

MARINE TIMES

IRELAND'S LEADING MARITIME NEWSPAPER

OCTOBER 2022 - PRICE €3



Denis O'Shea and his uncle Kieran O'Shea with an eel they caught off Castletownbere - Photo: Anne Marie Cronin Photography

A man in a yellow raincoat is standing on a boat, holding a fishing net. The background shows a sunset over the ocean. The text "GUY COTTEN" is written in large yellow letters. A circular badge says "TRUSTED IN IRELAND FOR OVER 50 YEARS". Below the man, there are several pieces of fishing gear, including jackets, trousers, and boots.

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Serious Differences Over Offshore Wind Energy Development

"If they put any of these structures where our boats fish we cannot move on, so we are basically finished."

No Rescue in The Budget for A Fishing Industry in Crisis

"Is EU Brexit funding replacing government investment in coastal communities?"

Fishing Industry Angry at Another Refusal of Help by Marine Minister

More News, Comment & Opinions Inside

Newspaper for Ireland's Fishing,
Marine and Coastal Communities

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the fine Art of Marine Finance

by Art Kavanagh

Sentenced First - Trial Later!

We are hearing reports that the SFPA hope to engage in “forensic” accounting to match up landing details for the Fishing Fleet I wonder if the Gardai are going to install Time Clocks in all Licensed Premises to make sure that the Licensing Laws are observed to the second?

Between this Forensic Accounting and the Penalty Points fiasco I was reminded of a story which an old drinking pal used to tell - He is now deceased but in his later years in the legal profession he became a District Judge. A decent man and a great character in those days when such things were allowed.

Picture the scene in a Country Court-house where a young man was being tried for burglary for which he was about to be convicted. In the finest traditions of the Law, the learned Judge asked him if he had anything to say before judgment was handed down - “I didn’t do it your Honour- it wasn’t me” he pleaded.

“Don’t be ridiculous” said the Judge “You were found leaving the scene of the crime wearing a mask over your eyes, wearing a striped t-shirt and carrying a bag marked SWAG - You had all the equipment!!!!” “Ok Judge” said the accused “Maybe you should also find me guilty of rape ... I DO HAVE ALL THE EQUIPMENT !!!!!”

Kinda like the Points System Lads!!!!
Sentenced First - Trial later!!!!

We finally have the definitive papers on the De Commissioning Scheme and the Producers Organisations met with BIM to get clarification on some of the conditions.

The condition on the Ownership of Capacity in January 2021 and on date of application was certainly a “Low Ball” which none of us had anticipated. Despite the fact that nobody is claiming “credit” for it, I believe the condition can be complied without compromising anyone or department.

The Banks are huffing and puffing a bit but we will be able to satisfy them also.

De Commissioning sticks in the throat as a concept lads for lots of you, but for those of you who it suits it may be a Godsend and will allow you to reorganise your fleets and your lives.

It will also allow those crews who may lose their berths on their current Vessels to be redeployed into remaining vessels reducing the reliance on Foreign Crews. That I believe has the potential to work out well.

I am hoping that the BIM Grant Programmes will shortly reopen both for the refurbishment of existing vessels and for the Young Fishermen many of whom I believe are ready to enter the inshore fishery if grant assistance is available.

The Potting sector is working well despite the many horror stories about difficulties in maintaining crews. Potting crews have been earning good money and I cannot understand how we cannot recruit more young fishermen. I continue to Bang the

Drum on the concept that BIM should be leading a recruitment campaign and that the Fish Expo in 2023 part of the BIM exhibit should be devoted to recruitment and that the local schools should be invited on the day before the official opening to hear from industry professionals about the life and earning capacity of a Fisherman.

It is hard to motivate our fishermen to work hard when their peers in the other EU fleets are being directly subsidised on their fuel costs.

I have to ask again how or why our regulators persist by their action or inaction in giving clear advantage to the competition in so many different ways.

Remember the story of the man who owned the greyhound who was winning round him?? Because he was an athlete he had to be well fed and steak was getting more expensive. We are blessed in Ireland in having more people than most who know better so the suggestion was made that if he could train the greyhound to live on nothing he would make a fortune - Great Plan???? Unfortunately it just had the dog trained to live on nothing when it died

That what will happen to our industry lads if we are not careful!

Stay safe everyone.



Castletownbere resplendent in Autumnal sunshine - Photo courtesy Anne Marie Croin Photography

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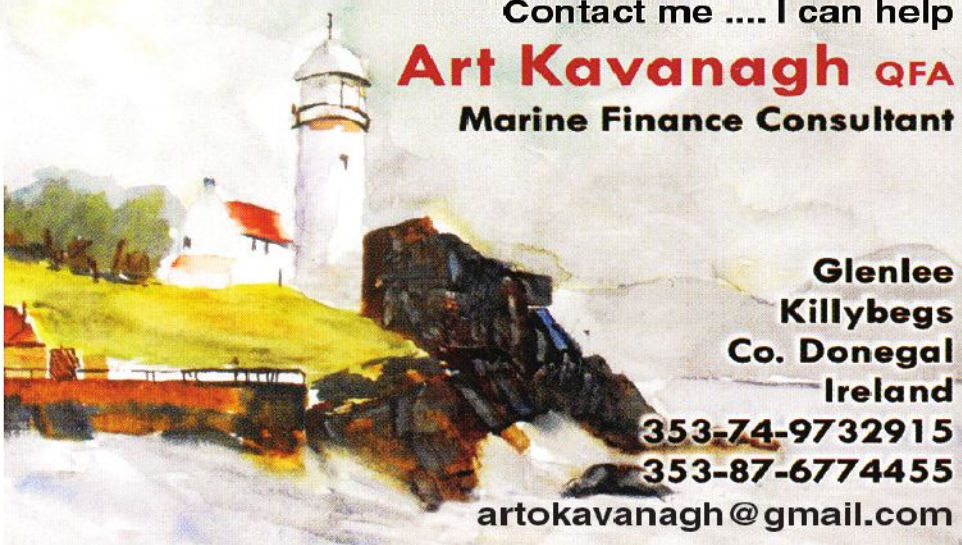
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BIM New Fishermen Scheme

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No Rescue in The Budget for A Fishing Industry in Crisis

“Is EU Brexit funding replacing government investment in coastal communities?” asks Sinn Féin spokesperson on Fisheries and the Marine, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn TD, as he conveyed his shock that there has been no announcement in the budget of an emergency financial aid package to address the unprecedented fuel crisis in the Irish fishing industry.

Teachta Mac Lochlainn said: “In recent days, the Irish fishing industry united again to meet the Minister for the Marine, Charlie McConalogue, to appeal for urgent financial support for their fishing communities in crisis. It was 11 weeks when they last met him in July with the same appeal. I am shocked that the government have not announced a rescue package in the budget.

“Worse, it appears that EU Brexit funding is now replacing what would normally be investment from the central Irish exchequer in coastal communities. This funding is supposed to compensate the Irish seafood sector for the loss of income due to Brexit and not replace Irish government funding.

“It is absolutely incredible that we have emergency fuel support schemes for their fishing industries, being introduced across EU member states with the support of the European Commission and here in Ireland the Minister has sat on his hands despite desperate calls for relief.

“Sinn Féin outlined the multimillion scale of what is required in our alternative budget proposals to support fishermen that would deploy the remaining €5 million of European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF), front loading funds from the new European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) and allow direct exchequer funding of €7.5 million.

“The time for action is now. The EU have relaxed state aid rules to allow temporary measures to be taken by the Minister. There is no excuse not to act” concluded Deputy Mac Lochlainn.

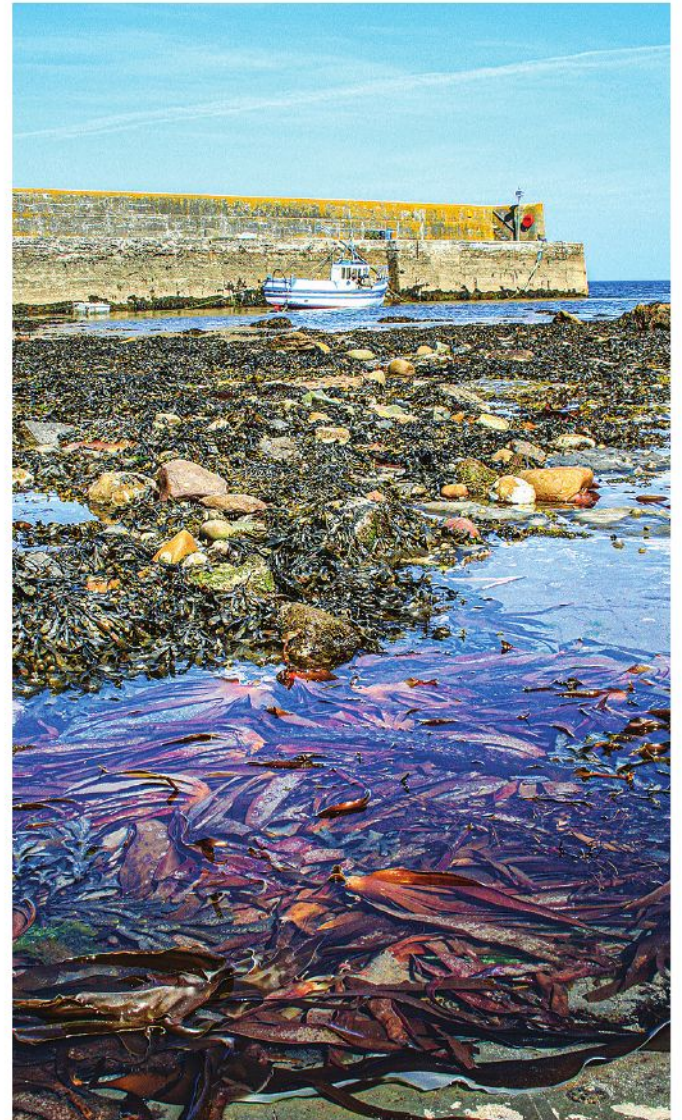
Commenting, on the budget Minister McConalogue said “The €335 million budget announcement for the seafood sector and coastal communities represents the largest ever annual budget provision for the sector. Over the past year I have announced a range of schemes worth €225 million, funded under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve, designed to support the seafood sector and coastal communities in overcoming the impact of Brexit.

“These schemes will run for the remainder of this year and for 2023 and the budget provision that the Government is making today will enable these schemes to be fully delivered.

“The schemes reflect the recommendations of the Seafood Task Force, which I established, and which are designed to ensure that the seafood sector and coastal communities post Brexit will continue to generate economic growth and sustainable jobs in coastal communities.”

Cormac Burke of the Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance says the budget was: “More ‘smoke and mirrors’ political stunts from the marine minister. His press release certainly looked impressive at first glance.... until you notice the glaring fact that some 66% of this funding has already been allocated since the start of 2022 and is nothing to do with this latest budget.

“Also, the Minister fails to mention that all of this money is from the EU’s Brexit Adjustment Fund (BAR) for Ireland and that in fact State investment, under the current coalition government, in the Irish fisheries sector and the coastal communities who rely on the fishing industry is at an all time low.”



Committed to Sustainability

The Clean Oceans Initiative is the umbrella name for a range of BIM and seafood industry supported programmes to minimise the impact their sector has on our oceans, including Fishing for Litter, Co-ordinated Local Aquaculture Management Systems (CLAMS), the new pilot Gear Retirement Scheme, shore and pier cleans.

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

For more information visit www.bim.ie or simply scan here:



Fishing Industry Organisations Angry at Another Refusal of Help by Marine Minister

Marine Minister Refuses to Draw Down EU Fuel Aid Despite Zero Cost to Irish Exchequer



Marine Times Reporter

Fishing industry representatives say they are confounded and disappointed by the Government's repeated refusal to draw down EU fuel aid.

They met with the Minister for the Marine again in the middle of September and urged him to secure the existing EU aid to help with the crippling costs of going to sea.

"However, Minister McConalogue failed to meet this demand, although it would incur no cost to the Irish exchequer. Furthermore, a statement issued by the Minister after the meeting made no reference to the EU fuel aid scheme," industry organisations say in a statement.

The meeting was attended by Aodh O'Donnell, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers Organisation who said that prior to the meeting the Minister had been presented with a pre-budget submission.

"This outlined fully costed measures aimed at creating a level playing field for Irish fishers in Europe. Based on BIM (Bord Iascaigh Mhara) annual consumption data, we require fuel aid of €20m to €25m a year to compete effectively in Europe. Otherwise, we are up against fleets whose governments are distributing the existing EU fuel aid or offering other fuel aid support. Whereas many Irish boats can't afford to fish because of fuel costs or can't make a profit on fishing."

Brendan Byrne of the IFPEA said this was the second meeting they'd requested and held with the Minister this year. "The industry spoke with one voice on the key issues of fuel aid and securing EU approved measures to enable our fleet to compete.

"The Minister took note and undertook to assess the industry's needs. We also pressed for the unallocated €5m European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to be used as a support measure for our, which is fully EU funded."

Mr. O'Donnell said they would be discussing the Minister's response with their members and hoped the Minister would take practical action soon to address their concerns. "Our fishing families and coastal communities deserve clear answers and clear action. Jobs, livelihoods, and communities are all at risk here. We are operating in an environment of uncertainty requiring a decisive approach in line with

European counterparts. The time for action is now".

Patrick Murphy, CEO at the Irish South and West, said: "We fundamentally disagree with the Minister's view that the BAR money secured from Europe is there and being used to deal with the rising energy costs. The funds listed in the first paragraph came from a report submitted to the Minister by his Task Force in October 2021, five months before the Russian Ukraine conflict even started. This is really simple. Our Industry, like all others, is suffering from the fall-out of the Russian conflict with its neighbour, the Ukraine. The European Union show of solidarity with Ukraine has led to a removal of Russian Oil and Gas supply to the European markets and as a result, fuel costs have more than doubled.

"In recognition of the hardship and jeopardy to Europe's fishing Industry as a result of these increased costs, the European Commission invoked Article 26.2 of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) under Regulation 2021/1139.

"This provides that in case of exceptional events causing a significant disruption of markets, compensation may be paid to operators of the fishery and Aquaculture sector for their income forgone or additional costs.

"The Minister has acknowledged there are unallocated funds left over in the 2014-2020 EMFF but he is still trying to decide where this money is best spent for the benefit of the Fishing Industry, and this despite all Industry Consultations clearly articulating to the Minister that the greatest threat currently is our inability to cover the additional costs of rising energy prices. The Fishing Fleets of France and Spain are receiving such funding from their Ministers giving their Fishermen an unfair advantage in the Common Market.

"Not supporting the Industry now will damage the current participants to a degree that will be damaging in the short-term and probably fatal in the not so long-term to come."

Seamus Bonner, Secretary of the Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation Producer Organisation, said Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue TD, "has failed to respond to calls from the Irish fishing industry for a fuel rebate scheme to be put in place similar to that which exists in other coastal countries such as France, Spain, Sweden and Italy. Ireland is one of the only coastal countries in Europe to refuse fuel cost relief to the fishing industry in the face of rapidly increasing fuel costs, both diesel and petrol have doubled in price since last year."

The Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO) has called for immediate political action to alleviate the soaring cost of fuel which has many fishermen on the brink and is causing untold hardship and anxiety for the industry.

Chief Executive, Seán O'Donoghue said that the Irish Government has been given approval for such a support scheme for the sector which is already in place in many other EU member states. Governments in those countries have acted swiftly to provide a beleaguered industry with financial support to offset the huge spike in fuel costs.

"It genuinely beggars belief that our Minister can stand idly by and effectively refuse to release funds which the European Parliament has approved for fishermen in light of the extreme escalation in fuel costs for their vessels.

"We've met Minister McConalogue and implored him to act swiftly with the average Irish fishing trawler now paying 70% more for diesel since March 2022 to remain at sea to earn a living. Approximately half of our members gross earnings are now gone on putting fuel in their boats. This is not sustainable given that a break-even situation is 60 cent per litre - fishermen having been consistently paying over 105 cent per litre since March.

"Moreover, it's placing Irish vessels at a major disadvantage compared to our EU counterparts which have had the scheme implemented in their respective countries. The Government is trying to fob us off with pithy soundbites stating they're 'acutely conscious' of our plight but that's simply no use.

"This is a real bitter pill which fishermen cannot swallow. The money is in place, it's just a matter of the Minister acting and affording the industry some support in a time of spiralling need."

Mr O'Donoghue said that the fuel support package should not be confused with ongoing Departmental engagement with the pelagic sector regarding a scheme to mitigate against the loss of €35million of mackerel quota since the Brexit transition in January 2021.



Foras na Mara
Marine Institute

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Marine Institute is inviting personnel to submit tenders for

Catch Sampling Services

Services required are to sample and record catch data on board commercial fishing vessels according to MI standard operating procedures.

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

<http://www.etenders.gov.ie>

Tender will be launched early Oct 2022

The deadline for the tender submission is the 25th Oct 2022

Irish Porcupine Fishery for Prawns Will Be Affected by European Commission Closure of 87 Areas

Fishing Industry Will Fight Decision While Environmentalists Support It - Decision Flawed According To Industry

Marine Times Reporter

The decision by the European Commission to close 87 areas of the North-East Atlantic to bottom fishing is being opposed by fishing industry organisations around Europe and is likely to lead to legal action against the EC.

The decision would have major effects on the Irish Porcupine fishery for nephrops, a major fishery for Ireland, second after mackerel in economic importance.

In mid-September Virginijus Sinkevicius, Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, announced the decision, maintaining that it was in line with the Commission's policy to "protect nature and restore biodiversity, as stated in the EU Biodiversity Strategy."

"Our oceans and fisheries depend on healthy marine ecosystems," he said. "By closing 17% of the area between 400-800

metres depth of EU waters of the North-East Atlantic to bottom fishing gears, we are delivering on our commitment to protect and restore marine life and after four years we finally implement one of the key provisions of the Deep-Sea Access Regulation. It is our duty to our society, to the future generations and in particular to those whose livelihood depend on marine resources.

"I am grateful for the commitment and efforts made by the fisheries sector to accompany this new chapter of ocean conservation."

However, his claim that appears to

suggest the decision was supported by the fisheries sector does not appear to be correct. It seems likely that the decision will be subjected to legal opposition. There is widespread opposition from the industry, while environmental organisations in Ireland and the Green Party have supported it.

