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Industry reacts to 2020 quotas. see pages 2-4



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www.wgbaird.com

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Published monthly by Mara Media,
Annagry, Letterkenny, Co
Donegal. www.maramedia.ie

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Sustainable quotas for vulnerable fish stocks to protect future of fishing industry says Minister



Minister Creed in Brexit Discussions with new EU Fisheries Commissioner

Disappointment, fear, caution from industry

By Lia ní Aodha

Following two days of intensive negotiations at the EU Council of Fisheries Ministers in Brussels that lasted into the early morning of December 18, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D. announced that EU Agreement has been reached on setting 2020's quotas.

The total package of fish quotas agreed is 195,000 tonnes worth €275 million for the Irish fishing industry in 2020. There will be increases in quotas for a number of our important stocks – including Mackerel (41% increase), and Haddock (+30%), Monkfish (+7%) and Mergims (+3%) in the Celtic Sea. Our second most important fishery, Prawns, however, has been reduced by 15%.

Among the key proposals causing concern among the industry before the negotiations, was the Commission's "unworkable" proposals on cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea. According to the Minister, at the Council agreement was reached on the introduction of significant additional safeguards designed to rebuild these stocks.

The Minister said, "Securing agreement on rebuilding measures in the Celtic Sea was one of the most difficult aspects of these negotiations. Council agreed measures that will deliver the necessary protections for cod and whiting while still allowing vessels to continue fishing in a sustainable way. These measures

were trialled by our experts in BIM and the Marine Institute, working closely with our fishing fleet. By taking these necessary steps now, we can rebuild the stocks in our Celtic Sea fisheries and avoid the need for closures."

Another core concern expressed by fishing representatives prior to the talks was the need to take social and economic factors into account and find balance between these on the one hand, and ecological concerns and targets on the other. In this regard, Minister Creed said that he was satisfied that he had achieved his "twin aims" coming into the Fisheries Council, "which were to continue the progress we have made on improving sustainability and to protect key fisheries on which our coastal communities depend."

This year marked the deadline set under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) for achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY) targets. This December Council agreed quotas for 47 stocks of particular interest to Ireland. For 32 target stocks, the quotas for 2020 were set at or below the scientific advice where available, meeting MSY criteria.

Considering the challenges relating to the landing obligation and meeting MSY deadlines at the same time, for four vulnerable stocks of interest to Ireland, where the advice was for no fishing, restrictive quotas were set. This, said the Minister, allows for unavoidable by-catches of these stocks, in circumstances where they are part of mixed fisheries. Industry sources, on the other hand, were less certain.

The Council also agreed to

very small quotas to allow for the collection of scientific data for 3 depleted herring stocks.

For the eight remaining stocks, it was agreed to set precautionary quotas considering the scientific advice available, and the status of many of these as minor by-catches.

Minister Creed said, "Since the reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, we have been working steadily towards the objective of setting quotas in line with Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY) by 2020. However, this is not the end of this journey. We must continue to build on the progress we have made to secure a sustainable future for our fishing industry and the coastal communities which depend upon it."

Cut to Prawns Disappointing

After the all-night negotiations in Brussels, the tone from industry was more cautious. Mr Hugo Boyle, CEO of the Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation (IS&EFPO) expressed disappointment with the cut to prawns. Prior to the commencement of the Council, Mr Boyle had said any cut to prawns would mean a big cut for the industry in monetary terms.

Speaking after the Council, Mr Boyle said that while the increase in monk and megs was welcome, those increases wouldn't compensate for the loss of prawn quota, as some prawn vessels would now be displaced onto these species in some cases.

On a somewhat more positive note, he said they were happy

AREA 6 WHITEFISH STOCKS				
SPECIES	Ices Area	Quota 2019(t)	Quota 2020 (t)	Diff. %
Cod ¹	6a	385	284	-26%
Cod	6b	16	16	0%
Megrim	6	749	764	2%
Monkfish	6	1145	797	-30%
Haddock ²	5b, 6a	528	650	23%
Haddock	6b, 12, 14	842	842	0%
Whiting ³	6	324	273	-16%
Plaice	6	261	261	0%
Pollock	6	56	34	-39%
Saithe	6	455	402	-12%
Sole	6	46	46	0%
Nephrops	6	204	215	5%
Total		5011	4584	-9%

AREA 7 WHITEFISH STOCKS				
SPECIES	Ices Area	Quota 2019(t)	Quota 2020 (t)	Diff. %
Cod ¹	7a	532	169	-68%
Cod ²	7 b-k	650	461	-29%
Megrim ³	7	3001	3101	3%
Monkfish ⁴	7	2501	2675	7%
Haddock	7 b-k	1851	2413	30%
Haddock	7a	1619	1366	-16%
Whiting ⁵	7a	419	415	-1%
Whiting	7b-k	5334	4073	-24%
Plaice	7a	1499	1442	-4%
Plaice	7 bc	63	67	8%
Plaice	7 fg	240	253	5%
Plaice ⁶	7 hjk	47	30	-36%
Pollock ⁷	7	929	929	0%
Saithe	7	1492	1492	0%
Sole	7a	74	77	4%
Sole	7 bc	36	36	0%
Sole	7 fg	26	52	100%
Sole	7 hjk	171	148	-13%
Nephrops ⁸	7	7296	6201	-15%
Nephrops	7 Functional Unit 16	959	957	0%
Total		27780	25400	9%

AREA 6,7 AND OTHER WHITEFISH STOCKS				
SPECIES	Ices Area	Quota 2019(t)	Quota 2020(t)	Diff. %
Cod	1,2	322	322	0%
Hake	6,7	4400	3493	-21%
Redfish	Int waters 5, 12, 14 (Shallow)	0	0	0%
Redfish	International waters 5, 12, 14	0	0	0%
Ling	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14	898	898	0%
Blue Ling	2, 4 International waters	4	2	-50%
Blue Ling	5b, 6, 7	33	31	-6%
Tusk	5, 6, 7	68	68	0%
Greenland Halibut	2a, 4, 6	14	14	0%
Snow Crab	Greenland Waters	0	0	0%
Skate & Rays ⁹	6a, 6b, 7a-c and 7e-k	1329	1329	0%
Small-eyed Ray ¹⁰	7f,g	25	25	0%
Undulate Ray ¹¹	7d,e	13	27	108%
Spur Dogs ¹²	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14	53	53	0%
Total		7159	6262	-13%

that the cod quota in the Celtic Sea had been set at a better level than expected, and would sustain a bycatch and prevent choking. The original proposal on cod, he highlighted was 27 ton for the whole year for Ireland.

The IS&EFPO boss, however, expressed disappointment the quota for Celtic Sea haddock had been given at the lower range of the advice. Long, drawn-out difficult negotiations on technical conservation measures that ran into the early morning, Mr Boyle said, meant little time for the industry to digest these figures.

Confusion and Fear

Speaking after the conclusion of the annual negotiations and expressing similar sentiments in places as Mr Boyle, Mr Patrick Murphy, CEO of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation (IS&WFPO) said disappointment, confusion, and fear were the main words for his

members. We were shell-shocked this morning, he said

Mr Murphy added that he and his member still had to sit down and look carefully at the figures. Expressing concerns, however, regarding how the Council this year had been conducted and what this might bode for next year once the UK left, the IS&WFPO chief said there had been a lot of precautionary cuts, where more fish could have been given within scientific advice which would have given fishermen an awful lot more fish to work with. However, on account of concern over the cod stocks, the IS&WFPO felt that everything else had suffered. Cuts were out of kilter with the biomass in places, said Mr Murphy.

Fishermen have been as compliant as they can be, he said. Now this over cautiousness is making it harder, which is actually going to make things harder in the longer term, he said. Not at



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all happy with cod and whiting measures, Mr Murphy said that despite fishermen putting in a huge effort trying to find solutions to the challenges now faced for fishermen fishing mixed fisheries, the catch 22 is that “we improve the haddock and now we can’t catch them.”

Reasonable

The Killybegs Fishermen’s Organisation (KFO) said the annual meeting in Brussels had delivered a reasonable overall result on certain key stocks but has upheld misguided proposals on others.

However, its CEO, Seán O’Donoghue, said at the end of Council that this is almost certain to be the last December Fisheries Council in this format with the looming withdrawal of the UK from the EU. This was the metaphorical calm before a potentially devastating storm with the long-term future of the industry very much in the balance as the UK and EU negotiating teams assess and mould Britain’s exit plan from the EU.

Commenting on the conclusion of talks which entered a third day, Mr O’Donoghue said that TACs and quotas had been set at sustainable levels.

“The Commission’s unworkable proposals for cod and whiting in the Celtic Sea were changed to setting appropriate bycatch and catch levels for these species and a range of workable technical conservation measures to avoid a vast array of sustainable fisheries being closed.

“There were significant sustainable increases in a number of species such as 41% increase in mackerel, 23% and 30% increases respectively in haddock in areas

6a and 7b-k, a 7% increase in monkfish area 7 and a doubling of small sole quota area 7gf.

“The reduction in nephrops our second most important economic stock was not unexpected but none the less it will have an affect on the demersal fleet. The 30% reduction in monkfish in area 6a and the 40% reduction in pollack areas 6 are disappointing as they are based on dubious science. In the overall context of all stocks of Irish interest there has a small increase of 1%.”

He added, “I wish to thank Minister Creed and his team of officials for achieving a reasonable sustainable outcome in difficult circumstances.”

Regarding the looming prospect of Brexit, Mr O’Donoghue said, “A no-deal Brexit really cannot be what people want but it still is a possibility on January, 1, 2021. The situation would be uncontrollable with almost 3,000 kilometers of a ‘water border’ to be policed and the potentially devastating consequences for fleets which would have to be tied up.

“Ultimately, it would be the death knell for many coastal fishing communities, with the demise of the Irish seafood sector to the tune of between 30% and 50% and projected job losses of between 30% and 40% in the fishing industry here. The reliance we have on UK waters for species such as mackerel (60%) and nephrops (40%) is staggering, these are two main money “spenders” for the industry. It’s very hard to get one’s head around the fact that waters, to which we have enjoyed access, could be out of bounds on 1st January 2021 with no physical wall nor barrier in place.

“It is imperative that no

PELAGIC QUOTA 2020				
SPECIES	Ices Area	Quota (t) 2019	Quota (t) 2020	Diff. %
Mackerel ¹	6, 7	55313	78052	41%
H. Mackerel ²	2a, 4a, 6, 7a-c, 7e-k, 8a,b,c	30306	17726	-42%
H. Mackerel ³	4b, 4c, and 7d	376	334	-11%
Blue Whiting ⁴	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8a,b,c,e, 12, 14	37800	38,599	2%
Herring ⁵	1, 2	3399	3035	-11%
Herring ⁶	6aN	630	526	-17%
Herring ⁷	6aS, 7bc	1482	1236	-17%
Herring ⁸	7a	1795	2059	17%
Herring ⁹	7 ghjk	4097	750	-82%
Tuna ¹⁰	northatl	2854	2891	1%
Argentines	3, 4	8	8	0%
Argentines	5, 6, 7	329	263	-20%
Boar Fish	6, 7, 8	15086	13235	-12%
Total		153475	158754	3%

SPECIES	Ices Area	Quota 2019 (t)	Quota 2020 (t)	% Diff ¹
Black Scabbard ¹	5, 6, 7, 8	71	71	0%
Roundnose Grenadier ^{2,3}	5b, 6, 7	166	166	0%
Roundnose Grenadier ^{2,3}	8, 9, 10, 12, 14	3	3	0%
Orange Roughy	6	0	0	0%
Orange Roughy	7	0	0	0%
Orange Roughy	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14	0	0	0%
Red Seabream ⁴	6, 7, 8	3	3	0%
Allsinosins ⁵	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14	8	8	0%
Forkbeards	5, 6, 7	0	0	0%
Deep Sea Sharks	5, 6, 7, 8, 9	0	0	0%
Deep Sea Sharks	10	0	0	0%
TOTALS		251	251	0%

stone is left turned to protect the Irish seafood sector in the future trade negotiations which, last year alone, was valued at €1.25billion, employing more than 14,300 people predominantly in rural, coastal locations. Michel Barnier and Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan will play key roles, along with our Government, to negotiate the retention of the close linkage between fisheries and the wider trade relationship in order to maintain existing access to fishing waters and existing resource allocations. This linkage is absolutely critical.”

During the Council, on December 17 Minister

Creed and the new EU Fisheries Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevicius held a bilateral meeting on Brexit and other fisheries matters. Of the meeting, the Minister said, “I was delighted to meet with Commissioner Sinkevicius and was very impressed with his knowledge and understanding of the potential impacts of Brexit on the Irish and wider EU fishing fleets. We had an excellent discussion on the vital importance of ensuring that the fisheries negotiations are inextricably linked with the wider future relationship negotiations in accordance with the agreed

Minister encourages NIFF to remain a strong voice for the sector

At the end of November, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D., hosted the 19th meeting of the National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF) at Agriculture House, Dublin.

The Inshore Fisheries Forums, established in 2014, are currently going through a renewal process with some members coming to the end of their terms and new chairs and vice-chairs being appointed to represent their region at the National Inshore Fisheries Forum.

The Minister took the opportunity to pay tribute to those who are departing: “I wish to thank all of you who stepped forward to represent your sector. Without your drive and dedication, this initiative would not have emerged as the influential voice for the sector that it has since become.”

From having first met on 15 January 2015, the National Inshore Fisheries Forum has now been given seats as the inshore fishing representatives on a number of consultative platforms including the Quota Management Advisory Committee and the



Representatives from the inshore forum with the Minister at Agriculture House, Dublin last November

EMFF Operational Programme Monitoring Committee.

Noting the record of policy development of the Inshore Fisheries Forums the Minister observed, “Eight conservation measures have been introduced due to the work that started in one of the six regions which was

then supported at NIFF. BIM is working with the NIFF to implement the first ever industry-led inshore strategy because the NIFF made that a priority.

“At times there have been challenging engagements but I sincerely hope that the proactive approach of the NIFF will

continue to be felt no matter who is in the seat for their region. Facing challenges like Climate Change and the roll-out of new policies like Marine Spatial Planning it is essential that there is a strong representative voice capable of leading for the Inshore Fisheries Sector.”

New weighing controls for pelagic fisheries

Despite concerns being raised by the industry regarding the flaws in weighing pelagic fish at the point of landing and the consequences of doing so for the quality of the fish, the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) has confirmed a percentage of all catches of pelagic species landed in the State will be weighed upon landing from the start of the 2020 spring pelagic fisheries. The measure arises from the recommendations of an audit conducted by the European Commission concerning compliance with pelagic fisheries regulations.

EU regulations require the weighing of catches prior to transport from the place of landing and compliance with this requirement involves the weighing of catches as may be directed by SFPA Sea Fisheries Protection Officers in the course of a landing inspection. Under a derogation previously approved by the European Commission, the landing and transport of catches for weighing in permitted establishments is permissible and this will continue in tandem with the additional procedures. The

SFPA have said controls in these establishments will continue to ensure compliance with legislation and weigh permit conditions.

An inspecting Sea Fisheries Protection Officer will notify masters of vessels when weighing of their catches prior to transport from the place of landing will be required. There will be an allowance of 2% made for water during these weighing operations. This will be deducted from the weights obtained to determine the Official Weigh Record that will be entered in all official documentation and systems used for recording of weighed catches.

Susan Steele, Chair of the SFPA stated that SFPA staff will ensure that the weighing operations at landing are completed in an efficient manner. “This requirement will be applied to a small portion of landings and co-operation with our officers will ensure that weighing operations are completed efficiently. In most cases, inspections and associated controls will continue as before. We would also encourage anyone who has any queries to contact the Senior Port Officer in their local SFPA Port office.”

In a separate comment to *The Skipper* regarding the audit, which came as the result of weaknesses detected in the Irish control system during an audit carried out by the Commission in Killybegs in 2018, the SFPA said that “due to the risk of non-compliance in high-value fisheries, such as Ireland’s pelagic fisheries which are amongst the world’s most valuable fisheries, the

SFPA devotes a significant portion of its inspection resources to them.”

The authority said also it was “examining measures that can further assist it to maintain a control system that will minimize the risk of regulatory noncompliance, arising from recommendations in the EU’s report on their audit of Ireland’s control system for pelagic fisheries.”

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Brown crab sector left reeling after 'sensationalist' headline

New certification regime causes concern

By Lia ní Aodha

Cadmium, according to the European Commission, is a heavy metal found as an environmental contaminant, both through natural occurrence and from industrial and agricultural sources. Though you mightn't know it from an article recently published in the Sunday Business Post, foodstuffs (in general) are the main source of cadmium exposure in humans.

A 2012 publication by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) indicates food consumed in larger quantities has the greatest impact on dietary exposure to cadmium. The food groups which contribute most to dietary exposure are grains and grain products (26.9%), vegetables and vegetable products (16.0%) and starchy roots and tubers (13.2%).

According to the Commission's note on the consumption of brown crab, the levels of cadmium found in muscle meat of legs and claws of crabs (the white meat) are low. Over time, however, higher levels accumulate (though this is highly variable from crab to crab) in the brown meat found in the body of the crab, containing the crab's organs. Much like a crab, cadmium accumulates in humans over the course of their life and can, at high levels, become toxic.

Generally speaking, the diet of the average person in either Europe or China does not include brown crab to such an extent that it poses a significant risk compared to other commonly consumed foodstuffs with higher cadmium ratings as defined by the EFSA.

Unsurprisingly then, fishermen and processors were left reeling after an article published in the paper on December 8 ran with the headline: *SFPA accused of letting cancer-linked crabmeat be exported to*

China. Based on Fórsa's submission to the ongoing organisational capability review of the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), detailing some of the internal politics of the SFPA and the politics between the Authority and the Department, according to the article among the complaints levelled by staff against the authority is "allowing potentially cancer-causing crabmeat to be exported to China."

"A confidential submission obtained by the Business Post has revealed how staff in the SFPA were directed by management to give the go-ahead to Irish crab exports to China – despite concerns about the presence of a cancer-causing heavy metal," the article states. Cadmium it says, "is a heavy metal that crabs take in from the environment" that "is toxic for human kidneys and causes an increased risk of cancer."

Norah Parke, who has been acting as liaison between the China Council group and SFPA on the issues that have arisen regarding certifying brown crab destined for China, said Irish exporters were "shocked and outraged" at how the article portrayed the industry. "The article," she said, "makes several misleading and erroneous claims in an attempt to sensationalise a story highlighting internal problems of the SFPA without any regard for the individual fishermen, their families and the companies which have invested heavily to develop this supply chain".

According to BIM's Business of Seafood 2018 report, in terms of landed and export values brown crab is our third most lucrative fishery, following only after mackerel and prawns. Regarding seafood more generally, China is our fifth largest export partner. Comprising 35% of that €47m market last year, a sizeable part of that growing relationship is built on brown crab.

Caught mainly by inshore fishermen, today a large proportion



Brown Crab. Image: Declan McGrath

of that sector depends on the species for their livelihoods. "Given there are an estimated 700 odd vessels involved in catching brown crab, not to mind the jobs they support in the processing and other ancillary sectors, brown crab is likely to be the most important species and fishery to Ireland from a socio-economic perspective," highlighted a spokesperson for the National Inshore Fishermen's Association and Organisation (NIFA/NIFO), who said the article was "reckless" and "sensationalist".

"It appears to pertain to some internal issues the SFPA are reportedly having but focuses on one example regarding cadmium levels in Irish crab. That said, it fails completely to outline many facts surrounding this issue, such as there being no issue regarding compliance of Irish crab with EU and other standards in the context of cadmium levels," said the spokesperson, who also said that airing the internal issues SFPA staff

may be experiencing, whatever they were, "in such a reckless manner" that was "likely to cause undue and unwarranted collateral damage to the Inshore Fishing sector" was highly inappropriate.

"It's a further indictment of the self-proclaimed dysfunctionality of the Authority. One could be forgiven that was "likely to cause undue and unwarranted collateral damage to the Inshore Fishing sector" was highly inappropriate.

Painting a picture of "an organisation struggling with itself", highlighted in the leaked submission by the trade union which represents the majority of the SFPA's staff is extreme frustration with the internal workings of the Authority, low levels of trust between management and staff, and deep concern regarding "crippling interference" by the Department. The online version of the Business Post article ran with the headline, *'Plebs in the ports' lash out.*

Far from an independent regulator, according to the 56 page submission, the role of the Department "in the

operation of the organisation is regarded as toxic, controlling and damaging". Also highlighted, among others, are spends of some €70,000 paying a Harvard Professor to present workshops. Some two pages discuss issues relating to cadmium and the associated export certificates for brown crab going to China.

Like many governments, to ensure safety the EU has established strict upper limits of cadmium for several foodstuffs, including chocolate, infant formula and brown crab. The EU limit for cadmium in the white meat of brown crab is set at 0.5mg/kg. The limit set by Chinese authorities is also 0.5mg/kg, however, driving the higher readings that have at times caused problems for exporters, the level is applied to "all edible parts" and includes sampling the body of the crab, where cadmium accumulates. A similar testing method is applied by Hong Kong, though with a higher limit of 2mg/kg set.

In terms of meeting these standards, the spokesperson from NIFA/NIFO stressed, "The fundamentals here are straight forward enough. Irish crab is of a high quality and has no issues regarding compliance on cadmium in almost all jurisdictions including the EU."

Ms Parke emphasised, "Irish brown crab meets very rigorous

health standards which are approved and implemented by both the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The Irish crab industry is completely compliant with EU regulations regarding cadmium levels".

Regarding the Chinese market, Ms Parke highlighted that in 2017, Ireland and China agreed a monitoring plan to assess levels of cadmium in brown crab in Irish waters. This monitoring plan forms the basis of the specific SFPA Health Certificate needed for exporting live brown crab to China. "The industry," she said, "is satisfied it complies with all requirements for contaminant testing as stated on that Health Certificate."

