



# The Skipper

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# WINDRUSH

Inshore fishermen raise the alarm as rush for the foreshore accelerates. See pages 2-4.



DIFFICULT APPROACH. RUNNING INTO MECHANICAL DIFFICULTIES WHILE FISHING IN THE GULF OF ST LAWRENCE IS NO JOKE!  
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Offshore wind farm. Image:Safety4sea.com

## OFFSHORE WINDRUSH

Concerns this month for inshore fishermen regarding offshore wind development plans around the Irish coast

**W**ith ambitious growth (and climate) targets, the rush for the foreshore has accelerated in earnest.

According to the European Marine Spatial Planning Platform, offshore renewable energy is the fastest-growing sector of the blue economy in Europe and this growth looks likely to continue. Offshore wind developments, in particular, are having a moment.

In Ireland, though developments are only in their infancy, with the Government's "Our Ocean Wealth" plans and a Climate Action Plan, published earlier this summer, espousing a target of increasing the electricity generated from renewables to 70% by 2030, at least 3.5 GW of which is to come from offshore renewables, this looks likely to intensify over the next couple of years.

Good news some may say. For others that fish the outlook is more uncertain.

**Inshore today, offshore tomorrow**

Though the socio-ecological implications of these developments are still poorly understood, what is reasonably well understood is that offshore developments are likely to increase pressure on existing users of marine space, with fishermen and women identified by many as the most likely to be affected by the development of offshore wind developments.

This is especially so for the inshore sector, given that currently developing offshore wind sites closer to shore remains a more 'cost-effective' option.

That said, the European Commission's 2019 Blue Economy Report, published earlier this year, highlights that almost 80% of the available offshore wind in Europe

is located in waters that are at least 60 meters deep, where it is too expensive to fix structures to the bottom of the sea – floating platforms are a reality "that work almost anywhere on the sea".

Inshore today, offshore tomorrow.

**Inadequate communication**

Over the past months, alarm bells have been raised by inshore fishermen and women regarding several planning applications that have been lodged for the development of offshore wind farms along the Irish coasts. Concerns have also been raised regarding the notification being afforded fishermen with respect the various other activities now underway at pace in the spaces they have traditionally worked. In response, and echoing calls coming from representatives of fishermen in Europe this month, the sector has called for better communication, increased consultation and greater consideration of their activities.

Representatives of the inshore sector were alerted to the sheer number of applications for offshore wind developments by a Marine Notice, that raised concerns among their members, published Friday June 21<sup>st</sup> relating to a series of surveys to be undertaken in the Irish Sea between June 2019 and May 2020 to inform the development of the Dublin Array wind farm.

Innogy, a German multi-national reputed to be worth somewhere in the region of a cool €23 billion, last year entered as a partner on the Dublin Array project—an offshore wind farm that is being developed on the Kish and Bray Banks—which until then, having been in the pipeline for almost two decades, had been under development by

Saorgas Energy.

With an estimated project cost in the region of 1.5 billion, according to their website, the project has a potential installed capacity of at least 600 MW and will generate enough electricity for over half a million homes in Dublin.

On consulting the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), inshore representatives became aware of several applications that had been submitted for projects in a much earlier phase of development, seeking foreshore survey licences for sites along the east and south east coasts.

Two applications, in particular, have caused concern – one by Viridian Renewables Ltd, recently rebranded as Energia, to carry out investigation works for the development of a windfarm 5km off Helvic Head, another by SSE Renewables to carry out the same in an area off Bunmahon Bay and Bannow Bay.

With respect both, alongside a range of socio-ecological concerns, at the fore of the concerns that have been raised by the inshore sector are those regarding the lack of consultation and communication about the applications, alongside a failure to consider their activities.

This, they say, is reflected in both applications and many of their concerns regarding the applications could have been alleviated had the developers consulted with them prior to making their submission.

Regarding both, a joint objection made by the National Inshore Fishermen's Association (NIFA) and the National Inshore Fishermen's Organisation (NIFO) states that though the DPHLG indicates on its website that it "places a high priority on public participation during the assessment of foreshore applications" and

that "the developer is encouraged to engage in pre-application consultations with stakeholders" as far as they are aware this has not happened.

To the best of their knowledge, "there has been no consultation between the developer and the inshore fishing groups, including the by now well-established Inshore Fisheries Forums, which have been in existence with five years." Indeed, in a response to *The Skipper* relating to the engagement they have had with other marine stakeholders currently operating in the areas a spokesperson for SSE Airtricity, the subsidiary of the UK energy supplier SSE, that saw a "slump" to £246.4m in its adjusted pre-tax profits for the six months to the end of September 2018, said: "The licence applications have been reviewed by the statutory stakeholders – the Marine Survey Office, the Sea Fisheries Protection Agency, the Marine Institute, and the Foreshore Unit's Water and Marine Advisor—who have confirmed that our application is suitable for consultation."

"If the foreshore licences are granted, the next step will be determining the scope and design of the site investigation works in consultation with local stakeholders."

"Pending the approval of the foreshore licences a Fisheries Liaison Officer will be appointed in line with determining the scope and design of the site investigation works," they said.

Similarly, a spokesperson from Energia said the company "has initially consulted with several marine and fisheries stakeholders, such as the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, local harbour masters, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Commissioner of Irish Lights and the Marine Survey Office."

"Consultations with all relevant fisheries bodies, marine and other stakeholders are at an early stage and will continue on an ongoing basis as part of the survey activity. Energia will also appoint a dedicated Fisheries Liaison Officer following initial consultations."

Little communication then with the sector, to date, either by the developers or the other "marine stakeholders currently operating in the areas" they had already met.

Speaking to *The Skipper*, Peter Lefroy, Project Director of Dublin Array, who already have a survey licence, explained that the project is still in a consenting phase and has been for some time.

Mr Lefroy did say that a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) had recently been appointed to the project. However, one might wonder, rather reasonably, why on a project that has been in the pipeline with almost two decades one had not been appointed sooner.

Though Mr Lefroy highlighted Innogy are new to the project and one of the "new generation" of

companies with "a much more active stakeholder programme" one might still wonder why it took them more than twelve months to appoint an FLO, raising the question as to when in the phase of a development primary stakeholders should be consulted.

**Early consultation could alleviate problems**

Relating to the two foreshore survey licence planning applications, sector representatives say that had they been consulted sooner some of the concerns now being raised by fishermen may have been alleviated.

The submission by NIFA and NIFO regarding the proposed site at Helvic, for instance, highlights that though the application recognises that the area is a spawning ground for some important fish species, it fails to the note "the well-known fact" that the area is an important spawning ground for Celtic Sea Herring.

"This important commercial Fish stock supports a very important Inshore fishery, the Celtic Sea sentinel Fishery, which has traditionally been economically important to a number of our members. However, it appears, from the absence in the documentation, that the applicant has failed to consider the socio-economic impact the development may have on other sectors of the maritime economy, particularly the commercial Inshore Fishing sector".

Though the fishermen say they appreciate that the application is for site investigation works, and note that the applicant is not looking to restrict fishing activity as part of that, they are still concerned that these works will be disruptive to their activities and have an economic impact on them.

They say that: "Had there been some consultation at pre-application stage, we would be better placed to detail further what this disruption would be."

Regarding the application by SSE Renewables, the fishermen say, "the level of Inshore Fishing activity detailed in the application is grossly underestimated."

"The application uses AIS data and observer trips to quantify commercial fishing activity, but notes that Inshore Vessels (Vessels under 15 meters in length) are not required to use AIS. The application acknowledges Inshore activity may be underestimated, but continues to claim that the majority of vessels observed in the area were larger vessels of 24-25m in length."

"Over 80% of fishing vessels on the Irish Fishing register are Inshore Vessels, of less than 12m in length. Given the proximity of this site to the coast, logic dictates that the majority of the vessels operating in this area are coastal, or Inshore vessels."

That the analysis of fish



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caught in the area outlined in the supporting documentation details only quota species and neglects non-quota shellfish species that are so important to the inshore sector is also highlighted.

Again, say the fishermen, consultation at pre-application stage would have alleviated some of these shortcomings and would have "allowed for a more accurate representation" of the inshore fishing activity in the area.

**Where will they go?**

And, indeed, it is not just offshore wind with which fishermen are competing. A Marine Notice, published on the afternoon of July 1<sup>st</sup>, relating to planned installation works for the Rockabill Subsea Cable notified marine users of an installation date starting the same day as the notification went out.

This first pre-lay shore end phase of the project would see the cable installed and buried, according to the notice, and would take ten days. All vessels, particularly those engaged in fishing, were requested to give the utility vessel a wide berth and keep a sharp lookout in relevant areas.

The scant notification caused alarm among fishermen who fish the area and had considerable amounts of gear out in the area at the time. "No consultation, no communication, just move," was how one fisherman described it.

Speaking to *The Skipper* Alan Fanning (ISE&FPO/ NIFA), who fishes for whelks and crabs out of Howth in his 39' ft boat Lily Tom III, conveyed dissatisfaction with the manner in which the notice had been handled and said that it seemed to him, that occurrences like these were becoming all the more common, particularly in the Irish Sea, where space is already a



Alan Fanning

premium.

"The notification was pretty poor. The Marine Notice was issued after they were supposed to start," he said.

"They were going straight through where we were fishing lobsters, but we had no consultation, and it seems to be happening a lot."

"And now you've got wind farms coming, you've got surveys... and I just can't see how that's going to be feasible."

Though the traditional fisheries

battleground has been quota, today it is increasingly becoming one of space.

And although co-existing with expanding development where they fish is not easy for fishermen, a 2015 study on the attitudes of Irish fishermen towards the development of marine renewable energy projects found that 70% of respondents believed that fishing and offshore wind developments can co-exist.

The main perceived impact of the expansion, however, was loss of access to traditional fishing grounds. The main mitigation option suggested was consultation.

Echoing this while speaking to *The Skipper*, Dunmore East fisherman Shane McIntyre, NIFA, expressed an acceptance that offshore wind was a reality that was not going to go away.

Shane stressed, however, that now what is important for them is how these are developed and the level of consultation, consideration and communication these developments will involve.

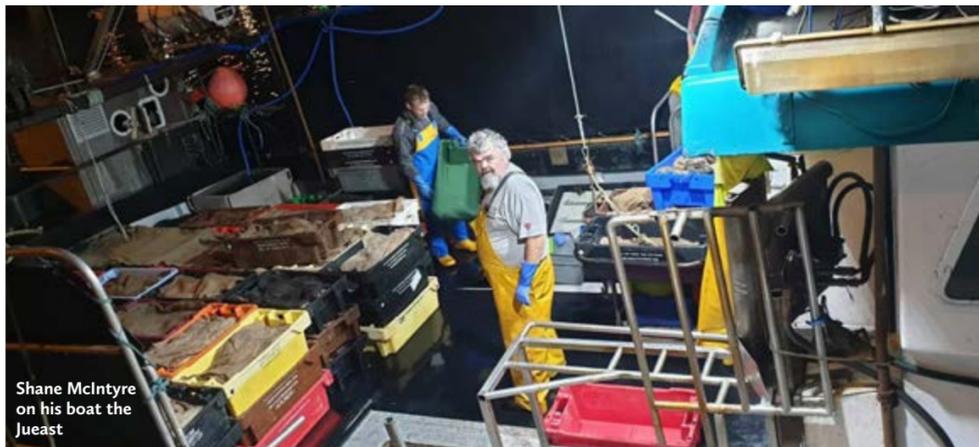
"They have to meet with you," he said. "And tell you this is how it

is going to be and how it will affect you. Nine times out of ten you will get cooperation."

He also highlighted the need for a protocol between the fisheries sector and offshore wind sector, which Ireland currently does not have.

Highlighting the way the Green Link Interconnector had worked, as an example of best practice, Shane recalled "they engaged with us early in the process and we had good consultation, good communication, they asked us what would work. With dialogue, enough information, no big inconvenience, everyone got on with what they were supposed to be doing."

Failing that, however, the bottom line, says Shane, is that in the event that fishermen at some stage find themselves locked out of these areas in the longer term—for example, on safety grounds, something they are reasonably worried about, and which they say most certainly amount to de facto privatisation—the pertinent question left for them is where will they go?



Shane McIntyre on his boat the Jueast

# Green light for €14.7m 120 metre quay extension in Killybegs

As part of Project Ireland 2040, The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD, announced the signing of a €14.7 million capital works contract to deliver a 120m long quay development and associated works at Smooth Point, Killybegs Fishery Harbour Centre.

Welcoming the signing of the contract with contractor ABCO/ Fugro JV, the Minister said "This is a very significant investment for the North West coast of Ireland which will be a big boost to Killybegs and Donegal in general. The Project will add a further 120 metres of workable quay space in the harbour and, as a result, will improve safety conditions in the harbour by alleviating congestion during the peak fishing season at this major port."

This is the second phase of the Smooth Point project, the first phase involved the removal and disposal of contaminated sediments and cost in the region of €6.6m. This final phase which involves the removal of the remaining uncontaminated sediments and construction of the additional 120m quay wall was subject of a public tendering process. It is expected that works will commence in September and that the project will be substantially completed within 9 months.

The Minister went on to say that "In approving this development, I have taken account of the unprecedented success of the previous major harbour development in 2004 in increasing fish landings, driving on the development of the onshore downstream industries and attracting other commercial marine traffic in Killybegs.

"That success has resulted in the need for a further major expansion to manage current activity levels and future proof the harbour. This major quay wall extension will provide long-term berthing for approximately 10 large pelagic fishing trawlers and will facilitate safe stern-on berthing for the largest vessels in the Atlantic fleet."

Minister Creed explained that "Government Policy is to substantially increase the landings into Ireland from all vessels that fish in the waters around Ireland. We want to see Ireland become the hub for all the marine activities that can be generated by the sustainable harvesting of these renewable resources in our marine sphere."

"Developing our Fishery Harbour Centres, such as Killybegs, to facilitate our industry and be able to attract and handle these landings is a key step in achieving our ambitions in this area, in line with the Governments integrated marine development strategy "Harnessing our Ocean Wealth".

In summing up, the Minister said: "I view this project as a testament not only to this Governments support for the Killybegs fishing industry and the ongoing development of the wider seafood sector, but also to our commitment to the social and economic development of rural coastal communities."

"When completed, the new facilities will be on a par with the best in Europe, and will significantly drive forward the fishing industry and local economy in Donegal and allow for a major expansion of the seafood support sector and other marine related industries in the North West. Killybegs



Michael Creed, Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine, Doctor Cecil Beamish, Assistant Secretary General, Dept. Agriculture, Food and Marine and Joe Mc Hugh, Minister for Education, and Skills. Fennell Photography



Proposed Line of New Quay Wall

has seen a marked increase in the number of cruise ships and cargo vessels docking in the harbour over recent years and it has also become the port of choice for the importation of wind turbines. The expanded landing facilities and increased quay space will provide further opportunities for greater economic diversification."

The project has been approved in principle for funding under Ireland's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme, co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the

European Union. The Minister concluded by highlighting that "the Irish seafood industry faces ongoing challenges, such as the significant challenge of Brexit. By providing world class landing facilities for our industry and for the many other EU vessels that we wish to operate out of Ireland, we are protecting our coastal communities and creating the opportunity for the seafood industry to continue to grow, prosper and facilitate a simultaneous growth of other ancillary marine industries."

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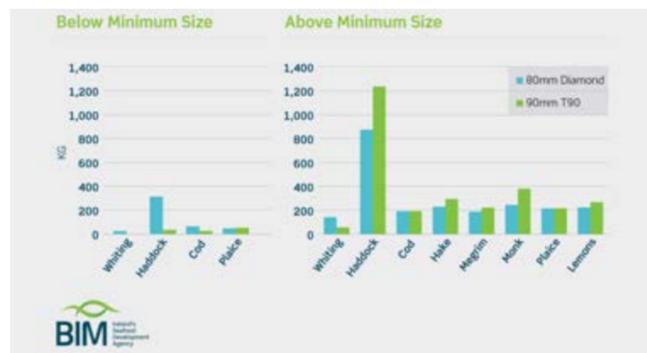
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# 90 mm T90 Mesh, An Excellent Gear Option for Most Whitefish Species

Major reductions in undersize roundfish, increased monkfish and no loss in other flatfish species

**Dr Ronán Cosgrove**  
Fisheries Conservation Manager, BIM



As outlined in BIM's Business of Seafood, Nephrops continue to dominate as the highest value species in the Irish demersal fishing sector with landings of 7,200 tonnes worth €56m at first point of sale in 2018. Whitefish species also remain economically important with monkfish, megrim, hake, whiting and haddock, predominantly caught in the Celtic Sea, providing a return of €46m in 2018. These species are primarily caught in mixed demersal trawl fisheries that are impacted by the landing obligation which is largely implemented through the discard plan for North-Western Waters. This plan contains survivability and de minimis exemptions which permit some continued discarding, and prescribed selective gear options that aim to avoid unwanted catches during fishing. The new gear measures came into force in the Celtic Sea on the 1st July 2019.

Vessels targeting Nephrops are relatively well prepared to address the discard plan. Gear options such as the 300 mm square mesh panel (SMP) and SELTRA panel that greatly reduce unwanted fish catches have been successfully tested, developed and implemented by BIM and the Irish Industry. Emanating from a BIM study, the Nephrops survivability exemption in ICES subarea 7 also assists—rather than landing and having them deducted from quotas, large numbers of living juvenile Nephrops can be put back to sea, with major biological and economic benefits for the fishery. Nephrops and whitefish vessels also benefit from de minimis exemptions of 6 to 7% for cod, haddock and whiting, and survivability exemptions for plaice and skates and rays.

Exemptions aside, a raft of new gear requirements pose

challenges for vessels targeting whitefish species in the Celtic Sea. Although yet to be tested, one of the options identified as having major potential to reduce unwanted catches comprises 90 mm T90 (turned 90o) mesh in the codend and extension piece. Led by Daragh Browne with assistance from Matthew McHugh, the gear was assessed on board the MFV Foyle Fisher from Greencastle. Catches from the 90 mm T90 codend were compared against a traditional 80 mm diamond codend using a twin-rig trawl configuration deployed in ICES 7j and g in early May.

Results revealed a tale of two stories in relation to effects on different species and associated directed fisheries: Major differences occurred in the size of retained roundfish species - undersize catches were reduced by around 90% in the case of whiting and haddock,

and 60% for cod in the T90 gear. Due to the increased size and orientation of the T90 mesh, market sized whiting (> 31 cm) were reduced by 60%. Other larger roundfish fared better. Likely due to greater water flow and trawl performance, market sized haddock and hake catches increased by 41% and 29% respectively. Results indicate that the gear generally works well for roundfish species, but due to substantial losses of market sized fish, the traditional directed fishery for whiting would likely be better served by one of the other gear options in the discard plan. Previous BIM research suggests that the 80 mm T90 codend with a 160 mm SMP might be a useful option and warrants further investigation in this regard.

Little difference occurred in catches of flatfish such as megrim, plaice and lemon sole but monkfish catches increased by 56% in the T90 gear. The latter result is difficult to explain but may be linked to increased water flow through T90 meshes and resulting effects on trawl geometry and spread. Whatever the reason, results are extremely positive for vessels targeting monk and megrim given such increases in a key target species, and major reductions in unwanted catches of undersize roundfish species.

BIM would like to thank Mick Gillen and the crew of the Foyle Fisher for an excellent collaboration, and John George Harrington or assistance with on board sampling.

A full report on this study is available at [www.bim.ie/our-publications/fisheries](http://www.bim.ie/our-publications/fisheries) and the discard plan (EU 2018/2034) can be viewed at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/>

# 35,000 LOBSTERS V-NOTCHED EACH YEAR

Each year up to 35,000 adult female lobsters caught by Irish inshore fishermen have a v-shaped notch removed from their tail by trained Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) staff. This 'V-notch' marking is supported by legislation that makes it illegal to land, hold or sell these lobsters and as a result, if they are caught again they must be returned to the sea. This allows them to continue to reproduce on up to three more occasions before the notch is repaired, helping maintain Ireland's lobster fishery. Ireland was the first country to introduce this measure in Europe in 1994. It arose from concerns by members of the Irish fishing sector in the early 1990s about the sustainability of the Irish lobster stock. The programme has grown in each year since that time.

Participating fishermen receive financial support from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund administered through BIM for a proportion of the value of the v-notched lobsters returned to the sea.

They also make a contribution themselves in the form of the remaining proportion of the value of the lobsters.

Additional protection is provided for the lobster stock in the form of a Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) of 87mm carapace length. This is measured from the back of the eye socket to the back of the carapace and aims to protect lobsters that are not yet sufficiently mature to reproduce and contribute to the lobster stock. A Maximum Landing Size (MLS) of 127mm also forms part of the conservation.

By V-notching larger lobsters which produce much higher numbers of eggs, the lobsters are afforded the chance to grow large enough to exceed the maximum landing size and gain permanent protection. Lobsters under the MCRS and over the MLS cannot be landed and must be returned to the sea.

You can download the grant aid form from the BIM website, [www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie) or you can contact your local BIM Regional Development Officer Caroline Curraoin, BIM at [curraoin@bim.ie](mailto:curraoin@bim.ie) or +353 1 214 418 to learn more about the scheme.



In reward for their efforts, last summer fishermen were reporting seeing plenty of small lobsters on the ground. Richard Murphy and his son Richard, end of shrimp season last year, Castletownbere. Image by Niall Duffy.