The Commission action, which is an 'implementing decision,' was opposed when announced at a Council meeting, where demands were made for it to be immediately withdrawn. It reduces from 800 metres to 400 metres the water depth involved and will have effects on Ireland's Porcupine fishery for Dublin Bay prawns.

It would come into effect 20 days after publication in the Official Journal of the European Union and be immediately applicable to all vessels of EU Member States and of third countries operating in EU waters.

"You would imagine that it doesn't affect us because we don't have a deep sea fleet, but it does because it relates to depths over 400 metres rather than 800 metres and that will certainly affect our Porcupine fishery for nephrops which is our second biggest money-spinner for the Irish economy after mackerel," Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation Chief Executive, Sean O'Donoghue, told the MARINE TIMES.

"It is based on flawed information, but still they brought in the regulation. At the Council meeting a number of Member States including Ireland sought that this be amended immediately. But it now looks that the earliest for this to happen will be the first quarter of next year. With our European colleagues we are looking at the legality of this and how it was done. We are really up in arms about this, but it has got very little media coverage in Ireland."

The Spanish industry is being supported by its government in opposition to the EC decision.

The European Bottom Fishing Alliance (EBFA) that claims to represent more than

20,000 fishermen and 7,000 European vessels, describes the abolition as "technical and legal bungling" and has said it will take the issue to legal action.

The move would see deep sea fishing using gear such as trawls, gillnets and bottom longlines, banned in 87 sensitive zones. The area amounts to 16,000 km² of EU waters, of which nearly 9,000 km² are within the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The EU Commission says "the measure was drafted after extensive consultations with Member States and stakeholders, including the fishing industry and NGOs over the past two years."

The Commission did not acknowledge the level of opposition to its proposal during the consultation process, as previously reported in the Marine Times.

"After the ban on bottom trawling below 800 metres, which was introduced in 2016, these closures offer further protection to help restore vulnerable marine ecosystems such as cold waters coral reefs, sea mounts and sea pens in deep waters. The total area of the closures represents 16 419 km² reserved for the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems below 400 metres," the Commission said. "This represents 1.16% of the EU waters of the North-East Atlantic. The closures concern vessels equipped with bottom gears, meaning bottom trawls, dredges, bottom-set gill nets, bottom-set longlines, pots and traps in 87 sensitive areas."

The area amounts to 16,000 km² of EU waters, of which nearly 9,000 km² are within the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

See further reaction on page 13 from the IFSA 'another little stab in the 'death of a thousand cuts' for Irish fishermen' and page 26 from a coalition of Ireland's leading environmental non-governmental organisations and networks.



**Commissioners of
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Vacancy for Able Bodied Seafarer (Deck) ILV Granuaile

Irish Lights is recruiting for an Able Bodied Seafarer (Deck) on board its multi-purpose DP 1 vessel, Granuaile.

THE SHIP

Granuaile is an Irish Flagged 80 meter multi-purpose DP1 vessel with a 20 tonne crane and significant mooring handling capabilities. She is a diesel electric ship powered by 5 x MAN gensets with total power of 3700kW driving 2 x Schottel Azi Pod propellers and a Gill Jet Azimuth Bow Thruster. She is classed by Lloyds and has UMS notation. Primary duties involve maintenance of floating and fixed Aids to Navigation. Over the ship's 20 years in operation she has successfully completed a wide range of offshore contracts including subsea operations.

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THE REQUIREMENTS

You must hold a valid STCW Able Seafarers Deck Certificate and all the essential criteria listed in the Candidate Briefing Pack. Ex-Naval personnel with experience of small craft operations will also be considered, subject to eligibility to progress to STCW Able Seafarers Deck Certificate and achieving all relevant STCW certifications for the role. Previous experience on Aids to Navigation Maintenance or Offshore Anchor Handling vessels would be a distinct advantage.

You will need to be able to take ownership of tasks and responsibilities and work efficiently. You will need strong communication and teamwork skills. If English is not your first language, you must achieve at least 80% on the Marlin Test. The ship's core operations of buoy maintenance and lighthouse replenishment can be physically demanding so you will need a good level of physical fitness.

An attractive salary, time on time off roster and pension scheme is available. Please visit our website (www.irishlights.ie/who-we-are/vacancies) to view the Candidate Briefing Pack for further information about the role and the requirements.

Closing date for applications is close of business **Monday, 17 October 2022**. Please apply by emailing a CV and cover letter to Gemma Gegan at human.resources@irishlights.ie. Please view Irish Lights Job Applicant Privacy Notice on our website.



The new Parkol built "Green Isle" on her engine trials on the River Tees. Parkol launched 23-metre trawler "Green Isle" on 5th September 2022 in Middlesbrough, where the vessel was built for Michael Cavanagh Fishing Ltd. This was Parkol's second new build for Ireland, the first vessel was built in 2021 for David & Niall Kirwan – 26.7-metre "Ambitious II", also built at their Middlesbrough facility. Photo courtesy Damien McCallig

Ireland's Coastal Communities to Benefit from Significant Funding for Capital Projects Under Brexit Blue Economy Scheme

Up to €200,000 individual funding available for capital projects

Businesses in Ireland's coastal communities are being encouraged to apply for the Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Development Scheme, with funding of up to €200,000 available per capital project.



The aim of the Scheme is to stimulate growth in rural coastal communities post-Brexit, with funding available to businesses operating within 10 kilometres of the coastline and involved in the blue economy.

The blue economy covers a wide range of economic activities within coastal communities such as seafood, coastal tourism, boat building and maintenance, marine recreation, and renewable energy initiatives.

The Scheme, the largest of its kind ever, is open to three streams of projects: Capital Investment, Business Mentoring & Capacity Development, and Upskilling & Training.

A €25 million budget is available in 2022 and 2023, funded under the EU Brexit Adjustment Reserve. The Scheme is an initiative of the Government of Ireland and is being administered by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM).

Paul Downes, regional officer at BIM, said the Scheme, which opened in June of this year, has already received many promising and innovative proposals; "We're delighted with the quality of the applications that have come in to date, covering a wide breadth of blue economy businesses – from seafood companies to charter boat businesses, marine engineering companies to coastal tourism enterprises.

"We're eager to encourage more businesses, particularly for the capital investment stream, to submit an application for funding. Brexit has brought challenges to coastal communities and this unique funding opportunity has the ability to deliver

real benefits to those communities and to individual businesses that are part of the blue economy. These investments will enable innovation, diversification, value-adding, and will support business growth and increased employment."

The Scheme is being delivered through Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) which uniquely focus local development funding specifically for areas and communities within 10 kilometres of the sea around the entire coast.

Capital project initiatives proposed by applicants must be located within 10km of the coastline and must be within one of the following blue economy sectors:

- **Small Non-Commercial Harbour/ Pier Activities**
- **Boat Building and Repair**
- **Coastal Tourism**
- **Marine Leisure and Sport**
- **Seafood**
- **Renewable Energy Initiatives supporting the Blue Economy**

The applicant must be a micro or small enterprise and projects must be completed by 30 September 2023.

The other two streams for funding are Business Mentoring & Capacity Development, and Upskilling & Training.

Full details about the Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Development Scheme, including how to apply can be found at www.bim.ie

Serious Differences Over Offshore Wind Energy Development

Lack of information at meetings of Government Seafood Offshore Renewable Group

Report by Tom MacSweeney

Serious differences are opening up at the Seafood/Offshore Renewables Energy Group meetings between the fishing industry and development companies.

At the most recent meeting, held at the end of September, these were clear when the companies were challenged about their publicly expressed views that areas for offshore wind farms were already chosen and the industry would have to work within those areas.

That is considered by fish producer organisations to be an unacceptable and unreasonable attitude adopted by big development companies, with huge resources and engaged in extensive political lobbying to achieve their aims, which will give them big profits from Irish waters.

A common denominator seems to be that there is a lack of specific information about the proposed developments being given and that the government is rushing headlong into giving concessions to the companies, without protecting the rights of the resource of Irish waters.

"It's a repeat of how other resources were given away – fishing, natural gas – it's happening all over again, with the government not standing up and defending the rights and entitlements of the Irish people who own these waters, not the companies," one source told the MarineTimes.

The energy companies appear to believe they are in a much stronger position than the fishing industry and that they are backed by the environmental lobby and its presence in government, particularly through the Green Party.

"At the moment it is really going the wrong way," said the Chief Executive of the Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation, John Lynch. "We are going to

have to get down to talking about how the industry is going to be dealt with. Is it going to be left to the last minute like the Corrib Gas pipeline was left to the last minute and caused problems for everybody concerned. Or are the issues going to be dealt with before they become a huge problem. They are dodging the main issues."

Aodh O'Donnell, CEO of the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation says that the co-existence of offshore renewable energy areas and fishing is very difficult to see and understand.

"The Government needs to take account of fishers' concerns about the planned development of Offshore Wind. This situation is moving rapidly. The issue we have is the type and level of consultation with fishers who have prior rights in these fishing areas."

Enda Conneely, who represents IIMRO, the island marine resource organisation on the ORW Group, says that "the offshore renewable energy group seems to be just trying to find a polite formula to tell fishermen that their days are over and to get out of the way.

"The major problem we have is that there is no solid information available on the scale, location or details of any of the proposed offshore structures that are being planned and there is all sorts of things that they need like co-located industries ashore, cables on the sea floor, associated onshore developments.

"There is a lot of stuff that we don't actually know, so you are kind of buying a 'pig-in-a-poke'."

BIM Announces Interim CEO

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood Development Agency, has appointed Caroline Bocquel as its interim CEO.

Caroline Bocquel currently holds the role of BIM, Director of Corporate Services, having joined the organisation in 2021. She previously held the role of Chief Financial Officer at Goal, and Director of Corporate Services at the Marine Institute.

Caroline takes up her role on 1st November, 2022 when the current BIM CEO, Jim O'Toole takes up his new position as CEO at Bord Bia. Jim has held the role of BIM CEO for the last five years. A competitive process to appoint a permanent new BIM CEO is already underway.

To date in her role at BIM, Caroline has been heavily involved in the development of the organisation's new corporate strategy. She has also led the development of an innovative new grants process to provide a high-quality service to clients within the Irish seafood industry and other BIM stakeholders.

Caroline has been integral to the development of new streamlined processes at BIM, further enhancing the seafood state agency's ability to be an effective support for industry at a critical time. These include leading new digital initiatives, the development of internal capability and a strong focus on governance.

Following the announcement, Caroline Bocquel said she was looking forward to working with colleagues in BIM and with industry in her new role over the coming months.

"I am delighted to accept this interim appointment and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the senior leadership team, across the wider BIM team, and in industry for the coming months, as we work to support and develop the seafood sector during this critical period."

Endorse your Certificate of Competency with BIM

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood Development Agency, is urging all skippers of vessels of 15 metres in length and above that hold a Second Hand Limited (SHL) certificate to ensure their Certificate of Competency is endorsed for service as Second Hand Special.

BIM is an approved provider of maritime training on behalf of the Marine Survey Office.

To apply to endorse your certificate of competency please contact BIM to discuss and book any training you need. Contact details for BIM's two colleges are detailed below:

Castletownbere College

National Fisheries College of Ireland,
Castletownbere, Co. Cork

Della O'Sullivan, College Administrator

T: + 353 27 7 1220

E: della.osullivan@bim.ie

Greencastle College

National Fisheries College of Ireland,
Greencastle, Co. Donegal

Maria McCarron, College Administrator

T: + 353 74 938 1068

E: maria.mccarron@bim.ie



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The CEOs - News and comment from the Chief Executives of the Fish Producers' Organisations, on current issues arising in the fishing industry



Patrick Murphy, Chief Executive of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation, says that what fishermen want, simply and clearly, is help to go fishing. They do not want their boats to be tied up to the quay walls. They do not want to be forced out of fishing. The Minister does not seem to accept that. He wants to force them out of fishing, to get rid of them. If there is not Government support for the industry it will be seriously damaged, to an extent that could probably be fatal in the not-so-long term to come. There was no help for the industry in the Budget at a time when it is suffering hardship.

The Minister does not appear to understand the industry. He is not listening to us.

Everybody knows that fishermen need help at present to go to sea to go fishing. It is really very simple and clear. But the Minister appears to believe that he knows better than all the fishermen who actually go fishing. He does not. The issue is being able to go to sea to go fishing. He has the money to help the industry. It is not going to cost the Exchequer anything. It is there, it is available and yet he will not help fishermen.

We fundamentally disagree with the Minister's view that the BAR money secured from Europe is there and being used to deal with the rising energy costs. This is not so. Those funds were in place five months before the Russian/Ukraine conflict even started.

This is really simple. Our Industry, like all others, is suffering from the fall-out of the Russian conflict with Ukraine. Fuel costs have more than doubled.

In recognition of the hardship and jeopardy to Europe's fishing Industry as a result of these increased costs, the European Commission invoked Article 26.2 of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) which provides that in case of exceptional events causing a significant disruption of markets, that compensation may be paid to operators of the fishery and Aquaculture sector for their income forgone or additional costs.

The Minister has acknowledged there are unallocated funds left over in the 2014-2020 EMFF, but has said he is trying to decide where this money is best spent for the benefit of the Fishing Industry, and this despite all Industry consultations clearly articulating to the Minister that the greatest threat currently is the inability to cover the additional costs of rising energy prices. This is a direct threat to food supplies and food sustainability through fishing and seafood. The fishing fleets of France and Spain are receiving such funding from their Ministers giving their fishermen an unfair advantage over Irish fishermen and the Minister stands over this and won't support Irish fishermen.

He has cast money around in all directions, but not in the

direction it is most needed – dealing with the fuel issue and giving fishermen the support they need to go fishing. That is the crucial issue. It is clear, but there has been no mention in the Budget of any movement to assist the seafood sector on the issue which has been repeatedly raised by the fishing industry – an energy subsidy. This is despite the fact that the Minister has €5.5m in European Funds that could be applied to address the crisis.

Fishermen do not want their boats to be tied up to the quay walls. They want to go fishing. That is what they do and they do it well. They catch fish, they provide seafood, they have provided sustainability and continuity of supplies right through Covid and yet, when they seek help which is recognised by the EU as necessary and other States apply it, our Minister won't help the Irish fleet.

He has given money to other aspects, but he won't give aid to those who want to stay in fishing. In all the Budget money there is no direct aid to help the fishers, the actual fishermen. He has done nothing to help them. He thinks that the solution is to force boats to tie-up to the quay wall, then force them out through redundancy and get rid of Irish boats and fishermen and leave the waters to be exploited by other European fleets. That is what he is doing. He just won't help the fishermen who want to continue to go fishing.

Not supporting the Industry now will damage current participants in the short-term and probably fatally in the not-so-long term to come.



Sean O'Donoghue, Chief Executive of Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, says that "Prior to Brexit we were a sunshine industry, now it seems to be we are in the sunset. We are not going to accept this." And he warns about the effects of the European Commission's decision on deep sea fishing will affect Ireland's Porcupine Fishery for nephrops and must be opposed and changed.

While we obviously welcome the increase in funding for the seafood sector in the Budget of €335m. for next year, but we had a major issue about the fuel and it isn't covered in the Budget. We met and asked the Minister on numerous occasions for a fuel subsidy and pointed out that he needs to bring in a scheme to cover the additional costs which is allowed for under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund under emergency measures. We have been at this for months and I am really annoyed that it is not included in the Budget. It is not actually ruled out either but there is no specific scheme.

We are not accepting that the Brexit adjustment funding,

which he keeps mentioning about the tie-up, that it relates to fuel. It doesn't and it isn't about the cost of fuel and doesn't relate to it. It relates to the losses suffered under Brexit and only applies to a limited number of whitefish vessels. All of the fleet is not covered. We made it clear to him. The temporary tie-up referred to is only for two months and we are still left with eight months and we are still going to demand that a scheme is brought in to deal with the fuel situation. The figures are there to prove our case and can be verified, I am certain, by BIM. Since the Ukrainian War it is clear how the cost of fuel has been affected. The break-even point is about 60 to a maximum of 70 cent for operating and that has been exceeded. €1.40 and more is consistently being paid a litre.

We can see in the Budget that there are references to a number of schemes that haven't been brought in that the Task Force recommended.

Unfortunately, the worst affected sector here has been the pelagic sector, particularly on the transfer of mackerel to the UK which amounted to 12,100 tonnes this year and just under 12,000 tonnes last year and will be more again next year. It looks now like there won't be any payments, assuming the schemes are improved, until next year which is not acceptable. There hasn't been one cent to the most affected sector.

The other big thing that has happened in the last few

weeks and about which there has been very little media coverage at an Irish level, but at a European level it has been quite significant, is that the European Commission brought in what they called an 'implementing decision' about deep-sea fishing. You would imagine that it doesn't affect us because we don't have a deep sea fleet, but it does because it relates to depths over 400 metres rather than 800 metres and that will certainly affect our Porcupine fishery for nephrops which is our second biggest money-spinner for the Irish economy after mackerel. It is based on flawed information, but still they brought in the regulation. At the Council meeting a number of Member States including Ireland sought that this be amended immediately. But it now looks that the earliest for this to happen will be the first quarter of next year. With our European colleagues we are looking at the legality of this and how it was done. We are really up in arms about this, but it has got very little media coverage in Ireland.

Going back to the fuel crisis the facts speak for themselves. People are at the end of their tether in relation to this. There had been an expectation that something would be done in the Budget. We are not going to leave this lying. We will continue after the Minister about this. We are not lying-down and accepting this. Prior to Brexit we were a sunshine industry, now it seems to be we are in the sunset.

We are not going to accept this.



John Lynch, Chief Executive of the Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation, says the rights of the fishing industry must be respected in the development of wind energy, but discussions at meetings of the 'Seafood /Offshore Renewable Energy Working Group' are not going the right way at present.

We are trying to nail it down to what is going to happen as big companies move in on highly productive fishing grounds. I have no good feelings from it yet, it is really hard to nail down any specific issues with them. We are going to have to get down to talking about how the

industry is going to be dealt with. Is it going to be left to the last minute like the Corrib Gas pipeline was left to the last minute and caused problems for everybody concerned. Or are the issues going to be dealt with before they become a huge problem. That is essentially where we are at.