Since December 2 the SFPA has instituted a new certification regime for consignments of brown crab leaving Ireland for the Chinese market. According to the SFPA, the revised certification arrangement has been put in place, following a process of consultation with industry, to provide assurance to Chinese authorities "who requested Cadmium testing for crab on a per export consignment basis."

A spokesperson for NIFA/NIFO said the sector were waiting to see how and if it will actually work in practice. "We note commentary by many experienced operators

in the Crab sector that it is simply unworkable, particularly for live crab exports," he said.

At the time of writing, the SFPA had "received test results for 14 samples since the new regime was implemented." Three of those had attained the Chinese standard. Industry sources indicate "most" were compliant with Hong Kong's requirements.

Regarding the sampling process, the SFPA explained that following receipt of an application for export, samples are taken by SFPA officers and sent to the Marine Institute. Results are received within 48 hours of the laboratory receiving the sample. The process from taking a sample to receiving a result takes 72 hours.

Queried on the implications the new regime might have for a live or perishable product, the SFPA said, "Product is held by industry either in holding tanks in the case of live crab or in temperature controlled storage environments in the case of processed product."

Ms Parke highlighted, however, crab can only be held in those systems for a limited time. The current timeline, she said, means crab tested has passed its viable window for shipping live to China – having bought at a premium, the exporter will consequently have to sell at a loss.

Emphasising the presence of

cadmium was not peculiar to 'Irish' brown crab (there is no such biological thing), Ms Parke said, "Other European countries exporting brown crab to China include Norway, the Netherlands, France, Portugal and the United Kingdom. Brown crab from those countries are biologically identical to Irish brown crab with the same physiological properties.

"Those countries continue to export their crab to China unhindered by their regulatory authorities and their product is welcomed by their Chinese customers. Our competitor countries will soon avail of the opportunity to buy Irish crab on what is now a falling market and export to China under their own flag. The Irish crab industry may be irreparably damaged."

"The onus is now on the relevant authorities and agencies to find a workable long-term solution to this issue as a matter of priority," said the spokesperson for NIFA/NIFO.

"Failure to do so in a timely manner could well result in a crisis in the inshore sector of unprecedented levels."

At the time of printing, the Department had not responded to a series of questions relating to the Fórsa report. The SFPA said that given the Authority's organisational review is not yet complete "it would be premature to comment on any of the submissions".

National Fisheries College of Ireland

Schedule January 2020



Skipper Full

- 14 April-17 June, NFC Castletownbere
- 14 April-12 June, NFC Greencastle

Second Hand Full

- 06 January-24 April, NFC Castletownbere
- 06 January-28 April, NFC Greencastle

Second Hand Limited

- 06 January-24 April, NFC Castletownbere

Deckhand Foundation Programme

- 03 February-13 March, NFC Greencastle

Electronic Navigation Systems (Fishing)

- 06 January-24 January, NFC Castletownbere
- 06 January-24 January, NFC Greencastle

Navigation Control Courses (Fishing)

- 22 June-03 July, NFC Castletownbere
- 22 June-03 July, NFC Greencastle

Enhanced Safety Training (Under 15m)

- 07 January, NFC Greencastle
- 29 January, NFC Castletownbere
- 19 February, NFC Castletownbere

Basic Safety Training

- 13-15 January, NFC Greencastle
- 14-16 January, NFC Castletownbere
- 14-16 January, Clogherhead, contact 087 2334620

- 14-16 January, Lettermore, Co. Galway, contact 087 6837134
- 27-29 January, NFC Greencastle
- 29-31 January, Howth, contact 087 2334620
- 03-05 February, NFC Greencastle
- 04-06 February, Lettermore, Co. Galway, contact 087 6837134
- 11-13 February, NFC Castletownbere
- 25-27 February, Inis Mór, Co. Galway, contact 087 6837134

Elementary First Aid on Board Ship STCW-95

- 29 January, Lettermore, Co. Galway, contact 087 6837134

PHECC First Aid Responder

- 17-19 February, NFC Castletownbere

GMDSS General Operators Certificate

- 20-31 January, NFC Castletownbere

Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting (3-day)

- 24-26 February, NFC Greencastle
- 1-3 April, NFC Castletownbere

Advanced Fire Fighting (5-day)

- 03-07 February, NFC Castletownbere
- 18-22 May, NFC Castletownbere
- 06-10 July, NFC Greencastle

Medical First Aid Aboard Ship

- 01-03 April, NFC Greencastle
- 06-08 April, NFC Castletownbere

GMDSS Restricted Operator Certificate

- 14-28 April, NFC Castletownbere

GMDSS Short Range Radio Proficiency (Modules 1 & 2)

- 20-22 January, Lettermore, Co. Galway, contact 087 6837134
- 21-23 January, Glogherhead, contact 087 2334620
- 11-13 February, NFC Greencastle
- 19-21 February, Kilrush, Co. Clare, contact 087 6837134

QQI Level 6 Commercial Scuba Diver

- 24 February-20 March, (pre-week medical course 17-21 February), NFC Castletownbere

Surface Supplied Diver (3 weeks)

- 30 March-24 April, NFC Castletownbere

Passenger Boat Proficiency

- 24-28 February, NFC Castletownbere

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To confirm the mobile training schedule on the west coast please contact 087 6837134 and on the east coast call 087 2334620. Funding for the course fee and subsistence costs may be available through BIM's Seafood Training Scheme.

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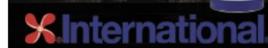
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New deckhand training programme to tackle industry skills shortage



Arrival of new deckhand training programme aims to tackle skills shortage in fishing industry

Brian Vaughan, Principal BIM National Fisheries College Greencastle, spoke of the challenges facing the industry and how the attraction and retention of skilled staff is one of the biggest threats to the future of the industry. He said: "This training is the first step for someone who is serious about a career in the fishing industry. This is an industry that's built on skill, resilience and hard work. It's highly rewarding and highly demanding work."

"You learn very quickly how to think on your feet; how to work as a team and how to safely respond to different scenarios that could affect you, the crew and the boat."

"This training is happening at a critical time in the history of the industry. The sustainability and the future of the industry is dependent on having a skilled workforce. The deckhands of today are the skippers of tomorrow."

The Irish seafood sector was valued at €1.25 billion in 2018 according to the BIM Business of Seafood report. There are currently 2,127 registered fishing vessels in Ireland. The sector is a key economic driver in rural communities in Ireland. In coastal Donegal, 12 in every 100 adults work in the seafood industry.

According to a report published by the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) earlier this autumn 53 per cent of those working in the Irish fishing industry are between the age of 40-64. A further 8 per cent are over the age of 64. Attracting new entrants to the industry has been cited as a major challenge by the industry.

The new Deckhand Foundation Programme is being held in BIM's National Fisheries College in Greencastle, Co Donegal and will run for six weeks from February 2020. For more details or to apply, please go to www.bim.ie or contact maria.mccarron@bim.ie

A new deckhand training programme, aimed at attracting young entrants to the fishing industry has been announced by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM). Trainers on the programme include experienced mariners and former skippers who will provide mentoring and training in a range of areas including essential safety skills, operating a marine VHF radio, working with ropes and nets, conditions affecting vessel stability and fish handling and food safety.

former skippers who will provide mentoring and training in a range of areas including essential safety skills, operating a marine VHF radio, working with ropes and nets, conditions affecting vessel stability and fish handling and food safety.

Minister Creed Receives 2019 Marine Institute Annual Stock Book

In preparation for the December Council negotiations, in late November the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed, T.D., received the 2019 Marine Institute Annual Stock Book. The Stock Book, which is one of the principal annual publications of the Institute, provides scientific advice on commercially exploited fish stocks of interest to Ireland.

Minister Creed said, "The fishing industry is a vital part of Ireland's ocean economy. The information presented by the Marine Institute in the Stock Book is critical to the preparations for the annual Fisheries Council negotiations".

"The detailed stock-by-stock guide ensures we have the most up-to-date scientific advice on this renewable resource," he said.

The Stock Book forms an important component of the sustainability impact assessment presented to Dáil Éireann annually before the EU fisheries negotiations commence. This year, advice was given for 74 stocks. Results show continued improvement in the number of stocks sustainably fished.

The Stock Book, which has been published by the Marine Institute (MI) since 1993, also serves as a valuable reference guide to a wide audience, including the fishing industry, managers, marine scientists, environmental NGOs, third level

institutes and financial institutions.

The scientific advice and services provided by scientists to the Department is a key focus of the MI Strategic Plan 2018-2022. "These scientific services are essential to supporting our sustainable ocean economy, protecting and managing our marine ecosystems and meeting EU obligations" said Dr Paul Connolly, Marine Institute CEO.

Marine Institute scientists participate in, and lead, many international working groups at the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES). ICES assess fish stocks and provide scientific advice on how much can be sustainably fished.

"ICES is a very important organisation for the Marine Institute where scientists from many countries share data and work together to deliver the impartial scientific advice required by the fisheries managers. This advice is presented in the Stock Book and is essential to sustaining our coastal communities" said Dr Connolly.

The Stock Book is available electronically on the Marine Institute's website as a PDF (www.oar.marine.ie/handle/10793/1433) and this year also as an interactive app (www.shiny.marine.ie/stockbook/). Much of the scientific work that delivers the Stock Book is funded under the European Maritime Fisheries Fund scheme.



Dr Paul Connolly, CEO Marine Institute with Michael Creed T.D, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Dr. Claran Kelly, Marine Institute. Picture Jason Clarke

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Dispute with Irish Water Continues on Lough Foyle. Fishermen call for public inquiry

Native Oyster Fishermen on Lough Foyle have called for a public enquiry into what they say is "reckless" behaviour on the part of Irish Water and the Loughs Agency.

In late November, Mr Liam O'Brien, spokesperson for a number of oyster fishermen working in the area stated a vessel had been "caught in the act retrieving large and heavy (approx. one tonne weight) pieces of equipment from the sea-bed at Carnagarve midway between Moville and Greencastle on Lough Foyle."

According to the fishermen's spokesperson, fishermen had not been made aware equipment had been deployed on the seabed. This, he says, "can only be regarded as reckless behaviour that could so easily have led to loss of life" and demands investigation.

Mr O'Brien alleged: "In an effort to facilitate Irish Water to secretly gather data the Loughs Agency were prepared to gamble with the lives of the fishermen by not making them aware of the locations of this lethal equipment on the sea bed where the fishermen were actively engaged in oyster dredging."

"This equipment was deposited on the bed of the designated oyster area some weeks previously and lay there hidden and unmarked and posing a potential life threatening situation to any unsuspecting oyster dredging fishing boat unlucky enough to have snagged into it."

"The fishermen are now aware that this is not the only piece of equipment of its kind lurking unmarked and unmentioned on the sea-bed against all the formal safety marine rules and regulations that apply to this type of operation."

Mr O'Brien further stated that "a number of native oyster fishermen have employed a legal team who has written to the Loughs Agency demanding answers as to why they did not make fishermen aware of the lethal dangers lurking on the seabed as they dredged unsuspecting on the designated area."

The fishermen are also seeking explanation as to "why details on the issued 69 Permits were not passed to the fishermen."

"It is becoming ever more clear," Mr O'Brien said, "that an official public enquiry is conducted into the activities of the Loughs Agency and Irish Water in respect of their lack of 'duty of care' to the fishermen."

"It seems that facilitating Irish Water in their covert efforts to locate a sewage discharge pipe on the officially designated oyster beds of Lough Foyle outweighs any importance of the fishermen's personal safety or that of their boats and equipment."

"In truth there is a distinct feeling

that this behaviour is in keeping with an organisation who are hell-bent in the destruction of the native oyster fishery. How else can it be explained when it is found out that they had prior knowledge of the deployment of these potentially lethal obstacles illegally deposited on the sea-bed and kept it to themselves?"

Opposition from fishermen and locals to plans to pump sewage into Lough Foyle has been ongoing since 1989. Last August, site investigations by Irish Water were postponed after locals and fishermen said they would block works, amidst concerns relating to the impact it would have on oyster beds.

Earlier last autumn fishermen operating in the estuary alleged activities being carried out on behalf of Irish Water were obstructing their fishing activities. Fishermen have also said Irish Water has not displayed any willingness to consult with them regarding the works.

In relation to the latest turn of events in the long-standing dispute, Mr O'Brien concluded by stating, "It is long beyond time that the politicians of Donegal took a detailed interest in the reckless and shameful behaviour being dished out to the fishermen. It would be no exaggeration to state that if this was happening to the farming community the response might well be different."

"Urgent and immediate action is required to address this out of control behaviour before there is loss of life. This situation is altogether far too important to ignore."

In a response to *The Skipper* regarding the allegations, a spokesperson for Irish Water said that in order to progress plans for the development of wastewater infrastructure in Moville, Co. Donegal "works including sampling, water profiling and current measurement were undertaken."

"The current recording equipment used for these works included Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers (ADCP) which rest on the bed of Lough Foyle," the spokesperson said. According to Irish Water, the ADCP equipment has all now been removed.

With respect to the permits for the works the spokesperson said, "All required permissions/permits for survey work were obtained including a Section 69 sampling permit from the Loughs Agency. A licence was not required from the Loughs Agency for the ADCP deployment. There are no further planned marine investigations for 2019 under the Section 69 sampling permit."

In a comment to *The Skipper*,

a spokesperson for the Loughs Agency stated: "Loughs Agency provided a permit to MERC Environmental, working on behalf of Irish Water to undertake survey work investigating the ecology of the seabed of Lough Foyle, near Moville. The survey work included 10 day grab samples and 9 intertidal core samples."

"Loughs Agency issued the permit subject to a number of conditions which included the return of any commercial bivalve species. The Agency has been made aware that a large vessel was observed removing monitoring equipment from the Lough. This was not survey work being undertaken by MERC Environmental."

Regarding their remit the spokesperson for the Agency stated: "Loughs Agency have a specific remit for the protection and conservation of the inland fisheries of the Foyle and Carlingford areas. The Agency provides permits for work that involves the taking of fish or shellfish for scientific purposes. The deployment of monitoring equipment or survey work that does not include the taking of fish or



The photograph, according to fishermen, shows a 1 tonne concrete box being lifted aboard. This box, they say, is used as an anchor to hold the yellow equipment (also shown on the deck of the boat) in place on the seabed.

shellfish is not an activity that can be subject to an application for a permit or licence by the Agency.

"In relation to concerns about shipping hazards, these are matters for other maritime agencies. The Agency did not receive a Marine Notice to alert that the monitoring equipment in question was being placed in Lough Foyle."

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The Fishermen and the Seals

Write down that the government killed him

By Lia ní Aodha

The mainstream narrative surrounding seals, fishing and fishermen in this country reminds me of a scene from *The Islands and the Whales* — the film that looks at Grindadráp, the annual pilot whale hunt carried out by the Faroese — when international ‘visitors’ Pamela Anderson and Sea Shepard hold a meeting with members of the Faroese community and tell them that rather than eat whales they should become vegetarian. The exchange in the scene goes like this:

Pamela: “It’s inhumane to kill a whale. Why would you need to kill a whale? Why would you need to kill anything? I mean you are killing all these whales here for this small...you know, community. How many whales do you need?”

Faroese community member 1: “If we are not eating whale meat maybe...eh...once a month what are we supposed to eat instead? Do you have any ideas?”

Pamela: “Be vegetarian! And protect the whales. Protect the environment. Protect our planet so we have one.”

Faroese community member 1: “You can’t grow many things here in the Faroe Islands!”

Faroese community member 2: “Do you think we should go the supermarket and buy groceries and fruit and vegetables imported from the other side of the world?”

Sea Shepard participant: “You do it already. The supermarkets are full of lamb from New Zealand. Of food from everywhere.”

Faroese community member 2: “Ya. But the killing of whales, it means we eat less imported meat.”

Faroese community member 1: “Let me try to rephrase the question. Let’s say we switch the whale...to give you...you get the whale and we get a cow instead from America or somewhere, for example. Would you leave us alone then?”

Sea Shepard Participant: “Well we are a marine conservation organisation. We focus on the ocean issues”.

Faroese community member 1: “Are you not obliged to put this

question into the real context?”

Over the past number of months, *The Skipper* has carried a series of articles and letters discussing the issue of seal-fishery interactions in Ireland. Gathered with the help of the National Inshore Fishermen’s Association and the National Inshore Fishermen’s Organisation (NIFA/NIFO), this month we are sharing input from inshore fishermen themselves on the issue. According to those fishermen, the issue of seal depredation is very real and has become worse over time. This, say the fishermen, has had several effects on their livelihoods – working to narrow their economic, social and ecological options.

One fisherman, who fishes for pollock, crayfish and monk off the south west told *The Skipper* that though seals have always been an issue for them, in the last ten years the issue has become particularly bad. Back in 1994, when he began fishing, he said he might have had a problem with one or two seals a day, now he could have an issue with up to twenty following him and feeding from his fishing gear. Seal numbers, he said, have exploded in the south west in the past ten years.

On account of this, the fisherman, who jigs and gillnets for pollock and tangle nets for monkfish, stopped fishing for monk altogether 5 years ago. 95 per cent of his catch was being destroyed by seals. When gillnetting for pollock, said the fisherman, seals take and damage at least 50 per cent of their catch from the net. Of the other 50 per cent hauled in 30 per cent is damaged by seals. When jigging, he said, the seals break the line before the fish come up into the boat and you can lose up to thirty traces a day at a cost of eight euros per day on top of the loss of fish. This, he said, makes this fishery unviable.

Kieran Healy, who fishes single-handed on his 7m vessel from Crosshaven also stopped fishing for monkfish on account of seals. Kieran, whose activity is currently limited to the various pot fisheries with the occasional netting for spider crab and line fishing for pollock, began fishing in 1977. Up

until the mid-eighties, he said, “there was hardly a seal to be seen” and none had ever bothered them until one particular day, out of the blue, a steady stream of monkfish heads, minus the tails came over the hauler. “To say we were shocked would be an understatement,” he said. “Over the years the losses of monkfish from tangle and trammel nets climbed to a level where we were constantly losing a third of our fish to seals,” he said.

According to the Irish Seal Sanctuary (ISS) the problem between seals and fishermen relates to how inshore fishermen fish (or maybe even that they fish). “Pictures of damaged fish,” they say (September issue, *The Skipper*), “give no context or information on proximity to seal haul-outs or soak times”. Fishermen can provide scientists with this information and records on bycatch on return for redress and transitioning to sustainability, they say. “The quicker their dependency on tangle nets goes the way of drift nets the better and the more such practice is eschewed, the faster stocks may recover.”

Speaking to fishermen, however, though they may get little credit for it, many have taken measures to adapt their practices over the years, and in more ways than just concerning seals. Kieran (who over the years has taken countless observers out to document his catches and losses to seals) explained how he has tried to deal with the issue by only fishing short strings of trammels and spreading them out. He also reduced soak times to overnight soaks and hauled the gear into the boat as quickly as he could, clearing fish afterwards.

“Finally, four years ago it became impossible to continue, losses of monkfish had climbed to 90% at minimum and oftentimes 100%. Between Ballycotton and Kinsale there were approximately sixteen boats successfully prosecuting this fishery for five months of the year, now none of them do,” he said highlighting the impact the issue has had not just on individual fishermen, but entire fisheries.

“The same amount of boats are still here but all effort has

now been diverted into various pot fisheries, however long that’s going to last,” he said.

A similar story from a fisherman who fishes shellfish in Dingle Bay and off the Blaskets — ‘the Grey Seal capital of Ireland’ — who said that when he began fishing roughly twenty years ago, alongside fishing shellfish they also fished various static nets and hooks and lines, mostly for whitefish but also shellfish and some pelagics. “About a decade ago the netting and lining became no longer economically viable, mainly due to seal depredation,” he said.

“As a result, I altered my business model and method of operation (at considerable cost in terms of capital investment in extra pots) to one where we now fish solely with pots,” he said. “We now work in excess of twice the amount of crab and shrimp pots than we did a decade ago.”

On the one hand, the Kerry fisherman highlighted that from a business perspective the move could be described at positive – his profit margins have increased, partly on account of good shellfish prices and a reduction in the costs of having to maintain several types of static nets, and he now employs one more crew.

On the other hand, he fears for the medium to long term viability of his business model, as he doesn’t see it is sustainable. “The eggs are in too few baskets now so to speak and the business is exposed to a decline in a small number of key shellfish stocks and their respective markets, incidentally with crab, both are showing a decline this year.” Should something now happen to that market, he said, he can’t think of an economically viable fishery alternative to turn to.

For those now operating exclusively in pot fisheries, neither has the decline of nets seen the seal problem disappear.

Existing research indicates seals are highly intelligent and adaptable marine mammals. Studies have reported pingers, once seen as a possible deterrent, actually quickly becomes a dinner bell, when seals learn to associate the acoustic cue with fish.

An article published earlier

this summer (2019), in the journal *Animal Cognition*, suggests seals are aware of their own behaviour and can recall it.

Frank Riney, who fishes for shrimp in Kenmare Bay, says seals opening shrimp pots are a big problem for him and one that has worsened over time. Frank said that over the years he might have had three or four pots open in about 100 hauled. In the past two years, however, this number has increased to twenty open in the 100. Though Frank ties covers seals only break them open. “It’s a big loss of income plus the damage to pots,” he said.

As with gear type, neither is the seal problem confined to a particular part of the country. Loughshinney fishermen, Alan Fanning who fishes from the east coast on his boat, Lily Tom III, says seals started affecting their gear in shallow water about three years ago. “We never has problems before that,” said Alan. “They started opening the pot doors to release the bait. On one particular day we had 250 pots opened,” he said.

