



# The Skipper

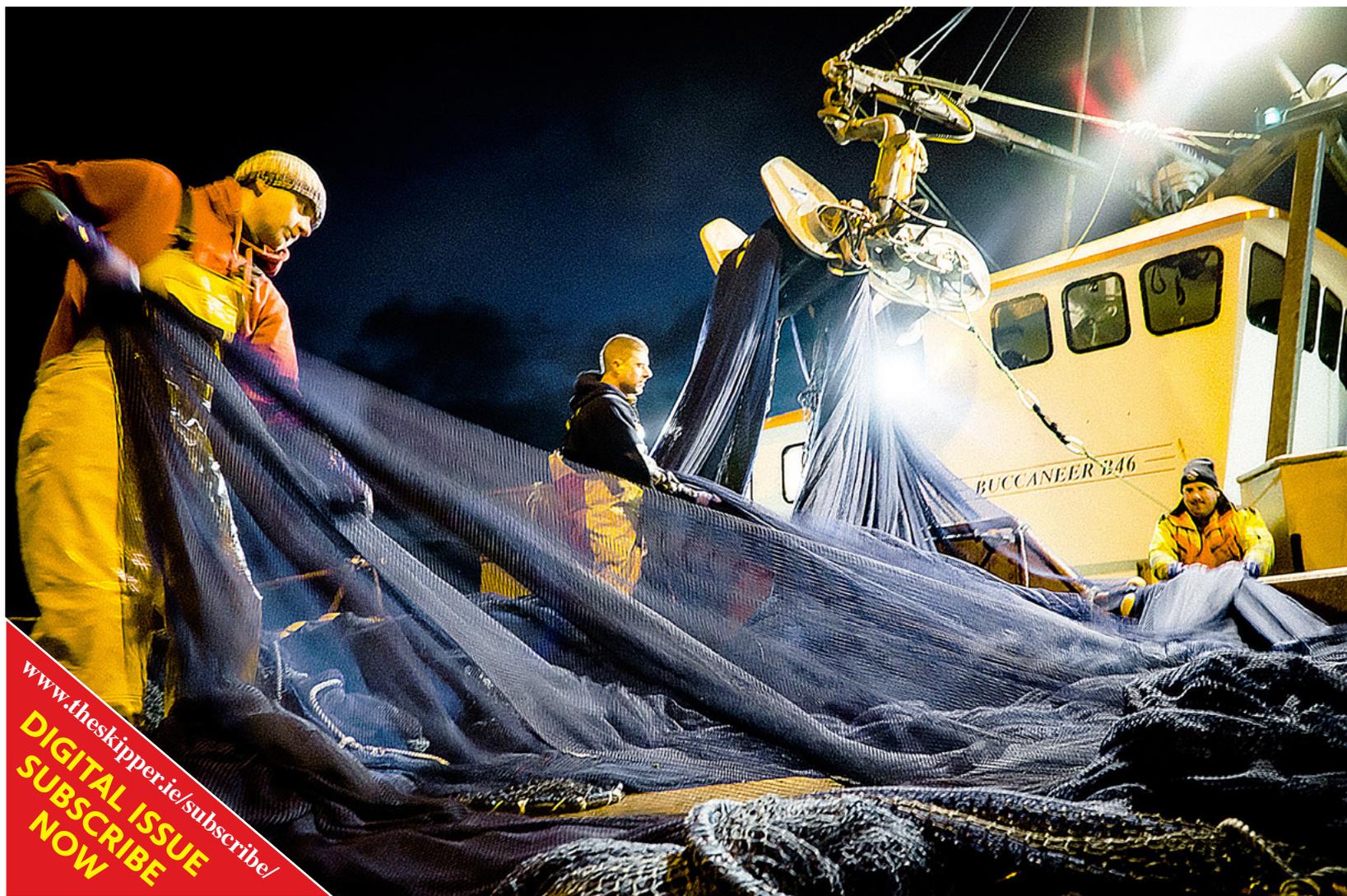
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## AN INDUSTRY ABANDONED

Fishing industry unites in criticism of Minister's Tie-up Scheme. See pages 2-3



SKIPPER AND CREW OF THE ASTHORE ON THE QUAY IN NEWLYN TAKING OFF THE NET FOR REPAIR AFTER A LONG NIGHT FISHING SARDINES. IMAGE: LARRY HARTWELL

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**EDITOR:** Lia ní Aodha  
editorial@maramedia.ie  
Mob: 086 823 9608



**SALES:** Sharon Boyle  
sharon@maramedia.ie  
Tel: 074 95 480 37  
Mob: 086 840 1250

**PRODUCTION /DESIGN:**

Declan McGrath  
design@maramedia.ie

**MANAGING DIRECTOR:**

Hugh Bonner  
hugh@maramedia.ie

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:**

sarah@maramedia.ie  
Tel: 074 95 62828

**PRINTED BY:**

WG Baird, Antrim, N.I.  
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**CONTRIBUTORS:**

Lorna Siggins  
Niall Duffy  
Craig Taylor,  
Dick James,  
Gudjon Eirnarsson,  
Shetland News



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## An industry abandoned unites

By Lia ní Aodha

At the beginning of last month, after weeks of heel-dragging on the issue, the Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, Michael Creed, T.D. announced a temporary voluntary tie-up scheme for the Irish fleet.

Under the scheme, which will be implemented under Ireland's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme (EMFF) 2014-20 (unspent funds still unknown), vessels would be supported to voluntarily tie up for one or two of the next three months, operational from June 1st, even though EU rules allow for the payment of retrospective compensation since many vessels have been tied up with months already.

On announcing the scheme Minister Creed said it would "support the fixed costs incurred by owners of fishing vessels while tied up."

"The supports to fixed costs will range from €6,000 per month for a maximum of two months for the very largest vessels over 24 metres, to €500 per month for a maximum of two months for the very smallest vessels under 6 metres in length," he said.

Available to 66% of the fleet, in different size categories, in any one month, the scheme will operate over June, July and August, to coincide with "monthly fisheries quota management periods, in order to adjust the supply of fish coming onto a currently depressed market and protect quota availability for later in the year."

"In these unique and unprecedented circumstances, it is useful to give the fishing fleet another option to help match supply with demand in the seafood markets," said the Minister.

The level of supports being offered as part of the scheme, which has since been launched by BIM, have, however, met with sharp criticism from the industry since announced.

A joint statement released by the four Irish fish producer organisations (POs) a fortnight after the scheme's announcement, said the Minister had rejected appeals for specific COVID supports from the industry "which is fighting for its very survival in the face of the pandemic."

"Agriculture Minister Michael Creed and his officials have effectively turned their back on the sector," said the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation (IFPO), the Irish South and East Fish Producers' Organisation (ISEFPO), the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation (ISWFPO) and Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO).

The announced scheme, said KFO Chief Executive Seán O'Donoghue, "is completely unfit for purpose."

"Instead of achieving the key objective of matching current supply and demand, the scheme will do the reverse with very little voluntary uptake as almost all vessels will continue to fish thus making an already over supplied market worse.

"Crucially, not one single cent of new financial support is being made available to the industry. We have met with the Minister and his officials and set out clearly what we need to survive this pandemic," he said.

"Like many others, fishermen are struggling desperately, in the new 'normal' that we find ourselves in. Demand has fallen to such an extent that some fishermen are actually receiving no bids for the fish that they have risked life and limb, to catch."

In contrast to the Minister's scheme, the four POs had put forward a joint position on what they consider necessary to achieve a "workable and effective temporary tie-up scheme that would try to match supply to demand."

Two key elements of their proposal were an initial three months scheme starting on April 1st with a review at the end of May, and that the financial support for a temporary tie-up would be based on 30% of the full grossings of the vessel in the same period last year, with an appropriate tie-up period of 7 to 10 days to be further discussed.

ISEFPO CEO, Hugo Boyle said that despite numerous requests for supports which have been specifically approved by the EU Parliament for the sector, the Minister has abandoned the sector by introducing a totally inadequate response to the potential collapse of an industry.

Highlighting that any support scheme should have a positive effect for recipients, Mr Boyle said the Minister's scheme for the industry falls far short of that. Indeed, one could question if it

was designed to fail, he said.

He said the industry had proposed a scheme based on one of the templates used in other Member States, namely the French model – which, he says, would have allowed strategic management of fisheries, matching effort to market demand, with continuity of supply in the food sector.

Conversely, he says, "what the Minister has offered will be counterproductive, resulting in a situation which will encourage vessels to continue fishing, using up valuable stocks while demand is at 'rock bottom' resulting in uneconomic returns for those engaged in fishing."

"This is also contrary to good planning and conservation of resources," he said.

Echoing much of the above, the IFPO's CEO, John Ward highlighted, "Despite the fact that we have seen the prices for the main species landed by Irish vessels to have fallen by 50 to 70% in the interim and many vessels have been forced to tie up since mid-March, the Department is only looking a tie-up commencing from June 1st."

Outlining that one of the main objections to the Minister's tie-up scheme is with the length of the scheme, he said, the scheme "will not have the desired effect of enticing vessels that have already been tied up for two months to consider the scheme."

"The tiered allocations outlined are totally inadequate," said Mr Ward, stating that fishermen and women "need an income and they need it now."

Similarly, ISWFPO CEO, Patrick Murphy said the Minister's "botched" scheme would not succeed in reducing the amount of product being placed on markets. On account of this, the PO called on the Minister "to immediately review the scheme."

"The entire industry is united in our unequivocal rejection of a botched and ultimately useless 'scheme' which does nothing to provide reassurance to fishermen. We've been endeavouring to try to manage a safe passage through Brexit and its consequences, now we're hit with this," said KFO Chief Seán O'Donoghue in the joint statement from the POs.

"I've never witnessed anger like it in the sector and I'd implore the Minister to review the scheme, deliver the very basic support that we need to survive. We are more than willing to meet him halfway and continue to operate, thereby providing a sustainable and very important food supply."

Inshore representatives have also expressed dismay with the scheme in its current guise. According to the National Inshore Fishermen's Association and Organisation (NIFA & NIFO), it falls short on several fronts, and suffers from "significant issues" that must be addressed if it is to meet its objectives.

In a joint submission sent to both the Department and BIM, the inshore representatives say that while the scheme sets out to cover fixed operating costs that apply even when a boat isn't fishing, most of their members, particularly those with boats in the 8-12m categories, say it falls far short



Idle pots. Image: Cathal Ó hUallacháin

of doing that. Under the scheme, as currently devised, vessels between 8 and 12 metres are being offered support payment over a 1 month tie-up period of between €750-800 euro (see table).

"As most boats will not be able to afford to tie up, they will have no option but to fish even if solely to try and meet fixed costs. This will include some vessels that are already tied up. Fishing effort is likely to increase which will only destabilise markets further and lead to lower prices or complete market collapse," they say.

According to a statement from the Minister in response to criticism from the industry, the supports on offer under the scheme "are in line with the fixed costs reported by industry in the EU data collection exercise operated by BIM."

Speaking to *The Skipper*, a spokesperson for the National Inshore Fisheries Forum (NIFF) said a proposal submitted by the NIFF to the Department on a tie-up scheme provided detailed analysis based on real figures from fishing businesses themselves of the type of costs a scheme needed to cover and the amount of aid that was required. "To give an example of the difference between the two proposals, in the 8-10m and 10-12m categories the government has offered less than half of what the NIFF proposed was required," said the spokesperson.

Cork South West Fianna Fáil TD Christopher O'Sullivan says what the scheme is offering hardworking fishermen and women per boat "is clearly not enough to make an impact."

"At this stage, survival is all any fishing business is asking for. The current scheme does not provide industry with any chance of survival," says the NIFF.

Betraying the Minister's and Department's socio-ecological priorities, the statement by the Minister says that the Government's "primary objective" throughout the coronacrisis "has been to maintain fishing activity, to ensure critical food supply lines to the domestic and European markets."

"The temporary tie up scheme is simply designed as a safety net scheme to provide a further option to fishermen who choose not to continue fishing. It is not designed as a replacement for viable fishing activity, wherever those possibilities exist," he says, begging the question as to what the Minister sees as viable.

"It is up to the fishing vessel owner to decide whether to tie-up or keep fishing and in line with the Government policy of keeping the food chain operating. It is, of course, preferable that the supply to fish continues to

satisfy available markets," he says.

"It would be a positive sign if the take-up of this supplementary scheme is low and that the safety net provided through the scheme is used only by the minimum number of vessels that make a decision that it is not in their economic interest to put to sea. To assist the continuation of fishing activity over the coming period, generous vessel quota allocations are being made for the month of June."

Suit the market to the fish, not the fish to the market...? According to Bord Bia's May 12th Market Insights report into COVID-19's impact on trade, Ireland's whitefish sector continues to experience "challenging market conditions." With reports of large volumes of stock in cold storage and continued low market demand, the situation regarding the frozen at sea prawn sector "continues to be very concerning," it says.

Though, according to the Minister, most Irish offshore fishing vessels have continued fishing, the NIFF spokesperson highlights the majority of the inshore fleet tied up in March because their markets had already been hit. "Many vessel owners saw that to keep landing shellfish or fish would only cause more damage in the long run as the product would only end up in storage."

"Now a scheme that has been rejected by the entire industry, large and small, is being rolled out, leaving many questioning if we are being listened to at all," said the spokesperson. "The sad part in all this is that family businesses will go to the wall across the entire sector through no fault of their own because of this. With a more realistic financial package this could be averted."

Calling on the Minister to work with his government colleagues to deliver the financial supports needed "to bail out our coastal fishing communities in this unprecedented crisis", Sinn Féin TD for Donegal Pádraig Mac Lochlainn says the statements from the industry "are a damning indictment of the total inaction of Minister Creed and this government."

The Minister, he says, "has effectively turned his back" on the entire sector and "knows very well that the temporary tie up scheme he announced will fail as it is too little, too late."

"This is the latest example of a Minister and a Department that has not been acting in the best interests of our coastal fishing communities. But the stakes are now higher than ever and the Minister must change course and finally do what is right by this vital sector."

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# EU Ministers meet Barnier & Commissioner on Brexit negotiations: Concerns among industry Chief Negotiator's stance is softening

On May 26th, the Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D attended a meeting with the EU's chief negotiator Michael Barnier and Fisheries Commissioner Virginius Sinkevicius concerning ongoing fisheries negotiations with the UK, ahead of the fourth round of talks between the two parties, starting June 1st.

During the meeting—which involved Ministers from Member States most impacted by the UK's withdrawal from the EU, including Fisheries Ministers from France, Germany, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium—Ministers were given an update by Mr Barnier on the state of play in the negotiations of a fisheries agreement with the UK after three rounds of discussions have been completed.

The meeting focused on the EU negotiating mandate for these discussions which sets down the EU position to “uphold existing reciprocal access conditions, quota shares and traditional activity of the Union fleet”.

According to a statement issued by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ministers welcomed Mr Barnier's strong commitment to the linkage between all the parts of these complex negotiations and specifically the link between the overall economic partnership and the conclusion of a fishing agreement.

All Ministers expressed full confidence in Mr Barnier and his team to defend the essential

objectives and principles set down in the mandate, they said.

Following the meeting, Minister Creed commented: “I very much welcome this detailed briefing from Mr Barnier on the current state of play in the fisheries negotiations. The 4th round of negotiations commence next week and it was very useful to hear directly from Mr Barnier about the issues arising and the challenges involved.

“I reiterated Ireland's full commitment to the EU negotiating mandate and delivering an outcome that upholds our existing access and quota shares. That position was also supported by other Ministers. The work done to date by Mr Barnier and his team gives confidence that Irish and EU fishing interests will be robustly defended in the negotiations.”

Contra the Minister's optimism, however, the Irish fishing industry has expressed concern about a potential softening of Barnier's stance on fishing in negotiations, following reports last month in *The Times* that, according to senior sources in Brussels, the EU was “ready to back down from its hard line on fishing rights”.

According to the report, the EU's chief negotiator has struggled to gain “attention” from European capitals during the coronavirus crisis on the need to shift from what he has conceded is a “maximalist” mandate on fisheries demanded by France, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands. The article cited a senior European diplomatic source as saying, “We should probably get more realistic about

our fishing position.”

To date, little progress has been made in Brexit negotiations on the question of fisheries – an area with a timeline aimed at an initial agreement by July 1st, with the objective of agreeing quotas for 2021 later this year.

In April, following the second round of negotiations Barnier said the UK had “refused to engage seriously on a number of fundamental issues”. On the “essential topic” of fisheries, he said, no progress had been made.

Following the third round of negotiations, which concluded on May 15th, Barnier signalled there had been some movement on fisheries. “We were also, at last, able to initiate the beginnings of a dialogue on fisheries, even if our positions remain very far apart,” he said.

Without an agreement on fisheries, there will be no economic and trade partnership agreement, he said, and asked, “Why would we seek to give favourable market access conditions to certain British professionals when our European fishermen would be excluded from British waters and risk losing their livelihoods?”

On May 19th, the UK published the texts of its draft negotiating documents as a “constructive contribution to negotiations.” Previously, those documents had only been seen by UK and EU negotiators.

In terms of fisheries, the draft plan outlines a desire to replace the Common Fisheries Policy's much-maligned principle of Relative Stability

as a mechanism via which to divvy out quota shares in favour of Zonal Attachment (i.e. based on the fish in the waters of a country's Exclusive Economic Zone) – a move which would likely see large alterations in quota allocations across European states.

Also outlined in the draft fisheries plan is a desire to negotiate quotas annually, for independent fisheries management, the establishment of a Fisheries Co-operation Forum to discuss management, monitoring, control and enforcement, and data sharing between both sides.

On the same day as the meeting between Barnier and European Ministers, RTÉ reported that “if the UK prevails in its ambitions in the Brexit fisheries negotiations” Ireland's quotas for some species could see huge cuts – up to 67% and 64% respectively for megs and monk, 48% for cod and haddock, according to an Irish government analysis.

Given the talks looming the first week of June are the final round of talks in the current negotiations before a ‘high-level conference’ to assess progress ahead of the end-of-year deadline and a decision is made by both sides as to whether they will continue trying to strike a deal, or start prepping once more for a no-deal... perhaps fishermen on both sides are right to be wary. All things considered, a deal on fisheries by the end of June looks unlikely.

The UK's draft fisheries framework can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/2Xaw6xZ>

# Irish vessel owners on Ireland's COVID-19 Tie-up Scheme 'It forces us into a race to the bottom'

By Lia ní Aodha

A survey was conducted by *The Skipper* last month with Irish vessel owners about the recently announced and launched tie-up scheme for the Irish fleet. Judging by the responses the outlook for Ireland's fisherman and women is bleak, and has been made worse rather than helped by the scheme, as currently devised.

Carried out on *The Skipper* Facebook page, 103 respondents answer six questions about the tie-up scheme. In terms of geographical location, responses were garnered from right around that coast and from owners with vessels ranging in size from under 6 metres up to 26.4 metres. 62.4% of those who answered were still at sea, while 37.6% indicated they were already tied up.