At the moment it is really going the wrong way. They are dodging the main issues. They are saying that sites have been determined, but that fishing can still be decided within those sites and have an input into that. But it is our opinion that it won't be physically possible to fish inside those sites, even if it is legally possible.

The ORE companies need to recognise this and the need to recognise that they are pushing us out of productive waters and that some kind of mitigation measures for fishing have to be thought about.

Fishermen have an entitlement to fish. The waters around

Ireland are belonging to the people, not to the companies.

Fuel costs are still a problem. It is slightly down, but while the cost has dropped a little, it will probably go back up again. It is a huge problem for the managing of the boats. After six months of it now they are really starting to feel the pain, boats have stretched their credit with all their suppliers, they have stretched their terms with their banks, most of the boats are on interest only at this stage and no recognition from the Minister.

There was nothing in the Budget for fishing, other than the re-announcement for schemes that were already announced. No recognition of fishing at all really.

John Lynch also made the point that the industry does appreciate the Brexit schemes for what they are, but they give no relief for the current fuel crisis he said.



Aodh O'Donnell, Chief Executive of the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation, says that "in the final analysis, in its simplest form," all that is required to respond to the fishing industry's request for a fuel subsidy "is a level playing field with everybody else." He also refers to the "spatial squeeze" by the impact of the development of wind energy on the fishing industry. The European Commission decision about deep-sea fishing will, he warns, have a severe impact on the Irish fleet in the Porcupine Fishery.

Landings of Irish fishing vessels in both domestic and foreign ports fell by a third since 2012. Over the same period, landings of foreign vessels at Irish ports rose by 48%. There is a major disparity here, leading to a big drop in the amount of fish landed by Irish fleets. This hits hard at fish producers and fish processors, but also at other industries relying on Irish fish. We discussed this in the context of the adverse and disproportionate impacts of Brexit quota transfers at a meeting with Tanaiste Leo Varadkar. This was a positive joint engagement of the IFPO and Irish Fish Processors & Exporters Association whose CEO Brendan Byrne was also present.

We emphasised that there is a need to achieve a rebalancing so that Ireland has a fairer share of quotas in the EU. It was the first step in a process aimed at ongoing engagement on the developmental needs of the seafood sector. We discussed the adverse and disproportionate impacts of Brexit quota transfers. We emphasised that there is a need to achieve a re-balancing so that Ireland has a fairer share of quotas in the EU.

We outlined the threat to our food security and employment in coastal communities because things are moving towards a situation where Irish processors, retailers and restaurants are forced to buy more fish from foreign vessels because the Irish fleet can no longer meet demand.

We pressed the need to immediately drawdown existing EU fuel aid subsidies which other Member States are already claiming. There is no cost to the State in passing on this aid as it is already on offer. It makes no sense to force our fleet to compete at a disadvantage with other EU fleets who are getting as much as 30c/litre in fuel aid. Otherwise putting to sea will simply be unaffordable for increasing numbers of Irish vessels.

I also outlined to the Tánaiste the need to back demands for the development of plans for the fishing industry's future. The Irish Government needs to press the EU to achieve a more equitable share of quotas for Ireland.

At present, decommissioning around a third of the whitefish fleet is being implemented to match the fleet to reduced quotas post Brexit. This is a bleak prospect for the sector. We stressed the need for a developmental approach to modernise and renew the fleet. This needs to be supported by innovative ways of securing more quotas. We must continue to build a consensus and work together to represent this sector and this is a step in this process.

We also outlined the need for Government to take account of fishers' concerns about the planned development of Offshore Wind. This situation is moving rapidly. The issue we have is the type and level of consultation with fishers who have prior rights in these fishing areas. Unfortunately the co-existence of offshore renewable energy areas and fishing is very difficult to see and understand.

There is also a serious concern about the designation by the EC of areas of the Porcupine Bank as BMEs because they will now be unavailable to Irish fishing vessels. The regulations announced in the last month are going to hit Irish boats particularly hard.



Highlighting the various colours of the ballan wrasse and the unusual green caught by young Josh Lavelle, at Saddle Head, Achill onboard the Kia Josh. Photo courtesy Donal Murphy

MARINE TIMES

The Strong Voice for Ireland's Fishing, Marine and Coastal Communities

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The Government Cannot Avoid Responsibility

What will it take to convince the Government that it is destroying a vital industry?

Fishing provides seafood which has vital nutrients needed for health and wellness at all ages, including omega-3s, iron, B and D vitamins, and protein. Fish and shellfish supply the nutrients, vitamins and omega 3s essential for strong bones, brain development and healthy heart and immune system.

These are known facts for human health.

Sustainability of seafood is as important as for any other food source.

Economic facts are that the fishing industry is the main source of support to the country's coastal communities.

Why then, is the industry not a priority for Government?

The challenges which the industry now faces are many and are causing a major crisis.

Sectors of the fleet cannot afford to go to sea to fish because of the cost of diesel. For several months, the Minister for the Marine has refused repeated requests for emergency help. While the European Commission has approved emergency help, which has been implemented by other Member States. Minister McConalogue has refused to give help to the Irish fleet. He has stated that EU funding to compensate for the disastrous Brexit deal, where the Government failed to protect the industry, is financial support for fuel costs. The industry has pointed out that this statement is not correct. The Brexit compensation was arranged before the Russian/Ukrainian War.

Why will the Government not assist a vital industry? Who in the Department of the Marine is advising against supporting the fishing industry?

At present there are fishing boats which cannot fish because they cannot afford to. Owners have exhausted credit lines with suppliers. There are increasing difficulties reported with financial supports from banks.

The State fisheries board, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, has confirmed the fears of the industry about the future. BIM's annual Fisheries Report says that there will be a decrease in landings, revenue and profitability for the fleet. That is a warning and a harbinger for trouble ahead.

Figures were produced to Tanaiste Leo Varadkar, who is also Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, showing that landings by foreign vessels into Irish fishing harbours have risen by 48 per cent over the past decade, while there has been a big drop in the amount of fish landed by Irish vessels.

He was also told that there could be many hundreds of job losses in the industry throughout the coastal communities and that lack of Government commitment to fishing was discouraging new entrants to the industry, further damaging its future and the continuance of an Irish fishing industry.

In the midst of these problems another serious challenge is confronting the industry.

It has become evident that powerful, well-resourced companies engaged in offshore wind energy development appear to have more State support than the fishing industry which could be forced away from vital fishing grounds by their development proposals.

Faced with all of that the industry has to cope with criticism from environmental groups, much of it ignorant and lacking knowledge of actual fishing operations. Some of these groups receive financial support from the State.

That oft-used description of a "perfect storm" is applicable to what is now attacking, in many versions, Ireland's fishing industry.

It is time for the Government to support the fishing industry, with clear, focused commitment to its sustainability and, through it, of vital food supplies.

If there is not Government support the long-term future of the fishing industry is at issue.

The Government cannot avoid the responsibility it bears.

MARINE TIMES RADIO

OCTOBER 2022



NEWS AND COMMENT FROM IRELAND'S LEADING MARITIME NEWSPAPER

Bringing you the voices of the fishing and coastal communities, with the latest news and developments and a review of the monthly edition of the MARINE TIMES.

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The MARINE TIMES is the strong voice for the fishing industry and the coastal communities.

Minister Turns Sod on New Coast Guard Station at Bunmahon, Co Waterford in €5 Million Investment

Minister with special responsibility for the Irish Coast Guard, Hildegard Naughton, and Senator John Cummins, “turned the sod” for the construction of a new Coast Guard Station at Bunmahon, Co Waterford.

Minister Naughton said “It is essential that we have Coast Guard stations, vehicles and equipment that are fit for purpose. The Irish Coast Guard provides a critical service

for Irish people saving life at sea and protecting the marine environment. The service is delivered by almost 1000 volunteers operating out of 44 Coast Guard stations along the coast of Ireland. The commitment and dedication of our volunteers is second to none. I am absolutely committed to supporting their work through the delivery of modern and safe facilities here in Waterford; a fact clearly demonstrable in our investment of €5.3 million here today. Today is a special day for our volunteers, the Irish Coast Guard and those enjoying Waterford’s beautiful coastline in the many years ahead.

The Minister paid tribute to the members of the Bunmahon Unit – “The Bunmahon Coast Guard unit is a key resource for the Irish Coast Guard in delivering its search and rescue mission in the Waterford area. The unit has shoreline and cliff rescue capabilities and works closely with its flank units at Ardmore and Tramore. The Waterford team here has responded to many search and cliff rescue emergencies down through the years, both maritime and inland, in rural communities and in the larger townlands of Tramore and Dungarvan. The unit has also assisted other Principal Emergency Services – An Garda Síochána, National Ambulance Service and Fire Service.

“The OPW is delighted to assist in the design and construction of this new purpose built premises in Bunmahon for the Irish Coast Guard Service. These new facilities, once completed, will provide improved accommodation and adequate vehicle storage to help the local volunteers to continue providing this very valuable service to the many communities along the south east coast.”

The Department of Transport is responsible for the Coast Guard building programme, which aims to ensure that Coast Guard Units along the coast are fit for purpose. The programme is managed through the OPW, from planning and design to build and on-going maintenance.

The new Coast Guard Station will provide vastly superior modern facilities for the eighteen volunteers who operate from the Bunmahon Unit. The new Coast Guard station will provide for vehicle storage, shower, WC and changing facilities, an Operations/training room, kitchen and office space.

The OPW has worked closely with the Coast Guard to identify a suitable site for the new Coast Guard Station and will manage the construction work which will take approximately 12 months to complete.



Minister Hildegard Naughton, and Senator John Cummins, pictured with members of the Bunmahon Coast Guard who are eagerly awaiting the construction of a new Coast Guard Station at Bunmahon, Co Waterford

Irish Coast Guard and Ministers Mark 200 Years of Lifesaving Service

Commemorative Service Token to be issued to volunteers nationwide in recognition of their valued service

The Irish Coast Guard, which can trace its roots to 1822, is celebrating 200 years of lifesaving service. The milestone was marked at an event attended by Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan TD and Minister of State with specific responsibility for the Irish Coast Guard, Hildegard Naughton TD, at Greenore Coast Guard Station, County Louth. A special Commemorative Proof of Service Wreck Token will be awarded to 950 volunteers nationwide in recognition of their valued service.

Staff and volunteers from 44 Coast Guard units across Ireland provide a national maritime search and rescue service and a maritime casualty and pollution response service. Together, they respond to almost 3,000 call outs and save on average 400 lives a year. Of the call outs, approximately

half are maritime incidents, a quarter are inland search and rescue and another quarter involve assisting the National Ambulance Service.

Today the Irish Coast Guard uses state of the art technology to support its work. However, over the decades, its volunteers have had to rely on horse drawn carriages to carry equipment, climbing cliffs on ladders and line-firing rockets to reach grounded vessels, for example, in their rescue efforts. The 200th anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on the legacy and rich history of this crucial rescue service.

Modern volunteer Coast Guard units provide a combination of Rescue Boat, Cliff Rescue, Shoreline Search Capabilities, and Emergency Community Support in conjunction with the other emergency services. Development in the use of Small Unmanned Aircraft systems (Drones) provide Coast Guard units with an enhanced search capability while Coast Guard helicopters provide 24/7 services out of four bases (Dublin, Waterford, Shannon, Sligo).

Minister for Transport, Eamon Ryan TD said: “The Irish Coast Guard Service has always been, and remains, a

critical part of Ireland’s emergency response system. Last year, the Coast Guard reported a 12% increase in the overall number of incidents coordinated during 2021. Hardly a day goes by without hearing of the extraordinary work carried out bravely and selflessly by its staff and volunteers. Whether it’s the rescue of someone from the sea, a cliff or mountain rescue, the provision of maritime safety broadcasts, ship casualty operations or the investigation of pollution reports, they provide a 24/7 service for, and on behalf of, the Irish people.

“I am delighted to mark this 200-year celebration and to reflect on its rich history by recognising the tireless work of Irish Coast Guard staff and volunteers - both those currently in duty and those who have served before them, and their families right across the country.”

Minister of State Hildegard Naughton TD said: “The Irish Coast Guard is one of the State’s Principal Emergency Services and their work is both challenging and varied. I would like to acknowledge the commitment of staff and volunteers for providing this crucial service and particularly

for maintaining service delivery throughout the Covid pandemic.

“I am continuing my visits to our coast guard units across the country. The dedication and commitment towards protecting people along our coastline and inland waters is palpable to say the least. I continue to hear stories of volunteers leaving their families at home at the dead of night, or on Christmas Day, to assist a person in difficulty; a fact that demonstrates the personal sacrifice that is made by our volunteers 365 days of the year. Without our volunteers we simply would not have this lifesaving service.

“I am also pleased to announce the publication earlier this week of the second annual report on the National Search and Rescue Plan, submitted by the National Search and Rescue (SAR) Committee. The Report shows a lot of evidence of inter-agency co-operation which is made possible by the close bonds forged locally between the services and inter-agency training and exercising.”

The Commemorative Proof of Service wreck token is based on original Proof of Service wreck tokens which were issued to all Coast Guard stations since 1822. When the Coast Guard members or members of the public attended to a rescue, the Officer in Charge would give all who attended the rescue a Proof of Service wreck token. Anyone who was issued with a token would then hand it back to the Inspector when he next visited the Coast Guard station as proof of his/her attendance at a rescue. He/she would then be paid the appropriate amount in exchange for the token.

These Proof of Service wreck tokens were maintained at each Coast Guard station. Two types were cast over the 200-year period and while both had a clipper on one side, the British version (1822-1922) had the Crown on the other side while the Irish version (post 1922) had the harp. Very few of these original Proof of Service wreck tokens have survived however they are an important part of the 200-year history of our Coast Guard service on this island.



Staff and volunteers of the Irish Coast Guard alongside Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan TD and Minister of State Hildegarde Naughton at an event to celebrate 200 years of the Irish Coast Guard at Greenore Coast Guard Station, Louth.



An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport



Watch Officer in the Irish Coast Guard (IRCG)

The Irish Coast Guard, a Division of the Department of Transport, has vacancies for Watch Officers at its three Marine Rescue Coordination Centres in Dublin, Malin Head, Co Donegal and Valentia, Co Kerry. The IRCG provides a nationwide maritime emergency service as well as a variety of services to shipping and other government agencies.

Watch Officers are responsible for watch-keeping on the emergency communications systems, act as Search and Rescue Mission Coordinators, Marine Alert and Notification

Officers, as well as tasking and co-ordination of Coast Guard aviation operations. They process marine communication traffic, monitor vessel traffic separation, and coordinate responses to maritime casualty and pollution incidents and Coast Guard support for the other emergency services.

APPLICATIONS FOR THIS ROLE WILL OPEN ON FRIDAY 14TH OCTOBER. THE CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF COMPLETED APPLICATIONS IS 3PM ON THURSDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2022.

For further details please log onto: www.publicjobs.ie

We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity and encourage applications under all nine grounds of the Employment Equality Act. Cuirfear fáilte roimh chomhfhreagras i nGaeilge.



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BIM Confirms What The Fishing Industry Has Been Saying

Report by Tom MacSweeney,
Deputy Editor

The serious problems facing the fishing industry have been confirmed in the first Annual Fisheries Report published by the State fisheries board. Bord Iascaigh Mhara admits that there will be a decrease in landings, revenue and profitability in what it describes as its "Inaugural Annual Fisheries Report." Effectively, it is an integral part of fisheries' performance data reporting to the EU.

BIM's National Seafood Survey provides insights into the status of Ireland's catching sector on an annual basis. It is an integral part of fisheries' performance data reporting to the EU. Based on the most recent survey returns the Annual Fisheries Report 2022: 'A Snapshot of Ireland's Fisheries Sector' acknowledges the problems for the fishing fleet due to fuel prices, where the Marine Minister has refused requests made several times for a subsidy, which has been provided in other EU countries. BIM says: "Based on feedback from industry, the impact of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine on inflation and rising fuel costs was the main driving force influencing the economic performance of the Irish fleet in 2022. In 2020, average fuel costs per litre were €0.42 whereas average fuels costs per litre in mid-2022 stood at €0.90 representing a 114% increase in cost and the current reported costs of €1.20 per litre represents a 18% increase since 2020."

The report, for 2021, says that "the data indicates an increase in landings by weight from 2020 (+6%) and a decrease in value of landings (-7.5%) due to decreasing fish prices and changes in quota allocation. Gross profit for 2021 is projected to decrease significantly (-58%) to €27.6 million combined with a decreasing net profit (-75%) to €8.1 million."

Fleet Profitability Will Decline

While it records that "profitability of the Irish fleet has increased since 2019," but that has changed in the current situation and the contradiction is clear from the report's projections for the current year: "In terms of the outlook for economic performance for 2021-2022, preliminary data point to a decrease in revenue and profitability for the Irish fleet."

The report records less time spent at sea by the country's

fishing boats: "The Irish fishing fleet spent 77,460 days at sea, of which 84% were fishing days representing a decrease of 16% and 17% respectively from 2019.

"Profitability of the Irish fleet has increased since 2019. Revenue increased by 2%, amounting to €312 million; gross value added (GVA) €161 million (+6%), gross profit €65 million (+24%) and net profit decreased to €32 million (-20%) due in part to Covid-19. The fleet landed over 218,600 tonnes valued at €312 million, an increase of 5% from 2019 in live weight and an increase of 2% in landed value (€306.5 million). In 2021, the fleet landed 233,000 tonnes, an increase of 7% from 2020.

"Overall, the cost structure of the fleet has remained stable with a slight increase in all costs except non-variable costs (e.g., insurance, loan interest). Operating costs totalled €255 million, a slight increase of 1% from 2019 with energy costs increased by approximately 10%. When capital costs are included, the total cost of operating the

national fleet rose by 4% since 2019 to €278.5 million. Direct employment generated by the sector was estimated at 2,928 jobs corresponding to 2,684 full-time equivalents (FTEs)."

Disagreement About Decommissioning

BIM, which has the responsibility for implementing the voluntary scheme maintains that "in the long-term, decommissioning will help to bring fleet capacity back in balance with available quotas and improve the profitability for vessels remaining in the Irish fleet."

This, however, is disputed by the fishing industry representative organisations, contradicting BIM's conclusion.