In light of this, one fisherman asked, rather reasonably, whether now it might only be a matter of time before seals also render those fisheries unviable?

In terms of a way forward, the clear answer from fishermen is some kind of action on the issue is needed, that takes into account what they are saying. Many point to the need for some form of management, highlighting that when issues occur like this on land that threatens livelihoods (and sometimes not) they are dealt with.

Whichever, the bottom line, says Kieran Healy, is the issue is not going to solve itself.

“There is often talk of ‘ecosystem management’ but how can this take place when the apex predator is allowed free run to build up a population far exceeding the ability of the ecosystem to sustain it, creating an imbalance which flies in the face of nature,” he highlights.

Earlier this year, after more than thirty wild deer were culled in Dublin’s Park, in response to criticism, in an article published in the *Irish Times*, the Office of Public Works (OPW) stated that while the value of wild deer in Phoenix Park must be recognised “this must be balanced with an equal recognition of the potential for deer to impact adversely on a range of other biodiversity values”.

The practice of culling deer was also defended by the Government,



The Aileen Des. Image Niall Duffy

as reported in *The Irish Examiner* in February when Minister Paschal Donohoe said that culling deer “is considered to be the most appropriate and humane way to sustainably manage the population of deer in the park”.

Highlighting grey seals are no longer an endangered species, though they do prey on other endangered species, Kieran wondered just how much would be sacrificed for seals? Today both grey and harbour seals are listed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as being of least concern.

“If Norway and Canada can have management plans for seals why can’t the European Union do so?” he asked with little hope.

At the nub of the issue, says another fisherman, is the protected status (both at EU and National level) that seal enjoy. “Reviewing that status including the cost that status has had, must in my view, be a prerequisite to any management attempts,” he said.

Seal interactions with fisheries in Ireland have fundamentally changed the inshore sector and how it operates. “That change has come at a significant cost which was borne solely by industry with no financial assistance. The result is the sector is now operating a model that is neither economically, socially or environmentally sustainable.”

Seals are protected under the European Union’s Habitats Directive. Under that directive, Ireland is legally obliged to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) for Annex

II species (which includes grey seals), and ensure listed species are maintained at a ‘Favourable Conservation Status’. Beyond SACs, says the Commission, member states “must take measures to ensure that the taking in the wild of specimens of the species as well as any exploitation of the species is compatible with it being maintained at a favourable conservation status”.

As the species is not strictly protected under the Directive, says the Commission, beyond the site protection requirements applying to SACs the provisions of the Directive, may allow for management of the population as long as this is consistent with the objectives of achieving and maintaining favourable conservation status under the Directive. This is a matter for the Irish authorities to decide on and to ensure, they say. In other words, this is a national issue.

According to the National Parks and Wildlife’s (NPWS) report published late last summer, *The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland*, “the Overall Status is Favourable with an increasing trend.” The Aerial Thermal-Imaging Survey of Seals in Ireland, 2017-2018 published by the NPWS this autumn, states 3,698 Grey Seals were counted compared with 2,964 counted in 2011/2012 and 1,309 counted in 2003. The Grey Seal count in 2017/2018 was 25% higher than the 2011/2012 count and almost three times higher than the 2003 count.

In *An tOileánach*, Tomás Ó Criomhthain recounts a time when people on the Great Blasket Island would much prefer a seal to a pig. Of course in Ireland, in the past, seals were hunted for food, for their fat, and for their skins – sometimes, perhaps, destructively. At times in the history of the Irish State the goal was to eradicate seals entirely to reduce their competition with fisheries. Bounties were paid for each seal killed. Since 1976 they have been protected under the *Wildlife Act*.

Little to do with seals, the last remaining human inhabitants of the Great Blasket were permanently evacuated to the mainland in 1953. Accepted as a necessity at the time on account of the increasingly harsh life on the island and lack of communications with the mainland, the last straw, writes Diarmuid Ferriter in his history of Ireland’s Off-Shore Islands, *On the Edge*, was the death of Seán Carney from meningitis in 1947 whose body lay for three days on his father’s bed on account of the telephone on the island not working and bad weather.

Of course, the reality is that life on the Blaskets, as on the mainland or at sea, was and is shaped by policies and politics, as much as the Atlantic. Ferriter cites Séan’s brother as recording concerning the determination of the cause of Séan’s death once on the mainland: ‘My father told them to write down that the government killed him’.

This summation could just as easily be applied to many inshore fishermen today.

How many departments does it take to manage an oyster? Department of the Marine opts out of new Marine Planning Bill

By LORNA SIGGINS

ASK a talkative Government minister how many departments are required to manage a native flat oyster, and one might expect an irritated pause.

However, junior minister Damien English barely drew a breath before giving the correct answer — seven — at a regional consultation in Galway last month (December).

It was a clever question, posed by Diarmuid Kelly of Galway Bay environmental group Cuan Beo, and one which the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development appeared to be well ready for.

He wasn't wearing waders or carrying a sharp knife or sickle for *Ascophyllum nodosum*, but the fast-talking Meath man was even able to inform Connemara seaweed harvesters that he knew how difficult their job could be.

Mr English was attending the evening session of one of the regional consultations currently being held by his department to canvass opinion on the new National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF). As reported by *The Skipper* last month, the framework sets sectoral policies to guide activity or development over a 20 year period.

It is driven by an EU directive which obliges all coastal member states to establish maritime spatial plans by 2021. One single national marine plan will apply to Ireland's entire maritime area, extending from mean high water mark on the coast to the 200 mile limits of the exclusive economic zone and Continental Shelf.

The Government is also "committed" to preparation of regional or sub-national plans in future marine spatial policy cycles, while possible coastal partnerships have also been discussed. The draft framework has been welcomed by the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO) as a "crucial milestone" in the "long overdue process" of developing a marine spatial plan.

However, there is a perception that it has already been delivered a knock-out punch by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, headed by Minister Michael Creed. His department is a key participant in the framework, and in the preceding marine planning policy statement which was published in late summer.

Last month, Mr Creed's department confirmed it would not sign up to the legislation which is designed to underpin it all.

This legislation aims to provide a single clearing house for approving renewable energy projects, commercial fishing, mineral extraction, aquaculture and other competing interests, including tourism.

The government is under pressure to deliver on EU targets to tackle climate change, and so offshore wind projects generating renewable energy will receive "preference" in sea areas zoned for "strategic marine activity".

It would only make sense, then, that the fishing industry should be taken into account in any such licensing of competing activities.

However, Mr Creed's department said in a response to a press query last month that "the



The Black Atlantic (or mid-Atlantic) is operative in the intensifications of the extractive activities in its waters. Bathymetry and fishing data in the mid-Atlantic. © Territorial Agency

Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government is the lead department in respect of the ongoing development of the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill".

"In accordance with a Government decision, functions relating to aquaculture, sea-fisheries related development, fishery harbour centres and any other development within the functional remit of the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine are excluded from the scope of the Bill," it said.

Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) Aquaculture Executive Teresa Morrissey, who represents fish and shellfish farmers, challenged Mr English at the Galway consultation to explain why this was so.

She said that the current system of aquaculture licensing had been acknowledged as not fit for purpose, while Diarmuid Kelly of Cuan Beo pitched in with his observation about the practical difficulties for shellfish farmers, citing management of the native flat oyster as one prime example.

"The situation with the Department of Agriculture is not finished yet," Mr English responded, making his best effort to upbeat about the situation.

Speaking to *The Skipper*, Ms Morrissey said she was first alerted to the issue at marine spatial planning advisory group discussion level, when she noticed that aquaculture was not referenced in the planned legislation.

"This marine spatial planning has three essential parts — the policy statement, the plan and the legislation underpinning it all," she said. "We are happy enough with the policy and the plan, as anything that takes a more coherent approach to marine development has to be good."

"I really thought the plan would provide a conduit for reform of the legislation, because we have enormous difficulties with the current aquaculture licensing system," she says. "It seems at the moment as if this is not the case."

"It is not just about the long waiting lists for

aquaculture licenses, but the fact that the current system is not transparent," she said.

"If people in the aquaculture industry can't interpret the licensing system, how can people outside, and therefore you then have communities who become very mistrustful — simply because the system does not allow them access to information," she says.

Two years ago, an independent aquaculture licensing review group made 30 recommendations to tackle a "dysfunctional" regulatory system, but there has been little action since, Ms Morrissey says.

As IFA Aquaculture chair Michael Mulloy pointed out earlier this year, this lack of action has had a critical, and very negative, impact.

"The opportunity to create and sustain 1,300 jobs has been wasted," Mr Mulloy said.

"According to BIM's figures, Irish aquaculture is now 20% below 2010 volumes and based on Government targets of 7.8% yearly growth, this means the industry is a staggering 82% below stated Government policy targets," Mr Mulloy added.

"If we had a legislative system that allowed for pre-screening of projects, it would resolve a lot of issues," Ms Morrissey explains. "Pre-screening opens up the discussion — and whether projects are suitable — at the beginning, not at the end of the process."

"However, the way the licensing system is geared now, projects have to go all the way to the end before being approved or turned down," she says.

"A backlog of license applications with the department has almost been cleared on the shellfish side, but finfish delays are ongoing and some projects are taking years for approval," she says.

"The only thing I'd take comfort from in Mr English's remarks is that his own department takes a similar view that all of the sectors should be part of the legislation," she says.

"It is not just about the long waiting lists for aquaculture licenses, but the fact that the current system is not transparent"

"However, it is action, rather than words, that is needed now," she says.

Within the fishing industry, there appears to be no great concern about the department's decision to opt out. The KFO says it has "no issue" as it makes "perfect sense".

This is echoed by Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation chief executive Hugo Boyle who pointed out that whereas a "one stop shop" for planning and infrastructure on the coast would work well, it would be more complex for fishing.

"The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is running workshops on simplifying the licensing system and digitising it, and we are very happy with this," he said.

The series of regional consultations on the national marine planning framework is due to continue into the new year, before a submission deadline of end of February 2020.

However, the Bantry Bay Protect our Native Kelp Forest grouping, which opposes mechanical harvesting of kelp in West Cork, has questioned the value of these consultations if the Department of Housing's work on the earlier marine planning policy statement is anything to go by.

The Bantry environmental group undertook an analysis of the draft and final marine policy statements, noting that some 58 submissions had been made. Its analysis of the final policy statement found it to be almost "identical with the draft text upon which these stakeholders commented", noting that "99% of the text is the same".

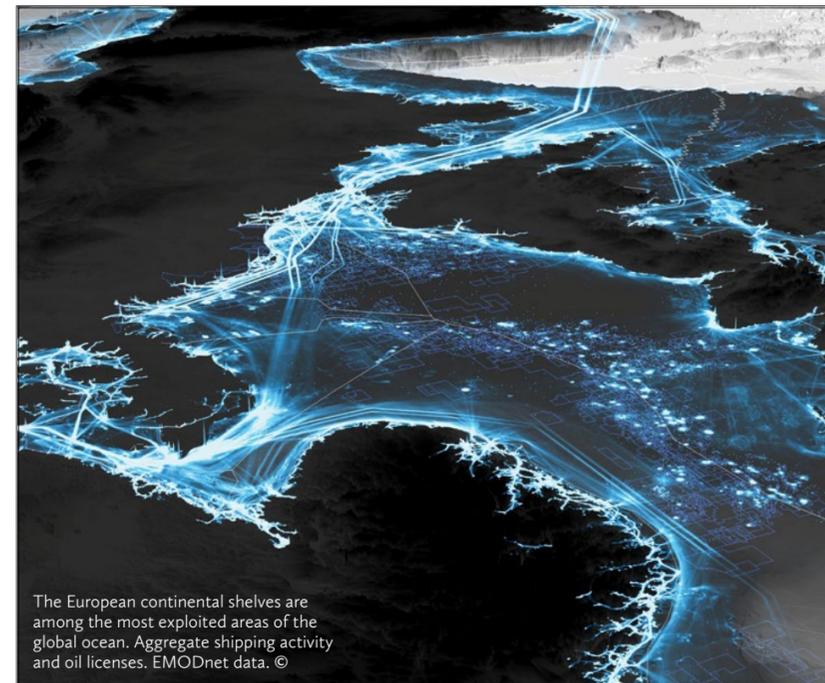
"The only major changes seem to have been the removal of the words 'consultation draft' from the document's cover and the headers at the top of its pages, the elimination of some typos, and the alteration of a mere 24 out of 6,000-odd words," the group noted.

It also tracked "the addition of 'the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and the Water Framework Directive' on page 8; the expansion of 'department' to 'Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine' on page 12, and, 'ironically, the expansion of marine stakeholders and the public' to 'marine stakeholders including NGOs, community groups and members of the public', also on page 12, group spokesman Tomás O'Sullivan and Dolf D'hondt noted.

"Over 200 pages of submissions during the public consultation process had utterly no impact" on the marine policy text, they concluded. The department has not responded to its criticism.

Government sources point out that while the Marine Scotland system of management has been cited as a model for Ireland, it has its problems. Similarly, they believe a return to a single department of marine would not work, given the EU's favoured separation of regulation from development.

"The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government might seem like an odd fit, but it does already hold responsibility for onshore planning — and when it comes to legislating for marine activities, it comes with no baggage and has no skin in the game..."



The European continental shelves are among the most exploited areas of the global ocean. Aggregate shipping activity and oil licenses. EMODnet data. ©

COMBINED impacts of sea level rise, intensification of maritime transport, depletion of coastal ecosystems and deep-sea mining are the theme of a new exhibition, *Oceans in Transformation*, opening in Venice in March 2020. Commissioned by TBA21-Academy and carried out in collaboration with Territorial Agency, which is hosting the exhibition, the project depicts the rapid transformations in the world's oceans with the aim of changing the conversation about the ocean environment. Effects of overfishing, bottom trawling, oil exploration and extraction, migration, changing ocean circulations, militarisation and melting ice are also traced by the research project.

Securitising Ireland's sea spaces

GOVERNMENT interest in issues beyond the high water mark is now extending to national security. It has opened a short month-long public consultation on this as part of its bid to develop a "national security strategy".

The Marine Renewables Industry Association (MRIA), representing offshore renewable energy, says it will make a submission.

The proposed strategy aims to "set out a whole of Government approach for how the State can protect its national security and vital interests from current and emerging threats over the period 2020-2025".

"Like many other states, the security environment that Ireland now faces is broad and changing," the Government says. "Traditional threats from terrorism, for example, remain a concern while newer threats such as those arising in the cyber environment or from a changing geo-political landscape will present new challenges."

"While a number of government departments and services have a central responsibility to protect the State, other government and non-government services and bodies may increasingly have a role in the national security space and we may need to develop new capabilities to respond to the changing environment," it says.

The Naval Service has already highlighted difficulties in protecting "critical national infrastructure" — but it is not talking about fish.

In a paper for this year's Defence Forces Review, Lt Shane Mulcahy says that around three-quarters of transatlantic cables in the northern hemisphere pass through or near Irish waters, mostly along a corridor less than 160km wide.

These cables have been described as the "corporate and physical backbone layers of the internet", facilitating up to 15 million financial transactions very day.

Ireland is "most assuredly not immune" to having the cables in its waters tapped, he writes, and Russian "spy ship" *Yantar* is "no stranger to European, and even Irish, waters".

He identifies subsea cables as "soft military target", which are fragile, geographically concentrated, and located in remote areas. Locations are identified to avoid accident damage from the fishing industry, but this also exposes them to threats from "non-state actors".

"So long as Ireland remains socially and economically married to the vital but delicate network of glass laying just offshore, it is high time we considered protecting it," Lt Mulcahy writes.

Closing date for public observations on the national security strategy was December 31st. The final submission date for the national marine planning framework is February 28th, 2020.

Details of how to make a submission, and dates and venues for further consultation meetings in further events planned for Killybegs, Co Donegal, Bantry, Co Cork, Dungarvan, Co Waterford, Dublin and Wexford are on www.housing.gov.ie/planning/marine-planning/marine-planning.

Irish Skipper Expo SHOW NEWS

Proud Sponsors
BIM Ireland's Seafood Development Agency
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UL ARENA, LIMERICK - MAR 13-14, 2020

Irish Skipper Expo 2020 – Visitors Please Register

With January now upon us, the new-look Irish Skipper Expo 2020 in Limerick (13 and 14 March) is rapidly looming with the show promising to be another fantastic showcase for the commercial fishing industry.

Sponsored by Irish seafood development agency, BIM, and leading marine insurer Cavanagh Hooper Dolan Insurances, there has been a huge level of interest from exhibitors, including from many first-time attendees, attracted by the excellent facilities at UL Sport Arena in Limerick.

For the first time, there will be visitor registration at the expo, and those looking to visit can beat the queues by visiting www.theskipper.ie/irish-skipper-expo/ and following the link for visitor registration. (Visitors can also register at the entrance if they prefer).

Stands are still available for companies looking to exhibit in the fit-for-purpose exhibiting

hall, and there is also a large outside display area right by the main entrance, which is ideal for promoting large items of fishing equipment and machinery, as well as small craft.

Sharon Boyle of Irish Skipper Expo 2020 organiser Mara Media, said: “The success of the Irish Skipper Expo can be attributed to the fact that it is a great place to do business, as well as being the ideal venue for the fishing industry to network and socialise.

“With an exciting new venue for 2020, where exhibitors will be housed in the one spacious exhibiting hall, everything is all set for a truly tremendous event.”

Irish Skipper Expo 2020 will be held at UL Sport Arena in Limerick on 13th and 14th March, opening times 10am – 6pm on Friday 13th and 10am – 4pm on Saturday 14th March. Entry is free.

More information at www.theskipper.ie or contact Sharon Boyle on 00353 868401250.



Pre-registered visitors will gain fast entry

Bespoke insurance packages from CHD Insurances

STAND
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Cavanagh Hooper Dolan (CHD) Insurances Ltd are delighted to sponsor Irish Skipper Expo 2020.

During their 76 years in business, they have developed bespoke insurance packages to cater for their clients' needs and provide a 24/7/365 claims service to their marine customers. CHD Insurances is part of the Hooper Dolan Group, one of the largest wholly Irish owned insurance brokerages.

Staff at CHD Insurances take pride in their work; always striving to go the extra mile for clients. CHD Insurances is a unique company with specialist marine knowledge and history. Both CHD Insurances' new and existing clients can expect to receive invaluable insurance advice and the highest standard of service.

They provide a comprehensive and competitive range of professional products and services to both individuals and companies. Services include a wide range of marine and general insurance

products for all classes of vessels and onshore business in all sectors of the industry. CHD also provide a broad range of home, motor and health insurance products and have clients based in both ROI and UK.

Due to recent changes brought in Marine Notice No. 42 of 2019, they have had an increase in queries for health insurance cover for crew. If you would like to discuss your options in relation to health insurance cover, or get some advice in relation to this topic, their staff will be more than happy to help you with this at the Irish Skipper Expo or over the phone.

The CHD team have been attending the Skipper Expo since its inception and use this premier two-day event as an opportunity to meet with existing clients and to meet with prospective new customers. In addition to providing information on their marine insurance products, they will have information on various other insurance products such as home, motor and the many other business needs.

STAND
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Fishfacts - Facebook for Fisheries



Fishfacts is a highly sophisticated database with fishing vessels, ownership, fishing rights and financial statements.

Exhibiting at the Irish Skipper Expo, Fishfacts has also developed its own AIS system that is specially

designed for the fishing industry. Most of the biggest fishing companies are using Fishfacts, says Hanus Samró, part-owner and head of sales and communication.

Fishfacts was launched in April 2018 by Óli Samró, economist and fisheries

consultant, along with his son, Hanus Samró. They are from the Faroe Islands but the company is registered in the Netherlands, where Óli Samró has lived since 2003.

The platform is based on thirty years of experience. Oli Samró published a book on fisheries management systems in 2016. How are the countries managing their fisheries? Do they use quotas? How about foreign ownership? What is the aim of their policies?

The book was written in Faroese but also translated into Icelandic and Norwegian. After the book, Oli Samró started working on Fishfacts. Instead of asking, how is it managed, the question is: who owns the fish, who is fishing it, and where?

Since Fishfacts was released a year and a half ago, the platform has grown rapidly. More than 350 fishing vessels are using the platform, including many service companies. A new feature was released specifically for the service sector in September this year, with the aim of connecting service companies with fishing vessels.

“It was a logical step,” says Hanus Samró. “It works like Facebook, i.e. companies can create their own page, write articles, publish products and upload videos. It is also possible to search for phone numbers, companies and contact information. The service sector is integrated to the AIS system. That is why we call it Facebook for fisheries.”

Smart Sailors helping to maximise revenue

STAND
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Exhibiting at Irish Skipper Expo 2020 is Smart Sailors, which is the most intuitive app to help you maintain your fleet of vessels.

Used by more than 1000 chief engineers all over the world every day, it is the perfect tool to ensure the best availability of your ships, maximize your fleet revenue generation and reduce your operational costs.

With an adaptive pricing of 2 euros per meter, you can start with one vessel at a minimum cost. Your invoice grows with your fleet! This

price includes everything: unlimited data, unlimited attachments, unlimited users online at the same time and reactive user support on instant chat for all your employees, and mobile / tablet support.

Smart Sailors is a turnkey solution: they import your existing maintenance plan, train your users and you're ready to start within a week. No hardware installation onboard or at your office, no software licences to buy, no contractual commitment and an always-smiling team available for you!



Easy to install, easy to program but most of all EASY TO USE

STAND
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are far too complicated to deal with and are also often oversized and too expensive for many fishing vessels and work boats.

That is why they have developed the Bridge Control Systems LMB2100 and LMB2101Basic based on their mantra: Easy to install, easy to program but most of all EASY TO USE. But still this unique bridge control system contains all modern facilities and can be adapted to any engine and gearbox combination. No job is too small or too big for Lyngaa Marine.