Asked whether the scheme would cover their vessel's fixed costs, as aimed, if they were to tie-up or had already tied up, out of 103 responses a massive 98.1% (101 fishermen/women) answered no. A tiny 1.9% answered yes.

To those who had not already tied up, we asked whether they planned to tie up on the back of the supports offered by the scheme. 92.1% said no, they would not be tying up on the back of the supports of the scheme. 6 respondents (7.9%) indicated they would.

To those who indicated they would not, we asked how far short the scheme would leave them considering just the fixed costs needed to keep the boat afloat while tied up. On a scale of 1 (very far off) to 5 (not very far off), 103 respondents answered on average 1.8, indicating the scheme doesn't come close to covering most vessel owner's fixed costs. 59.2% of respondents indicated the scheme was ‘very far off’ in this regard.

Asked whether they believe the

scheme, as it stands, will succeed in reducing the number of boats fishing sufficiently to “adjust the supply of fish coming onto a currently depressed market” as hoped by the Minister, an again very sizeable 93.2% answered no, with just 6.8% holding a belief that it would.

Overall, the responses from Irish fishermen and women indicate the Minister's scheme—termed an insult, a joke, useless—has done little more than leave Irish vessel owners between a rock and a hard place, both socially and ecologically.

One respondent explained, “We're losing money at sea and a lot more tied up. Plus the market will now be overstocked for a long time into the future, which will add more burden down the road.”

“It would be great for the markets and the fishing grounds,” said another, “if some boats could afford to tie up. But who can at that kind of money?”

Giving an insight into just how far off meeting most boats' fixed costs the scheme is, another highlighted that the majority of owners have monthly repayments and subscriptions that can't be cancelled, such as internet, VSAT, loan repayments etc.

“Our own monthly expenses amount to €15,300. This is not including the wages we owe our crew for the last three trips (the factory has been unable to sell our prawns, so we are unable to pay our crew in full) and outstanding supplier debts.

“We are receiving letters threatening legal action if we don't pay our outstanding invoices, but we don't have the money to pay them, hence we have no choice but to chance going fishing and hope we get paid something,” said the fisherman, indicating the level of pressure Irish vessel owners now find themselves under.

Several respondents highlighted issues surrounding the duration of the scheme, and more called for a partial tie-up scheme or a top-up scheme



Mending nets on Dinish Island. Image Niall Duffy

similar to that which has been implemented in the UK, whereby vessels are allowed to continue to fish. Others emphasised problems with basing a vessel's costs on a vessel's length.

More drew attention to the fact that far from a reality starting on June 1st, as per the Minister's scheme, some of them already tied to the pier wall on account of the virus have been there since March, and before that were tied up for the best part of the start of the year on account of storms.

“I was all for the tie-up but after it was announced I had to start shooting pots and start earning again,” explained one fisherman. “It forces us into a race to the bottom,” said another of the scheme. “I would personally prefer that the lobster and crab be left in the ocean to breed for the future,” explained another. “To

hell with supply, selling our product for nothing.”

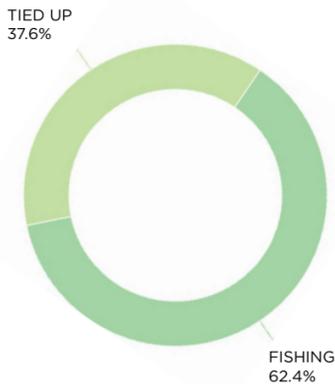
Highlighting the magnitude of the crisis now facing Ireland's fishermen and women one respondent said, “Our fishery has never been under such threat, it's a total disaster, I honestly don't know if we will have a crew or a fishery to go back to. If we ever needed some more financial aid it is now.”

“The scheme shows the Minister's and Department's lack of respect or concern for fishermen or their families,” said another respondent. Given Ireland's fishing history, perhaps most damning of all one fisherman said, “I never thought in my 36 years of fishing that a government could be so ignorant and insulting.”

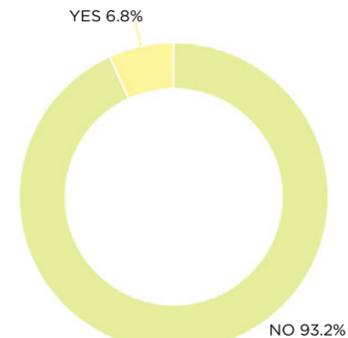
The entire debacle, said another, “shows our industry is facing a bleak future if any.”

### Survey Results:

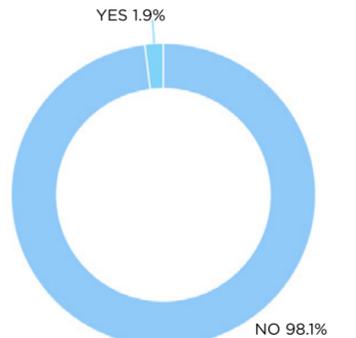
Have you tied up or are you still fishing?



Do you believe the scheme, as it stands, will succeed in reducing the number of boats fishing sufficiently to “adjust the supply of fish coming onto a currently depressed market” as hoped by the Minister? i.e. will it help the recovery of market prices?



As a vessel owner, will the scheme cover your fixed costs, as aimed, in the event you tie up or have already tied up?



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## BIM pilots online learning for Skipper Training Programme



The course delivers practical training in a range of core navigation and safety skills

The Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) National Fisheries College of Ireland in Castletownbere, Co. Cork is currently piloting the *Skipper Full Certificate of Competency* as an online course. The Skipper Full Programme, which commenced the week of May 6th, will be conducted as a nine-week online course, followed by three weeks in situ in Castletownbere once the college can open for the new academic term in accordance with COVID restrictions.

This is a popular full-time course, designed for fishermen with a *Second-Hand Full Certificate of Competency*, and 12 months sea time in that capacity, who wish to gain further qualifications in skippering a vessel. The course delivers tuition in a range of core navigation and safety

skills that will aid successful participants to obtain a *Skipper Full Certificate of Competency*.

BIM decided to pilot the training online as it will allow students the opportunity to complete their studies this year. Speaking after the online pilot was announced, Ian Mannix, Skills Development Services Manager, BIM said, "We felt it was important in the current difficult circumstances that students should have the option to continue their training, supported by BIM and embracing new technologies and teaching methods. We are actively looking at what other programmes we can introduce online to support our students"

BIM Skills Development unit is one of BIM's five organisational units and is focused on enhancing the attractiveness and viability of

careers in the seafood sector. This is achieved by creating fully recognised and accredited pathways for lifelong learning and career progression, featuring recognition of prior learning and portable modular qualifications.

Capt. Shane Begley, College Principal, National Fisheries College of Ireland, Castletownbere spoke of the students' reaction saying, "Currently we have four students enrolled on the pilot programme and I'm heartened to see how quickly they have adapted to online learning. It's fantastic to be able to facilitate their ongoing training and we look forward to providing similar support with some of our other courses".

For updates and more information go to [www.bim.ie/training](http://www.bim.ie/training)

## Social Democrats Call for greater regulation of 'supertrawlers'

With the new Fisheries Control Regulation currently before the European Parliament, Social Democrats Holly Cairns TD and Councillor Ross O'Connell have written to MEPs on the Parliament's PECH Committee expressing their support for CCTV onboard 'supertrawlers'.

The measure, they say, will "provide greater monitoring of their activities" and "help protect sea life and Irish fishing communities."

"Supertrawlers are an obscene industrialised version of fishing. Massive nets indiscriminately sweep up all forms of fish and sea

mammals which further decimate fish stocks and damage Irish coastal and island communities," says Cork South West TD Holly.

"Supertrawlers are the very opposite of sustainable fishing. We need more oversight of their activities, including the provision in new EU regulations on allowing CCTV to monitor compliance with landing obligations."

Ross says, "Fishing policy should be about supporting local communities and ensuring sustainable practices. We need interventions like this one to highlight the harm being done by these factory sized vessels. The

Social Democrats are committed to working towards an EU-wide ban on super-trawlers."

A promise to work towards an EU-wide ban on 'supertrawlers' and ensure current fisheries controls are strictly observed and adequately resourced was one of the fisheries-related points in the Social Democrats General Election Manifesto last spring.

One aspect of the new Fisheries Control Regulation concerns the installation of CCTV on a certain percentage of vessels fishing for species subject to the Landing Obligation, according to various 'risk categories.'

## NEWS in brief

### LÉ CIARA Detains French Registered Fishing Vessel

On the night of May 12th, the French registered fishing vessel *Cap Finistere* was detained by the Naval vessel LÉ *Ciara* approximately 120 nautical miles south west of Mizen Head for alleged breaches of fishing regulations.

The vessel, the fifth to be detained by the Navy this year, was subsequently escorted to Castletownbere Co. Cork, where on arrival it was handed over to An Garda Síochána.

### A standalone Minister for Fisheries?

As government formation talks continue, last month Michael Collins TD raised the question in Dáil Debate with An Taoiseach as to what exactly fishermen and women might expect from a Fianna Fáil/Fine Gael government.

Highlighting that with many boats tied up due to the coronavirus crisis the industry is close "to the edge", the Cork South West independent asked what plan was in place for those vessel owners, before going on to query whether consideration is being given in coalition talks to having a standalone Minister for Fisheries.

Leo Varadkar responded he was aware of the sector's difficulties, that Minister Creed and his 'European colleagues' were working on ways to assist, and that "anything relating to conversations on forming a Government are a matter for the parties and not a matter for the Dáil just yet."

Judging by both parties' manifestos and that of the Greens, however, I wouldn't hold my breath.

### Foreshore Licence for fibre optic cable off Mayo quashed

Clare Island fisherman, James O'Toole, who last month launched High Court proceedings to stop the laying of a fibre optic cable off Mayo has won the first part of his battle, after a decision was taken to quash the foreshore licence granted to multinational consortium-owned America Europe Connect 2 (AEC) by the Department of Planning and Local Government earlier this year to install part of the cable off Old Head.

According to Marine Notice 21 of 2020, initial installation works were due to start on May 17th and finish on June 16th. The works are now, however, on hold while the question as to whether another foreshore licence should be granted is considered.

## Creed announces funding for 58 Local Authority harbour projects



Cé Heilbhic. (Image: Cathal Ó hUallacháin)

The Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed T.D., last month announced details of a €3.1m package to assist 10 coastal Local Authorities undertake and complete 58 development and repair projects on harbours and slipways owned by them (see table for details).

The package provides funding for maintenance and repair works in addition to supporting the ongoing development and enhancement of harbour facilities including some marine leisure developments.

The Minister said, "I am delighted to announce the continuation of our programme to assist coastal Local Authorities in the repair and development of fishery and aquaculture linked marine infrastructures under their ownership."

The Local Authority programme forms part of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's 2020 Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme, whereby the Department co-funds up to 75% of the total cost of approved projects, with the Local Authority providing the balance.

The Minister went on to say, "The Local Authority owned harbours in receipt of funding under this year's programme are fundamental to the wellbeing of rural coastal communities and play an important social and economic role in their respective localities by contributing to the ongoing development of fishing related activities, increasing participation in marine leisure and supplementing measures to attract greater numbers of tourists which ultimately create the environment for job creation."

Minister Creed concluded the announcement by stating, "The €3.1m I have made available in 2020 is testament to my commitment to assist in the ongoing economic and social development in our rural coastal communities. This enlarged scheme will provide a much needed economic boost to these communities, given the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on rural areas."

"The diverse range of projects approved for funding under the programme are geographically spread across 10 Local Authorities and will not only create local construction employment over the lifetime of the projects, but equally will further enhance the amenities provided to the wider Marine community in these coastal areas."

## Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine funded Local Authority works 2020

County Council	Location	Grant Aid Approved €				
Clare County Council	Carrigaholt Pier	37,500	Fingal County Council	Entrance to Kincasslagh (Aid to Navigation)	24,000	
	Bournapeaka Pier (Ballyvaughan)	51,750		Cruit Lower	22,500	
	Ballyvaughan Pier	48,750		Donegal Town (Aids to Navigation)	18,000	
	<b>Total Clare</b>	<b>138,000</b>		Mullinasole	9,000	
				<b>Total Donegal</b>	<b>433,500</b>	
Cork County Council	Ballycotton Pier	22,500	Fingal County Council	Balbriggan Harbour	67,500	
	Kinsale Harbour - Pier at Fisherman's Pontoon	93,750		Loughshinny Harbour	67,500	
	Youghal Harbour - Nealon Quay, Market Dock & Green Dock	60,000		Loughshinny Harbour	15,000	
	Cork County Council	Keelbeg - Union Hall Pier - Safety Measures	30,000	Rush Harbour	7,500	
		Utility Upgrade (water) at Keelbeg (Union Hall Pier), Kinsale Harbour, Baltimore Pier, Ballycotton Pier	38,250	<b>Total Fingal</b>	<b>157,500</b>	
		Safety Measures & Improvement Works Bundle - Ilawn na gCoarach (Bere Island), Bea Lough Pier, Abbey Pier (Sherkin Island), East Pier (Heir Island), Middle Land (Long Island), Colla Pier & Abbey Pier (Sherkin Island)	26,250	Tarbert Pier	150,000	
		Utility Upgrade Bundle (Water & Electricity) Schull Pier, Courtmacsherry & Middle Land (Long Island)	32,250	Glen Pier, Ballinskelligs	45,000	
	Donegal County Council	Monkstown Sand Quay	7,500	Kerry County Council	Ventry Pier	56,250
		Castletownsend	5,250		<b>Total Kerry</b>	<b>251,250</b>
		Drumlave (Adrigole)	5,250		Roonagh	150,000
Donegal County Council		Knockadoon Pier & Slip	13,500	Mayo County Council		150,000
		Lough Hyne East	7,500		Killala	
		Warren's Boathouse Pier	52,500		Blacksod	112,500
		<b>Total Cork</b>	<b>394,500</b>		Ballina Harbour	112,500
Donegal County Council		Leenan Slipway	150,000	<b>Total Mayo</b>	<b>525,000</b>	
		Greencastle Pier	90,000	Sligo County Council	Easkey Pier	84,000
		Malinbeg Slipway Winch	22,500		Aughris Pier	67,500
	Ballyderlan Pier	18,000	Milk Harbour		15,000	
	Donegal County Council	Carrickarory	45,000	<b>Total Sligo</b>	<b>166,500</b>	
Port Inver (Aid to Navigation)		12,000	Waterford County Council	Tramore North Pier	150,000	
Nead na Gé		22,500		Helvick Pier	150,000	
				Boatstrand Pier	120,000	
				Youghal Bridge / Ticknock Pier	15,000	
		<b>Total Waterford</b>		<b>435,000</b>		
Donegal County Council			Wexford County Council	Stade Harbour	71,250	
				Kilmore Quay	150,000	
				Kilmore Quay	60,000	
				Kilmore Quay	75,000	
				New Ross Marina	22,500	
Donegal County Council			Wexford County Council	Kilmore Quay Marina	22,500	
				Fethard Harbour	11,250	
				Courtown Harbour	7,500	
				<b>Total Wexford</b>	<b>420,000</b>	
Donegal County Council			Wicklow County Council	North and South Piers, Arklow	45,000	
				Packet Pier, Wicklow	52,500	
				North & South Quay, Wicklow	33,750	
				East Pier, Wicklow	61,875	
				Wicklow & Arklow Harbour	22,500	
				<b>Total Wicklow</b>	<b>215,625</b>	
				<b>Total Grant Aid Approved</b>	<b>3,136,875</b>	

# Nurturing Green Shoots in the Irish Sea



The T90 codend reduced undersized haddock by 41%

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

As the Irish fishing industry continues to deal with the fall-out from the COVID-19 crisis, it is essential that landings are tailored to available markets, and catches are optimised to make best use of available resources.

While Nephrops exports remain hampered due to the Italian market collapse, sales of demersal fish species are faring slightly better. As industry reliance on such species increases, it is imperative that unwanted catches—formerly known as discards—are minimised to boost fish stock

sustainability and to maximise economic returns on available quotas.

As outlined in BIM's recent 'The Business of Seafood 2019', the Celtic Sea is the stronghold for Irish demersal fish landings. Following a steady decline since the 1980s, there are signs of green shoots in the Irish Sea where haddock is the most important commercial fish species. The Marine Institute Stock Book shows that average haddock landings of 513t from 2013 to 2015 increased by 75% to 898t from 2016 to 2018. This is likely linked to a substantial 56% reduction in the haddock discard rate over the same period. Whiting discards also dropped by 48% so a pattern emerges:

Most discarding traditionally

occurred in the Nephrops fishery in the Irish Sea. In 2014, BIM and Industry demonstrated significant 70% and 52% reductions in haddock and whiting catches with an enlarged 300 mm square-mesh escape panel. This led to comprehensive uptake of this measure in the Irish Sea from 2016 onwards and it looks like the benefits are starting to accrue.

While the Nephrops fleet can take a bow, the directed haddock fishery which accounts for around 70% of Irish Sea haddock landings is the main beneficiary from the success of this conservation measure. The directed fishery stands to gain even more if a new proposed gear measure is implemented. Irish vessels currently use a 120mm diamond-mesh codend to target

haddock in the Irish Sea. Previous work by BIM and Industry demonstrated the benefits of using 100mm T90 mesh for haddock in the Celtic Sea so it made sense to examine if similar findings would apply in the Irish Sea.

Led by BIM's Martin Oliver, a trial was conducted in the Irish Sea in March 2020 to compare catches between these gears. The T90 codend reduced undersize haddock by 41% and retained similar small quantities of whiting and cod compared with the 120mm codend. A reduction in quantities and value of small market sized haddock was offset by increased catches of plaice and other prime species in the T90 codend. A simple economic analysis demonstrated a 64% increase in total catch value with the T90 before the monthly haddock quota was fully utilised. Large grade haddock were scarce on the grounds during the trial.

We know from previous work that T90 codends consistently catch more large grade haddock when they are available. T90 also improves catch quality and further Industry-led testing is planned to demonstrate the benefits of this gear first-hand. In the meantime, an application has been submitted to the European Commission to permit use of this gear in the Irish Sea. If successful, Industry uptake of the T90 codend would further boost stock sustainability and economic returns in the increasingly important Irish Sea haddock fishery.

BIM would like to thank the owner and crew of the trial vessel for a fruitful collaboration. Their names are excluded due to use of economic data. A full trial report is available at [www.bim.ie/our-publications/fisheries](http://www.bim.ie/our-publications/fisheries)

## COVID-19 Temporary Tie-up Scheme Open for Applications

The Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine's recently announced temporary voluntary tie-up scheme for the Irish fleet was launched by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) last month, opening for applications on May 19th.

The scheme—which has been “designed to assist in adjusting the supply of fish coming onto a market that is currently depressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and protect quota availability for later in the year”—will be implemented under Ireland's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme 2014-20, co-funded by the Government of

Ireland and the European Commission.

Vessels that are eligible vessels will be supported to voluntarily opt to tie up for one or two months, during June, July & August. The two-month period does not necessarily have to be for consecutive months. For instance, the tie-up period could be June and August.