They have said that the smaller fleet will be a long-term damage to the industry and the coastal communities, with no prospect for improving that situation in the years ahead. They say that hundreds of jobs will be lost, damaging the industry, making it unattractive to new entrants and ultimately create serious economic and social problems in the country's coastal communities.

How BIM Describes Its Report

BIM says that its report is "a snapshot of Ireland's Fisheries Sector, examines the economic performance of the national fleet and its multiple segments. It also details the social demographics of people employed in the sector and the current challenges impacting the industry.

"It provides insights and trends for the financial and operational performance of the Irish fishing fleet based on economic data of 2020 operations and an overview of key forces impacting the economic performance of the Irish fleet from 2020- 2022 based on industry feedback.

"Creating an accurate picture of the industry relies on a strong response rate and consistent support and goodwill from skippers and vessel owners to provide economic and operational data on an annual basis. The results of the survey help industry and policy makers to understand the challenges and opportunities they face, as well as the impact of fisheries management measures such as Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and quota allocations."

BIM's key findings for 2020

- Profitability of the Irish fleet has increased since 2019. Revenue increased by 2%, amounting to €312 mil-



Lady Emma - Photo courtesy Donal Healy

lion; gross value added (GVA) €161 million (+6%), gross profit €65 million (+24%) and net profit decreased to €32 million (-20%) due in part to Covid-19.

- The Irish fishing fleet spent 77,460 days at sea, of which 84% were fishing days representing a decrease of 16% and 17% respectively from 2019.
- Energy consumption decreased by 35% over the same period reflecting this decrease in effort.
- The fleet landed over 218.6 tonnes valued at €312 million, an increase of 5% from 2019 in live weight and an increase of 2% in landed value (€306.5 million). In 2021, the fleet landed 233 tonnes, an increase of 7% from 2020.
- Overall, the cost structure of the fleet has remained stable with a slight increase in all costs except non-variable costs (e.g., insurance, loan interest). Operating costs totalled €255 million, a slight increase of 1% from 2019 with energy costs increased by approximately 10%. When capital costs are included, the total cost of operating the national fleet rose by 4% since 2019 to €278.5 million.
- Direct employment generated by the sector was estimated at 2,928 jobs corresponding to 2,684 full-time equivalents (FTEs).
- Based on feedback from industry, the impact of the Russian invasion of the Ukraine on inflation and rising fuel costs was the main driving force influencing the economic performance of the Irish fleet in 2022. In 2020, average fuel costs per litre were €0.42 whereas average fuels costs per litre in mid-2022 stood at €0.90 representing a 114% increase in cost and the current reported costs of €1.20 per litre represents a 18% increase since 2020.

BIM's Future Projections

- In terms of the outlook for economic performance for 2021-2022, preliminary data point to a decrease in revenue and profitability for the Irish fleet. For 2021, the data indicates an increase in landings by weight from 2020 (+6%) and a decrease in value of landings (-7.5%) due to decreasing fish prices and changes in quota allocation. Gross profit for 2021 is projected to decrease significantly (-58%) to €27.6 million combined with a decreasing net profit (-75%) to €8.1 million.
- Preliminary data for 2022 compared to 2021 indicate a decrease in landings by weight (-17%), an increase in value of landings (+5%) and a decrease in gross profit (-12%) to €24.5 million. It is anticipated that the Brexit tie-up schemes will mitigate these projected outcomes and allow the industry to absorb the impacts of rising fuel costs for some segments of the fleet and the reduced access to fishing quota as a result of Brexit. In the long-term, decommissioning will help to bring fleet capacity back in balance with available quotas and improve the profitability for vessels remaining in the Irish fleet.

BIM will be hosting National Seafood Survey information meetings with vessel owners at various ports from October onwards to discuss the finding of the Annual Fisheries report 2022, the importance of returning the annual survey and how to register and complete the online National Seafood Survey for 2022. Register to attend by Email to: Dr. Sarah Perry, National Seafood Survey Coordinator, at: DCFData@bim.ie Additional meetings are scheduled with NIFF and RIFFs and further meetings may be organised at more locations at a later date, BIM says.

Killybegs

- KFO Board room, October 11th, at 2pm

Greencastle

- BIM National Fisheries College, October 12th, at 6.30pm

Castletownbere

- BIM National Fisheries College, October 18th, at 6.00pm

Dingle

- Harbour Masters Office, October 19th, at 2.30pm

Last to Leave, Turn Out the Lights ...



Cormac Burke, Chairman of the Irish Fishing and Seafood Alliance assesses the situation whereby Irish fishermen are more endangered than anything else in our waters



Save the seal, save the whale, save the Scorals, save the energy crisis - but when will our Government make an effort to save Ireland's fishing industry and its coastal communities?

One can't help feeling that our fishing industry is under attack from every possible angle - if its not European fishing superpowers pressurizing the EU Commission then its our own marine department and regulators doing their best to work against the industry, but now, in the name of environmental conservation, it is the banning of trawling in certain areas - another little stab in the 'death of a thousand cuts' for Irish fishermen.

Before the conservationists jump all over me, I'm not saying that certain sensitive seabed areas, such as those with delicate coral life in GENUINE deep seas should not be protected - but the entire strategy of closing down fishing areas piece by piece, often under different plans, is clear to be seen.

In a recent press release from Fair Seas (see page 26 of this issue), one of the statements reads "The Irish government has committed to protect 30% of our waters before 2030. We need to ensure that MPA legislation is ambitious and timely to conserve, restore and protect our ocean. Our ocean territory is home to endangered sharks, globally important seabird colonies, and animals threatened with extinction. It is vital that we act now to restore critical habitats, safeguard wildlife and help address the climate crisis" —

The operations of the Irish fishing industry, not now or ever, has been a threat to sharks, seabirds or animals threatened with extinction - and yet 30% of Irish waters are to be closed to fishing by 2030.

Not all of this 30% will be areas that are fished anyway but even if only 10% are currently productive fishing grounds then this, on top of the recent loss of 30% of fish quotas in Irish waters for Irish fishermen [as a result of BREXIT] and on top of the growing number of wind farm licences to be established on even more fishing grounds, is yet one more step in the gradual but apparent strategical-

ly-planned extermination of this industry.

And, as for the statement of a fishing ban on 'deep sea' areas, how on earth can the extremely important Porcupine Bank be included amongst this category when it is a plateau in 200m of water that rises to 145m?

During my days as editor of Fishing News I was a guest of the then fisheries minister Richard Benyon to Westminster for a meeting with a group of environmentalists and to hear their proposal for banning fishing in 'deep sea' waters.

But, as the only fishing industry representative in the room I felt compelled at the end of their presentation to point out to the Minister (and the environmentalists) that in their screen graphics they showed sensitive corals that grew at depths of 600m+ but then the fishing areas that they wanted to close were all in waters of less than 250m...

Meanwhile, MPAs (Marine Protected Areas) can be the thin end of a very dangerous wedge.

A decade ago in the UK for example, there were many, many proposals for 'protected' areas - and each of these came from different green groups but all working with the same strategy - MPAs, MZCs (Marine Zones of Conservation), MCZs (Marine Conservation Zones), and a half a dozen other titles etc etc - but at the end of the day they were all MPAs under one name or another.

And with individual cases of single areas applying for the status of 'protected' such cases seemed reasonable and harmless enough — until the eventual plan of 'joining the dots' of all these MPAs became apparent - leaving fishermen the losers of vast sways of perfectly good fishing grounds.

Joining up a string of MPAs is a logical step in a region such as Australia's Great Barrier Reef but is far from logical in Irish waters which are known to be the richest and most productive fishing grounds in all of Europe.

Come the next election people need to ask themselves just how far is the Irish Government willing to go in defending everyone and everything except for its fishermen, their families and the hundreds of years of heritage and tradition on this island nation?



**TOM MacSWEENEY**

Maritime Diary

“Chaotic, cluttered, disarranged, disarrayed, disordered, messed, messy, muddled.”

These adjectives I have located while attempting to define ‘confusion’ and ‘confused’.

“If you’re not confused, you’re not paying attention,” according to Tom Peters, who wrote “Thriving on Chaos, Handbook for a Management Revolution,” an American writer on business and management practices, whom I came across while in pursuit of my self-imposed task of defining ‘confusion’. This, to understand the government’s maritime policy and wherein the Department of the Marine is situated in the State administration.

About this I am, like others who have expressed a similar feeling, perplexed. This is a state of being bewildered or unclear in one’s mind about something.

What I am unclear about is why, in an island nation, the Department of the Marine has such little relevance to formulation of State policies on crucial maritime matters.

It is located within the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Naming it last is stated to have been necessitated, according to government, because of ‘alphabetical placing.’ But, could that also,

reflect being of ‘least interest’ to State administration?



It does not deal with the ports, maritime transport, safety at sea, inland and estuarial fishing, for example, while aspects of the marine sphere relating to tourism and sport are placed elsewhere. It can be challenging and difficult to locate exactly in which Department marine aspects are located.

The latest indication of its lowly status appears to be the placing of MARA, the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority, “responsible for regulating development

and activity in Ireland’s maritime area,” according to Government announcement.

MARA, is under the aegis of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Is that not a more landbound, shore-based, than maritime-oriented department?.

Why is there not a dedicated Department of the Marine to deal with the most dominant physical aspect of Ireland’s geography – that it is an island state at the extremity of the European mainland, surrounded by water.

Apart from fishing, where, to many it seems more opposed to the development of the industry than progressive, what role does the Marine section of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, actually have in maritime affairs?

‘Heritage’ could provide some liaison between those two Departments. I have been asked - what has happened to the proposal for heritage fishing licences, much discussed a few years ago? It appears to have vanished from any priority. I don’t know the answer, but I’d be interested to hear from either Department.

MARITIME IRELAND RADIO SHOW

The monthly, hour-long, maritime programme is supported by the MARINE TIMES and issued on Podcast on the first Friday of each month. It is available on the MARINE TIMES website: www.marinetimes.ie and on Apple, Spotify, Amazon, Google and other Podcast Services. It is also broadcast on 17 Community Radio Stations around Ireland

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Programme website: www.maritimeirelandradioshow.ie Email address: maritimeirelandradioshow@gmail.com



Golden Reaper arriving back at Ardglass after a nice paint job - Photo by Christopher Feenan

Upcoming Courses 2022

OCTOBER

- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting
3rd October - 5th October
NFCI Greencastle
- STCW Advanced Firefighting
3rd October - 7th October
NFCI Castletownbere
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
4th October - 6th October
Coastal Training Unit 1,
Cromane, Co Kerry
- GMDSS Short Range Radio Certificate
10th October - 12th October
NFCI Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
11th October - 13th October
NFCI Castletownbere
- Enhanced Safety Training
11th October
Coastal Training Unit 1,
Cromane, Co Kerry
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
17th October - 19th October
NFCI Greencastle
- STCW Personal Safety and Social
Responsibility
20th October
NFCI Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
25th October - 27th October
NFCI Castletownbere
- Enhanced Safety Training
27th October
NFCI Greencastle

- Surface Supplied Diving Operations
31st October - 25th November
NFCI Castletownbere

NOVEMBER

- GMDSS General Operators Radio Certificate
1st November - 12th November
NFCI Castletownbere
- Enhanced Safety Training
10th November
NFCI Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
14th November - 16th November
NFCI Greencastle
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting
15th November - 17th November
NFCI Castletownbere
- STCW Advanced Firefighting
21st November - 25th November
NFCI Greencastle
- Navigational Command & Control (Fishing)
21st November - 2nd December
NFCI Castletownbere
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
22nd November - 24th November
NFCI Castletownbere
- STCW Medical Care Aboard Ship
28th November - 2nd December
NFCI Castletownbere

DECEMBER

- Navigational Control Course (Fishing)
5th December - 16th December
NFCI Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
6th December - 8th December
NFCI Castletownbere
- STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting
7th December - 9th December
NFCI Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training
12th December - 14th December
NFCI Greencastle

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Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



THE MARINE TIMES INTERVIEW

OFFSHORE ENERGY: “If they put any of these structures where our boats fish we cannot move on, so we are basically finished.”

Enda Conneely is the IRISH ISLANDS MARINE RESOURCE ORGANISATION (IIMRO) representative on the offshore renewable group set up by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The ‘Seafood /ORE Working Group’, the name assigned to it by Minister Darragh O’Brien, was established “to facilitate discussion on matters arising from the interaction of the seafood and offshore renewable energy industries, to promote and share best practice and to encourage liaison with other sectors in the marine environment.”

Is this being done?

Seafood is very important to Enda Conneely who, as well as being an inshore fisherman is also a chef and operates the South Aran House Restaurant and Cookery School, the guest house, South Aran Rooms and the Aran Sea Experience, on Inisheer in the Aran Islands. He recently presented a TG4 cookery programme, Ó Cuisine, highlighting seafood and is a member of the island’s Co-op.

In this month’s interview, he outlines to Marine Times Deputy Editor, Tom MacSweeney, the concerns of IIMRO about offshore wind energy development, pointing to a lack of information about what is going to happen.

“The offshore renewable energy group seems to be just trying to find a polite formula to tell fishermen that their days are over and to get out of the way,” Enda Conneely tells me.

“The major problem we have is that there is no solid information available on the scale, location or details of any of the proposed offshore structures that are being planned and there is all sorts of things that they need like co-located industries ashore, cables on the sea floor, associated onshore developments. There is a lot of stuff that we don’t actually know, so you are kind of buying a ‘pig-in-a-poke’, Enda Conneely says.

“People are saying ‘oh, wind energy is great’. There is a polarised approach, you are seen either for or against, there is no level-headed look at what is actually needed or where it is going to improve our lives. In general we are working in the dark. The problem that we have as small-scale fishers, small-scale operators whose boats would be under 12 metres, most around 8, so our boats would be spatially restricted.

“If they put any of these structures where our boats fish we cannot move on, so we are basically finished. The impact on fishing grounds close to shore is of major concern and those fishing grounds can move,” so we have a lot of concern about what is happening.”

That summarises issues for small-boat, inshore fishermen, facing the impact of wind energy development, where the Government has committed to the generation of 70% of electricity through renewables by 2030, with offshore wind energy the major supplier.

“The State should take ownership”

“The fishing community have been there for a long time and the coastal communities depend on it. There is a sudden rush into all this and when that is the approach

taken, it is never good. We are concerned that this all seems to be going towards private developers. We feel that the State should take ownership. We did have oil and gas resources. We had a lot of fish. They have all gone. Now wind energy is seen in our seas as the resource, so the Government and the Minister must step in and say, particularly with the strategic needs now, that offshore renewables must be prioritised and kept in State ownership really, or else any private developers must be subject to review of their

the moment seems to be just trying to find a polite formula to tell fishermen that their days are over and they need to get out of the way, in a polite way from what I can see,” says Enda Conneely. “It doesn’t seem to have feeling for legislation that allows for maritime consent for the sectors involved. If there is enough money to make things happen, they will happen, so this is all about the money for a private corporation. It is not protecting enough strategically for the State which is a big problem.”

I ask him about the new State Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) being placed under the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, excluding the Department of the Marine.

“If they cannot do things on land I would not be too confident of their ability to do it at sea”

IIMRO, he responds, has been pointing out to Government for some time the need for a properly resourced, committed agency to deal with maritime matters, but based on the performance of the Department of Housing in providing housing, he does not seem confident: “If they cannot do things on land I would not be too confident of their ability to do it at sea. It seems to me that they are packaging this to give to somebody and then we won’t have anything.

“They are talking about 40-year leases. There is strong concern that there is

the likelihood they are giving sections of the oceans, maritime areas, over to the exclusive use of private developers. The situation does not inspire confidence.

“People are important and we need to see exactly where this is going to benefit the people.”

• Enda Conneely will be interviewed on the October edition of MARINE TIMES RADIO and the MARITIME IRELAND RADIO SHOW



involvement over short periods. They must put financial bonds in place to deal with any problems and the salvage and correction of problems, commensurate with when these developments start. There are a lot of things there that need attention. There is not enough solid information available.”

There is strong lobbying underway from offshore energy developers, at a level to which the fishing industry and coastal communities do not appear to have the resources to respond.

“The offshore renewable energy group that is going at

Port of Cork Company Officially Launches €89 million Cork Container Terminal

Following years of significant planning, investment and development, the Port of Cork Company (PoCC) officially launched its new state-of-the-art Cork Container Terminal (CCT) in Ringaskiddy on Friday, Sept 23rd.

