



The Skipper

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SEAFARING GUT INSTINCT

Tributes Paid by Galway Paddleboarders after Epic Rescue. See pages 4-5



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Fisherman Patrick Oliver and his son Morgan return to Galway docks. (CREDIT: JOE O'SHAUGHNESSY, CONNACHT TRIBUNE)

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The tragedy of...



Lobster. (Credit: Cathal ó hUallach)

By Lia ní Aodha

Another month, and no end in sight for the challenges facing Ireland's fishermen and women. No Minister, a no-deal Brexit once again looking ever more likely, poor markets and trade-deals that only make those markets more difficult, and little recognition...

Following the fallout from the Oireachtas Golf Society's dinner event in Clifden last month, after just 37 days in post Dara Calleary resigned as Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine. At the time of writing it is still not clear when a new Minister will be instated, leaving the Irish fishing industry without even a semblance of a Minister as they face into the very real possibility that no deal will be reached between the UK and the EU before January 1st.

As the latest round of talks concluded, Michel Barnier said a post-Brexit trade deal "seems unlikely" at this stage. Fisheries remains a contentious issue.

Meanwhile, as the global pandemic continues to impact seafood markets, among Ireland's inshore fishermen, trans-Atlantic trade deals are also causing concern. Bad for fishermen, and bad for lobsters,

under a limited trade deal struck by the EU and US tariffs on live and frozen lobsters exported from the US into the EU would be eliminated, with reductions retroactive to begin August 1st.

In return, the EU would see tariffs slashed by half on a series of items including certain prepared meals, crystal glass, as well as cigarette lighters.

Previously, EU tariffs on US lobster had been eight per cent. In 2017, an EU-Canada deal—the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)—similarly eliminated tariffs on imported lobsters to the EU.

Announcement of the deal was made by US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and EU Trade Commissioner Phil Hogan.

"As part of improving EU-US relations, this mutually beneficial agreement will bring positive results to the economies of both the United States and the European Union. We intend for this package of tariff reductions to mark just the beginning of a process that will lead to additional agreements that create more free, fair, and reciprocal transatlantic trade," said Ambassador Lighthizer and Commissioner Hogan.

Biosecurity concerns were raised also, given the potentially invasive nature of American lobster, and the multiple instances where they have already been caught in the wild in European waters, having been released (or maybe making a break for it) after being imported.

"This poses a real threat to the biosecurity of our native

domestically, most is sold into European markets.

According to BIM's Business of Seafood report 2019, 100 tonnes of lobster were landed by Irish boats last year, up 52 per cent on 2018 and worth €2 million. As one fisherman pointed out to me, his few live lobster onboard pays for the boat's diesel for the day.

Following the news, on their social media page, the National Inshore Fishermen's Organisation and Association (NIFA/NIFO) said that the EU Trade Commissioner's welcoming of the deal was being described by their members "as another kick in the teeth."

The deal, they said, would likely depress Irish lobster prices further – worrying considering how depressed prices are already due to the havoc wreaked by the COVID-19 pandemic on traditional markets.

Biosecurity concerns were raised also, given the potentially invasive nature of American lobster, and the multiple instances where they have already been caught in the wild in European waters, having been released (or maybe making a break for it) after being imported.

"This poses a real threat to the biosecurity of our native

lobster stocks as American lobster can potentially carry a shell disease that European lobster have little immunity to," they said. "As tariffs are reduced and imported volumes increase this is likely to become a more common occurrence."

American lobsters are usually olive green or greenish-brown and the underside of their claws are orange-red. European lobsters are blue to dark blue and the underside of their claws are generally a cream colour.

Sweden has previously pushed for American lobsters to be regarded by the EU as a pest species and potentially invasive, which would mean a ban on the import of live lobsters.

Instead, the EU-US deal will work to make live exports into the EU much more attractive, which will likely, as highlighted by NIFA/NIFO, have a consequent impact on the prices those fishing in Ireland get for their lobsters, with the knock-on implication that their already difficult livelihoods are made more so.

Sadly for Irish fishermen, with Golfgate raging on it is unlikely that the EU Trade Commissioner is losing much sleep over their livelihoods.

One thing is for sure, no Minister is. And that is the tragedy, not of the commons, or perhaps even the commodity, but simply of Ireland's sea fisheries.

HIGH COURT RULES CONSULTATION PROCESS IN 6-MILE BAN DECISION FLAWED

The High Court has ruled in favour of two fishermen who submitted an application for a judicial review into the decision taken by the then Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed concerning the ban on trawling by vessels over 18 metres in length inside Ireland's six-mile zone.

The case was taken by Dingle fisherman Tom Kennedy and Castletownbere fisherman Neil Minihane, owners of *The Celtic Quest*, *The Fiona K III* and the *Ocean Venture II*, whose vessels would be excluded from fishing in the six-mile zone on the back of the directive.