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- 15-17 October, NFC Castletownbere
- 04-06 November, NFC, Greencastle
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- 25-29 November, NFC Greencastle
- 07-11 October, NFC Castletownbere
- 25-29 November, NFC Greencastle
- 23-25 September, NFC Castletownbere
- 16-18 December, NFC, Greencastle
- 09-11 September, NFC, Greencastle
- 09-11 September, Howth, Co. Dublin, contact 087 2334620
- 16, 17 & 19 September, Howth, Co. Dublin, contact 087 2334620
- 23-26 September, Rossaveal, Co. Galway, contact 087 6837134

- GMDSS Short Range Radio Proficiency (Modules 1 & 2)**
  - 10-12 September, Rossaveal, Co. Galway, contact 087 6837134
  - 23-25 September, Howth, Co. Dublin, contact 087 2334620
  - 01-03 October, NFC Greencastle
- Commercial Scuba (4 weeks)**
  - 30 September-25 October, NFC Castletownbere
- Surface Supplied Diver (3 weeks)**
  - 04-29 November, NFC Castletownbere
- Two Day Seafood HACCP Workshop**
  - 09-10 October, Athlone, contact (01) 2144 185
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**mara** **Skipper**

## Seal Management Plan?

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the June edition of The Skipper's head-line article, "Past Sell By Date – Time to discuss the seal management problem" by Dr Ciarán Crummey, and complement you both for opening up discussion on a subject often hidden, more regularly consigned to megaphone diplomacy, showmanship and war of words, with truth the first casualty of silly season purveyors of perfidious, inflammatory journalism and fake news.

The author, in this case, is a true champion for the fishing industry and like the ISS (Irish Seal Sanctuary) has often been censored and isolated. The ISS is immediately at one with him in calling for "a formal transparent consultation process with all stakeholders" and criticism of the authorities for indifference and apathy to the plight of seals and fishing communities.

The authorities have made no effort to either protect seals or provide interim redress and support for provable damage to catch while transitioning to more selective and sustainable fishing.

This far the ISS applauds the article and author for integrity and courage in putting forth a view but now must take issue briefly with some misconceptions. Without equal space, we cannot address fully all the claims made and much will be best dealt with in the proposed inclusive process. For now, we simply suggest and question some of the shaker precepts of the plan.

From the outset it appears "seal management plan" is a euphemism for culling and this begs the question, is it seals or fisheries that require management or indeed is it a shared problem?

Grey Seals are the world's first wildlife species protected by law, under the 1914 Protection of Grey Seal Act. Seals, derogations apart, are protected by Irish and EU legislation.

Seals are apex predators and their populations controlled by abundance of food, not the reverse. They are ecological messengers as to the health of fish stocks and this relationship requires much further research. Comparing seals to deer, which are herbivorous, fast-breeding, terrestrially confined and without predators in Ireland, is comparing apples and oranges.

With respect to unreferenced dietary studies, other studies show salmonids to constitute as little as 1% of the composition of a seal's diet and these studies vary widely and wildly according to location, seasonality, resources and scope of research – work that must be undertaken, before considering shooting of messenger.

Grey seals are complex, opportunistic piscivores and research must take account of that. As to the demise of salmon, there is no justification for ignoring the impact of double-jobbing klondykers and opportunists, moonlighting as fishers, that drift-netted salmon to near extinction.

Pictures of damaged fish give no context or information on proximity to seal haul-outs or soak times, which when prolonged are a buffet to every piscivore that swims, crawls, slithers across the ocean bed just looking for a static feast, vertebrates and invertebrates alike. Are birds and cetaceans not offenders too and the poor seals just an easy target?

Fishers can provide scientists with this information and records on bycatch in return for redress and transitioning to sustainability. It is reprehensible of authorities to deny them justice, driving some

even to lawlessness. The quicker their dependency on tangle nets and poorly tended static nets goes the way of drift-nets the better and the more such practice is eschewed, the faster stocks may recover.

As to other range states with "management plans", what measurable success have they had in catch and how many seals culled would yield benefits in Ireland? The numbers would be huge for benefits if any and would become an additional cost burden on fisheries, as it would have to be sustained.

The cull proposed—and who are the NGOs not cull averse?—would be merely a distraction from the very many and real problems fisheries face and with which ISS tries to assist. The ISS is represented on the M.I. Seal Depredation Group (meetings horrendously overdue); NWWAC; N.E. RIFF and FLAG; NASCO and IWC and works inclusively with fishing and coastal communities, eNGOs and civil society. And learns from them.

The ISS, after over thirty years association and grappling with this perceived "problem", is convinced "shooting the messenger" is no solution and worse distracts from solutions and opportunities for recovery of stocks, cleaning oceans, marine ecotourism etc.

The ISS supports and would participate with the author's "best way forward" consultation process with all stakeholders.

For full ISS Seal Cull Policy and further info see [www.irishsealsanctuary.org/about-us/policy](http://www.irishsealsanctuary.org/about-us/policy). For film Lanugo <http://vimeo.com/114476900> Password Selkie100

*Yours sincerely,  
Brendan Price M.Biol.Inst.  
Irl., Acting CEO/ISS  
Irish Seal Sanctuary,  
Garristown, Co. Dublin  
[www.irishsealsanctuary.org](http://www.irishsealsanctuary.org)*

## The economics of seal-fishery interactions

Dear Editor,

I have read with interest the recent articles in the Skipper on grey seal depredation. I note in the June issue Dr Crummey points to the fact that the human, economic, and wider conservation problems associated with grey seals continue to be ignored. It does appear that little attention has been given, at least, to the economics of grey seal-fishery interactions in Ireland. The BIM study presented by Dr Cosgrove in the July issue did carry out some economic analysis on the direct effects of depredation, other effects were outside the scope of the study. In the following I give a synopsis of how fisheries economics can contribute and further inform the discussions.

Surveying the literature, the effects on fisheries resulting from seal interaction include; depredation (loss or damage to catch), damage to gear, disruption and relocation of fishing operations and competition for commercial prey. While biological research has been undertaken on the issue, biological reasoning alone cannot analyse these effects. Fisheries economics combines economic and ecological models to analyse human interaction with nature. Economists have developed tools to evaluate the above effects. These tools include methods to estimate seal induced losses on fishing operations; calculation of the opportunity cost of seal consumption on commercial fish; or calculate the annual predation cost per grey seal. Bio-economic models can be used to analyse policy, management and mitigation measures with the objective of achieving a sustainable and profitable fishery.

Seals are seen as charismatic creatures by the public (sometimes resulting in a poor public image for fisherman arising from seal injuries and mortality) and this has a value. For a complete economic analysis it is important to include these values in the management objective, often resulting in trade-offs between the fishery and existence value of seals.

Economics is a necessary part of the conversation, joining the natural component and human component of a fishery. It can estimate costs arising from the seal-fisheries conflict, provide guidance on management and add to the scientific research. Needless to say all analysis is dependent on strong scientific and economic data!

*Best regards,  
Dr Naomi S Foley  
Fisheries Economist*

## Recreational Fishing?

Dear Editor,

I'd like to draw your attention to an ongoing issue off the west Kerry coast. Since 2016, there has been an illegal fishing operation taking place in and around the Blasket Islands.

French fishermen are operating 3 ribs (each approximately 17 feet in length), manned by 3-4 fishermen in each rib. From my observations, and those of other local fishermen, they appear to be angling for pollack, and fish 7 days a week, with a fishing season spanning from the end of May to mid-August each year.

These vessels between them, land approximately 7-8 boxes of pollack per day, which given an average fish box weight of 40kg, adds up to approximately 320kg of pollack per week, resulting in over 3,000kg of fish being taken from

inshore waters on the south-west coast by these French fishermen.

To the best of my knowledge, these fishermen are unlicensed for commercial fishing in Ireland, and certainly, the scale of the operation, as described above, cannot be defined as "recreational" fishing. The fish is apparently being filleted, frozen and then exported to France for sale, not for personal consumption.

I have personally contacted the SFPA, on several occasions to alert them of this issue, but to date they appear to be unwilling or unable to do anything about it.

As you can imagine this is a very frustrating situation for me and other Irish inshore fishermen, who have complied with the law, by means of paying for a commercial fishing license. The scale of this illegal fishing



Blasket Islands. geograph.org.uk, Creative Commons

operation has the potential to have a very negative impact on the sustainability of local fish stocks, and a knock-on negative impact on

the livelihoods of local fishermen.

*Mise le meas  
Michael O Connor.*

## Fishermen are listened to and believed in Norway

Dear Editor,

There is a big difference between biological and physical interactions. They are often confused. The former is what seals eat in the wild and the latter is what they eat from nets. Biological interactions are poorly understood. It is precisely because they are so poorly understood that the precautionary principle should be applied holistically, across the board. That includes grey seals. This is what they do in the Baltic, Norway, Iceland and Canada. In Norway, for example, there are some 6,000 gillnetters, compared to about 60 in Ireland. They farm over 1.2 million tons of salmon, compared to 20,000 tons in Ireland. Their wild salmon stocks have declined, but not by as much as in Ireland.

Grey seals are hunted in Norway under a quota system. Since 1997 the recommended quotas have generally been set at 5% of abundance estimates. Indicative of robust adaptive management practise, in some areas quotas were increased due to assumed immigration of grey seals from large neighbouring colonies, e.g., the UK. Also, in areas with particular conflicts between grey seals and fisheries, quotas were increased by 20-30%, even though the negative effects of seals on Norwegian fisheries has not been scientifically investigated or documented. Fishermen are listened to and believed in Norway.

In 2003 these quotas were increased substantially to 25% of population estimates. Also, a bounty was introduced that year. The Norwegian management

objective is for a stable annual production of approx. 1,200 pups. That is a seal management plan. The ISS would not support such a plan. The faffing around by the State should not be used as an excuse to begin the research process all over again, as suggested by the ISS. Fisheries are close to being managed to death, whereas our grey seals have enjoyed protection since 1976.

Irish wild salmon stocks are in danger of extinction. Ours must run the gauntlet of a record-high number of grey seals from Scotland downwards. Even if salmon remains are rarely found in seal diet, biodiversity considerations support seal management to conserve wild Irish salmon stocks. Our wild salmon stocks continued to decline after the salmon driftnet fishery was banned more than a decade ago. Also, there is no evidence that klondykers ever fished for Irish salmon.

Physical interactions, or what seals eat from nets, is property damage. This is a legal concept. More than 20,000 deer were culled in Ireland last season because of property damage. Both seals and deer are overabundant. In this sense seals and deer are analogous. An even better analogy would be seals and foxes. Unlike deer, foxes are omnivorous and apex predators – another so-called sentinel species. Unlike seals, foxes are not protected in Ireland. Their population is unknown and uncensused. They have the legal status of vermin. This is very harsh on foxes. Norwegians treat their seals much better than we treat our foxes. A conservation campaign in Ireland to protect

foxes doesn't exist. This is all about values. The science has been used by policymakers and politicians to fudge and obfuscate for at least the past three decades. The biodiversity arguments have been ignored, as have the legal rights of the disaffected to fair procedure, natural justice and compensation for property damage. This is about being able to balance things in the best way. In Ireland, this is now primarily about a human and social injustice that has been perpetrated by the State for decades. Some eNGO's, including the ISS, made it easy for this to happen by happily providing emotive and condemnatory quotes to the media whenever a controversy arose.

A seal focus group was set up in 2011 and chaired by the Marine Institute. The ISS refer to it as a 'seal depredation group.' It aimed to make progress towards developing a management plan so that, amongst other things, set net fishermen could plan for their future, according to BIM in 2013. This group has not met since 2015. It's dead. The ISS was one of its participants. How are set net fishermen supposed to plan for their futures? They have been hung out to dry by the State. This is the human aspect, and it's about law and politics, not science.

The ISS's main stated aim is to provide sanctuary for seals. They are primarily motivated by an emotional response to the suffering of one animal. This has nothing to do with conservation. It's about the welfare of one species. A holistic approach, given our very poor

understanding of this important subject, would conclude that we should consider all species equal. The same arguments can be made in terms of supporting biodiversity. We also need to acknowledge our hypocrisy when we compare how we treat our foxes compared to our seals. These double standards are wrong. There is a middle ground, and the Norwegians live in it. Clearly, at least in my opinion, the ISS don't. They belong to an umbrella Irish ENGO, Sustainable Water Network (SWAN). Let their perspective be heard through this umbrella group.

The Minister, Josepha Madigan, was a lawyer before she was elected. Her predecessors have been able to kick this one to touch, for fear of upsetting the likes of the ISS, for three decades now. I would like to end this letter by reiterating the call made to the Minister in this journal three months ago for her to establish a consultation process with a view to informing the terms of reference of a Seal Management Action Group. Justice further delayed is justice further denied. If she needs to be constantly reminded of it, so be it. This is a very real problem that will not go away.

*Yours sincerely,  
Dr Ciarán Crummey  
Bawnboy, Co. Cavan*

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Brown Crab. By: Declan McGrath

## PUTTING THE CRUSTACEAN AMONG THE PIGEONS

Charting a way forward for brown crab

By Lorna Siggins

Former fishery inspector and rare fish expert Dr Kevin Flannery put the crustacean among the pigeons last month when he called on the Government to show “leadership” on managing the national brown crab fishery before the stock collapses.

“Inaction” by Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine Michael Creed could result in many small vessels going to the wall unless a management plan is introduced, Flannery warned.

### MIXED REACTIONS

His comments have elicited a mixed reaction within a fleet of over 350 vessels, with some concern that pot limits will be introduced and a belief that any new management plan can only work for both inshore and offshore stocks if several EU states are involved.

Brown (or edible) crab (cancer pagurus) and lobster are not covered by EU total allowable catch provisions, and the primary management tool is minimum landing size restrictions.

Earlier this year, Mr Creed’s department introduced new conservation measures, increasing the minimum size taken from ICES areas VI and VII to 140mm. His department says the Irish industry requested the change as “a way of supporting the sustainability of the brown crab fishery by allowing brown crab more time

to reproduce”.

The department also points out that the crab fishery was closed for three months from January to March this year, on foot of an Irish quota management advisory committee recommendation.

The National Inshore Fisheries Forum has been holding a series of meetings to come up with a management recommendation, the department says.

“It is recognised that management arrangements involving a real time monitoring of fishing activity will be challenging as most fishing vessels are small and mainly use paper log book records. Any new proposals will be considered in detail by the minister and his decision will be informed by the views of stakeholders,” the department says.

It also refers to the Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) fisheries improvement project for brown crab, initiated two years ago in partnership with key industry stakeholders from the inshore and processing sectors.

That project is “focused on improving both the management and the value of the fishery” and says the work plan for 2019 “includes elements aimed at managing effort, improving quality and industry working with scientists to improve our knowledge and management of the stock”.

However, Flannery believes it is unfair to expect stakeholders to come up with a management regime without department leadership and a

*“The Government was warned when it introduced the driftnet ban for salmon in 2007 that there would be consequences if there were no clear alternatives, and one of those consequences was that more inshore boats would turn to pots.”*

INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE

“rapid solution”.

“Yes, consult the industry, but don’t expect it to be able to draw up an agreed plan – by which time many boats could have gone to the wall,” he says.

Fuelling Flannery’s concern is the fact that demand in China has driven up prices, resulting in a substantial increase in effort here.

“You have up to 75 per cent of the Irish fleet now potting, and yet we have no patrol vessel that can haul a pot,” Flannery, who is a member of the south-west regional inshore fisheries forum, says.

“The price of brown crab has gone from 1.20 euro a kilo to 5 euro a kilo, but this has led to a bonanza which is not good for the stock – or for those who have invested in pots when there is no adequate management,” he adds.

Over 11,000 tonnes of crab were landed in 2016 with a value of at least €16 million. Recent figures from Bord Bia show that the total crab exports to China in 2018 reached a value of €16.4 million. The average unit price per tonne was €7.9k, an increase of 32% on 2017.

### OTHER FACTORS

National Inshore Fishermen’s Association (NIFA) Director Shane McIntyre, who fishes his vessel *Jueast* out of Dunmore East with gillnets and lobster/crab pots, says pot limitations could only work if every boat was taken into consideration.

“We work 1500 pots in an 11-metre vessel and have done for the last 15 years, and I wouldn’t go any higher unless I got a bigger boat,” McIntyre says.

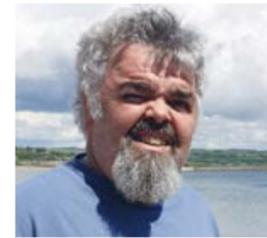
“We agreed limits ourselves in the south-east within six miles and outside 12 miles, and so we throw back crabs that might be marketable but are too small. At the same time, the limits that suit us might not suit the boats in the north-west.”

“I think all of the boats in NIFA are in favour of management plans of some kind, but the difficulty is that whereas Ireland Inc might be able to control the fishery inside six miles, outside 12 miles any controls have to involve other EU states.”

He notes that in France, there are controls. In Brittany, for example, there is a set number

*“I think all of the boats in NIFA are in favour of management plans of some kind, but the difficulty is that whereas Ireland Inc might be able to control the fishery inside six miles, outside 12 miles any controls have to involve other EU states.”*

SHANE MCINTYRE, NIFA



of pots per crew, to a maximum of 250 to 300 pots per person, depending on the fishing port. Brittany sets a limit of 1,000 pots on vessels under 20 metres and a maximum of 1200 pots on boats over 20 metres.

The Chinese prices are not the only factor, another industry representative who did not wish to be named, said.

“The Government was warned when it introduced the driftnet ban for salmon in 2007 that there would be consequences if there were no clear alternatives, and one of those consequences was that more inshore boats would turn to pots.”

“The issue of seals—as documented by Dr Ciarán Crumney and Dr Ronán Cosgrove of BIM in *The Skipper* June and July issues—is also not being faced, and so there are less and less options for commercial inshore fishermen...,” he said.

### SKIPPERS KNOW THEIR BUSINESS BEST

The Marine Institute’s brown crab expert, Dr Oliver Tully says that he would agree with Flannery if there were no structures in place – but says that the national and regional inshore forums facilitate developing management proposals.

“The department and relevant agencies have done everything they can to enable these structures to be supported, and they haven’t come up with management proposals yet,” he says.

The change in minimum landing size, supported by the industry, was a positive step, he says. The minimum size increase to 140mm enabled better spawning levels, as maturity is on average 120mm.

As Tully explains, the Marine Institute is primarily concerned with the state of the stock. “Yes, effort management is about economic viability, and that is everybody’s concern,” Tully says. “But we feel that, in the main, effort management should be driven by industry rather than taking a top-down approach.”

“Skippers know their business best, and we know they can come up with something we can add to, if needs be...,” he says.

“We know catch rates may

have been declining, but we believe this is due to too much gear being used. So it is an effort problem, not a recruitment problem...”

“Skippers could reduce gear and associated costs and have the same catch, but that is an issue that has been talked about for the past 20 years,” Tully continues.

“The problem with limits is that once they are set, everyone works to the limit. There is no really good model in other EU countries for management, and it would be difficult to ask existing operators to accept a limit when other boats in the polyvalent sector could, in theory, turn to potting also,” he says.

“It is topical now because of the Chinese prices, and we also know that there are individuals in the industry who are concerned,” Tully adds.

### NO ROUTINE ASSESSMENTS

A recent project undertaken on the English Devon/Dorset coastline by the University of Plymouth, and funded by the British Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Blue Marine Foundation, found that crab caught in areas where there were low potting levels were of greater average weight.

The study in Lyme Bay found that areas which were exposed consistently to medium and high levels of potting yielded crabs weighing less than those caught in the low potting areas. Lyme Bay is Britain’s largest marine protected area, and a ban on dredging and trawling had led to an increase in potting.

The Blue Marine Foundation’s executive director Charles Clover said the study showed there was a “sweet spot” between static fishing gear use and biodiversity conservation, and the value of a “high quality, low volume approach” pioneered in Lyme Bay.

In Ireland, there are no routine assessments of the state of brown crab stock – but some skippers believe more research is now required. Oliver Tully says it is a difficult stock to assess, and that even the International Council for Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

finds it challenging.

“Unless we have successive years of recruitment failure, there is no immediate concern,” he says.

### CADMIUM

The one shadow on the Chinese market’s horizon is the issue of cadmium levels. Cadmium is naturally occurring and can be found in many foods, but widespread contamination as a result of heavy industry in China has led to extra vigilance and particular testing protocols.

The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) recently briefed the industry on the latest situation. In a statement, it told *The Skipper* that “certification of brown crab exports to China from Ireland continues under established export certification protocols as agreed with the Chinese authorities”.

“These certification protocols are currently under review by the SFPA in light of recent communications with the Chinese authorities, and are related to our export certification and the crabmeat sample analyses being conducted in Ireland and in China,” the statement said.

“Meetings have recently been held by the SFPA with the relevant industry stakeholders to discuss factors that could lead to technical changes of our current protocols for sample analyses and export certification,” it said.

“In addition to diplomatic contacts, the SFPA and other control partners are in ongoing dialogue with Chinese authorities to ensure there are crab certification regimes in place that support the export of Irish crab to China,” the statement said.

In the meantime, it believes there should be no significant changes to the Chinese market in the short term...

## AN PORTÁN RUA

The brown or edible crab—*Cancer pagurus* and *An Portán Rua*—is a migratory species that can travel several hundred kilometres. It also emits a “strange droning” during low tides, when comfortable in its hide, and “the more uneven and difficult the shore, the better for it”, the late Connemara author, Séamas Mac an Iomaire, wrote in his classic *The Shores of Connemara\**.

