries Alliance, Gerard van Balsfoort, who is also Vice-President Européche and President of the Pelagic Freezer Association

He was speaking at the City of Law School in the University of London at a workshop ‘Legal Challenges Faced by Coastal and Fishing Communities, Brexit and the New British Fisheries Policy.’ This brought together leading fisheries experts from academia, industry, and policy to share their expertise, views and experience on the challenges and consequences that Brexit has brought after the UK left the Common Fisheries Policy. He has been closely involved in the Brexit process from the start.

The title of his speech was – ‘Why is (almost) everybody complaining?’

“With the notable exception of Scottish pelagic operators, following Brexit virtually everyone in the EU and UK seafood industries has been complaining and found themselves in a rather dire situation,” he said. “The UK as a new coastal state in the Northeast Atlantic has stirred up an already complex fisheries management system. We have seen one consequence of this already by the unilateral increase by Norway and the Faroe Islands of their respective mackerel shares with 55%,” he said. “The UK government badly failed in its expectation management towards its own fishing industry which has led to overpromising and under delivering. This needs time to heal.

“The EU and the UK share numerous fish stocks that need joint, proper management and that would only be possible by accepting that both parties are heavily interlinked with many mutual dependencies. One is more dependent on access to the other party’s waters and the other more on access to the other party’s market. To be constructive, collaborative and reasonable

is the only way forward to avoid a situation that fish stocks are badly managed,” he said. “The EU has for the first time strongly and successfully played trade as a trump card during the negotiations on the Brexit fisheries agreement. As far as the EU fishing industry is concerned trade will be centrally placed in future fisheries negotiations from now on. In other words, access to the Single Market comes with a price,” Gerard van Balsfoort said.

Mapping The World’s Oceans

A project to map the world’s entire ocean floor by 2030 is underway. The project, called Seabed 2030, aims to map 100% of the global ocean floor. It is being funded by using crowd-sourced data from science vessels, corporations and private boat owners around the world, but has been hampered by COVID-19. That is according to Project Director and hydrographer, Jamie McMichael-Phillips. It has reached 20 per cent of target, he said.

“When Seabed 2030 was launched in 2017, only 6% of the oceans had been mapped to modern standards. In the last year, the team completed another 1.6% of the global ocean map, adding an area roughly around half the size of the United States,” McMichael-Phillips stated.

Some of the most hard-to-reach places on Earth have been included from data shared by billionaire explorer Victor Vescovo and the crew of his ship, the *DSSV Pressure Drop*. In September 2019, Vescovo completed a personal mission to descend to the deepest points in all five of Earth’s oceans aboard a small submersible. Vescovo’s team also used bathymetric

instruments aboard *Pressure Drop* to map these bottom-of-the-world hotspots while the ship was in the neighborhood. The team’s expeditions mapped an area equivalent to the size of France in roughly 10 months, more than half of which had never been seen before

Why map the entire ocean?

According to the Seabed team, a comprehensive understanding of the ocean floor is crucial to various scientific and commercial pursuits. “Good seafloor maps can help vessels navigate more efficiently, and they can also aid endeavours like laying cables and constructing pipelines,” the team said.

Super-Charging Nature at Largest Shrimp Farm in The World

‘Project Sea Dragon’ is the name given to a plan costing one point five billion Australian dollars to build the “largest shrimp farm in the developed world on land.”

That is the description by the Seafarms Group of its intention to create what Dean Jerry, Professor at James Cook University in Townsville, North Queensland, who leads a team working on the project says is: “Super-charging natural selection. What we’re really trying to breed ultimately is a prawn which grows as fast as it can.”

Seafarms is getting support from the Australian government. The proposal is for 1,000 ponds onshore and transporting the shrimp from one of Australia’s remotest regions to markets in Asia. Reports say that the scientific team is “attempting to unlock the genome of the Black Tiger prawn to make a super invertebrate that will grow faster, fight disease more effectively and taste better than its free-roaming brethren.”

Increasing Land-Based Interest In Salmon Farming

More proposals are being made for salmon farming at land-based locations. In South Korea a company called K Smart Farming has been established to develop, construct, own and operate land-based facilities.

Following initial research into concept development and engineering the company has made an agreement with Artec Aqua of Norway for a detailed feasibility study of a planned smolt site in Jeungseon and a ‘grow-out’ location in Yangyang. The agreement includes engineering, delivery, installation and commissioning of designed process related systems and equipment in the future build-out of the project. The agreement was signed in Seoul.

Heavy Penalties for Lobster Fishermen Who Broke Whale Entanglement Rules in Australia

Two fishermen in Western Australia who failed to comply with regulations designed to minimise whale entanglements have been fined seven and a half thousand Australian dollars each and had their equipment confiscated. They were fishing lobster pots. Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) officers seized nine lobster

pots off the coast of Scarborough where, they told Perth Court, that “a part of the pot line for each pot was trailing across the surface of the water.”

“These were two commercial fishermen who were aware of the trailing rope and did not comply with the rule that requires the top third of the length of the pot lines to be held vertically in the water column,” the officers told the Court.



The fishermen pleaded guilty and were each fined 7,453 Australian dollars and made to pay Court costs as well and the Court ordered forfeiture of the nine seized pots and equipment..

DPIRD’s Director of Regional Compliance, Todd A’Var, said the rules were “very important in reducing the hazard of entanglement of whales migrating along the Western Australian coast. Measures focussed on reducing rope and floats and eliminating floating rope in waters deeper than 20 metres came into force seven years ago. These were hefty fines and make the point.”

DPIRD issued a statement saying that research has shown the protective measures, to ensure that less rope is used and that most of it is held vertically in the water column, “have significantly reduced the number of entanglements by an average of 64% and annual entanglements have fallen to single figures.”

Kazakhstan Seeking a Billion Dollars to Develop Fish Farming

Kazakhstan is seeking over a billion dollars investment to increase farmed fish production from its current annual figure of 7,000 tonnes to 270,000 tonnes by 2030 because government predictions have indicated that annual domestic fish consumption will increase from 67,000 tonnes to 134,000 tonnes.

The government plan also wants to increase exports could quadruple from 30,000 tonnes to 134,000 tonnes. This will require large-scale hatcheries and major expansion of fish processing capacities.

Using Fish Farming to End Conflicts

Tilapia are being used as a fish farming project in parts of rural Columbia to end violence caused by guerrilla groups which have used the areas for drugs production.

The pilot project to use tilapia farming as a way to bring peace and economic prosperity to a violent part of rural Colombia is showing promising results, according to government statements. 400,000 people work direct or indirectly in the fishing and aquaculture industries in Colombia.



Boy Calum gets ready for the new season at Ardglass port - Photo Christopher Feenan



WATER SAFETY IRELAND REPORT

The Chief Executive of Water Safety Ireland, John Leech, says that the public attitude to the importance of safety on the water has improved steadily. He examines the statistics for last year and looks forward to the first ever 'World Drowning Prevention Day' on July 25.

Fatal Drownings Decreased in 2020

Sadly 76 people drowned last year, this compares to 105 drownings in 2019 and is the lowest number since 1936 when 73 drowned in Ireland. The majority, 50, were male. Suicide accounted for 28 deaths, 9 fewer than 2019. A total of 44 people drowned accidentally in 2020, 18 fewer than in 2019 when 62 drowned accidentally. Gender - Male: 50, Female: 26; Cause - Accidental 44, Suicide 28, Undetermined 4; Province - Connacht: 21, Leinster: 19, Munster: 28, Ulster (Donegal): 8.

By Age:

Under 30	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	Over 75
5	6	4	9	8	7	8	10	7	7	5

Some commentators may suggest that the decrease was because of Lockdown, however it was relatively short and was early in the year when aquatic activity is normally low. Conversely, we had an explosion in open water swimming which continues and a very large increase in recreational aquatic activities like kayaking, sailing, surfing, stand up paddle boards, personal watercraft, cruising, angling and many more as most of our population holidayed at home due to the pandemic.

Overall, the Coast Guard co-ordinated 2643 incidents last year in comparison with 2490 incidents in 2019. Activity over February, March and April was the lowest recorded for each of those months over recent years, but noticeably picked up in May with August and September being exceptionally busy.

Interestingly the population of Ireland in 1936 was just under 3 million, whilst today it is just under 5 million with tens of thousands of people involved in aquatic activities who would have kept away from water for fear of drowning.

Recognition must go to all the organisations who are doing so much work on drowning prevention including members of the Marine Safety Working Group and our Local Authorities and, of course our SAR services, including the Coast Guard, RNLI, Community Rescue Boats, fire services and lifeguards.