Offering support from €500 per month for a maximum of two months for the smallest vessels (under 6 metres in length) to €6,000 per month for a maximum of two months for the largest vessels (over 24 metres), the scheme's announcement has met with cool response from the industry.

Available to a maximum of 66% of the fishing fleet, in the different size categories, in any one month “to ensure that the food chain is maintained and that there is continuity of supply to the limited markets available”, the closing date for applications for June is 5pm on Wednesday, May 27th. Applications for July and August will be accepted up until June 20th and July 20th respectively.

Any vessel not receiving support to tie-up in any month due to over-subscription to the scheme may opt to tie-up for one or two of the following months. Applications to the scheme can be made online at <https://bim.flexigrant.com/>

# IRELAND'S FLAGSHIP FISHERIES SHOW

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**Sharon Boyle**  
Commercial Fishing Manager

Email: [sharon@maramedia.ie](mailto:sharon@maramedia.ie)

Tel: 00353 (0)74 95 48037  
Mobile: 00353 (0)86 8401250

Web: [www.theskipper.ie](http://www.theskipper.ie)

# IRISH SKIPPER EXPO 2020

## Fresh, local, delicious... 7 Good Reasons to Eat Oysters



April and May are a particularly good time to enjoy oysters

Like many across the seafood sector, so far 2020 has been difficult for oyster growers but there are plenty of good reasons why that should change... Here are just seven from Triskell Seafood...

1. Because arguably they are at their best right now

You've heard the old adage "only eat oysters when there is an R in the month"? This came from a time when what was available on the market was native oysters and the fishing season closed for the summer to allow the oysters a chance to reproduce. Nowadays

most commercial growers are growing Pacific oysters and April and May are a particularly good time to enjoy them!

2. Because the water is warm Right now the oysters are actively growing, waters are warming up and there is plenty of algae for them to eat. What's more, the global shutdown means that the waters they are growing in are cleaning than ever.

3. Because N°2 is perfect In late Spring / early Summer the adult oysters are getting to the perfect size for our plates. They've fleshed up to around a

tasty 100g, a No 2 in the oyster grading system, that's the perfect size for those who enjoy their oyster on the half shell.

4. Because bigger is... better? With the markets closed the growers are working hard to slow down the amount the oysters grow. This summer we may see bigger than usual oysters for sale which will allow us to get inventive with our cooking. Larger oysters might not suit those who like to down them in one but they are marvellous grilled, baked, fried or on a summer barbeque.

5. Because they are good for you Oysters offer a wealth of health benefits, thanks to their huge stockpiles of essential vitamins and minerals. They're an excellent source of protein, vitamin D, zinc, iron and copper, and also have high levels of Vitamin C, phosphorus, niacin and riboflavin. Vitamin C is the important one as it plays such an important role in boosting our immune systems and that feels like a good thing right now.

you

Oysters offer a wealth of health benefits, thanks to their huge stockpiles of essential vitamins and minerals. They're an excellent source of protein, vitamin D, zinc, iron and copper, and also have high levels of Vitamin C, phosphorus, niacin and riboflavin. Vitamin C is the important one as it plays such an important role in boosting our immune systems and that feels like a good thing right now.

6. Because we need to support our oyster farmers According to BIM, in 2018 Irish oyster growers produced an all-time high of 10,300 tonnes of oysters and directly employed 1,300 people nationwide. While aquaculture is on the list of essential services and growers are allowed to continue to work, with restaurants closed the reality is that there is very little market for their oysters leaving them facing a crisis. The livelihood of all those people depends on their ability to get their oysters sold.

7. Because we believe in buying local Now more than ever is the time to buy local. No air miles. Buy local and keep the money in your community, what's more, you can't get fresher than buying directly from the grower or from your local fishmonger. Fresh, local, delicious!

## Outlook for Irish Aquaculture Uncertain

Over the past weeks, IFA Aquaculture has been surveying the impacts COVID-19 is having on Irish aquaculture. The outlook is uncertain at best.

Based on responses received from members, annual turnover for Irish aquaculture in 2020 is predicted to drop by 58% on last year, which, based on figures from BIM's Business of Seafood Report 2019, could see a loss of €100 million euro, with potential losses of €35 million euro in the shellfish sector alone. An assessment of turnover for the first two quarters of 2020 shows a reduction of 70-100% compared to the same period last year.

Members were also surveyed on national supports available and potential additional supports

required specific to the sector. 80% of those who responded (59 respondents in total) have availed of national supports, the majority of which (95% of respondents) have availed of the Wage Subsidy Scheme (63%) and/or COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment (55%).

In terms of sector-specific supports, speaking to *The Skipper*, IFA Aquaculture Executive Teresa Morrissey said a solid response from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine as to what kind of scheme, if any, might be made available for the sector based on the new EU rules which allow for supports from European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) budgets had not yet been forthcoming.

While there is still a lot of

uncertainty as to the exact size of that budget in Ireland, Ms Morrissey acknowledged more money would be needed from Brussels. To date, however, the sector has had no direct communication from the Minister.

Based on survey feedback and analysis of possible supports that could be made available, among the list of proposals that have been sent to the Department for discussion are:

- Suspension of annual licence fees.
- Subsidised scheme for loss of sales/ reduction in production
- Compensation for stock lost due to mortality losses/ unsellable stock.
- Insurance costs: State to subsidise insurance costs for one year.

At the time of writing, IFA Aquaculture was awaiting a response from the Department on those.

In terms of an outlook for the sector beyond that, Ms Morrissey indicated that with lockdowns lifting, food services are starting to open up and markets are tentatively starting to come back. However, it is still too early to forecast impacts, she says.

"Particularly for shellfish, for mussels and oysters, you've got a flooded market. And so any markets that are opening up is only minute in comparison as to what is needed to alleviate the pressure."

"And that's part of what we need as support. We need something that's going to alleviate that pressure."

## BIM Aquaculture Remote Classroom (ARC) goes online

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) has announced its Aquaculture Remote Classroom (ARC) has moved temporarily online, allowing teachers and pupils access to a series of lessons that have been specially created based on the 5th and 6th class school curriculum.

Primary school children have been learning how oysters, salmon and other seafood are being sustainably farmed around the coast of Ireland in the purpose-built Aquaculture Remote Classroom (ARC) since its launch in 2018. The mobile classroom has visited more than 50 national schools to date.

Richard Donnelly, Sectoral Manager for Salmon and Shellfish, BIM said: "BIM is proud to be able to offer this online resource to teachers and their pupils as schools remain temporarily closed."

"The seafood industry is an integral part of Ireland's rural coastal communities. In coastal Donegal for example, as many as 16 out of every 100 adults work in the industry and aquaculture is an important part of the mix. However, quite often even the term aquaculture has many people drawing a blank. The aim of the ARC is to help bridge that gap in understanding."

Each lesson focuses on an aquaculture theme and has a fun quiz for students to complete at the end. The first episode in the new series is an introduction to aquaculture. Other lessons will look at how geographic, environmental, and socio-economic factors can impact the

aquaculture industry in Ireland. Health and nutrition are also covered.

Lesson content for each episode links to SESE Science, SESE Geography and SPHE Education topics.

Schools can access the content at: <https://aquaculture.ie/register-for-online-content/>

Parents and pupils can access the content at: <https://bit.ly/3cDoNUJ>



Learning how oysters, salmon and other seafood are sustainably grown around the coast

## Recruitment underway for 2020 Irish Aquaculture Accelerator Programme

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) announced on Thursday, May 14th that recruitment is underway for this year's Aquaculture Accelerator programme. The two-week programme, managed by aquaculture accelerator Hatch and funded under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, is taking place in the RDI (Research, Development, Innovation) Hub in Killorglin, Co Kerry this October.

Richard Donnelly, Development and Innovation Manager, BIM said: "Last year's aquaculture workshop, held in Dublin, resulted in 3 of the participating Irish businesses receiving significant capital investment and going on to join the Hatch Global Accelerator programme in Hawaii. It's clear that many more concepts and ideas await discovery and development in Ireland given the right environment, investment and focus."

Like most accelerators, the BIM Aquaculture Accelerator offers access to investors, fin-tech and other specialists, but this programme is specifically tailored to the aquaculture sector. This is the third such BIM aquaculture accelerator to take place since 2018. Start-ups on the programmes are diverse. Previous years' businesses have included innovative technologies in salmon cage manufacturing to online trading platforms for aquaculture products.

With respect the programme, Wayne Murphy, Co-Founder and COO, Hatch said: "We are excited to partner with BIM once again to create and drive more opportunity and innovation within the aquaculture sector in Ireland. The ultimate aim with this initiative is to grow, develop and support more early stage ideas and talent in what is the fastest growing food sector in the world right now (\$230B)."

Ten start-up businesses from Ireland will have the opportunity to work directly with and receive mentorship from a global team of experts from aquaculture, fin-tech and marketing disciplines in October.

Commenting on BIM's announcement Helen Rea, Programme Manager with RDI Hub, said: "We are excited to welcome BIM and Hatch to Kerry later this year. The purpose of RDI Hub is to catalyse innovation and create high skilled ICT jobs and achieving these objectives is accelerated through cross-fertilisation of ideas and solutions across sectors. Consequently, partnering with BIM and Hatch on this important initiative is a natural fit for RDI Hub."

The BIM aquaculture accelerator programme is taking place from the 5th until the 16th of October in the RDI Hub, Killorglin, Co Kerry. For details on how to apply, please go to [www.hatch.blue](http://www.hatch.blue)

## Aquaculture Technical Appeals Advisor Sought

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine seeks to recruit an Aquaculture Technical Appeals Advisor. The function of the role is to assist and advise the Aquaculture Licences Appeal Board on technical issues arising out of appeal applications.

Main responsibilities of the role include examining appeals received by the Board, undertaking investigations, examinations, site visits and studies of aquaculture sites under appeal, and attending Board meetings and hearings.

The successful candidate will be appointed at the grade of Higher Executive Officer (HEO). Full details of the job specification can be found at <https://bit.ly/2TBHale>

Closing date for applications is June 5th

## Both AE2020 and AE2021 to go ahead in 2021

The European Aquaculture Society (EAS) Board of Directors have decided the Aquaculture Europe 2020 (AE2020) event cannot go ahead as planned in Cork from September 29th to October 2nd this autumn, meaning there will be no Aquaculture Europe (AE) event this year.

However, to maintain their commitment to their chosen locations, delegates, exhibitors and attendees, EAS will organise two events in 2021. AE2020 in Cork, Ireland from April 12-15 and AE2021 in Funchal, Madeira, Portugal 6 months later from October 5-8.

The deadline for abstracts for the rescheduled AE2020 in Cork is December 31st. The deadline for early bird registration is February 15th. The deadline for abstracts for AE2021 is May 1st, with a deadline for early bird registration of July 15th.

## Farm to Fork: A real opportunity for aquaculture

The Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP) have welcomed the EU's recently announced Farm to Fork Strategy, which sets out measures to deliver more sustainable food systems and help achieve the EU's 'Green Deal' ambitions with respect 'climate-neutrality' in Europe.

The emphasis placed on the role for aquaculture as part of that strategy, particularly in the areas of carbon capture, food security and sustainable food production has been especially welcomed.

According to the Commission: "European farmers, fishers and aquaculture producers play a key role in the transition to a more equitable and sustainable food system." A number of measures, including financial instruments, will be available to support fishermen, women and aquaculture producers in driving the necessary transition, they say.

A real opportunity for the aquaculture sector to position itself as part of the solution to these growing demands, says FEAP, at home IFA Aquaculture highlight that Ireland, as an island nation, will have a distinct advantage in this regard!

## EU Ombudsman castigates EU Council over lack of transparency – Council unrepentant

By LORNA SIGGINS

EUROPE's main decision-making body on fisheries has "failed fully" to "grasp the critical link between democracy and transparency", according to EU Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly.

Ms O'Reilly's damning criticism comes as her office has confirmed a finding of "maladministration" against the EU Council for failing to introduce more transparency into annual fishery negotiations.

She has expressed "regret" that EU fisheries ministers failed to adopt a demand for more transparency in the lead up to, and negotiation of, the annual catch and quota negotiations under the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

Transparency is "all the more important when the decision-making relates to the protection of the environment," she has said.



Emily O'Reilly

"The Council's position appears to be that a key democratic standard—legislative transparency—must be sacrificed for what it considers to be the greater good of achieving a consensus on a political issue," she has said.

Last October, the EU Ombudsman's office said that the EU Council should "proactively" release documents on annual fishing quota negotiations into the public domain.

The documents should be made public at the same time as they are circulated to member states, or "as soon as possible thereafter", it said.

The recommendation followed a complaint by non-profit environmental law organisation ClientEarth, which has offices in London, Brussels, Warsaw, Berlin and Beijing.

Ms O'Reilly began her investigation in May 2019, after the lawyers' organisation raised the issue of "many years



of unexplained fishing quotas, set above the scientific advice for the recovery and long-term sustainability of fish populations".

In her ruling, Ms O'Reilly said that she had "already taken the view that having a complete and accessible public register is key to transparency".

"To enable the public to exercise fully the right to access documents, all documents produced and/or circulated in preparatory bodies should be listed in a public register, irrespective of their format and whether they are fully or partially accessible or not accessible at all," her ruling stated.

"In addition, in order to enable the public to access these documents, they must be easy to find on the (EU) Council's website. Only through a complete and accessible register of documents can the public get a proper overview of deliberations taking place in preparatory bodies," she stated.

The finding in favour of the complainant took the view that since the documents in question are "legislative documents" and contain environmental information, "wider and more timely access should be granted".

The investigation also considered the documents to "contain environmental information within the meaning of the Aarhus Regulation" concerning access to information, public participation and access to justice in environmental matters.

It noted that complainant ClientEarth was concerned that the EU Council "fails to record the positions of member state governments as expressed in

Council 'preparatory bodies' or in meetings of the Council of Ministers".

The NGO was also concerned that the EU Council "failed to provide timely access to legislative documents, proactively and upon request", and "has in place an incomplete and unsatisfactory register of documents".

The EU Ombudsman is independent and is charged with holding EU institutions and agencies to account. However, in its defence, the EU Council argued that proactively releasing documentation could "seriously undermine" decision-making by ministers at the annual December negotiations. It also said that the outcome of the deliberations was a "non-legislative" act.

It argued that it could "delay the successful outcome of Council deliberations, as member states need to balance different interests at stake for more than a hundred fish stocks in preparing their initial positions".

It said that it could expose the Council to "external pressure" as "the context in which the negotiations take place is highly politicised and subject to external attention".

"If documents detailing the state of negotiations and consolidating positions of member states were released in the course of the negotiations in this context, this would risk freezing the respective positions and limit the flexibility of member states to shift from their initial positions as well as their willingness to compromise, which are key to successfully reaching an agreement at Council level," it said.

"The disclosure of initial positions of member states ahead of deliberations would lead to more entrenched positions and reduce their margin of manoeuvre to compromise, jeopardising thus an agreement during Council deliberations. This applies not only in the phase of decision-making procedure leading to the political agreement but is also relevant in the phase leading to the adoption of the legal texts by actual vote within the Council," it said.

"Disclosure would therefore limit the possibility to discuss in serenity and agree, which would, in turn, run counter to the efficiency of the decision-making process," it said.

Releasing documents in advance would "require a comprehensive case-by-case assessment of the individual information contained in the documents in order to verify whether or not exceptions laid down in the EU rules on access to documents prevent such a disclosure".

"Furthermore, such assessments require consultation of relevant participants before disclosing sensitive information pertaining to them," the EU Council added.

ClientEarth environmental democracy lawyer Anne Friel welcomed the EU Ombudsman's "stance against the Council's lack of transparency".

"But we regret that despite taking crucial decisions for the future of our planet, the Council of the EU still refuses to open its decision-making to public scrutiny, dubiously claiming that it would delay or influence the process," Ms Friel said.

## Paper Fish and the Christmas Panto

Lack of transparency in EU fisheries negotiations has long been an issue for industry organisations, which rely on politicians and their advisors to brief them on the "behind-door" all night sessions in December.

"The Christmas panto", as it was termed by Harry Browne in *The Dublin Review* (winter 2008-9), is where "the science meets the politics, and more often than not the latter wins".

"The gathered ministers treat the scientific evidence about fish stocks as though it were the enemy's initial negotiating position, not a statement of marine reality", Browne wrote.

The "panto" engaged in by politicians inspired a now infamous phrase—"paper fish"—coined by the late Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation chief executive Joey Murrin to describe the extra percentage sought by European industry representatives which is "invented" by politicians to placate them.

Murrin had recalled a late night phone call from former marine minister Michael Woods in Brussels in the 1990s where the politician was eager to convey the good news that an alliance with the Netherlands had led to an overall ten per cent increase in Ireland's total allowable catch for mackerel.

"Where will they get the fish?" Murrin asked the minister, who was momentarily lost for words.

Environmental non-government organisations (NGOs) are also concerned about transparency. "It's time to bring fisheries negotiations into the light" is the title of a recent posting by Birdwatch Ireland policy officer Fintan Kelly. He cites the EU Ombudsman's ruling in a paper that is critical of the EU's progress towards ending overfishing.

However, some NGOs tend to take the view that the industry lobbyists have become used to working the existing system and favour a more opaque approach.

Four years ago, Transparency International, the global anti-corruption network, published an interesting analysis, which acknowledged that disclosing full negotiating positions in advance of talks might not be realistic, but noted that there was little appetite for more openness among EU member states.

"While there has been a group of progressive member states (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Sweden), which previously produced an outline for future reform, the majority of member

states remain rather cautious about substantial changes," it said.

"Reaching an agreement among 28 EU member states can be a challenging procedure – even more so if the decision involves sharing a limited resource such as fish," its report said.

"Ministers have a political incentive to fight for their national interests and claim victory for tough and successful negotiations. They often emerge from negotiations proclaiming "the best possible deal" for the fishing industry, as the former UK fisheries minister Richard Benyon did in 2012," it noted.

"A fixed upper limits victory for one side would normally mean a defeat for the other side. In the case of the negotiations of fishing quotas, alliances between member states have to be built to reach a qualified majority. To get a mutually beneficial compromise, there is a real incentive for ministers to just "make the cake bigger" by setting higher fishing limits than those that are scientifically advised," it said.

"This way everybody can walk away from the negotiations announcing that they were able to secure a good deal. In the case of the renewable but limited resource of fish, this increases the risk of overfishing and unsustainable catches. Thus, a successful agreement comes at the price of depleting fish stocks and undermining the very basis of profitable fishing in the future," it said.

Transparency International said the system developed over the CFP lifetime had resonances with the "tragedy of the commons" – the theory used to describe how participants in a commonage can sometimes "independently and rationally, according to their own self-interest, behave contrary to the common good of all users by depleting that resource".

"Even though it is not in the long-term national interest to support overfishing, from a bargaining position it can seem rational for a government to maximise their own quota if every other government is also pushing for this," its report said.