Crabs tagged and released off Donegal’s Malin Head have made their way down to the Mayo coast and out as far as the Continental Shelf. “So the fishery is almost interceutory,” the Marine Institute’s expert Dr Oliver Tully says.

Ireland’s main crab stocks are divided into several key areas – north Donegal, north Mayo and west of Scotland; some patches south of Clew Bay and Galway Bay; south of Loop Head, Co Clare as far as Cork; a Wexford/Waterford fishery which extends to south Wales, the Bristol Channel and North Devon and the Scilly islands; and a north Irish Sea stock which is contiguous with the Isle of Man.

Dr Tully is optimistic about the outcome of the project involving 50 boats in the south-east and south-west, which have been participating voluntarily in a scheme involving the use of technology for more efficient fishing.

“It involves testing how pot limits could work with gear sensors and vessel monitoring systems, and if we can demonstrate that it is efficient and effective the industry might take it on board,” Tully says.

The Marine Institute project is supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, and results are expected later this year.

Northern Ireland’s DEFRA division has recently initiated a consultation on managing the brown crab, where there was a lower minimum landing size of 130mm.

The Northern Irish authority said this was in response to industry concerns about the health of the fishery, which recorded landings in ports worth over £1.239 million in 2017.

*\*The Shores of Connemara by Séamas Mac an Iomaire, translated by Pádraic de Bhaldráite (Tír Eolas, 2000 and 2006).*

## New FLAG project officer announced for South West region



Brenda O'Riordan

Following a reorganisation of BIM regional services Brenda O'Riordan, Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) has been confirmed as the new project officer for the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) in the South West region of Ireland. Vera O'Donovan who previously held the role of FLAG Project Officer for FLAG South West is to continue her work with the rest of the fisheries sector in the area.

The FLAG programme is co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). BIM administers the programme on behalf of the seven local FLAGs which will deliver a total of €12 million in funding to Ireland's coastal communities over the 2014-2020 period.

Almost 400 applications were made to the FLAG programme in 2019. All applications were reviewed by individual FLAG Boards in each of the seven FLAG regions throughout Ireland. Projects must demonstrate a clear link to coastal community rejuvenation, enterprise, innovation, job creation and skills enhancement across the fishing, aquaculture and maritime industries.

Portmagee Seafoods Ltd is one of 274 projects to secure funding this year. The Kerry based seafood processing plant will use the FLAG support to invest in storage facilities for live shellfish, this, in turn, will increase their capacity to deliver lobster and crab to European customers.

Applications for 2020 are now open. Details of the FLAG programme and on how to apply can be found at [www.bim.ie/schemes/](http://www.bim.ie/schemes/)

For further details of FLAG South West applications, please contact Brenda O'Riordan at [Brenda.oriordan@bim.ie](mailto:Brenda.oriordan@bim.ie) or +353 87 351 2327.

## Forum established to help restore native oyster stocks in Ireland



Tralee Oyster Fisheries Society, Fenit, Co. Kerry. Photo: Cathal Noonan

The Irish Native Oyster Fisheries Forum, funded under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, has been set up to help restore native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*) populations in oyster fishing areas in Ireland. Members of the newly formed Irish Native Oyster Fisheries Forum (INOF) visited Tralee Oyster Fisheries Society in Fenit, Co Kerry in April to see the results of the organisation's stock enhancement programme.

Earlier this year, Tralee Oyster Fisheries Society, under the management of Denis O'Shea, invested in a purpose-built barge to deploy coupelles or spat collectors in large frames during summer months.

Native oyster juveniles are then stripped from the collectors and held in a designated nursery area until they are big enough to resist predation when restocked into the fishery. Members of Tralee Oyster Fisheries Society visited France last year to learn the techniques surrounding this method of spat collection and are now transferring their knowledge to forum members who hope to adopt similar technologies in the future.

Patricia Daly, BIM said: "This forum has been set up to better influence policies that may affect native oyster stocks in Ireland. Native oyster fisheries remain of high environmental and socio-

economic importance to fishing communities in Ireland. This forum is helping native oyster co-ops and developments to have their voice heard."

The Irish Native Oyster Fisheries Forum includes two representatives from the following native oyster fisheries groups; Tralee Oyster Fisheries Society; Clarinbridge Oyster Co Op; Comharchumann Sliogeise Chonamara; Clew Bay Oyster Co Op; Achill Native Oyster Fishermen's Group; North Mayo Oyster Development Co-op and Lough Swilly Wild Oyster Society Ltd. It meets four times a year with advisors from BIM and the Marine Institute. Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) provides secretariat to the forum.

## Bord Bia leads third Irish presence at Japan International Seafood & Technology Expo

Last month, determined to explore new business opportunities in the region, Bord Bia and Irish seafood exporters exhibited for the third time at the Japan International Seafood and Technology Expo in Tokyo that ran from August 21st – 23rd.

The Expo, now in its 21st year, attracts more than 35,000 buyers, suppliers, media and other seafood professions and features the stands of over 1,400 exhibitors. The five Irish companies that exhibited at the show— Connemara Seafoods, Norfish Ltd., Rockabill Seafood, Ward Fish, and Errigal Bay—are all members of Origin Green.

Following on from the success of last year's show and combined with recent promotional activities and extensive market research, East Asia is now seen as a prime opportunity for Irish seafood

companies to develop their export business.

Last year, Irish seafood exports to the four main Asian markets of China, Hong Kong, South Korea and Japan increased by around 19% in value and accounted for around 14% of total seafood export values.

Seafood exports to Japan, now Ireland's second-largest export market for Irish mackerel and horse mackerel, were valued at €16 million, representing an increase in value of 54% compared to 2016. These were accounted for predominantly by pelagic species, with Irish mackerel accounting for €7.8 million worth of sales – an increase of 105% from 2016.

The value of horse mackerel exports increased to €5.6 million, with herring, seaweed, varieties of molluscs, clams, oysters, mussels, shrimps and

prawns making up the bulk of the rest of export values, combining to a value of approximately €2.5 million.

In recognition of the potential for continued growth in Japan, Bord Bia opened its 14th international office in Tokyo in June and continues to invest in 'feet on the street' resources to increase Ireland's business presence in Japan and to support pelagic and other seafood categories.

In the coming months, Bord Bia and Irish seafood exporters will attend two more major tradeshows in Asia. In September, there will be a strong Irish presence at Seafood Expo Asia in Wanchai, Hong Kong whilst from October 30th – November 1st, Bord Bia and a total of 20 of Irish seafood exporters will attend China Fisheries & Seafood Expo in Qingdao, China.

## Blue label from Marine Stewardship Council for Irish rope grown mussels

Last month, the Irish rope grown mussel fishery achieved Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification. Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's seafood development agency, is the holder of this latest MSC certificate. The state agency also holds the certificate for the Irish bottom grown mussel fishery, which achieved certification in 2013. This latest certification means the entire Irish mussel fishery under BIM management is certified. MSC is a non-profit international organisation set up to recognise and reward sustainable fishing practices through its globally recognised ecolabel and fishery certification programme.

Jim O'Toole, CEO BIM spoke of the collaborative, cross-industry approach taken by BIM to achieve this result and said: "BIM's strategy is to enable sustainable growth of the seafood sector in Ireland.

"The prestigious certification achieved allows for a unique national approach where all

mussel growers operating in licensed harvest locations in Ireland can now label their mussels with the MSC ecolabel, showing that they are MSC certified as sustainable and from a well-managed fishery.

"Ireland's mussel industry is export focussed and MSC certification of Irish rope grown mussels provides valuable evidence to the marketplace of the sustainable environment in which our seafood is produced. This recognition by the MSC means our seafood is produced to the highest standard and protects our aquaculture for future generations."

Jim O'Toole celebrated the announcement during a visit to Blackshell farm in Westport, Co Mayo. He was joined by Jo Pollett, MSC UK and Ireland, and mussel farmer, Michael Mulloy, Blackshell Farm Ltd who is also Chair of IFA Aquaculture.

Jo Pollett, MSC Senior Fisheries Outreach Officer, UK and Ireland, said: "This is a significant achievement and great news for Irish mussels. BIM has



Jim O'Toole, CEO BIM; Jo Pollett, MSC UK and Ireland and mussel farmer, Michael Mulloy, Blackshell Farm Ltd and Chair of IFA Aquaculture

shown ambition and leadership in pushing for the sustainability of Irish fisheries. We're really excited to have this fishery as part of the MSC programme and look forward to a healthy future for Irish mussels."

The Irish mussel industry was valued at €11.7 million in 2018 according to the BIM Business of

Seafood report. The total volume of Irish mussel production in 2018 was 13,800 tonnes, with the rope grown sector producing in the region of 9,000 tonnes each year. This method of mussel farming was introduced in the 1980s predominantly along the west coast of Ireland and is subject to MSC from today.

## New app to help aquaculture sector in Ireland respond to invasive alien species

In late July, a new smartphone app to help the aquaculture sector in Ireland identify invasive alien species was trialled for the first time in Mulroy Bay, Co Donegal. The app, developed by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's seafood development agency, helps users identify and learn about invasive alien species they should remain alert to. An alien species is defined as any living specimen introduced outside its natural range. An invasive alien species is one whose introduction or spread may threaten or adversely impact on the biodiversity and related ecosystem of a given area.

Catherine Morrison, Sustainability and Certification Manager BIM said:

"Invasive alien species present a major threat to biodiversity loss. An important part of BIM's role in developing the Irish aquaculture sector is to work with operators to minimise the environmental impact and improve overall environmental performance of their operations. This app will help the aquaculture sector



Trial of new app to help aquaculture sector respond to invasive alien species

exchange information on any potential invasive alien species they encounter to help with their management."

The app works by the user taking a photo of a suspected invasive alien species they discover. The location and other coordinates are captured by the app and the information is then sent to BIM to investigate further and if confirmed, catalogue.

Grainne Devine, BIM and Arjan Gittenberger, GiMaRIS, a specialist in ecological risk assessments, demonstrated the new app to father and son, Hugh and Johnny Wilhare, Mulroy Bay Mussels, Cranford, Co Donegal.

The Wilhare family are among the first members of the Irish aquaculture sector to test out the new app during its initial pilot phase. The mussel producers have been growing rope-grown mussels in Mulroy Bay for more than 30 years.

Grainne Devine spoke of how the species information contained in the app will help farmers learn more about risks to and from their operations and said: "The aim of the new app is to help the aquaculture sector in Ireland undertake more comprehensive risk assessments and to help strengthen their biosecurity plans."

## IFA Aquaculture Conference and AGM

IFA Aquaculture

On Thursday, September 26th, the IFA Aquaculture Conference & AGM will take place on at the Connacht Hotel, Dublin Road, Galway.

Conference Welcome & Registration – 10.30am  
IFA Aquaculture AGM (Members Only) – 3.30pm.  
Only fully paid up members of IFA Aquaculture shall be entitled to participate in the AGM.

This will be followed by buffet dinner 'Taste the Atlantic – Celebration of Irish Aquaculture' hosted by BIM, at the Galway Oyster Festival Marquee, Nimmos Pier, Galway from 6-9pm.

Registration via Eventbrite – <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/ifa-aquaculture-conference-agm-tickets-68591552179>

## Pilot Programme for Bluefin Tuna Data Collection



Bluefin Tuna, Donegal Bay.  
Image: David Morrissey

Authorisations will be soon be granted for 15 angling vessels to participate in Tuna CHART (Catch and Release Tagging) a pilot Bluefin Tuna Data Collection Programme. The new programme has been developed by the Marine Institute and Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) in partnership with the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) and the Department for Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE).

The programme will enable 15 authorised vessels to catch, tag and release Atlantic Bluefin Tuna for data collection purposes off the Irish coast. The authorised vessels, which are located in Cork, Clare, Galway, Sligo and Donegal will support

scientific work to increase knowledge of the behaviour and abundance of Bluefin Tuna in Irish waters. The Bluefin Tuna Data Collection Programme will operate on a pilot basis in 2019.

Authorisations will be granted to the 15 angling vessels from mid-August until mid-October. All skippers and trained crew have participated in training with guidance provided around fish handling, welfare, tagging and data recording. Participants in the programme will catch, tag and release Bluefin Tuna while adhering to strict fish safety and handling procedures at all times.

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Michael Creed TD welcomed the initiative, "My Department has been working on this project for two years at both EU and domestic levels and

I am happy to announce the commencement of the project this month. This initiative will allow the Marine Institute and Inland Fisheries Ireland to collect valuable data on the migratory patterns of Bluefin Tuna in Irish waters in a tightly controlled environment. This project has been a wonderful example of cooperation between my Department, DCCAE, SFPA, IFI and the Marine Institute and I am looking forward to the continued development of this relationship."

Sean Canney TD, Minister with responsibility for inland fisheries said, "The angling vessels which will be receiving authorisation from my Department will contribute in a very tangible way to important data collection around Bluefin Tuna as they migrate past the Irish coastline. The recreational

fisheries sector is crucial in the delivery of this pilot programme and we look forward to working with all the state agencies involved and critically with the skippers and their crews who have received authorisations in providing valuable data for scientific purposes."

The Marine Institute has been engaged in international Bluefin Tuna migration research since 2015. The Bluefin Tuna Data Collection Programme will build on and complement the scientific work undertaken by the Marine Institute. In partnership with DAFM, DCCAE, IFI and the SFPA, the Marine Institute has developed and provided training for authorised skippers, the organisation of on-board observers and the data collection requirements for reporting of the data to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT).

The Sea Fisheries Protection Authority and Inland Fisheries Ireland will undertake inspections and patrols around the coast to ensure this remains a strictly controlled fishery. Anglers wishing to engage in this fishery must only do so on a sea angling vessel specifically authorised to participate in the pilot programme. A full list of authorised skippers can be found at [www.fisheriesireland.ie/bluefin](http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/bluefin).

## Scientists find plastics at the bottom of deep submarine canyon

University College Cork (UCC) scientists have discovered plastic at the bottom of a deep submarine canyon at 2,125m water depth while investigating cold-water coral habitats on board the Marine Institute's RV Celtic Explorer.

UCC's Marine Geology Research group were investigating cold-water coral habitats in the Porcupine Bank Canyon, some 320 km due west of Dingle, on a research expedition led by UCC's Dr Aaron Lim.

The research team recovered eight novel monitoring stations called 'landers', deployed between 2500m water depth and 700m water depth by the Marine Institute's Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) Holland 1, earlier this summer.

The monitoring stations record the speed, temperatures and direction of the currents around these habitats as well as trapping samples of the food, sediments and microplastics being deposited around the corals to understand conditions and how the corals are coping with changing oceans.

The researchers found plastic in the bottom of the canyon at 2,125m water depth, as deep as ten Eiffel Towers stacked on top of one another. The reach of human plastic waste is down this deep, even 320km offshore.

"It's always sad to see plastic rubbish in these otherwise pristine habitats. It quite incredible that our plastic waste can get this far out and so deep in the oceans," said UCC Professor Andy Wheeler, who has pioneered research on cold water coral mound offshore Ireland over the past 20 years.

"I don't think people think about this when that dump their rubbish. We're also trying to see if microplastics are being fed to the corals from above. We've just got the samples, let's hope



ROV Holland 1 recovering one of the monitoring stations. Image: UCC

we're wrong."

The Porcupine Bank Canyon, which is deep enough to stack ten Eiffel Towers inside, is teeming with a whole range of cold-water coral habitats, just on Ireland's doorstep, according to Dr Lim.

"The environment is much more dynamic than we thought, with two of the monitoring stations knocked over by the currents; food supply for the coral is variable but the corals are doing okay. Some of these habitats have existed for millions of years and have grown so large they resemble hills made of coral, called coral mounds."

This is the first time eight of these monitoring stations have been deployed and collected using the ROV Holland 1. It will provide scientists with an insight into the processes affecting these cold-water coral habitats, food sources and the impact of microplastics.

Ireland's cold-water coral reefs are found in the cold, dark ocean at water depths of 600m to 1,000m along our continental margin. "Not only



A white plastic sack found 2125m deep. Image: UCC

is this expedition vital for understanding these habitats and our impact upon them, it also acts as a baseline to start monitoring how our deep-water habitats here are changing," added Dr Lim.

The team has a research agenda which will see them return to the canyon and other habitats alike for a number of years to monitor the changes in the environment around these habitats. The monitoring stations will be brought back to UCC for detailed analyses.

This research survey is

carried out with the support of the Marine Institute, funded under the Marine Research Programme 2014-2020 by the Irish Government to support and promote the Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance (AORA). AORA facilitates common research and knowledge exchange for us to provide healthy, resilient oceans for our future generations.

The survey has also received funding from Science Foundation Ireland, the Geological Survey and University College Cork.

## Dr Heffernan appointed to EU Mission Board



Dr Peter Heffernan CEO Marine Institute.  
Photo Andrew Downes Xposure.

Dr Peter Heffernan has been selected as a member of the European Commission's Mission Board for Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters.

The Mission Board is one of five major research missions of Horizon Europe, the EU research and innovation programme (2021 – 2027). Dr Heffernan is one of 15 experts on the Mission Board which will identify the first possible specific missions on healthy oceans by the end of 2019.

Dr Heffernan has served as the inaugural CEO since the establishment of the Marine Institute in 1993 and will retire from this role in October 2019.

Welcoming the announcement, Dr John Killeen Chairman of the Marine Institute, said "Dr Heffernan has played a fundamental role in developing Ireland's ocean research capacity, and for driving collaboration in marine research and innovation in Europe and internationally. I congratulate Peter on his appointment, which reflects his strong standing in the European research community."

Over 2,100 individuals from across the EU and beyond applied to become members of the mission board. Dr Heffernan served on the EU's Research and Innovation Area Board (ERIAB) from 2012–2016.

Images by Tony Lynch

# CLOGHERHEAD Blessing of the Boats

The Bank Holiday saw the annual Blessing of the Boats take place at Clogherhead's Port Oriel.

On Sunday, August 4th, the annual blessing took place on the pier, officiated by Fr Cyrus. The day, which is organised every year in accordance with the tides, featured numerous attractions including music from local trad musicians Podge and Friends, set dancing, net mending competitions, bouncy castles, face painting and more.

Patrick Smith, skipper of the Celtic Warrior II and chief organiser of the event told *The Skipper* the weather was perfect, they had big crowds, and—with ten or eleven over 20 metres boats and the whole of the under 20 metre boats in—most of the fleet was in and dressed with flags for the festive occasion.

Arkh Angel took the prize for the best-dressed boat over 20 metres, with Boy Aaron nabbing the under 20-metre title. David Reid, skipper of the Resilient, fought it out in the net mending to take the Craig Byrne Memorial Cup.

The day—which also saw the RNLI out, the Coast Guard do a fly-by, and BIM busy on the pier promoting their Fishing for Litter campaign—was sponsored by the Clogherhead Fishermen's Co-op, Dundalk Bay Seafoods (Clogherhead), Pepe Trawls (Howth), Marine Suppliers (Howth), GK Nets (Howth) and BIM.

The Clogherhead Fisherman's Association would like to thank all those who helped to make the day, with a special thanks to their sponsors.

The Skipper is already looking forward to next year's event. Until then, we would like to wish good and safe fishing to all the owners, skippers, crew and families fishing out of Clogherhead in the coming year.



Ivan Moore, Pepe Trawls, judging the netmending competition sponsored by Pepe Trawls.



Patrick Smith presenting the cup to David Reid.

## RESULTS

### THE FISHERMAN'S GOLF OUTING

1. RYAN MURPHY
2. ANTHONY KIRWAN
3. JOHN CUNNINGHAM

### THE CRAIG BYRNE MEMORIAL CUP FOR NET MENDING

1. DAVID REID, RESILIENT
2. JIM CONNOLLY, SUPREME II
3. VAL REILLY, PATRICK C

### BEST DRESSED BOAT OVER 20 METRES

- ARKH ANGEL

### BEST DRESSED BOAT UNDER 20 METRES

- BOY AARON



Fr Cyrus blessing the winning Uzo metre boat Boy Aaron sponsored by BIM



## SCOTLAND NEWS

### TASTY, HEALTHY-TO-EAT AND SUSTAINABLE – NEW HERRING SEASON GETS UNDERWAY!

With the Scottish North Sea herring season now underway, this is the perfect time for consumers to include this tasty and nutritious fish as part of their weekly shopping basket.

Herring is an incredibly nutritious fish, packed full of minerals, vitamins and omega 3 fatty acids that are so important for heart health.

Robert Duthie of the Scottish Pelagic Processors Association says: "Scottish North Sea herring has great flavour and is healthy to eat, which means it ticks all the right boxes when looking for something new to try in your weekly shop."

Once affectionately known as the 'silver darlings', North Sea herring is one of the most sustainable types of fish around and carries the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) eco-label for the responsible way the fishery is managed.

Ian Gatt of the Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group states: "Our herring fishermen are committed to sustainable fishing, and with the stock in great shape, this is a fish that should be on everyone's menu."

### ACCOLADES FOR SHELLFISH MANAGEMENT BODY

Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO) is celebrating a series of accolades in recognition of the work it does to maintain the good name of local seafood produce.

It secured a special achievement award in the recent Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) Awards.

That came after SSMO was highly commended in the Sustainability Award at the annual Fishing News Awards.

To round off the honours, representatives of SSMO have been invited to meet Prince Charles, the Duke of Rothesay, during his visit to the islands on Saturday 27th July.