We must also recognise that our populations' attitude, behaviours and culture regarding water safety has improved steadily in recent years, they have taken more personal responsibility for their water safety. The ten-year average of drowning supports this, as in 2000 it was 190, today it is 115.

We now have water safety education programmes in our crèches, pre-school, primary school, secondary school and

students in third level institutions have the option of developing their lifesaving skills. On April 28 this year, Ireland and Bangladesh spearheaded the first-ever United Nations resolution on drowning prevention (for more details you can find them on our website: watersafety.ie)

which aims to reduce drowning worldwide. Internationally, Ireland is recognised as a leader in drowning prevention and these statistics support this view.

On July 25, the world will celebrate the first ever 'World Drowning Prevention Day'

We need to continue to give leadership around the world to help reduce the preventable drownings that amount to 235,000 fatal drownings each year, as well as maintain all the good work that we have done at home. We need to see a further decrease in fatal drownings for 2021 and we require the public to continue to take personal responsibility for their water safety.

So, until next month, enjoy your aquatic pursuits or sports and always wear a lifejacket on or near the water and use your influence to further reduce the number of drownings on our island nation to improve our nations safety culture.



IRISH WHALE AND DOLPHIN GROUP IWDG NEWS



Celtic Mist, the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group's flagship, has been on a 'shakedown' voyage after maintenance work. Chief Executive of the Group, marine scientist Dr. Simon Berrow has been on board and recounts a splash he heard outside his porthole.

I Heard a Splash Outside My Porthole

It was three pairs of black guillemots, or Tysties, courting. The female crouching low on the water, showing her red gape to her courtiers. So close, but oblivious of me.



I was on *Celtic Mist* in Greystones Marina. Another gift from the IWDG flagship research vessel. *Celtic Mist* is well known in Ireland.

Formerly owned by Charles Haughey, it was gifted to the IWDG, 10 years ago in 2011. The boat was in poor repair despite its lofty reputation and we have put in a lot of money and hundreds of hours of voluntary labour to bring it up to its current very high standard. She left Howth Boatyard after receiving fresh paint, varnish and antifouling. We went on a 'shakedown survey' of little terns off Kilcoole for GMIT (Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology) and the NPWS (National Parks and Wildlife Service) before IWDG Members summer cruises started at the end of June.

We also had our first cetacean sighting from *Celtic Mist* this season, 3 harbour porpoise, including a calf, off Bray Head, Co Wicklow.

Everybody knows how much work and expense maintaining any boat is, especially a 17 metre steel-hulled ketch built in 1974 in Custo in Brittany. Powered by a 350 hp Caterpillar engine, she is perfect for the IWDG to get members out to sea

and experience our coastal waters as well as carrying out surveys for whales and dolphins.

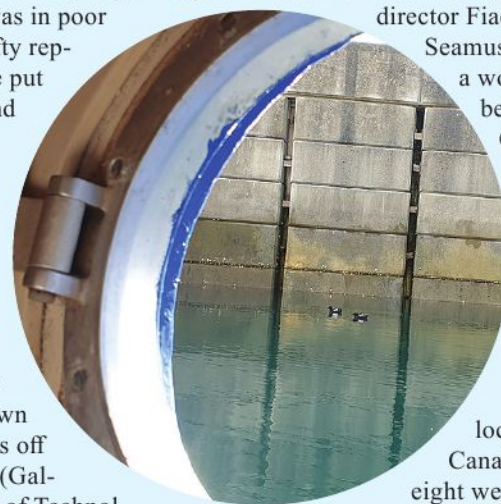
When we first got her, we struggled to maintain and run such a large vessel, but a chance meeting between IWDG

director Fiacc O'Brolchain and Seamus MacGearailt started a wonderful relationship between IWDG and GlenNua, which not only provides IWDG with Skippers and Mates to sail *Celtic Mist*, but an army of superbly gifted volunteers to carry out ongoing maintenance.

After a year of being locked down in Grand Canal Basin, *Celtic Mist* has eight week-long cruises available to members in addition to three weeks on the Shannon Dolphin Project working between Kilrush, in the Shannon Estuary and Fenit/Brandon in North Kerry.

She will survey inshore waters off Dublin, Wicklow, Wexford, Waterford, Cork, Kerry and Clare this year providing fantastic experiences for IWDG members, as well as contributing to our knowledge of whales and dolphins in Ireland.

Photos: Dr. Simon Berrow



Extensive Works by the KER Group Aboard the New Vessel Mfv Ella

KER Group designed, supplied and installed the following equipment on-board the new MFV "Ella": 275Kw R134a RSW system; Complete Vacuum Pump system, 2000ltr tank; BUUS 3 tonne flake Ice Machine c/w Bitzer condensing unit; Fish hold chilling, stainless steel evaporators c/w Bitzer sea water cooled condensing unit; Air conditioning; Cold room (food provisions).

RSW System

275KW RSW system on R134a gas. System fully installed by KER Group, circulating pump and condenser pump and associated pipework supplied and installed. Polyurethane manifold manufactured and installed in RSW room to control chilled water and distribution to all fish tanks. The system is controlled by a PLC, this was designed and programmed by KER Group.

Vacuum pump system

KER Group Vacuum pump system, include 1 x Samson Ocean Master vacuum pump c/w stainless steel casing for longevity. 2000ltr vacuum tank c/w inspection hatch and rubber flap unit. All necessary 12" stainless steel piping to each fish tank and delivery pipework to main deck. Vacuum system includes a blow back system. Controlled by PLC, designed and programmed by KER Group.

BUUS Ice Machine

3 Tonne per day, salt or fresh water ice machine, complete with Bitzer condensing unit and Azcue pump. Ice machine produces flake ice for use during white fishing.

Fish hold chilling

Fish hold chilling in all fish tanks. KER Group manufactured the complete evaporator from stainless steel piping, approx. 1,000 meters. The vast quantity of piping

increases surface area and allows for increased refrigeration duty, offering our client's optimum fish hold temperatures for their fish.

Air conditioning

KER supplied and installed a full heating and cooling air conditioning system throughout the accommodation, galley and wheelhouse areas.

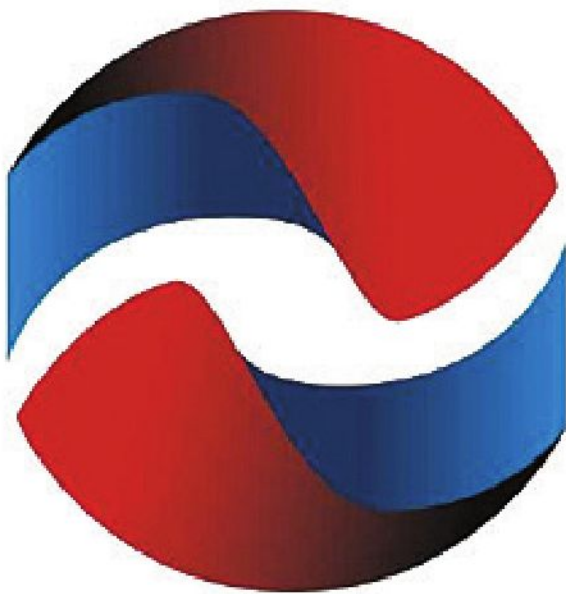
Cold room (food provisions)

The new MFV Ella came with space for a walk-in freezer off the Galley area. KER Group, sheeted the room, installed fiberglass, on the floor, walls and ceiling, to allow for ease of cleaning and durability. Installed the refrigeration system to cool the area and installed a stainless steel food rack along with a custom pedestrian door finished in stainless steel.

KER Group Installed all above systems including, all copper, stainless steel, mild steel, polyurethane piping. All necessary coded welding for refrigeration piping. Complete electrical installation, electrical control cabinets manufactured in house and installed on board.

All systems set up and commissioned, by KER Group.

Visit www.ker.ie for more information.



KER GROUP



KER Group designed, supplied and installed the following equipment on-board the new MFV "Ella"

- 275Kw R134a RSW system
- Complete Vacuum Pump system, 2000ltr tank
- BUUS 3 tonne flake Ice Machine c/w Bitzer condensing unit
- Fish hold chilling, stainless steel evaporators c/w Bitzer sea water cooled condensing unit
- Air conditioning
- Cold room (food provisions)

Best wishes to Atlantic Dawn Group and all the crew of the Ella from all the KER Group



Saint Catherine's Road, Killybegs, Co. Donegal, Ireland
Tel: +353 (0)74 97 31525 Fax: +353 (0)74 97 32111

www.ker.ie

New "Ella" Delivered by Mooney Boats for the Atlantic Dawn Group



The Atlantic Dawn Group have proudly taken delivery of their new vessel MFV "Ella"

They would like to thank Mooney Boats Ltd for finishing the vessel to such an exceptionally high standard.