The closest you can get to “plug and play”

Irish Skipper Expo exhibitor Lyngaa Marine has recognised that Bridge Control Systems for Controllable Pitch Propellers

It is possible for the crew to commission the systems themselves and the set-up is done directly from the touch screen – so

that operators can learn as they go along. However, online contact with Lyngaa Marine is also an option if necessary. Compared to other systems, this means really big savings for the ship owner and less trouble for the crew.

Due to the fact that these new systems are so easy to set-up, robust and very competitively priced, the systems are now a huge success and are working on fishing vessels and work boats all over the world, and in the past 15 years no errors have been recorded. References can be seen at www.lyngaamarine.com

Jan Christiansen of Lyngaa Marine says: “We are really looking forward to welcoming everybody to our stand at the Irish Skipper Expo.”

IRISH
SKIPPER EXPO
13-14 MARCH 2020



WE NEED
YOU
..to pre-register

All visitors need a **VISITORS PASS** to enter next year's show in Limerick. Complete the Visitor Registration today and gain **FAST** entry.

www.theskipper.ie/irish-skipper-expo/

EXHIBITOR LIST TO DATE

- AIB
- AJ GROUP
- ANDERSON MARINE
- AQUABROKER
- ARKLOW MARINE
- ASAP SUPPLIES
- ASTANDER SHIPYARD
- ATLANTIC MARINE SUPPLIES LTD
- BARRUS
- BARRY ELECTRONICS
- BELCO MARINE
- BERE ISLAND BOATYARD
- BERTHON POWER LTD
- BIM
- BOPP
- BRUNVOLL AS
- CAVANAGH HOOPER DOLAN
- CAVANAGH NETS
- CC JENSEN A/S
- CH MARINE
- CHARITY & TAYLOR
- CHARLES CLEGHORN LTD
- CHRISTY HANNON ENGINEERING
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- FAIRWATER FISHING
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- FINNING UK & IRELAND
- FISH FACTS
- G. SMYTH BOATS
- GEMS LTD
- GLOBAL EMPIRE HYDRAULIC CONNECTIONS
- GUY COTTEN UK LTD
- HACI LTD. (HOSE & COUPLINGS IRELAND)
- HARDWARE & MARINE SUPPLIES
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- INJECTOR DOOR
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- JACKSON TRAWLS
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- KER SERVICES LTD
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- LARSEN FISHING GEAR
- LIAM MCDERMOT POTS
- LORRIMAR
- LYNGAA MARINE APS.
- MACGREGOR (GBR) LTD.
- MANTSBRITE MARINE
- MARINE & INDUSTRIAL TRANSMISSIONS
- MARINE DESIGN
- INTERNATIONAL MARINE INSTITUTE
- MARINE SAFETY

STAND
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AIB at Irish Skipper Expo 2020

AIB has been a longstanding supporter of the Irish Skipper Expo. At AIB, they understand the value that the Irish fishing sector contributes to Ireland's economy and recognise that the Skipper Expo is a great platform for everyone engaged in the industry to meet, network and do business together.

It is a great opportunity for AIB to meet with existing customers as well as develop new relationships with

businesses in the industry. It's a place for AIB to learn and really understand the opportunities and the challenges within the fishing sector.

AIB staff will be there on the day to guide you in your financing journey, whether that be building a new fishing vessel, looking at setting up a pension or discussing the challenges that Brexit poses to the industry and the supports available.

With outlets in all major fishing ports, AIB staff have

a keen interest in the fishing industry. Listening to their customers and understanding the challenges within the sector is vital information to allow AIB to continuously enhance their product and service offering.

Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c. is tied to Irish Life Assurance plc for life and pensions business. Allied Irish Banks, p.l.c. is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Irish Life Assurance plc is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

Mooney Boats exhibiting a wide range of products and services

STAND
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At Irish Skipper Expo 2020, Mooney Boats Ltd will be exhibiting a wide range of services and products, as well as looking at what the year ahead has in store for the yard.

Ahead of what is sure to be a busy period for the Killybegs boatyard, they will be featuring their latest new build delivered Yard No B48 "Amethyst" 20.25m prawn trawler for Scotland, along with new builds under construction for delivery in 2020 which are Yard No B47 "Ocean Challenge" 28.5m trawler to be delivered to Shetland and Yard No B49 "Ella" 27.38m trawler to be delivered to Ireland.

The yard will also be showcasing some of their facilities in and around the yard, including their 75 ton boat hoist, their brand new state of the yard workshop as well as the DAFM Syncrolift Facility which is located adjacent to the yard itself.

They will also be promoting many of their in-house services, such as welding & fabrication, carpentry, CNC Plasma, turning & fitting, hydraulics, crane hire, shot-blasting, hot zinc spraying,



painting, as well as DNV approved Ultra-Sonic Hull Testing.

Mooney Boats will also be promoting some exciting new products that they are main Irish agents for, including Kemilux cleaning products, as well as a brand new line of diesel treatments from Marship UK/ Marine 16. On top of this they

have a range of brand new stainless steel transducer blocks which they are manufacturing in-house and S/S Fish Handling Equipment.

It's going to be another busy year for Mooney Boats, so come and visit them at Irish Skipper Expo where they look forward to seeing you.

STAND
101

Quality fish boxes from Craemer

Craemer UK, based in Telford England, and Craemer in Herzebrook, Germany, have been making heavy duty returnable fish boxes for customers in Ireland since the 1980s. This long standing experience and knowledge of customer requirements has created the industry standard for reliable, durable fish boxes trusted by Skippers, Co-operatives and processors, throughout the fishing Industry.

Craemer is a long established family company with a

commitment to invest in the best injection moulding machines and toolmaking available on the market. This means that the fishing industry is supplied with quality products of a consistently high standard and from the widest fish box range available. Unique features include the Craemer designed outside drainage system, arrow marks for nesting and stacking, and the RFID profiles designed into the box which give the opportunity to track boxes with retrofittable tags.

Craemer will also be featuring the new CB3 heavy duty pallet box at the exciting new venue for Irish Skipper Expo 2020 in Limerick, along with all the standard nest stack boxes on show.



SNG – serving all sectors of the fishing

STAND
126

From the smallest potter to the large pelagic vessels, few companies in the international commercial marine sector can boast of such a diverse range of products and services to the fishing industry as Swan Net Gundry (SNG).

Practically a permanent fixture of the Irish and Scottish Skipper Expos every year, SNG will once again display their new and existing products at the Irish Skipper Expo.

With a strong reputation in R&D, resulting in new innovations to adapt to the needs of fishermen in this ever changing industry, SNG is renowned for high quality pelagic and whitefish/prawn trawls — and the company's design and sales staff will be on hand at the 2020 Expo to explain the many benefits of their latest designs.

And, for all trawlers, SNG provide unique applications to make life easier, including a full range of chandlery and the new range of HDG hardware products from leading supplier Gunnebo.

At the other end of the industry scale, SNG invests strongly in its inshore division - evidenced by the top quality range of newly developed products introduced



in the last 12 months, including high performance plastic base lobster/crab pots, Ocean Buoys, and the extensively 'fatigue tested' Oceanflex Plus and Oceanflex Extreme potting ropes which are now highly popular with Irish and UK inshore fishermen.

SNG welcome you to drop by their stand at the 2020 Skipper Expo to discuss any products and services, including products from their supply partners Blue line, Hempel Paints, ACR Electronics and Guy Cotton.

Prolines Naval Architecture and Marine Surveyors

STAND
25

Limerick exhibitor Prolines, now in their nineteenth year of operation, started off as a naval architects company supplying drawings to the fishing industry for the tonnage conversion programme in 2001.

Prolines have over the last two decades diversified in both markets and services. Today

Prolines offers naval architectural services ranging from complex finite element analysis FEA to detailed kit design for all manner of businesses from heavy construction companies to the film industry.

This year has seen Prolines flag in several passenger ships, fishing boats and work boats as well as designing and producing kits

for over 100 tonnes of steel.

Prolines has however never forgotten its roots in the fishing industry. They continue to service this sector so if you are looking to import a boat, build a new one or modifying a used one or you are simply trying to keep up with your legislation requirements, they look forward to meeting you all at Irish Skipper Expo 2020.

STAND
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Major investment by Tyson's



Family owned and operating for over 35 years, Irish Skipper Expo exhibitor Tyson's Ships Riggers Ltd is proud to announce major investments in new wire winding and coiling machines and the launch of their new creel range.

The company's Directors Chris Tyson and Jonathan Tyson said: "The major investment will allow us to increase our Annual Wire and Combination capacity from 250 thousand fathoms to over 400 thousand fathoms".

"We have expanded our warehouse and created our layby system in which Skippers can forward plan their orders. This system allows our customers to order ahead of time their trawl wires and combination sweeps which will then be kept in stock in our warehouse until required. This should give skippers peace of mind that

when their wire and sweeps are coming to the end of their working life they don't have to wait for their wires to be produced they will be there ready to be despatched immediately for their next trip saving them valuable time and loss of earnings".

There will be special offers on their GOLD STRAND Trawl Wire, with customer Zeik Tuits describing it as "excellent quality wire and Tyson's service is always 100%!"

Customers will also be pleased to hear that Tyson's will be exhibiting their new polysteel ropes at Limerick, and will have some extra special offers on their popular multicolour range.

There will also be offers on their King Crab range of ropes, 17mm Leaded which is used by Christopher and Anthony Harley, who say: "Tyson's King Crab Leaded ropes are excellent quality. Their motto is 'Trust Tyson's and we have to agree.'"

The company is also delighted to launch their new creel range. Tyson's are working closely with our European partner Carapax to guarantee excellent quality and competitive pricing on all our new potting range.

Visit Tyson's on their stand, where they will have on show a selection of their ropes, Euro Polysteel Ropes, King Crab Ropes, Shamrock Polysteel Ropes plus much more, including the recently added clothing range.

For more information reference the above or anything else please contact Chris Tyson or Jonathan Tyson and they will be happy to help.

- MARINE SUPPLIES (INTERNATIONAL) LTD
- MARINE SURVEY OFFICE
- MARPORT
- MC DONNELLS (QUEEN ST) LTD
- MEDLEY POTS
- MERMAID MARINE
- MICHIGAN MARINE
- PROPULSION
- MMG WELDING
- MOONEY BOATS LTD
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- MURPHY MARINE SERVICES
- NIFA - NATIONAL INSHORE FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION
- NOTUS
- ON SITE POWER GENERATION
- O'SULLIVANS MARINE
- PADMOS ENGINE & SHIP REPAIR
- PAT O'DONNELL & CO - VOLVO PENTA
- PETER BRUCE (PATSY) SHIPS PAINTERS
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- RNLI FISHING SAFETY
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- ROBERT BEIRNE ENGINEERING LTD
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- SILVERLINE PRODUCTS
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- SIRM UK
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- SPENCER CARTER
- SWAN NET GUNDRY
- TEIGNBRIDGE PROPELLERS
- THE SKIPPER
- THISTLE MARINE
- THYBORON TRAWLDOORS
- TOM HAND ELECTRONICS
- TRISKELL SEAFOODS
- TYSONS SHIP RIGGERS
- UNION CHANDLERY
- VERSA DOCK
- VIRHYDRO / HOOKLINE
- WESTWARD SCANIA
- WHISPAIRE
- ZIEGRA ICE MACHINES

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH EVERYTHING THAT IS HAPPENING IN THE BUILD UP TO IRISH SKIPPER EXPO 2020 ON OUR WEBSITE WWW.THESKIPPER.IE

NORTHERN IRELAND NEWS *By Dick James*

THE FISHERY

■ Another poor month! On the home front, there was little doing with the Nephrops fleet, a few got days in at the island and other quad riggers found meagre returns off Carlingford. Other Portavogie and Ardglass men located a fishing of sorts in the upper reaches of the Clyde and at least in those more sheltered waters, most days were fishable so a week's wages were there to be had. The only action of note was in the North Sea from Eyemouth to North Shields where a substantial fleet including the Northern Irish men were fishing by day for good returns. The catch was of good quality and one or two tows a day was typically returning 100 stones of Nephrops with little fish by-catch.

Other boats, mainly Kilkeel based, found themselves in the English Channel based in Plymouth or Brixham fishing the winter run of Cuttlefish in a consistent if not spectacular fishery. There was a presence of Irish boats in the same area.

This year's Scallop fishery has been poor, particularly on the Manx grounds, and the poor run of weather did not help the cause, particularly off the Northern Irish side where a succession of easterly blows hindered the better of a poor fishery.

Again, the Inshore men were weather affected and a depressing year at the Brown Crab was not helped by a poor market demand with some turning to lobster closer to home.

The usual whitefish suspects worked the Haddock off the Co. Louth coast, and one or two boats were operating in the North Channel for a mixture of fish including Hake.

The Pelagic season is now over with quotas caught and the boats tied up early for Christmas, although some fish is coming into the local factories by road.

2020 FISHING PROSPECTS

■ At the time of writing, the December Fisheries Council has yet to convene to decide the structure of the 2020 fisheries in terms of TAC's and quotas. There are, however, indications of the likely outcome from the ICES advice and the Commission's initial position. For Area VII most stocks of interest to the local fleet are roughly on a par with recent norms. However, the Irish Sea cod stock (along with other cod stocks) pose a potentially serious problem with cuts in the order of 70% possible. This could lead to fisheries closures within the landing obligation context and, of course, Northern Ireland's position is weakened by Hague Preference application.

The other stock of concern is Area VII Nephrops, which forms the backbone of the Northern Ireland fishery in terms of dependence. The Area VII assessment (like the North Sea and West of Scotland assessments) is a summation of individual area assessments within Area VII to reach a



Staff at NIFHA presenting Danielle with congratulatory flowers on her appointment. Image courtesy of NIFHA

Danielle Rooney has officially taken up the role of Kilkeel harbour master. Danielle, who is originally from Ballymartin and a senior footballer for Ballymartin GAA, also works as station officer for Kilkeel Coastguard. Having taken the role as acting harbor master last October, her role was made official in December. Believed to be the first female to take up such a post within Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA), Danielle has taken over the role from Michael Young, who has moved to Carlingford Harbour. Best of luck in your new role Danielle.

composite figure but this is usually added to for various complex reasons. Whatever – most of the Area VII stocks would appear to be coming in at a reduced level to the 2019 assessments which leads to the prospect of a TAC fall, with 15% being a touted prospect. This could lead to problems for 2020 as the quota uptake in 2019 will be in excess of 90% and with fleet structure changes could lead to a tight balance. It is noted that Northern Ireland's

largest Producer Organisation (NIFPO) which is a quota management body has reduced quota setting for Area VII Nephrops from 50 tonnes per month to 25 tonnes per month in anticipation of possible problems.

In contrast, the West of Scotland Nephrops stocks are showing better returns, with the South Minch in particular showing strength and a TAC increase should result in that sea area which can be heavily fished by the Co. Down fleet.

DILLON OWEN

■ The wreck of the Dillon Owen, which foundered on Phennick point on the 23rd of October, was raised on the 2nd of December in an operation involving a heavy lift barge, the Cormorant, two tugs and a carrier barge. The operation was done in several stages, as weather was a prime factor and a succession of onshore easterly blows interrupted proceedings several times with lifting barge and tugboat sheltering in Belfast port in between times. A window of three clear days at the end of November allowed the lifting barge to raise the hull and deckhouse separately onto the transport barge – all four vessels heading north and sheltering in Larne Harbour as the weather broke again. Final destination is supposed to Greenock on the Clyde.



UK NEWS

Major shellfish policy initiative launched

Shellfish interests from across England, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands recently met in London to form a cross-industry working group.

The intention is for the group to work collaboratively with fisheries scientists and government, to define a strategy which would deliver sustainable and profitable shellfisheries for the future. The group is focused on pot fisheries for crab, lobster and whelk.

The background to the new group is a widespread feeling that shellfish, despite its economic and social importance, hasn't achieved the political and management priority which it deserves. Inspiration has been taken from the Scallop Industry Group which fulfils a parallel role for the scallop sector.

Among the challenges facing the sector is the displacement of effort from other sectors into the shellfish sector, a rapid increase in effort in the shellfisheries, a dynamic but volatile market, rapid technological development, a need for coherent and evidence-based management, and the possible market and management implications of Brexit.

The inaugural meeting, which focused on some of these issues and possible solutions, was well attended by representatives from Defra and the Northern Ireland fisheries department, signalling an important commitment to work jointly with the shellfish sector on solutions. Big industry players, including the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) and the Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) were also present.

According to the NFFO, the government's current commitment to the development of different forms of co-management across the fishing sector provides an opportunity for the industry to shape policy, science, and the management regime – if it can speak with a clear and coherent voice.

There is, however, recognition that the shellfish sector is extremely diverse in terms of vessel size and operations and all voices in the industry must be heard. In this regard, the importance of ensuring the small-scale sector, whose voice is often drowned out, was agreed. Composition of the group and definitive terms of reference have been kept open to encourage involvement and ensure the new group is responsive and relevant.

With Seafish providing a secretariat, the Group's first step will be to conduct a detailed overview of different management options. A meeting in February will take this ground-breaking initiative forward. Membership will be open to all industry groups willing to commit to working collaboratively on an evidence-based approach to managing the shellfisheries.

Working together: Industry leads the way on North Sea Cod

One of the few bright spots in the North Sea cod downturn, according to the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO), is the way fishing industries in the countries affected have quickly mobilised to take ownership of the problem and have worked collaboratively to develop practical solutions. This, says the NFFO, is the first time fishing associations right across the North Sea have cooperated in this manner.

From an initial meeting held by the Scottish Whitefish Producers Organisation, shortly after the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) advised a 70 per cent cut to the TAC for the stock, a meeting between Scottish, English and Danish fishing associations was convened in Copenhagen last July to discuss effective ways to mitigate the consequences of the dramatic cut and remedial measures that could be put in place. A further meeting which included Norwegian interests was held in August.

For EU members navigating the landing obligation the dramatic cut has raised the danger of a choke—whereby in a mixed fishery the low cod TAC would mean boats would quickly have to tie up for the rest of the year once that was exhausted—early in the New Year, leaving them facing a situation where they potentially wouldn't be able to catch their main quotas in 2020.

Scientific projections suggest 78 per cent of the haddock catch and 72 per cent of the whiting catch would be lost if a low TAC for cod caused a choke, with catastrophic consequences for the fleets involved. Against the backdrop of this eventuality, over the summer and into early autumn, the fishing industry group was widened to include all countries potentially affected.

Following this, a position paper was finalised and presented to the Scheveningen group of North Sea Member States and the European Commission. The paper was also presented to Norwegian officials. A further iteration was presented to both during the first round of EU/Norway negotiations held in London last November.

Although at the time of writing negotiations were ongoing and a management agreement for 2020 between the EU and Norway on North Sea cod had yet to be reached, the Commission has acknowledged the paper has significantly shaped the emerging approach being developed.

Highlighted in the paper are the complexities surrounding the status of North Sea cod including the northward shift in the stock's distribution that has occurred and the ecosystem changes in play. North Sea cod, it has been calculated, is moving north at 12 kilometres per annum, leaving next to no cod in the Southern North Sea but major concentrations around Shetland.

Uncertainties surrounding assessment of the stock, the potential for chokes, lessons learned from previous cod recovery plans, and the legal obligations within the CFP, including the MSY timetable, which obliges parties to take into account mixed fisheries' complexities, the

potential for chokes and the socio-economic impact are also underlined.

Adding to these, is the fact the stock is jointly managed with Norway and the need to take into account the latest scientific advice including the revised stock assessments incorporating the quarter three survey results which has already reduced the scale of the TAC reduction required to rebuild the cod stock in a single year from minus 70% to minus 61%.

The paper, thus, makes the case for an integrated package of remedial measures which moderate the level of TAC reduction but support a range of supplementary measures to reduce fishing pressure on cod and allow incoming year classes to rebuild the stock. These include seasonal closed areas to protect spawning stock, real-time closures, move-on provision, and precautionary areas linked to a number of access conditions.

According to the NFFO, the industry initiative on cod is ground-breaking in several ways. The demersal industry is large and extremely diverse in terms of fleets, gears, target species, degree of cod in the catch, national interests etc. In the past, this has been a huge obstacle to speaking with a united voice.

The environmental NGO's rigid views on achieving MSY by 2020 and Norway's central role as a third country with joint management rights, ruled out the North Sea Advisory Council as a potential host for the necessary discussions and so the necessary dialogue has been rather ad hoc, with meetings mainly in Copenhagen, Brussels and London.

A major driver in overcoming the obstacles involved in international cooperation, to deliver a consensus position paper with broad support, has been the urgency of finding a practical, workable solution that would steadily rebuild the cod stock whilst maintaining the fabric of the fishing industry.

At this stage, the NFFO highlight, it is unclear what has triggered the downturn in the cod stock in the North Sea. Probably, they say, there are environmental changes at work as well as changes within the fishery. And while it is vital to get a handle on these and make the necessary adjustments to the management regime, urgent action is required to prevent the North Sea cod situation getting worse.

Important lessons have been learnt from previous cod recovery plans – the most important of these is that simply cutting the total allowable catch is no guarantee that this will lead to a reduction in fishing mortality. For this reason, the industry paper and now the managing authorities involved, are focused on the design of a balanced package of measures which lays the foundations for real recovery of the stock.

Cosmetic measures, say the NFFO, including an eye-watering TAC reduction, may satisfy the media and some NGOs, but it won't deliver stock recovery. That will require well-designed measures which have the understanding and support of the fishing industry. That is why the work of the industry itself in this ground-breaking initiative is so important. Food for thought for 2020, indeed!