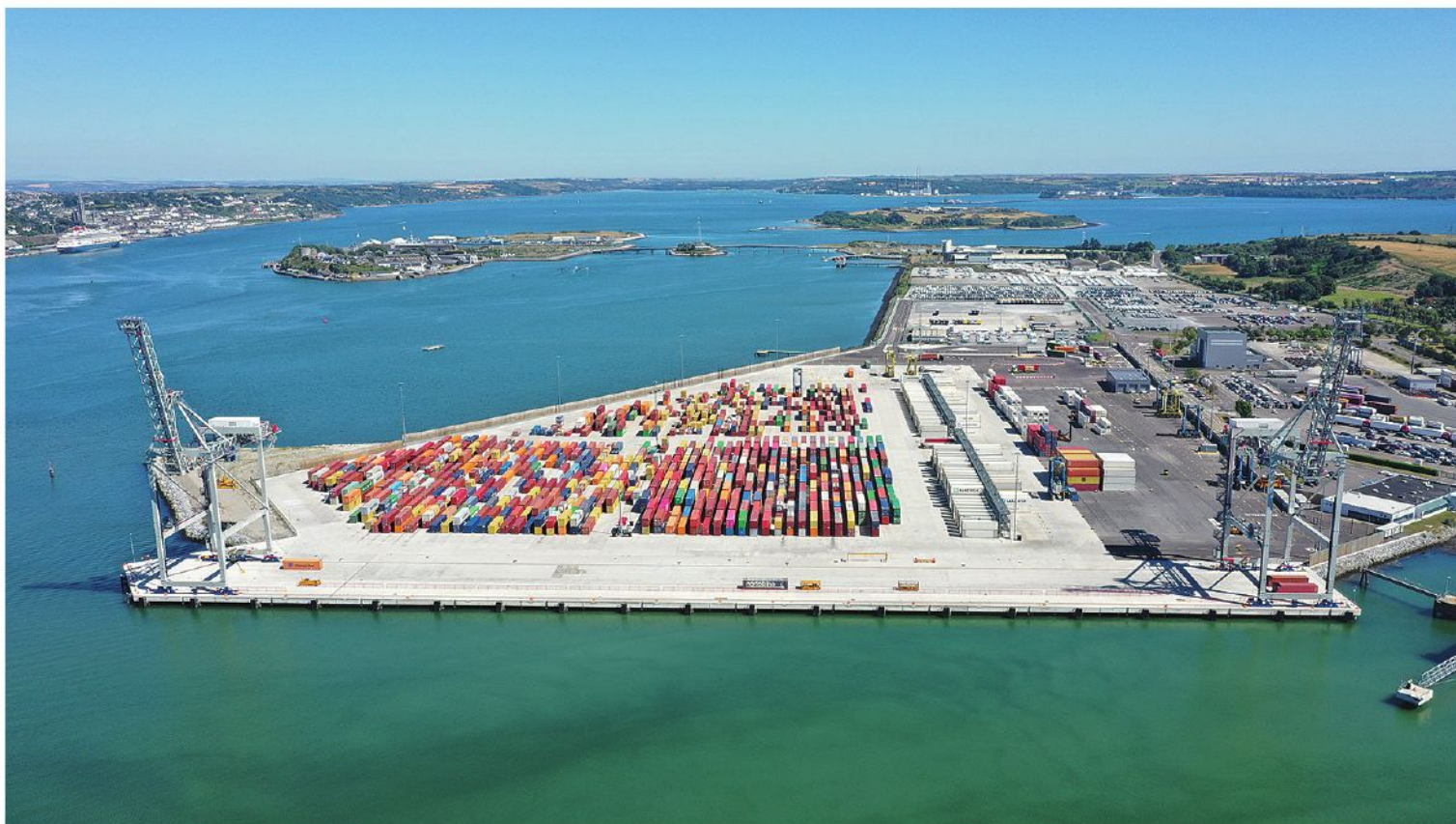
The launch of CCT is a hugely important milestone for the PoCC and represents the largest single investment in marine infrastructure of any Irish port over the last 100 years. The new terminal, which is the result of an €89 million investment, became operational in April 2022 and enables the port to deliver more efficient container handling facilities.

With one of the largest deep-water, multimodal berths in the world (13-meter depth and 360 meters in length), the container vessels that can be facilitated in Ringaskiddy will be the largest that can be accommodated anywhere in Ireland. When fully operational, on completion of the M28 road network, CCT will have the capacity to handle 330,000 TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit) of cargo. This is set to have significant economic benefits for Cork and the Munster region, as well as the national economy.

Earlier this year, as part of the CCT journey and to help welcome the new colossal cranes to the Cork harbour community, PoCC hosted a competition with local primary schools to 'Name the Cranes'. The winning names for the two giant 50m ship-to-shore Liebherr cranes, as chosen by Crosshaven Boys' National School were 'Mahain' and 'Binne', inspired by the old Irish folklore story about two giants who lived in Cork harbour.

Representatives from Crosshaven Boys' N.S. were invited to the official ribbon-cutting ceremony at CCT in recognition of their participation in this monumental milestone.

Minister Hildegard Naughton with special responsibility for transport and logistics, spoke about the importance of Maritime Transport for Ireland at the official opening: "Maritime transport accounts for more than 90% of Ireland's international trade and the Port of Cork has played an integral role in keeping Ireland connected, as part of the global supply chain. The Cork Container Terminal is already strengthening Port of Cork's position on a global scale and on completion of the M28 will welcome further increased capacity for international transport and trade. It is also important to acknowledge the Port's success in completing the project despite the challenges brought about in recent years by Covid-19 and Brexit. I offer my warm congratulations to everyone involved. The



Port of Cork and Dublin are the only ports in Ireland capable of servicing all six shipping modes – lift-on/lift-off, roll-on/roll-off, liquid bulk, dry bulk, break bulk and cruise. On that basis, the Ringaskiddy re-development will be beneficial not only to the Port, its customers and Cork, but to the entire country."

At the launch, it was highlighted in an address by PoCC Chairperson, Michael Walsh, that CCT represents the first phase of an overall proposed development plan for the Port of Cork.

Mr Walsh stated, "CCT represents the biggest investment in port infrastructure in the history of the state. It will bring further efficiency to the port with major benefits to the local and national economy. By increasing the efficiency of infrastructure, the costs of trade will reduce, which in turn helps to reduce inflation and the cost of living. It will also bring value to exporters, and a boost to Irish business.

"This is the beginning of an exciting new chapter at Port of Cork as we seek to meet the next phase of needs of our community and customers. As we look forward towards a Vision for 2050, we see huge potential for our beautiful harbour to continue its role as a focal point for our community to live in and enjoy, as well as a key gateway for global trade and enabler of Net Zero.

"We would like everyone's help in developing a new Masterplan to 2050, which will act as a blueprint for the future growth and development of the Port of Cork. I encourage our local community, customers and national stakeholders to share their ideas when we launch a consultation on our draft plan in the coming weeks."

As one of Europe's core ports, PoCC is



Pupils of Crosshaven Boys National School, Peter McCann and Thomas Buckley, pictured with Michael Walsh, Chairman of Port of Cork Company, Simon Coveney, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Eoin McGettigan, Chief Executive Officer, the Port of Cork Company, Hildegard Naughton, Minister of State at the Department of Transport, and Michael McGrath, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, at the official launch of Cork Container Terminal (CCT) in Ringaskiddy, Cork.

developing a Masterplan to 2050, which will act as a blueprint for the growth and development of the Port of Cork over the next number of years. Details of which to be delivered in the months ahead, following public consultation.

Eoin McGettigan, CEO, PoCC, who acted as MC for the proceedings, closed the proceedings with another message about the future: "It is really important to us that we work with our colleagues, neighbours and customers in the local area to make sure that the development of the Port of Cork is something that everyone is proud of."

Mr McGettigan added: "As we look to-

ward the future, reducing Ireland's carbon emissions and creating a cleaner, greener future is a priority which will require a joint effort from everyone, including industry and businesses nationwide. I would like to reaffirm the Port of Cork Company's commitment to playing its part on this journey, particularly with facilitating the development of the Offshore Renewable Energy sector in Cork harbour over the next few years."

For further information on Port of Cork and Cork Container Terminal visit www.portofcork.ie

Ireland's Fishing Ports to Raise the Flag for The World's Sustainable Development Goals

In September 2015, 193 countries met in New York and signed the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This Agenda has become the guide to the world's social, economic, and environmental actions to achieve a sustainable future by 2030. The framework consists of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Currently individual countries provide voluntary national reviews to the UN and BIM's Clean Oceans is one such initiative that demonstrates commitment to sustainability and contributes towards Ireland's responsibilities under the SDGs.



Martyn Simpson, Inshore Fisherman - "Mending and refurbishing fishing gear is part and parcel of fishing as extending the life of gear keeps costs down. Developing networks to reuse and repurpose ropes and floats either retired from or lost in bad weather would be a hugely welcome".

In partnership with BIM, the 12 ports signed up to BIM's Clean Ocean's Initiative will join the International SDG Flag Campaign which runs from the 23rd to 29th September with activities being promoted and reported until the 8th of October. Be part of the global movement working together for the SDGs, #TogetherForTheSDGs. All registered vessels have received a

Clean Oceans pack featuring SDG Goal 14, Life Below Water. Please share your involvement online so that the ongoing contribution of the Irish catching sector to achieving the UN SDG targets is promoted to the wider public.

The SDGs are for everyone, and we can all contribute to their success, regardless of what actions we take, large or small. The



Deirdre Lane, Harbour Master, Dunmore East FHC - "Dunmore accounts for handling 60 tonnes of all the FFL material to date through our ports waste management system. The Clean Oceans initiative gives us all as stakeholders a common ambition to play our part for the Ocean Decade".



Denis Harding, Fisherman and Gear Maintenance Contractor - "At sea vessels and crew will do their best to bring in marine litter as it keeps the fishing ground clean and healthy for the stocks. Improving facilities on the shore to help us prepare and move old gear to specialist recycling will be of great importance".

SDGs are now gaining momentum and developing clear actions to address the targets. In 2017, the UN's Ocean Conference recognised the importance of addressing marine pollution (including plastics) as a socioeconomic issue, requiring the adoption of reuse and recycling, the development of economically viable waste streams and encouraging behavioural change to stop plastic waste entering our oceans. In 2021, to further underpin the critical importance of the ocean, the UN Ocean Decade was launched (2021-2030) as the ocean holds the keys to an equitable and sustainable planet for all.

BIM's Clean Oceans focuses on 3 SDGs in particular:

- *UN SDG 14 - Life below water*, in particular the target "Prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds". This target is the touchstone for the Fishing for Litter (FFL) Programme. To date BIM has 12 key fishing ports participating in FFL across the country. A recruitment drive to get vessels to sign up was hugely successful with 244 officially registered vessels representing 1,169 crew. This represents about 95% of the Irish over 12 metre registered demersal fleet that are best placed to be effective to retrieve passively fished waste (the technical term for FFL). As of June 2022, fishers and ports have retrieved, recorded and responsibly disposed of 824 tonnes of passively fished waste as part of the FFL scheme, collectively protecting life below water and reducing marine pollution. While engagement on FFL initially targeted the retrieval of litter, it has also contributed to increased interest and requests from vessels and ports to assist in improving waste management facilities and services.

- *UN SDG 12 - Responsible consumption and production*, in particular the target "By 2030, substantially reduce waste

generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse". This year, BIM in partnership with ports and fishers, has begun to collate national data on retired waste fishing gear, which, to date, totalled 49 tonnes. This autumn, BIM and the ports will co-design a systemic gear retirement scheme, with imminent plans to conduct two pilots. The pilots will be blockchain based to add value to the recyclates in the supply chain. Based on the results of these pilots BIM plans to scale the retired gear collection scheme nationwide in 2023 and positively apply the principles of a circular economy to fishing gear with plastic. This will be referred to as operation BIM Net Effect (#BIMNetEffect)

- *UN SDG 17 - Partnership for the Goals*, in particular the target "Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships". Initially BIM worked to develop strategic partnerships between vessels and ports. However, to succeed and deliver for SDG 17, BIM is now working closely across government and in particular with Ireland's EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) so that both schemes (Net Effect and FFL) align to the National Waste Framework. This will also assist with improving the categorisation of these materials so it can enter the plastic and circular economy and minimise the economic impact of the forthcoming extended producer responsibility (EPR) scheme for fishing and aquaculture gear containing plastic. Clean Oceans leads on stakeholder engagement of new and emerging stakeholders such as plastic recyclers and waste contractors needed to unlock the opportunities and achieve SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production), thereby changing the landscape for a Circular Economy of marine plastics and improving the competitiveness of the sector.

Businesses Need Help to Survive



Addressing the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Agriculture last month, a delegation from IFA Aquaculture highlighted the issue of input costs and licensing issues. IFA's Aquaculture Executive, Teresa Morrissey, reports that the politicians were told that businesses will no longer be profitable unless there are significant supports.

IFA Aquaculture

IFA Aquaculture Chairman Michael Mulloy said that operators and their businesses "will no longer be profitable unless there are significant supports during this time of crisis to assist with spiralling input costs."

Earlier this year the European Commission activated a crisis mechanism of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), to enable Member States to grant financial compensation to aquaculture operators for income foregone and additional costs due to the current market disruption.

IFA Aquaculture is calling on the Government to consider these funding mechanisms made available by the European Commission to assist aquaculture operators affected by these severe cost increases.

This must be done without delay.

"It's critical that a single piece of legislation is brought forward to implement and underpin appropriate aquaculture policy and bring together all the existing primary, secondary and amended legislation in one single provision," Michael Mullpy said.

To achieve the objectives and specific actions outlined in the Seafood Development Programme 2021-2027, the National Strategic Plan for Sustainable Aquaculture and the Seafood Taskforce Report are to be most effective for the sustainable development of the aquaculture industry, there must

be an immediate effort made to reform, modernise, and improve the aquaculture licensing system.

"Reducing the administrative burden and having an efficient, transparent aquaculture licensing system is of benefit to regulators, the industry and aquaculture stakeholders alike," he said.

On Friday, September 23, IFA Aquaculture joined a delegation of Irish seafood industry stakeholders in a meeting with Marine Minister Charlie McConalogue addressing rising input costs among other issues. In leaked pre-budget documents, it appeared that primary production industries of farming, fisheries and aquaculture were to be excluded from the proposed 'Business Energy Support Scheme' aimed at providing grant-aid for energy intensive businesses during this time of crisis. Primary production must be included in any such proposed schemes, this was demonstrated to the Minister during the meeting noting the soaring energy costs affecting aquaculture businesses with some monthly bills exceeding €38,000 for electricity.

The State must support the Irish seafood sector during this time of crisis, primary producers must be included in any such business-energy scheme announced in Budget 2023. Further, the Minister and his DAFM officials must give strong consideration to utilising the EU Commission mechanism of activating the EMFAF funds or to allocate the €5.5m remaining funds in the EMFF, which as yet is still unallocated. Not to do either is simply not an option.



The question asked was - What has happened to all the mussels? On a recent visit to the Marine Times office, George Gallagher of Inver, Donegal showed us photos of bare rocks from the shore at Inver that were once laden with mussels and a great source of tasty treats for locals. We all have our theories about what has happened to them along with the lack of other species such as eels, trout and salmon ... but if anyone of a scientific mind can give us a definitive answer it would be greatly appreciated (editor@marinetimes.ie)

Ireland is one of the only coastal countries in Europe to refuse fuel cost relief to the fishing industry in the face of rapidly increasing fuel costs, both diesel and petrol have doubled in price since last year says Seamus Bonner Secretary of the Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation Producer Organisation.



Island Fishers Off the West Coast of Ireland Are Struggling

Irish island fishers, fishing from small vessels off the West Coast of Ireland, are struggling with increasingly small margins from catches as fuel prices and other costs of going to sea soar.

Ireland is one of the only coastal countries in Europe to refuse fuel cost relief to the fishing industry in the face of rapidly increasing fuel costs, both diesel and petrol have doubled in price since last year.

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD, has failed to respond to calls from the Irish fishing industry for a fuel rebate scheme to be put in place similar to that which exists in other coastal countries such as France, Spain, Sweden and Italy.

The Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation (IIMRO) has warned that without a fuel support scheme, many fishermen will be forced out of business. This would not only have a devastating impact on the livelihoods of fishermen, but would also have a detrimental effect on food security, the rural economy and the island and coastal communities that depend on the fishing industry.

Many small scale fishers cannot access tax rebates available to larger organisations and fuel such as petrol which is used in small vessel outboard engines is outside any relief currently available.

IIMRO have made a number of representations to the government since the start

of the fuel crisis warning that lack of a credible fuel support scheme for the fishing industry could lead to serious economic and social consequences for coastal communities, damaging Ireland's food security in the process.

IIMRO is calling on the Minister to urgently introduce a fuel support scheme for the fishing industry and to make sure that small-scale fishers are not left behind in the short term. The Government must also fast track research and investment into fossil fuel alternatives with an emphasis on renewable energy infrastructure, cold chains and propulsion so that a smooth transition away from fossil fuel dependency can be made.

The Government has committed to supporting communities during this current fuel crisis and needs to show that this commitment extends to all sectors including the fishing industry. IIMRO, which is disappointed by the lack of any support to date, is urging Minister McConalogue to act now to ensure that the fishing industry can weather the storm and emerge in a strong position to meet future challenges.

Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation (IIMRO) is an island-based fishery producer organisation. It is a member of the North West Waters Advisory Council and affiliated to the Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE) organisation and Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann - The Irish Islands Federation.

Website: www.iimro.org
Twitter: [@islandsmarine](https://twitter.com/islandsmarine)



An "Arranmore Flat", a small multipurpose boat around twelve or thirteen feet in length, wooden, clinker built with a transom stern. They were usually rowed with one or two sets of oars. This example has an outboard engine. An example of a traditional island design and rich maritime heritage from our islands at Arainn Mhor. Photo © Seamus Bonner

Basking Shark Given the Status of 'Protected Wild Animal' Under the Wildlife Act



Two Basking Sharks pass Malin Head on their annual migration

Minister of State for Heritage & Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD, and Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD, have announced that the Basking shark (*Cetorhinus maximus*) has been given the status of a 'protected wild animal' under the Wildlife Act.

Minister Noonan has made Regulations under Section 23(2)(a) of the Wildlife Act 1976, entitled the "Wildlife Act 1976 (Protection of Wild Animals) Regulations 2022." The effect of these Regulations is to confer 'protected wild animal' status on the Basking Shark under Section 23 of the Wildlife Act, 1976.

Where an animal is protected under Section 23 of the Act, it is an offence to: Hunt a protected wild animal (unless under permission or licence granted by the Department; Injure a protected wild animal (unless done while hunting in accordance with a licence or exemption cited above), or Wilfully interfere with or destroy the breeding or resting places of a protected wild animal. As the Basking Shark is a species of fish, under Section 23(3) of the Wildlife Act 1976, the Minister may only make such Regulations to protect it with the agreement and co-signature of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. Minister

McConalogue has concurred with the making of the Regulations and has co-signed the Regulations. The Regulations have legal effect from Monday October 3rd, 2022.

The Basking Shark is a globally threatened species which faces a high risk of extinction. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifies the Basking Shark as 'endangered' on its Red List of globally threatened species, with its status changing from Vulnerable to Endangered globally in 2019. Irish waters constitute one of the most internationally important coastal regions for the species. "Protected wild animal" status will give Basking Sharks important additional protections and contribute to Ireland meeting its obligations under international law.

As a further initiative, a Code of Conduct for the wildlife watching industry is currently being prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to guide responsible and safe interaction with the Basking Shark in Irish waters. This Code will ensure that there is strong awareness of and accordance with best practice for operators and the public in observing or encountering marine wildlife such as Basking sharks and marine mammals.

Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD, said: "We are living in an age of mass extinction. There is an urgent responsibility on all

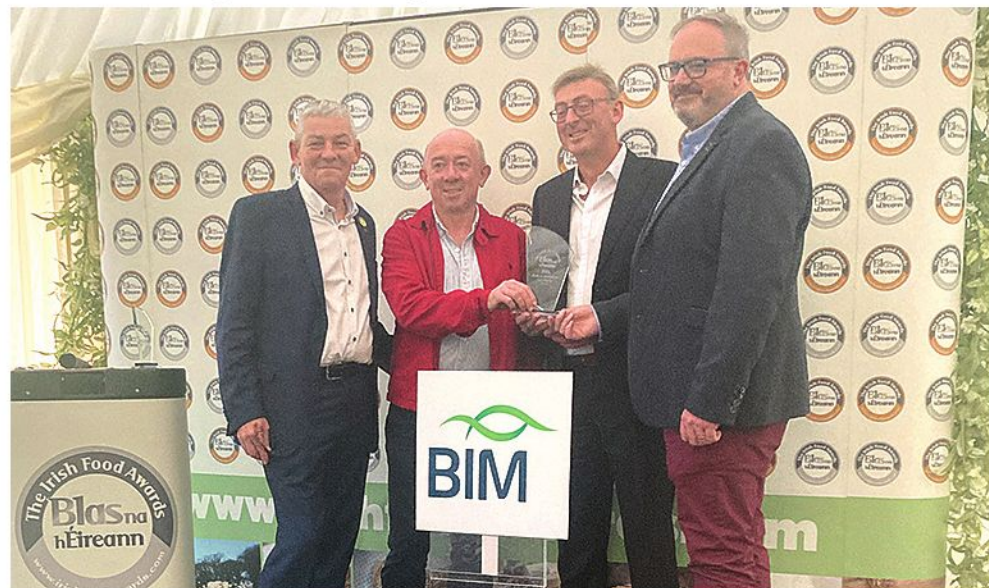
of us to do everything we can to reverse that trend. By strengthening protections for the Basking Shark, Ireland will play its part in offering improved protection to an endangered species that depends on our territorial waters to survive and flourish. This measure is a first step in additional protections for vulnerable species in Ireland. My Department is working to further strengthen our wildlife laws to ensure that natural habitats are protected and restored, and to provide a better balance of safeguards for both marine and terrestrial wildlife."

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD, said: "I am delighted to be introducing this measure. Irish waters constitute one of the most important international regions for the Basking Shark. By strengthening protections, we are helping this iconic animal thrive in the seas around Ireland. In addition to this measure, my Department continues to support conservation efforts for this species through the SeaMonitor project, a trans-boundary research initiative that is focused on developing research links between Irish marine research teams and our international partners."

Work is also underway in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to review the Wildlife Act, as per the Programme for Government. This will involve an examination of protections and provisions in the Act and will enable further consideration of its effectiveness.

Seafood Innovation Winner Announced at Blas na hEireann Awards

Bantry Bay Premium Seafood has been announced as winner of the 2022 Blas na hEireann Seafood Innovation Award, an award category sponsored by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's seafood development agency. The annual event, held in Dingle is aimed at recognising quality Irish produce, and has been running for the last 15 years.



(l-r): Artie Clifford, Blas na hEireann, Seamas Roiste, Quality Manager, Bantry Bay Premium Seafoods, Paul Ward, Manager BIM Seafood Innovation Hub, Damian Connolly, Sales Manager, Bantry Bay Premium Seafoods.

Bantry Bay Premium Seafood is a family run seafood processing business, established in 1991. It processes mussels sourced from its own farms in Bantry Bay. Much of the company's success owes to its consistent focus on provenance and innovation. The company has established a strong customer base in retail, foodservice and industrial markets in Ireland and overseas, developing new markets in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Bantry Bay Premium Seafood currently produces more than 2000 tonnes of Irish mussels annually.

Speaking at the awards ceremony in Dingle, Damian Connolly, Operations Manager at Bantry Bay Premium Seafoods, spoke of his and the wider team's delight at having received the award; "We are honoured to receive this award. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the team in Bantry Bay who have worked so hard and to BIM who have worked closely with us and been hugely supportive of our business. At Bantry Bay we strive to continuously improve all areas of the business to ensure sustainability and innovation is at the forefront, allowing us to continue to work hard to bring Irish

Mussels to the world's tables."

BIM's Seafood Innovation Hub, based in Clonakilty, has supported the team at Bantry Bay Mussels with their business development in areas including sauce development, shelf-life analysis and trialling of packaging equipment for process optimisation.

Paul Ward, Manager of BIM's Seafood Innovation Hub explains the need for innovation throughout the seafood supply chain; "Our focus with clients is to look at all areas of their operations, across the supply chain. This approach is vital if they are to remain competitive. Bantry Bay Mussels have innovated throughout their supply chain from their raw material supply security to innovative changes within their operations, including product and process developments.

"Today innovation and sustainability go hand in hand. This means food businesses need to develop innovation and sustainability roadmaps to help highlight the importance of food systems in climate adaptation strategies."

Letters to the Editor

Bleaching our Environment

Tom MacSweeney, Deputy Editor, Marine Times Newspaper

Dear Tom

The enclosed cutting from 'The Munster Express' of 13th September speaks volumes! In fact, it tells anyone who is interested in conservation, or saving the planet, or idiots who have been re-stocking the lobster grounds, to simply "get stuffed!"



I believe I am right in thinking that chlorine was the main ingredient in the poisonous gas used by the Kaiser's troops during World War 1. Very effective, indeed it kills everything!

So, who are these people? When they take a notion they take action, and places like Dunmore East and Tramore, and anywhere else they might think of, they just dose it with a killer chemical. What about scientific research? What about control of the quantity released into the streams and beaches? What about the resulting wildlife kill and the follow-up research?

Yes Tom, I am severely pissed-off. When I think of the good work done by BIM in helping us to start the v-notching of lobsters scheme on the Waterford and Wexford coasts, and the ports of the Suir Estuary. All the lads that did it with such dedication. So much work and expense!

Well Tom, that's enough of my ranting. I have reached a certain age now as I'm retired, but I do remember when things in the fishing were looking good. It was a time of expansion, and everyone was "Hearts up". You, Tom, could see what was coming and I remember you warning us. Yours was "the one and lone voice in the wilderness." We didn't believe you but look at us now! The small boat industry has been destroyed – there are no young fellows down the dock now.

Good luck Tom – Keep up the good work.

Yours

Trevor Simpson

Little Kernow, Kilmaclegue, Dunmore East, Co. Waterford

Peter Mogan Wins Patrick McClenaghan Memorial Trophy at Greencastle

A record fifty teams took part in the All Ireland Fisherman's golf competition at Greencastle golf club. The All Ireland Fisherman's trophy was renamed this year as a memorial to one of the founder members of the competition Patrick McClenaghan. The main sponsors this year were Arachas Insurance, The Foyle Fisherman's Co-Op, and the Killybegs Fisherman's Organisation.

The large number of participants was a fitting tribute to Patrick's memory both as first class fisherman and a keen golfer. The charity to benefit from a successful day was the Donegal Cancer Society Donegal branch

In ideal conditions and the course in first class conditions scoring was keen. Over the years rivalries have been built up and there were close calls in both the team and individual competitions

In the team section the holders, the Westward Isle team once again came out on top pipping the Paula team with Vindr windows being the only local team in the prizes and The Atlantic Dawn team coming in 4th

In the individual section Micheal Doyle kept up his good from in the competition winning with a score of 40 pts on a break of tie from Jimmy Cunningham with Adrian Kelly 3rd on 39pts

Niamh Hegarty won the ladies section with a score of 35pts

Peter Mogan was the inaugural winner of the Patrick McClenaghan memorial trophy with a great score of 41pts. The skipper of the Veronica playing the Greencastle course for the first time had a memorable round to win the coveted prize

The organising committee would like to thank all the teams for taking part and a special thanks to all the sponsors whose generosity made it such a successful event

A cheque for €8500 was presented to Edna Barrett from representing the Irish Cancer Society by Patrick's daughters Clare and Joanne

Results: Patrick McClenaghan memorial trophy and All Ireland Fishermans Golf Champion; Peter Mogan 41pts; Individual 1st Michael Doyle 40pts, 2nd Jimmy Cunningham 40 pts, 3rd Adrian Kelly 39pts; Ladies Niamh Hegarty 35pts; Team 1st Westward Isle 93pts, 2nd Paula 91 pts, 3rd Vindr Windows 90pts, 4th Atlantic Dawn 88 pts.



(Above): Charlie McHenry (organising Committee) Joanne McClenaghan, Edna Barrett, Claire McClenaghan and Aneek Vekins Lady Captain Greencastle Golf Club making a presentation of €8,500 to the Irish Cancer Society

(Below): Prize winners Jeffrey McMenamin, John Histon, Peter Mogan, Declan McMenamin and Michael Doyle (missing from photo is team member Eamon McGuinness).



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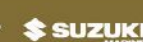


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news from Castletownbere

Helen Riddell



Photo courtesy Catherine Turner

Castletownbere Coastguard

The Castletownbere Coast Guard team was tasked to assist with a search for a missing person in Glengarriff in September. The boat crew covered the harbour area while the rest of the team carried out searches on land. Castletownbere RNLI Lifeboat was also tasked along with Bantry Inshore Search and Rescue Association. All assets were stood down when the missing person was located safe and well.

Allihies Men's Shed

Allihies Men's Shed winter schedule has resumed, the shed is now open every Tuesday from 7.30pm, all are welcome to come along.

BIM Training

BIM will hold a Fire Prevention and Firefighting Course at the National Fisheries College of Ireland, Castletownbere from November 15th to 17th. The three day course covers fire awareness, advanced firefighting, the control of firefighting teams and co-ordination of search and firefighting teams. Students will participate in live fire exercises. On successful completion of the course students will be awarded an STCW Fire Prevention and Firefighting Certificate. Those wishing to participate in the course must provide a doctor's certificate to say they are fit to undertake the course or a valid Seafarers Medical Certificate ENG11.

Three Day Basic Safety Training will take place at Castletownbere from November 22nd to 24th. The training includes personal survival techniques, elementary first aid, fire prevention and safety. On completion of the course students will receive an STCW Personal Survival Techniques Certificate. For further details and to book contact 027 71230 or email della.osullivan@bim.ie

Dail Committee meet on Bere Island

The Joint Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development made history in September by holding a meeting on Bere Island, the first time the committee has met outside Dáil Éireann. At their meeting, the committee recommended changes to the funding

framework of the voluntary and charitable sector, additional supports for communities and community organisations, improved transport links to the offshore islands.

The fourteen member Oireachtas committee, also met with representatives of Bere Island Projects Group and island voluntary groups to discuss a number of issues facing the island community.



Deputy Eamon O Cuiv, Deputy Joe Carey and Senator Paddy Burke assisting Bere Island ferry operator Colum Harrington in steering his ferry the Oilean Na hOige into Castletownbere following their recent meeting on Bere Island.

Recommendations made following the committee's meeting included the immediate establishment of a new LEADER programme for rural enterprises and community organisations, increase in the Community Enhancement Fund by €20m, funding for Age Action groups and Men's and Women's Sheds should increase by €5 million and adequate and sustainable support for the charitable and voluntary sector. The Committee made specific recommendations on supports for island communities including a €10 million fund for major and minor capital development works on the islands, current funding for the Islands air and ferry services to increase by €1.5m, a new air service to Inisbofin, and LEADER grant aid on the islands to increase to 85%.

Beara Historical Society

The Beara Historical Society will hold its first AGM since December 2019 in Twomey's Lounge, Castletownbere at 8pm on Tuesday October 4th. Membership is €15 for individuals and €20 euro for a family and may be renewed on the night. New members are always welcome. Following the AGM, society member John Lucas will give an illustrated talk on 'The Landscape of Beara.'

English Language Classes

English language classes have now resumed in the Beara West Family Resource Centre, Bank Place, Castletownbere contact 027 70998 for details. English classes are also taking place at the Beara Further Education Centre, North Road, Castletownbere, for details and to book contact 086 8239147.

Beara Race Series

Races in Glengarriff and Allihies have already taken place in the Beara Athletic Club's annual five mile autumn race series. There are two remaining races to complete the series, the Bere Island race on Saturday October 13th and the Eyeries Race on Saturday November 12th. For further details and to register see the Beara Athletic Club Facebook page.

Beara GAA Fundraiser

Beara GAA and the Beara 1997 County championship winning team are raising funds to help the future educational needs of James and Molly Crowley, children of the teams goalkeeper Padraig Crowley. In recent years, Padraig has been receiving medical treatment, but unfortunately a recent prognosis has not been positive.

A fundraising golf event took place in September and a raffle will be held on November 6th. Tickets for the raffle cost €10 and are available online at www.bearagaa.ie and also currently on sale from members of the Beara 1997 team and management and from local businesses around Beara. The 1997 team will be honoured at the county final in Pairc Ui Chaoimh as the silver jubilee team.

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International Fishing and Maritime News

Tougher EU Action Sought Against Illegal Fishing

The European Court of Auditors (ECA) has recommended to the European Commission that Member States should reinforce control systems to prevent the import of illegal fishery products. The ECA also wants “dissuasive sanctions” against illegal fishing to be imposed in EU waters.

A special report by the ECA says that “illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is one of the greatest threats to marine ecosystems, undermining efforts to manage fisheries sustainably.”

“Due to the uneven way in which checks and sanctions are applied by Member States, these measures are not as effective as they should be,” according to the report. “The EU has been committed to ending illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by 2020, a target which has not been met. However, ensuring the legality of a product alone does not guarantee that it is sustainably sourced.

“The EU has control systems in place to make it harder for illegally fished products to reach consumers,” said Eva Lindström, the ECA member who led the audit. “But in spite of those measures, these products keep ending up on EU citizens’ plates. One key reason is that checks and sanctions are applied unevenly by Member States”.

“The EU set up a catch-certification scheme to guarantee the legality of imported fishery products. This has improved traceability and reinforced import controls. But Member States apply controls unevenly. The EU’s catch-certification scheme is paper-based, which entails an increased risk of fraud; a single electronic database at EU level would be more effective.”

“The European Commission has devel-

oped an EU-wide IT system to help detect fraud and to automate controls. However, no Member State uses it. The Commission has proposed to make the use of this IT system mandatory.

The vast majority of serious infringements detected led to an investigation or prosecution resulting in timely sanctions. But the audit revealed the absence of a level playing field across the EU. For instance, the auditors noted that the average fine imposed for a similar infringement ranged from around €200 (Cyprus, Lithuania, and Estonia) to more than €7 000 (Spain). In some Member States, sanctions were not dissuasive enough to deter illegal fishing, because they were not proportionate to the economic benefit derived from the infringements. The Commission should work on the uniform and effective application of a dissuasive sanctioning system.”

The Shetland Fishermen’s Association claims that EU vessels have been landing more fish from UK waters and that their catches increased by 60% from 2011-2018, while UK-boat catches were up only 17%. Analysis, carried out by Dr Ian Napier of the NAFC Marine Centre UHI, based in Scalloway, highlights disparity between overseas vessels, which landed more than two-thirds of the two million tonnes of fish worth stg£1.7bn caught in the UK EEZ in 2018 and UK boats. Vessels from EU Member States landed 60% more fish and shellfish from the UK exclusive economic zone while UK boats landed just 17% more,

his report claims..

For pelagic species such as mackerel and herring, the increase was even more marked, with EU vessels landing 159% more fish from the UK EEZ over the same period compared with just 60% more for UK boats.

Spanish Gain Support Against Abolition of Bottom Trawling

The Spanish fisheries sector has claimed support from the country’s government for its campaign against the abolition of bottom trawling. The fishing sector, integrated into the European Bottom Fishing Alliance (EBFA) an organisation that claims to represent more than 20,000 fishermen and 7,000 European vessels, describes the abolition as “technical and legal bungling” and has said it will take the issue to legal action.



“Pending the in-depth study being carried out by the SG Pesca, together with the State Advocacy Office of the Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and Foreign Affairs, the fishing sector trusts that the Spanish Government will present an appeal and request the subsequent precautionary suspension of the application of the measure which, as the sector has already warned, would have devastating consequences for the fishing fleet, fishing professionals, their entire value chain and also consumers,” an industry statement said. “The EC Implementing Regulation prohibits all bottom fishing activities (trawling, longlines, hooks, etc.) in 87 fishing zones in France, Spain, Portugal and Ireland. In the opinion of the EBFA, the consequences of this implementing act will be dramatic for all European fisheries and calls for its withdrawal in view of the recognised scientific gaps, the lack of adequate consultation and socio-economic impact analysis.”

Despite Economic Problems – UK Offers Another Round of Seafood Grants

In the midst of the economic and political travails in the UK, the Government’s Seafood Innovation Fund is offering a further round of £3m to support ‘novel, practical solutions’ for the seafood industry. It says “applications for an even wider range of projects than ever will be welcomed.”

The Seafood Innovation Fund is part of the £100m Seafood Fund. The latest tranche of £3m takes the Innovation Fund (SIF) to £19m in total.

More Money for Seafood Also in US

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Sea Grant has allocated approximately US\$14 million in federal funding across four strategic areas for improving US aquaculture.

NOAA Sea Grant will award a total of approximately \$5.1 million over three years to nine research projects that will develop

and refine early-stage propagation strategies for aquaculture species.

Cornish Sardines Are a New Tesco Product

The Cornish ‘sardines tradition’ has led to a new product launched by Tesco in the UK, bearing the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) label. The fishery has moved from a small-scale artisanal product, salted pilchards, to the mainstay of an inshore fleet over two decades. It now supports 15 purpose-built ring-netters, up to 15 metres in length, working from Newlyn, Mevagissey, Falmouth and Plymouth, from the start of the season in July through to February.

“The launch of the new sardine product follows a remarkable turnaround for the fishery, after pilchards were rebranded as Cornish sardines in the 1990s. The fishery was certified by the MSC in 2010, and is the only fishery in the world for this species that carries the eco-label,” according to Tesco.

South China Sea Catches Declining 70 Per Cent

Since 2000, catch rates in the South China Sea have declined by 70 per cent, and large fish stocks have shrunk by 90 per cent. Around 2,500 species of fish inhabit its waters, but since 2000, catch rates have declined by 70 per cent, and large fish stocks have shrunk by 90 per cent.



It accounts for only 2.5 per cent of the planet’s ocean surface area but produces 12 per cent of the world’s fish catch. Half of the world’s 3.2 million registered fishing boats are reported to operate there.

China’s long-distance fishing fleet of 2,500 ships is the biggest fleet operating there. That number rises to 17,000 if unregistered and illegal Chinese vessels are counted in, according to reports from the area.