"This creates a so-called 'social dilemma', where what seems to be rational from an individual perspective creates a situation in which everybody is ultimately worse off..."

Transparency International made several recommendations in its 2016 report. These call on the EU fisheries council to publish more detailed results/

**"Where will they get the fish?"  
Murrin asked the minister, who was momentarily lost for words.**

minutes, and provide detailed information on member state negotiating positions, ideally before compromises have been reached or votes have been held.

It called on the EU to extend live-streaming to Council and Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Member States to the European Union debates; and make trilogue meetings more transparent by publishing agendas, participant lists, negotiating positions and proposals for compromises before the meetings, and detailed minutes in a timely fashion afterwards.

It called for best practice at each stage of the decision-making process, and ensuring the EU Council would become a full member of the EU Transparency Register.

Unregistered lobbyists should not be able to get meetings or access buildings, Transparency International said. It also said permanent representations of member states should pledge to no longer meet with unregistered lobbyists as well as the rotating presidency – both in Brussels and in national capitals.

"To enable the public to monitor the implementation of the above principle, the Council should publish meetings with lobbyists as is current practice for the European Commission," it said. And it said all scientific and socio-economic evidence used in the preparatory bodies of the Council negotiations should be open to public scrutiny.

After the EU Ombudsman's ruling, it would seem such recommendations are a long way off...

## Engine reliability



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## NORTHERN IRELAND NEWS *By Dick James*

Waiting for the weather to ease early last March in Ardglass. Image: Chris Feenan



### The Fishery

In these uncertain times, events are happening at a furious pace and frequently overtake any reporting I may do on what is a volatile situation. Last edition, we left it that grants to the fleet in reaction to (so it is said) the coronavirus were at odds between Government grant and the Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation (NIFPO) grant, whereas Government said the recipients had to be in a position to fish and NIFPO said they had to contract to tie-up for the period.

In the end, the tie-up obligation was dropped so all boats, fishing or not, got both grants and peace resumed (sort of). So limited fishing continued mainly in the mid-channel of the western Irish Sea with a bias to the Manx shore and for one mad week the Co Down fleet

was joined by the southern Irish fleet, but that lasted for a limited period for whatever reasons. One or two boats tried the Cumbrian grounds off St Bees Head but nothing much developed, and the Clyde grounds were left unfished as it is said that prices on offer tempted not the local fleet and the usual Portavogie prawners fishing the area were in lockdown anyway. The only other activity by the Co Down fleet was guardship activity in far distant parts.

On the 11th of May, the restrictions changed and the Portavogie and Kilkeel fleets, previously tied up, put to sea en masse reportedly on a limited-time allowance set by the market of a 3 day week. Whether this is reality or is enforced remains to be seen. Most boats joined the existing fleet in the western Irish Sea but a significant number found their way to the Cumbrian grounds for which the usual season is with us, and some Portavogie boats went to the

Clyde (and stayed there). What the reaction of the local fleet will be remains to be seen, as one or two Clyde boats breaking the lockdown previously induced a hostile reaction. There are signs of a very limited recovery of the prawn market in Great Britain with enquires for product, but not yet in volume to tempt landings on the mainland.



Still waiting on the winds to ease. Ardglass fleet tied up at the end of March. Image: Chris Feenan

Meanwhile, the whitefish fleet has also put to sea but what the demand will be like is not yet known, although there is talk of a resurgent local market with supermarket fish counters closed and a theme of local is best (compared presumably to imports). Factories are reopening and hawker/traders getting ready for opportunities.

Meanwhile, in the wider context, some scallopers are carrying on to the season's close (end of May), again favouring local sales, and beam trawling carries on with the *Margaret of Ladrasm* finishing off the spring fishery in the Irish Sea after short forays into the Bristol Channel, and a sizeable Belgian fleet doing the reverse i.e. fishing the Irish Sea to complete a trip started in the Bristol Channel.

The pelagics are in close season but factories are reporting reasonable sales, suggesting that on return to the summer herring there will be a reasonable market left open.

Small inshore potters are experiencing the worst of the export market shutdowns, although there is some indication that the tide is turning in this sphere too.



*Gleaner II* visiting Red Bay from Campbeltown last month for a job with i-fish. Image: Stephen Jones, i-fish

### SEA FLAG GRANT

The South East Area Fisheries Local Action Group (SEA FLAG) recently announced their latest project – funding for St Nicholas Primary School, Ardglass in the form of a nautical themed ecogarden. Ardglass is one of the main fishing harbours in Northern Ireland and the primary school is seen as a hub of the community. Many of the fishermen working from Ardglass would have started their education at the school, and the garden is in recognition of this and taking this forward to the next generation.

The project involves carrying out groundworks and installing 2 towers, a frame with a reinforced cargo net, steps, a slide, rope bridge and the bow of a ship. The frame will replicate the lifting frame of a fishing boat including netting with artificial fish inside, local to the fishing village. The project also envisages an eco-garden with plant and vegetable planters, bugs life trio, picnic tables and an open playhouse. It is envisaged that the project will be used by guest speakers from the environmental, fisheries, aquaculture and maritime sectors to deliver talks and other activities to the community.

Theresa Taggart, the school's parent group treasurer, said the facility will complement the school's curriculum and enhance awareness of the local fishing industry. There will also be an environmental impact.

SEA FLAG chairman Alderman Angus Carson emphasised the impact on the

development and well-being of the children and its role in promoting the fishing industry as a future career.

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council Chairperson Charlie Casey commented on a similar theme noting the potential impact on the local fishing industry in the minds of both the children and the wider community.

Previously, SEA FLAG has grant aided, through the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority, two refrigerated freezer storage facilities at Ardglass and Portavogie for use by the local creel fishermen as a bait storage facility. The provision of bait has now become a significant issue within the local creel fishery, and the store originally supplied to Ardglass has now proved of limited capacity illustrating the need for increased capacity. Indeed, bait provision has now become an industry in itself, whereas previously it had been a means of disposal of unwanted fish carcass and offal.

A Kilkeel based project involving G Smyth Boats Ltd was also funded by SEA FLAG. This involved the company diversifying into a new fibreglass mould for the construction of 10-12m catamarans. The emphasis was on increased production and efficiencies, with the benefit of job security and creation.

Previously, Portavogie had benefited with grant aid for a telescopic lifting vehicle to aid repair and upgrading of fishing boats. The recipient was Marshall Engineering Services.

### Chandlery stores reopen

The Northern Ireland Fish Producer Organisation chandlery stores reopened for business after a 6 week shutdown on the 14th of May. This followed a 3 day stocktake by staff returning from furlough. The stores were closed mid-March as a reaction to COVID-19 lockdown, but as fishing and fishing supplies provision were seen as playing a vital role within the economy this closure was of a voluntary nature as was the reopening. The Portavogie and Kilkeel fleets resumed fishing on the 11th of May, joining the Ardglass boats.

### Latest on Nephrops

The United Kingdom Fish Producer Organisations with a stake in the Nephrops fishery recently agreed, as a function of their management responsibilities, to adopt measures in respect of marketing of Nephrops. What form this may take is not clear, but with so many players in different areas at different levels and with different marketing strategies it is difficult to see common ground being an easy journey end. Certainly, the tails fishery in the Irish Sea poses different objectives from the whole prawn fishery in other parts.

### Harbour staff

The "new" Kilkeel Harbour Master, Danielle Rooney featured recently in a television documentary, Home Ground, focusing on the day by day running of Kilkeel Harbour. As it was, the point of interest as far as the program went was the gender of the Harbour Master and the fact that a woman could do the

job as competently as any male. Harbour operations including dredging and slipping were covered but the eye-opener was the filleting demonstration done by a fish worker involving beheading a haddock before slicing the carcass.

Danielle took the responsibility of the job from the previous incumbent Michael

Young some months ago. In Portavogie Neil Warnock has taken over the duties of Harbour Master from Eddie Robinson who has been in post for the past seven years. With the appointment of James Lenaghan as Ardglass Harbour Master in 2017, that means a clean sweep of NIFHA Harbour Masters in the last 3 years.



## UK NEWS

### Developing a participatory approach to the management of fishing activity in UK offshore Marine Protected Areas

Successfully involving the fishing sector and stakeholders in decision-making over the management of fisheries in marine protected areas (MPAs) is important to their overall effectiveness and sustainable management of our seas. The results of a new project including new tools and approaches to use when establishing, evaluating and adapting fisheries management measures in MPAs aims to help achieve just that.

The work has been led by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), together with partners the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Natural England, the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) and Bangor University supported by funding from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

A series of workshops over the last two years were facilitated by independent consultants CAG and brought together the fishing sector, regulators, scientific advisors and academic researchers to inform the new guidance, resulting in the MPA Fisheries Management Toolkit. The toolkit aims to provide a resource for those involved in, and affected by, fisheries management decision-making and lays out the key elements to consider when establishing a participatory approach to management in MPAs.

Dale Rodmell, Assistant Chief Executive, NFFO said, "The work has married together an evidence-based approach to MPA management with a more in-depth involvement of those affected by decision-making. Ultimately, we want to

see management outcomes that are widely supported and accommodate sustainable marine livelihoods with meeting management objectives."

Using two existing MPAs in the Irish Sea and North Sea as case studies to explore the challenges of managing sedimentary habitats; the project has focussed on mechanisms for enabling the fishing sector to engage positively with the management process and bring their perspectives and knowledge to the table.

It has been designed as a guide to help regulators assess the suitability of establishing a participatory approach, including governance structure, stakeholder balance, management objectives, and logistics. Each section comes complete with a standalone summary poster that highlights key information to help ensure that users can take away the key messages.

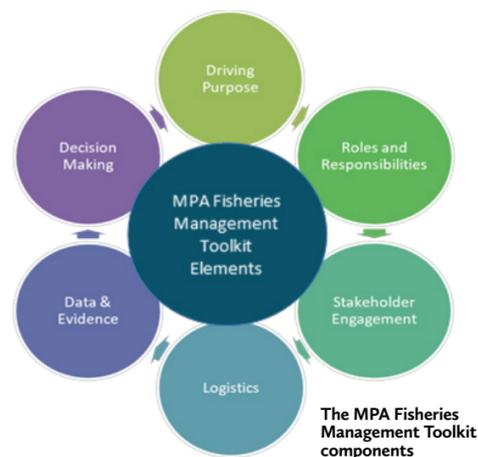
"The project has been a fantastic opportunity to share perspectives on how and why we all participate in MPA management, and has produced some great resources which will hopefully help decision makers and stakeholders make the most of opportunities to come together," said Nick Greenwood, Principal marine Conservation Manager, Marine Conservation Team, MMO.

The work also includes the development of the Benthic Impacts Tool, a management decision-making support tool, drawing on the latest scientific understanding of the impacts of mobile fishing gears on the seabed.

Dr Lowri Evans, Postdoctoral Ecologist,

Bangor University said, "This project offered a fantastic opportunity for collaboration between a range of marine environment stakeholders (from fishers to conservationists, regulators to scientists) and developed really useful outputs for future use in the adaptive marine protected area management sphere. It has been very useful to discuss the usability, applicability and potential future avenues for the Benthic Impacts Tool with likely users of the Tool."

For those who may be interested in learning more about the project, all resources from the project are available at <https://bit.ly/2AZHfJ8>



### £500,000 from Seafarers UK for fishermen and women affected by the COVID-19 pandemic

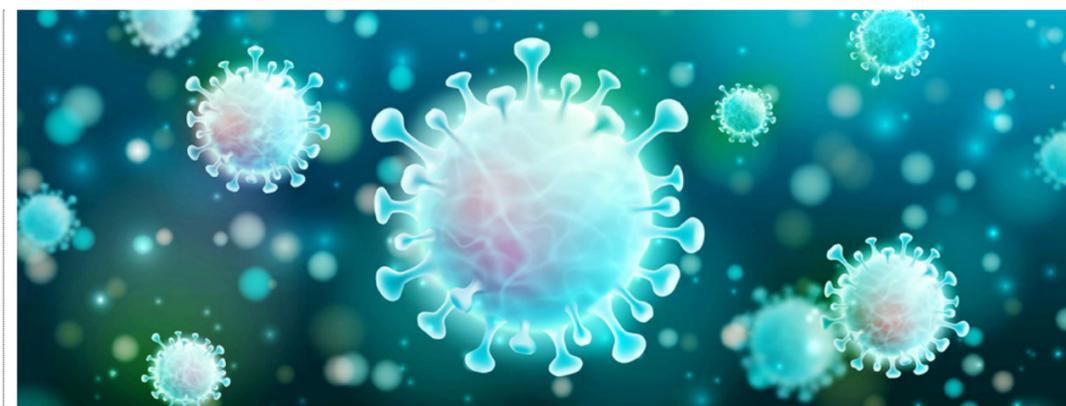
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on merchant seafarers, fishermen, women and their families, Seafarers UK has created a new Seafarers UK COVID-19 Emergency Fund of £2million, with £500,000 immediately allocated to assist fishing communities across Britain.

Seafarers UK Chairman Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson CB CVO BA said: "The trustees of Seafarers UK have released new funds to help fishers recover from the widespread impact on their wellbeing and livelihoods as a result of the coronavirus.

"We are working with our charity partners to provide both hardship funding and innovative new projects to support our fishing communities through and beyond the current crisis. Our long history of helping those who work at sea enables us to target effective and meaningful support to where it is most needed."

Included in the grants that have been awarded to partners providing advice and support arising from the widespread impacts of the coronavirus are:

- £250,000 to provide match funding with The Fishmongers' Company's Fisheries Charitable Trust for innovative projects to support fish and seafood businesses, benefiting the fish-catching sector. The



Coronavirus

COVID-19 Rapid Response Grant Programme guidelines can be found at <https://bit.ly/2xRJ4V>

- £200,000 to The Fishermen's Mission to provide hardship welfare grants to fishers and their families, based on requests received via the Mission's frontline staff – see <https://bit.ly/3dyTGJX>
- £50,000 reserved for organisations working with fishermen and women around the UK.

Welcoming the funds, David Dickens CBE, Chief Executive Officer of The Fishermen's Mission said: "This rapid and substantial financial assistance from Seafarers UK for our hard-pressed fishing communities is most welcome. I am most grateful for the generous grant to The

Fishermen's Mission that will help us sustain our support to fishermen and their families at this difficult time.

"Importantly, the overall commitment here is not only to addressing short term welfare needs, but also to assisting fishing communities recover as they emerge from the current crisis. I am confident that this engagement with a broad spectrum of issues and partners across the fishing endeavour should deliver positive outcomes."

Grants from Seafarers UK are offered to charities and other organisations providing services to fishermen, women and their families. Applications should be made via email to [grants@seafarers.uk](mailto:grants@seafarers.uk). Guidance to applicants is available at [www.seafarers.uk](http://www.seafarers.uk) or phone 020 7932



Peter Wilkinson

0000. [www.seafarers.uk](http://www.seafarers.uk)  
Individual fishermen and women seeking support should contact SAIL, a dedicated free Citizens Advice facility that receives an annual grant from Seafarers UK. SAIL (Seafarers' Advice and Information Line), phone 0800 160 1842, email [advice@sailine.org.uk](mailto:advice@sailine.org.uk), website <http://sailine.org.uk/>

### Coronacrisis exacerbating oversupply issues in prawn market

POS say effort and output restrictions will be necessary to restrict supplies

A statement from nine UK fish producer organisations (POs)—the Anglo North Irish, Anglo Scottish, Fife, North East of Scotland, Northern, Northern Irish, Orkney, Scottish Fishermen's Organisation and West of Scotland—has warned that the significant decrease in market demand for Nephrops due to the coronavirus crisis has exacerbated an already precarious oversupply situation within the UK sector. Effort and output restrictions will be necessary to restrict supplies, they say.

According to the statement from the POs, "Higher than normal landings volumes of whole prawns and prawn tails due to good fishing throughout 2019

was already starting to negatively impact market price during the first quarter of 2020, before the effects of the lockdowns in domestic and export markets fully took hold."

Though during April and May most prawn boats tied up, and factories closed, some boats stayed fishing, "with some supplying buyers at prices that many within the sector have viewed as undermining the market's pre-existing price structures."

"One of the roles of UK fish producer organisations (FPOs) is to help facilitate a level of raw material supply that matches with market requirements, to support price integrity throughout the supply chain," the POs highlight.

In terms of returning to normality, they say, "Naturally, the fleet wants to be back at sea, fishing for a fair price, while the onshore sector wants to restart production and see an upswing in demand as soon as possible.

"And whilst the resumption of activity will at least partly be determined by factors outwith industry control, such as lockdown rules in target markets, it is necessary to consider how a managed, gradual resumption of activity can best be achieved in practice, to avoid filling up cold stores which are already well stocked and putting excess downward pressure on quayside prices, resulting in fishing and processing becoming unviable. "Affected UK POs are

therefore united in their belief that a combination of effort and output restrictions will be necessary to restrict supplies to an already oversupplied market due to the ongoing low level of demand. The reality is that going forward, landings need to balance with the new level of demand to prevent excess supply ending up contributing towards the establishment of a cheaper and, for some, unviable market."

To this end, the POs state they are currently in talks with prawn processors "to establish both what the current market demand requires and what is viable for vessels, with a view to finding a solution that leads to an acceptable outcome for all concerned."

### Coronavirus crisis sees drop in UK landings

Data from the UK's Marine Management Organisation (MMO) for March of this year show a drop in UK landings, in terms of volume and value, coinciding with the coronavirus crisis.

An ad hoc statistical release comparing fishing activity recorded in March 2020 compared with that of March 2019, published in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide timely evidence on impacts on commercial sea fishing activity, suggests the global pandemic began to have an impact on the UK's fishing industry during March.

According to the data, March this year saw UK vessels' landed volumes fall by 17% to 59,027 tonnes. At 26%, the value of these landings fell more steeply to £46,563,000. The number of fishing trips by UK vessels was also down by 33% to 8,906 trips, compared to the same period last year.

Smaller length vessels saw the greatest percentage decrease in value and quantity, with the value from the under 10m and 10-12m fleet falling by 47 and 60% respectively. Volumes for these vessels fell by 35 and 32% respectively, while for the over 12m fleet values decreased

by 20%, volumes by 16%.

By species, at 43% shellfish saw the greatest decrease in value, with a reduction in volume of 29%. By vessel nationality, the Welsh fleet saw the largest percentage decrease with value down 87%, volume by 83%. According to the MMO, this staggering drop is due to the fact that Wales has a large proportion of under 10m vessels that target shellfish in its fleet.

In terms of volume, at 89% vessels administered from Shetland had the largest decrease, at 70% vessels administered from Eyemouth

had the largest decrease in the number of trips. As stated, vessels administered from Milford Haven (the entire Welsh fleet) had the largest decrease in value of 87%.

Bucking many of these trends, however, was the pelagic sector. According to provisional figures from the MMO, when considering the period from January to March of this year, at 101 thousand tonnes compared to 65 thousand tonnes, mackerel landings by the UK fleet were 56% higher than the same period last year, due to an increased mackerel TAC.