If anyone doubts that boat building is a craft, then they need only step on board the "Ella" to see the skilled workmanship throughout the vessel. The quality of the finished vessel is a credit to the management and staff of Mooney Boats Ltd.



Shore Road, Killybegs
Donegal, Ireland
+353 74 97 31152
info@mooneyboats.ie



**MOONEY BOATS LTD Proud Builders Of The MFV Ella
Wishing Atlantic Dawn Group, The McHugh Family
& Crew Every Success For The Future.**

www.mooneyboats.ie



The McHugh family welcoming the delivery of the Ella from Mooney Boats with Lee Mooney and Fr O'Gallchoir PP who blessed the vessel - Inset photo - Ella christening her namesake



Barry Electronics Ltd.
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Best Wishes to Atlantic Dawn Group and the crew with your new vessel "ELLA"

We are delighted to be selected as suppliers of electronic equipment for the "ELLA"

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Best wishes to the McHugh family Atlantic Dawn Group and all the crew with your new vessel 'Ella'

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Build 49 'Ella' is arguably one of the best-looking vessels in her class. The Ella's sweeping bow to stern lines and wheelhouse lip has been designed in such a way to complement her three bigger 64m sisters' ships MFV Veronica, Lauren & Leila which are currently under construction.



The Ella's modern lines not only offer complementing looks but also practicalities such as the enhanced visibility out of the arching wheelhouse windows.

The vessels internal layout has been pre-designed three dimensionally by Mooney Boats Ltd Design team to comfortably accommodate the latest technologies while allowing owners to virtually walk-through and review layouts and finishes prior to fitout.

Atlantic Dawn Group would also like to acknowledge the important role that the

naval architect played in the project. Mr. Ove Kristensen of Vestvaerftet in Denmark has managed to make a relatively small vessel feel very spacious and most importantly, a very safe and effective working environment.

In addition they would like to acknowledge the excellent work of Padmos and GEMS Ltd., who managed the mechanical, propulsion and electrical integration for the vessel.

GEMS was established in 1998 by George McCormick initially to provide



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Congratulations and continued success to the Atlantic Dawn Group, skipper and crew of the new ELLA From the management and staff of K.T. Nets





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www.ktnets.ie danny@ktnets.ie info@ktnets.ie

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Marine Equipment Specialists

Systems


SeaQuest Systems are proud to have supplied the complete supply of deck equipment to Atlantic Dawn Group's new build at Mooney Boats, MFV Ella - We wish owners, skipper and crew every success and safe seas



SeaQuest Systems supply of equipment for the MFV ELLA includes:

- 20t Trawl Winches
- 20t Top-Line Winch
- 20t Net Drums
- 15t Mid-Line Winch
- 15t Tail-Line Winch
- 6t Gilson Winch
- 2t Net Sounder Winch
- 1.5t @ 7mtr Powerblock Crane
- SeaQuest 14" Fish Pump
- SeaQuest Hyd. Hose Reel
- SeaQuest 14" Pump-Thru Fish Hose Reel
- Main & Fish Pump Hydraulic Systems
- Wheel House Control Panels & Crane Radio Control System





Killybegs, Co. Donegal, Ireland.
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www.seaquest.ie



(l-r): Kevin Mc Hugh, Lee Mooney, Karl Mc Hugh, Sean O'Donnell, Arron Diver & James Walsh.



shore support to the local fishing fleet in Greencastle and beyond. The core skills of the business are electrical system design along with the manufacture and commissioning of marine generators and control systems.

Having worked on a number of large scale international ship building projects, the aim of the company is to now apply and integrate that knowledge to the design of modern day fishing vessels. GEMS were very excited to get the call to build the switchboards for the new FV Ella, especially since this was the first major project carried out for Mooney Boats.

“With space on board being at a premium, the biggest challenge was to fit all the required equipment into the switchboard and yet leave access to the main parts for future maintenance or replacement. I’m quite pleased with the final product. I believe the vessel has an extremely robust electrical system which will give many years of trouble free operation”.

GEMS are fast becoming a main player

in the marine generator and control system market with a large stock of genset engines and complete generators available ex works.

Affordable synchronising systems are also tailor made for each vessel with all design and manufacture carried out “in house” at their premises in Greencastle. GEMS can also offer advice, in confidence, to any vessel owner as to their options when considering the electrical system for their vessel.

Feel free to contact us at any stage via our website, www.gems-ltd.com.

The Atlantic Dawn Group were very pleased to have contracted a number of local suppliers for important components on the “Ella.” This is a testament to the cluster of highly specialised companies that exist in our local community.

As accustomed with Mooney Boats Ltd vessels, the accommodation is finished to the highest standards.

Expertly crafted bespoke timber furniture can be found throughout the living quarters which have been brought into the 21st century with the use of accessible charging



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Best wishes to the Atlantic Dawn Group and all the crew with your new vessel ELLA.



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Power Management Solutions

Best wishes and good fishing to all on board FV Ella from all at gems.
Design and manufacture of marine electrical power systems

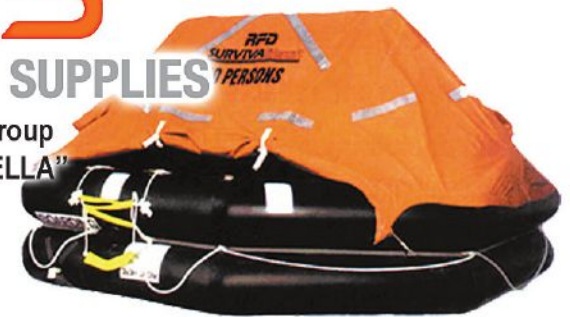
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Best wishes to Atlantic Dawn Group and all the crew with the new “ELLA”

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ports, modern LED strip lighting, Mooney's distinctive tv and mess seating, underfloor heating, air conditioning and innovative storage solutions.

The vessel replaces the 45 year old MFV "Star of Hope" and will operate in the polyvalent segment of the fishing fleet. This new addition to the Atlantic Dawn Group fleet will provide a safer, more efficient and more environmentally friendly means of conducting their fishing operations.

The vessel is also designed with optimal fish handling and chilling equipment to ensure that the landed catch is of premium quality for their more discerning markets.

The Ella features the SNG Swan Guider Trawl. The success of the trawl has been significant, the aim of the design concept was to increase herding power, this was achieved by adding additional meshing to the side wing panels of the trawls, this in turn reduced the possibility of fish escaping out through the sides of the trawl, which would have been the case with trawls of older design. The gap in the sides of some trawls can range from 30m up to 250m on different model types and the Swan Guider Trawl has also extended the fishing area as

the spread on the trawl will increase. SNG have now had success with this trawl at the Mackerel, Horse Mackerel, Herring and Albacore Tuna fishery.

The Ella's navigational, fish finding and communication equipment was installed by Barry Electronics Ltd in Killybegs over a 4 month period. The wheelhouse is centred around 3 x 55" Neovo monitors controlled by an Avitech video system. The sonars, echo sounders and chart plotters

can be displayed in several different configurations. For fish finding, the ship is fitted with a Furuno FSV25 and FSV84 low and high frequency sonars, along with Furuno FCV1900 broadband sounder. This new model echosounder uses using multi frequency transmission called CHIRP

technology to provide high definition echo detection not possible with conventional echosounders.

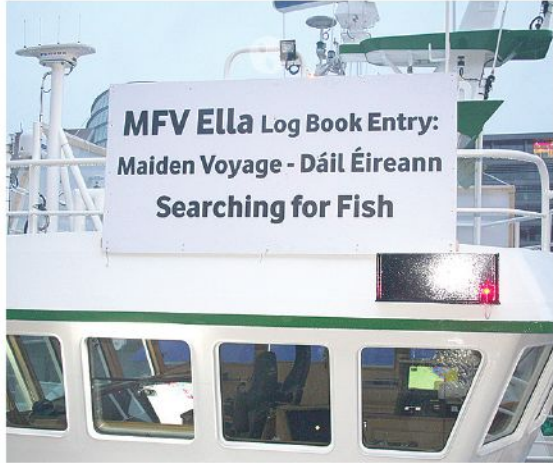
For navigation the ship is fitted with the latest model radars, GPS navigators and AIS from Furuno. The main radar, FAR 1518 is fully type approved. It can be controlled with a conventional control panel or with a standard trackball for ease of use. It comes with ground braking features such

as Target Analyzer allowing the user to spot hazardous targets simply by their colour and Automatic Clutter Elimination (ACE) for unprecedented echo clarity.