Using Political Nous for Seafood Advancement in Norway

The former State Secretary at the Prime Minister’s office in Norway, Peder Egseth, has been hired by Seafood Norway, the aquaculture and fishing employers organisation in that country, to head up its business policy. “With a background as State Secretary at the Prime Minister’s office and a heavy political, economic and organisational background, Peder is the right man for Sjømat Norge [Seafood Norway]”, said the CEO of Seafood Norway, Geir Ove Ystmark.

In Norway, a State Secretary is a partisan political position within the executive branch of government, although the post is below that of a Minister.

Seems an interesting way of moving forward political ‘clout’. Should Irish fishing organisations take note?



The Cornish ‘sardines tradition’ has led to a new product launched by Tesco in the UK, bearing the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) label. The fishery has moved from a small-scale artisanal product, salted pilchards, to the mainstay of an inshore fleet over two decades. It now supports 15 purpose-built ring-netters, up to 15 metres in length, working from Newlyn, Mevagissey, Falmouth and Plymouth, from the start of the season in July through to February.

Due Recognition



Niamh Stephenson, Media Manager for the RNLI pays respect to volunteers who drop everything to save lives



I love to see lifeboat crews getting recognised for their services. I know how uncomfortable it makes them but part of me feels it isn't really about them, it's for the families, friends and employers who take great pride in seeing the achievements of loved ones or employees who drop everything, often running off in the middle of some activity and going out on the water to save a life.

A recent recognition that was long overdue was to David Maloney, former Lifeboat Operations Manager for Rosslare RNLI and also a volunteer Press Officer for the station. I met David after a service off the Wexford coast which I had written up. In capturing the details, I had neglected to mention the role of a flanking station, whose volunteers played a vital part in the rescue. He was rightly annoyed with me, and I was mortified. We became friends from that day.

So, it is with delight that I share details of an incredible rescue David carried out back in 2016. He has been awarded a Commendation from the Operations Director of the RNLI for his actions which saved the life of a woman trapped in a cabin on a yacht which had been dashed onto rocks. In the early hours of the morning and during a strong north-westerly gale, a small yacht owned and crewed by a Swedish couple entered Rosslare Harbour. On arrival, the

engine stalled and the yacht was blown onto the rock armour where it was pummelled by waves. A call for help was raised and Rosslare lifeboat was launched. However, due to the location, the lifeboat was unable to reach the yacht. David, and volunteer Jamie Ryan, arrived at the scene to see a man standing on the quay wall and clearly in shock. It was his vessel and his partner was still onboard.

Jamie discussed the option of using a rope which could be put around Dave's waist, to reach the woman, but they both realised there would be no time for this. The woman was in immediate risk of being pulled out to sea and lost. Using his lifeboating knowledge and with the waves pummelling the vessel, Dave got across the rocks and into the cabin of the yacht. He pulled the woman out of the cabin onto the safety of the quay wall. He never sought recognition for his actions that night, but the station put him forward for his role in the rescue. It may be a few years later, but that recognition has finally been paid.

You may have missed the incredible rescue of a man who was trapped in Downpatrick Cave in Mayo. The lifeboat crew at Ballyglass spent an incredible 23-hours at sea, during which they kept in constant contact with the casualty by shining a searchlight into the cave and checking he was conscious, letting him know that help was at hand. They were able to guide members of the Irish Cave Rescue team into the cave from overland, who carried out an incredible rescue.



Former Rosslare RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager, David Maloney has been awarded a Commendation from the Operations Director of the RNLI John Payne



Crew of the Ballyglass Lifeboat who put in a 23 hour shift at sea during the recent rescue of a man at Downpatrick Cave in Mayo; Cox Francie Gibbons, Matthew Togher, John Gaughan, Henry Gaughan, Eric Geraghty and Ciaran Deane. Photo courtesy RNLI/John Hest

The man had taken refuge on a high ledge well above the water and back from the mouth of the cave. Undoubtedly his experience in caving and his wet suit helped keep him, but the incredible work of all the agencies on scene that day including the Coast Guard, Garda Divers, Civil Defence and local fishermen, as well as locals from Ballycastle brought him home.

It was great work by the Coxswain Francie Gibbons and his crew. They were called out again and came to the aid of four fishermen in Donegal Bay in the early hours after their 55ft trawler got into difficulty. The lifeboat launched, this time under Coxswain James Mangan just after 2.30 a.m. The large vessel had lost power and was drifting. Conditions were less than favourable with a 2-3 metres sea swell

Once on scene at 5.25am a decision was made to establish a secure tow and bring the vessel to the nearest safe port at Killybegs.

Two of the lifeboat crew, Eric Geraghty and Ciaran Deane, were put on the 23-hour callout just three days previously.

It's still too early for Christmas but you may want to know the best places to shop. The RNLI's most westerly shop in Ireland has opened its doors on Inis Mór. As well as a retail outlet, there will also be a Visitor Experience.

Located in the boat hall of the station, the Visitor Experience will bring people through 175 years of lifeboat history featuring imagery and facts about the station's lifeboats, memorable milestones, awards, rescue stories and the many volunteers from the island who have made up the lifesaving crew over the years. The shop is to open seven days a week during the tourist season from Easter through to Autumn to coincide with the ferry. The Visitor Experience will give tourists to the Aran Islands another attraction to enjoy.

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Rarely observed circling behaviour of endangered basking sharks shows how globally important the West Coast of Ireland is for this endangered species says Dr. Simon Berrow, IWDG CEO

World First Discovery on The Clare Coast

Rarely observed circling behaviour of endangered basking sharks have now been explained as 'shark speed dating' courtship displays, thanks to a new study.

Marine biologists from the Marine Biological Association (MBA), the Irish Basking Shark Group and colleagues have led ground-breaking research which reveals that circles of basking sharks seen off western Ireland are engaged in annual reproductive behaviour, the first place in the world where this has been verified.

Circling formations have been documented on a few occasions over the past 40 years in the north-west Atlantic off Canada and the USA. Although basking sharks are often seen filter-feeding plankton in UK and Irish coastal waters in the summer, the circling formations were rarely seen, and until now, scientists could not explain the behaviour.

Scientists captured footage of 19 circling groups using underwater cameras and aerial drones off County Clare, Ireland, from 2016 to 2021. They found each group comprised between 6 and 23 sharks swimming slowly at the surface, with others below them deeper down, in a three dimensional ring structure the researchers termed a 'torus'.

The team found that the sharks in circle formations were equal numbers of sexually mature male and females and were not filter-feeding. Some females had a paler body colour than males, a difference seen during courtship and mating behaviour in other shark species.

The study also showed that despite courtship torus duration lasting several hours, and perhaps even several days, individual females and males associated with most other members within a few minutes. In that time, the sharks interacted through gentle fin-fin and fin-body touching, rolling to expose ventral surfaces to following sharks, and breaching behaviour perhaps as a signal of their readiness to mate.

Professor David Sims, Senior Research



Irish Whale and Dolphin Group



Fellow at the MBA and University of Southampton who was lead author of the study said: "How usually solitary basking sharks find a mate in the ocean's expanse has been an enduring mystery. Incredibly we now find that a courtship torus not only forms but acts like a slow motion 'speed-dating' event for assessing lots of potential mates in one go.

"It is astonishing that this wonder of the natural world has remained hidden for so long, presumably because circles most often form at depth away from surface observation, which could explain why mating itself has never been seen."

Basking sharks are slow-moving ocean giants which can grow up to 12 metres in length and feed on microscopic animals called zooplankton. Throughout much the 20th Century in the north-east Atlantic they were hunted for liver oil and fins which dramatically reduced population numbers. Basking sharks remain endangered in Europe as populations continue to recover.

Having co-led the field research our discovery of important basking shark courtship grounds in coastal waters off western Ireland makes it even more urgent that this species gains protection in Irish waters from potential threats, such as from collisions with marine traffic and the impact of offshore renewables.

Despite protection in many parts of the world, legislation to protect basking sharks in Irish waters was only drafted this year. If signed into law it will be illegal to hunt, injure, interfere with or destroy their breeding or resting places.

The research team hope their findings can inform identification of other basking shark courtship grounds in the UK and further afield in the Mediterranean Sea and Pacific Ocean to ensure appropriate conservation measures are put in place to safeguard this gentle giant's 'love dance'.

The full paper can be read in the Journal of Fish Biology. Video from the study can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7i2H1wVomb4>

**Dr. Simon Berrow is also a member of the Irish Basking Shark Group and on the staff of the Atlantic Technological University, Galway.*

EU Decision to Ban Deep Sea Fishing in Sensitive Waters Is Good News for Ireland According to Fair Seas

A coalition of Ireland's leading environmental non-governmental organisations and networks says progress is beginning to be made towards protecting some of the most vulnerable ecosystems within Irish waters. Fair Seas has welcomed a decision by the European Commission to close parts of the Northeast Atlantic to bottom fishing but says more action is needed.

The move will see deep sea fishing using gear such as trawls, gillnets and bottom longlines, banned in 87 sensitive zones. The area amounts to 16,000 km² of EU waters, of which nearly 9,000 km² are within the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Fair Seas published a report in June identifying 16 'Areas of Interest' for MPA designation in Irish waters. The new closures line up almost perfectly with the areas identified by Fair Seas.

The new ban on bottom fishing will apply to 1.8% of Irish waters. Fair Seas is urging the Government to designate a minimum of 30% of Irish waters as Marine Protected Areas by 2030, up from the current figure of 2% which the group says is wholly inadequate. Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are areas of our seas and coasts legally protected from activities that damage the habitats, wildlife and natural processes.

Aoife O' Mahony, Campaign Manager for Fair Seas highlighted the need for legislation to be implemented in Ireland, she said, "The Irish government has committed to protect 30% of our waters before 2030. We need to ensure that MPA legislation is ambitious and timely to conserve, restore and protect our ocean. Our ocean territory is home to endangered sharks, globally important seabird colonies, and animals threatened with extinction. It is vital that we act now to restore critical habitats, safeguard wildlife and help address the climate crisis. The time for action is now."

Regina Classen, Marine Policy and Research Officer with the Irish Wildlife Trust said, "This is incredible news for Ireland. We have sensitive ecosystems in the deep waters off the Irish coast. These areas are home to cold water coral reefs, deep sea sponge reefs and sea-pen fields which are easily damaged by bottom-contacting fishing gear. Not only are we now protecting fragile deep sea reefs from bottom trawling, but even a part of the Porcupine Bank, which is heavily trawled

for Dublin Bay Prawn, is now protected due to the presence of sea-pens."

Ireland South MEP Grace O'Sullivan, Green Party Spokesperson for the Marine added, "The news that over 16,000km² of fragile marine ecosystems are to be



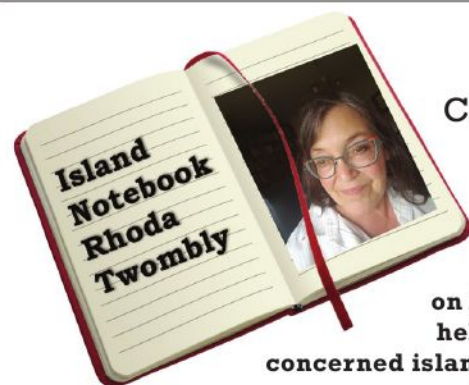
strictly protected is a fantastic development for Ireland and our seas. Civil society organisations have worked hard to achieve this victory over the last few years and should be commended. These areas are home to priceless biodiversity and are also some of the most effective at storing carbon. I believe these areas could now play a central role in the government's work to protect at least 30% of our waters with new Marine Protected Areas, a third of which should be 'strictly protected' from human

interference. The EU meanwhile must now ensure that these commitments are met by Member States as the clock is ticking towards 2030."

The Fair Seas campaign is led by a coalition of Ireland's leading environmental non-governmental organisations and networks including Irish Wildlife Trust, BirdWatch Ireland, Sustainable Water Network, Friends of the Irish Environment, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Coomhola Salmon Trust, Irish Environmental Network and Coastwatch. It is funded by Oceans 5, Blue Nature Alliance, BFCT and The Wyss Foundation.

Inset Photos: A basket star which is found in some of the deep water habitats off the coast of Ireland. The Gorgonocephalus catches prey with its many arms that bend and coil towards a mouth on the underside of its central disc. Image courtesy of the SeaRover project which is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Maritime & Fisheries Fund 2014-2020

A huge message in the sand in Co. Waterford calling for 30% of Ireland's seas to be protected by 2030 to give our species, habitats and coastal communities the opportunity to thrive. Learn more at fairseas.ie. Sand Artist: Sean Corcoran, The Art Hand. Location: Kilmurrian Beach, Co. Waterford. Photographer: Tony Kinlan, Aerial.ie



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

Long Wait for Islands Policy Document

Two island AGM events took place in September: Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann held their AGM and conference on Arranmore Island and ESIN (European Small Islands Federation) held their meeting on Kihnu Island, Estonia. Seminars held by both concerned island sustainability. Comhdháil concentrated largely on the housing issue while ESIN was focused on habitability and island policies.

In opening the Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann AGM acting Chair Máirtín O Méalóid expressed his delight at welcoming islanders to the event in person after the previous two AGMs had to be held virtually due to Covid.

He highlighted several challenges and disappointments facing the offshore islands. Levels of suitable housing and serious difficulties in receiving planning permission continue to be roadblocks to sustainability. Mr O Méalóid also expressed frustration that the island policy document is a long time in coming and that there has been no cohesive development plan since 1996.

Insufficient Help for Island Fishers

While there has been some increased support for island farmers through the Areas of Natural Constraints (Islands) scheme, there has been insufficient help for the smaller fishers of the offshore islands.

Opening the seminar segment of the AGM, Minister Heather Humphreys highlighted projects on Arranmore and beyond that not only improved infrastructure but would be beneficial to the tourism industry. She noted 11 CLÁR projects across 7 islands within the "Our Islands" measure. Importantly, measures were put in place throughout Covid-19 to insure continued ferry services. The Minister stated that DRCD is working on the policy document which is expected to be completed this year and she looks forward to the results of the islands housing survey.

Questions to the Minister from the floor concerned several issues of importance to islanders. John Walsh noted that, while appreciative for the CLÁR measures and projects put in place there was still help needed on several islands in broadband supply. He said also that now was the time to install fibre-optic cable otherwise the islands would be behind in their technology in a few short years. Additionally, much more work was needed to enable islands to not only make their own electricity but export excess for payment.

The Minister said these issues will be brought to Minister Eamon Ryan.

Fishing and Other Issues

Jerry Early of Arranmore and IIMRO expressed the need for the Minister to speak with Minister McConalogue concerning fishing issues. The problems being experienced by Irish fishers have huge support at European level but there is "big opposition" to supports and proposed projects from our own government.

He cited examples of "our own department removing the Irish islands from EMFF inclusion" and lack of support for designating IIMRO as a PO (producer organisation).

Minister Humphries pledged to ask her counterpart about these issues.

Tomás MacPháidin of GRETB brought up the issue of the removal of the special allowance for island teachers: this is to be investigated. Planning issues were raised by several attendees, and it was noted that with the current situation and difficulties in planning approval people would not be able to stay on the islands. This is to be discussed with Minister Darragh O'Brien. Comments were also made concerning the manner and technique used in carrying out the islands survey, that it is feared that the survey wasn't inclusive enough. The Minister in reply

stressed that the policy document is to be a "living document" that can be changed as needed.

In the reports of the Executive, Máire Uí Mhaoláin, CEO of Comhar na nOileáin, spoke of the efforts made between Comhar and Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann to benefit the islands. There is ongoing work on developing Blueways – especially between Arranmore and Burtonport, as well as workshops on Smart Villages, a European programme. Recognising the importance of involving young people in the working of the community, Maire and members of Comhdháil set about developing Foróige for the island youth. Comhar, along with Comhdháil Oileán na hÉireann, is also very much involved in the survey and study of island housing with researchers from UCC. The survey was launched at the meeting and will collect vital data which will support islanders' frustrations surrounding available, suitable housing.

IIMRO

In his report to the AGM, IIMRO (Irish Islands Marine Resources Org) Secretary Seamus Bonner presented the aims and activities of the organisation: to address challenges facing island fishers, Improve prices for catches, Infrastructure development, promotion of changes to regulation, and improve access to fishery resources.

IIMRO was represented at the UN Oceans Conference in Lisbon which highlighted the effect of human activities on oceans and the effects of climate change on ocean health. The importance of co-management where traditional fishers' knowledge can complement scientific knowledge to improve management of fisheries and the environment was a big topic for discussion. At the National Biodiversity Conference in Dublin it was emphasized that islands make up a tiny portion of the population in Ireland but have 5.5% of the national fleet. Several issues are at the centre of IIMRO's work: for example, fishing technologies being trialled in Galway and Donegal, digital archive creation to collect local knowledge of fishing boats and techniques. Recent issues include fuel costs, the Islands heritage fishing bill, access to markets, the Marine Protected Areas regulation which will make 30% of fishing area protected, potentially leaving no ground for island fishers.

ESIN Activities

In opening his account on ESIN activities, (ESIN Chair) John Walsh noted that IIMRO continues to do an incredible job for the small fishers of the islands. He continued that ESIN, whose members are representing 1,200 islands in 11 countries, is a voice for small islands both in their countries and in Brussels. 2021 saw a review of ESINs statutes clarifying eligibility to islands with populations less than 5,000 and disallowing islands connected to the mainland in any way, i.e., bridges or causeways.

The attendance at the Marine framework meeting with DG Regio in Brussels was fruitful, both in making contacts and keeping the small islands visible. Similarly, the energy transition workshops in Samsø, the world's first completely renewable island in Denmark, was important in exchanging ideas on a range of projects to make islands not only energy efficient but also self-sustaining. Working groups were set up to tackle island issues separately and in-depth. These groups are made up not only of Board members but others who are experienced in the issues associated with energy, policy, culture, branding, funding, and habitability. The work of ESIN has led to increased recognition of the needs

of the small European islands and creation of important contacts within the Brussels structure.

The week following the Comhdháil AGM saw the ESIN AGM take place on Kihnu Island, Estonia. Excitement grew for ESIN representatives to the 5-day 2022 AGM event as they travelled by plane, train, bus and ferry from eight European member countries and 27 European small islands to the island of Kihnu, off the southwestern coast of Estonia. Ireland was represented by ESIN Chair John Walsh of Bere Island and acting Comhdháil Chair Máirtín O Méalóid of Oileán Chléire.