The ban, which came into effect on January 1st of this year following a public consultation on the matter, subject to a phasing out of sprat fishing over a two year period from then, was challenged by the fishermen who fish within the zone for herring, bull mackerel and sprat for three months of the year on a number of grounds.

Claiming the directive was unlawful, the fishermen sought a number of orders, including the quashing of the directive, a declaration that the directive was made in breach of fair procedures, of the Common Fisheries Policy and of their rights their rights. As part of this, they argued the consultation process adopted by the Minister regarding the matter was flawed.

These challenges were fully contested by the Minister, who as part of that highlighted that more than 900 submissions were made and considered as part of the consultation process, with a wide variety of views expressed. On the back of those, the Minister's assessment was that there was a compelling case for the exclusion of trawling by large vessels in the zone.

In a judgement handed down on July 31st, Mr Justice Michael McGrath ruled that there was an unfairness in the consultation process, which resulted in noncompliance by the Minister with his legal obligations.

The unfairness arose as the fishermen were not aware that a particular option, which was subsequently decided on (i.e. that trawling by vessels over 18m in length inside the six-mile zone be phased out), had already been recommended to the Minister by Department officials. This preferred option, he ruled, should have been outlined to the affected stakeholders before a final decision was taken. This was not done.

Though the Court did not rule that a second consultation would or should be undertaken, it did rule that the fishermen, as stakeholders, were entitled to succeed on that ground, and invited parties to make submissions by electronic means on the form of order and such other matters arising within twenty days.

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Tributes Paid by Galway Paddleboarders after Epic Rescue

By Lorna Siggins

TWO young Galway women who were rescued by fishermen after surviving 15 hours at sea on paddleboards have paid tribute to all those who participated in the overnight search to locate them.

Cousins Sara Feeney (23) and Ellen Glynn (17) of Knocknacarra in Galway city have said they have “no words” to describe their gratitude, after they were found by fisherman Patrick Oliver and his 18-year old son, Morgan.

Following a terrifying night on choppy seas with heavy rain, thunder and lightning, they managed to grab hold of several floats attached to crab gear owned by Aran fisherman Bertie Donohue some two miles south-west of the Aran island of Inis Oírr.

It was at that location—close to an area known as “the Finish” off Inis Oírr—that Morgan Oliver (18) spotted them around midday on August 13th onboard his father’s seven-metre catamaran *Johnny Ó*.

Mr Donohue, from Cill Éinne on Inis Mór, has said they are two “very tough, very brave girls—and I don’t know how they managed to hold on to my fishing gear in that location”.

The two exhausted women were battling to try and arrest their drift out into the Atlantic when they spotted the floats.

Mr Donohue, who runs a crab

Fisherman Patrick Oliver with his son Morgan. (Credit: Joe O’Shaughnessy, Connacht Tribune)



processing business, had intended moving the gear several days before but says that “something stopped him”.

The two women, who were flown from Inis Oírr by Irish Coast Guard helicopter to University Hospital, Galway after their rescue, described afterwards how helicopters and vessels were close to them during the night.

They described sighting a helicopter heading north of their location towards the Aran islands on the Thursday morning.

North-easterly winds had carried their paddleboards some 17 nautical miles from their last known position off Furbo beach diagonally across Galway Bay towards Black Head.

A major air-sea search had been tasked by Valentia Marine Rescue Sub-Centre after the alarm was raised at 10.05pm on August 12th.

The pair were wearing buoyancy aids but not wetsuits, and had no means of communication. The alert was raised by Sara Feeney’s mum, Helen, who was on the shoreline at Furbo with her dog and noticed they had drifted out.

The cousins—an NUI Galway psychology graduate and a student at the “Jez” secondary school in Galway—had only planned to stay out a short while.

Ms Glynn’s father, Johnny, is a well-known Galway United footballer, who scored the goal that clinched the FAI Cup for the club in

1991 against Shamrock Rovers. He is also the club’s current head of youth development.

When the cousins realised the offshore winds were preventing them from paddling back to shore in the air-filled boards, they had quickly lashed them together and focused on trying to stay parallel to Furbo beach.

RNLI lifeboats from Aran and Galway, a rotation of Irish Coast Guard helicopters from Shannon, Waterford and Sligo, and the Doolin and Costello Bay Coast Guard units were tasked.

The Civil Defence, local fishermen, anglers, leisure craft and hundreds of shore searchers participated, as did pilots with

Bertie Donohue's boat Venture



Galway Flying Club, Aer Arann, and the Oranmore-Maree coastal search volunteers.

Patrick and Morgan Oliver, from a well-known Claddagh maritime family, had joined the search on Thursday morning. They had noticed the position of the other vessels, and informed Galway RNLI they would head out towards Inis Oírr.