The ship has the usual suite of GMDSS radios etc. For shore communication and crew welfare the ship is equipped with Barry Electronics own VSAT internet access system. This is now essential on modern fishing boats for always on internet access, email, crew welfare and managing the ship. Barry Electronics system delivers complete system control to the owner/Skipper allowing the system's use to be defined by the owner. A backup INMARSAT phone has also been installed. For deck and ship

safety, Barry Electronics have installed a High Definition IP CCTV. Using IP technology the system has 9 cameras and any or all cameras can be displayed on multiple monitors improving the safety of the fishing operation and allowing the Skipper to oversee the complete fishing operation.

The Mooney Family & Mooney (Boats) Ltd Management & Staff would like to thank the McHugh family for choosing their shipyard for the construction of their new vessel "Ella". "We would like to pass on our very best wishes to the Mc Hugh family and the crew of the "Ella" and may they have many years safe fishing into the future."



Representing the onshore service industry at the recent Dublin protest are some of the teams that worked on the newbuild "Ella" - Mooney Boats, MGM Welding, GCM Painting and KT Nets

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Best wishes to owners & crew of the ELLA from

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Swan Net-Gundry would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Karl and Kevin Mc Hugh and everyone at the Atlantic Dawn Group on the completion of their new vessel FV Ella

SNG were delighted to have been selected as a suppliers of Pelagic Midwater Gear for this fantastic new addition to the Killybegs fleet

Pelagic Midwater Gear Supplied from SNG

One SWAN 35*20fm GUIDER HERRING TRAWL
 This trawl will have the new SNG GUIDER Design concept incorporated into the frontend wing panels

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'Uncommon Skates' in a Flap - the Dipturus Complex

Declan Quigley reports

On 10 September 2020, the MFV Eblana (D397) [Skipper: Brendan Lynch] captured an exceptionally large Flapper Skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) weighing c. 100 kg and measuring c. 215 cm TL while trawling at a depth of 137 m in the central Irish Sea off Howth, Co Dublin. After taking a couple of quick photos the enormous specimen was safely released alive (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. Flapper Skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) from the Central Irish Sea (10.09.2020)

On 21 April 2021 the MFV Verlaine (WD5) [Skipper: James Taite] captured a juvenile Blue Skate (*Dipturus batis*) measuring c.72 cm TL and c.52 cm DW while trawling at a depth of 113 m in the Celtic Sea off Co Cork (Fig. 2). The specimen was photographed prior to being released alive.

During the 19th century ichthyologists considered that the Blue Skate (as *Raja batis*) was distinct from the larger Flapper Skate (as *Raja intermedia*). However, during 1926 both 'species' were synonymised as representing a single species – the 'Common Skate' *Dipturus* (*Raja*) *batis*. More recently (2010), the morphological differences recognised during the 19th cen-

tury were supported by genetic studies and re-confirmed the existence of two separate species within the so-called *Dipturus* Complex: Blue Skate (*Dipturus batis*) [*Dipturus cf. flossada*] and Flapper Skate (*Dipturus cf. intermedius*).

Although Blue Skate (*D. batis*) are known to attain a TL of at least 143 cm, their maximum weight is unclear, but may be less than 20 kg; 50% of males and females reach sexual maturity at 11 years of age at TLs of c.115 cm and c.123 cm respectively. While Flapper Skate (*D. intermedius*) are known to attain a size of 127 kg and 230 cm TL, it is estimated that they may attain a TL of at least 254 cm, and



Figure 2. Juvenile Blue Skate (*Dipturus batis*) from the Celtic Sea (21.04.2021)

there are unconfirmed reports of specimens measuring up to 285 cm TL; 50% of males and females reach sexual maturity at 19-20 years of age at TLs of c.185 cm and c.197 cm respectively. Both species produce exceptionally large egg cases measuring 10.6-24.5 cm TL in *D. batis* and up to 25 cm TL in *D. intermedius* (Figs. 3-4). The newly hatched juveniles measure up to 21 cm and 29 cm TL respectively. Although *D. batis* is known to reach 24 years of age, it is possible that *D. intermedius* may survive for at least 50 years. Due to their large size (including egg cases and newly hatched juveniles), late maturity, low fecundity and strong site fidelity, both species are particularly vulnerable to capture and potential over-exploitation at all stages of their life cycle.

Both species can be easily distinguished by their unique colouration and morphology (Fig. 5). Blue Skate (*D. batis*) have prominent dorsal oval ring-like pectoral markings (yellowish on the outer ring and darker in the centre), a yellowish iris, outward-pointing lateral thorns on the tail, and the distance between the two dorsal fins located near the end of the tail is less than the length of the dorsal fin base (Fig. 6). Flapper Skate (*D. intermedius*) have numerous pale pectoral spots, an olive-green iris, forward-pointing lateral thorns on the tail, and the distance between the two dorsal fins is about half the length of the dorsal fin base (Fig. 7).

Historically, the distribution of the *Dipturus* Complex ranged from Iceland and northern Norway southwards to NW Africa and the western Mediterranean. Recent studies indicate that *D. intermedius* primarily occurs in the North Sea and off the west coast of Scotland, whereas *D. batis* is more common in Icelandic waters, on the Rockall

Bank and in the Celtic Sea. However, in some areas the distribution of both species is known to overlap (NW Scotland, western Ireland, and the Celtic Sea), but further south their respective distributions are currently unclear.

As the name would suggest, 'Common Skate' (as *R. batis*) were previously regarded as an important component of the combined skate & ray landings in European waters. However, since the mid-20th century, there has been a dramatic decline in commercial landings (Fig. 8). Indeed, during 1981 *R. batis* was officially declared to be commercially extinct in the Irish Sea.

In 2006 *R. batis* were classified by the IUCN as critically endangered, and since 2009, commercial targeting and retention by EU vessels has been prohibited. Both species are now required to be released unharmed and since 2019 all captures are required to be logged as discards (*R. batis* as RJB and *R. intermedius* as DRJ).

Since the late 1960s, a major decline was also observed in the number of rod-caught specimens weighing ≥ 54.5 kg recorded from Irish waters (Fig. 9). Up until the early 1970s, anglers routinely killed specimen skate and this clearly had a negative impact on local stocks. In 1976, the Irish Specimen Fish Committee (ISFC) eventually suspended *R. batis* from its list of eligible species and only reinstated

the species again during 2016, albeit specifically on a catch & release basis supported by photographic evidence for specimens measuring ≥ 180 cm TL.

It is a pity that it took the ISFC 40 years to introduce these new measures which would have provided valuable information on any changes in the species status between 1976 and 2016. Indeed, based on the recorded lengths, weights and occasional photographs of the 607 specimens published by the ISFC over the last 65 years

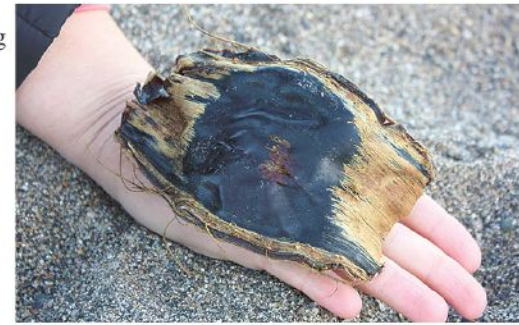


Fig 3. Blue Skate eggcase (*Dipturus batis*) Sarah Varian

Fig 4. Flapper Skate eggcase (*Dipturus intermedius*) Gary Hannon



Dipturus cf. flossada *Dipturus cf. intermedia*

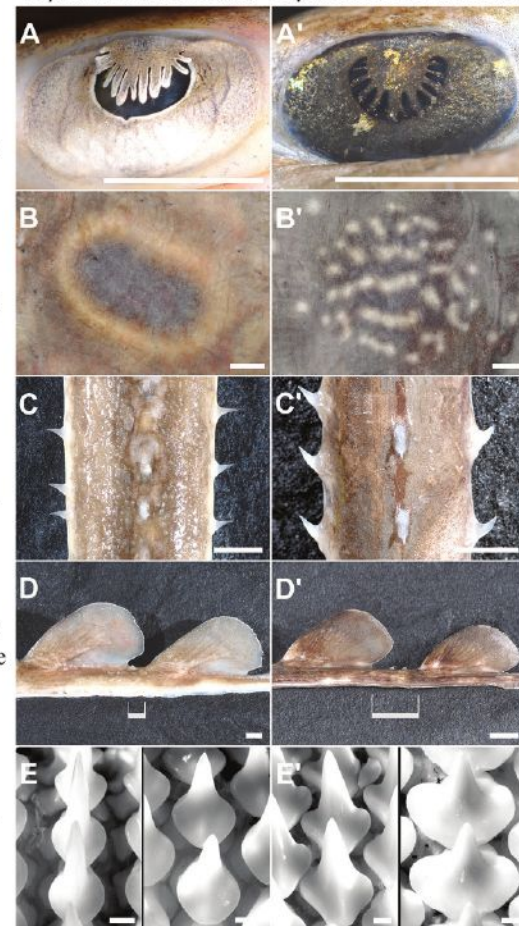


Fig 5. Comparative diagnostic features of Blue Skate and Flapper Skate (Samuel Iglesias)

(1956-2020), it would appear that most if not all of the specimens were actually *R. intermedius* rather than *R. batis*.