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SCOTLAND NEWS

SNP MEP writes to new fisheries commissioner highlighting Iceland mackerel concerns



SNP MEP Christian Allard

SNP MEP, Christian Allard has written to new European Fisheries Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevicius—who took over as Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries at the beginning of December—highlighting concerns

over the potential overfishing of mackerel by the Icelandic fishing fleet.

The move came after Iceland unilaterally increased its mackerel quota – the vast majority of which, the MEP says, is taken in international waters. Whilst the northeast Atlantic mackerel stock is currently in a healthy state, concerns have been raised from several quarters that Iceland’s actions will threaten that sustainability.

The EU attempted to place a cap on mackerel fishing in international waters at the recent annual meeting of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission. The move was, however, unsuccessful and Iceland intends to continue with its

increased quota.

Mr Allard said: “The EU’s decision to tackle Iceland at the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission was extremely welcome. The mackerel fisheries has, until now, been sustainably managed and that should not be threatened by one country.”

Reminding the new Commissioner that fisheries forms an important part of this new portfolio, in the letter the MEP states the move by Iceland is “both unjustified and unsustainable.”

Given the continued deadlock on the issue, and Iceland’s failure to back down from its position, among the answers sought by Allard from the new Commissioner is what further action the Commission intends to undertake to protect these vital stocks and to underline to Iceland that their unilateral actions are unacceptable?

“The Fisheries Commissioner is new in post and will have a lot of important issues on his plate. It is imperative that these mackerel

Scots call for swift international agreement on North-East Atlantic mackerel

The Scottish Pelagic Sustainability Group (SPSG) is calling for swift international action to protect the North East Atlantic mackerel stock from what they say are unilateral and unsustainable actions by Iceland, Greenland and Russia in setting their quotas without international agreement from the main coastal states who have traditionally been involved in the

fishery.

This, they say, is resulting in unsustainable increases in catches – for example, this year Iceland set its mackerel quota at 107,000 tonnes in March, and then increased it to 140,000 tonnes in June. Such actions have resulted in the EU, Norway and the Faroes having to cut their catches to offset the unilateral activities of others.

Ian Gatt, chairman of SPSG,

which includes Scottish mackerel catchers and processors in its membership, said: “In the last three years Iceland has taken half their catches in international waters, rather than Icelandic waters, and their actions are not sustainable and totally unjustified.”

“It is very difficult for responsible coastal states comprising the UK, EU, Norway and the Faroes to set in place a



Mackerel

comprehensive fishing agreement for sustainable catching when other nations are setting their own quota unilaterally and with no regard for the overall sustainability of the stock.”

As such, SPSG is calling as a first step to limit the mackerel that coastal states can catch in international waters to 10% of their respective quota, and then ultimately moving to a management regime where each coastal state can only catch their quota in their own fishing zones.

Ian Gatt said: “The science shows that the mackerel stock is currently in a healthy state, which is great news for the consumer, but if the unsustainable actions of some countries continues, then this may no longer be the case in the future.”

“The only sustainable approach is for all parties to engage sensibly and positively to ensure a healthy future for the precious mackerel stock. The time has now come for a swift international agreement on a plan which achieves exactly that.”

Scottish fishing family delighted with performance of Osprey trawl doors from Morgère

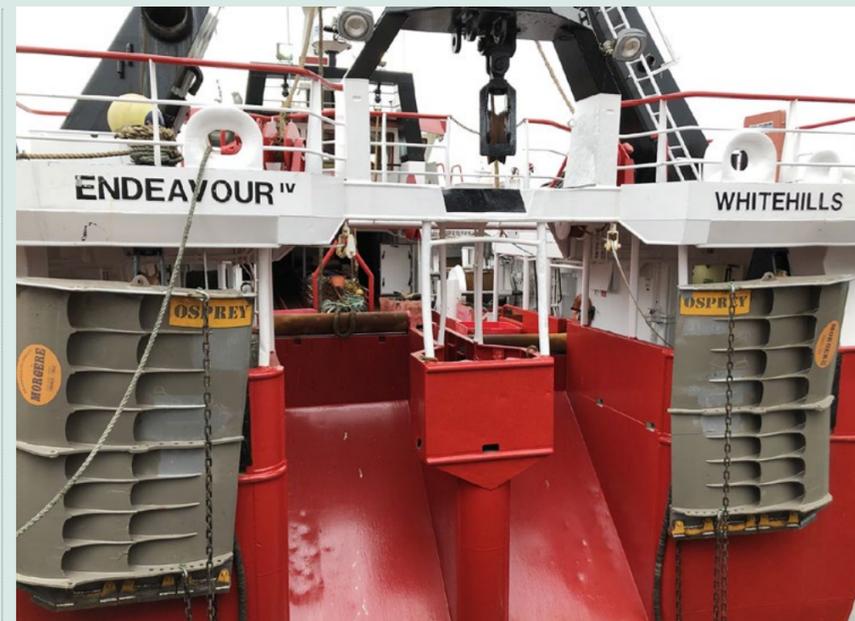
The Lovie family, who fish out of Kinlochbervie with their two demersal trawlers *Endeavour IV* and *Venture II*, have been achieving good results with their new Osprey trawl doors from Morgère.

The boats had previously fished with Exocet and PV3 doors supplied by Morgère but made the switch to Osprey earlier this year and have been delighted its performance. The new Osprey is a semi-pelagic trawl door and its special design ensures there is lower drag, which in turn reduces fuel consumption.

Skipper David Lovie, who works with his father, Peter, on the 29m *Endeavour* said: “There is definitely a fuel saving from using Osprey and they spread very easily, which is important to us. They are also easy to shoot and come up well.”

The *Endeavour*, and the 30m *Venture* skippered by Mark Lovie, target a wide range of groundfish species, as well as cod and haddock on grounds to the west and north of Scotland, often in challenging fishing conditions.

One of the attractions they find in using Morgère trawl doors is the excellent before and after sales service provided by the company, which with the most recent purchase of Osprey, included director Michel Dagorn travelling to Fraserburgh to help in the sea trials of the door.



Good results on the Endeavour IV with Morgère's Osprey trawl doors

“We have been using Morgère for over 20 years and the service they offer is second-to-none and that helps ensure we get the maximum performance,” said skipper Lovie.

Michel Dagorn said: “We are proud of our long association with the Lovie family and are delighted that they find our doors suit their requirements and deliver great fishing performance.”

Pre Council cod cut main danger for Scottish industry

Elspeth Macdonald, chief executive of the SFF, has said the main damage for the Scottish industry – a 50% cut in the total allowable catch (TAC) for North Sea cod – was done at the bilateral negotiations between the EU and Norway prior to the December Fisheries Council.

In a statement following the conclusion of the annual quota talks in Brussels the SFF chief said, “Because the UK did not have its own seat in those negotiations, it was very hard to make the case for our industry.”

“When the UK leaves the EU and becomes an independent coastal state, we will take our rightful place at the table and be able to negotiate in our own right.”

She added: “The reduction in the TAC for North Sea cod next year will have a serious economic impact on the Scottish whitefish sector, presenting major practical difficulties for the fleet.”

“Despite the disappointing and damaging outcome, we are grateful to Fergus Ewing and his team of officials who, alongside their UK counterparts, worked tirelessly to achieve the best outcomes in difficult

circumstances. We also welcome their commitment to review and update the stock assessment model for North Sea cod, reflecting the changing distribution of the species, most likely due to climate change.

“In anticipation of better days ahead, the SFF looks forward to working closely and constructively with both the Scottish and UK governments on the development of the Fisheries Agreement that will establish the framework for the future of the industry outside the Common Fisheries Policy.”

Prior to the Council, fishermen from Shetland also reacted strongly following the agreement on cod reached by the EU and Norway on Friday December 13 and the announcement of 50% cut for the North Sea stock next year.

The agreement reached between the European Commission and Norwegian negotiators was formally ratified at the European Council meeting.

“This outcome illustrates exactly why every fishing industry in Europe wants to be shot of the Common Fishing Policy,” said Simon Collins of the Shetland Fishermen’s Association.



Cod

“Together with industry representatives from all around the North Sea, including Norway, and working closely with the Scottish government, we had put together a responsible and credible package of measures on cod that would have fully met sustainability objectives as well as the legal constraints bearing on the EU.

“The EU’s decision to go instead with a simplistic read-out of a single line from a computer model is staggeringly irresponsible. Fisheries management should be a grown-up discussion around a complex ecosystem, not an infantile read-out from computer modelling that all

sides know is desperately flawed.” While the UK is expected to leave the CFP on 31st January 2020, the passage of the Withdrawal Agreement through parliament will effectively keep the UK bound to quotas agreed at the coming week’s Council meeting until the end of next year.

“For Shetland’s fishing fleet, leaving the CFP is more urgent now than ever,” added Mr Collins. “Fish stocks in our waters – including cod – are heading the right way, and our coastal and island communities deserve a responsible management regime. It’s about time we got one.”

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SKIPPER PRESENTS



SHETLAND NEWS *By Peter Johnson, Chris Cope and Hans J Marter / Shetland News*

Small boat men unhappy about mackerel quota

SHETLAND Fishermen's Association (SFA) will be having a meeting next year on mackerel allocations for under 10 metre boats after some fishermen raised concerns about the lack of quota.

One under 10m fisherman, Davy Porter, contacted Shetland News saying the fishery had been terminated prematurely once quota was up, even though the Shetland boats had benefitted from extra uncaught quota from North East Scotland.

Porter, a member of SFA, said that a free fishery, where under 10m boats could catch what they wanted and when they wanted, would be ideal.

Failing that, a 500 tonne quota for the 30 odd Shetland under 10m boats would be a "good starting point, according to the general consensus".

Porter added: "Any help with upping the quota would



Davy Porter's boat, Girl Isla

Mackerel on sonar

be excellent as it forms a huge chunk of our income.

"Our quota is really nothing in the grand scheme of resources available.

"All the guys I know, who work on the large pelagic boats think its ridiculous for the under 10m fleet to be on any quota and that rings true when you hear of the big boats taking five times Shetland's entire under 10m quota in one haul."

According to Porter, Shetland's quota for under 10 metre boats this year had been a "measly" 270 tonnes that was upped to around 410 tonnes owing to a lack of catching in the Moray Firth.

Despite the boost, "every tail was caught" and the fishery was closed by 5 October.

Porter also said that a desire for increased quota or other beneficial changes to allocations was unanimous in the under 10m sector.

Shetland Fish Producers Organisation chief executive Brian Isbister, who is not responsible for administering the under 10m quota – that is done directly by the Scottish Government, said that the (Scottish) under 10m fishery had been halted at 869.7 tonnes landed, which was 97.7 per cent of the quota with some fish still coming through the system unaccounted for.

Isbister added that the system, which issues a fortnightly catch for all vessels in the fleet, could

work against the Shetland boats as the fish came near to Shetland at the tail end of the season, when much of the quota could already be used up.

He said: "This year the Shetland boats have been fairly successful in catching their quota, with quotas being reallocated. Obviously it would have been better if they'd carried on longer, but in relation to other years, it's been good."

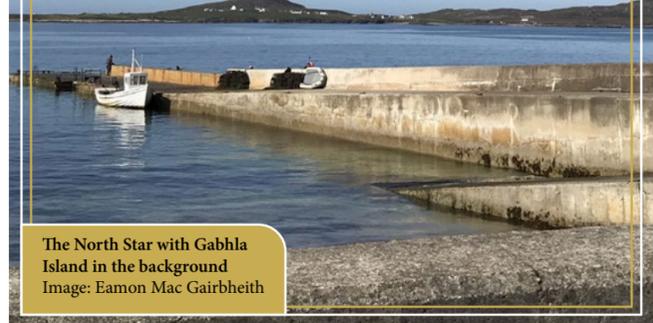
He added that in more general terms it was still hoped Brexit would prove a windfall for fishing, and there would be more quota to go all round.

Despite valid concerns about the way mackerel quota was allocated, said SFA executive officer Simon Collins, the system tended to favour Shetland boats, as in this year when uncaught fish had been transferred north.

Collins said that the SFA could not start lobbying until the views of its under 10m members had been ascertained, to which end a meeting would be organised as soon as possible in the New Year.

The Scottish under 10m fleet receives around one-thousandth of the entire North East Atlantic mackerel total allowable catch annually.

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The North Star with Gabhla Island in the background
 Image: Eamon Mac Gairbheith



ORKNEY NEWS *By Craig Taylor*

Santa arrived on Kirkwall Lifeboat

SANTA Claus brought festive cheer to Kirkwall Pier in December, after arriving on Kirkwall Lifeboat.

Santa, and the volunteer crew of the lifeboat, joined by Orkney Rotary Club, spent time at the station, where a good crowd, including many youngsters, had gathered to see him arrive.

The lifeboat guild fundraisers and helpers had festive refreshments on offer, which were very much enjoyed by all.

Santa, his reindeer, RNLI members and fundraisers, then paraded through the streets of the town, where they were given generous donations to Kirkwall RNLI from kind members of the public and local businesses.

Kirkwall RNLI said: "Many thanks to all who came along, made donations, visited the lifeboat shop and bought raffles, Christmas cards, and gifts. Many thanks also to Orkney Rotary Club, Santa and his reindeer, for making it a super day."

The visit of Santa at the station came only a few short hours after the lifeboat crew took part in a search operation off Westray after suspected distress flares had been sighted. The search was later called off, it was presumed to be a false alarm with good intent.



Santa arriving on Kirkwall Lifeboat. Image: Craig Taylor

Committee visit Orkney

HOLYROOD'S environment, climate change and land reform committee came to Orkney recently as part of its inquiry into marine-related issues.

The visit took place on as part of a series of visits by the committee focussing on the work of marine planning partnerships (MPPs) and the creation of regional marine plans (RMPs).

Following visits to Shetland and Clyde MPPs, committee members heard from a range of people involved in setting up Scotland's newest MPP in Orkney.

During the visit, committee members met with Orkney Islands Council, Orkney Harbour Authority as well as fisheries groups.

The committee then travelled to Stromness for a series of meetings at the Orkney Research and Innovation Campus, before visiting the European Marine Energy Centre's Wave Energy Test Facility at Billia Croo.

Convenor of the environment, climate change and land reform committee, Gillian Martin, MSP, said: "Safeguarding Scotland's inshore waters is so vital and our work on Marine Planning Partnerships will help us do just that. But to do this, we need to hear the experiences of organisations currently working to develop the Orkney Marine Planning Partnership. Not only will this help our inquiry but will also help inform the roll out of future Marine Planning Partnerships in Scotland.

"It was clear to our committee that Orkney was a vital part in this. There is clearly so much detailed and interesting work taking place, and I am looking forward to seeing this for myself and meeting people in Orkney."

You can learn more about the work of the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform on the Scottish Parliament website.



FAIR ISLE

Scottish Sea Farms new £1.9m purpose-built workboat, Fair Isle, and skippers Aaron Anderson and Alastair MacEachen

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ICELAND NEWS *By Gudjón Einarsson*

No capelin season, again?

As the new year commences pelagic fishermen in Iceland are feeling apprehensive. They fear that no capelin fishing will be allowed this season, the second season in a row, which would be a first in the 57 year history of this fishery in Iceland. Usually, the capelin season starts early January and lasts until the middle of March. Scientists assess the stock during the autumn before each season. Their last assessment indicated that the stock was still in poor shape and there was no ground for issuing any fishing quotas for the coming season.

Hoping and praying

However, the pelagic industry clings to the hope that more capelin will be registered when this tiny fish starts its annual migration clockwise

around Iceland on its way to its spawning grounds. Research vessels will monitor its migration in January/February as usual. Earlier assessments of the stock have, in fact, time and again been altered following the second survey, but this time around scientists find that unlikely to happen.

A lot at stake

The state of the capelin stock has been a matter of concern for quite some years. The shrinking of the stock has been blamed on climate change. The capelin is a cold water species and with warmer temperature the fish has retreated further north in summer and not returned in winter in the same abundance as before. Instead of a total catch of over a million tons, the quota has been reduced to several hundred thousand tons



Capelin fishing in Iceland.

A seal hunting ban

Iceland's Minister of Fisheries recently announced that he intends to issue a regulation banning all direct hunting of seals. The ban is in accordance with the advice of the Icelandic Marine and Fresh Water Institute.

The main type of seals around Iceland are the harbour seal and the grey seal. As discussed earlier (The Skipper, September 2019) the population of harbour seals in Iceland is estimated at 9,400 animals which is 20% under the governmental management objective of

12,000 animals. Even though the population of grey seals is currently estimated as sustainable at 6,300 animals, the stock is deemed vulnerable by international conservation standards (IUCN).

No reliable figures

In addition to the ban of direct hunting of seals, measures will be taken to reduce by-catch of seals during fishing. No one really knows how many seals are killed each year. Traditional hunting of harbour seals has decreased from

several thousand 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. Therefore official figures are not very reliable. Culling around river mouths to reduce the effect that seals are thought to have on salmon fisheries is still common. Seal by-catch in gill nets, especially during the lumpfish season, is considered high but reliable figures are lacking.

annually in recent years. The capelin used to be the second most valuable species in Iceland rendering up to 250 million euros a year (in 2013) in export

value. In addition, capelin is the most important source of food for cod, Iceland's most valuable species. So there is a lot at stake.



Icelandic whaleboat belonging to Hvalur Ltd bringing two fin whales to shore last year.

No whaling in 2019

For decades the hunting of whales off the coast of Iceland has been a controversial issue. Environmental organisations like Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd fought actively against the practice in the past and the United States Government even threatened Iceland with sanctions for killing whales, although these sanctions have never been enforced.

So it may be newsworthy that in 2019 no whales were hunted in Icelandic waters. Not because of external opposition to whaling, but because Hvalur Ltd., the only fin whaling company in Iceland, deemed it commercially unviable to continue their operation.

This also happened in 2016 and 2017 when the company stopped whaling temporarily, blaming the Japanese

authorities' implementation of technical obstructions to the importation of whale products into Japan, the only potential market for whale meat from Iceland. The company resumed whaling in 2018 and caught 144 fin whales. Now it remains to be seen whether this is really the end of big whale hunting in Iceland or not.

Minke whales

The hunting of minke whales, a much smaller mammal, has been practised by coastal boats in Iceland for a very long time. Less than a hundred minke whales have been caught each year, entirely for domestic consumption. In 2019 no minke whale was hunted but the operation is expected to continue next summer.

Dalwhinnie ready for the trip home.
Image: Leslie Campbell

DALWHINNIE



NEW BOAT

NEW BUCCANEER 46 COMPLETED BY G SMYTH BOATS LTD RECENTLY DELIVERED TO STONEHAVEN

Gerry Smyth's busy yard in Kilkeel recently completed their latest new build, *Dalwhinnie A 913*. Built for Ian Mathieson, after being launched at the yard early in November, following successful sea trials, *Dalwhinnie* was handed over and made her way home to Stonehaven with crewman Neale Clark on board and skipper, Ian at the helm on November 13.

The largest new vessel to have been completed at the Kilkeel yard since the 2015 built 14.1m

Álsviør K 337, with a beam of 5.2m and a moulded depth of 2.26m, *Dalwhinnie* is 14.65m in length. Based on a Buccaneer 46 displacement hull, moulded in Cornwall by Paul Ching, the vessel has a soft nose stern, bulbous bow, and transom stern.

A replacement for Ian's Trejar built Cleopatra Fisherman 42 Ian told *The Skipper*, "The last two boats I've had from Trejar have been very successful, but it was time to move up a scale. Their next size boat is a 50-foot boat, and due to restrictions

with both licenses and bigger engine costs, we decided to look at the various alternatives of what was available and decided to change from a fast planning, semi-displacement boat to a full displacement boat – heavier duty, so that we could do slightly longer trips when the weather allowed us to."

Ian had a good idea with respect the quality of work done at the Kilkeel yard, having seen two of Gerry Smyth's boats on display at the Skipper Expo Aberdeen some years back.

"Although they were smaller, I did look at the quality of finish then and it just sort of stuck in my head," he said. "When it came time to look at the various options, Gerry had already completed a similar hull to what I was looking at for the Orkneys — the Álsviør — so that gave me an insight".

"We went up to the Orkneys to have a look at the finish of the boat there and when I saw the final build, though we wanted a different style with the engine room aft and various other bits

FACT FILE

NAME DALWHINNIE
SKIPPER Ian Mathieson
REGISTRATION A 913
HOMEPORT Stonehaven
CREW 2
BOATYARD G Smyth Boats Ltd.
LENGTH 14.6m
BEAM 5.2m
DRAUGHT 2.26m
GT 18.65 tonnes
FISHROOM 130 boxes

and pieces, I knew that was what we were looking for".

"I like the quality of their finish. They go in to do their job and they don't realise how many people in the UK are watching them. And each boat that comes out is getting better and better".

"They've earned quite a reputation", said the Stonehaven skipper.

"Just ask any fisherman within the UK where they are wanting their boat built and they'll say Gerry's yard. It's becoming so popular because of the quality of their workmanship. The guys, they just take it for granted, they don't realise how good they are at what they do."

"The Irish lads," he said, "are setting records there as far as I'm concerned."

Regarding the bespoke *Dalwhinnie* Ian said: "We started right from scratch. I did a complete set of drawings of the boat that I wanted, to allow Gerry to do a quotation, bearing in mind that with all boats of that size and that complexity you are going to have deviations as you build, little things crop up, things need to be changed and adjusted and we just dealt with them as they came up."

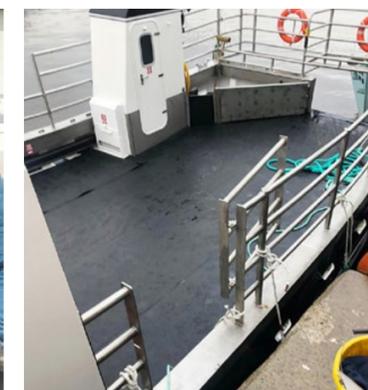
Though slightly behind schedule on account of how busy the yard is, the build from there went to plan. According to Ian, "It was a really painless build. They're very professional in what they do. Gerry's lads are easy to deal with. Nothing is too much for them."