## SCOTLAND NEWS

### Optimism: Post COVID recovery a chance for sector to set standards

The recovery period after COVID-19 is a "golden opportunity" for Scotland's seafood processors to set the highest global standards, according to the sector's leaders. Pioneering work on hygiene and social distancing to allow continued operation during the pandemic mark the start of a drive for excellence, they say.

Scottish Seafood Association (SSA) chief executive Jimmy Buchan said: "The impact of COVID-19 on our sector has been severe, with demand hemorrhaging in both export and domestic markets since mid-March. Most businesses have been operating at significantly reduced capacity and some unfortunately have been forced to close.

"But as we come out of it, and with Brexit now just over six months away, we have a golden opportunity to set the

highest global standards in the supply chain and create a fit-for-purpose, profitable processing sector that will complement our sustainable fisheries and modern fishing fleet."

In a paper, "Securing Recovery from Covid-19", Mr Buchan said that success would require the support of both the Scottish and UK governments in relation to COVID-19 recovery and Brexit.

"Economic viability will be restored through the rebuilding of markets, and the vast repository of knowledge and understanding of these markets that exists within the sector will be accessible to ministers and officials through giving processors' representatives a seat at the table when solutions are under discussion.

"A similar level of engagement is required on Brexit, since the maintenance



Jimmy Buchan

of tariff-free trade with the EU beyond December 2020 will be critically important to ensure that the COVID-19 recovery is not crushed. The industry anticipates signs of recovery in shellfish markets in particular just as the transition period comes to an end."

The SSA is also calling for both governments to involve the sector in the design of the replacement for the EMFF, which it says must be open to companies of all sizes, not solely small and medium-sized enterprises, and relax state aid rules.

### Phased capacity increase at Peterhead Fish Market

Following swift implementation of measures in the face of the coronavirus to ensure landings could continue, Peterhead Fish Market is now to begin increasing capacity in a phased manner, in line with Scottish Government advice.

Peter Duncan, Head of Fishing-Commercial, said: "The current segregation of stakeholders and distancing measures that are in place along with the utilisation of extended open walkways between each tier of fish, allows each individual the space to physically distance in the auction room floor when required.

"This has been a crucial factor that has allowed Peterhead Fish Market to remain operational for the facilitation of the whitefish auction during this Covid-19 pandemic. However, there is a need to continually monitor our operation. Peterhead Fish Market will continue to follow the advice set out by our government. Our steps will be careful, gradual and incremental as we implement the changes required to return to full capacity of the auction."

Landings at the market dropped dramatically in the wake of the coronavirus crisis and corresponding lockdowns. However, Peterhead Port Authority say auctions on Mondays and Fridays have been attracting more vessels landing their catch, and on occasions vessels have had to lay over until the following day.

Mr Duncan said: "With this in mind we intend to increase the auction room floor capacity from 5000 boxes to 6500 boxes on Monday and Friday auctions only. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday auctions will remain at the current 5000 box capacity; this can be adjusted if necessary.

"Currently each vessel is allocated 50% of its box count for auction floor space, and this will continue on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday auctions. We will be adjusting space allocation to 40% on Mondays and Fridays, thus allowing us to increase capacity while keeping the vital physical distancing measures and stakeholder segregation in place."

As with all restrictions in place, he concluded, Peterhead Port Authority would continue monitoring the situation adjusting where necessary to ensure stakeholders "receive the best possible service in the safest possible conditions."

Uberous and Fruitful Bough in Fraserburgh last month. Image: Eugene Rutter



### Additional funding for aquaculture businesses affected by COVID-19

It was announced last month that shellfish growers and trout producers will receive a share of £800,000 of funding to help make improvements to their businesses to mitigate the impacts of the global coronavirus pandemic.

The grants from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to 11 aquaculture businesses include nearly £100,000 for phase

two of the expansion of Seaforth Mussels on the Isle of Harris and around £200,000 for new specialist trout harvesting equipment at Dawnfresh Seafoods Ltd in Lanark.

This investment for small aquaculture businesses is in addition to hardship payments of up to £27,000 which were launched as a direct response to COVID-19 last month.

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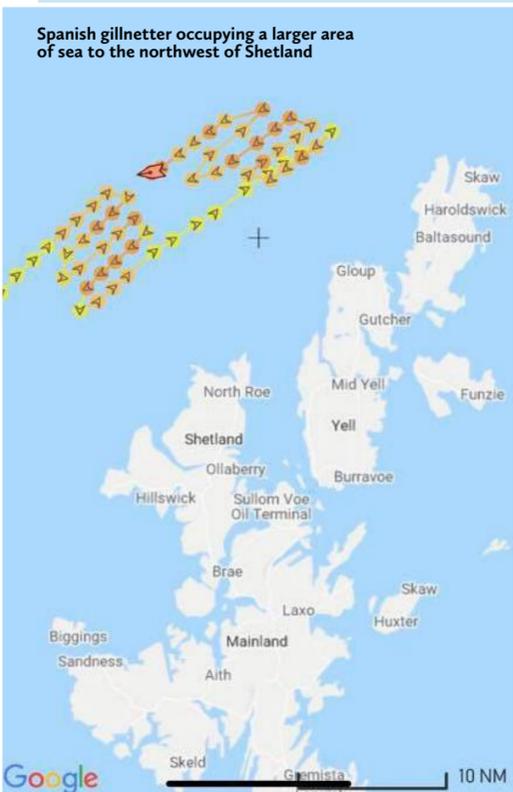
SCOTTISH SKIPPER EXPO 2020



# SHETLAND NEWS

By Peter Johnson, Chris Cope and Hans J Marter / www.shetnews.co.uk

## Resolving the Spanish gillnetting issue likely to be 'one of the immediate wins of Brexit'



Spanish gillnetter occupying a larger area of sea to the northwest of Shetland

**F**ISHERMEN have again vented their anger and frustration over the ongoing and unresolved issue of Spanish gillnetters taking over fishing grounds to the northwest of Shetland.

Shetland Fishermen's Association chief officer Simon Collins said the topic would be one of the first to be negotiated once the UK has become an independent coastal state.

That is set to happen on 31 December this year but in light of the current COVID-19 crisis, it depends on whether the UK seeks an extension to the current transition period.

Collins said the conflict is nothing new and happens every year. However, with the Scottish whitefish fleet reducing its fishing effort to protect prices, Spanish vessels are accused of having moved in big style.

"We feel that the Spanish vessels have taken advantage of this, have moved in and occupy more than they would otherwise be able to do," Collins said.

He said those vessels' gill nets were covering up to 300 square miles of seabed per vessel and were making it completely impossible for local vessels to fish their home grounds.

And there is particular anger and grief around Shetland since this conduct is

perfectly legal under EU law, which has been rolled over into UK law as part of the Brexit process.

Changing this behaviour would be "one of the immediate wins of Brexit", Collins said.

"If we are able to leave the transition period by the end of this year, the UK and the Scottish governments will have the powers to do something about it, and they are on board to do that," he said.

This could include a stricter licensing system for Spanish vessels wanting to fish in UK waters such as fewer vessels, reciprocal deals to allow UK vessels to fish off the Spanish coast, as well as limitations to equipment and fishing times.

"We very much object not only to this occupation of fishing grounds, which would not be tolerated if we would do the same thing off the Spanish coast, but it is also the aggressive nature with which some of these vessels occupy the grounds and will try bully us off it," Collins said.

"We are only eight months—hopefully—away from being able to resolve this in an amicable and reasonable way.

"It seems astonishing that these vessels take advantage of a slightly reduced presence on our grounds, a very short-sighted thing to do, and not helpful at all."

## Local fishermen against any extension of Brexit transition period

**T**HE FISHING industry in Shetland has voiced its opposition to suggestions by opposition politicians that the Brexit transition period should be extended by another two years.

Shetland Fishermen's Association (SFA) said the industry had been opposed to a transition period from day one and was ready for the UK to become an independent coastal state tomorrow if required.

In the light of the COVID-19 crisis and the deep recession forecast for 2020, Liberal Democrats and the SNP have been lobbying for an additional delay before the UK leaves the EU.

Welcoming Labour's support for the proposal, Northern Isles MP Alistair Carmichael said: "Unless the government does the right thing and extends

the transition period we risk crashing out without a trade deal, delivering a double whammy just as we try to recover from the current crisis.

"The NHS, food supply chains and the economy are all already under huge amounts of pressure. People are rightly worried about their loved ones and about their jobs.

"We need to be able to put Brexit issues to one side for the moment, in order to focus on protecting the most vulnerable."

But Simon Collins, the SFA's executive officer, said that as far as he could see there was "not much appetite within the government to extend", and fishing was a special case anyway.

"The institutional arrangements have been in place for 40 years. The only thing that needs to

be arranged is to have an extra seat and a different flag at the negotiating table, but the arrangements of how it all works are understood," Collins said.

"If we were required to operate as an independent coastal state as of tomorrow, we could; so for us there is no reason to delay.

"Whatever decisions are being made for other parts of the economy, for which we can't speak, as far as fishing is concerned our stance is absolutely clear: we have every intention to push the government to deliver, at least for fishing, that we are an independent coastal state by the end of the year.

"There is no technical reason why we can't be. We didn't want a transition period and we certainly don't want an extension."

Collins added that once the



Simon Collins

UK is an independent coastal state and fishing matters be devolved to Scotland, the country would finally be in a position to implement measures against the hugely controversial and environmentally damaging gillnet fishing undertaken by a fleet of Spanish owned vessels in Shetland and Scottish waters.

## Fish landings and markets

**W**HITEFISH landings in Shetland are down by around 40 per cent as a consequence of the industry adapting to the impact of coronavirus.

With overseas demand for fresh fish disappearing overnight as a result of the closure of the UK borders and UK restaurants being told to close at the end of March, the industry has managed to keep fishing albeit on a much-reduced level.

The pandemic also brought any outstanding work at Shetland's two new fish markets to a sudden halt just weeks before both new facilities in Lerwick and Scalloway would have been ready to operate.

Shetland Fishermen's Association's chief officer Simon Collins said the whitefish fleet had to quickly adapt to a radically different set of circumstances to prevent oversupply and the danger of prices collapsing.

The association's member vessels shared what was available by tying up voluntarily for half of April, while as of May a Scotland-wide scheme has been introduced that requires fishing boats to be tied up for eight consecutive days in a bid to reduce fishing effort.

It is a balancing act that involves individual fishing partnerships, fish agent LHD as well as the Shetland Fish Producers' Organisation, which managed the local quota allocations.

"It helps to keep prices up, but it also helps the transport industry and the wholesale market during the COVID situation. You can't have boom and bust, you have to smooth the situation," Collins said.

Collins said the whitefish fleet was not in a hardship situation yet, a marked difference to the state the Scottish prawn fleet



With lack of demand for crab and lobster the local inshore fleet are feeling the pinch. Shetland-based Resolute out on the grounds making the best of a bad situation hauling some buckie pots. Image: Ivan Reid

finds itself in whose situation he described as "desperate".

He added: "Income for the fleet is down, but it is too early to say what that will mean for the year. The [local] shellfish fleet in a more difficult position, and the Scottish Government was quick to come in with support. That support is not available for the whitefish fleet."

Martin Leyland of Shetland Seafood Auctions said that currently around 5,000 boxes were being landed per week, which is about 3,000 fewer than what would normally be sold.

The reduced volume helps the fish market operations at Lerwick and Scalloway to comply with social distancing regulations.

"The fact we have two fish markets means that our staff is already separated, and we are also working in pairs and not in groups," Leyland said.

Work practices have been adapted accordingly, so hauliers are only allowed in the market to fetch fish for onward transport to the UK mainland once fish market staff have completed its

tasks, for example.

Shetland had been on track to get two brand new and much larger fish markets this spring, with the Scalloway market having already been handed over to its owner Shetland Islands Council in February when COVID-19 struck.

The Lerwick market, which is being built at Mair's Quay for Lerwick Port Authority, was following closely behind. Both new facilities have been built in response to the steady growth in whitefish landings, and the confidence that this would continue following Brexit.

All that is needed to complete both markets is the floor layout markings and the essential paperwork from the local authority's environmental health department.

Victor Sandison of Lerwick Port Authority said: "We hope to be in a position to open the new market at the earliest possible opportunity once the remaining works are complete and it is safe to do so."

Leyland added: "Ideally, that



Martin Leyland

kind of space and the more open layout in both new markets would really help in terms of social distancing, but you can't go it at the moment."

Shetland Seafood Auctions also has to wait for its new state of the art electronic auctioning equipment to be installed.

Leyland said: "We are also investing in a new web-based auction, but this is now also on hold. The system would be allowing a wider range of buyers access to the market. However, it turned out to be a completely different year."

## Mussel farming business nets £75,000 grant

**A** LOCAL mussel farming company has been successful in attracting EU and Scottish Government funding to help upgrade a workboat.

Scalloway-based Eastvoe Shellfish has secured just over £56,000 in funding from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) plus a further

£18,750 from the Scottish Government.

The grant funding covers for half the projected cost of upgrading one of the company's workboats.

The funding allocation was announced on Saturday as part of the latest round of EMFF funding for a number of Scottish shellfish

businesses and organisations worth over £800,000.

Rural economy secretary Fergus Ewing said: "COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on the seafood sector with the market for some products disappearing almost overnight, leaving many businesses at risk of financial ruin.

"This new funding is being awarded to businesses working in rural areas who have been hit the hardest by this pandemic, helping them to strengthen their business and recover from the loss of markets.

"Aquaculture is an important part of our food and drink success story which we need to preserve."



## ORKNEY NEWS *By Craig Taylor*

### Challenging time for the Orkney fishing industry during the COVID-19 pandemic

**T**HE coronavirus pandemic continues to hit the fishing industry hard, with both the inshore fleet and trawler operators affected by a collapse in markets due to so many hospitality businesses being shut down.

The whitefish fleet agreed to a tie-up period in May, however, there has been criticism from some that foreign netters are using this to their advantage. This, however, was causing more of an issue for our neighbours in Shetland, explained Fiona Matheson, secretary of the Orkney Fisheries Association (OFA), who also gave an overview of the situation in May.

She said: "The problems that the Shetlanders are getting are not affecting us so much here as the whitefish fleet tend to fish further off towards the north east edge where the liners don't go.

"In recent years they have come closer and one of the problems is the long soak times when gear sits in the water blocking off access for trawlers. There is also a significant plastic pollution and ghost fishing problem that can mean abandoned gear can drift or be picked up in nets anywhere."

On fishing operations, she said: "The Keila has been fishing at Rockall, but as the quality of haddock declines out there due to spawning a lot of boats will be moving off that ground.

"An eight day trawl tie up has been agreed for the month of May only at this stage anyway, and this has been initiated by the POs (producers organisations) to try and stabilise the landings into the fish markets as well as the price. There have been some very volatile prices in the markets since the COVID crisis hit

particularly with high value species like monkfish taking a huge price fall. Although boats are finding plenty of fish the poorer prices are affecting the share in pay to crew."

On fish and shellfish sales, she explained: "Locally there has been a surge in fresh fish deliveries for haddock. For the shellfish sector the problems are that most buyers and processors are either closed still or working at severely reduced capacity. Buckies are still being taken by some buyers but there is very little in terms of any quantity of other species like velvet crab and brown crab being landed.

"For the prawn fleet the issue is that cold stores are full of prawns and so prices offered are very low and will continue to be so as long as buyers have full stores.

"The velvet fishery would normally tail off a bit towards the

summer as they become more vulnerable to dying in transit.

"There have been local deliveries of live crab, lobster, prawns and scallops going out to households in Orkney also so a positive is that the Orkney public are rediscovering the top quality seafood that normally heads off south or abroad. Folk are getting the chance to eat the freshest best quality seafood you can get anywhere."

She concluded: "Many boats are using this time to do maintenance and repairs, paint and other jobs. At OFA are already focussing on the recovery and how best to make Orkney's fishing fleet fit for the next 10-20 years, because even with COVID there will still be a fishery in Orkney waters, we just need to make sure we have the boats and the skills continuing into the next phase to help feed our community and the wider public."

### Aalskere impresses on first trip New trawler at Rockall for the first time

**O**RKNEY'S brand new trawler *Aalskere* recently put in her first trip, with skipper Iain Harcus and crew catching 1570 boxes out at Rockall.

With the fish landed in Ullapool, the 35m long stern trawler boat turned around and headed back out on her

second trip.

Following that trip, Mr Harcus said that the boat would be heading back home to tie up as part of a fleet agreement, in the hope that market prices improve for catches during the coronavirus crisis which has seen market demand and fish prices hit a serious low.



The Aalskere.  
Image: Craig Taylor

### Safe return of stranded seafarers must be an urgent priority

**O**RKNEY and Shetland MP, Alistair Carmichael, has backed a cross-party parliamentary motion calling for the safe return of UK merchant navy sailors stranded by global COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

The motion recognises that an estimated 2000 mariners have been trapped on board their ships for an extended period and the significant effect this will have on their

physical and mental health.

Commenting in late May, Mr Carmichael said: "The challenges of COVID-19 are concerning enough without having family members stranded offshore. Repatriation of UK citizens has been a significant challenge during this crisis and the government should not forget about seafarers as part of this. Ministers must act to ensure the safe return of merchant navy staff to their families

and loved ones."

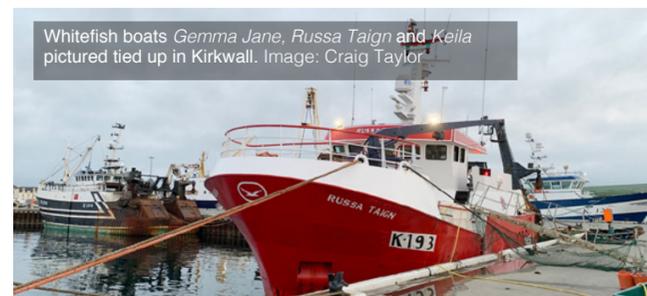
He continued: "The merchant navy has a longstanding connection to the Northern Isles. They play a vital role in our economy, still more so during the current crisis. Supply lines are more important than ever. The government should sign up to the International Maritime Organisation's plan to ensure crew changeovers can resume. Delaying this will only worsen the

situation faced by seafarers who face physical and mental exhaustion during this time.

"Working conditions for merchant navy workers cannot be ignored in this crisis. We know there has been a temptation on the part of some maritime employers in the past to take any opportunity to undermine pay and conditions. We need a strong stance from the government against this."



Orkney creel boats pictured at Tingwall. Image: Craig Taylor



Whitefish boats *Gemma Jane*, *Russa Taign* and *Keila* pictured tied up in Kirkwall. Image: Craig Taylor



## ICELAND NEWS *By Gudjón Einarsson*

### Lumpfish season abruptly stopped

**F**ishermen along the western coast and the West Fjords of Iceland became furious after the Minister of Fisheries ordered on May 3 a shutdown of this year's lumpfish season without a warning. According to their licenses, they were allotted 44 fishing days but many had only managed a few trips to the fishing grounds, and some had not even started laying their nets when they got the bad news.