The current Irish rod-caught record weighing 100.2 kg was captured off Ballycotton (Co Cork) during 1913, similar in size to the recent specimen captured by the Eblana in the Irish Sea, albeit 109 years later. During March 1849, a slightly bigger specimen weighing 101.6 kg and measuring 221 cm TL, was captured in a trammel net off Coosheen, Skull Harbour, Co Cork. The UK rod-caught record, weighing 102.961 kg, was captured off Tobermory, Inner Hebrides, NW Scotland during 1986. During March 1929, an exceptionally large female weighing 127.3 kg and measuring 216 cm TL, was captured in a cod net in Balloch Bay, Firth of Clyde, SW Scotland.

There is some evidence that the status of the 'Common Skate' in Irish waters may be improving, at least in some areas. Over the last 5 years (2016-20) significant numbers of rod-caught specimens have been captured off the NE and south coast, comparable to the historical annual numbers recorded during the mid-1960s (see Fig. 9).

During 1970, *Inland Fisheries Ireland* (IFI) introduced their marine fish tagging programme, and since 1972 at least 1159 'Common Skate' have been tagged to date (c.22/year), with a relatively high rate of recaptures (c.16%). During the 31-year period 1972-2002, a total of 586 skate were tagged (c.19/year), whereas over the last 19 years (2003-2021), at least 573 were tagged (c.30/year). Although the recent increase in

the number of skate tagged suggests that stocks may be improving in some areas, it is acknowledged that the apparent increase may also be due to greater tagging effort and/or positive effects of the recent ban on commercial landings.

Commercial fishers have a very important role to play in contributing to the conservation of the *Dipturus* Complex in Irish waters. Apart from releasing incidental captures unharmed, and where

possible contributing to the tagging effort, they can help to fill the current knowledge gap on the distribution and abundance of both species by logging all discards.

Declan is interested in receiving reports about unusual species and specimens from Irish waters (087-6458485; declanquigley2021@gmail.com).



Fig 6. Blue Skate (*Dipturus batis*) [Photo Samuel Iglesias]



Fig 7. Flapper Skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) [Photo Samuel Iglesias]

Figure 8. Annual tonnage of Blue Skate (*Dipturus batis*) landed by European countries 1978-2018

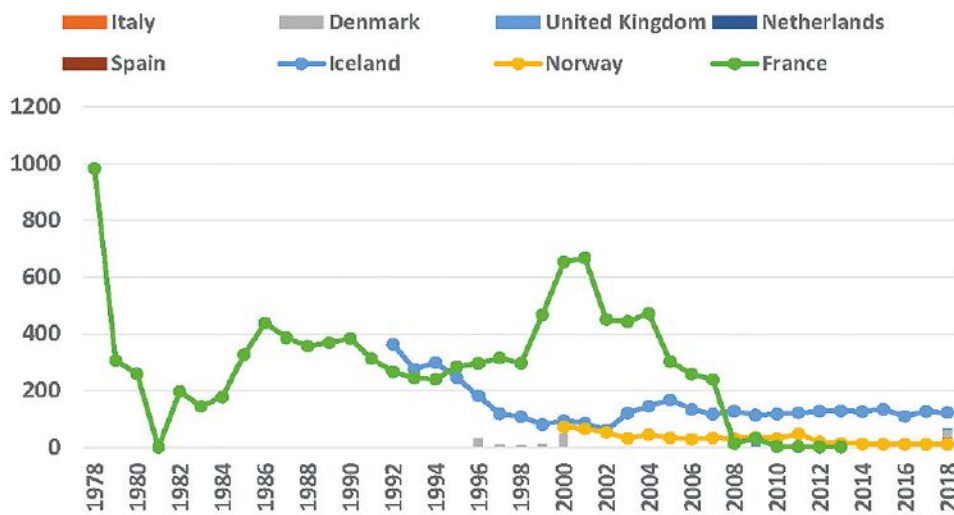
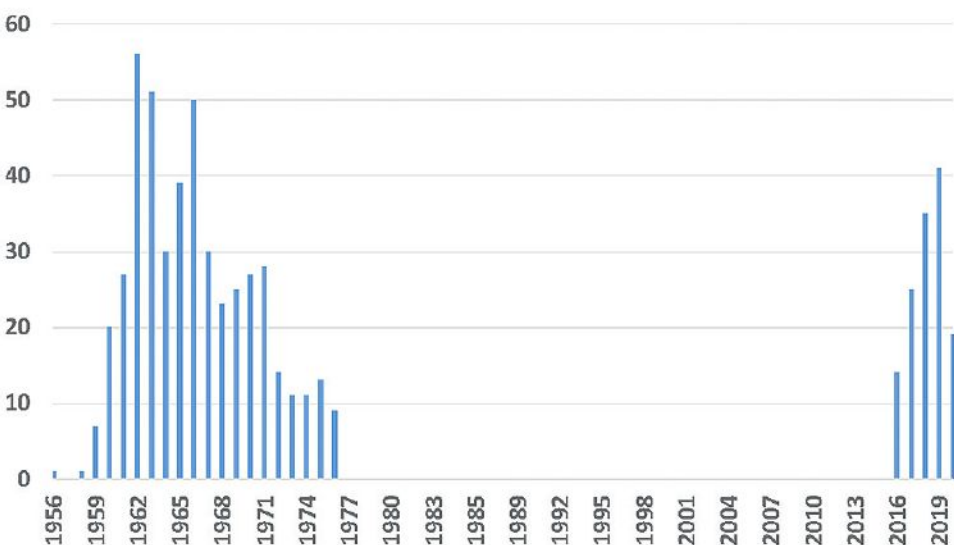


Figure 9. Annual numbers of rod-caught specimen Skate recorded by the ISFC (1956-2020)



What Happened to the 'Monarch of The Seas' Off Kerry?

The ship is believed to have gone down off the Kerry coast with the loss of all 759 aboard, including 519 Irish passengers.

Dr. Conor Brosnan from Dingle tells the story of "a loss of life at sea almost without parallel ..."

On 20 March 1866 the 1,979 ton emigrant vessel *Monarch of the Seas* left Liverpool bound for New York. Captained by Robert Kirkaldy, carrying 639 passengers and 59 crew (another account recorded as many as 759 passengers and crew) and 1,600 tons of freight, she failed to reach her destination. The *Monarch of the Seas* was believed to have gone down off the Kerry coast with the loss of all aboard.

Described as one of the "finest American emigrant ships" that ever left the Mersey, the *Monarch of the Seas* was built in Liverpool in 1854 by Messrs Roosevelt and Joyce. She was 223 feet in length, 43 in breadth and 29 feet depth of hold and had three full decks. She was valued at \$125,000 in 1866. She had undergone repairs in New York in 1859 and in Liverpool in 1863 and 1865 when her "bottom was metallised over felt" and she was certified as being in "perfect condition in every respect to resume her position as an emigrant ship."

Captain Kirkaldy had served on the *Monarch of the Seas* as first officer and captain since she was built. She had crossed the Atlantic in 37 days in 1864 when 974 Latter-day Saints emigrated from Liverpool to New York. On her last voyage she carried 519 Irish, 53 English, 47 Germans and Dutch and 20 Scottish passengers of whom there were 44 children and 24 infants.

The only communication received from the *Monarch of the Seas* after departing Liverpool was a letter written by Captain Kirkaldy near the Tuskar Rock and conveyed to port by the channel pilot. He reported on the fair weather and the fact that the voyage was proceeding as planned.

Dunquin fishing boat found 20-foot whaleboat near 'North Blasket Island'

In late June 1866 the Dingle correspondent of *The Cork Examiner* reported that a Dunquin fishing boat had found a 20-foot whaleboat near 'the north Blasket Island' (Inis Tuaisceart). But due to the action of the sea there was no name on the boat.