Carole Laignel, SSMO inshore co-ordinator, said: "We were honoured to receive these awards in recognition of all the work that has been done over many years to enhance Shetland's reputation for producing high-quality, sustainable shellfish."

"I am the only employee of the organisation and report to a Board comprising shellfish fishermen, shellfish processors and members of the community council all of whom give their time voluntarily."

"Our brown crab and scallop

## Pelagic fishermen to donate £100,000 to MRI Scanner Appeal



From left, Tommy Eunson (Serene); George William Anderson (Adenia); Davie Hutchison (Charisma); Una Simpson, (SFPO); Gary Williamson (Research) Lorraine Hall, NHS director of human resources and support services; Allister Irvine (Zephyr); Raymond Stewart (Antarctic II); Lowrie Irvine (Antares); Brian Isbister (SFPO).

The owners of seven Shetland pelagic fishing vessels are to donate £100,000 to the MRI Scanner Appeal.

The Whalsay families behind the Adenia, Antarctic II, Antares, Charisma, Research, Serene and Zephyr decided to make the sizeable contribution as a gesture of support for the Shetland Health Board Endowment Fund, the charity behind the appeal.

They hope that this significant endorsement of the local appeal will help to stimulate the fund further by enabling the organisers to lever in additional funding from local and national sources.

Shetland Fishermen's Association pelagic committee chairman and Charisma skipper Davie Hutchison said:

"The case for the Gilbert Bain Hospital in Lerwick to have its own MRI scanner, which is used to diagnose and monitor a huge variety of medical conditions, is overwhelming."

"It will result in big savings in travel costs and reduce stress and inconvenience for patients."

"The pelagic fishermen all felt very strongly that this project will bring real benefit to our whole community and we are delighted to be able to come together and support this unique cause in the manner we have."

"It is our understanding that once 50% of the funding target has been met, applications can be made to other funding bodies outside Shetland and that has to be the goal."

Lorraine Hall, from Shetland Health Board, said the donation was "overwhelmingly generous

and accepted with gratitude". "This donation has set the MRI Scanner Appeal on track to reach its target of £1.650 million. Thank you to all the families involved."

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a type of scan that uses strong magnetic fields and radio waves to produce detailed images of the inside of the body.

An MRI scan can be used to examine almost any part of the body. The results of a scan can be used to help diagnose conditions such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, dementia and MS, and allow treatments to be planned. Follow up scans can allow medics to assess how effective treatments have been.

At present all patients requiring such scans must travel to Aberdeen to have them carried out.

### FIRST MINISTERS OF SCOTLAND AND WALES CALL ON NEW PRIME MINISTER TO RULE OUT 'NO DEAL' BREXIT

The First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon and the First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford have written a joint letter to the new Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, asking him to immediately rule out a 'no deal' Brexit.

In the letter, the First Ministers set out four steps the new Prime Minister can immediately take to establish a more productive relationship between the governments of the UK. These include the need for the on-going Inter-governmental Relations Review to put in place more robust

machinery for working together on the basis of greater equality and a commitment to the full involvement of the devolved administrations in international negotiations which impact on devolved competence.

They also say that the UK Government must make good on the promises made by the Leave campaign that Scotland and Wales would be no worse off if the UK does leave the EU and the Immigration White Paper should be replaced by proposals which reflect the needs of the economy of the whole of the UK.

They have also called for the UK Government to prepare for a second EU referendum, and say that a no-deal would be 'catastrophic for all parts of the UK.'

## SHETLAND NEWS *By Peter Johnson and Hans J Marter / Shetland News*

### Brexit opportunities



Brian Isbister (SFPO)

■ **A FISHERMEN'S** representative in Shetland has expressed concern that the UK appears not to have sufficient

patrol vessels to police its waters following a potential no-deal Brexit on 31 October.

Brian Isbister of the Shetland Fish Producers' Organisation (SFPO) said that "long-term" the industry was looking forward to benefitting from operating outside the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP). Deal or no-deal, very little would initially change on 1 November, according to the chief executive of the Shetland PO.

"We are obviously concerned if the UK Government doesn't have plans in place to police UK waters in the event of a no-deal Brexit," Isbister said, adding that the SFPO as well as the Shetland Fishermen's Association (SFA) have a 'common sense' rather than a 'political' view on the Brexit situation.

"There is a common sense

outcome where if the UK is no longer part of the CFP the UK will be able to administer and develop fisheries management rules as a coastal state. We see that as a better prospect for the industry," he said.

"The could potentially become a reality on 1 November either under a deal or a no deal outcome. We don't have any political preference, we just simply see the opportunity of managing fisheries on the UK level thereby providing a better and stable long-term platform for the industry."

He said that regardless of what the political situation would be on 1 November, the internal management arrangements currently in place would continue.

There is also no quota upheaval expected during the

remaining two months of the year, usually one of the busiest periods for fishermen's leaders anyhow, as the following year's quotas are being negotiated in a series of international meetings.

Isbister said: "The two months will be used for negotiations – in essence it will be much the same.

"We are negotiating quotas based on ICES advice, based on a shared access type arrangement, and on all the things that are relatively known and understood – the new dynamic, however, will be the Brexit dimension to those arrangements.

"We see a potential benefit from the UK being in charge of that process rather than being simply part of it, but we are still a partner in a dynamic arrangement with other players."

### Loss of Coelleira sparks calls for better protection

■ **EFFORTS** to salvage a 30 metre long Oban registered and Spanish owned fishing boat from rocks off the northwest coast of Shetland have been ongoing for the last ten days.

All fifteen crew members of the Coelleira were winched to safety by the Shetland based Coastguard search and rescue helicopter in the early hours of Sunday (4 August) after the vessel ran aground on the Vee Skerries in fine weather conditions. The Spanish crew was taken to Lerwick for check-ups and were reported as having no injuries.

Several attempts by the emergency towing vessel (ETV) levoli Black to pull the Coelleira off the rocks at high tide have failed. The Coelleira is now lying on her side as the weather deteriorates.

Meanwhile, concern has been voiced by fishermen as to the pollution threat while marine environmental organisation KIMO International has called for a comprehensive network of emergency towing vessels around the UK coast.

Concerns have been raised about whether her gear is still in the sea "ghost fishing" and whether fuel is still onboard the 49-year-old vessel. Chief executive of the Shetland Fish Producers' Organisation (SFPO) Brian Isbister said expectations were that the fishing vessel would be breaking up shortly.

"There is obviously concern that she will create a mess that could have avoided, we think, potentially there certainly was a weather window where something could have been done in the early stages," he said.

"The big worry from my members' point of view is that if that vessel's gear is still out there what will happen to it.

"Meanwhile, in an open letter from KIMO's secretariat, based in Shetland, to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) the environmental organisation called for ETV's to be considered a "blue light" service like other first response services.

KIMO also said that present search and rescue capabilities would be inadequate to handle a repeat of the Viking Sky2 incident in Norway – where only about one-third of the people on board the ship were

rescued in a 19-hour helicopter evacuation before the weather eased enough to get the vessel undertow.

"Since this is critical to the safeguarding of life at sea, KIMO believes that mechanisms and the mind set at ministerial level for assessing the needs for maritime safety and emergencies must change and that ETV provision should be considered a 'blue light' service in line with other first response services (such as police, fire and ambulance) which have response times set by government," KIMO wrote.

According to a Coastguard spokeswoman weather

conditions to date "have prevented any access to the island or the vessel".

She added that the Lerwick based Constructor has assumed guard duties and is standing by awaiting a suitable weather window to attempt the recovery of the debris and oil.

The owners and insurers are also said to be "continuing to work on plans to remove the wreck."

The spokeswoman said that there have been no reports of recent pollution.

She added that the Secretary of State's Representative (SOSREP) continued to monitor the situation.



Coelleira. Image Garry Sandison

### Icelandic catch increase could lead to 'mackerel war'

■ **AN ICELANDIC** decision to increase its northeast Atlantic mackerel catch to 140,240 tonnes – has prompted warnings of a 'mackerel war'.

Greenland has also declared an 18 per cent increase in its mackerel catch to 70,411 tonnes.

The European Commission has denounced the Greenland/Iceland decision and threatened EU sanctions unless co-operation is restored. It also told the Icelandic government that its action "demonstrates a lack of interest in contributing to the sustainable management of the stock."

International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) scientists last year recommended cutting the mackerel catch to an all-time low of 318,403 tonnes in 2019, down 42 per cent from 2018.

Fishermen's representatives at the time criticised the scientific advice and the EU, Norway and Faroe watered that cut down to 20 per cent - or 653,438 tonnes. That meant mackerel quotas for all nations and blocs totalling 1.01 million tonnes at the start of 2019, almost three times the scientific advice.

Following a meeting with Shetland fishing interests, also attended by Lib Dem MP Alistair Carmichael and the party's Scottish parliamentary candidate Beatrice Wishart, the chairman of the European Parliament fisheries committee MEP



Jim Wallace, Chris Davies, Beatrice Wishart & Alistair Carmichael

Chris Davies said a "mackerel war" could threaten the future of Scottish fishermen.

Davies added: "Partnership is essential if shared fish stocks are to be managed sustainably. Iceland's actions are greedy and irresponsible. They are not those of a friendly nation, let alone of a country that is part of the European economic area.

"I welcome the fact that, despite all the talk of Brexit, the European Commission is acting strongly in defence of Scottish fishermen, and I will ensure that this issue is debated as soon as the European

Parliament meets again."

Shetland Fish Producers' Organisation chief executive Brian Isbister said that given the theoretical equal importance of the European Parliament and Commission these days, the meeting was a valuable one.

Isbister said that the rigour of the mackerel management regime in the EU was matched by the extremely laxity of external relations with the likes of Iceland and Greenland, which suited themselves how much fish to catch.

Wishart said it was good to have the chair of the European

Parliament's fisheries committee in Shetland to hear about the relationship with Iceland over mackerel stocks.

She said: "His determination that the Commission follow through on their strong rhetoric when it comes to Iceland is exactly the reassurances our fishing community needs.

"This is enormously important to Shetland. We already know all too well the consequences of a deal done badly, not least because we have had to live with consequences of the last one."

### EU funds for Scalloway fish processor



Tranquility LK63. One of the boats QA Fish works alongside to source the finest seafood. Image by Ivan Reid.

■ **A LOCAL** fish processing and sales firm has received over £130,000 in the eighth round of European and Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

QA Fish Ltd, based in Scalloway, has been awarded £132,500 to support its waste management optimisation. Scotland received just over £5.6 million in the latest round of EMFF funding. Around £4.2 million has come from the EU, while the rest came from the Scottish Government.

Rural minister Mairi Gougeon said: "With this round fully committing all allocated funding to the Scottish processing sector, I call on the UK Government to meet its pledge, to provide the required additional funding to allow future rounds to proceed so that businesses can continue to grow and deliver sustainable economic growth for the seafood sector.

"This funding should be transferred to the Scottish Government for disbursement in Scotland, in line with the devolved settlement."



# ORKNEY NEWS *By Craig Taylor*

## Lobster fertility under the microscope

■ MARINE scientists have successfully trialled a new method for investigating the fertility of the European lobster, one of the country's most valuable catches.

Researchers at Heriot-Watt University and Orkney Sustainable Fisheries have proved that their non-invasive method, adapted from a technique used on lobsters in America, allows scientists supporting fishery management.

The scientists can now monitor lobster egg numbers quickly while minimising loss. Understanding and monitoring the lobsters' fertility will help make the stocks more sustainable, the Orkney-based scientists say.

The European lobster makes up almost 10 per cent of the value of all shellfish caught in Scotland, fetching up to £20 per kilo.



**Matthew Coleman, senior marine scientist at Orkney Sustainable Fisheries.**

Matthew Coleman, senior marine scientist at Orkney Sustainable Fisheries said: "Until now, we had to remove the lobsters from the water, scrape all the eggs off and count them. This is time consuming, invasive and wastes lobster spawn.

"Our method relies on taking three simple measurements of a lobster's egg mass and eggs: the egg mass's overall length, its depth across five points and the size of a small number of eggs, which are carefully removed.

"From these measurements, we can accurately estimate the number of eggs the animal is carrying without damaging the lobster.

"We adapted this from the method used for American lobsters - we couldn't just replicate the technique they use over there, as European lobsters produce larger eggs compared to their American cousins. This small difference, if unaccounted for, would provide inaccurate estimates of egg numbers.

"This method has already enabled us to find out more about the European lobster's fertility. We found that egg loss from when lobster first start to carry their eggs until the larvae hatch is around 44 per cent - before, it was assumed it was close to zero.

"Now we can calculate lobster fertility and egg production in five minutes instead of 24 hours; that's hugely beneficial to fishery managers."

Dr Michael Bell, a research fellow at Heriot-Watt's International Centre for Island Technology in Orkney, said: "It's important to understand how lobsters become more productive and how their egg numbers increase as they grow, because it will help us conserve the spawning population. That's the future of the fishery.

"Having an easy to replicate, quick method will allow us to monitor any changes in fertility that haven't been noted historically.

"In the USA they've already



**A berried lobster**

seen a drop in lobster egg numbers related to rising sea temperatures, which highlights the importance of monitoring lobsters here in Scotland and the UK."

"Lobster and other inshore fisheries, while often overlooked at a national scale, are of huge importance in supporting flourishing coastal and island communities in areas like Orkney. They make a vital contribution to supporting traditional ways of life and maintaining local character.

"Scottish seafood is second to none in quality and freshness, and by providing robust, locally appropriate science, we can help this continue."

The results of the Orkney study and the new method for sampling brooding lobsters

were published in the ICES Journal of Marine Science and can be found online.

The European Lobster, *Homarus gammarus*, also referred to as the common lobster is a species of clawed lobster with a distribution covering northern Norway to North Africa

In 2017, 96 tonnes of lobster comprised two per cent of the 4170 tonnes of shellfish landed into Orkney. The £1.4million of lobster represents 16 per cent of the first sale value of £8.7million of shellfish landed into Orkney.

In 2017, 1214 tonnes of lobster landed in Scotland comprised two per cent of all shellfish landings (52,100 tonnes) and 11 per cent of the first sale value (£157million).

## Calls for Coastguard tug provision to be a 'blue light' service

### Safety of life must be a priority says KIMO

■ A MAJOR maritime organisation has said that Coastguard emergency tugs should be a 'blue light' service to prioritise the safety of life at sea.

KIMO International (Municipalities for Sustainable Seas) is an association of coastal local authorities whose goal is to eliminate pollution from the northern seas.

The organisation's members include 160 local authorities representing over 6 million inhabitants in Belgium, Denmark, Faroe Islands, Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

In an open letter to Brian Johnson, chief executive of the UK Maritime and Coastguard

Agency, KIMO International responds to the recent Shipping Risk and Emergency Towing Provision Study commissioned by the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and conducted by Fraser-Nash Consultancy.

KIMO believes the primary response function in any incident at sea must be to

prioritise the safety of life and not property.

KIMO highlights issues with the scope of the study that it believes will seriously undermine the study's effectiveness, and believes that the lack of opportunity to input further to the study is not in line with government guidance for public engagement.

The study aims to review the risks presented to and from shipping within the UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and to assess the availability and adequacy of emergency towage arrangements.

The assessments carried out within the study focus only on the risk to shipping and the impacts on the environment but do not consider intercept times (the length of time it takes for an ETV to arrive at the scene of an incident). Since this is critical to the safeguarding of life at sea, KIMO believes that mechanisms and the mindset at ministerial level for assessing the needs for maritime safety and emergencies must change and that ETV provision should be considered a 'blue light' service in line with other first response services (such as police, fire and ambulance) which have response times set by government.

KIMO said that it was surprised that the element of search and rescue capability (SAR) was not within the scope of the study. The provision of a comprehensive ETV network around the whole of the UK should be based on the time it takes an ETV to arrive at the scene to prevent a shipping loss or accident.

However, the basis of the study was to review the changing nature of shipping in the EEZ and the lack of attention to the fastest-growing shipping sector, the cruise industry, is worrying, says KIMO, which went on to say: "Cruise liners



**The Orkney based coastguard emergency towing vessel Levoli Black. (Craig Taylor)**

carrying up to 5000 passengers and crew are now a regular feature around the UK and Irish coasts and it is clear that in view of incidents such as the Viking Sky in March of this year in Norway our traditional SAR capabilities would not work."

On March 23 of this year, the MV Viking Sky suffered an engine failure off the coast of Norway. Rescue services airlifted 479 people, hoisting them one-by-one onto helicopters before the weather subsided on the following day and a tow could begin. She was carrying 915 passengers and 458 crew, making her a relatively small cruise ship.

The Donaldson Inquiry into the Braer disaster in January

1993 resulted in a wide-ranging and damning report. The Braer was an oil tanker that ran aground during a storm off Shetland in January 1993 spilling around 85,000 tonnes of crude oil.

Lord Donaldson was "surprised and alarmed" at the number of potentially serious incidents uncovered by his Inquiry into the incident and, regarding major pollution, felt it was "a matter of chance". The report published 103 recommendations including that a UK Government-subsidised salvage tug service should be made available at key points around the United Kingdom.

Following the MCA/Fraser-Nash workshop on June 27 in

Edinburgh, the purpose of which was to update stakeholders on the ongoing analysis and risk assessment, KIMO submitted a formal response to the workshop assessments but, to date, has not received a response that adequately addresses any of the key issues raised, said the organisation this week.

The Orkney based coastguard emergency towing vessel Levoli Black has been in Shetland waters following the grounding of the Spanish owned but British flagged fishing vessel Coelleira on Vee Skerries earlier this month. The 15 crew were airlifted off the vessel on August 4, and the longliner remains hard aground, promoting pollution concerns.

## Holidaymakers spark concern in small inflatable dinghy in Pentland Firth

■ A FAMILY of seven holidaymakers, consisting of two adults and five children sparked serious concern in mid-August after being spotted in the Pentland Firth in a small inflatable dinghy.

Longhope Lifeboat crew were paged and were requested to standby by the UK Coastguard, and a Coastguard team sent to the area after a member of the public reported sighting the small vessel heading towards the Island of Stroma, from the Caithness coastline, with the several children onboard.

A spokesperson from Longhope RNLI said: "Although conditions were fair, with a moderate sea and good visibility, the strong tides can make these waters extremely perilous, even for experienced sailors. Furthermore, the crew (of the

inflatable) appeared to be without lifejackets and there was serious concern for their safety.

Shortly after a second alert and request to attend, the crew were stood down and the boat returned to Longhope.

A Thurso Lifeboat spokesperson said that the dinghy made it to the shore where those onboard were assisted by the Coastguard team, adding that they had no life jackets and no idea of sea conditions, adding that the family were extremely relieved to make it safely back to dry land.

Thurso RNLI also stated: "There are several very important safety messages from this incident:

- Do not go to sea in inappropriate inflatables.
- Always wear lifejackets.



**The small inflatable dinghy**

**The group of seven in the small inflatable**

- Tell someone what you are planning.
- Carry some form of communication
- If you see something untoward at sea do not hesitate to contact emergency services.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency has been running a campaign about the dangers of going out on the coast on inappropriate inflatables, saying that in this case those involved "are incredibly lucky they made it back."



## UK NEWS

### Fishermen in over 12m fleet urged to register now to be ready for EU exit



Emily Rose, Image Luke Selvey

In preparation of Brexit, UK Fisheries Administrations (UKFAs) has called on fishermen with vessels 12 metres and longer to register with the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Access for UK boats to fish in EU, Norwegian or Faroese waters after the UK leaves the EU will be a matter for negotiation. Should access be agreed, fishermen in the over 12m fleet will have to ensure their vessel has an IMO number to be licensed to fish outside UK waters once the UK leaves the EU.

The UKFAs are urging fishermen to apply to the IMO now to make certain they have registered in good time for the UK's departure.

IMO registration is free. UK fishing vessels will also have to submit their number to the Single Issuing Authority (SIA), established by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on behalf of the UKFAs, to manage licensing for commercial fishing in non-UK waters. The deadline for IMO numbers to be submitted to the SIA is the end of September.

Fishermen can download the IMO registration application form online. Fishing vessel owners should complete the form and send it to [ship.imo@ihs.com](mailto:ship.imo@ihs.com) to register with the IMO.

When fishermen have received their



Albatross BA 88 in to land in Whitby. Image Mick Bayes Jr

IMO number they should email it to the SIA at [UKSIA@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:UKSIA@marinemanagement.org.uk) along with their Port Letter and Number (PLN) and Registry of Shipping and Seamen (RSS) number.

All skippers and vessel owners, whether they have an IMO number or not, are also asked to register their email address with the SIA, to speed up issuing of the new licences that will be required when the UK leaves the EU.

### Eustice re-appointed minister



George Eustice

The UK's former fisheries minister, George Eustice is back in the fisheries seat, having been re-appointed to his

former role in the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) by the new Prime Minister, Boris Johnson.

Eustice, a Brexiteer, was replaced just months ago by Robert Goodwill, after he resigned late last February in protest over Theresa May's decision to allow a vote in the House of Commons on delaying Brexit, stating in his resignation letter that he feared the vote would "lead to a series of events culminating in the EU dictating the terms of any extension requested and the final humiliation of our country"

### Public consultation opens on the Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard

Stakeholders across the seafood industry are being asked to respond to a 60-day public consultation launched August 15th by providing feedback on the draft standard criteria for the next iteration of the Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS), to be called the Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (RFVS).