Always bouncing ideas off each other throughout the build with what they wanted and what could be done, Ian said, "I would say 70/40 in their favour, most of the stuff they came back with was a better idea". Gerry Smyth said, "Me and my build team (led by Joel Chambers) enjoyed the challenge of the Buccaneer 46 build.

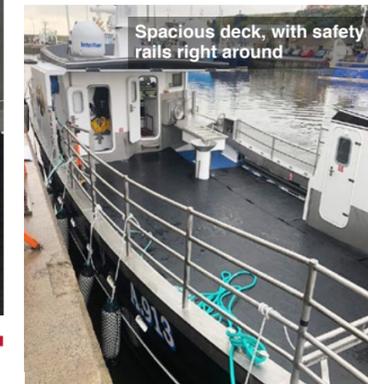
"Ian had very definite ideas for the finish on his boat and



Ian, Gerry and Neale onboard the Dalwhinnie



Spacious deck, with safety rails right around



"The Irish lads," he said, "are setting records there as far as I'm concerned."

it was great working alongside someone who had done his research."

Delighted with that finish, Ian said, "They didn't scrimp on anything. There were areas that I got a surprise with – the quality of the fittings the fixtures that they've used".

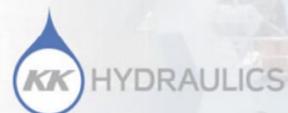
"They've gone for the best that they could get for the vessel and that becomes most evident when you go in," he said.

With stainless steel throughout and boasting a walk-in engine room positioned aft as per Ian's specifications, *Dalwhinnie* is powered by a Watermota supplied Doosan V158TI main engine producing 265kW @ 1500 rpm connected to a Twin Disc gearbox with a reduction ratio of 4.17:1 gearbox, powering a Clements Engineering supplied 1370mm diameter x 600mm propeller.

"She's not conventional, because these kinds of vessels have normally got a forward engine room with a long shaft going to the stern of the vessel. I didn't want that, I wanted the forward wheelhouse, with the accommodation up forward, engine room's aft, with a short shaft — I don't even think it's a metre and a half long — no vibration, it's a solid built shaft.



Ian Mathieson in his new wheelhouse



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Tel: 0044 (0)28 417 61010 | Mobile: 0044 (0)7711452763

“We’ve extended the engine room a metre bigger. Priority was maintenance and looking after the engine. The hold is still huge. So we have the aft section that holds the steering gear and it holds two tanks – one of them is for fuel for the gensets, one of them is fresh water we use that for balance as well. Then we’re into the main engine room which is the biggest compartment of the whole boat.”

Cooling for the *Dalwhinnie’s* main engine is provided for by two stainless steel seawater systems. To ensure optimum functioning and longevity, in terms of anti-fouling the vessel is equipped with two Sonihull ultrasonic generators supplied by NRM Marine.

The vessel’s load-sensing pump and hydraulic equipment were supplied by Killybegs’ SeaQuest Systems. Two Nil-Fish pump units feed the Powerwasher Services, Laurencekirk supplied power wash system onboard.

Dalwhinnie is also kitted out with 1.5t Hydroslave hauler, supplied by KK Hydraulics of Tralee. The deck crane on board was supplied by Penny Hydraulics. Pots on board were manufactured by Caithness Creels and Gael Force creels. With storage for 130 boxes, the *Dalwhinnie* also boasts a dry hold fitted with a refrigeration system supplied by Cool Temp in Kilkeel.

The vessel’s wheelhouse kit was supplied by Furuno UK in Fraserburgh. The state-of-the-art install includes the latest F3 WASSP multibeam sounder, TimeZero system, and an eight-camera CCTV system, incorporating an underwater hull-mounted camera.

And with a spacious galley, and three berths below deck — all fitted out to an equally high spec — no doubt skipper and crew will be comfortable. Insured by Sunderland Marine, safety equipment aboard was supplied by Blue Anchor Fire and Safety Ltd.

Targeting brown crab and lobster, weather permitting Ian and his crew will be working 36 hour trips on the *Dalwhinnie*. “Everything is dictated by weather in these vessels,” said Ian.

Ian will be fishing the *Dalwhinnie* with Buckie brothers, Neale and Derek Clark. From a well-known fishing family, both live and breathe fishing. “It’s really hard to get guys like that, you can trust them to look after everything and that’s a big weight off your shoulders,” said Mathieson who at the time *The Skipper* was going to print was waiting on the final paperwork and hoping to “get straight into it” after that. Landing into Stonehaven, their catch will be sold to the Crab Company (Scotland).

Dalwhinnie had a chance to prove her seakeeping abilities on the trip home from to Stonehaven when the already “scruffy” weather changed and got a lot worse. “But we were already committed by then,” said Ian, so they “went right up across the Irish Sea” and “punched into it” where they had to. “Right up the west coast was horrible and then we got to the top and it was better. We got past Cape Wrath and then it was nice.” After a stop off in Buckie to see Neale’s family with the new boat, they then steamed from there all the way back to Stonehaven.

Now eager to test her fishing capabilities, on Brexit Ian said, “It’s a big open debate

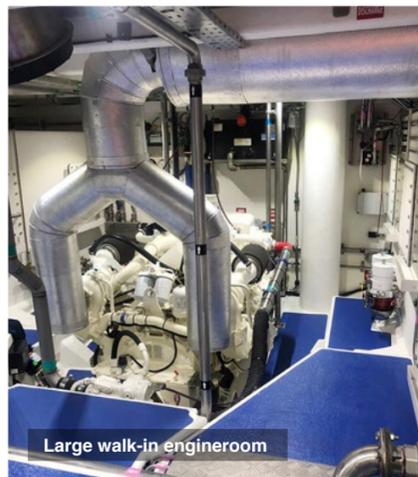
“You have to try and visualise where you think it is going to go and if you’re going to be ok. And, of course, nobody knows for sure, but you just have to trust your instincts at the time and take it from there.”



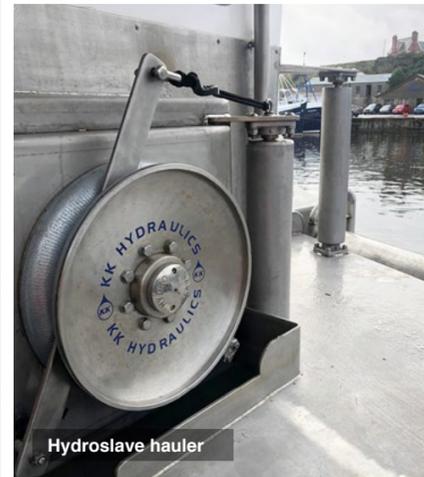
Well-equipped wheelhouse



Hauling arrangement



Large walk-in engine room



Hydroslave hauler

that, it’s all over the place. Whether or not it will affect this – nobody knows. Nobody knows where it is going, how it’s going to pan out.” But, he said, if everybody lost faith every time things were hard in the industry there wouldn’t be a fishing industry.

“We saw the time is right to move up to the bigger vessel. The crabbing industry, to my mind, has always been the poor man’s end of the fishing industry, but over the last 8 or 9 years, more so the last 5 years, with the international markets opening up, the time has come right. There’s definitely a good vibe and a good buzz around the industry just now.

“It’s gone from being the poor man’s part of the industry to a multi-million pound industry with international markets. And this has all been done without any help from governments – any government! Whether it’s British, Scottish, English, Irish, whatever... the lads have built up this reputation for their own seafood on their own.

“And the buyers are clipping your heels to get stuff all the time. Now, there’s a little

clink now with this Chinese thing, but I think there’s a bit of politics involved in that. I think that’s going to clear. When the dust settles, it’ll go back to being as busy as it was before.”

“We feel the time is right to make the investment. And processors are investing too – in their facilities, their storage capacities and so on”.

“I think it’s really good at the moment,” he said.

“The likes of Gerry’s yard and other yards, they have a two year wait list and so if you wait until you are absolutely safe, you’re another five years down the line. You have to try and visualise where you think it is going to go and if you’re going to be ok. And, of course, nobody knows for sure, but you just have to trust your instincts at the time and take it from there.”

The Skipper team would like to take the opportunity to wish Ian, Neale, Derek and their families every success and safe fishing with the new Dalwhinnie.

SeaQuest Systems awarded prestigious Gitte Henning contract

SeaQuest Systems of Killybegs have been awarded the contract to supply a deck machinery package to Gitte Henning A/S for their new build in Zamakoma Shipyard, Spain.

With fish pumps on many of his vessels, cranes and hose reels also on others — including the recently built MFV Birthe & MFV Birgette — Henning Kjeldsen has been a long-time customer of SeaQuest Systems. The SeaQuest package for the new 87.6m vessel will include:

- 1 of 4t @ 12.5mtr Reach Knuckle boom Crane supplied with 4t & 2t Winches
- 1 of 5t @ 18mtr reach Knuckle boom Crane
- 1 of 7t @ 13mtr SeaQuest Trawl Handling / Net Stacker Crane
- 1 of 7t @ 14.6mtr SeaQuest Gantry Style Net-Stacker Crane
- 2 of 4t @ 10.5mtr SeaQuest Knuckle boom Fish Pump Cranes

- 1 of SeaQuest NW625 Net Hauler, supplied for Electric Drive
- 1 of SeaQuest Ring Needle
- 3 of SeaQuest 24” Electric Fish Pumps
- 3 of SeaQuest Electric Driven Cable Reel
- 3 of SeaQuest Electric Driven Fish Hose Reel

All HPU Stations for the cranes will also be manufactured & supplied by SeaQuest Systems

Speaking of the new build Henning said he had initially intended to withdraw from fishing after the sale of Gitte Henning to the Faroe Islands, as well as receiving offers for all his pelagic fishing rights. However, after thinking about the future, he got cold feet doing nothing, and contacted Salt Ship Design. Together, Henning and Salt have now designed a new, green Gitte Henning.

Throughout the design process and in the choice of equipment, the focus has been on improving quality of the fish and reducing emissions through



Artist's impression of the new Gitte Henning

reduced energy consumption and efficient power production.

The new fishing vessel will have several environmentally friendly solutions, many of them new in pelagic fishing. Some of the innovative features of the new build include two propellers (powered by two electric Permanent Magnet (PM) motors, which have less electrical loss and, thus are more efficient than conventional motors) and a twin-skeg hull design for efficiency.

Alongside this, all winches aboard will also be powered by PM motors for reduced loss and optimal operation. Electrical winches provide the opportunity to regenerate energy when the trawl is

set. This energy is available to other consumers and can, for example, be used for propulsion or RSW (refrigerated seawater) cooling. Conventional hydraulic winches and fishing pumps require a system with a significant amount of hydraulic oil. The risk of hydraulic oil spill at sea is eliminated by choosing electric winches. All electric motors, from winches to pumps, will be frequency controlled which will give a more customised power supply and hence reduce overall energy consumption.

A full description of the new Gitte Henning's specifications can be found on The Skipper's website: www.theskipper.ie.

New version of Turbowin, Solowin and Easywin launched by Seafield Navigation

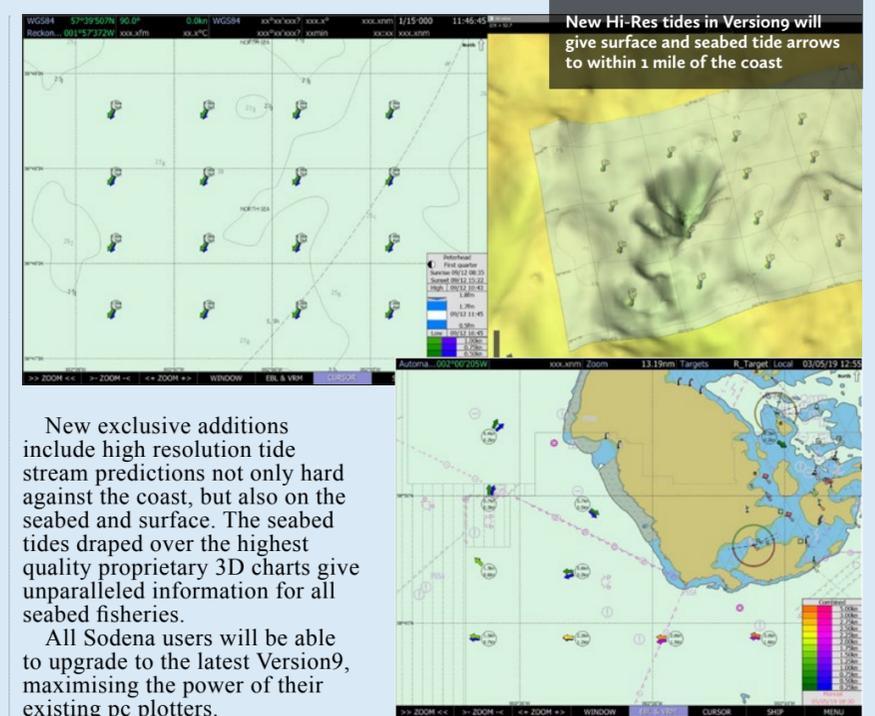
Seafield Navigation of Fraserburgh, UK distributors for Fishingwin (formerly Sodena), have launched the new version of the widely used Turbowin, Solowin and Easywin plotters software.

“The new Hi Resolution tides in Version9 will give surface and seabed tide arrows to within 1 mile of the coast,” says MD Fran West. The existing V8 Low resolution tide licences expire in January 2020 and we are actively upgrading existing users to the new V9. We have listened to feedback from existing users and revisions have been made accordingly, he said.

New user data management tools allow for merging and moving of user files, having specific setups for different fisheries and can use the same file names from multiple boat’s backup disks.

New Automatic AIS tracking filters and tracks boats by type and colours their tracks according to their speed, so fishing boats can be clearly shown when towing.

In one of the most dangerous industries safety needs to be embraced, so audible anti grounding/collision alarms have also been added.

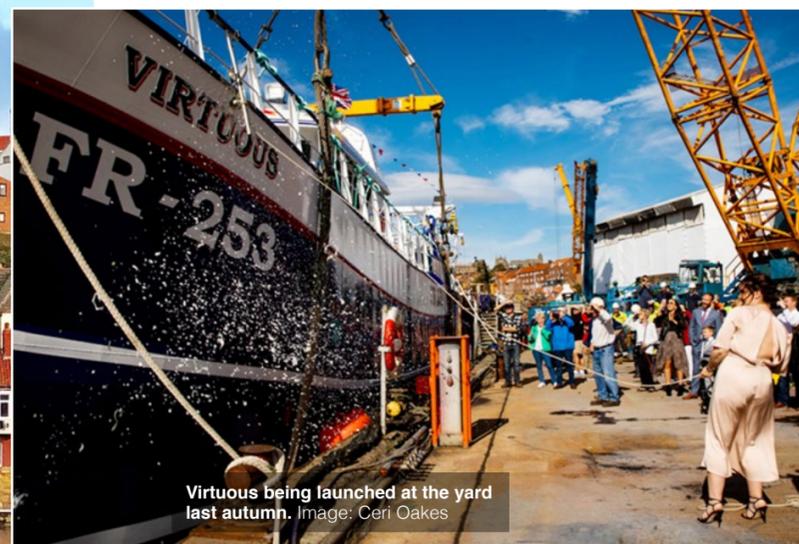


VIRTUOUS



NEW BOAT

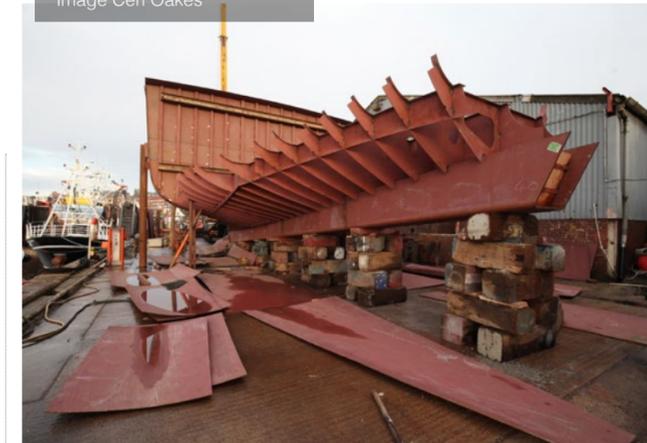
Virtuous FR 253 leaving Whitby last October, homeward bound for Fraserburgh
Image: Mick Bayes Jr



Virtuous being launched at the yard last autumn. Image: Ceri Oakes



Early construction
Image Ceri Oakes



SOMETHING A WEE BIT DIFFERENT

Mixing Innovation with Tradition at Parkol, 46 builds on

Parkol Marine Engineering Ltd. recently completed their 46th build, *Virtuous* FR 253. The second new build by Parkol for owners Sandy and Alex West, after being launched at the yard in Whitby and completing sea trials in October, *Virtuous* has since made her way home to Fraserburgh and is currently proving her fishing

credentials off the east coast of Scotland.

Co-owned by Virtuous LLP and Westward Fishing Ltd, *Virtuous* is a replacement for the West's 23m trawler which was also built by Parkol and was handed over to new owner, Michael Wilson, last September. "We fished pretty well with her. She was a very good boat, a very

good sea boat. A very comfortable boat. So when we went to build this boat we thought, well maybe we need to do something a wee bit different," said skipper Sandy West.

Designed by SC McAllister & Co Ltd. for the father and son duo, the 24m steel hull trawler has a beam of 7.8m, a draught of 4.8m and a moulded depth of 4.25m. Arranged for single and twin rig trawling, the vessel has a round bilge hull, transom stern, bulbous bow, soft nose stem and a full-length shelter deck.

Housed on the main deck is a deckhouse for galley and mess, with the oilskins room and washroom offset to starboard. Hopper and catch handling are also offset to starboard. Aft is a steel shelter and integral gallow arrangement, an over net drum space, with a stern ramp to shelter. The vessel also boasts a weathertight shelter catch handling and winch space.

Below deck is subdivided by three watertight bulkheads into aft accommodation (with 8

berths) with steering gear, engine room, fishroom and forepeak tank. The shelter deck houses the stern ramp, a bag hatch, the gilsen gantry, the trawl gallows, a power block crane, landing crane with an aluminium alloy wheelhouse.

X bow design

Part X bow design, the innovative bulbous bow on the *Virtuous* was designed for extra buoyancy, reduced resistance through the water and increased waterline length which gives better seakeeping. The innovative design is also supposed to damp wave energy and reduce slamming impact.

Another innovative feature of the *Virtuous* is the way she is rigged. Arranged for single and twin rig trawling, the stern ramp aboard has been designed specially to bring the catch in over the stern of the vessel rather than over the starboard forward side as is conventional in Scotland. For safety and efficiency, net drums and winches

are located on the weathertight main deck.

In terms of the design Sandy told *The Skipper*, "Two years ago when we were drawing the plans I knew exactly what I was doing. But two hours before I went out on trials I was quite nervous.

"There's a lot of different ideas. I had to swallow a bit of a breath to go in and instigate them all at the same time. But we did it and everything's worked out well".

"I was always keen to bag over the stern and I was quite interested in these X bow type vessels as well. You see them in the North Sea, these big oil vessels with X bows and they look very comfortable. So I investigated that a wee bit and that has proven to be very comfortable. The boat is amazingly comfortable up into the wind now. She's very very

canny into a swell. We're very happy.

"Bagging over the stern has made a big difference to us in equal measures. I know the Irish boats have been bagging over the stern for a long time and it's probably something we should have been doing a long time ago ourselves."

A big priority for Sandy was safety on board. "If you have your crew all working in the one area the communication is a lot better. Now the crew are all working on the aft side of the wheelhouse, so they can all talk to each other, they can all see each other and they know what's happening. Also, the wheelhouse is quite a big structure there and it's providing quite a lot of shelter for the crew as well."

In terms of the layout, Sandy wanted to keep the net drums under the shelter deck. "I didn't

see the point of moving from a vessel which was covered in aft and then exposing the guys to the elements after not being exposed to the elements. So we had to think quite a bit how we were going to keep the shelter over the top of the net drums where the lads were mending, shooting and hauling and yet still work over the stern. That's why the ramp ended up going up the middle of the vessel.

"Another thought there as well was we wanted to keep the cabin aft. We didn't want to be moving the cabin into the forward part of the vessel where it's more uncomfortable. So we've managed to keep the cabin aft as well, in the traditional place of the boat and so we kind of mixed new ideas with traditional ideas and it took quite a bit of working out to be honest with you. But we got there in the end."

FACT FILE

BOAT Virtuous FR 253
OWNER Sandy and Alex West
COMPANY Virtuous LLP and Westward Fishing Ltd.
SKIPPER Sandy West
REGISTRATION FR 253
HOMEPORT Fraserburgh
CREW 8/9
BOATYARD Parkol Marine Engineering Ltd
LENGTH 24m
BEAM 7.8m
DRAUGHT 4.8m
DEPTH MOULDED 4.25m
GT 242 tonnes
FUEL 22,000 litres
FRESHWATER 17,000 litres
LUBE OIL 400 litres
HYDRAULIC OIL 1,000 litres



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Wheelhouse



Galley



Spacious accomodation



Virtuous being launched at the yard last autumn. Image: Ceri Oakes

In terms of a standout feature of the new build, Sandy said, "There's actually a few things, to be honest with you. But if someone was to say what is it you are most pleased about with your boat I would say it's the comfort levels. How good a sea boat she is, I would say."

Communication was key

With such an innovative design, and many of the design elements of the boat feeding into one another, communication, says Sandy, was key to the success of the build.