He also mentioned that a Blasket Island boat found 'a man's ankle'. A week later the main-yard of a ship of about 1,500 to 2,000 tons was found close-by at Smerwick Harbour and a body was found 15 miles further east at Ballyheigue. The correspondent further reported that the Ballydavid

Coast Guard station had found the body of a female in Smerwick Harbour and a man's body in the Blasket Sound. Both still had their boots on - the woman's a 'peculiar form of the boots' of 'an Irish emigrant girl'. The man's boots had barnacles attached suggesting his body was in the water for a considerable time. It was asserted that the boots indicated the man was a passenger and emigrant rather than a member of the crew.



He was buried in the 'churchyard of Ballintemple, parish of Dunquin' some days later with a coffin provided by the Dingle Board of Guardians. The *Liverpool Mercury* newspaper carried details of a small

wooden label - similar to those used by emigrants and fastened to their boxes.

The fishermen of the Great Blasket Island had 'reported wreckage washing on shore for some time'. On 11 July *The Sun* newspaper reported that those who examined the whaleboat believed it belonged to the lost vessel. The agent in Liverpool, A Taylor & Co, believed she had 'struck on some rock off the coast of Kerry' and went down instantly. The Dingle correspondent of *The Cork Examiner* believed the vessel had been 'lost on or in the vicinity of the Blasket Islands' and must 'after striking on the rocks or against the high cliffs in the night time, have immediately sunk in deep water'.

The scale of the tragedy was described as "a loss of life at sea it is almost without parallel ... never before have we heard of 759 souls (at the least computation) being launched into eternity at the wreck of one vessel." On the other side of the Atlantic *The New York Herald* carried a report of the loss of the vessel on 17 July and listed the names of all the passengers lost.

The 519 Irish passengers who perished with the sinking of the *Monarch of the Seas* remain the greatest loss of lives of Irish people off the Irish coast.



RNLI REPORT

The RNLI is looking for women Engineers. Niamh Stephenson, Ireland Media Manager for the RNLI, explains

The RNLI marked 'International Women in Engineering Day' (INWED) with the official launch of the RNLI Women in Engineering Day webpage. Engineering is at the heart of what the RNLI do and we want to inspire the next generation to consider engineering careers.



The webpage is designed to provide engaging and thought-provoking activities and challenges. It has links to Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths resources, RNLI insights and some information that may inspire young women to consider engineering as a future career. The RNLI has a wide range of careers within engineering - From designing, building and maintaining lifeboats and stations, to roles in finance, HR, planning and administration.

Here is a little 'taster' of what is available on the web page:

- A task to help design the slipway from the lifeboat station to the water, by looking at the forces acting on the boat and then calculating the best angle for the design so that the lifeboat enters the water at the right speed.
- The Engineering and International Activity session examines the problem of international drowning and how design and engineering could be used to avert drownings. Participants will be able to

calculate, test and create concepts for a buoyancy device using plastic bottles.

- The technology activity looks at why it is important that the RNLI continue to innovate and build on the latest advances in science, technology and engineering.

The world's first unsinkable lifeboat was designed in 1785 by Lionel Lukin, using the River Thames in England to test his various experiments. The simple boat was made with materials such as wood, cork and copper plates, a basic shell that would carry up to 20 people. RNLI lifeboats now feature chart plotters, autopilot and even self-righting technology in the case of capsizing. Another 20, 30 or even 50 years into the future, who knows what new technology may be onboard lifeboats to save even more lives at sea? Students are asked to draw on their own ideas and knowledge on what technical systems may be on a lifeboat, to deal with issues such as - 'How do lifeboats know where to go or communicate with other marine vessels or see during darkness?' Students are asked to think ahead and, if they were in charge



New Atlantic 85 class lifeboat Christine and Raymond Fielding goes on service at Union Hall RNLI. The lifeboat which arrived at the Cork lifeboat station last week, replaces the last Atlantic 75 in Ireland, Margaret Bench of Solihull, which has been used to save lives at sea in West Cork since 2017.

of their own lifeboat, what new technology and features would they like on it.

Activity sheets and videos are available to download. Who knows - maybe the designer of the next class of lifeboat will take part?

The page can be found at: <https://rnli.org/youth-education/women-in-engineering>

Golden Welly Awards

The first-ever Golden Welly Awards were awarded to recognise the best of the best for the recent RNLI Mayday campaign. Ireland shone and we were thrilled to see some of our wonderful fundraisers, supporters and lifeboat crew recognised.

The Best Community Partnership Fundraiser was won by Ballyglass Lifeboat Station and Bellmullet Tidal Pool Swimmers. Each day from April 29 to May 3, fifty-nine courageous swimmers swam a collective distance of 74.11 miles in their Atlantic Ocean tidal pool.



Supported by the crew from Ballyglass Lifeboat Station, they raised €2,016. Not far behind them was Kinsale RNLI where a, perhaps, future crew from 2nd class in Summercove School did RNLI themed 'spellathon' and raised €395.

The 'One Crew Award' was taken by Crosshaven RNLI who worked together with four lifeboat crew members by doing individual challenges. Susanne Deane, James Fegan, Jonathan Bermingham and Molly Murphy raised an incredible €8,697 together.

Ballycotton RNLI, Ballycotton Crew, Fundraising Committee and locals raised a whopping €5,640

This one is very special - The Mayday Hero Award was won by Pamela Deasy in Union Hall RNLI. The citation said: "Pamela is an incredible fundraiser for Union Hall. She celebrated her birthday this May, but last year she was using a walking stick, having undergone chemotherapy, radiotherapy and then surgery. She had only been strolling around over the last few weeks prior to May 2021 and walked a mile a day for May.' She is one of our volunteer Lifeboat Press Officers. With volunteers and fundraisers like this, it's no wonder that Mayday was the success it was, even though it had to be largely online and done in isolation by many participants, but that didn't stop anyone.

A huge 'thank you' to all.

Lough Ree Safety Warning - Busy Time For Lough Ree RNLI

Lough Ree RNLI lifeboat has had a very busy June. Before the end of the month it had rescued 30 casualties.

As the MARINE TIMES went to print the Lough Ree RNLI crew rescued six people from a 34ft cruiser discovered on

the Hexagon Shoal, a rock formation near Hare Island. Crew members boarded the stricken vessel and on inspection found that it had been holed, was taking on water and listing badly on the starboard side. Under helm Stan Bradbury and fellow volunteer crew members Emmet Devereux, Liam Sheringham and Donal Herraghty the six casualties were transferred to the safety of the Lough Ree RNLI lifeboat 'Tara Scougall.' In relatively calm lake conditions the six people were taken to the jetty at Coosan Point.

Jude Kilmartin, Lifeboat Operations Manager at Lough Ree RNLI has advised boat users to 'plan your passage, study your charts and don't stray off the charted navigation routes.'

"This rescue brings to 30 the number of casualties assisted this month," said the Lough Ree Lifeboat Station in a statement.

New Atlantic 85 class lifeboat Christine and Raymond Fielding goes on service at Union Hall RNLI

A new inshore Atlantic 85 class lifeboat has officially gone on service at Union Hall RNLI, in West Cork.

The lifeboat which arrived at the Cork lifeboat station last week, replaces the last Atlantic 75 in Ireland, *Margaret Bench of Solihull*, which has been used to save lives at sea in West Cork since 2017. Previous to this, *Maritime Nation* was in service from 2014. Both of these lifeboats came from the RNLI's relief fleet. The new lifeboat was officially declared a search and rescue asset by the Irish Coast Guard on Thursday 24 June.

The new lifeboat has been funded through a legacy from the late Raymond Fielding. Raymond and his wife Christine were keen sailors and sailed into Glandore Harbour many times over the years. Due to his many fond memories of West Cork, he wanted his legacy to fund an Atlantic 85 class lifeboat and he requested that it came to Union Hall.

Volunteer lifeboat crew began familiarisation training on the new lifeboat on Monday. The *Christine and Raymond Fielding* will be officially named at a special naming ceremony and service of dedication at Union Hall lifeboat station at a later date.

The new lifeboat has some advancements on its predecessor. The Atlantic 85 design allows room for four crew members and more kit than the Atlantic 75 lifeboat, which only had room for three crew members. The lifeboat is powered by two 115 horse power engines and has a stronger hull and greater top speed of 35 knots. The added radar allows the crew to operate more effectively in poor visibility and there is also VHF direction-finding equipment. The vessel also has a manually operated self-righting mechanism which combined with inversion-proofed engines keeps the lifeboat operational even after capsize. The lifeboat can also be beached in an emergency without causing damage

to its engines or steering gear.