The RFVS standard criteria have been released by Seafish and Global Seafood Assurances (GSA), a not-for-profit organisation seeking to offer full supply chain assurance for wild and farmed seafood in partnership with existing providers.

The revised draft standard criteria were informed by the objectives outlined in the Terms of Reference, established in response to extensive feedback received during an initial consultation in 2018 and published earlier this year.

The overarching goals of the development process are to create a standard which continues to meet the UK seafood sector supply chain

assurance requirements, both for products sourced within the UK and beyond, is capable of meeting international supply chain assurance requirements, is internationally credible, third-party assessed and has a certification model aligned to the requirements of ISO 17065; and has the ability to deliver a streamlined certification process.

The public consultation will be open for 60 days with the deadline for responses on Monday 14 October 2019. All comments submitted during the consultation period must be made via the official feedback process – by returning a completed public comment form, available on the Seafish website [here seafish.org/article/rfvs-public-consultation](http://seafish.org/article/rfvs-public-consultation), to [RFS@seafish.co.uk](mailto:RFS@seafish.co.uk).

For further information visit [seafish.org/responsible-fishing-scheme](http://seafish.org/responsible-fishing-scheme) or contact Helen Duggan, Head of RFS Transition at Seafish, on [Helen.Duggan@seafish.co.uk](mailto:Helen.Duggan@seafish.co.uk) or 01472 252 347.

### "NO WINNERS" FROM BREXIT FISH WARS



Chris Davies

With the threat of a no-deal Brexit putting cooperation between British and continental fishermen at risk, Liberal Democrat MEP and the new chair of the European Parliament's Fisheries Committee, Chris Davies visited the largest fishing port in France last month.

On August 8th, the MEP visited the fish auction in

Boulogne-Sur-Mer, before holding a series of meetings with fishermen and fish producers' organisations. Before that, he had already met with British civil servants responsible for negotiating fishing policy and with Barrie Deas, CEO of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO).

Highlighting the dangers of Brexit, as he sees them, he said: "The UK fishing fleet is the second largest in Europe and the most profitable, but there will be no winners if existing arrangements collapse."

"Hostility will only lead to retaliation on both sides, trade disruption and the poisoning of future relations. Brexit is against our national interest."

"Changes in fisheries policy need to be secured through negotiation and the number one priority must be to build up fish stocks for everyone's benefit."

### Bursaries available to support fishermen's attendance at inshore fisheries conference

An industry-led steering group aims to support fishermen to attend a major conference on inshore fisheries management in October.

Fishermen from across the UK are being offered funding to support their attendance at the Future of Our Inshore Fisheries conference in London on 8-9 October 2019. The move is part of efforts to ensure strong representation from active fishermen at the event, which will discuss issues around the management of inshore fisheries and aims to establish a blueprint for their future management.

A variety of organisations and companies have responded to a call from the project's steering group to help reduce the financial burden on active fishermen who choose to attend by covering

out of pocket expenses, such as travel and accommodation.

The conference aims to establish the foundation for a collaborative management approach which ensures our inshore fisheries and our coastal communities are sustainable and thriving into the future.

The two day conference is free to attend and the bursaries will be allocated on a first come first served basis to eligible fishermen.

**Fishermen interested in registering for the conference, which will be held at the Leonardo Royal Hotel at Tower Bridge, London on 8-9 October 2019, and accessing bursary funding should contact Holly Kaiser at Seafish on 0131 558 333 or at [holly.kaiser@seafish.co.uk](mailto:holly.kaiser@seafish.co.uk) for further information.**

### Detering the growing seal population?

The MMO has published a stakeholder report on seal depredation and non-lethal seal deterrents. Based on surveys, interviews and stakeholder workshops, the report details the experiences of English fishermen with, what they say is, a problem that is getting worse, with static nets as the most affected gear type.

The report, published August 2nd, is part of an ongoing project investigating seal depredation and appropriate non-lethal deterrent measures for reducing interactions between seals and gear at sea.

To gain a detailed understanding of the issue of seal depredation and by-catch issues in fisheries throughout England, the programme of stakeholder engagement involved detailed surveys, interviews and stakeholder workshops with fishermen, collecting their first-hand experiences.

In terms of the magnitude and nature of the problem, most respondents indicated frequent seal interactions with static nets. However, frequent interactions were also reported for other gears including drift nets and lines. Interactions with pots/ traps were more occasional.

The respondents overwhelmingly felt that there has been a large increase in the level of seal interactions over the last ten years, with interactions with seals reported to occur throughout the year, peaking between April and August.

All fishermen that responded to the question relating to the type of interactions with nets cited seals damaging or taking catch from the gear as a problem. Fewer, but still

more than half, cited seals damaging gear as a problem, while just over a third cited seals getting entangled in gear as a problem – indicating that seal depredation is a primary concern, with seal bycatch being a more secondary issue.

Increased seal-fishery interactions were largely attributed, by fishermen, to the increasing seal populations around the English coast, resulting in more and more seals in search of food. Human interaction and the release of seal pups or rescued seals was also seen as a contributing factor.

Fishermen indicate that, in many cases, seals can make fishing (particularly with nets) uneconomical and some claim to have stopped fishing as a result of the damage caused by seals.

There was little agreement among fishermen as to whether there was any point in trying to use deterrents or avoidance behaviour to reduce interactions with seals, or whether there were some options that could help. Some felt there was no point in trying, having tried various deterrent options with little success.

Regarding past experiences with deterrent devices, in interviews, several problems were cited by fishermen concerning the use of acoustic deterrent devices and their long-term effectiveness, including the fact that seals are intelligent and quickly learn how to evade deterrents.

According to the report, which can be read in full online, drawing on these results, the next steps of the project will involve the development and execution of sea trials of deterrent devices.

**The full report can be found at [bit.ly/2yKlVwC](http://bit.ly/2yKlVwC).**



Grey Seals" by naturallengland. Source Creative Commons

## NORTHERN IRELAND NEWS *By Dick James*

### STRATEGIC REVIEW

■ The Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs have now launched a strategic review of the Northern Ireland fishing industry which will form the base for Government policy and in particular funding policy going forward. Poseidon Aquatic Resource Management Ltd have been chosen to undertake the review led by Rod Capell who has previously done work on the local fisheries notably on Marine Conservation Zones and Brown Crab Management strategy. A steering group has been set up to oversee the project along with a stakeholder group of mainly industry personnel. Contact with further interested parties is expected over the coming months and a final report next year.

The review will consider proposals made for Kilkeel Harbour as well as other options. What part BREXIT will play in the review is not yet certain though that is undoubtedly a major factor however it plays out.

In the meantime, Ardglass Harbour Developments Limited have commissioned a technical feasibility study on the options for Ardglass Harbour and have appointed RPS Limited to do this funded through an EMFF

grant. This report is due before the year end.

### HARBOUR DEVELOPMENTS

■ The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority have announced plans for various harbour improvements. A major fish market upgrade is planned for Kilkeel which will be required should BREXIT eventuate and EU fish import standards would apply. In the event all of Northern Ireland fish exports to the EU would have to be routed through Kilkeel as no similar facilities are planned for other ports of landing.

Harbour Authority and Fishery Officer offices are to be upgraded at all three harbours (Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie) to accommodate facilities for officials and scientists. It is also planned to extend bait holding freezers at the three ports. Facilities presently exist in Ardglass leased to the local crab men who have outgrown that facility.

### THE FISHERY

■ The high summer Nephrops fishery continues in the west Irish Sea with catches of mainly tails being limited by crew

fatigue but machinery failure also features. The demand for tails remains high with prices holding at £6 per kilo but the whole Nephrops or Langoustines as they are now called suffering with seasonal price drop. Fortunately incidence of the larger Nephrops is seasonally low so not much is lost in the overall grossing. Locally fishing is to the west of the Isle of Man and latterly to the south of that area with the Irish fleet showing up there as other grounds to the south prove less attractive. Quota limitations are now coming into play with the high overall uptake and some boats with little quota have been subject to stoppages. Whether or not this will force an early check on the fishing remains to be seen but it is going to be tight come year end.

The Clyde has also come good with elements of the Portavogie and Ardglass fleets taking advantage of that particularly in times of indifferent weather. On the Scottish west coast the usual individuals are showing up and the Porcupine Bank is also hosting the regular pair of Apollo and Maracestina.

With a miniscule quota the 15-le of Man summer queen scallop fishery is attracting

limited interest this year with some Manx boats switching to the prawns which is definitely a last option of choice for them.

On the whitefish front activity this year has so far been much less than last with four boats scattered from the Minch through the North Channel to the County Louth Haddock grounds.

The Pelagic fishery for Irish Sea Herring is to start mid/late August with the Kilkeel duo of Havilah and Stefanie M looking to return to operations after their summer break whilst the Voyager berthed in Skagen is looking at North Sea Herring to restart operationally.

On the inshore grounds Brown Crab are again making an appearance but a dramatic fall in demand and price contrasts with last year when catches were boosted by unusually high price. That has prompted some potters to gear up for creeling for Nephrops but prices for the whole prawns are again poor. Velvet Crab is also an option of choice as is Lobster.

In Kilkeel two fleet owners have taken steps to market their own catches as contract sales now make that a viable option and diversification into guardship work is now a coming factor for fleet owners.



## ISLE OF MAN NEWS *By Michael Craine*

Scientists from Bangor University indicated that there were very few queen scallops on the Manx grounds to be fished during the summer fishery. This impacted on the TAC allocated by the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA) who set a quota of 476 tonnes compared to the 2018 quota of 697 tonnes. This TAC permits licensed queen trawl boats to catch 77 bags per week within the Manx 12 mile limit.

There has been no increase in the TAC following a survey by two Manx boats the week before the opening of the fishery who found excellent queen scallops to the east of Douglas. They also discovered a vast area of juvenile queenies near the Chicken Rock lighthouse and this has resulted in a closed area spanning southwest through to southeast of the lighthouse, and out to the 12 mile fishing limit line.

The Manx fleet of twenty trawlers were joined by licensed vessels from Kilkeel and Maryport who left their home ports on the 1st of July for the grounds. Within hours of starting to fish, boats working off Douglas were catching 30 to 60 bag lifts of queenies and were soon back in port with their allotted weekly quota of 77 bags. These queenies were caught on big tides and it was expected that the fleet would catch their quota more quickly as the tides dropped.

After catching their quota in one day, some boats had an early start to fish outside the 12 mile limit where there is no weekly quota. The boats which tried found very few queenies on the ground and what was caught was thrown back.

The fleet have tried other areas within the 12 mile limit, away from the Douglas fishery and found sufficient queenies on the grounds.



Frey CT137 steaming to land her catch of queens

The present TAC is expected to last 6 weeks. If the TAC is not increased following these catches, the Manx fleet will only take six days to catch their quota which actually means they have only been allowed six days fishing between the 1st July and the 1st November – a crazy situation.

Alongside Manx registered boats landing queenies were the queenie trawlers Chalaris, MT 23; Sincerity, MT188 and Friendly Shore, CT20 from Maryport and the Northern Ireland trawlers Crystal Tide, CE135; Determination, N39; Golden Shore, N153 and Highland Queen, N970.



Manx queen trawlers gathered in Douglas

### QUEENIE DREDGERS

■ Queen scallop dredgers from Kirkcudbright have been fishing outside the 12 mile limit to the east and southeast of Douglas. These boats have been making a number of landings into Douglas including Argonaut, BA858; Arcturus, BA863 and Osprey, BA 4. The Kirkcudbright scallop carrier Mytilus, B449 has made a few visits to the island to collect catches from these Scottish boats.

### FISHING BOAT ASHORE

■ Around 3am on the 2nd July, Ramsey lifeboat crew were paged by Belfast Coastguard to assist the 24 metre beam scallop dredger Argonaut, BA858 which had gone aground half a mile south of Queen's Pier, Ramsey, near Port Lewaigue. The lifeboat, Ann & James Ritchie, reached the casualty within 20 minutes and assessed that Argonaut was on a sandy bottom

and there was no risk to the crew or the vessel. By 8am there was sufficient water to allow the lifeboat to tow Argonaut into deeper water and after 20 minutes she continued on passage to her chosen queen scallop grounds off Douglas.

### POTTERS

■ Most potters are settled on their summer grounds and making steady landings. Some of the bigger boats have been working whelk pots as well as their usual crab or lobster pots – depending which side of the island they fish. The Derbyhaven catamaran potter, Nancy Ellen, CT 58 fished out of Port St Mary and was joined by the Douglas based multi-hulled potters Manx Shearwater, DO118 and Enigma I, PL164.

### KING SCALLOPERS

■ A few Manx boats have continued to dredge for king

scallops and with the Irish Sea closed they have moved to grounds between the Clyde and Mallaig and around the neighbouring isles. These boats included the Valonia, PL63, Lynn Marie, PL178, Shannon Kimberley, RY169 and Bonne Lass III, RY189.

### PRAWN TRAWLERS

■ The prawn trawlers Golden Ray, B963; Faithful Friend V, B952; Incentive B126; Heritage, B786; Northern Quest, N777 and New Venture, N304 were working off Peel this month. Peel prawn Polaris, PL193 has worked off Peel while Alauna, PL187 has moved back to the St Bees grounds.

### KIPPERS FOR BORIS JOHNSON

■ The Manx political party Liberal Vannin leader, Kate Beecroft MHK and chairman, Michael Josem have congratulated the UK's new

Prime Minister Boris Johnson with an unusual gift. Their letter asked the new PM to keep the interests of the island 'close to his heart' and the gift .... a six-pound box of Manx Kippers. Hope you enjoyed them Boris!

### BROTHERS FINED

■ Two Manx fishermen Iain David Quine and Robert Michael Quine of Castletown who own the fishing boat Nancy Ellen, CT 58, recently appeared before High Bailiff Jayne Hughes at Douglas courthouse, following an incident on the 9th April. Both pleaded guilty to two counts of illegally fishing – a third charge against them was withdrawn by prosecution advocate James Robinson. Both men pleaded guilty to two counts of breaching the Island's lobster and crab-fishing by-laws.

Prosecutor Hazel Carroon said government fisheries officers began investigating after they found a number of untagged pots off the Island's south coast within the three-mile limit. The court heard the duo co-operated fully with the enquiry into the offences by the Department of Environment, Fisheries and Agriculture and told officers they were using 720 pots, and that many weren't tagged as required. They were only licensed to use 300 pots.

Each was fined £7,500 for each offence, making a total of £30,000 in fines. They were also both ordered to pay £125 costs, and 50 pots seized during the investigation (worth around £70 each) were also forfeited. The maximum fine for each offence was £100,000.

## 50 years for Ardglass Festival Association

Paul O'Shea, Ardglass Festival Association Chairman reports that the Ardglass Festival Association celebrated its 50th anniversary this year and put on 8 days of events from 4th to 12th August with the help of some of our other community groups including the Ardglass Vikings, Ardglass GAC, Ardglass FC, St Nicholas Primary school PTA, St Mary's Primary school PTA, Ardglass Development Association and Community Centre and off course the Fishermans Mission.

There were several highlights over the week including a 10Km road race, Raft Race, Street Games and our annual float parade. Saturday 10th August saw lots activities down on the harbour with artisan crafts talks, a seafood cookery Demo with Wayne head chef from Mourne Seafood Dundrum and a fantastic Prawn Tailing Competition where the village's trawlermen competed to see who could tail the most prawns in 90 seconds, there was tremendous rivalry between the Irish, Eastern European and African fishermen with Ardglass man Barry Shannon securing the 2019 title. A cross-denominational Blessing of the Boats was held on Sunday, with Father McCloskey and Rev Savage conducting the annual blessing of the Ardglass trawlers at Ardglass Harbour.

Following this year's great success Ardglass Festival Association will look to make next year's event bigger and better!



Barry Shannon, who secured the 2019 title, for his prawn tailing skills. Images Ross Mulhall



Crowds were out for the prawn tailing competition.



## ICELAND NEWS *By Guðjón Einarsson*

### Hunted down before – now protected

Several decades ago seals were considered a plague on the Icelandic fishing grounds. They had a price on their head and were mercilessly hunted down to keep their population from increasing. The seals were seen as a menace to the fishing industry, not so much because they occasionally ruin catches by snatching fish from gillnets or sucking out the liver, but primarily because seals are the carriers of roundworms (seal worms) which later sometimes find their way into the flesh of fish and it takes a lot of effort and money for the fishing plants to pluck the worms out. Furthermore, the increasing number of seals was seen as a threat to fishing as these creatures devour enormous amounts of fish and are therefore fishermen's most powerful competitors.

#### The problem decreased

In recent years the situation in Iceland has drastically changed. The "seal problem" which worried the fishing industry so much before seems to have in some strange way decreased. Even though the hunting of seals has been greatly reduced, on paper at least, the most common seal stocks, the harbour seal and grey seal, are continually decreasing, in fact to such a degree that scientists have started worrying. In its latest report, The Marine and Fresh Water Research Institute of Iceland (MFRI) advised that direct hunting of harbour seals should be banned to raise the numbers in the population to acceptable levels. MFRI also stresses that actions must be taken to reduce by-catch of seals in commercial fisheries.

#### Declining stock

In 1980, the abundance of harbour seals was estimated around 33,000 animals but the population declined rapidly until 1989 to around 15,000 animals. The 2018 harbour seal census resulted in an estimated population of 9,400 animals which is 21% under the government's management objective of 12,000 animals.



Harbour Seals

Traditional hunting of harbour seals has decreased from 3,000-4,000 in the 1980s to around 300 per year during the last decade according to official statistics. In Iceland, seal hunting does not require a specific hunting licence and no quota system has been established. Seal hunting is managed by landowners and there are no special protected areas or protected periods (e.g. breeding season) of the year for seals except those imposed by landowners and general regulations on hunting. It is not mandatory to report direct catches to the government. The MFRI recommends the initiation of a management plan and a mandatory reporting of all seal hunting.

Traditional sealing using nets has decreased in recent decades, but culling around river mouths to reduce the effect that seals are thought to have on salmon fisheries is still common. Seal bycatch in gillnets, especially during the lumpfish season, is considered high but reliable figures are lacking.

#### Grey seal

The second most common seal around Iceland is the grey seal. The population is currently estimated at 6,300 animals which is well above the governmental management objective of 4,100 seals. However, the population size

is 32% smaller now than it was in 1982 and the stock is deemed vulnerable according to international conservation standards (IUCN).

#### What happened?

So why have the two main Icelandic seal stocks shrunk so much? It is worth noting that in the period 1960-1980 the yearly seal catch was up to 6,000 animals, mostly baby seals hunted for their skin which was exported for a good price. By 1980 a long and relentless international campaign against the killing of baby seals organised by conservation organisations had succeeded in turning popular opinion against this practice and subsequently, the export market for seal skin collapsed. As a consequence sealing was not profitable anymore and mostly stopped.

Fearing that the population of seals around Iceland would explode in the aftermath the Icelandic fishing industry started paying a certain sum for each animal caught. During the following years, 3,000-4,000 seals were killed annually and the meat was processed for mink farms. Then the market for mink skins collapsed and the farms went bankrupt. No one wanted to buy the meat and seal carcasses were left to rot on the shore by the shooters. The public disliked this practice and

soon the fishing industry put an end to the payments.

#### Not fully explained

As mentioned, during the 1980s the population of harbour seals in Iceland decreased from 33,000 to 15,000 animals, probably a great deal as a result of this hunting campaign. However, it has not been fully explained why the seal stocks continue to decline taking into account how small the annual catch and the bycatch seems to have been in recent years – at least according to official statistics. Environmental changes have been mentioned as a possible cause. Unregistered killing of seals could also be a factor. Therefore a mandatory reporting of all seal hunting is important, as the scientists have recommended.

Even though the "seal problem" is not the big issue it used to be, workers in the fish plants are still plucking out seal worms from fish fillets, especially from fish caught close to the shore. But boats which can shun the worm-infested areas and go deeper are rewarded with fewer worms and better fish quality. Seals around Iceland are still eating a lot of fish in competition with the fishermen but not as much as before. And generally speaking, the "seal problem" is not a topic of much discussion anymore.

### Emergency Measures for Baltic Cod announced

In late July, the Commission announced emergency measures banning, with immediate effect, commercial fishing for cod in most of the Baltic Sea until 31 December 2019. The measures have been taken, says the Commission, to prevent the eastern Baltic cod stock from 'impending collapse'.

The immediate ban will last until 31 December 2019, will cover all fishing vessels and, aside from some targeted derogations, will apply in all areas of the Baltic Sea where the largest part of the stock is present (i.e. subdivisions 24-26).

The ban follows growing concern about the health of the stock. In April, the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) found that the eastern Baltic cod population has reached such a low level that it can no longer reproduce sufficiently to maintain a healthy stock.

Total allowable catches for eastern Baltic cod have been reduced every year since 2014, from 65,934 metric tons down to 24,112t in 2019.

The announcement follows measures that have already been taken by some Member States, however, the Commission says that given these measures do not ensure a uniform approach in all areas where the eastern Baltic cod stock is found, and not all Member States intend to adopt national measures, it has decided that further emergency action is warranted.

The Commission has also said, that the need for longer-term action will be revisited later in the year when Ministers meet to decide on next year's fishing opportunities.

Under the Common Fisheries Policy, the Commission may, at the reasoned request of a Member State or on its own initiative, take emergency measures, applicable for a maximum of six months, to alleviate a serious threat to the conservation of marine biological resources.