#### Fishing surprisingly good

The reason for this awkward situation was that the fishery along the north-east and east coast turned out to be extremely good, and likewise the weather, so the total allowable catch of 4,646 tons had already been caught at the beginning of May. As a rule, the lumpfish does show up a little later off the west coast and therefore the season there had not fully started when the Minister put an end to it.

#### Olympic fishing

Fishing in Iceland is for the most part managed by a system of individual transferable quotas. The lumpfish is an exception to the rule. Everyone can apply for a lumpfish license and each year the Minister decides the number of allowed fishing days based on advice from the Marine and Fresh Water Research Institute which also recommends the total allowable

catch. So, it is Olympic fishing within the frame of the allowed fishing days. This year the season started on March 10. In total, 250 lumpfish licenses were issued but only 58 boats used 40-44 days at sea. 57 boats managed to use 20 days or less and some did not start fishing at all.

#### Follows scientific advice

The Minister has been under pressure to increase the total allowable catch in order to solve this unexpected problem but has refused, asserting he will adhere to scientific advice. He has also been criticised for not stopping the fishery in the north and north-east in time so there would have been enough left for others, but since a situation like this has not occurred before the authorities do not seem to have been prepared.

#### Minister wants a quota system

The Minister wants to abolish the present system regarding the fishing of lumpfish and wants to introduce a system of transferable quotas as is the case in almost all other fisheries in Iceland. That would solve this problem for good, he maintains. Many of the fishermen are opposed to that idea.

The export value of lumpfish products from Iceland in 2019 amounted to €18 million Euros, mostly for the roe, but 3.8 million for the flesh of the fish.



Lumpfish roe

### Top Catcher

**I**n the good old days when there were no catch restrictions, most of the cod in Iceland was caught in gillnets during the winter season from January to mid-May. People from all over the country flocked to the southwestern part of the country to take part in the fishery and make good money. Traditionally, the final day of the season was May 11. Subsequently, it was announced

which captain in each port and in the country as a whole would be honoured as Aflakóngar (literally Catch Kings) or the Top Catchers of the season, a highly prestigious title. In those days, quantity rather than quality was the measure of success.

#### Not relevant anymore

With the introduction of

the individual transferable quota system in 1984, the title Aflakóngur stopped being relevant since the total catch of a captain or a boat is not based only on efficiency anymore but also on how much quota each vessel owner has acquired. Still, it is considered noteworthy in the media when a captain and his crew do extremely well during the winter season.

That was the case this season

when captain Pétur Pétursson and his crew on the boat *Bárður SH* from the Snaefellsnes peninsula on the west coast of Iceland managed to catch 2,311 tons in gillnets from January 1 to May 11. This is an all-time record in a winter season, even the famous Catch Kings of the good old days were not nearly as successful. *Bárður* is a 27-meter fibreglass boat built in Denmark in 2019.



Bárður SH



Skipper Pétur Pétursson

## Online deliveries keep the supply chain going at CH Marine

**C**H Marine's significant investment in their website and online market came to fruition during the COVID crisis as they were well placed to continue the supply of essential items to the fishing industry. CH Marine has seen considerable growth in the volume of orders and they report a complete acceptance that ordering online is the way to go. With free delivery on orders over €50 and next day delivery in most instances, the internet can be a more cost-effective and timely method of supply, while at the same time being safe in this pandemic era.

Supply tends to be in the PPE or parts sector with Guy Cotton & Helly Hansen Workwear showing noticeable growth as most people are aware of their size in these ranges and can simply re-order with confidence. Other items coming to attention are essential power management products such as Victron chargers and inverters, as well as safety electronics in the form of Ocean Signal and McMurdo PLBs and EPIRBs. Here, next day delivery to most parts of Ireland is often a very satisfactory solution.

Often, when buying online, returns are a big concern. What happens if the garment doesn't fit or there is some other reason to bring it back? This is not a problem at CH Marine, as they use An Post's 'Return my shopping' service. Simply download a label at [www.returnmyshopping.ie](http://www.returnmyshopping.ie) and drop

into your nearest Post Office. This service has also proved invaluable for sending lifejackets to CH Marine's Service Centre for servicing.

Guy Cotton, famously known in the fishing industry, has been very busy redeveloping their ranges and there has been a continuous supply of new releases including some breathable items. Featured here are the Barossa and Chinook, so next time you are looking for new oilskins give CH Marine's online service a try!



## Time to go green with Engine Solutions Ltd



Andrew Deacy, Engine Solutions busy at the Scottish Skipper Expo last year

**O**ffering green solutions to the marine industry, Engine Solutions Ltd are Ireland's sole importers of YC Engines, Genets, Aderco organic fuel treatments, Addinol oil long drain and Micfil filtration systems.

YC Engines are a German design very robust stronger engine, with a wide range of power and size for the commercial industry: 50hp to 450hp, 4 cylinder, straight 6 cylinder, straight 8 cylinder, straight 9 cylinders and v12 v16. Both the 8 and 9 cylinder engines are 1000hp upwards, giving you more room in your engine room than the v cylinder engines. Cheaper to service, cheaper to run and lighter in weight, there is also a wide range of engines for the smaller commercial and pleasure vessels.

Aderco fuel treatment is an organic treatment that kills the bug in the fuel, breaking down

the dead bug and suspending it in the fuel to be burnt off. Aderco cleans the fuel tank fuel pump and injectors, while also keeping the fuel filters from clogging up, and is authorised by all engine manufacturers.

A high performing oil for a variety of applications, made in Germany, Addinol oil is a long drain oil for engines, gearboxes, hydraulics. With testing, Micfil filtration and Addinol oil together can prolong the life of the oil for thousands of working hours. German designed and manufactured, Micfil has oil filtration and fuel filtration to suit all applications.

Operating a 24 service to the industry, with these products Engine Solutions Ltd. is helping the industry reduce their carbon footprint, reduce waste and save money.

Time to go green?

Contact Engine Solutions Ltd at [andrew@engine-solutions.ie](mailto:andrew@engine-solutions.ie) or phone 087 9280232

Engine Solutions are Ireland's sole importers of YC Engines, Genets, Aderco organic fuel treatments, Addinol oil long drain and Micfil filtration systems



## G Smyth Boats back at work

**G**Smyth Boats Ltd reopened on May 6th. After being closed for almost 6 weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Gerry decided that it was time to get back to work! And so, after stocking up on the required PPE and adopting a number of changes to work procedures, the staff were briefed and, operating under strict COVID guidelines, all at the busy Killeel yard got back into it.

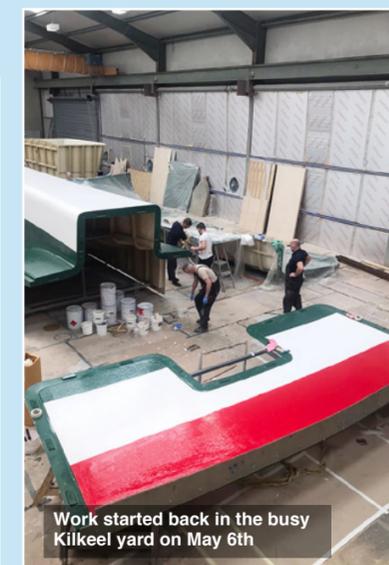
At the moulding plant, work has commenced in earnest on the moulding of a Maxis 14m Catamaran hull – the first 14m hull

for G Smyth Boats for the yard's new catamaran design. Down at the fitout and repair plant the team are busy completing a Cygnus Cyclone for Skerries, Dublin, which at the time of writing is near ready for launching. The Cygnus Cyclone is the second boat the Killeel yard has completed for the owner, who has just recently sold the GM7M G Smyth Boats Ltd built for him in 2012.

Busy as always, the yard is also working on 2 Maxis 12m catamarans that are almost complete, and another has been brought in for a partial fitout before heading to England.



Cygnus Cyclone near ready for launch



Work started back in the busy Killeel yard on May 6th

## Good trip for Orkney's Aalskere

**J**ust finished up three trips and tying up until markets improve, the new *Aalskere* has been proving her fishing credentials off Rockall since April, despite the current crisis. See page 22 for report by Craig Taylor.



Aalskere fish hold with over 1600 boxes



First haul at the Rock twin rigging.

Images courtesy of Sean Glackin, Malin

## SeaQuest Systems continues to push ahead

**I**reland's leading company for the design & manufacture of deck equipment, SeaQuest Systems continues to push ahead, with deck equipment for Irish & foreign markets proving to be more & more popular within the fishing & aquaculture sectors.

Currently in production at the Killybegs based factory, are a number of projects for Ireland, the UK, Turkey, Faroe Islands, Denmark and Oman. Recently expanding production capabilities—both in terms of building & machinery—has allowed SeaQuest to build ever bigger equipment, as seen on MV *Grip Arctic* during 2019 with the crane delivered measuring in at 25m in length.

Already, 2020 has proven extremely busy for the company, with the final assembly well underway on equipment for the next vessel to be completed at Mooney boats for the Atlantic Dawn Group. The MFV *Ella* is to receive a full SeaQuest Systems deck machinery & hydraulic package, including winches, net drums, Powerblock crane, hydraulic systems, along with SeaQuest hose reels & 14-inch fish pump.

Alongside this, are packages, also for the Atlantic Dawn Group, to be delivered to Cemre Marin in Turkey. These new vessels will be supplied with SeaQuest cranes, hose reels, 24-inch fish pumps, and hydraulic systems.

MFV *Finnur Fridi* is to receive delivery in the coming months of a new SeaQuest Powerblock crane. As usual with SeaQuest Cranes, sections of the cranes are modified to suit the vessel allowing the maximum usage for the end-user.

Following on from DanFish in October, Karstensens Skibsvaerft has ordered a new Powerblock crane for a refurbishment project on the MFV *Stella Nova*, (ex. *Carmona*). At the request of the owners, this crane will be fitted with a custom-sized Powerblock arrangement.

Some of the future packages to be delivered by SeaQuest Systems include:

- MFV *Antarctic*, Karstensens Skibsvaerft, Denmark
- MFV *Gitte Henning*, Astilleros Zamakona S.A, Spain
- NB71, Atlantic Dawn Group, Cemre Marin, Turkey
- MFV *Juvel*, Oman

For more info on any of our upcoming, present or past projects, visit the project section of our website [www.seaquest.ie](http://www.seaquest.ie)/ projects



SeaQuest Systems continues to push ahead, with deck equipment for Irish & foreign markets

## Work begins at Zamakona on new *Gitte Henning*



*Gitte Henning*, artists impression

Zamakona Yards have begun work on the new *Gitte Henning* AS, with steel cutting for the new vessel starting as scheduled last

month.

The new *Gitte Henning* will have several environmentally friendly features, several of them new in pelagic fishing, including

two propellers and a twin-skeg hull design, and permanent magnet motors for propulsion.

Improving the quality of the fish and reducing emissions

through reduced energy consumption have been at the fore in terms of the decisions that have been made relating to the vessel's design and choice of equipment.

"This new build represents our consolidation as one of the main shipbuilding yards into the pelagic trawler market after delivery of 7 vessels for shipowners in Scotland, and thus it is a very important milestone for us," said Pedro Garaygordobil, Chairman of Zamakona Yards.

"The project progresses in good cooperation with the customer and with the designer Salt Ship Design."

The whole steel blocks for the vessel will be manufactured at the yard's facilities in Bilbao, Spain. Assembly of the ship sections at the slipway is scheduled to commence in July.

## Evac Evolution ballast water management system chosen for Irish Lights vessel



ILV *Granuaile* to be installed with Evac Evolution BWMS

Evac, the world's leading provider of integrated water and waste management systems, as well as corrosion protection systems for the marine, offshore, and building industries, recently secured a contract with the Commissioners of Irish Lights. The Evac Evolution ballast water treatment system (BWMS) will be installed on the Irish Lights aid to navigation vessel, ILV *Granuaile*.

With a length of 79.69m, the ship is equipped with advanced dynamic positioning equipment

and accommodates a crew of 16.

The vessel's primary function is to place and service 150 offshore buoys, which warn mariners of the location of sandbanks, reefs and other offshore hazards.

The vessel also provides support for the teams tasked with maintaining a further 65 lighthouses and beacons around the coast of Ireland and Northern Ireland. In addition, the ship supports the national response to maritime wreck and new dangers to navigation.

"We are delighted to have

won the BWMS order for a vessel which has such an important role in maintaining safety at sea and protecting the marine environment", said Adam Rogers, Evac's Head of Global Sales for Ballast Water Management Systems.

The vessel will be installed with an Evac Evolution system with the capacity to treat ballast water at a rate of up to 250m<sup>3</sup>/hr. The components will be supplied in modular form enabling them to be distributed to make the best use of available space within the engine room.

The Evac Evolution attained IMO and U.S. Coast Guard Approval last year, opening the way to worldwide sales. Based on a combination of filtration and UV technology, the space-saving system is energy effective and completely chemical-free. It has a 'feedback loop' which uses UV transmission as the parameter for precisely determining UV dosage. This ensures effectiveness in challenging water conditions but saves on power during normal running.

Effective in fresh, brackish and seawater, the Evac Evolution system enables vessels to operate without restriction. The system is available with capacities from 34m<sup>3</sup>/hr to 1,500m<sup>3</sup>/hr in a single unit. It can be supplied in modular form for retrofits or skid mounted for newbuild applications.

The Evac Evolution system has been fitted on vessels including cruise ships, container vessels, research ships, offshore supply vessels and cable laying craft where its small footprint and potential for flexible installation have proved to be important assets.

## New Kongsberg designed freezer trawler is ready to start fishing in the Arctic

The latest vessel by Kongsberg to enter service, an 81.80m NVC 375 WP freezer trawler named *Ilvileq*, has just been delivered to its working domain in Arctic waters.

Typifying the principles on which the NVC range was conceived the vessel combines an economical and environmentally beneficial foundation of low emissions and fuel-efficient operation, with a freeboard of optimal height to ensure crew safety, teamed with modern, responsible fish-handling solutions.

The low-resistance, wave-piercing hull maximises the vessel's speed, comfort and seakeeping qualities, while *Ilvileq's* design flexibility will enable its crews to undertake both pelagic

and bottom trawling. These assets lead to outstanding hourly catch capacity and quality, allied with minimal environmental impact.

With the hull, *Ilvileq's* hybrid propulsion system makes for a substantial reduction in fuel usage and operational noise (both onboard and into the water) by allowing crews to engage either mechanical or diesel/electric drive modes. The trawler's green credentials are further enhanced with the integration of the most cutting-edge nitrogen oxide reduction technology.

Kongsberg Maritime's emphasis on system integration is reflected in *Ilvileq's* full complement of system packages. In addition to equipping the vessel with hybrid propulsion and electrical

The Kongsberg designed NVC 375 WP freezer trawler *Ilvileq* combines safety, efficiency and sustainability.



power generation technology, the company has also supplied a manoeuvring system (steering gear, flap rudder, tunnel bow thruster and Helicon X3 remote control); an ACON automation system incorporating modules

for energy and power management, pump and valve control, and alarm and monitoring capabilities; plus key items of deck machinery including an electrical winch system.

## Production Underway for Innovative MDI Napier designed Whitefish Trawler

After considerable development, production is underway on the new design 16.49m registered whitefish trawler for Ian Mackay of Kinlochbervie. At 19.7m overall, the third vessel to be named "*Loch Inchar*" is maximising the length available from the recent change in registered length formula.

Designed by Glasgow based naval architects Marine Design International Ltd (trading as MDI Napier), the vessel's design ethos is derived from the successful Napier designs of the "*Oruna*" and "*Demarus*". While heavily modernised for increased gear, power and capacity as well as regulatory compliance there was a drive to maintain the easily driven hull and surprisingly high bollard pull demonstrated in her predecessors.

During the design development, two computational fluid dynamic (CFD) systems were used to optimise the underwater hull shape which was married with the owners' experience and preferences for the deck and gear layout, with consideration of crew comfort and safety as well as efficient fishing operations.

The forward engine room

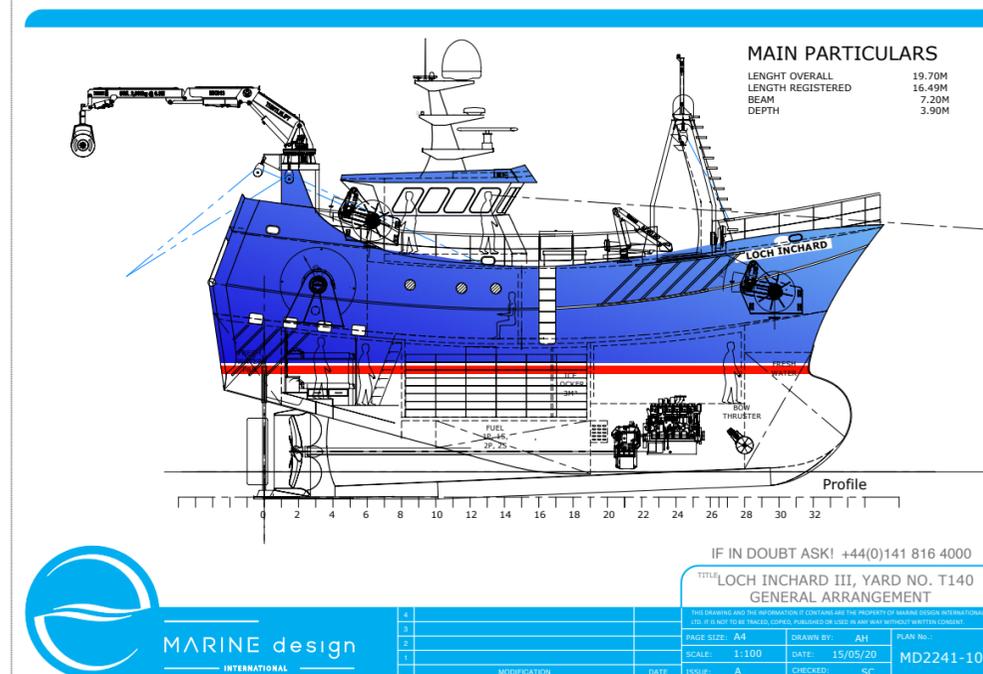
will be noted as a departure from recent trends and while it comes with some compromises in machinery space and exhaust routing it is fundamental to the clean hull lines aft, and the reduction of trim throughout the voyage, so that the carefully considered hull continues to

perform when loaded, hopefully to a deep draught.

The crew accommodation is well separated from the machinery reducing noise while still giving easy access to the aft deck and processing shelter through a hanging and changing area. A separate skipper's

cabin with private shower room maximises privacy and uninterrupted rest.

Steel is now in production for build at C Toms & Sons on what is hoped to be a vessel offering a progressive step in comfort and efficiency while maintaining class-topping capacity.