The Atlantic 85 which was introduced to the RNLI fleet in 2005 also carries a full suite of communication and electronic navigation aids, as well as a searchlight, night-vision equipment and flares for night-time operations.

Speaking following the lifeboat officially going on service, John Kelleher, Union Hall RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager said: 'We are extremely grateful to Raymond Fielding for his generous legacy donation which has funded our permanent lifeboat here at Union Hall. As we welcome a new lifeboat, there is also a sense of nostalgia as we are the last lifeboat station in Ireland to use an Atlantic 75 lifeboat.'

'We are looking forward to being the custodians of this new lifeboat which will allow our volunteers to go on to rescue and save many more lives in the years to come.'

Aran Islands RNLI Mechanic Johnny Mulkerrin Retires After 35 Years of Helping to Save Lives at Sea

After 35 years of dedicated service, Aran Islands RNLI mechanic Johnny Mulkerrin retires on the 1st of June.



Johnny is one of Aran Islands RNLI's longest serving crew members having first joined the volunteer crew in 1984, as soon as he turned 17. His early passion for the lifeboat came as a child growing up watching his father, John Snr, also an active lifeboat volunteer, respond to his pager and go to the aid of those in difficulty at sea.

Having completed his secondary education on Inis Mór, Johnny went on to do a block laying course and worked in the building trade for a time while continuing to serve as a volunteer crew member on the station's all-weather lifeboat.

In 1987, he became the emergency mechanic for Aran Islands RNLI and then in 1993 he became the station's full-time mechanic.

From the Barnett class through to the current all-weather Severn class lifeboat, Johnny has throughout his 35 years with the charity, seen many changes as the technology on the lifeboats advanced bringing huge benefits to the area Aran Islands RNLI covers and the people it serves.

Johnny who has been on over a 1,000 call outs and recently received a 30-year Long Service Award from the RNLI recognising his selflessness, courage and

commitment, said it was hard to pick out a stand out rescue. However, his abiding memory will be 'any call where we brought a person or people home to their families. That was always a good call'.

Paying tribute to Johnny, Rob King, RNLI Area Lifesaving Manager said: 'Johnny has made a significant contribution to saving lives at sea off the Aran Islands for more than three decades and we are extremely grateful to him for his dedicated service throughout that time. His job as full-time mechanic ensured the operational effectiveness of the station through the operation, maintenance and repair of the lifeboat and its associated machinery and equipment. As he embarks on a new chapter, we want to thank him and wish him every good health and happiness.'

Michael Hernon, Aran Islands RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager added: 'Over the years Johnny would have experienced all types of call outs and braved all sorts of weather and challenges at sea to help those in need. All at Aran Islands RNLI would like to wish Johnny the very best for the coming years and thank him for his years of service.'

Four Clifden RNLI crew members recognised for rescuing a lone sailor

Four Clifden RNLI crew members who went to the aid of a sailor stranded on the rocks of Inishark have received letters of commendation for their role in the complex rescue operation.

On 20 September, 2019, in severe weather conditions, Clifden RNLI's all-weather Shannon class and inshore Atlantic 85 lifeboats were launched at the request of the Irish Coast Guard. A sailor had come into difficulty after his yacht suffered engine failure at Inishark island. The volunteer crew were on the scene within 30 minutes and located the casualty who had made his way onto the rocks.

The operation was hampered by a south east Force 7/8 onshore wind but Helm Alan Pryce, using experience and training, was able to safely put a crew member ashore to assess the casualty. The casualty did not have life threatening injuries but given the severity of the weather, the safest option was to request the assistance of the Irish Coast Guard Rescue helicopter 118 from Sligo which winched the casualty to safety.

Clifden RNLI volunteers Alvin Bell, his father Andy Bell, Ian Shanahan and Alan Pryce manned Clifden's Atlantic 85 lifeboat during this challenging rescue operation and they recently received letters of commendation from John Payne, the RNLI Director of Lifesaving Operations, for their service.

John Brittain, Clifden RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager congratulated the crew saying: 'Alvin, Andy, Ian and Alan have shown continued commitment to Clifden RNLI and I am delighted that their selfless courage and dedication has been recognised with a letter of commendation. This particular rescue highlights the level of training, skills and seamanship of our volunteer members and we are very grateful for the role they play in saving lives at sea.'

Fishing Vessel Stability

Fishing Safety Manager for the RNLI Frankie Horne discusses the reasons for loss of stability in fishing vessels

RNLI analysis of commercial fishing fatality's 2007-2018 shows high number of the fatalities occurred due to the "loss of vessel stability". There are many reasons why a vessel can capsize, but it can be summed up in a few categories; Vessel Modification; Free Surface Effect; Over Loading; Hauling from Height and Watertight Integrity.



Vessel Modification Modifying a vessel from one type of fishing to another is not unusual in the under 15m fleet. This can mean having to add more equipment to a vessel or even moving things around to suit the working area. If the deck area is tight, the skippers tend to look at space above head height. Any weight moved or added high up has a great effect on the vessels stability and must be checked. If any modification is taking place you must inform the MCA and take advice before you start.

Free Surface Effect is one of the things that is controllable simply by making sure that water, the catch, and other objects cannot move around the vessel uncontrolled. Such things as, blocked scuppers leading to water retention on the deck, undetected rising water in bilges, the catch moving around either in the fish room or on the deck, and fishing gear or ropes not stowed correctly.

Overloading of vessel is easy to do especially if there is no calculation on the vessel to guide the skipper. However, most skippers I have spoken to have admitted that they, at times have pushed the limit, myself included. Skippers tend to have a good feel for what their vessel can safely hold but they also know they have taken it to the maximum and therefore could be at risk. It only takes a blocked freeing port or a bust pipe or a leaking hatch cover to change the whole situation. Make sure all freeing ports are clear, scuppers well maintained, and bilge alarms are in working order.

Hauling from Height can change a

normal task from safe, to unsafe in seconds. Most fishermen have had this situation when either hauling a weight in the net that needs to be freed or fouled pots that need to be untangled or mobile/static gear fast to the seabed. When hauling any heavy object make sure that all watertight hatches are closed, and that weight is kept as low and controlled as possible when lifting. Beware sudden shifting of suspended weights.

Watertight Integrity. Most vessels going to sea operate with hatches closed. This is not possible with fishing vessels. Hatches in some cases are open all day for operational reasons. Watertight hatches are vital to a vessels capability to recover from a large angle of heel. If water can get inside the vessel it will affect the vessels ability to right itself. Make sure when in transit or when hauling weight such as being fast to the seabed your hatches are closed and sealed.

It is fair to say that fishing vessels operate in a different way to other sea going vessels. However, when regarding vessel stability they are the same. Skippers must be aware of the vessels capability's and operate within them. Fishermen are always having to try and get the most out the vessel they have, and this is just what they have to do with constantly changing rules. However, if you are looking to change your vessel in any way you must seek advice from the MCA UK and MSO Ireland before you start any modifications.

Take a look at the Stability Films on <https://rnli.org/safety/choose-your-activity/commercial-fishing#mob-recovery>

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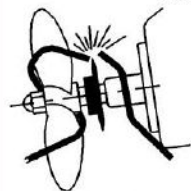
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Capturing Ireland's Blue Carbon Potential

The Marine Institute are launching a funding call for a major programme of research in the area of Blue Carbon. Blue Carbon has been identified as one of the ways in which marine and coastal ecosystems can reduce the impacts of climate change by absorbing and storing carbon from the atmosphere. Funding of up to €1.6m has been earmarked for the call to support a large-scale research project to run from 2021 to 2026.



A calm Wild Atlantic Way at Galway Bay. Photo courtesy Sinead Coyne

Launched in June 2020, Ireland's Programme for Government recognised the 'enormous Blue Carbon potential that the ocean has to offer in tackling climate change'.

The government tasked the Marine Institute with a collaborative research initiative, aimed at investigating the climate-change mitigation potential of Blue Carbon, and working towards creating an inventory that will assist the EU in meeting Ireland's climate-change objectives.

In order to prepare the ground for such a large-scale research programme, the Marine Institute commissioned a synthesis report to review existing knowledge on Blue Carbon habitats and their role as carbon sinks in Ireland. The report, 'Blue Carbon and Marine Carbon Sequestration in Irish Waters and Coastal Habitats', was published in May 2021.

"Blue Carbon refers to carbon which is stored, or sequestered, in the ocean and in vegetated habitats around coastal regions," explains the report's lead author, Dr. Grace Cott, Assistant Professor at the UCD School of Biology and Environmental Science. "In terms of Blue Carbon which we can actively manage, what we are really referring to is the vegetation in coastal regions, and that means three main habitats: firstly, mangrove forests - which we don't have in Ireland and are mostly found in tropical regions - secondly, salt-marsh habitats and finally, seagrass meadows."