"With some things we had to wait until the boat was built to see how it was going to work out, we had an idea how we wanted to do these things but we didn't really get an idea about how they

were going to work until the build was almost concluded. Most of it was done from the middle of the North Sea, to be honest with you. Videocall, broadband videocalls. We saved a lot of time because of the communication from the yard.

"We weren't in Whitby a lot at all. WhatsApp video is a fantastic thing when you're in the middle of the North Sea."

With a long relationship with the yard, having worked them previously and having been very interested in the work that was coming out of the yard long before that, Sandy was confident they could deliver from the outset. "They're very easy to work with," he said.

"They are very good at keeping us updated with how the boat was going. And they wouldn't do anything without asking us.

They've done a fantastic job.

"From the very design stage, the architects are asking what do you want to achieve? What do you want to do with this? We had two or three meetings down in York with Ian and drawing the boat with him and we just got exactly what we wanted."

Ahead of schedule

The build itself started in October 2018 and was completed less twelve months later. "We were actually a month early. From the time the first steel arrived in Whitby to the time we took the boat home was 11 months," said Sandy.

Virtuous is powered by a Mitsubishi S6R2 T2-MPTK-3 main engine producing 555kW@1,350rpm, connected to a Reintjes WAF 474L 7,476:1 reduction gearbox, powering a 2500mm diameter four-blade propeller. The vessel is also installed with 2 x Mitsubishi 6D16-T and 1 x S6B3T2 auxiliary engines. Main engine and auxiliaries were all supplied by Padmos. Electrics onboard were installed by Pearson Electrical of Hull and the yard's own onsite electrician.

The impressive wheelhouse package aboard was supplied by Echomaster Marine Ltd. and includes an array of the most up-to-date Simrad kit. 2 NS1500 seats were supplied by Norsap. A custom-made deck machinery package was supplied by Killybegs' EK Marine and includes three 15 tonne split winches, twin 2300mm diameter double net drums, two 15 tonne Gilson winches, an EKM powerblock crane, landing crane

and winch.

Nets onboard — 2 x 195ft twin-rig prawn scraper trawls rigged on 6in and 8in discs; 2 x 155ft twin-rig discer nets rigged on 8in and 10in discs — were supplied by Scotnet, warps by Karl Thomson of Buckie, trawl doors by Thyborøn. With space for 1,000 boxes, refrigeration was supplied by Fraserburgh's Premier Refrigeration Ltd. The vessel is also fitted with two Zeigra ice machines capable of producing 1 tonne of freshwater ice per day.

With landings under their belt already, the Fraserburgh skipper was busy getting ready to go to sea the day I spoke to him. "It's going well. The boat's fishing well. We're very happy with her, she's a very comfortable boat. She feels a lot bigger than she actually is, to be honest with you," he said.

"We've been working with seven men just now. But we usually manage to work a boat with five men really. To start with we've kept a full crew on all the time just now. But my two sons are not going away to sea with me tonight, so we're going away with six."

Fishing mainly prawns and groundfish, they're also catching some monk and with "a wee bit of squid on the ground just now" as well, there's been a nice mix of fish really, said Sandy.

Working mostly 6 day trips and hauling 4 times a day, for the Fraserburgh skipper the future of the industry is all about quality.

"We've got to try and catch the product as quick as we can and get it back to the market in as good a condition as we possibly can and just try and do that with the

"We knew what would work and what wouldn't work, and a lot of things we fancied doing we just went and did them."

boat. Obviously, if the boat's not moving about so much, the crew are able to do their work faster.

"We're definitely managing to clear the deck in this boat faster than we have in any other boat we've had before. Definitely, the product is coming out of the sea and going into cold storage a lot quicker than it did before."

Passionate about fishing

Landing into Fraserburgh, most of their catch goes to Europe. I asked Sandy if he was apprehensive about how those markets might change in the future. "To be quite honest with you," he said, "we're not very worried about that. Because we all know that although Brexit has to come sometime, people over here have got to keep buying German cars because they like them. And then people on the continent are going to keep buying the fish and prawns from us because they like fish and prawns."

"We just recently struck up a relationship with EK Marine," he said. "We're not going to stop using Eunan and his machinery because of Brexit. We're going to keep buying stuff off Eunan because I like his stuff."

"So that's that. I like to be optimistic about things."

True to form and unperturbed by the outcome of the December Councils that were upcoming at the time *The Skipper* was going to print Sandy said: "We know that probably any fish that gets cut will get cut from us before it gets cuts from the whitefish lads. While we've been doing quite a bit of whitefish as well. But what we tend to see is that the years where there's big quotas on the go the price of fish comes down.

"So hopefully the prices will be a wee bit more buoyant next year. In particular, the cod this year has never really hit any big heights for any length of time and has probably been threading quite cheap on the markets all year really, or most of the year, compared to the years where there was less of it on the go. So although there may be a wee bit less to catch, hopefully, the prices will be a wee bit better."

In terms of the longer term

outlook, with stocks looking "very healthy, through a mixture of stocks" Sandy was equally optimistic. It would, he said, however, be nice to see some younger lads coming into the industry. The last number of years there have been a few more coming through in Fraserburgh, he said, "but maybe just half of them will stick it out once they get a week or two at sea they change their mind."

With fishing on both sides of the family, and 32 years fishing under his own belt, there's little changing Sandy's mind, however. "It's been a wee while now," he said, "but we've got a wee while to go yet." Having started on the then brand new seiner, the *Renown* when he first went to sea, today Sandy has two sons coming up and fishing with him on the new *Virtuous*. Sandy's eldest son Alex works with him as relief skipper. Keen to get out onto the North Sea, Aidan, who'll be 17 next year, started last spring.

"Having someone coming up, it gives you something to work for. If these two boys hadn't been here, there's no way we would have been building a new boat. It's as simple as that. Because they're here and they're going to fish in it, it's just something for me to keep working for," said Sandy. "Keep a good boat below their feet."

"We're quite passionate about the fishing industry. We've been here a wee while now. And we knew what would work and what wouldn't work, and a lot of things we fancied doing we just went and did them."

Working alongside the West's is a mostly Filipino crew, a number who have been fishing with the family with more than a decade. The crew includes another father and son duo, with a cousin joining them in the New Year. "It's turning out to be a real family affair," said Sandy.

"We're going away to sea tonight. The wind's blowing into the south-west here now, so we'll get away tonight and get the last trip before Christmas and then that'll be us. Then we'll be home. Home for Christmas and away for New Year again. That'll be fine."

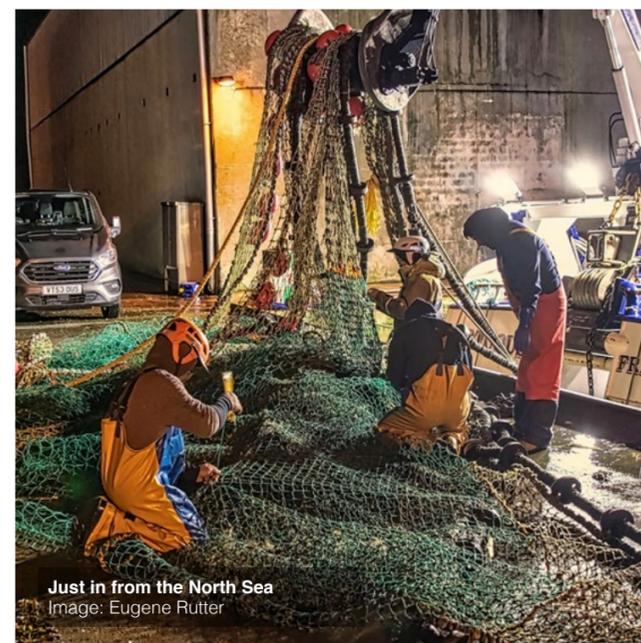
Best of luck and safe fishing in the Virtuous Sandy, Alex and crew from The Skipper team.



Skipper Sandy West and his crew, including sons Alex and Aidan on board the Virtuous. Image: Eugene Rutter



Skipper Sandy West, landing into Fraserburgh. Image: Eugene Rutter



Just in from the North Sea. Image: Eugene Rutter

Household fish spends still dwarfed by meat

Though spending more on fish and seafood, the recently published 2019 EU Fish Market annual report indicates EU household fish spends are still dwarfed by household spends on meat.

According to the 2019 report — which provides analysis of fish and seafood consumptions, landings, production, and trade — consumption of fish and seafood in the EU was estimated at 24.35 kg per capita in 2017, down half a kilo compared to 2016. Eating 56.8kg per capita (more than twice the EU level) the Portuguese remain the absolute champions in terms of consumption, followed by Spain and Malta. Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania rank

lowest in terms of per capita consumption. Accounting for 44% of total volumes in 2017, tuna, cod, salmon, Alaskan pollock and shrimps are the most popular species.

Household spends on fish continued an upward trend in 2018, reaching €59.3 billion, 24% higher than in 2009. The average per capita household expenditure on fish and seafood in 2018 was €115, while consumer prices of fish and seafood increased with an average 3% per year from 2009 to 2018. That said, in no EU country is the expenditure on fish and seafood higher than that for meat. Since 2009, at EU level, households spent around one-quarter of the amount spent on

meat purchasing fish and seafood (€226 billion in 2018). Italy, France, Spain were the countries with the highest level of total expenditure, while Malta, Slovenia and Cyprus those with the lowest level.

Though aquaculture production reached a 10-year high of 1.37million tonnes in 2017, the EU fish and seafood market is still dominated by wild-caught products, accounting for three-quarters of the total per capita consumption. Volumes landed in the EU reached a 10-year peak of 4.68 million tonnes, however, decreasing prices for some of the main landed species, especially of blue whiting and herring, caused a slight decrease in the overall value

of fisheries production.

Nonetheless, with 43% of the fish consumed by EU citizens coming from the EU and imports accounting for almost 60% (more than a quarter of which originate in Norway), internal demand for fish in the EU is still met largely by imports. Salmon, cod, tuna, Alaskan pollock, fishmeal and shrimps are the most imported products. On the other hand, almost 15% of EU supply is exported. The main products exported are herring, mackerel, blue whiting, tuna, fishmeal and fish oil. The main export markets in value terms are the US and China. The highest volumes, however, are actually destined for Nigeria and Norway.

Europêche meets with new Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries

Last month, the European fishing industry representative body, Europêche met the newly elected Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius, and exchanged views on the challenges faced by the sector and on ongoing fisheries policy developments. The fishing

body assessed the talks with the Commissioner — who, they say, is committed to balancing the three dimensions of sustainability during his mandate — as open and constructive.

During the talks, Europêche highlighted the important role played by all fleets, both small and large, in providing healthy

food to the consumer and creating employment and wealth in many coastal communities.

Praising the huge efforts made in the North East Atlantic by the EU industry that was seeing recovery of stocks, Mr Sinkevičius acknowledged there was still room for improvement, however, promised not to single out any of the pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) during his mandate, without losing sight of the goal to achieve Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). In response, representatives from the European fishing body asked the new Commissioner to take into account the socio-economic impact reports submitted by Member States and draw on the full ranges provided by scientists to achieve MSY objectives when making quota decisions, reminding him there are a lot of people making a living out of fishing and huge catch reductions are simply unbearable.

The Commissioner committed to move fast on the negotiations to deliver a new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2021-2027 in the shortest timeframe possible to facilitate smooth transition to the next budgetary period. On Brexit, Mr Sinkevičius reassured industry representatives the Commission is ready and prepared for every possible scenario and provided assurances that fishing will not be singled out from any political package agreement with the UK and fisheries negotiations will be inextricably linked to trade and market access.

Alongside implementing the current Common Fisheries Policy, the new Commissioner will focus part of his mandate on addressing issues not sufficiently covered in the current policy such as climate change and social affairs. Europêche

here highlighted that eating wild-caught fish means climate protection since it is by far the animal protein with the lowest carbon footprint and thus the best option in terms of food security. And as a low impact food producer, the sector called on the Commission to prioritise the fishing sector as a key user of the marine space.

As part of his environmental portfolio, the Commission intends to extend and intensify the coverage of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), while allowing fishing activities where possible. Europêche cautioned, however, that like so many other things, this intention should not mean achieving particular percentages as a goal in itself.

The fishing body fully endorsed the new Commission's "Farm to Fork Strategy", which applied to the fishing industry would be a "Sea to Plate strategy". The sector proposed to implement this approach by enhancing traceability on imports in the EU market, expanding information to consumers about processed seafood products and their origin and requested that a communication campaign be put in place about the benefits of fish consumption not only for people but for the planet.

Daniel Voces, Europêche managing director welcomed the constructive talks and highlighted that "open dialogue is paramount to design workable policies and rules". Mr Voces also warned, however, that 2020 will be a crucial year for the industry, as Brexit negotiations on the future relationship with the UK take form and since international treaties, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), will set new ambitious goals for sustainable ocean governance for the next decade — the industry, he said, will need a seat at the table.

Minister Creed presented with The Atlas of Commercial Fisheries around Ireland

Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed TD, was recently presented with the Marine Institute's Atlas of Commercial Fisheries around Ireland.

This publication includes a series of maps detailing fishing activity around Ireland, providing an insight into fishing activities and Ireland's fisheries resources. On an average day, approximately 500 fishing vessels are active in the waters of Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone, which equates to more than 1.8 million fishing hours per year.

Dr Paul Connolly, CEO of the Marine Institute said, "The fisheries in Irish waters are highly diverse. The Atlas presents very complex, scientific data through a series of visual and informative maps making this information more accessible for our stakeholders. The Atlas will be useful for

scientists to further understand fishing activities in Irish waters and will also inform marine spatial planning of our marine resource."

Published by the Marine Institute, The Atlas of Commercial Fisheries around Ireland, is the third publication of its kind. The Atlas of Commercial Fisheries around Ireland shows the distribution of fishing activities by gear and country, as well as the Irish landings of key commercial fish species.

The maps featured in The Atlas of Commercial Fisheries around Ireland are produced using a number of data sources including Vessel Monitoring Systems which provide geographical position and vessel speed, and the Irish Vessel Logbooks and the EU Fleet Register provide details on the catch and fishing gear used.

The Atlas of Commercial



Minister Creed was recently presented with the Atlas of Commercial Fisheries by Dr Paul Connolly, CEO Marine Institute. Image Jason Clarke

Fisheries around Ireland is available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10793/1432>

The data that underpins the information provided in The Atlas of Commercial Fisheries around Ireland is collected

under the Data Collection Framework, which is financed by the Irish Government and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund as part of the EMFF Operational Programme for 2014 – 2020.

Bringing Ireland's Deep Atlantic into the classroom



Ken O'Sullivan and Patricia Orme discuss Ireland's deep Atlantic with students

The Marine Institute welcomes the addition of new online classroom resources for Junior Cycle students, which will feature the documentary series, Ireland's Deep Atlantic.

Junior Cycle for Teachers (JCT), Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ) and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) recently launched a new selection of online classroom resources for the Junior Cycle classroom. Ireland's Deep Atlantic is one of three Irish-produced and publicly-funded television programmes used to create the online resources.

Ireland's Deep Atlantic, produced by Sea Fever Productions, sees filmmaker Ken

O'Sullivan embark on a series of voyages in the North Atlantic in search of blue whales, sharks and deep-water coral reefs. Ken O'Sullivan filmed part of the series on board the Marine Institute's marine research vessel the RV Celtic Explorer and documented coral reefs at a depth of 3,000 metres using the Marine Institute's ROV Holland 1.

The new online classroom resources for Business Studies students will utilise the series, including video clips of the RV Celtic Explorer and scientists, to learn about consumer behaviour and sustainable development, and the impact of economic growth on society and the environment.

Geography students will learn about the 'Real Map of Ireland' and the importance of Ireland's ocean territory. The students will also learn about the exploitation of water, fish stocks, forestry, and soil and the relationships between the physical world, tourism and transport.

Ken O'Sullivan of Sea Fever Productions said, "This project took five years to realise with huge co-operative work from a number of organisations and groups, but it's just wonderful now to realise that every teenager in Ireland will see our beautiful, fertile oceans and learn not just about the rich life within them, but the impact of human behaviour on our oceans".

Patricia Orme, Director of Corporate Services at the Marine Institute said, "These online resources enable Ireland's Deep Atlantic to be utilised as a learning tool in Junior Cycle classrooms across the country. Students will learn from engaging video content that showcases marine life in Irish waters and the work of Irish scientists. Bringing Ireland's Deep Atlantic into the classroom increases awareness about Ireland's valuable marine resource, encouraging students to become ocean leaders and marine champions."

The production of Ireland's Deep Atlantic was supported by the Marine Institute, BAI and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Teachers and students can access the educational material and the programme clips referenced from the RTÉ Learn website at <https://www.rte.ie/learn/junior-cycle/>



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CHARISMA

By Peter Johnson
Shetland News



NEW BOAT

Charisma heading home to Symbister on her maiden trip from Denmark. Image Ivan Reid

NEW CHARISMA SHINES BEFORE HEADING FOR SHAKEDOWN TRIP

Pelagic giant is fifth in little over a year

CHARISMA is the latest pelagic trawler to join the Whalsay fleet and is the fifth such vessel in little over a year to be welcomed to "Da Bonnie Isle". At 75m long and 15.3m beam she is five metres longer and 0.8m beamier than her predecessor, which has gone to Iceland after

16 years service to the *Charisma* partners. Shareholder and skipper Davy Hutchison is continuing at the helm with William Polson also a skipper and Billy Hughson as engineer. Five of the original nine shareholders are still fishing on the *Charisma*, which is understood to

have cost around £25 million. She is the fourth vessel to bear the name – the first being Davy's initial foray into pelagic tankships. Come next Christmas, he will have completed 60 years at the fishing, having started with the 53ft *Brighter Morn*, which went to the drift net in summer and seine-net

in winter. Being ship's cook, it was Davy's job to give the heavy bush rope (which was at least a mile long) an annual tarring, then to coil it when the drift net was hauled. That was in the days when gloves were unknown aboard a fishing boat and the rope was in a good mess for the first few weeks. Fishing at the seine net in winter would be a tough job by any standards, but they "knew nothing else" then. Davy acquired a small scallop boat called the *Heather Belle* and acted as relief on various other fishing boats. He then moved on to work on the inter-island ferry *Grima*, which replaced the *Earl of Zetland* on the Lerwick to Whalsay run in 1975. There were fewer ferry men in those days and they tended to work long hours through the night. Davy was not contented with it and was back at the fishing after three years. As for now, Davy said that he would "play it by ear" as far as continuing as skipper went. As to the new ship, Davy said he had a "fairly favourable" impression. "She seems to steam well, very silent and smooth. "It was a fine run, it was fresh in the morning but there was no

FACT FILE
NAME: Charisma
REGISTRATION: LK 362
HOME PORT: Symbister
SKIPPER: Davy Hutchison
CREW: 14
YARD: Karstensens
TYPE: Pelagic trawler
LENGTH: 75m
BEAM: 15.3m
RSW CAPACITY: 2,380 cubic m

sea that came in over," he said of the trip back from Karstensens Shipyard, in Denmark. The vessel's steelwork was completed in Poland and she was fitted out in the Danish yard, with the accommodation fitting done by Norwegian firm, Maritime. Although the *Charisma's* plans were among the first to be signed among the new generation of ships, various hold ups meant she has only been completed now. *Charisma* was catching mackerel around Shetland before Christmas with engineers from the equipment companies in attendance. The rest of 2019's quota was swapped for 2020, with good prices meaning there was no difficulty getting a trade. "We will have most of two quotas to catch next year," the skipper said. The vessel usually lands to Pelagia processing plants which now owns what was previously Shetland Catch as well as several factories in Norway. With a 42 per cent increase in 2020's mackerel quota now confirmed, and prices holding up, the immediate future for the pelagic fleet is looking good. Davy said: "The science is good so there is hopefully a good picture for the immediate future." Brexit remains the big uncertainty, with a clearer picture maybe emerging after the general election. If there is another hung parliament, what will throw more sand in the gearbox. Davy added: "The big one for us is herring. We have a very, very poor share of herring and it's nearly all fished in UK waters." Independence from the CFP might allow Britain to claw back some of that quota. The first *Charisma* was built in 1979 as a purse netter. She was a sister ship to the *Antares*, built the year before. She was lengthened in 1985 and the following year she was converted to trawl and paired with either *Serene* or *Research*, but continued to purse when required. The first *Charisma* had four cabins – not quite as luxurious as the present vessel's accommodation. But it was still "a big improvement from seven or eight men shoved down a peerie cabin aft," said Davy.



Left Skipper Davy Hutchison and first mate William Polson - Charisma wheelhouse. Image Ivan Reid



Charisma crew. Image Ivan Reid

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Well wishers boarding the Charisma. Image Ivan Reid



Charisma's wheelhouse



Lerwick harbour the day after arrival to take onboard Mackerel gear. Image Ivan Reid



Engine Room

"A grain o' weather in a big boat, it's certainly more comfort, safety and everything."

The next ship was built at Egersund in 1995 and she was followed in 2003 by a vessel built in Turkey and fitted out at Flekkefjord, a construction pattern that has been repeated many times.

The 1995 *Charisma* is still fishing from Denmark where she is known as the Rockall.

Charisma will be sailing with a big crew of 14, including some new recruits who will be trained up in the first few trips. That number might in future reduce as some of the older hands decide to step down.

"We just want to get some of the young ones involved in the electrics and engineering work," said Davy.

The five original partners still on the *Charisma* are William Polson, Larry Williamson, Jimmy Tulloch, John Pearson and Davy. There are another four non-fishing shareholders – all with family connections.

Charisma has a refrigerated sea water (RSW) tank capacity of 2,380 cubic metres but is unlikely to take more than 1,800 tonnes of mackerel at a go, a lot depending on the time of year and firmness of the fish.