## Crew's backs are spared by mechanising pot fishing vessel

*"It can't be compared with before"* – Thomas Jensen, skipper on the fishing vessel *Wicki-Alex*

In a project, funded by the EMFF, a local blacksmith in the coastal city of Hundested, Denmark has been put to work to relieve the crew of heavy lifts in their daily fishing for whelk. The project aims to prioritise the crew's health and well-being, so that that the fishery is attractive also in ten years from now.

H410 *Wicki-Alex* is fishing with pots for whelk, brown crab and lobsters combined with gillnetting for sole and cod. The fishing for whelk has grown to be a larger part of the annual catch as the price for round fish has been varying. Skipper, Thomas Jensen hopes to catch around 200 tonnes of whelk this year, a task he expects will be easier now.

"It's simply not comparable with before. The mechanization has meant that the crew can work the entire day without being exhausted. No one is worn out. Furthermore it was also more dangerous before, now the pot just lands on the table, without bouncing around. It's incomparable!" he says.

"In regards to efficiency; We are not fishing faster than before but we are getting a better product with the washing machine and we can work for much longer. Before

we had to stop, because the crew was fatigued. Now we can just go on and on."

The design is to a high degree invented by the skipper Jensen and the company Aquamind, that specialises in solutions for fishing boats. The design involves line guides, new placement of winch, to avoid lifting the pots of the winch. The sorting table and the washing machine is integrated and transports the catch away from the fisherman while cleaning for barnacles, algae and sand.

The payback time for a system like this is about 1 year with pre-corona prices.

Fishing with pots is sustainable and can be lucrative, but it is a hard physical job and often the crew's backs, hands and fingers are injured when the heavy pots are moved around the ship. This reputation is believed to be scaring away interested fishermen. This project can hopefully convince fishermen that fishing with pots can be done without injuries from heavy lifts.

Data from the last two years show that there is a 5% increase in pot handled after the instalment, which corresponds to a 7% increase in earnings per trip.

A video from the project is available at:



*Wicki-Alex fishes pots for whelk, brown crab and lobster*

<https://bit.ly/2ZfiNNW>

For further info contact: Mikkel Villadsen: +45 40594423, Aquamind mkv@aquamind.dk

## O'Sullivan's Marine: Suppliers of Safety Equipment eligible for Grant Aid under Fleet Safety Scheme



O'Sullivan's Marine is one of the leading suppliers of not just boats, engines and trailers, but also a vast range of high quality, and competitively priced chandlery and safety products that comply with Code of Practice requirements for grant purposes under the Fleet Safety Scheme.

A small sample of products available include:

### SOLAS Approved Lifebuoys:

Designed for pleasure and commercial usage, featuring an orange cross-linked polyethylene outer shell that will not deteriorate and is unaffected by extreme weather conditions CE approved to SOLAS (L.S.A Code), O'Sullivan's Marine have a range of Lifebuoys, Lifebuoy cases and accessories available.

### Range of Distress Flares:

Designed to withstand exceptional environmental exposure and to perform reliably even after immersion in water, with the longest expiry dates available in the business... also available are a range of distress flares that conform to SOLAS 74, as amended.

### Fire Fighting Equipment:

From fire axes and fire blankets to dry powder fire extinguishers from 1kg to 9kg, Marine multi-purpose dry powder and CO2 fire extinguishers with pressure gauge suitable for suppression of fires caused by flammable liquids, gases, oils, ordinary solid combustibles and energized electrical equipment, O'Sullivan's Marine has a full range of firefighting equipment.

### Handheld and Fixed VHF Radios:

With a wide range of VHF radios to choose from, O'Sullivan's Marine is the main distributor of Cobra Marine Radios in Ireland. From floating handheld VHF radios to fixed VHF radios with built-in

GPS, O'Sullivan's Marine offers excellent value for money.

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## KK Hydraulics: A chance encounter and some stainless 2 ton potting units

A chance encounter with a man from the Isle of Tiree looking for his father's boat, the *Skipinnish Maid*, led the Kelly brothers, Willie and Jake from KK Hydraulics Ltd to its whereabouts, tied to the pier in their local port of Fenit.

Now in the safe hands of the James family from Ballyheigue, Angus MacPhail arrived the following Friday, Willie picked him up from Cork Airport, and the search for many years came to an emotional end. A few days of music and drama followed.

Angus is the founder member of the famous Scottish group Skipinnish, Willie plays with the much-travelled Irish band Spailín. A friendship was founded. The MacPhail family were having a new boat finished at Murphy Marine in Valencia.

One of KK Hydraulics 17 inch 2 ton complete stainless units was put on a pallet and dispatched to the Isle of Harris to Murdo Kennedy for fitting. This story is as much about stainless pot haulers as it is about the cultural connections between us all – Ireland, Scotland, England, Wales and the surrounding Celtic states

and islands.

Since lockdown, we have been exchanging tunes and songs, stories and virtual cups of coffee, promises of travel to these remote corners and engaging with their people and cultures.

Calum Iain McCorquodale, fisherman and accordion virtuoso from the island of Uist, is now a regular facetime session player with Willie. Just this week, Leslie Tulloch from Shetland ordered some equipment – he plays with Shetland band Rack n' Ruin.

We have come to realise that it's not about the euro or the pound, it's not about Brexit or Europe, it's about the survival of this beautiful industry. And we all have a role to play.

We have formed new and lasting friendships. I can talk freely to Mike Green on the Isle of Harris about putting nail varnish on his motor shaft to prevent pitting, a recipe for sourdough bread from Newhaven, the beautiful shanty I was given by a potting man from Cornwall, the packet of wildflower seed from the wife of a bass fisherman close to the Kilgetty roundabout, a willow

pot from Yorkshire swapped for a valve, or indeed the fine feed of claws and pollock in exchange this morning for a set of wear plates all the way from Quilty. So, common goodwill and a more reflective look at life and the world.

It's not about a bank balance or the stock market. It's about smiling and staring a man in the eye, with the knowledge that you helped in some way. With survival of the industry have a listen to Skipinnish's Last of the Hunters, and the Kellys will see you all sometime soon and stare you in the eye. (By the way, we have plenty of stainless 2 ton potting units!)

Willie and Jake,  
KK Hydraulics,  
[www.kkhydraulics.ie](http://www.kkhydraulics.ie)



KK Hydraulics are Irish distributors for the Hyrdoslave range of marine equipment

## New Products and Special Offers at Barry Electronics Ltd

Barry Electronics Ltd, based in Killybegs, Co Donegal have new products and special offers to announce to the Irish market.

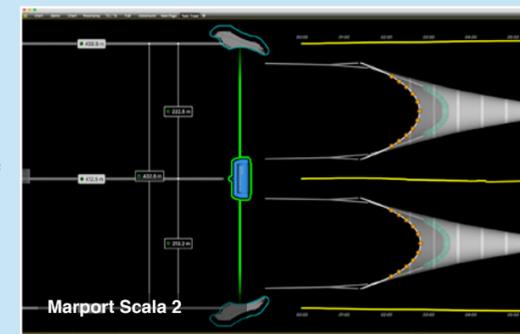
Furuno has launched several new products that will be of interest to the Irish market, including the FSS-3BB Fish Species ID echosounder. Following the highly successful FSS-1BB which identifies mid-water fish acoustically, the FSS-3BB is a higher-powered sounder with a lot more features. Furuno has also introduced the SX20/21 GPS compass for smaller fishing vessels and leisure boats, which eliminates problems with internal fluxgate compasses and is priced accordingly for the smaller boat owner. The company has also launched the Furuno M1815 8.4" Colour Radar. Ideal for vessels under 12m, the radar is easy to install, simple to operate and has an excellent clear picture.

Following Marport's successful Apple Mac/Scala combination, they have now released Scala 2, which shows you graphically what sensors are seeing and how the trawl is behaving graphically in an easy to visualise screen. Existing Scala systems can easily be updated, demonstrating the development and

investment that is being put into this product by Marport. One of the most successful trawl systems on the Irish market, we are looking forward to continuing success with this in the future. The image below shows a Marport Twin rig system in operation.

Barry Electronics is pleased to announce also that Telenor has a special offer on Thor 7 Airtime. A service that is very popular on smaller vessels using the Sailor 60cm antenna, the offer is on 2MB and 4MB packages from June 1st until December 31st, 2020.

For further information call 0749731215 or email sales@barryelectronics.ie



# The Skipper

In light of the current coronavirus pandemic and the impact it's having on businesses across the fisheries sector, we wanted to see if we can help. If there is anything we can do in these worrying times, please let us know.

Do you have a new product, solution, or service you're trying to promote to the fishing industry? Do you need help promoting an existing product or service? Do you have an innovative idea that might help the industry through these tough times? Do you have some news that you feel the industry should hear?

Simply email [editorial@maramedia.ie](mailto:editorial@maramedia.ie) with your news, and we will make every effort to post it on *The Skipper's* website for our audience to see. Since launching [www.theskipper.ie](http://www.theskipper.ie) last autumn we've had more than 130,000 hits from visitors right around the world.

You can also send a direct message to our social media accounts:

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For advertising contact [sharon@maramedia.ie](mailto:sharon@maramedia.ie)

We understand these are trying times. Whatever happens amidst the great uncertainty we all face, over the coming months we will strive to continue to serve the industry as best as we can across our various platforms, from the print edition to our social media accounts and website.

In this regard, we would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your continued support. The industry is resilient, it has been through tough times before. We are here to help you through this and if there is something we can do to help your business we will.

Though the current situation is unprecedented, we have no doubt that by supporting one another we will all manage to come through this.

## DIAS scientists collect unique data from the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean



Sergei Lebedev. Image: SEA-SEIS Team

Unique ocean-bottom recordings of North Atlantic earthquakes and the songs of great baleen whales offshore Ireland have been obtained thanks to one of the boldest deep-ocean research projects ever undertaken in Europe.

The SEA-SEIS project, led by scientists from the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS), deployed a network of state-of-the-art ocean bottom seismometers across the Irish offshore area, to the west of Ireland, in 2018. An expedition to retrieve the seismometers returned to Galway Port on the evening of May 12th.

The expedition was comprised of six scientists and a small crew, who spent the last three weeks on board the RV *Celtic Explorer*. New insights into earthquakes off the Irish coast, the potential for enhanced tsunami warning systems, and the migration patterns of North Atlantic whales are among the topics on which key information was retrieved.

Commenting on their return, Dr Sergei Lebedev, a seismologist at DIAS and the leader of the SEA-SEIS project, which is co-funded by Science Foundation Ireland, Geological Survey Ireland and the Marine Institute, said: "The SEA-SEIS scientists joined the ship with a skeleton crew three weeks ago in an effort to recover this sophisticated equipment that is currently on the sea floor, and the valuable scientific data that has been recorded.

"When the seismometers were deployed in 2018, they were programmed to run until this time. This meant that the

### Recordings of earthquakes and the songs of the great whales

Dr Lebedev said the data captured by the seismometers over the past 19 months will shed light on the nature, occurrence, and frequency of earthquakes off our coast, and is fundamental to our understanding of them.

"The current nature and history of the ocean floor along Ireland's coast is key to our understanding



DIAS survey 1. Image: SEA-SEIS Team

expedition was time-critical: if we didn't retrieve the equipment in the past weeks, we risked losing the valuable seismometers – and the even more valuable data they have collected."

Eighteen seismometers were deployed in 2018, across an area spanning over 1,500 kilometres from North to South and over 1,000 kilometres from East to West, with some sensors placed in the UK and Iceland's waters, as well as in Ireland's offshore territory.

Dr Lebedev continued: "Our mission with this expedition was to retrieve these hugely valuable seismometers and the unique data they have recorded. The instruments have flashing-light beacons and radio beacons but the most reliable way to spot a seismometer bobbing at the surface of the ocean has been by their bright orange flags. We went west from Galway to the stations within the underwater Rockall Trough first, then made our way North along the western coast, retrieving the seismometers as we went, heading towards Iceland and the mid-ocean ridge and circling back around to Galway after three weeks at sea."

migration patterns of the Earth's largest animals and their acoustic environment, known to be crucially important for them."

### Vast offshore territory

Dr. Lebedev went on to highlight: "Many people do not realise how vast Ireland's offshore territory is. In fact, 90 per cent of Ireland's territory is offshore, most of it to the west of the country.

"Far beneath the ocean waves, there are spectacular mountains and deep valleys, with steep slopes and elevation drops of up to four kilometres. There are also many extinct volcanoes, similar to those that formed the Giant's Causeway.

"The SEA-SEIS project aims to uncover new insights about this territory. It is the first project ever to deploy a network of seismometers across such a large area of the North Atlantic. The results of the expedition will play a crucial role in furthering our understanding of the structure, evolution, and seismicity of Ireland's offshore territory."

### Engagement with schools

The ocean bottom seismometers collected will be familiar to many secondary-school students throughout Ireland. Before the seismometers were deployed in 2018, DIAS ran a competition inviting students to name each one. As a result, the seismometers placed across the North Atlantic seabed bear names ranging from 'The Dude' to 'Gráinne', 'Luigi' and 'The Loch Ness Mometer'.

When the seismometers were deployed back in 2018, the team provided video links from the ship, so school students could watch as the seismometers they named entered the depths of the Atlantic Ocean.

During the retrieval expedition, the research team on board hosted live video links with school classes from St Francis National School in Wicklow. St Joseph's College in Tipperary, and a school in Calabria, Italy. People at home could also track the journey of the RV *Celtic Explorer* and the retrieval of the seismometers through social media and blogs from the research team.

Further information on the SEA-SEIS expedition is available at: [www.sea-seis.ie](http://www.sea-seis.ie)

of how the Atlantic evolved and is evolving, and this is important for better understanding both the natural hazards and natural resources offshore," he said. "For example, slope failures triggered by earthquakes can generate tsunamis in the Irish offshore territory – the data will give us new insights into this hazard.

"The seismometers have waterproof memory sticks with recordings of earthquakes off the coast of Ireland. To date, these have been poorly understood, but we know they are generally larger than the ones Ireland has onshore. The new data will give us much greater insights into earthquake mechanisms and, also, into the structure of the Earth's interior.

"The capturing of information on the life and movements of the great baleen whales of the North Atlantic is also important in terms of understanding the lives of these creatures and the dangers they face. The instruments have made continuous recordings from the last 19 months of the songs of the great baleen whales, including the Blue, Fin, Humpback and North Atlantic Right whales. These unique recordings will build our understanding of the

## EU's Biodiversity Strategy ignores management achievements

Launched May 20th by the Commission, the EU's Biodiversity Strategy 2030 ignores fisheries management achievements, is discriminatory and undermines the viability of the fishing sector, says European fishing body Europêche.

Underpinning the new strategy which "aims to put Europe's biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 with benefits for people, the climate and the planet", are 2030 targets which include increasing the EU's protected areas (on land and at sea) to 30 per cent of Europe's sea and landmass, designating ten per cent of the seas as no-take zones (i.e. zones where no fishing can take place).

Additional proposals involve reducing fishing mortality to or under maximum sustainable yield (MSY) levels, increasing offshore wind development, and phasing out bottom trawling.

Emphasising the "well-developed" and "effective" fisheries management fishermen and women in the EU operate under, Europêche say the Commission's strategy fails to appreciate the huge improvements in fish populations that have occurred on the back of management efforts, highlighting the latest scientific figures which indicate there are 50 per cent more fish in the North-East Atlantic than there were a decade ago.

The strategy, they say, fails also to recognise the low carbon footprint of fishing in comparison with other food production industries, and while

the strategy contains strong binding targets for fishing, other maritime industries with large carbon footprints (e.g. oil, gas, shipping) and which disrupt ecosystems "are not even mentioned." Europêche qualifies this as "discriminatory treatment".

Alongside this, according to the European fishing body, consideration of the socio-economic consequences of the "disproportionate targets are clearly missing since the strategy will consider impact assessments only as a second step." It is crucial, they say, that other effective area based conservation measures are considered on an equal footing with MPAs and developed in close cooperation with fishermen given the tremendous socio-economic costs of these measures.

"Closing off parts of the ocean to fishing actually conflicts with fundamental Sustainable Development Goals such as increasing food security and reducing poverty – both of which require the use of the ocean," said Daniel Voces, Managing Director of Europêche.

"We are shocked to read that while fishing would be heavily restricted or closed in protected areas, offshore wind farms will be permitted and even prioritised. The Commission already tried in the past to convert the oceans into a mining extraction site and now wants to transform our seas into the new European energy engine".

The big fear, they say, is

that the combined effects of Brexit, the expansion of offshore wind farms, 30 per cent MPAs alongside other environmental EU regulations such as Natura2000, could restrict access to traditional fishing grounds to the point that fishermen would have nowhere to fish, which in turn would reduce productivity, ultimately leading to increased reliance on imports.

On top of this, the proposal to phase out bottom trawling "would prevent the use of one of the most common, certified, regulated and researched fishing gears in Europe. Bottom-trawling is the only viable way of fishing for key species such as sole, megrim, plaice, Greenland halibut, shrimps and Nephrops which are fished at MSY levels."

Considering these, Europêche has called on the EU Parliament and Member States "to send the proposal back to the Commission for full revision, so as to include the full cost of the policy in terms of impacts by the new users of space, intensification of fishing in limited space, reduction of fishing pressure and food production, elimination of trawling without a viable alternative and impact on exporting the environmental debt of the EU to developing countries."

"If the strategy is not changed," they say, "the Commissioner will fail to live up to his promise not to single out any of the pillars of sustainability—social, economic and environmental—during his mandate".

## EU, Norway and Faroe Islands reach joint control agreement for pelagic fisheries

On April 22nd, the European Union, Norway and the Faroe Islands reached a coastal states' agreement for the monitoring, control and surveillance (MSC) of shared pelagic fisheries (mackerel, horse mackerel, blue whiting, and herring) in the North-East Atlantic.

This is the first dedicated agreement on fisheries control and, according to the European Commission, a major step in progressively achieving a level playing field on control and management of these pelagic stocks. Though the agreement remains open for the signature of other coastal and fishing states; Greenland, Iceland and

the Russian Federation have not signed up to the agreement.

Under the agreement, the three signatories commit to adopting several control measures for pelagic fisheries to avoid discards and operations. To ensure compliance with the landing obligation, several measures to prevent illegal discards will be mandatory.

To ensure better control and monitoring of catches, measures such as providing control authorities with real-time access to weighing data and camera surveillance of landing and processing facilities were agreed. As part of this, camera surveillance

will be mandatory at the landing and processing facilities for landings of pelagic stocks and where more than 3,000 tonnes per year are weighed.

The signatories also agreed, for the first time, a number of measures aimed at ensuring accurate weighing and catch recording. Delegates agreed also to engage in a plan to test Remote Electronic Monitoring systems on fishing vessels, such as cameras, sensors and other technological solutions to monitor fishing operations and processing activities onboard.

Details of the agreement can be found at <https://bit.ly/3dCZfHA>

## Fishing pressure in North-East Atlantic reduced by almost half in just two decades

Good news for fish in the recently published Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries' (STECF) annual report on the performance of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which indicates pressure on stocks in the North-East Atlantic dropped substantially between 2003 and 2018.