In response to the measures, however, *Europêche*, the representative body for the European fishing industry, has hit back at the Commission's decision saying that, with this extreme emergency measure, it has completely ignored the latest scientific advice which, they say, has shown little benefit for the recovery of the stock while creating a high risk for local fishing communities to collapse.

The representative body has called instead for a significant reduction of the present catch limits for the second semester of 2019, which would take into account the survival of the species and the fleet alike.

### Commission questions Ireland's capacity to apply CFP rules

The European Commission has given Ireland three months to conduct an administrative inquiry to evaluate its capacity to apply the rules of the common fisheries policy (CFP). This comes as a result of, what Europe says, are severe and significant weaknesses detected in the Irish control system during an audit carried out by the Commission in Ireland, in 2018.

During that audit, which was carried out in Killybegs in March of last year, the Commission identified

shortcomings relating to the control of the weighing of catches of small pelagics, issues related to underreporting of catches of these species, alongside an inadequate sanctioning system for offences committed by operators.

As part of the audit, the auditors looked at the weighing systems in several fish factories and analysed monitoring of the large pelagic vessels, some of which were found to have under-recorded their storage capacity.

The lack of control and enforcement of bluefin tuna

catches by recreational vessels was also identified as a shortcoming, with the auditors finding evidence that catches under the guise of a recreational fishery were being landed and sold, in contravention with rules.

The Commission says that the administrative inquiry should focus on the collection of information on these specific shortcomings to enable the Commission to further evaluate Ireland's capacity to apply the rules of the CFP and assess the potential consequences of any failure to do so.

### EU fleet maintains high profits mainly due to sustainable fishing methods

The 2019 annual economic report on the EU fishing fleet shows that the high levels of economic performance in 2016 continued into 2017. The report links this success to the use of sustainable fishing methods.

Commenting on the report, which provides an overview of the structure and performance of EU fishing fleets, the European Commissioner for the Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Karmenu Vella said: "This report on Europe's fishing fleet shows that good results come with good practices. Over the course of my mandate, I have emphasised the fundamental importance of sustainable

fishing. Europe's fishers are seeing the benefits".

According to the report, which is prepared by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee of Fisheries (STECF) and the European Commission, in 2017, the EU fleet registered a net profit of EUR 1.30 billion, only slightly lower than the record EUR 1.34 million registered in 2016.

The continued strong performance was the result of higher average fish prices, continued low fuel prices, and the improved status of some important stocks. Alongside this, the sustainable exploitation of fish stocks was identified as an important factor in the fleet's strong

performance.

That said, while the entire EU fleet was profitable, the results varied by scale of operation and by fishing region. The large-scale and distant-water fleet segments registered higher economic performance than the small-scale coastal fleet segments.

Further, fleet segments operating in the North-Eastern Atlantic, where most stocks are being fished at sustainable levels, registered higher economic performance than the fleet segments operating in the Mediterranean, which has a continued (although improving) problem of overfishing or overexploitation of several stocks.

### Post Brexit regulatory changes for fisheries

A document has been released by the European Commission providing further clarifications regarding some of the key fisheries changes that will occur if the UK leaves the EU on November 1st without a deal and hence without the transition period provided for in the Withdrawal Agreement.

It states that as of the 1st November the fishing opportunities regulation 2019 will no longer apply to the UK. It will be up to the UK government to define fishing opportunities for UK vessels. UK authorities will not be allowed to carry out inspections in EU waters.

Under EU rules, EU vessels are only allowed to fish in UK waters up until the withdrawal date. After this, access to UK

waters will only be possible if explicitly authorised by the UK, and the Flag State authorises the vessel to do so.

In this regard, the EU is ready to provide continued access to UK vessels up until December 31st, if this is on a reciprocal basis and the relevant authorisations have been obtained.

Quota swaps with the UK will not be possible as of the withdrawal date, however, if fishing opportunities are maintained on a reciprocal basis until the end of 2019 the possibility of swaps will be maintained until then.

As of the withdrawal date, it is up to fishermen themselves, the document states, to know the rules and regulations in place regarding access and act in accordance with them. If

there is to be continued access to UK waters for EU vessels, the Commission will inform Member States, who are then expected to inform fishermen adequately about the rules.

Though vessels may no longer be entitled to fish in UK waters, under international law they will continue to have the right of 'innocent passage' through the territorial sea and freedom of navigation in the exclusive economic zone. However, the document highlights, vessels in transit must have their gear stowed and secured.

**LIFE JACKETS  
SAVE LIVES**

# LEAH ELOISE

Victor Duncan and family with the Leah Eloise after arrival at the Hamnavoe Marina, Burra, Shetland.



NEW BOAT

## FACT FILE

**SKIPPER** Victor Duncan  
**REGISTRATION** LK65  
**HOMEPORT** Hamnavoe, Burra Isles  
**FISHING FOR** Mackerel & Cod  
**VESSEL TYPE** Cygnus Cyclone 30  
**BUILD YEAR** 2019  
**BOATYARD** Valentia Marine Services  
**LENGTH** 9.15 metres  
**BEAM** 3.35 metres  
**DRAFT** 1 metre

## NEW CYGNUS CYCLONE FOR SHETLANDS

Victor Duncan's new Cygnus Cyclone Leah Eloise, built and fitted out down in Valentia by Murphy Marine Services Ltd, steamed home for Shetland last month and will soon start fishing for mackerel.

Last month, Victor Duncan's new Murphy Marine Services built Leah Eloise, made the long journey home from Valentia to Shetlands, where she will soon start fishing for mackerel before turning to cod for the winter.

Renowned for their stability at sea, the Cygnus Cyclone has an overall length of 30 feet, a beam of 11 feet and a draft of 3.2 feet. Powered by a Doosan L086TIM connected to a Twin Disc MG5065A gearbox, both of which were supplied by Christopher Hannon, the vessel's propulsion is supplied by a Clements Marine 4 blade 26-inch prop.

The vessel's Spencer Carter hydraulic system was supplied by Derek Noble, as was the Spencer Carter NHO-03 Net Hauler. The Cygnus is also installed with a Penny Hydraulics PH 180.3 H landing crane and a Spencer Carter 1000lb s/c Slave Hauler. Sleipner Motor Ltd supplied the hydraulic bow thruster, while Ger O Sullivan supplied a Sea Bright Engineering net stacker.

The wheelhouse was kitted out with an impressive package by Scalloway's H Williamson and Sons which includes:

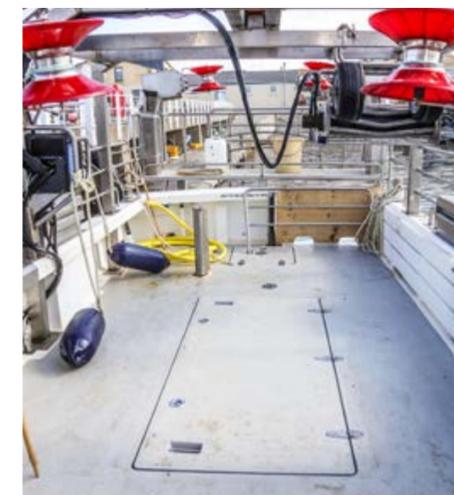
50/200-12HM 1Kw through hull bronze transducer  
**VHF:** Icom M323G Comrod AV7 antenna  
**GPS:** Furuno GP39  
**Plotter:** Soda Solowin PC & software, USB controller, trackball & chart pack  
 Neovo X-17" monitor  
 3D software module  
 3d high resolution depth data for Shetland  
 Tide module for Shetland - East coast Shetland  
**Radar:** Furuno 1815  
**Autopilot:** Simrad AP60 C/W control unit, junction unit, fluxgate compass, feedback unit  
 24v1.0 1p reversing pump

Accommodation on the Cygnus is provided by 2 berths forward. Mackerel gear onboard was supplied by Peterhead's Seagate Fabrication. Cod nets they made themselves.

### A GOOD SEAKEEPING BOAT

With the mackerel season in full flow, Victor hasn't yet sold his old boat. However, once she starts

IMAGES SUPPLIED BY IVAN REID



Heading into Hamnavoe her home port Burra Shetland

fishing, the Leah Eloise, which is named after his two daughters (Victor also has a son, Jeemie), will replace Victor's current 23 footer the Lesley A. Victor told *The Skipper* that the Cyclone 30 was just the step up he was looking for.

With a much larger deck area, greater speed and stability, the seakeeping capabilities of the new vessel, says Victor, are much greater - which makes her a safer boat which, he told *The Skipper*, will be much welcomed come winter and he's fishing the cod nets, oftentimes with a small weather window and the chance of getting caught out with a freshening forecast.

And the Cygnus Cyclone 30 got a chance to prove her seakeeping capabilities as they steamed home to Shetland.

On their way from Ireland, Victor and his brother in law, Brian, stopped in Baltimore for fuel before steaming as far as Dunmore East, where they made another fuel stop and waited for the tide up the Irish Sea.

Though they hadn't intended to stop in Dunmore they thought that, with it being a fishing port, they were likely to get some sound advice on the next leg of the journey there. Which they did from fishermen on the pier readying their boats for sea, who

told them how to take the tide up the Irish Sea and exactly the right time to leave at.

Victor told *The Skipper* they were very glad to get some information from the local fishermen, who "were a helpful bunch of guys."

After that, they made a quick stop into Ardglass, before heading through the Caledonian Canal and up to Peterhead, where they stopped to have the mackerel gear fitted by Seagate Fabrication.

With some alterations to the rails of the boat, gear fitted and a weather window opening, they made the run up north towards

Orkney and then across to Shetland, just in time to see the weather break again.

For the most part, the journey was fine said Victor, who also holds a deep-sea licence earned during a time working offshore.

"The journey from Valentia up to the Caledonian Canal was really beautiful weather. It was a really still, settled spell of weather so we couldn't really complain.

"There was some 20 knot winds and a bit of swell off the mouth of Bantry Bay, but it was nothing that the boat couldn't handle. So, very impressed with her seakeeping capabilities."

**Cygnus - Murphy Marine Services**

Cygnus Cyclone, "Leah Eloise"

**CYGNUS**

Best Wishes and Safe Fishing to Victor, family & crew.

Tel: 00353 (0)66 947 6883 Mob: 00353 (0)87 280 9861  
 Email: fionan@murphy-marineservices.com  
 Web: www.cygnusboats.com

**Sounder:** Furuno FCV-588

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## ON FISHING, SEALS AND BREXIT

Victor, who has been fishing since he was 16, comes from a big fishing family and has been at sea for the best part of 30 years now, one way or another, having spent a decade long stint working on the offshore before coming back to fishing again.

“My mother’s side and father’s side are all fisher people,” said Victor, who also spent some time over the course of his career fishing with Paddy Owenie, out of Castletownbere on the Karen Rose.

Once the mackerel season ends, Victor who mostly fishes single-handedly on his own boat—but is sometimes accompanied out by his father, a retired fisherman himself—will turn to cod netting, as he has usually done with the old boat. His father, he told *The Skipper*, has always been keen of the cod fishing, less of a fan of the (sometimes long) mackerel game!

They made up the cod net themselves, setting them up in the way they have found works best for them and his father hand rigged them himself through the last winter. The netting came from China and was ordered in bulk from South East Netting in England. The float lines were sourced in Finland, the lead lines from South East Netting.

“Fishing is pretty good at the moment,” said Victor. Some of the boats have been getting good catches of mackerel, and he’s excited to get out to try the new gear—4 Beltronic machines and four strippers that will give him four lines and a new satellite sonar to with a 360 view to look for the mackerel—as soon as he can.

Though until now Victor has been fishing cod about three to four miles out, he says with the Leah Eloise there could be potential to go further. “Some of the guys jigging for cod are going much further from the harbour – up to twenty or thirty miles.”

Victor, who—when he’s not on his own boat – is one of the crew on the Radiant Star, will fish the Cygnus on his days in from sea, day fishing from his home port of Hamnavoe, landing into Scalloway Market.

The Leah Eloise will, however, be berthed in the marina in Hamnavoe when she’s not out.

Though the road from Hamnavoe to Scalloway is only some six miles, it makes much more sense and will be quicker, says Victor, to land directly, if he can, straight into the new market in Scalloway and steam back out to berth at home.

That’s why he wanted the small crane he had installed on the boat. His mackerel is mostly bought at the market by a private buyer, Simpson Fish.

Victor also chatted seals and Brexit with *The Skipper*. “We do have problems with the seals taking



Birdseye view



The journey home



Bunting down, ready, work begins. New Boat at Hamnavoe

mackerel off our lines and following us around sometimes,” he said.

“There’s lots of seals up this way.”

“If we’re fishing on a spot of mackerel and a seal comes on it, that’s pretty much the end of your fishing,” he said. Though he also said the problem faced by him was not so big, in comparison to anyone working with static gear.

On Brexit he said, “It’ll be what it’ll be. That’s all you can say about Brexit. I don’t know what it’s going

to be to be honest with you. We’ll see what comes out of it.”

“The goalposts have changed lots of times since Brexit was announced. So it’s going to be one of those things that you have to see and just have to hope that it doesn’t have too much of an effect on a lot of the good markets that’s been built up for fish over the years.”

Brexit and seals aside for now, however, with respect the Valentia build, Victor said he was very happy

overall with the new vessel.

Speaking to *The Skipper*, Fionán Murphy of Murphy Marine Services congratulated Victor on the Leah Eloise and wished him and his family many years of safe and plentiful fishing in her.

*The Skipper team would also like to take the opportunity to wish Victor and his family every success and safe fishing with the Leah Eloise.*

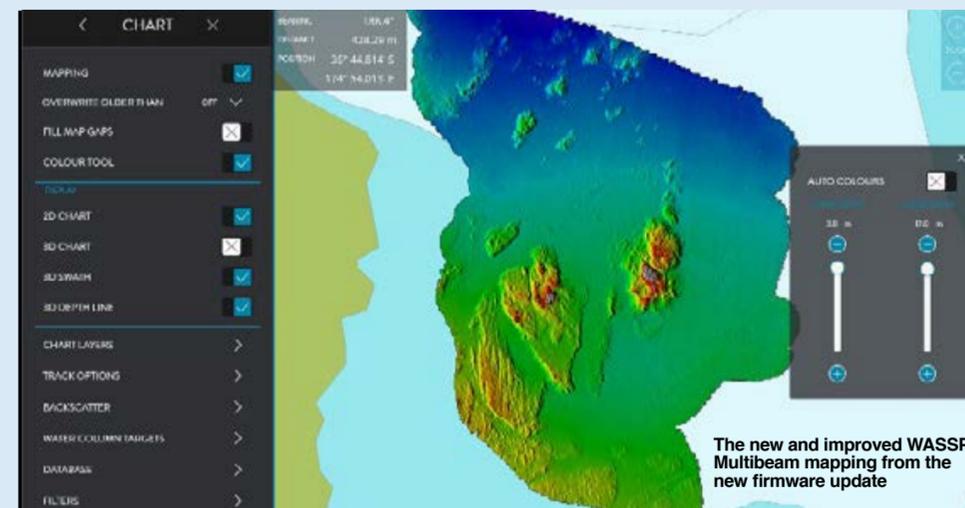
## WASSP releases Firmware updates for its F3 and F3X Multibeam Sonar

WASSP Multibeam, in line with their company philosophy of constant improvement, have invested in many new enhancements, bug fixes and licences with the announcement of the release of two new firmware updates, CDX 4.0 and DRX 6.0, for its F3 and F3X multibeam sonar systems designed for the fishing industry.

These updates will add a number of new functions to WASSP systems currently in use and, in most cases, can be installed by existing users free-of-charge.

The firmware update will include a new TVG (20 and 40) option, added to the existing mode, shows the full water column and does not need to be tuned for different depths.

Also included is a new Multiresolution Database with automatic, depth-adjusted, best resolution mapping which can be used in all depths and to



The new and improved WASSP Multibeam mapping from the new firmware update

which existing databases can be uploaded.

A greatly improved mapping algorithm will reduce roll errors by using best data, both new and historic, and significantly enhance mapping and tracking

in shallow water of less than 5m.

Add to that, aligned water column targets in sonar, sounder, 2D and 3D mapping can now be displayed in the same colour according to target or volumetric strength.

A new Wireless Licence option so that two vessels can share (via wireless connection) each other’s WASSP mapping, including 2D and 3D mapping and backscatter – ideal for fleets or partner boats.

## IC Brindle & Co Ltd launch new Line Launcher in Europe

International safety expert IC Brindle & Co Ltd signed a distributor deal in June this year to distribute a groundbreaking new safety product in the UK and further afield. The Line Launcher by Kiwi Rescue Ltd can propel a high-vis safety line and flotation pod 80m with one powerful launch.

Ian Brindle of IC Brindle said: “This is a unique and refreshing new product on the market – a clever product that is almost entirely reusable with easily replaceable CO2 cartridges. It fills a real niche in the market.”

The Line Launcher’s main USP is that it’s the only product of its kind to use a 16g CO2 which is cost-effective and easy to replace. Whereas its counterparts that use pyrotechnics to propel the line can be expensive, difficult to replace and some applications are single-use.

Line Launcher can also be used in rescue situations where combustible equipment is banned for use in hazardous environments. Designed for ease of operation in the most extreme of weather conditions

and where making a line connection between two parties is required, including ship to ship transfer, ship to shore, man overboard and ocean lifesaving. Line Launcher has multiple land-based operations including crossing gaps, rivers, floods and construction.

It is manufactured by one of New Zealand’s leading line makers and is made from 2.5mm polypropylene, which floats. It has a high breaking strain of 80kg, but when necessary, it can also be used as a pilot to attach to a stronger line when more strength is required or replaced with a stronger line.

Ian Brindle said, “The Line Launcher was the brainchild of an operator of the rescue hovercraft at Auckland airport that has a flight path directly over water and mud.”

He continued to explain “Regular line launchers, used pyrotechnics to propeller which could be unsafe in situations where non-combustible equipment is required.”

Following proof of concept trials project development was continued by a new company

Kiwi Rescue Ltd headed by New Zealander Gerald Davies. He and his business partner and composite moulding expert Bruce Holt continued development to bring the Launcher to market.

Gerald Davies said, “We are delighted that IC Brindle Ltd will be distributing the Launcher in the UK and beyond.”

IC Brindle is currently looking for dealers to come on board to supply the product.

For more info visit the website [www.icbrindle.com](http://www.icbrindle.com)



Line Launcher

# Safety feature

Fishing safety campaigns continue to highlight the need to address the disproportionately high fatalities rates in the industry. Though practices are changing, and more and more fishermen are wearing lifejackets while working on deck, gaps remain and fatalities remain high. The Skipper continues to spearhead a campaign to encourage the use of PFDs by fishermen. In last month's Skipper, we carried the first part of a two-part safety feature. This month, September—a month that, according to new analysis by the RNLI, is one of the top four months for fatalities at sea in Ireland and the UK—we are continuing that theme with the second part of that feature. Again we hope that this year the numbers of fatalities and injuries at sea will continue to fall and prioritising safety becomes the norm in the Irish and UK fishing industry.

## Are you rigged and ready?



By Frankie Horne  
RNLI Fishing Safety  
Manager

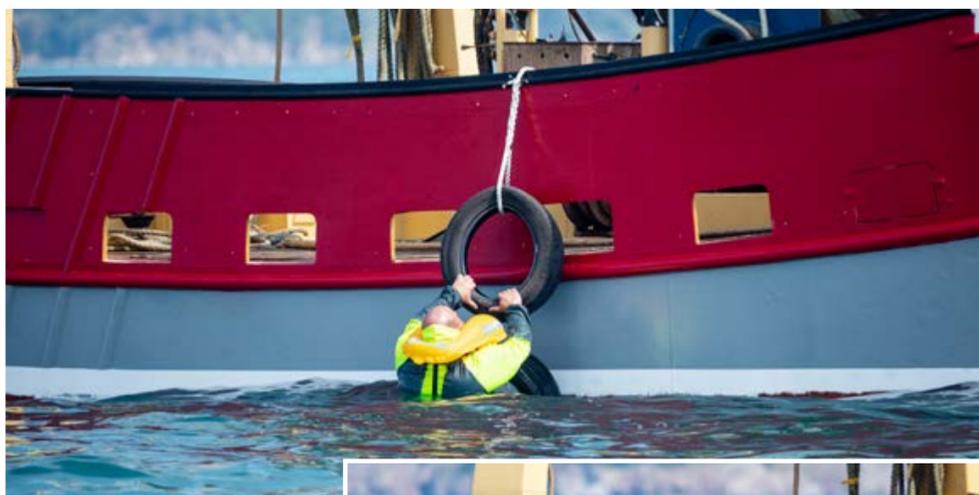
Commercial fishing is historically one of the world's most dangerous jobs. In the last decade, more than 100 fishermen lost their lives in Irish and UK waters. But making some simple and affordable changes could save your life.

The RNLI recently analysed MAIB and MCIB fishing incident reports from 2008 to 2017. Of the 109 UK and Irish fishing fatalities in this period, we found that nearly half came from a man overboard (MOB) situation.

Nobody expects to go overboard, but what would you do if you did? It takes around 90 seconds for the effects of cold water shock to pass. After that, you have no more than 10 minutes in the water before you are no longer able to help yourself.

Having a man overboard recovery system rigged and ready on your boat could help you or one of your crew save yourselves. It will buy you time and minimise how long you spend in the water before help arrives.