Carbon sequestration – the long-term capture and storage of Carbon Dioxide from the atmosphere – can take place through a range of natural processes, from photosynthesis, to sediment trapping, where carbon based sediments from the tide are physically trapped by vegetation. In addition, through the process of waterlogging, carbon release back to the atmosphere is prevented and carbon is stored long term.

The Marine Institute report points out that Ireland's tidally influenced coastal wetlands comprise approximately 160 square kilometres of salt-marsh and seagrass beds. Globally, although these habitats represent a much smaller area than terrestrial forests, their total contribution to long-term carbon storage is comparable to carbon sinks in tropical forests.

According to Dr. Cott, salt marshes in Ireland are up to ten times more efficient than agricultural grasslands at storing carbon on a per area basis. This is mainly due to the lack of microbial decomposition in these wet regions, which inland causes the release of carbon from the soil as Carbon Dioxide.

Supporting Blue Carbon into the future

The loss and destruction of vegetated coastal ecosystems threatens their ability to function as long-term carbon sinks, and mismanagement can lead to the release of stored carbon back into the atmosphere.

"But there is hope in the management of these resources," explains Cott. "Even though researchers need to conduct further research into the matter, we are already becoming aware of certain strategies which can help preserve our Blue Carbon habitats around the Irish coast."

"Regarding salt marshes, it is beneficial to allow them to migrate inland," she says. "So, as sea levels rise, if these habitats can migrate inland, that's a positive aspect in terms of carbon sequestration and coastal protection. One potential issue is in the building of sea walls as these can actually restrict the migration of the marsh inland."

"Then, in terms of seagrasses, which represent the other main Blue Carbon ecosystem in Irish coastal regions, we can aim to improve water quality to help seagrass beds to function optimally, and keep on capturing and storing carbon. Looking ahead, I believe that Ireland will need an appropriate management framework, led by government, to enhance protection of these habitats in relation to carbon sequestration."

This focus on research was presented as part of the Marine Institute's recent four week Oceans of Learning campaign, which enabled everyone to engage with our ocean from anywhere. Oceans of Learning included a new podcast series, videos and short films, news and online resources all about our ocean. There's something for everyone and the Oceans of Learning series explored all aspects of our marine resource - from our rich marine biodiversity, to our changing ocean climate, and our ocean's future.

When a Training Exercise Turns Into Your First Call Out

Union Hall RNLi assist two people on 34ft yacht in difficulty off Toe Head

When you sign up and volunteer for the RNLi you need to be prepared for all situations and especially the unexpected. Union Hall RNLi assisted two people Tuesday night 22nd June after their 34ft yacht got into mechanical difficulty off Toe Head in West Cork.



The volunteer crew were requested to launch their inshore lifeboat Margaret Bench of Solihull, by the Irish Coast Guard. The lifeboat helmed by Michael Limrick with Liam Limrick and Craig Jennings onboard, were on a training exercise at the time, and launched back out to sea at 9pm.

The lifeboat made its way to the area off Toe Head where the crew observed that the yacht was making progress but was slow due to mechanical issues. Sea conditions were good at the time with a moderate northerly breeze, so the volunteer crew stayed alongside the yacht and escorted it back to the pier at Union Hall.



Speaking following the call out, Peter Deasy, Union Hall RNLi Deputy Launching Authority said: 'Our volunteer crew were just returning from an exercise and a busy day of training so I asked the crew if they would like an alternative crew but they were very willing to interrupt their training and proceed to assist the casualties. We congratulate Craig Jennings (pictured above) on what started as a three hour training exercise for him but turned into nearly five hours at sea and included his first call out with Union Hall RNLi.'

'We would remind everyone for the season ahead to always carry a means of communication and wear a lifejacket.'

Photos by Pamela Deasy / RNLi

Stone Crabs (*Lithodes maja*) Rock Off Inishturk, Co Galway

Declan Quigley reports

The Northern Stone Crab (*Lithodes maja*) is a cold-water amphiboreal species ranging from Spitzbergen (80°N) to the south of Ireland (c.50°N) in the NE Atlantic, and from SE Greenland southwards to Maryland, USA (Baltimore Canyon; 38°N, 74°W) in the NW Atlantic.

Northern Stone Crabs have rarely been recorded from Irish waters. Indeed, prior to the mid-1960s there was only one authenticated record; on 29 June 1901, the partly digested remains of a specimen was discovered in the stomach of an unidentified fish captured at a depth of 182 m on the Porcupine Bank (53.4°N, 13.6°W). Since then, only 28 specimens have been recorded southwards of latitude 55°N, the vast majority off the SW coast (Co Kerry).

During August 2019, the MFV 'Realt an Oileain II'

(G733) [Skipper: David Heaney] captured a Northern Stone Crab measuring 75 mm CL (carapace length including the rostrum) while potting for lobster at a depth of 120 m W of Inishturk (53.67°N, 10.42°W), Co Galway (Inset photo). The specimen was transferred alive to Dingle Oceanworld, Co Kerry. David remarked that 'around the same time another vessel captured a number of specimens at a depth of 140 m in the same general area, but it was the first time that he had captured one in 20 years fishing in the area'.

On 25 May 2021, David captured another Stone Crab in the same area. The male specimen measuring 60 mm CL and 50 mm CW (carapace width) was photographed and released alive (photo on right). David remarked that 'the crab

was very lively and that he could imagine it covering a large distance if it was on the move'.

There is only one previously authenticated record of *L. maja* from Co Galway. On 22 November 2018, the MFV 'Ocean Breeze' (D96)

[Skipper: Ciaran Powell] captured a female specimen measuring 90 mm (CL) and 65 mm (CW) while trawling at a depth of 140 m W of the Aran Islands. The specimen was transferred alive to Galway Atlantiquaria where it was named 'Ciara'.



It is possible that *L. maja* may be more abundant and widely distributed in Irish waters than the current paucity of records would suggest.

Although it's apparent rarity southwards of latitude 55°N may simply reflect limited recording effort in suitable habitats, the use of inappropriate survey methods, the species cryptic behaviour and/or non-commercial interest, it may also reflect a genuinely low abundance, and/or patchy distribution. The species is likely to be encountered more frequently by potters fishing in deeper offshore waters.

Declan is always interested in receiving reports about unusual species captured in Irish waters (declanquigley2021@gmail.com; 087-6458485).



Stone Crab (*Lithodes maja*) captured off Inishturk, 25th May and released alive.



Girl Geraldine and Keriulet steaming to Dublin for the protest. Photos Donal Healy



BIM New Fishermen Scheme

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David Hurley's "Alice Again" potting off the Old Head of Kinsale. Photo: Carroll O'Donoghue, KinslaeAngling.com



Higher Diploma in Business in Fisheries and Aquaculture

The Higher Diploma in Business in Aquabusiness has now run for a fourth year at Wexford Campus of Carlow Institute of Technology, with 20 students hopefully graduating from the programme this year.

The programme aims to upskill individuals working in the fishing, aquaculture, seafood processing and marine bioproducts sector. It provides graduates with the education and entrepreneurial skills necessary to meet the challenges within the sector. The HDip is becoming established as a highly sought after third-level qualification for business leaders in the fishing, aquaculture and broader seafood sectors. This year the Higher Diploma was delivered on line which expanded the appeal of the programme nationwide, with one student from the Arctic Circle in Norway taking two modules in law and economics.

Following consultation with the sector the programme title has changed to a Higher Diploma in Business in Fisheries and Aquaculture. Dr Janette Davies, Deputy Head of Wexford Campus, told the Marine Times that the term aquabusiness has given rise to some confusion in the past and the title change of the programme aims to make it clear that it deals with all aspects of the seafood industry. "While agriculture and

agribusiness is well catered for in Ireland at third level the Institute of Technology Carlow's Higher Diploma in Business in Fisheries and Aquaculture is unique, we have small class sizes and for students who feel they do not want to undertake the whole 60 credit level 8 higher diploma, they can take each certificate individually in law, economics, marketing, strategic and innovation management and finance."

Recruitment is now taking for the fifth cycle of the HDip for September. The programme will be delivered mainly online, further information is available from Dr Davies (janette.davies@itcarlow.ie) or from Brian O'Loan of BIM (aquabus@bim.ie). The course fee remains unchanged at €2,500 for the full HDip and €450 for individual module Certificates. Candidates from the sector in Ireland are eligible to apply for 50% grant for fees from BIM, which continues to support the course. The same fees apply to applicants from the EU/EEA and the UK.

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