On average, the analysis indicates, for all the stocks evaluated in this area, fishing pressure has been reduced by almost half in the last two decades, with most now reaching maximum sustainable yield levels (MSY). As a consequence, fish populations have seen significant benefits – increasing by 50 per cent between 2010 and 2018.

Since 2012, recruitment levels, which show the number of young fish entering stocks, have also increased consistently. That said, uncertainties here do exist, there are ecoregion variations in success rates, and the report highlights more work is still needed, particularly in the Mediterranean. Overall, however, the analysis indicates trends are heading in a positive direction.

Welcoming the news, Europêche Managing Director, Daniel Voces, said: "The news on sustainable fisheries is unequivocally good. The majority of fish stocks in the North-East Atlantic are healthy and thriving.

"That's thanks to many years of sacrifices being made by the EU fishing fleets and intensive collaboration with scientists and public authorities to improve fishing practices and fisheries management. Overfishing in the EU is at an all-time low".

Drawing attention to the fact that this recent analysis again bucks the pervasive 'crisis in fisheries' narrative, Europêche expressed regret that some environmental NGOs keep launching gloom and doom studies trying to prove how awful things are in European waters by analysing the number of fish stocks or tonnes overfished in the past.

"The reality is that in the last 10-20 years no industry has made so many efforts and commitment towards sustainability like the European fishing industry", Mr Voces said. All this, he said, in spite of "unachievable policy objectives in the CFP" which "unfairly gives the impression to citizens and consumers that the fishing industry is not sustainable."

## Women in small-scale fisheries will play a key role in implementing the new EU Fisheries Control system – why is nobody asking them what they think?



Arranmore island Donegal. Image: Seamus Bonner

operation. The material realities of small boats mean that they may not have a closed cabin where it's feasible to use a mobile phone if weather conditions change, internet access at the fishing ground may be patchy or non-existent so that it may not be technically possible to report until ashore, small crews and solo operations may not have capacity to do anything other than the physical work of catching and hauling, older fishermen who don't have capacity for digital learning (even with training) will need to rely on family support. Even for those fishermen who are tech-savvy, women in small-scale fisheries will, in many cases, be the ones to figure out how to use the technology and teach it to those going fishing.

"There's a reason that I do nearly all of the paperwork – there is zero capacity for the fishermen to do anything other than the physical work of catching and hauling. That's also taking into consideration that there are two of us on board for our operations; several fishermen we know operate solo and simply don't have the spare hands to do anything other than what they're already maxed out doing," highlights Keara Osborne, Iasc Inis Oirr.

The new Fisheries Control Regulation is therefore likely to directly increase the burden on women in small-scale fisheries. While there was much discussion at the PECH Committee around the need to 'take on board the sector's concerns', to 'create trust and confidence in the industry', to 'explain and listen to the sector', nobody mentioned asking the women in small-scale fisheries what their needs and concerns will be. Nobody suggested that they should be included in the training that will need to be delivered.

Recent research highlighted by *The Skipper* in the May issue (available online at <https://bit.ly/3dUWLEn>) found that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 (Life Below Water) will not be attained if 50% of the population it affects (i.e. women in fisheries) are not taken into consideration. The research attributes various aspects of marine resource mismanagement to overlooking the essential roles played by women in fisheries. It seems highly probable that the achievement of the aims of the new Fisheries Control Regulation (an integral part of fisheries management) might be similarly

impeded if nobody is thinking about the role that women in small-scale fisheries will likely play in implementing the requirements of the new system on a day to day basis. There appears to be an unspoken assumption that legislation to control practices on fishing vessels will only impact those who are in the vessels, which ignores the wider implications for fishing families and, in particular, for women in small-scale fisheries.

On a practical level, this means that, in consulting with and listening to 'the industry' and 'the sector', there should be a real effort to engage, in particular, with women in small-scale fishing families around the practicalities of the new Fisheries Control system, including organisations that represent women in fisheries, where they exist. A good place to start could be to engage with the AKTEA European network of Women in Fisheries to ensure that the new system is gender-sensitive. As detailed in the April issue of *The Skipper*, this network was recently relaunched and revitalised in Brussels in a three day event that brought together more than forty women in fisheries from Ireland, Italy, Croatia, Malta, Cyprus, Spain, the Azores, France and The Netherlands. (For more see <https://bit.ly/2WJ5y6O>).

The members of the AKTEA network include independent national and regional level organisations that represent independent fisherwomen, and wives and partners of fishermen, involved in fish processing, sales and administration, fishing (in boats and onshore), shellfish gathering, and net mending. If the European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and the Fisheries is serious about his commitment to valuing and supporting women in fisheries (as stated in his video address to the AKTEA representatives in Brussels), there needs to be concrete evidence of this, through gender sensitivity to the impact of legislation, such as the new Fisheries Control Regulation, on the small-scale fishing communities and families behind the vast majority of EU and Irish fleets.

**Dr Ruth Brennan is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellow (2018-2020) at Trinity College Dublin's Centre for Environmental Humanities. She is also Sea Fisheries Advisor to Luke 'Ming' Flanagan MEP.**

By Dr Ruth Brennan,  
Trinity Centre for  
Environmental Humanities,  
Trinity College Dublin

The new Fisheries Control Regulation currently before the European Parliament's PECH Committee aims to be "simple, transparent and effective", according to Spanish MEP Clara Aguilera, the Rapporteur in charge of this file. In practice, the new Regulation will require the phasing out of paper-based recording (such as paper logbooks) so that recording and reporting of fishing activities eventually move to digitised 'fully documented fisheries', irrespective of vessel size. The thinking is that this will make for better communication between Member States and with the Commission, and result in a more efficient and effective control system. The Regulation is supposed to be technologically neutral – in other words, it should not prescribe the use of any specific technology to achieve its aims.

During the two hour discussion between Fisheries Committee MEPs on Thursday 30 April, the majority of contributing MEPs expressed concern at the disproportionate impact the Regulation will have on small-scale fisheries. They emphasised the need to understand the on-the-ground realities of small-scale fishing, the need for support (financial and training) for the additional administrative and financial burdens, a concern that digitisation (such as the electronic logbook) will impose undue burdens on small-scale fishers (SSF) who were already under huge pressure, even before the global pandemic.

There was, however, no discussion around the practical realities of who exactly will be coping with the burden of these changes to current operating procedures with the introduction of new digital tools and software to successfully report catch and to comply with the landing obligation.

The large majority of fishing vessels in Ireland (86%) and in the EU (75%) are classified as small-scale (under 12m in length and using non-towed gear). Most of these are family-run operations with women in small-scale fishing families playing important (often unrecognised) roles that 'keep the show on the road'. It is, by and large, women who take responsibility for administrative and logistical tasks related to the fishing

run with something on the premise that it will create jobs, but it's incredibly short sighted to do this at the expense of existing jobs. West Cork relies on its shores for two of our major industries, the fisheries and tourism. It shouldn't be left to communities to right these decisions. It takes incredible work, time and money, so massive shout out to *Bantry Bay - Protect Our Native Kelp* team and everyone involved in protecting the Bay."

## High Court position on Bantry Bay Kelp harvesting welcomed

Social Democrat TD, Holly Cairns has welcomed the decision in the High Court last month by Ms Justice Deirdre Murphy, that a foreshore licence granted to BioAtlantis in 2014 to harvest kelp in Bantry Bay is not "operative or effective".

Ms Justice Murphy ruled the licencing process had not yet concluded by reason of the failure of the Minister to comply with his statutory obligations under the Foreshore Act 1933, which provides for public scrutiny of State decisions. She said the only way mechanical harvesting of seaweed can be done sustainably is if the State first conducts trials on what the environmental effects will be.

The Cork South West TD said: "It is very timely that the environmental impact of industrial scale harvesting of Bantry Bay Kelp has been recognised during biodiversity week. This whole issue surrounding this controversy has been poor decision making that doesn't respect the value of our natural environment for coastal and island communities in West Cork."

Since the granting of the licence, concerns relating to the ecological implications of the mechanical harvesting of Bantry Bay kelp have been raised by locals of the area. Several inshore fishermen have raised concerns regarding the

impact that large scale harvesting of native kelp would likely have on the crab and lobster they are dependent on for their livelihoods.

*Bantry Bay - Protect our Native Kelp*, a local group set up in response, argued the licence to 'industrially extract' 1860 acres of native Kelp in Bantry Bay—the largest native kelp extraction licence ever granted in Irish or British waters—had been granted without public consultation, adequate advertisement of the licence, or environmental impact assessment.

"Again, it was left to a community group to organise, fundraise, and go to court to ensure their voices were heard. We had the exact same thing with the Save Our Skibbereen campaign to stop the plastics factory. The state, Ministers in Dublin, and even County Hall make decisions with serious local impacts without properly consulting with communities involved," said the recently elected TD.

"Ms Justice Murphy's comments illustrate how the state has not conducted proper trials of this process before granting licenses, despite expert advice. We need a planning system that starts with local people and supports their involvement," she said.

"The High Court has said that the only way to know for certain what the environmental



A demonstration at the Dáil in March 2018. Image: Photocall, courtesy of The Southern Star

effects of mechanical harvesting of kelp will be is to conduct trials. *Bantry Bay Protect Our Native Kelp* expects legal battles will continue, but this is great news to get during international biodiversity week, it's a step in the right direction. In a single lifetime biodiversity has disappeared at an alarming rate and a year after the Oireachtas announced a Climate and Biodiversity emergency, no significant progress has been made. "Too often we're expected to

run with something on the premise that it will create jobs, but it's incredibly short sighted to do this at the expense of existing jobs. West Cork relies on its shores for two of our major industries, the fisheries and tourism. It shouldn't be left to communities to right these decisions. It takes incredible work, time and money, so massive shout out to *Bantry Bay - Protect Our Native Kelp* team and everyone involved in protecting the Bay."

## L.É. William Butler Yeats returns to routine security operations at sea

On May 15th, the Irish Naval vessel L.É. *William Butler Yeats* (P63) left Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin to return to routine security operations at sea, completing an unbroken presence by the Naval Service since March 15th where it has operated a COVID-19 Community Testing Centre in support of the HSE.

Since that date, Naval Service vessels have acted in support of the HSE in Dublin, Galway and Cork, with L.É. *Samuel Beckett* the first to enter Dublin, L.É. *William Butler Yeats* in Galway on the 17th of March and L.É. *Eithne* in Cork. In total six vessels have rotated through the three ports.

Throughout Operation 'FORTITUDE', the Defence Forces operation in response to COVID-19, Naval vessels have been supported by personnel from the Naval Service Reserve.

Over the last nine weeks, Naval Service vessels have supported the HSE and the National Ambulance Service in conducting almost 6,000 COVID-19 Tests in the national effort to fight against the spread of the virus.

The Naval Service has completed a handover with their Army colleagues who will now operate the COVID-19 testing centre at the Aviva Stadium as the Defence Forces continues to assist the HSE.



L.É. William Butler Yeats at Sir John Rogerson's Quay



The CO-SUSTAIN project ([www.belongingtothesea.com](http://www.belongingtothesea.com)) has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 789524

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# MONTHLY COMPETITION

Send in your best fishing related photo and you could win a Sotra Fleece by Guy Cotten plus the chance to win overnight accommodation at the Irish Skipper Expo 2021.

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 might also be used in other areas of the magazine if suitable.

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



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Mending nets at Lerwick 1990



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# The Archives - JUNE 1973

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Padraig Willie McDonagh (right), the Rossaveal, Co. Galway, skipper, meeting the Taoiseach, Mr. Cosgrave (centre), and Commander G. L. Coles, Marine Director, Decca Navigator Co., at the opening of the new west coast Decca chain at Rinville, Co. Galway, on May 31st.

## SIX STEEL TRAWLERS FOR IRISH FISHERMEN

AT LEAST six Irish skippers are negotiating to buy steel-hulled trawlers to replace their wooden vessels of 65 to 75 feet. The new trawlers will be in the 80-90 ft. class and will cost up to £150,000.

It is understood that the hulls may be built as a bulk order and finished to Irish yards now engaged in fishing vessel construction. Such an arrangement would keep down prices considerably.

So far, the Polish-built 84 ft. Father Murphy, now fishing from Killybegs, and the two smaller Dutch-built stern trawlers, Colm Mairead and Colm Padraig, have been the only steel trawlers ordered new by Irish customers. Irish fishermen have preferred steel mainly because repair facilities are more readily available.

## N.I. harbour board named

SAM McKNIGHT, of Killeel, and Jack Millar of Portavogie, will be the fishermen's representatives on the new Northern Ireland fishery harbour authority which has been formed for Ardglass, Killeel and Portavogie.

The chairman will be Sean Hall, managing director of a chemical firm. The authority will be responsible for the maintenance, improvement, reconstruction and management of the harbours and for any other harbour which may in future be designated as a fishery harbour.

The other members of the new harbour board are Barney Montague, Tom Burke and Angus Cochrane.

## TAOISEACH OPENS NEW £750,000 WEST COAST DECCA CHAIN

THE Taoiseach, Mr. Cosgrave, opened officially the new west coast Decca navigational chain by pressing a button in the master station at Rinville, Co. Galway, on May 31st before a large crowd representing every section of the fishing industry.

The new chain, which will cost the State £750,000 over ten years, is served by three slave stations in Co. Waterford, Co. Kerry and Co. Donegal. The latter station will also serve a new chain for west Scotland, which will improve navigation for Irish fishermen on the north coast of Donegal.

The event took place with ceremony on the edge of Galway Bay. An Army Guard of Honour was present and a Garda band also played in a marquee erected on the site. The two bishops of the diocese performed the blessing.

A party of 60, mostly Decca executives, came from Britain by charter flight for the occasion, and among them was Mr. Bill O'Brien, an American of Irish descent who had invented the navigational aid at the beginning of the last war.

In his speech of welcome to the Taoiseach, Brendan O'Kelly, Chairman of B.I.M., said that it was an historic occasion which not only heralded the beginning of a new era for our west coast fisheries but also marked a major advance in marine technology in Ireland.

The Taoiseach, on his first fishing industry engagement, said: "It is fortunate that the introduction of this powerful new aid for our sea-fishing industry comes at this time. Over the past four years the value of exports of fish and fishery products almost trebled. Membership of the European Economic Community—one of the richest and fastest-growing markets in the world—should accentuate this trend.

"If we are to avail ourselves of our opportunities, full use will have to be made of all the financial, technical, educational and marketing aids provided."

Sir Edward Lewis, Chairman of Decca Ltd., referred to the phenomenal growth of the Irish fishing industry over the past 10 years. "Over this span we have seen this young and growing fishing industry make a mark for itself in the European scene." (See also pages 8 and 9.)

## Des Houlihan mourned

THE sudden death late last month at 33 of Des Houlihan has come as a tremendous shock to his family, relatives and friends and to us in B.I.M., who for many years have worked with him. In the spheres in which he worked with B.I.M., especially in boatbuilding at Killybegs and later as Area Officer of the north-west area, Des always brought a deep feel-

ing of commitment to the welfare of fishermen. There are many also outside fishing, in sport and in Credit Union circles, who will remember Des for his manliness, his devotion and boundless energy.

Our grief cannot approach that of his wife, Mary, his parents, brothers and sisters to whom our hearts go out in sympathy and our prayers for their support.

—JIM O'CONNOR

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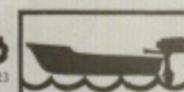
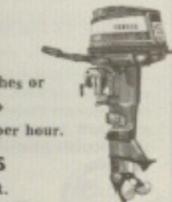
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An article explaining how this study can profit the fisherman appears on page 4.



# Coronavirus outbreak on Spanish vessel that landed in Castletownbere

By Lia ní Aodha

A French-flagged, Spanish-owned longliner was quarantined in Spain last month after the skipper and several crew tested positive for the coronavirus, less than two weeks after the vessel had landed in Castletownbere.

According to reports in the Spanish press, the *Notre Dame Cedeira* arrived in the port of Celeiro on Friday, May 3rd after the skipper reported feeling unwell while they were fishing off the Gran Sol. On landing, the skipper was subsequently transferred to Hospital Público de Mariña in Buerla, where he tested positive for the virus. All 15 crew on board were also tested on arrival in port.

Results from the tests, which they awaited onboard the vessel, subsequently confirmed six additional cases among the crew, who all bar one were subsequently transferred to their homes and

quarantined. It is understood one crew member chose to quarantine in a hotel. It is further understood the crew members who tested positive were asymptomatic.

Reports also indicate an additional crew member, who reportedly had felt unwell since the vessel had originally left Spain three weeks previous, tested positive for virus antibodies, suggesting he had had the virus but had since recovered on the trip.

The news of the outbreak comes following blockades of Dingle pier in March and April by fishermen and residents protesting risks associated with, what they see as, inadequate checks on foreign vessels landing at the pier, amidst fears of the spread of coronavirus in the town by crews off those vessels.

Last March, several of the largest fishing organisations in the country quickly 'condemned' a blockade in Dingle preventing access to foreign trawlers, and threats of similar action in Castletownbere as "unnecessary, alarmist and without any reasonable nor rational foundation".



*Notre Dame Cedeira*. (Image: Elian Caistaing, Marinetrffic.com)



Vessels landing in Castletownbere last month. (Image by Niall Duffy)

The management of the organisations in question said "that the blockades preventing French and Spanish vessels from offloading their catch would only damage the Irish industry in the long run and sought to reassure the wider public that extremely strict and enhanced conditions apply concerning the movement of crews in light of the pandemic."

The case of the *Notre Dame Cedeira*, however, has done little to alleviate the concerns of local communities. The vessel, which originally left Spain on April 10th, landed into Castletownbere on April 21st. According to reports, the skipper of the *La Rochelle* registered 33-metre longliner informed Spanish authorities that none of the crew went ashore when the vessel landed fish in Castletownbere.

According to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, procedures that have been put in place for all landings were implemented, and a Maritime Declaration of Health was submitted before landing, as per Marine Notice No. 06 of 2020.

Building on an Information Note issued by the Department on March 27th setting out procedures for handling fish landings by vessels at the six Fishery Harbour Centres, the Department has since issued individual guidance notes for each of Ireland's Fishery Harbour Centres setting out harbour-specific guidelines for vessels landing in the context of the pandemic.

The notes, issued May 11th, set out "to both clarify matters and assist in the implementation of the procedures at each of the six Fishery Harbour Centres" and aim to "assist in the safe management of all fish landings, Irish and non-Irish, during the crisis."

To account for the differing facilities on the ground in each Harbour, the guidelines are harbour-specific in terms of guidance on access. Laying out landings guidance on a more general level, the notes reiterate in line with earlier guidance that all vessels, Irish or non-Irish, whose voyage commenced outside of Ireland will be accommodated in designated, demarcated areas as directed by the Harbour Master.

All landings and associated servicing activities of the vessels must be carried out within the demarked area provided. Crews must remain in the landing area "unless for essential travel or for the purposes of travelling home."

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