Being rigged and ready doesn't have to be expensive or complicated. The RNLI's fishing safety team has been demonstrating easy and affordable recovery ideas for fishermen as we visit ports, harbours and piers around the coasts of Ireland and the UK.



MOB options

They include:

- **Tyre solution:** Tyres roped together into a line, which remains over the side of the boat at all times. You can rig one of these up yourself. When deployed, at least one tyre should hang below the surface of the water.
- **Ladder solution:** A ladder with a weighted bottom rung, secured firmly to the railings with straps hanging below. A firm tug on one of the straps releases the ladder. Once deployed, the bottom of the ladder should hang 4 feet below the water.
- **Haul-out solution:** If your vessel is crewed by multiple people and has an A-frame, this is one for you. With a harness stowed close-by and clipped on in case of a MOB situation, the haul-out



rig is lowered to the crew member in the water so they can be lifted back on deck.

Alongside a MOB solution, wearing a personal flotation device (PFD) is a must. Auto-inflate PFDs are light and compact, so won't get in the way of you working. Having one onboard is useless unless it's worn. If you go into the water it will help you to float, even if you're unconscious, and hugely increase your chances of survival.

In addition, consider wearing a personal locator beacon

(PLB), which takes the search out of search and rescue and could cut vital minutes off the time you spend in the water.

Of course, equipment is no good if you don't know how to use it. As well as rigging a recovery solution, you need to be ready. Good risk assessments and a tried and tested MOB plan are vital. Carry out regular practical drills so you know what to do instinctively in a MOB situation.

**For more suggestions including videos of MOB recovery solutions, visit [RNLI.org/riggedandready](http://RNLI.org/riggedandready)**

## BIM: Supporting safety at sea



2,127 fishing vessels are registered in Ireland and over three thousand adults work in fisheries according to the 2018 Business of Seafood report. Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) works closely with members of the fishing sector in Ireland to provide safety training. Ireland's seafood development agency also administers funding of safety equipment.

Since its introduction in 2001, over 8,000 members of the Irish fishing sector have completed BIM basic safety training and have been issued safety cards. Moreover, almost 2,000 Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) have been issued to owners of Irish registered fishing vessels in the last 5 years.

Ian Mannix, Head of Skills and Training at BIM said: "The fishing industry can be highly rewarding and for many, it's more than a job, it's a way of life. However, fishing remains the most dangerous occupations in Ireland. Having appropriate safety training and equipment is essential."

BIM offers a range of practical training courses designed to provide skills to those working in the sector in the areas of personal safety and survival techniques.

Since the BIM Enhanced Safety Training (EST) was launched in 2013 almost 2,000 BIM Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) with integrated Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) have been issued to owners of Irish registered fishing vessels. All persons operating or working on board fishing vessels of 15 metres or less are eligible to apply and will receive a PFD fitted with a PLB on completion of this training.

A range of practical training designed to increase knowledge of personal safety and survival techniques are also available. These include a short course delivered over 1 day, the Standards of



BIM Supporting Safety at Sea with a 3 day basic safety training course

Training and Certification of Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STWC) - Personal Survival Techniques Certificate, issued by BIM on behalf of the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport (DTTAS).

This course involves a mix of practical and classroom-based learning by trained BIM staff.

The theory element covers personal survival techniques, onboard safety equipment, use of Personal Flotation Device (PFD) and Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), maintenance of safety equipment, musters and drills, abandon ship, life raft equipment, survival techniques onboard the raft and the role of the Emergency and Rescue Services.

The practical exercise takes place in a swimming pool and includes launching a life raft, boarding a raft in dry and wet conditions, taking injured casualties on-board the life raft and the procedure for righting an up-turned life raft.

These are the essential skills required to demonstrate proficiency in how to survive at sea in the event of having to abandon ship or an accident. Further onboard training and industry experience may be needed to maintain the required standard of competence at sea.

Financial Support Grant aid of up to 50% of course fees and learner support costs are available for individuals working in the sector.

Financial assistance is also available under the Fleet Safety Scheme which provides grant aid of up to 60% for the purchase and installation of a full range of safety items including statutory life-saving,



fire-fighting, navigation and radio communication equipment.

As described by whelk fishermen Gerry Copeland, James Byrne and David Massey following the sinking of their boat MFV Lavicca, which capsized off the Wicklow coast on April 15th, 2015, David recalls how, on a seemingly normal, flat calm day, things can change very suddenly.

"We were hauling a string of pots and suddenly the boat took a jolt. Gerry had reached for the VHF radio but didn't have time to make the call before we went over and he was trapped inside the wheelhouse. Gerry managed to find an air pocket, took a gulp of air and dived out of the door and up the side," Mr Massey said.

"As soon as James asked where the life raft was, it popped up too. The emergency position indicating radio beacon

(EPIRB) in the wheelhouse also floated free."

The boat sank within a few minutes, however, as a result of the safety equipment onboard and on their person, rescue services were soon on the scene and they were airlifted to safety.

As Gerry says, "Only for the lifejackets we had on us, I wouldn't be standing here today."

It is an ongoing campaign with BIM to change the culture in the sector to the belief that a well-trained crew is a safe crew.

**For more information on the Enhanced Safety Training Scheme or to download the application form, please visit <http://www.bim.ie>. You can also find out more about this grant by contacting John Connaughton by email at [connaughton@bim.ie](mailto:connaughton@bim.ie) or tel +353 1 2144 262.**

# MULLION: Personal location devices



There is a wide range of Rescue Beacons known as Personal Location Devices (PLD's) on the market, all of which can be integrated into lifejackets for safe practice and best performance. These can work in various ways.

A 406 PLB (Personal Locator Beacon) has to be manually activated and sends a signal via the global satellite system to the Rescue Co-ordination Centres who will then alert the nearest Rescue Services. This is the best option for single-handed fishermen or small boats where there is a risk of the whole crew ending up in the water.

An AIS (Automatic Identification System) device is normally semi-automatic and activates when the lifejacket inflates. This will send a message to the vessel itself, or other vessels nearby, as long as they have modern AIS plotters installed on board. This is a good option for larger boats with bigger crews, or when fishing in an area where there are likely to be other boats nearby.

Some devices also have an integrated DSC (Digital Selective Calling) transmitter which will send an alert via the VHF radio equipment.

Other devices work by sending an alert via a dedicated frequency which then also require a special receiver to be installed on board the vessel.

Mullion / Sioen Ireland can offer a wide range of options to integrate all of the above in different models of lifejackets.



All of these are extensively tested and certified for compatibility of the lifejackets and beacons together according to European and International Regulations. Mullion also offer advice and technical support on the

best products for individual purposes.

**For further information and advice please contact Tony Brown: Email: [tony.brown@sioen.com](mailto:tony.brown@sioen.com) Tel: 0879 953192**

# Fleet Safety Scheme

## PFD/PLB Grants Available

Under the Fleet Safety Scheme, which is implemented by BIM, EMFF funded grants are available to fishermen and women for safety items, including integrated Personal Flotation Devices/Personal Locator Beacons (PFD's/PLB's). The Scheme is intended to improve the overall safety standards on board Irish fishing vessels.

The full list of items covered are listed on the application form; and include, among others, life rafts, life jackets, distress flares, first aid kits, bilge pumps, and safety manuals

The grant provides funding over a three year period for up to 40% of the amount claimed on boats over 12 metres and 60% for boats under 12 metres. The maximum amount that you can receive depends on the size of your boat.

Maximum eligible costs apply for each individual item. Vessels equal to or greater than 24 metres are entitled to a max. grant of €20,000. Vessels equal to or greater than 18 metres and under 24 metres are entitled to a max. grant of €15,000. Vessels equal to or greater than 15 metres and under 18 metres are entitled to a max. grant of €10,000. Vessels less than 15 metres are entitled to a max. grant of €6,000.

Expenditure incurred (including any work undertaken, invoiced or payments made) before the commencement date of a project is ineligible for grant payment. The commencement date of a project is the date shown in the Letter of Acknowledgement, issued by BIM, following receipt of a completed form.

**Application and further details can be found at <http://www.bim.ie/media/bim/content/funding-forms/BIM-Fleet-Safety-Scheme-Application-Form.pdf>**

**Alternatively, forms are available from BIM by calling 01 2144100 or emailing [power@bim.ie](mailto:power@bim.ie) or [macgabhan@bim.ie](mailto:macgabhan@bim.ie) or visit <http://www.bim.ie/schemes/fleet,safety,scheme/>**

# New pelagic trawler for Shetland's George Anderson named in Spain



Images supplied by Ivan Reid

She's christened

In late July, the Skipper attended the naming ceremony of Whalsay Skipper, George William Anderson's new 69.9m pelagic trawler Adenia LK193 in Bilbao.

Though the weather, being the weather, was un-cooperative, the rain failed to put a damper on the event, and it was cheers all round as guests from Denmark, Ireland, England, Faroes, Norway, Scotland, Shetlands and Spain looked on, as the Adenia was named by George's wife, Ruby, before their granddaughters, Faye, Lori and Mollie, smashed a further three bottles.

Designed by Karl Sandvik of Salt Ship Design and built at Zamakona shipyard the 69.9m vessel has a beam of 15.6m and 10 RSW tanks. She will be skippered by George, who owns the boat with his sons and fishing agent LHD.

The Adenia is scheduled to leave the yard in Spain and make her way home at the end of August. After a stop off in Killybegs, where the new Adenia's gear will be rigged by KT nets, it is expected the vessel will arrive in Shetland in early September, in time for the herring season.

The impressive new vessel, which will undergo fishing trials when she arrives in Shetland, replaces the Norwegian built 'old' Adenia. Built by Flekkefjord Slipp & Maskinfabrikk yard in Norway in 2003, and lengthened to 70.4m back in 2015, as part of a £2.5 million project carried out by Karstensens in Skagen, she was sold last year to Fosnavåg Havfiske in Norway.

A full feature of the 'new' Adenia will appear in the October issue of Skipper. Hugh and Sharon would also like to thank George for his generous invitation to the vessel's launching and best of luck with the long steam home.



Stuart and George Anderson welcome Martin Oglesby (Neptune), Danny Gallagher KT Nets and Martin Doherty Western Viking.



Ruby and George take time out during the celebrations



Left to right - Christian Anderson, Stuart Anderson, Fraser Nicolson, Geordie Nicolson, Kevin Nicolson, Mollie Anderson, AnnMarie Anderson, Lorri Nicolson, Emma Nicolson, Faye Anderson, Michael Anderson, George Anderson, Ruby Grace Anderson, Josie Anderson and June Stewart.



Sharon, Hugh, Martin Doherty and Mona Bonner.



Back row: Scott Reid, Brian Laurenson, Stuart Anderson, Michael Anderson, Aslam, George Anderson, Leonard Reid, Jim Smith, Ivor Polson Front row: Josie Anderson, Raymond Fraser, Stuart Shearer and Kevin Nicolson.

# LIVES

Charles Cavanagh, of Cavanagh Hoop Dolan, recently reminded *The Skipper* of the LIVES acronym, which Derek Flanagan in Malin Head came up with:

**L – Lifejacket and PLB** – also good practice to keep a phone in a watertight bag when working on deck inshore

**I – Inspect Radio and Safety Equipment** – test DSC and VHF/MF with the Coast Guard Stations and carry out EPIRB and PLB checks as required

**V – Voice and DSC** – in a distress situation use the DSC as well as the Mayday Call this will ensure the Coast Guard know your Position

if your Mayday call gets cut short

**E – Evaluate the weather and tides before each day's fishing** – keep a listening watch on VHF Channel 16 for Distress Calls and Safety broadcasts by the Coast Guard

**S – Search and Rescue** – Stay Afloat – Stay in Contact



if your Mayday call gets cut short

### UK'S ABILITY TO SAFEGUARD ITS WATERS UNCERTAIN

A memo by the British government has revealed that there's "a lot of uncertainty" about the UK's ability to protect its fishing waters if there's a no-deal.

The email, which was accidentally sent from the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to the BBC, reveals fears about how effective the plans currently in place will be. It said: "At this stage, there is a lot of uncertainty about the sufficiency of enforcement in a no-deal because we have 12 vessels that need to monitor a space three times the size of the surface area of the UK." However, though the British government has confirmed that the email did come from them, it has said that it is confident they have all the resources to needed to enforce security in UK waters.

### FRENCH THREATEN TO BLOCK UK FISH FROM EU

French fishermen have threatened to blockade the port of Calais if they are locked out from UK waters in a no-deal.

Fishermen from the north of France have said they will prevent any fish from travelling from Britain to Europe via the port, unless Boris Johnson grants EU boats access to UK waters. Olivier Lepretre, Chairman of the regional fisheries committee in Northern France said, "If there is a hard Brexit, I can assure you that not a single kilo of seafood or fish from Britain will get into France."

"We would set up barricades. All the fishermen along the northern French coast will tell you the same thing."

### DOCUMENT WARNS OF POTENTIAL CLASHES

A leaked Whitehall report has warned that clashes would place immediate strain on maritime agencies, with nearly 300 foreign boats fishing illegally on day one of Brexit. The report also warns of border violations and smuggling as potential major issues.

The report, known as Operation Yellowhammer, said: "Up to 282 EU and European Economic Area nations' fishing vessels could enter illegally or are already fishing in UK waters."

"This is likely to cause anger and frustration in the UK catching sector, which could lead to clashes between fishing vessels and an increase in non-compliance in the domestic fleet."

## Forty years of fish fights

### New study indicates international conflicts over fish are increasing

by Lia ní Aodha

With stories of potential post-Brexit clashes in the spotlight all month, reports emerging in July of confrontations between foreign skippers and Shetland fishermen and the month prior to that Scotland announcing an intention to start arresting Irish fishermen fishing at Rockall, the news that fights between countries over fish are on the rise might not come as a surprise to fishermen.

Based on English language news reports published between 1974 and 2016, a recently published paper in the journal *Global Environmental Change* looking at global trends in international fisheries conflicts, has found that though there was a period of lower reported conflict between 1998 and 2007, disputes over fisheries have increased since 1974, with a dramatic increase over the past ten years.

The authors, who developed and analysed the International Fishery Conflict Database, also found that, on the whole, conflict is more common between countries located in the same continent, is more likely to occur between two countries, and most likely to involve large industrial fishing powers with large Distant Water Fishing (DWF) fleets, with the US, Canada, Japan, China and the EU the most involved in conflict over time. Spain and the UK, are also among the top ten.

Of course, conflict at sea is not new. As the authors of a paper highlight, conflicts over fisheries in the 1960s and 1970s were at least partially responsible for the establishment of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) in the 1980s. What is new, however, say the researchers from Stockholm Resilient Centre, is the nature of the conflicts that are now occurring and the countries involved.

From the Cod Wars between Britain and Iceland, a halibut dispute between Canada and Spain in the mid-90s that sparked serious tensions, to a prolonged shift in the distribution of northeast Atlantic mackerel which triggered a dispute that the authors cite as playing a role in Iceland's decision to withdraw its application for EU membership, prior to 2000 most of the fisheries conflicts that occurred involved North American and European countries clashing over particular species of fish linked to unresolved territorial tensions.

Though Europe is still dealing with disputes about mackerel and herring—and the UK's exit from the EU looks like it may have the potential to challenge this finding—according to the study, these conflicts, which were relatively common before the turn of the century, are becoming less common. The authors credit this to changes to the institutional structures governing those fisheries and agreements made over boundaries and management of fisheries.

Today, though certainly single species skirmishes still do occur—last summer saw the scallop war erupt again as British and French fishermen clashed in the English Channel—what is becoming more common, according to the study, are conflicts that are more severe, and involve mainly Asian fleets clashing over non-specified or multiple species, linked to illegal fishing and territorial disputes.

Since 2000, 43% of all international fisheries conflicts have occurred between Asian countries. Diplomatic and military tensions, for example, between China and countries such as the Philippines (and as far away as Argentina) have been sparked by repeated incursions by the Chinese fishing fleet into foreign waters.

Fisheries disputes in the region arising from quarrels over territories have also, since 2007, become more common and include competing claims for fishery rights around the islands off eastern Hokkaido (the Kuril Islands, claimed by both Russia and Japan), the Senkaku Islands (disputed by Japan, China, and Taiwan) and the Scarborough Shoal (claimed by both China and the Philippines).



Icelandic postcard from the Second Cod War in 1972 between Britain and Iceland. Reproduced in Rozwadowski (2002, p. 200). © Crown copyright reproduced with the permission of Centre for Environment, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), Lowestoft.

The authors suggest that these trends among Asian countries may be down to the multispecies fisheries common to tropical ecosystems, overfishing and consequent displacement and relocation of fishing effort, alongside the rapid expansion of fishing effort by East and Southeast Asian fleets.

Indeed, according to the authors, there are multiple factors driving fisheries conflicts. Climate change, shifting abundance and distribution of fish, food security concerns, and—as, indeed, fishermen in Ireland are all too well aware of—unresolved territorial disputes are all cited as factors.

These triggers, they say, are likely to increase in the future, which, as competition and demand for fish increases, may lead to more 'transboundary poaching' and "increasingly aggressive resource grabs and open conflict between states".

In the past, transboundary scientific collaboration, shared enforcement activities, addressing territorial boundary tensions arising from overlapping territorial claims and compensation from one party of a conflict to another have all proven useful in reducing conflicts.

Long-term management plans allowing for changes in stock distributions, stringent IUU policies, and provisional fishery agreements explicitly recognising overlapping territorial claims have also been cited by the authors as being effective.

That said, they caution that while these have proven successful in deescalating conflict in the past, there is no standardised, swift procedure for dealing with conflict situations in 'non-escalatory manner and it often takes years for governments to agree on an effective strategy to end conflicts'.

This, they say, will require 'deep changes to the current international governance framework for fisheries' and management of 'incremental stressors' that drive conflict in the first place. Understanding these, however, they state, requires more research.

The full paper can be found online: Spijkers, J., Singh, G., Blasiak, R., Morrison, T. H., Le Billon, P., & Österblom, H. (2019). *Global patterns of fisheries conflict: Forty years of data*. *Global Environmental Change*, 57, 101921.

## Negotiation and compromise sees Bay de Seine "Scallops War" averted for 2019

Jim Portus, Chief Executive of South Western Fish Producer Organisation and is also the Chairman of the national Scallop Industry Consultation Group (SICG), has reported that an Anglo-French deal has been agreed for 2019. The deal arrived at after extended and often intense industry to industry talks, he says, will avert a repeat of the ugly scenes of 2018, when French scallopers attacked British boats fishing for scallops (legally) in the Bay de Seine at a time when it was closed to Frenchmen.

Under the 2019 Accord, first brokered at a meeting between the two sides in Ghent on 2nd July, the entire east Channel scallop fishery will close to both sides on 1st August. Then, on 1st October, the waters of the east Channel will open to UK scallopers north of a line drawn 24 miles off the coast of France, or the "Median line" between the 2 nations, whichever is the closer to France. French scallopers will fish south of that line from 1st

October. The "open season" will prevail from 00.01 19th October, when the 2 fleets will inter-mingle without hostility.

The accord will not apply to any UK vessels of smaller than 15 metres in length. They will be free to roam as in all previous years. In return, the French will transfer an amount of "Western Waters Scallop Effort" that the UK requires to enable its fleet of larger vessels to exploit fisheries in more distant parts of the ICES Area 7 without the risk of exhausting restricted and limited days at sea.

Mr Portus, who negotiates on behalf of the SICG in dealings with his French opposite number, Pascal Coquet, President of the national Scallop Commission in France, said, "This deal for 2019 was made in the face of great pressure to avoid repeating the "Scallop Wars" of 2018 and 2012.

"Last year the intransigence of the French led to stalled negotiations and an open fishery that ought to have been closed by consent. The UK boats did as they were legally allowed.



Autumn J E 222 in Scarborough last April. Image Mick Bayes Jr

Eventually the French returned to the talks and we brokered a deal.

"This year I was determined to keep the French in talks until we had a settlement agreeable to both sides. Compromise was

required by UK and France alike. Both sides moved from entrenched positions to centre ground and I think we have the best that could be done.

"A "Scallop War" has been averted for 2019."

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# 2019

## Skipper Fisherman of the Year Competition



Peter Lynch, Skipper Fisherman of the Year 2019 with his wife Julie, daughter Aoibhe (5) and son Senan (2)

**B**attle lines of a somewhat different nature were drawn as fishermen from around the coast fought it out for the coveted title of Skipper Fisherman of the Year down in Castletownbere over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

The competition, now in its sixth year, took place as part of the annual Castletownbere Festival of the Sea, organised by the Castletownbere Development Association (CDA), which saw visitors and families flock to Ireland's main whitefish port for a week of events showcasing what Castletownbere has to offer.

Given the importance of fishing to Castletownbere, little surprise that one of the highlights of the festival was the Fish Festival Day—which aims to spotlight fish and

traditional fishing skills—on Saturday the 3rd.

As the showers cleared crowds gathered to watch the main attraction – fishermen as they battled it out across a range of challenges from net mending, line throwing, splicing, fish filleting, to the survival suit challenge. Demanding serious concentration, the battles were fierce as William Power fought to defend his title and the other entrants sought to demonstrate the skills that would topple him.

Alongside fishermen and their families, Lost at Sea Tragedies (L.A.S.T), Ireland's only dedicated charity to offering support and guidance to the families of those lost to fishing tragedies, and BIM had a strong presence at the festival and both had stalls which were busy throughout the day.



Netmenders Darren O'Sullivan and Michael Martin Sullivan



Catherine Barrett, BIM and Peter Lynch, Skipper Fisherman of the Year 2019.