H Williamson & Sons of Scalloway, "the best you could get," according to Davy, supplied and fitted out the electronics in *Charisma's* wheelhouse, a powerful

array of touch screen controlled devices.

Charisma was taking gear on board earlier this week, including a new net from Swan Nets.

Rapp MacGregor supplied the winches, two net drums and fish pump. The all-electric gear package is much quieter than hydraulic and seems very satisfactory in the other vessels that have such systems installed. It is the first time the *Charisma* has gone with Rapp winches, having had Karmoy installed in previous vessels.

SeaQuest Systems of Donegal supplied the cranes which are the only hydraulic powered gear on the ship.

Johnson Controls installed the RSW plant and vacuum pumping was installed by Danish firm IRIS.

The main engine is a 7200 kW Mann V12 powering a 3200 kW shaft generator as well as the 4.2m Brunvoll propeller. Fore and aft Brunvoll thrusters (fore thruster is retractable) of 890 and 950 kW can be powered by the shaft or the auxiliaries.

There are two 1550 kW Caterpillar auxiliaries and two 250kW harbour generators. Normally only one generator would be in use when the *Charisma* is tied up at the pier but all the engines can synchronise together.

Best of luck and safe fishing to all on the Charisma, from all at The Skipper.



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Best wishes to owners & crew of the new MFV *Charisma*
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Satisfied customer orders alternative oil filter solutions for new builds

This alternative oil filter ensures both optimal reliability and lifetimes for marine engines, while also saving on fuel and time and money on maintenance. The environmental benefits of saving many litres of waste oil on an annual basis is just one of the advantages of C.C.JENSEN's new oil filter, the CJC® Lube Oil Filter.

This is what shipping company Royal Greenland discovered after testing several different types of oil filter on its existing ships. During the period, C.C.JENSEN closely monitored the choice of the different types of oil filter and, as part of a collaboration between MAN, Royal Greenland and C.C.JENSEN, the new oil filter was developed in order to ensure continually clean and dry lubricating oil in the ship's diesel engine.

At Royal Greenland, the CJC® Lube Oil Filter 427/108 with Flow Drive became the most natural choice for one of the shipping company's new build, the trawler 'Sisimiut', which is the third of the shipping company's trawlers to go by this name and, with a volume of 5,000 gross tonnes, is twice as big as its predecessor.

'Sisimiut' was launched in August 2019. Not only is the

trawler bigger, it has also been improved in several significant areas, including in relation to fuel consumption, which has not increased even though the new 'Sisimiut' trawler has the capacity for both longer and faster voyages than its predecessor.

CLEANER, BETTER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE

The ship's main engine, a MAN 9L32/44Common Rail 5400 kW, is fitted with the new CJC® Lube Oil Filter, which also ensures a continually clean and dry oil, increasing uptime and extending the lifetimes of components and oil.

"Overall, the improvements mean an increase in efficiency and quality while improving sustainability. And efficiency, energy optimisation and sustainability are certainly important parameters for today's shipping companies,"



Royal Greenland trawler, 'Sisimiut' with CJC® Lube Oil Filter installed to maintain its engine lubricating oil

emphasises Jan Foged, C.C.JENSEN Ireland Ltd

While the typical oil filter solution is a centrifuge, requiring more maintenance and regular repairs, C.C.JENSEN's alternative solution has been developed and designed to make life easier on board.

"It's an easier way of keeping the oil and engine clean. We also hear from the crew that they enjoy just being able to wash their hands with water and ordinary soap after making repairs, quite simply because the oil is nowhere near as dirty as with traditional filtering," says Jan Foged.

A FILTER FOR YET ANOTHER NEW BUILD

Royal Greenland's positive experiences with C.C.JENSEN's oil filter have meant the shipping company is now ordering the same solution for yet another future new build.

"Research shows that 80% of oil related failures and breakdowns are caused by contaminated oil. That's why preventive oil maintenance is so important for ensuring optimum reliability and avoiding system breakdown. On this basis, we are very happy that Royal Greenland has had such positive experiences with our oil filter and has chosen

the solution again," says Jan Foged, Technical Advisor.

GROUND-BREAKING FILTER TECHNOLOGY

C.C.JENSEN A/S is a globally oriented family-owned business, which has specialised in the production of lubricant oil filters for marine engines since its establishment in 1953. The company has its head office in Svendborg and its own production plant in Hesselager, where all filter inserts are produced from 100 per cent natural cellulose fibres from sustainable resources – entirely without chemicals.

After many years of research and practical testing, C.C.JENSEN has, in collaboration with shipping companies and leading engine producers, been at the forefront in the development of a new and ground-breaking technology for maintaining lubricating oil in 2 and 4 stroke engines running on diesel, medium fuel oils, heavy residual fuel oil, heavy fuel and other fuel types.

A typical argument for choosing a CJC® Oil Filter is the considerable savings to be made, with up to 60 per cent lower oil consumption, 97 per cent energy savings and a full 99 per cent lower slam content from the lubricating oil.



Gafa sna Líonta

Wednesday 8th January 2020 - TG4 @ 9.30pm

Despite having the richest fishing waters in Europe, Ireland's fishing industry and fishing communities are swimming against the tide. Directed and shot by Darina Clancy, *Gafa sna Líonta*, tells the stories of those struggling to make a living and to make ends meet on our coastline.

Filed in the fishing towns of Castletownbere, Dunmore East and Heilbhic, the first episode in the new TG4 documentary series, *Tabú*, chronicles the challenges each season brings for the people fishing around our coasts.

Offering a taste of the life of a fisherman and the challenges they face daily, the hour-long documentary features just some of the many types of fishing taking place around our shores – from pelagic to potting, seining to gillnetting. The documentary also follows the Irish Navy as they perform routine inspections on boats in Irish waters.

Frank and honest interviews with fishermen, who find themselves trapped by quotas and who are heavily policed by Irish and EU regulations, capture elements of the day to day life of fishermen that are oftentimes not captured within those regulations.

Among those featured is seiner Damien Turner. Whilst not originally from a fishing family — his father was a merchant seaman — Damien came into fishing at an early age and excelled from day one. Now, he is rarely off the water. His boat, the *Róise Catriona*, is proudly named after his daughter. Never one to shy away from a challenge, Damien has navigated the obstacles that have been placed before him over the years and has earned the respect of the fishing industry at large for his innovative conservation and efforts to be proactive within the industry.

Patrick Murphy, CEO of the Irish South and West Producer's Organisation also features and his passion for the fishing industry is palpable. Patrick himself comes from a mussel farming family in the stunning Roaring Water Bay of West

Cork where they have class A waters for farming – their product is exported to France and the Far East. Like many around our coasts, Patrick is adamant that if we fought just a little more for our rights within our own waters, the benefits to the country's exchequer are boundless.

Castletownbere Fishermen's Co-op Manager, John Nolan also makes an appearance. Pulling no punches, in a way that will be familiar to many, John has all the facts and figures at his fingertips and sees the pitfalls of the industry first hand every single day, but also offers reasonable solutions.

Further east along the coast, Dunmore East fisherman, Shane McIntyre recounts some of the many challenges he has faced over the years he has been at sea. Highlighting a reality that is all too familiar to the inshore fleet, Shane recently made the costly decision to adapt his boat as whitefish fishing became increasingly unviable for him. Today, having made the changes to make his boat suitable for lobster and crab pots, he now faces an unannounced challenge to the fishing grounds he has fished for years – offshore wind. Expressing a deep-seated desire for our authorities to fight our corner so he can simply provide for his family and do what he loves best, Shane also fears for how events will unfold at sea after Brexit and these are painted vividly.

Gafa sna Líonta forms part of the *Tabú* series on TG4. The series comprises nine individual hour-length standalone documentaries that offer a startling, compelling and uncompromising look at lesser spoken of topics in Ireland today such as Homelessness, Children with chronic Health conditions, Allergies, Direct Provision, Being Transgender in Ireland, Worldwide frontline emergency medical workers, Ireland's Offshore Fishing industry, The Coast Guard and the imminent closure of the Bord na Móna bogs.

Gafa sna Líonta airs Wednesday, January 8, 2020, on TG4 @ 9.30pm



Darina in action

How do you truth the life of a fisherman (or woman) in an hour?

By Lia ní Aodha

How do you capture the day to day reality of a life lived at sea in 60 minutes? With challenges, says documentary maker Darina Clancy, having set herself this task with her new documentary, *Gafa sna Líonta*.

With a personal remit to do a lot of maritime history and culture, and having interviewed several fishermen for the 'Bailte' series last year, that explored Ireland's remote townlands and its people, when Darina was approached by TG4 via the television company Midas to do a programme on fishing she jumped at the chance.

Knowing nobody in the industry, apart from the fishermen she had interviewed previously and her cousin's husband (Kevin Murphy) who is a fisherman,



Shane McIntyre

the first person Darina went to was the latter. "I sat down with Kevin and got a crash course in fishing – the different types, the different rules, different quotas, the different types of boats, the different types of fish, the times of year they would go fishing, the types of fish fished." From right then, she knew this was not going to be a simple story.

Subsequently, Darina contacted the other few contacts she had in the industry and asked for recommendations. After that, she quite literally walked the piers of Castletownbere and Dunmore East, spoke to people, explained what she was doing. It was tough, she said, some were sceptical and said it would never get made, others embraced it.

"I looked up the fish producer organisations too and that's how I met Patrick, it was just through a phone

call. I knew after the first phone call Patrick was very passionate. Then he introduced me to Damien. And having met Damien and having seen his boat I knew that he was a very forward thinking person – very clear but also passionately in love with his job. His crew were fantastic as well," she said.

Shot over seven months by Darina herself (she also directed and produced the entire programme), over the course of filming, challenging herself logistically, Darina went to sea and immersed herself in the day to day of fishing. Though she had been out on the water, when she started she had never been out on fishing boats for long periods. Reflecting on her experiences she said, "I was completely pushed outside of my comfort zone and that's what I wanted. It really did, in every sense – in terms of the content I had to decipher and deliver, as well as the logistics and handling the camera on a boat for seven days or whatever it was."

More challenging than land-based filming, making the documentary took around nine months start to finish. "Between research we started in December, then we should have been ready to go in February but the weather was so bad no boats were going out, so I really didn't start in earnest until late March. Then April was a bad month again, I had loads of things lined up for Easter but nothing happened. Then I was out for all of May and June. And then the edit process takes another two months," said Darina, who realised early on that the realities on board a fishing boat would mean this was going to be a one-woman shoot that would entail fitting herself around fishing trips, rather than the other way around.

Not making her life any easier, Darina suffered from seasickness when shooting at sea. "There's something about looking through a lens on a camera as well, that you're not looking at your surroundings you're concentrated on one small tiny screen, and it screws with your balance and your perception of what's going on around you," she said.

Aside from logistical challenges, trying to digest the information she was learning about, processing

it so it would be digestible and understandable to an audience at home within an hour documentary was also challenging.

With no preconceived notion of the story she was trying to tell, Darina explained that throughout the process, through conversations, she was learning from the fishermen she met. "In my own head it was all very naïve," she said, "my perception of the fishing industry was naïve." But from talking to people on the pier and at sea a more complex story than she bargained for emerged.

"I'm not going to lie," she said, "I struggled with the story from start to finish because it's a story that is very difficult to tell in one hour. But it's a fascinating one, an absolutely fascinating one."

"The fishermen, they live this. They breathe it. This is what they talk about every single day. This is how they operate. It is the difficulties and it is the quotas. It is trying to get this, that and the other thing. It is regulation being brought in. It is how to fix their nets and it is the cost of x,y and z. It is all of these things in constant conversation.

"And that was one of the things I found difficult, just trying to make it digestible so that an audience sitting at home could understand the level and the layers of regulation, rules, different types of fishing etc."

"I think I went into the job thinking I'm going to be going out fishing with a load of angry fishermen. That was my perception. But then I realised fishermen are kind of like the middle child.

"They are literally jumping up and down and they are trying every which way — they have tried every which way — to get attention, and all they are left with is just shouting and screaming. Because they've never been heard.

"And what they're actually saying is making an incredible amount of sense.

"There are some incredible people with great innovative and progressive ideas within the industry — people who LOVE the industry and what they are doing and who want to protect the industry and stocks — but they're not being given a voice," said Darina.

In terms of high points for

Darina, there are a few. Going out with the boats, even when sick, was one. "It was just a privilege really to be trusted by them, to work with the crews, to be able to ramble around the boat. To get to see how they work".

"I was on the last journey on the *Carmona* with Brendan O'Driscoll when he was selling it. That was a bittersweet and very privileged position to be in, where he was handing over his boat", she said.

In terms of a take-home message from the documentary, Darina said though it was hard to pick one if she were to summarise it is that "we've missed a trick."

"We've definitely missed something in this country. It's not even a trick. It's an income, it's an industry. And the documentary hits on this. Irish fishermen are actually working very hard with the Marine Institute to make sure the stocks are sustainable. And as they say very succinctly themselves it's not in their interest to fish the fish to death. It's not in their interest

because they want to be able to come out again and fish."

Aside from working with the lads (and of course coming home with a bag of fish), another high point for Darina was working with the Navy. "I think there's another asset. There's another resource that is underutilised in this country. If they were able to operate to the level that they're trained to, they would be a much better resource for our country".

Would she do it again? Absolutely. "The more I've learned, the more questions I have really."

Currently in the thick of another hour-long documentary, this time on the Irish Coast Guard, at the moment Darina is busy out filming again. Covering all aspects of the Coast Guard from the Coordination Centres, the volunteers to the helicopter bases, that documentary, which is also part of TG4's *Tabú* series, will air later in the New Year.

"There's so much in common in both of these stories," said Darina, "I think it is something to do with maritime people in general. They're just so resilient."



Damien Turner



Reeling ropes

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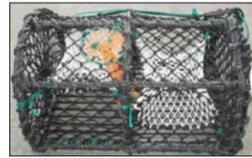
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The subject of the picture must be related to the Fishing Industry (your vessel, your catch, a stormy day at sea...etc). Each month, the best photo will be published in The Skipper and the winner will receive a prize, courtesy of Swan Net Gundry Ltd 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.

The closing date for entries this month is the 17th JANUARY 2020.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:
Simply get your phones and



PHOTO OF THE MONTH WINNER: VINCENT O'BRIEN

O'BRIEN BROTHERS, VINCENT AND GAVIN BRINGING POTS AND CATCH ASHORE FOR CHRISTMAS, AT KNOCKADOON, EAST CORK.

THE MONTHLY PRIZE

The winner will receive a Sotra Fleece by GUY COTTEN

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The Skipper



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Safety At Sea was the theme of an address by Mr Brendan O'Kelly, Chairman of BIM, to a group of Sea Scouts from Dublin onboard the training ship "Albatrose" in Dun Laoghaire in 1972.



Gallagher brothers, St John's Point. 1972, launching of the Carrannon. L-R Danny, Charlie, John Joe, Pasty and Willie at the back. Image: Mickey Gallagher



John Griffin, Schull fishing salmon out of Goleen Bay circa 2006.



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THE IRISH SKIPPER

JANUARY 1984

MAINLY PORTS AND PEOPLE

By Dan Leno

Oilmen suspected of Windscale plot

VIRTUALLY every reader of this journal has suffered to different degrees from the Windscale alarm. I was told that in some parts of Northern Ireland, retail fish sales were down to 25%, and in Britain the demand has also been seriously reduced, thus hitting Irish exports.

On one day in the Dublin market last month, only 175 boxes appeared, thus indicating what little demand was anticipated, even though the prices for that amount were high.

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It is somewhat coincidental, the B.B.C. suggested, that the Windscale scare began just as several British energy authorities were well advanced in plans to produce their electricity from nuclear power. And at the same time, oil sales are falling.

More than 10% of Britain's electricity is already made from nuclear power. There are more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream, as they say.

FIVE PORTS TESTED The Irish Fish Producers' Organisation has been assisting with tests in Howth, Clogherhead, Skerries, Arklow and Dunmore East, and these have revealed no risks whatsoever.

Also, two university professors in Dublin, probably the most qualified persons in Ireland to comment on the subject, last month said that the scare was unfounded.

It's something to think about next time you are writing a cheque for fuel.

Inshore men are uniting Changes in the regulations concerning this season's salmon fishing may be possible if a unified front is presented by the licencees on all coasts.

This is the opinion of Frank Doyle, the Irish Fishermen's Organisation Chief Executive who has been meeting salmon and inshore fishermen around the coast following the successful meetings held in Co. Donegal in November. There, the fishermen realise that they have much in common with all other fishermen, whether they use nets that float or are dragged.

Special interest has been shown in the south-west, where a meeting has been called in Macroom on January 8th of delegates from local associations. Strong support is expected from Co. Kerry, where there has been considerable inequality in the allocation of licences. With the lobstermen, who also produce a valuable export commodity, the salmon men consider that they can present a powerful voice for a revision of the by-laws.

Salvaged trawler does well on sprat



Awards presented to trainees

At a special function held in the National Fishery Training Centre in Greencastle last month, the second I.F.O. Trainee Awards for 1983 were presented by Frank Doyle, Secretary General of the organisation.

The award winners were: 1st, Paul McLaughlin, Malin, Co. Donegal; 2nd, Michael Dwan, Bonmahon, Co. Waterford; and 3rd, John McCarthy, Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork.

FISHMEAL PLANT FINED £275

Fines amounting to £275 and costs and expenses totalling £804.32, were imposed on the Irish Agricultural Wholesale Society (I.A.W.S.) last month for causing pollution at Killybegs Harbour on three different dates last year.

You may not recognise the trawler, but it is the Tonton Louis, which ran up on rocks at the Baily, Howth, in September, 1969, when two lifeboats went to the scene. Now fishing from Cogh, the Tonton Louis is one of the Co. Cork trawlers bringing in big catches of sprat, as this last month's photograph by Kevin McLoughlin shows. The shortage of sprat in Norway is greatly helping southern Irish fishermen, who are finding it a more certain fishery than herring this winter. However, movements of the shoals are less predictable than herring.

OVERSEAS COPIES Other than in Ireland or Britain, the one year subscription rate is £7.80 (£4.20 surface post included), or £15.60 for two years (post included). The rate for one year by airmail is £14.16.

THE IRISH SKIPPER Established in 1964 Bought in more than 50 ports. Editor: Arthur Reynolds. Advertisement Manager: Brian Taylor. Circulation Manager: J. P. O'Reilly. Published each month by IRISH MARITIME PRESS LTD., Helm House, 71 Lansdowne Rd., Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Tel: 689770. Printed by the Anglo Celt, Cavan.

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Sole survivors

50% survival obtained in Irish otter trawl fishery

Dr Ronán Cosgrove,
Fisheries Conservation
Manager, BIM

Black, common, or plain old 'sole' is prized by seafood consumers for its firm flesh and sweet taste. In terms of landings, sole is one of the most valuable species in Europe with most catches occurring in the North Sea and eastern Celtic Sea.

In Ireland, aside from some small scale directed fisheries, the species is mainly taken as bycatch in mixed demersal trawl fisheries. According to the Marine Institute stock book, around 185 tonnes of sole are caught annually by Irish vessels, mainly in coastal shallow sandy areas where they typically constitute less than 2% of total landings of all species. Around half of Irish sole catches are made off the southwest coast in ICES division 7j. Discarding is considered negligible and landings have been well below the Irish quota in 7j in recent years. Quota is much more restrictive in other areas: Further to the east in ICES divisions 7f and 7g, a 1% bycatch quota applies for most months of the year. In the Irish Sea, no directed fisheries were permitted in 2019, with Irish vessels allocated a bycatch quota of 74 tonnes.

Under the EU landing obligation, low quotas combined with difficulties in reducing unwanted catches can lead to early cessation or choking of fishing effort. Demonstration of relatively high post-capture survival can be used to apply for an exemption under the landing obligation. Sole has potential in this regard with a survivability exemption currently in place in an inshore trawl fishery in the English Channel. Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), conducted a sole survivability study in September 2019 in collaboration with Padraic and Gerard McDonagh, owners of the MFV Karen Mary, and with Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT). The trial was led by members of the BIM fisheries conservation team, Martin Oliver and Matthew McHugh.

The vessel fished a single-rig otter trawl with 80 mm codend and 120mm square-mesh panel. Hauls averaging around 3 hours duration and 47 m depth were



Dr. Matthew McHugh, BIM, Martin Oliver, BIM with Skipper Gerard McDonagh onboard the MFV Karen Mary 127. Photography by Alan Place

mainly conducted in outer Galway Bay and the Aran Grounds. Approximately 160 sole were stored onboard in fish bins with a continual flow-through of seawater before transport to a recirculated seawater fish-holding system at GMIT. Relatively large holding tanks were used with sand on the bottom to facilitate sole's natural burying behaviour and reduce stress associated with captive holding.

Mortalities were observed to stabilise after 5 days' observations with just one fish mortality on day 5 and no mortalities on days 6 and 7 of the experiment. At the end of day 7, 50% of fish remained alive. A survival extension model was used to predict mortalities beyond day 7. This also resulted in a survival estimate of 50%. Water temperatures are known to be highly correlated with mortality of flatfish species. Relatively high water temperatures during the Galway trial suggest survival is likely to be greater at other times of year and in other areas around the Irish coast such as the Celtic and Irish Seas.

There are no guarantees regarding the outcome of applications for survival exemptions with the EC placing increasing emphasis on stock status and bycatch reduction plans for the relevant species. Nevertheless, an application will be made and, hopefully, this work will assist the Irish Industry in dealing with low sole quotas and key challenges under the landing obligation. BIM would like to thank the vessel owners, Ian O'Connor and staff at GMIT for their assistance with this study. **A full report is available at www.bim.ie/our-publications/fisheries**



(Main) Bringing in the catch, (inset) transferring sole to onboard tanks.

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