Kihnu has a rich cultural history and is included in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. It is a living culture and delegates were entranced by the handicrafts, cooking, music, dancing, and folk costumes. Included in the island tour were visits to local fish processing plants – Kihnu is historically rooted in seafaring and fishing activities – and woodworking enterprises. A highlight were the workshops on handicrafts as well as folk dancing. The busy day was polished off with a banquet of local dishes with dancing and singing late into the night. The colourful traditional clothing worn for the dance as well as the bright and multi-coloured buildings were a pleasure to see and left the visitors impressed.

The following day the ESIN AGM conference discussed "Island Policies and Habitability." Christian Pleijel presented an overview of the concept of habitability factors in determining the strengths and weaknesses of islands with regard to their future success. Christian's colleagues, Pia Prost (vice-Chair of ESIN) and Rose Marie Hellen then led a workshop and presentation on determining habitability.

Included was a presentation by Brid Ní Chonghaile of the Irish Dept. of Rural and Community Development on the work of the Irish government's policies for the offshore islands. After lunch, academics, politicians, island cognoscenti and civil servants working on Island Policies elaborated on existing and planned policy documents. The speakers, from Ireland, Scotland, Estonia and Croatia outlined the basis of their country's policies and, in some cases, Acts of Government. There were similarities – for example, all agreed that islands are an important part of their country's heritage, integral to the fabric of rural life.

Islands need to be considered differently to the mainland and "one size does not fit all" in terms of creation and implementation of policies. Core services such as access, communications, transport, education, potable water supply and electricity creation and supply to name a few must all be looked at considering island circumstances. More and more, islands must become even greener, more self-sufficient places and must be supported in their efforts to progress through policy creation and implementation.

Island Property Problems

Riina Kaljulaid, host of the event and Estonian representative to ESIN, summed up the discussions on national island policies and Island Acts: **Introductions of the policies of different islands often repeated their similar problems: decrease of population, outflow of young people, problems with public transport, overloading of the islands during high season of tourism (transport, waste management, sewage systems), failures in mobile phone and internet service.**

Organisations of the islands are standing on different levels in development or formation of their Small Islands Act. On Swedish islands, the law has not been given much thought yet. In Finland, Croatia, Scotland and Estonia Islands Acts exist. But the Acts always need to be supplemented. One of the hottest problems that has been and is coming up, in many islands, is about ownership of land. Islanders have to face serious problems due to selling of land to people who live outside the island – the rise of rental prices, complicated management of the lands, difficulties in management of nature protection areas, ending of local traditional lifestyle etc.

NEXT YEAR IN IRELAND: The meeting concluded with a proposal that AGM 2023 be held in Ireland – the proposal was passed.

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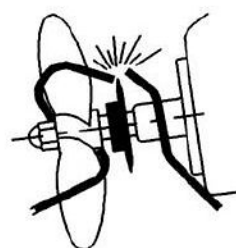
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Sponge Crabs (*Dromia personata*) Captured off Kilmore Quay

Declan Quigley reports

On 12 September 2022, the *MFV Swift* (WD333) [Skipper: Stephen Scallan] captured three Sponge Crabs (*Dromia personata*) while potting at a depth of 27 m, 7 km off Kilmore Quay, Co Wexford (ICES VIIa, 33E3, 52.3639 °N, 6.6481 °W). The specimens included two males measuring 90 and 55 mm carapace width (CW) and weighing 283 and 66 g respectively. The third specimen was a female measuring 75 mm CW. The smallest male was still carrying its distinctive camouflage 'cap' fashioned from a living colony of the Boring Sponge (*Cliona celata*) [Figs. 1-4].



Figure 1. Sponge Crabs (*Dromia personata*) captured by the *MFV Swift* WD333 (Stephen Scallan) off Kilmore Quay (12.09.2022).



Figure 2. Sponge Crabs from Kilmore Quay (12.09.2022). (Below): Figure 3. Sponge Crab carrying its camouflage 'cap' of Boring Sponge (*Cliona celata*); Figure 4. Sponge Crab showing distinctive pink pincers. (Inset pics): Figure 6. Sponge Crab carrying Boring Sponge (*Cliona celata*) off Pembrokeshire, SW Wales (Photo Dr Bernard Picton) Figure 7. Sponge Crab from Aberdaron, Llyn Peninsula, NW Wales



Stephen remarked that in 17 years fishing he had never come across any previous specimens of Sponge Crab in the area. Stephen kindly donated both of the live male crabs to the *Sea Life Bray Aquarium* (Fig. 5), and the female, which had moulted, to the *Natural History Museum* in Dublin.

At least 9 Sponge Crabs have been recorded from Irish waters over the last decade, including 5 from Co Wexford. However, apart from the female from Kilmore Quay, all of them were males. All of the Irish specimens were captured between April and September at depths ranging from 8 to 32 m. The CWs, carapace lengths (CLs), and weights ranged from 66-90 mm, 45-70 mm, and 66-283 g respectively. The species attains a maximum CW and CL of 90.7 and 75 mm respectively.

The first Sponge Crab was reported during August 2010 when the *MFV Oir Shore* (S531) [Skipper: Patrick O'Regan] captured a specimen south of the Calf Islands, Roaringwater Bay, Co Cork. A second specimen was captured the following year (April 2011) by the *MFV Lucky Lady 1* (C327) [Skipper: Dara O'Riordan] off Ballycotton, Co Cork. During August 2018, the *MFV Sea Lion* (C394) [Skipper: Kevin Murphy] captured the third specimen off Youghal, Co Cork, and the following year (July 2019), the *MFV Pride & Joy* (W10) [Skipper: Michael Dwan] captured the fourth specimen 1.6 km S of Brownstown Head, Co Waterford. During August 2020, the *MFV Ellen Marian* (W167) [Skippers: Joe Whitty Snr & Calum Bolger] captured the fifth specimen 4.8 km S of Hook Head, Co Wexford, and the following year (April 2021), the *MFV Mary Anne* (W205) [Skipper: Ian Pepper] captured the sixth specimen close to the same area (1.6 km W of Hook Head, Co Wexford).

Sponge Crabs are easily recognised by their brown velvety carapace and pink claws. They have a pair of specially modified rear legs which they use to hold their 'caps' in place. However, the 'caps' are often lost during the rough and tumble of retrieval in commercial fishing gear and/or during agnostic encounters with conspecifics and potential predators.

In NW European waters, Sponge Crabs are known to use a wide variety of sponge species (e.g. Sea Orange Sponge *Suberites ficus* and Breadcrumb Sponge *Halichondria panicea*), colonial ascidians (e.g. Football Sea Squirt *Diazona violacea*), and soft corals (e.g. Dead Man's Fingers *Alcyonium digitatum*) to fashion the matrix of their

millinery creations. Sponge Crabs were recently discovered to be making extensive use of the non-native Chinese Yellow Sponge (*Celtodoryx ciocalyptoides*) which was accidentally imported into Brittany (Ria d'Étel) during the early 1990s along with Pacific Oysters (*Magallana gigas*) from the NW Pacific. This increasingly invasive sponge has since spread eastwards (along with *D. personata*) via the English Channel as far as the Oosterschelde Estuary in the Netherlands.

The Sponge Crab is essentially a warm-water species which commonly occurs southwards from Biscay to NW Africa (Morocco, Azores and Canary Islands) and throughout the Mediterranean and Black Seas. However, the species has been reported, albeit infrequently since 1899, from the North Sea (Netherlands and Wash, UK) as far north as 55.1500°N, 3.8000°E, English Channel (Thames, Isle of Wight, Channel Isles, Plymouth, and Isles of Scilly), and

with increasing frequency along the UK side of the Irish Sea from the Bristol Channel and Cardigan Bay northwards to the Anglesey (NE Menai Strait, 53.2963°N, 4.0362°W) [Figs. 6-7].

It is possible that *D. personata* may be more abundant in Irish waters that the current paucity of records would suggest. Its habit of concealing itself with sponges and other biota, along with its preference for inaccessible rocky habitats (from the lower shore down to depths of 75-100 m), probably helps to keep it well hidden and protected. Furthermore, the species has no commercial value and is most likely discarded by commercial fishermen.

Although there is currently no evidence that Sponge Crabs actually breed in Irish waters (no ovigerous females or planktonic larvae have been found to date), berried females and pelagic larvae (zoeae) have occasionally been recorded off Cornwall on the UK side of the English Channel during July and September respectively.

It is possible that Sponge Crabs may arrive in Irish waters as pelagic larvae derived from self-sustaining breeding populations in the English Channel or further south (e.g. Biscay). Some of these vagrant pelagic larvae may settle (after an estimated drift period of 28 days), and grow to adulthood in Irish waters. Increasing sea water temperatures are likely to favour successful reproduction and future range expansion in Irish and other northern European waters.

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



news from the **RNLI**
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Ballyglass RNLI Spend 23 Hours at Sea for Rescue of Man Trapped in Cave

Volunteer lifeboat crew at Ballyglass RNLI spent 23-hours at sea after launching just after 6pm on Saturday (17 September) to reports of a man trapped in a cave at Downpatrick Head in county Mayo.

The man was eventually brought to safety by members of Irish Cave Rescue late on Sunday afternoon, with lifeboat crew spending the entire time at sea. The volunteer lifeboat crew had a critical role during the epic callout, keeping in constant contact with the casualty by shining a searchlight into the cave and checking the man was conscious, letting him know that help was close at hand.



It is believed the man had got into difficulty while walking near the cave with another person, before they were both swept inside it, following a strong surge in waves. A woman was rescued by paddleboarders, but the man took refuge on a high ledge well above the water and back from the mouth of the cave. The man had experience in caving and was wearing a wet suit but conditions at the time made a further rescue attempt impossible. During the hours that followed, the RNLI were joined by the Coast Guard, Garda Divers, the Irish Cave Rescue Unit, Civil Defence and local fishermen, as well as locals from Ballycastle. While the experienced cave rescue team formulated a plan to extract the casualty, members of Ballyglass RNLI went without their sleep to keep an all-night vigil to check in with the man every half hour, by shining a light inside the cave and asking him through their loud hailer to let them know he was conscious and safe by showing a sign of movement.

Lifeboat crew took turns resting throughout the night and a relief lifeboat crew was readied to take over at moment's notice.

However, the volunteer lifeboat crew wanted to stay with the casualty to the end as they knew a rescue attempt was imminent.

The day long operation came to end when the Cliff Rescue Unit entered the cave at low tide from above and extracted him by rope. They were then able to guide the casualty to safety along the ground, where he was then met by the waiting Coast Guard helicopter and taken to hospital. He was in good spirits at the time and was able to communicate with his rescuers.

Commenting on the callout Ballyglass RNLI Coxswain Francie Gibbons said, 'This was a long callout for the lifeboat crew, and I am so proud of them for their actions over nearly 24 hours at sea. Normally in spending such a long time away from home for a callout, you would be out searching but this was different as we had to stay in a very small area, and we could only see the casualty when we brought the lifeboat to the mouth of the cave. We knew if we left him or didn't keep in constant contact that he might lose hope or think we had left. We couldn't hear him, but we knew he could hear us, and that contact kept everyone going.'

'We are delighted he was rescued and that we were able to play our part. The work carried out by the all the agencies present that day and the local community, was nothing short of incredible. It's a callout we will remember for a long time and thankfully with a great outcome.'

.... and then: Early Morning Call Out for Ballyglass RNLI to Assist Four Fishermen on 55ft Drifting Vessel in Donegal Bay

Ballyglass RNLI came to aid of four fishermen in Donegal Bay in the early hours of the morning of Wednesday 21st September after their 55ft trawler got into difficulty overnight.

The volunteer crew left their beds when they were requested to launch their all-weather lifeboat by Malin Head Coast Guard at 2.20am and go to the aid of a drifting trawler four miles west of Malin Beg in Donegal.

The lifeboat launched under Coxswain James Mangan and set out immediately across Donegal Bay just after 2.30am to assist the crew of the large vessel that had lost power and was drifting.

Conditions on the overnight passage were less than favourable with southerly Force 5-6 winds, a 2-3m sea swell and poor to fair visibility. The lifeboat made the jour-



Abi McNamara presenting her cheque of €5,104 to Clogherhead RNLI following her record breaking swim from Gyles Quay to Port Oriel (27.5kms).

ney north to assist the fishermen as Arranmore RNLI's all-weather lifeboat is currently in dry docks for routine maintenance.

Once on scene at 5.25am the lifeboat crew assessed the situation and found at the fishermen were safe and well. A decision was then made to establish a secure tow and bring the vessel to the nearest safe port at Killybegs where they secured the trawler at 11.40am. The crew then began the preparations for the return journey to Ballyglass.

Eric Geraghty and Ciaran Deane, two of the volunteer crew onboard the lifeboat were also out on the 23 hour call out just three days ago to rescue a kayaker who got trapped in a cave at Downpatrick Head. Also out today were Coxswain James Mangan, mechanic Allen Murray and Paudge Kelleher.

Speaking after the trawler was safely berthed, Pádraig Sheerin, Ballyglass RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager, commended the crew for their dedication: 'We would like to wish the fishermen well. Despite the very early hours of this morning when the pagers went off, there was a great turn out once again from our volunteers with plenty of assistance and team work to launch the lifeboat as promptly as possible.

'It is thanks to the commitment, dedication and hard work of the volunteer crew, along with the top-class training and equipment provided by the RNLI, and the funds raised by all those who donate to the lifeboats, that allow us to continue saving lives at sea. A sincere and heartfelt thank you to one and all.'

Abi's Record-Breaking Swim for Clogherhead RNLI

Clogherhead RNLI were delighted to welcome local girl Abi McNamara back to the Clogherhead RNLI lifeboat station as she came to present them with a cheque for €5,104 which was raised through generous donations as a result of her record breaking 8-hour 23-minute continuous sea swim over the ultra-mar-

athon distance of 27.5km from Gyles Quay to Port Oriel, Clogherhead on the 12th July this year.

This was a tremendous feat for a 16-year-old. The swim was later ratified by the Irish Long Distance Swimming Association and entered into the ILDSA records.

Abi and her family wish to give a big shout to all the supporters who donated to raise this fantastic sum of money for the local Lifeboat Station in support of the volunteers for everything they do in saving lives at sea,

They send their heartfelt thanks and sincere appreciation to the local community and swimming community who took the time to come out on the day of swim to patiently welcome Abi home. Abi was so humbled by this community showing and is surely a memory for life. Abi wishes also to thank the Port Oriel Swim sponsors for their generosity namely; Oriel Sea Salt, Clogherhead; Clogherhead Fisherman's Co-op; Best Wear, Shop St., Drogheda suppliers of Infinity Channel Swimming Port Oriel Team kit; Moore's Caravan Park, Ganderstown; Flynn's Boutique Hotel, Termonfeckin; The Irish Medium; Infinity Channel Swimming; Clogherhead Post Office; Greenman Barbers, Drogheda.

A Special word of thanks to Infinity Channel Swimming escort boat crew Jacqueline, Barry & Milo for without their expertise, encouragement & support this swim would not have been possible. 'If you can see it you can swim it'. Pádraig Rath Clogherhead RNLI who tirelessly worked the fundraiser for a year from initial proposal while all the while supporting Abi to achieve her dream swim in local waters as an advocate of the RNLI 'Respect the Water' campaign.

The volunteers at Clogherhead RNLI are very impressed with Abi's effort and commend her highly, wishing her all the best in her Leaving Cert in 2023 and all her sporting endeavours into the future.

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Photo courtesy Richard Guildea

Decommissioning Scheme Application Deadline Extended

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood Development Agency has announced an extension to the Brexit Voluntary Permanent Cessation ('decommissioning' scheme). The new deadline is 5pm, Friday 18th November.

BIM has also announced a change to the crew compensation agreement within the scheme. This agreement which was previously required to be submitted with an application, can now be submitted prior to first scheme payment subject to an applicant being approved for decommissioning and having received a letter of offer.

The new scheme, that is now open for applications, aims to help restore balance between fishing fleet capacity and available quotas following quota reductions arising

from the Brexit Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) between the EU and the UK.

The scheme is a recommendation of the Seafood Task Force, established by the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Charlie McConalogue TD, in 2021.

More information, including details on eligibility and how to apply can be found by visiting www.bim.ie

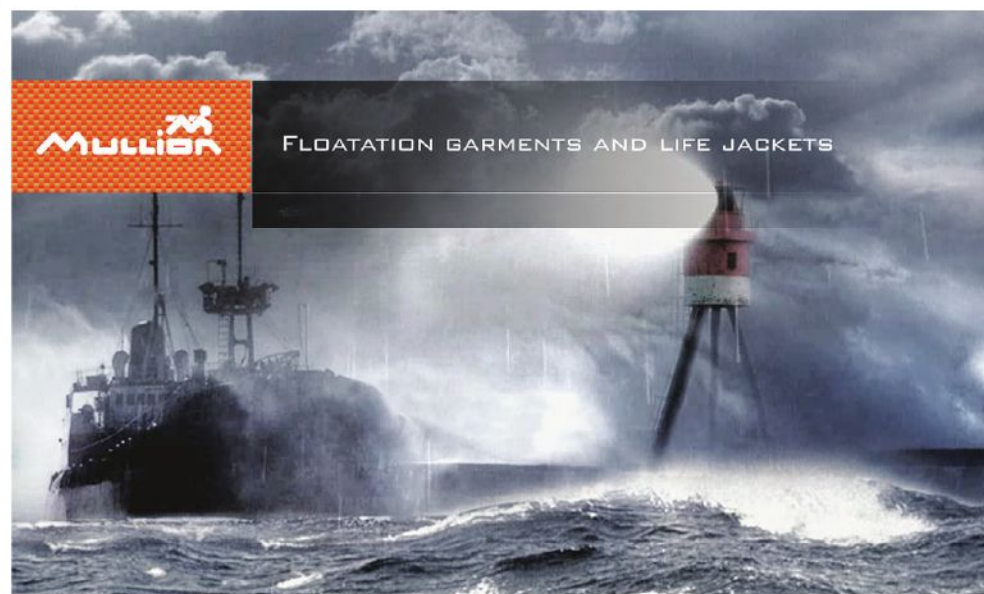


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