Niall Duffy, L.A.S.T.

Tony Brown, Mullion Lifejackets was on hand as well providing free lifejacket inspections at the L.A.S.T stand, having hosted a fishing safety talk the night beforehand at the Castletownbere Lifeboat Station with Frankie Horne and David Comer from the RNLI's Fishing Safety team.

A safety demonstration which attracted a sizeable crowd was also held by the local RNLI and the Fishing Safety Team in front of the Lifeboat Station on the day during the interval of the fisherman's skills competition. There wasn't much time for respite, however, before the competition recommenced, but the rain held off and in the end, the Gerry O'Shea Memorial Cup for splicing sponsored

by O'Shea's Bar was won by David Price, while local Annemarie O'Boyle took the Castletownbere Fishermen's Co-op sponsored fish filleting title.

The Sheehan's Fishing sponsored sea survival suit challenge—which garnered much amusement—was won by last year's Fisherman of the Year, William Power.

Castletownbere's Darren O'Sullivan took top prizes for both the Swan Net Gundry sponsored net mending competition and the Twomey's Ivy Bar sponsored line throwing competition (which attracted entrants across generations).

The Lynches of Howth, however, were thick on the ground and it was Peter Lynch who played the long game and nabbed the overall

2019 Skipper Fisherman of the Year title for the best overall performance in the fishing skills competition.

To go with the locally made Skipper Fisherman of the Year trophy, Peter was also presented with a gear bag made out of recycled life-rafts by BIM's Catherine Barrett, who was busy throughout the day signing boats up to the Fishing for Litter scheme.

Over the weekend, €1,160 was raised for L.A.S.T, with fishermen taking part in the competition raising €145.00 towards the total. All donations were entered into a raffle, with prizes from Mullion Lifejackets, The Skipper and Guy Cotton.

L.A.S.T asked the Skipper to give a special mention to Betty and the staff in O'Shea's who raised €350.70

for the charity over the weekend and David Price who donated his €100 prize money from the splicing competition.

Throughout the weekend, live music, games and plenty of food offerings (with lots of fresh fish) saw the square busy.

On Sunday, the annual Blessing of the Boats took place and Castletownbere RNLI accompanied by local boats laid a wreath at the mouth of the harbour in commemoration of all of those who have been lost at sea.

The annual regatta and day of water sports took place on the Bank Holiday Monday, with events continuing right throughout the following week before the festival closed on Saturday, August 10th.



Survival suit challenge



Family day out



William Power, Skipper Fisherman of the Year 2018



RNLI Castletownbere Coxswain Dean Hegarty and crewman Marc O'Hare with RNLI Fishing Safety Manager Frankie Horne



Anne Marie O'Boyle winner of the fish filleting competition sponsored by Sheehan's Fishing



## Minister Creed announces call for rural female entrepreneurs to join the latest cycle of ACORNS

There has been an increase in early-stage female entrepreneurs in Ireland over the past year and the call is now open for those with new businesses or well-developed ideas to join ACORNS 5.

ACORNS is the highly successful development initiative to support female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland, who wish to start and develop new businesses or have recently started a business.

The call for applications follows the launch of the programme on August 13th by Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD. ACORNS is funded under the Department's Rural Innovation and Development Fund.

Over 200 female entrepreneurs have taken part in ACORNS to date and 50 new participants are being sought for ACORNS 5. The programme will run over six months from October 2019 to April 2020. The deadline for application for this year's cycle is 20th September 2019.

Any woman with a new business based in rural Ireland—or an idea for a new venture they want to get off the ground—can get more information and download an application form at [www.acorns.ie](http://www.acorns.ie). There is no charge for participation, though eligibility criteria do apply.

To be considered for ACORNS, applicants must:

- Have set up a new business which has generated sales no earlier than the 1st January 2017; or be actively planning a new venture and have made good progress towards getting the new venture off the ground. Indicators of actively planning a business would include organising the start-up team, sourcing equipment/facilities, money saved for the start-up, writing the business plan, etc.
- They must own or part-own the business which must be located in a rural area, that is in an area outside the administrative city boundaries of Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford;
- They must commit to attending the Launch Forum over two days in October 2019 (14th/15th); the ACORNS Community Forum on 20th and 21st April 2020; the monthly meetings from November 2019 to March 2020; and give the required personal commitment to advancing their business ideas over the six-month programme duration; and
- They must expect to become an employer within three years.

Michael Creed TD, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, launching the call for applicants, said: "The ACORNS programme is a tremendous opportunity for early stage female entrepreneurs in rural Ireland to help them realise their ambitions. I would urge those who have recently started or are about to start a new business to apply to participate in this exciting initiative, as it is an opportunity not to be missed.

"Each year, the participants give an overwhelming endorsement of the role ACORNS has played in supporting them to start and develop their businesses. I am



(l-r back row) Mary B. Walsh of Ire Wel Pallets (Wexford), Caitriona Considine of Moher Cottage (Clare) (l-r front row) Emily Brick of Athena Analytics (Kerry), Michael Creed TD and Paula Fitzsimons of Fitzsimons Consulting.

delighted to continue to provide support to this initiative through my Department's Rural Innovation and Development Fund."

Paula Fitzsimons, founder and Managing Director of Fitzsimons Consulting, the company that developed the ACORNS initiative said that the rate of early-stage entrepreneurial activity increased among women in Ireland in 2018, while remaining stable for men. On average, 850 women in Ireland are starting a new business every month. The rate of nascent female entrepreneurs in Ireland is now ranked 5th across Europe.

"In most countries more men than women are early-stage entrepreneurs. This is also true in Ireland. However, the ratio in Ireland continues to narrow and now stands at 1.6:1 (men to women early stage entrepreneurs) as more women plan and start new businesses.

"The ACORNS programme is critical to assist this growing body of female entrepreneurs to get their businesses off the ground and on the road to success. I am delighted that the opportunity is being offered once again thanks to the support of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the contribution of the voluntary Lead Entrepreneurs."

ACORNS is based on peer support and collaborative learning. Each participant will have the opportunity to learn from successful female entrepreneurs.

Acting in a voluntary capacity, these "Lead Entrepreneurs" will share their insights and experience with the group and help the participants to address the issues and challenges they face in progressing their businesses. They also act as role models, illustrating by their actions that it is possible to start and grow a successful business in rural Ireland.

This year, the Lead Entrepreneurs

are: Alison Ritchie, Polar Ice, Laois; Anne Cusack, Critical Healthcare, Westmeath; Anne Reilly, Paycheck Plus, Louth; Caroline McEnery, The HR Suite, Kerry; Deirdre McGlone, formerly Harvey's Point Hotel, Donegal; Eimer Hannon, Eimer Hannon Travel, Meath; Mary B. Walsh, Ire Wel Pallets, Wexford; Triona MacGiolla Rí, Aró Digital Strategies, Galway.

In addition, Monica Flood, formerly Olas IT—a Going for Growth Lead Entrepreneur—will facilitate an ACORNS Plus round table for previous participants, who are committed to growing their businesses.

Many past participants of ACORNS report increased exports and job creation. Progress made by the 46 participants that completed ACORNS 4 (the last cycle), which ran from October 2018 to April 2019, demonstrates these encouraging outcomes:

- Combined turnover for participants is €2.3m – an increase of 43% over the six-month programme cycle;
- Thirteen participants became exporters for the first time;
- 19 additional part-time employees were hired during the cycle, with 26 companies planning to hire additional staff this year;
- 86% said ACORNS brought about practical change within their business; 95% felt nearer to achieving their ambitions and 100% would recommend participating in ACORNS to others.

Past participants of ACORNS are also invited to participate in a further development phase and to join the ACORNS Community, so they can continue to build their support network of valuable connections.

Among those in the fisheries sector that have participated in the programme is Ciara Shine, of Shines Seafood, see <https://acorns.ie/participants-stories/shines-seafood/>

## World Maritime Day 2019 – Empowering Women

Commissioners of Irish Lights to host event for women working in the marine



World Maritime Day 2019 will take place on September the 26th. To raise awareness of the importance of gender equality, in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and to highlight the important contribution of women within the maritime sector, the theme for this

year is "Empowering Women in the Maritime Community".

The theme, says the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), gives the organisation the opportunity to work with various maritime stakeholders towards achieving the SDGs, particularly SDG 5, to foster an environment in which women are identified and selected for career development opportunities in maritime administrations, ports and maritime training institutes and to

encourage more conversation for gender equality in the maritime space.

To celebrate in Ireland, this year a professional networking event for women working across all aspects of the marine sector in Ireland (north and south) will be held on the 26th, hosted by the Commissioners of Irish Lights.

Yvonne Shields O'Connor, Chief Executive, alongside a committee of fellow female professionals from across the sector, is organising the initiative which

she hopes will profile and promote women in the marine sector.

It is expected that the event for women in shipping, ports and harbours, logistics, fishing, seafood, aquaculture, offshore energy, marine tourism, policy regulation, research and education will be hosted at the Commissioners of Irish Lights Headquarters in Dún Laoghaire.

Currently, preparations are well underway finalising the programme for what looks like an exciting event!

## Inaugural Coastguard Cadet event held in Greencastle

The inaugural Coast Guard Cadet event was held in Greencastle Co Donegal on Friday 9th August 2019, reports Greencastle Coast Guard Officer, Charlie Cavanagh.

Hosted by members of Greencastle Coast Guard Unit, the event was attended by over 130 children between 5 and 12 years of age. Because of the huge interest in the first event the participants were preregistered and allocated a time slot to attend.

The children were broken into smaller groups of 8 to 10. Each group then were taken through an interactive circuit which involved instruction on subjects which included life jacket use, line throwing, care and maintenance of life rings, CPR, information session on emergency situations and equipment. Every learning session was complemented with team building activities and at the end of the event participants received a bag containing books, wrist bands, a cadet badge and a certificate of achievement.

The event was held in the Greencastle Community Centre Sports Hall on the first day of the annual regatta events.

Maeve Cavanagh & Adele Doherty co founders of the event and team members of Greencastle Coast Guard Unit said that the event was very well received by all who attended. They said we came up with the idea in order to create a more interactive way of getting the water safety message across to children. The group are now looking at the feedback from the event and how they might improve and share with other communities to help improve safety awareness. Watch this space!



Images supplied by Greencastle Coast Guard



Ryan Gallager, Image by Sharon Boyle



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**PHOTO OF THE MONTH** IN ASSOCIATION WITH **GUY COTTEN** **SNG SWAN NET GUNDRY**

**COMPETITION**

Send in your best fishing related photo and you could win a Neptune 50 N Bouyancy Aid by Guy Cotten plus the chance to win overnight accommodation at one of the Skipper Expos.

The subject of the picture must be related to the Fishing Industry (your vessel, your catch, a stormy day at sea...etc). Each month, the best photo will be published in The Skipper and the winner will receive a prize, courtesy of Swan Net Gundry Ltd and Guy Cotten. Images sent in may also be used in other areas of the magazine if suitable.

cameras out, and send us your hi-res photos by email to editorial@maramedia.ie and don't forget to mention your name and details, as well as a brief description of the scene depicted. The photos must be taken by the person sending it to us, and it is understood that they are free of copyrights.

**PHOTO THE MONTH WINNER:**  
**FINBARR HEALY. FINDING THE MISSING LINK. CARLOS, FROM PORTUGAL, CREW ON THE SAINT JOSSE, BUSY WORKING ON KILMORE QUAY PIER.**

**THE MONTHLY PRIZE**

The winner will receive a Sotra Fleece by **GUY COTTEN**

PLEASE NOTE: The Skipper reserves the right to use your images for future use and possible publication.

**The Skipper**

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:**  
 Simply get your phones and

**The closing date for entries this month is the 12th SEPTEMBER 2019.**

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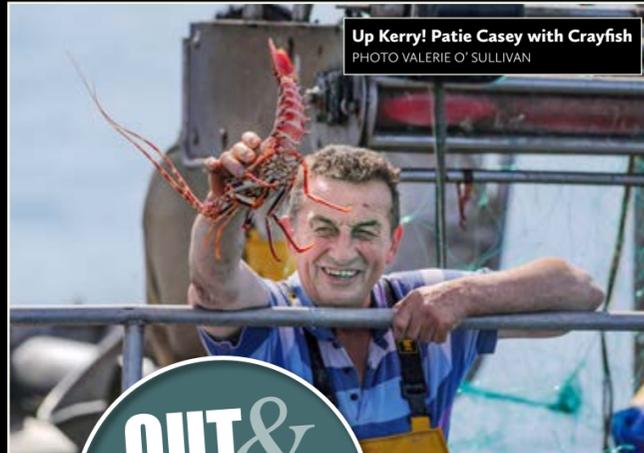
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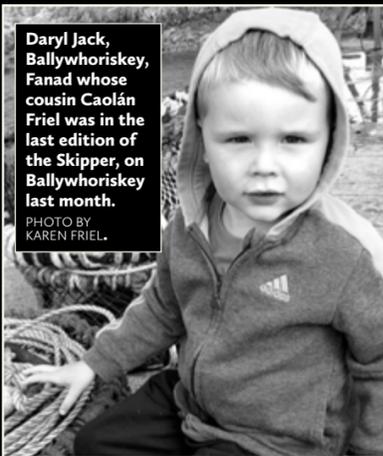




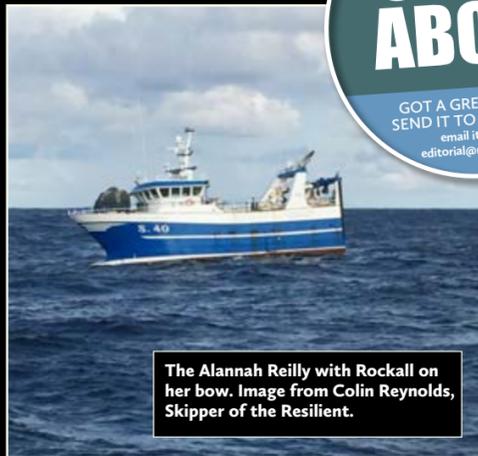
Castletownbere laying a wreath at the mouth of the harbour in remembrance of those lost at sea, during the annual blessing of the boats last month. PHOTO LIA NÍ AODHA



Up Kerry! Patie Casey with Crayfish PHOTO VALERIE O' SULLIVAN



Daryl Jack, Ballywhoriskey, Fanad whose cousin Caolán Friel was in the last edition of the Skipper, on Ballywhoriskey last month. PHOTO BY KAREN FRIEL



The Alannah Reilly with Rockall on her bow. Image from Colin Reynolds, Skipper of the Resilient.

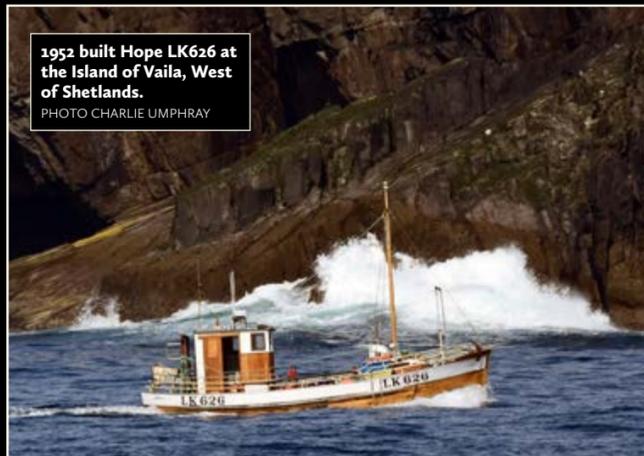


Guiding star II, after hauling tuna in the Bay of Biscay. PHOTO : SEAN ORPEN

OUT & ABOUT  
GOT A GREAT PHOTO? SEND IT TO THE SKIPPER email it to us at: editorial@maramedia.ie



Chilean Fishing Vessel, Port of La Serena, North of Santiago, Chile Taken by Paul (Point) Gallagher, Donegal, Chief Engineer on MFV Annelise P



1952 built Hope LK626 at the Island of Vaila, West of Shetlands. PHOTO CHARLIE UMPHRAY



Fraserburgh harbour on a fine day PHOTO EUGENE RUTTER



The Ard Fionnbarr from Portmagee at Knightstown Pier ready for a hull scrub. Image by Aaron Quigley, engineer onboard the MV Oriana



Teelin rowing club heads for the buoys, Sunday 4th August. Audacious in the background in all her glory. IMAGE BY SHANE MEEHAN.

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Cavanagh Hooper Dolan Insurances Ltd. Proud sponsors of The Skipper crossword Send entries before 12th SEPTEMBER 2019 to: Crossword Competition, The Skipper, Annagry, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. (Photocopies not accepted).

NAME: ADDRESS: TEL: (REQUIRED): EMAIL:

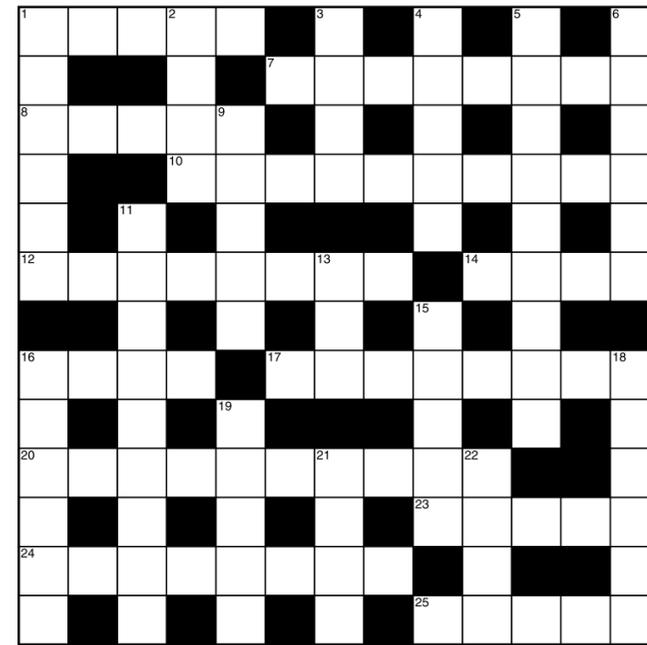
IMPORTANT PLEASE INDICATE JACKET SIZE: SMALL MEDIUM LARGE XL 2XL

ACROSS

- 1. Student's written assignment 7. Dig 8. Bay 10. Cabbage dish 12. Forsakes 14. Non-alkali 16. Gallivants (about) 17. Lecturers 20. Logos 23. Bitterly pungent 24. Fangs 25. New Delhi is there

DOWN

- 1. Puzzle 2. Positive votes 3. Wheel shaft 4. Lays off (worker) 5. Unfilled jobs 6. Hit hard 9. Belated 11. Abrasive sheet 13. Siesta 15. Island nation, Sri ... 16. Roof channel 18. Actress, ... Bullock 19. Soft cap 21. Plays (the fool) 22. Quick look-over



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## Clifden RNLI receive first Shannon class lifeboat for the West Coast of Ireland



Clifden RNLI have become the first lifeboat station on the west coast of Ireland to receive the Shannon class lifeboat. The new 25-knot lifeboat significantly reduces response times for the Galway lifeboat crew and reaches casualties faster. The first planned outing for the new lifeboat is to visit the nearby island communities where the lifeboat can be called out for medical evacuations. Photo: Michael Mc Laughlin

Clifden RNLI have become the first lifeboat station on the west coast of Ireland to receive the latest in lifeboat technology, the Shannon class lifeboat. The vessel is the first modern all-weather lifeboat to be propelled by waterjets instead of traditional propellers, making it the most agile and manoeuvrable all-weather lifeboat in the search and rescue charity's fleet. The new 25-knot lifeboat replaces the station's 15-knot Mersey class lifeboat, significantly cutting response times for the county Galway lifeboat crew and reaching casualties faster.

The twenty-four-person strong Connemara based volunteer lifeboat crew are a close-knit community. Two of the station's four Coxswains are brothers, there is a husband and wife serving on the lifeboat as well as a father and son. There are currently two Shannon class lifeboats at Lough Swilly in Donegal and Clogherhead in Louth with a relief lifeboat in Wicklow. The introduction of the Shannon class lifeboat into Clifden represents a major investment by the charity, €2.4 million, into search and rescue on the west coast.

Commenting on the arrival, Clifden RNLI Coxswain James Mullen said: "Three years ago we received our first all-weather lifeboat on a two-year trial, and we were thrilled with it. It meant we could launch in all-weathers and cover greater distances. However, with the arrival of the Shannon we have 21st century lifeboat design and technology. Bringing her home to Clifden from Poole was one of my proudest moments.

"As we rounded Loop Head, we hit a bit of weather and we really made her dance. The



ergonomic seats bear the force of the impact of the lifeboat hitting the waves and the improved communications technology means the crew can talk to each other by linked headsets and can hear each other above the noise and receive information directly from the Coast Guard."

The crew have been undergoing intensive training since May and will receive consolidation training on station in Clifden before the lifeboat is declared on service and fully operational and the Mersey class lifeboat is retired. Clifden's new Shannon class lifeboat is named Brianne Aldington and comes from the RNLI's relief fleet having been built two years

ago. The station's former lifeboat will be sold on as the charity has upgraded its entire fleet to a 25-knot capability.

The first planned outing for the new lifeboat is to visit the nearby island communities

where the lifeboat can be called on to respond to urgent requests for medical evacuations. Both Inishbofin and Inishturk are first in line to receive a visit and have a tour of the new lifeboat that will serve the west coast.

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