The Oliver family are very involved in Galway RNLI lifeboat and Galway Sea Scouts. Patrick’s nephew, Sean Oliver, was just 14 years old when he and fellow Galway Sea Scouts pulled a man from the river Corrib in October 2018.

The Olivers rooted out jackets, towels, whatever they could find to wrap the two women up on the deck of their catamaran.

“They couldn’t have been kinder to us,” Sara Feeney said.

The buoyancy aids helped, but staying together and staying with their paddleboards had been crucial – along with keeping calm, Patrick Oliver said.

Bertie Donohue says he is “amazed” at the resilience of the two women.

“That was one of three sets of pots I laid off “The Finish”, some two-miles south-west of Inis Oírr, but it was the outer set of gear,” he explained.

“If they had missed it, they would be out in the Atlantic,” he said.

Mr Donohue said that “what had happened to those two girls could happen to any of us”.

Experienced Galway sailor Pierce Purcell paid tribute to the “phenomenal effort”, and said that sailors would “never complain about lobster pots getting in the way again”.

Former Irish Coast Guard search and rescue pilot Dave Courtney, author of the memoir *Nine Lives*, says that questions need to be asked as to why the rescue took so long.

“The whole country rejoiced when the two women were found alive after 15 hours at sea,”

The chart area



“But tide and search probability computer technology, and three of the country’s four rescue helicopters—the most modern and best equipped in the world, armed with heat-seeking cameras—were no match for the sea-faring gut instinct of Patrick Oliver and his son Morgan”



Aran fisherman Bertie Donohue and the sling the girls held

Images courtesy of Bertie Donohue



The buoys marking crab pots two miles south-west of Inis Oírr

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Supreme Court rules in favour of fishermen in Porcupine case

On July 31st, the Supreme Court handed down their eagerly awaited decision pertaining to the methodology adopted by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) in relation to the Porcupine Bank, ruling in favour of an application by two fishermen to have the matter referred to the European Court of Justice (ECJ).

The case was originally taken by fishermen Pat Fitzpatrick and Michael Flannery, following a decision in 2017 by then Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed to close an area of the Porcupine Bank on advice from the SFPA who argued that based on their 'time spent' methodology more prawns had been caught in FU16 than recorded in the logbooks of fishermen and women.

In the autumn of 2018, the fishermen lost a High Court action challenging the SFPA's adopted methodology. Last summer, however, they were granted leave to appeal the judgement in the Supreme Court.

Following July's Supreme court judgement, solicitor Dermot Conway, representing the fishermen, explained, "The SFPA wanted to disregard EU Fishing Logbook data and instead deploy a statistician, Dr Coughlan of the SFPA to analyse the VMS data. The

data was examined on a time spent rather than catches logged basis. The statistician would then reallocate the catches and disregard the logbook completely on the basis of where vessels were spending time.

"The EU Control Regulation mandates that in January of each year, the competent authority must report the proceeding year's outtake data to the Commission. The SFPA said that they were entitled to report their new 'methodology' because they had to report data.

Michael O'Mahony, on Affidavit, stated that he could not have a 'blind reliance on logbook data'.

"The fishers had argued that this was a twisting of the meaning of the regulation and that the data which the Control Regulation at articles 33(2)(a) and 34(4) is referring to is only the logbook data. That there was an arsenal of enforcement tools and procedures available to the SFPA and this approach was in breach of EU Law."

On the ruling in favour of the fishermen, he said, "While initially unsuccessful in the High Court, an Appeal was taken to the Supreme Court. Two issues came before the Court and the fishermen, Patrick Fitzpatrick and Michael Flannery were successful on

both. "The first was whether or not the two men, rather than their owning companies, had sufficient interest to bring the case. The SFPA argues they did not. The Court held that they did have sufficient interest.

The second issue is whether or not the matter should be sent by way of a reference to the European Court of Justice to determine how to apply the arguments.

"The Minister and the SFPA argued that no reference was required as the interpretation of the law was so obvious as to leave no scope for any doubt as to its meaning i.e. an Irish Court could figure out what the EU law means. The SFPA argued the meaning of 'data' and 'information' is clear and obvious.

"The Court clearly held that this argument was not correct and it was not clear and obvious. The approach taken by the SFPA has not been examined by the ECJ before. The Court held 'that this is a new question of interpretation of general interest for the uniform application of EU law.'

In other words, said Mr Conway, "What the Court is saying is that in order to have the law apply the same in every Member State this referral to the ECJ is required."

Flagships: A response to Quoque Latrones

Quoque Latrones,

The answer to your conundrum (August Issue, *The Skipper*) lies in the ECJ case *Regina vs Jaderow/Hookton* in the European Court when Margaret Thatcher discovered that, indeed, the

UK had lost sovereignty to Europe on entering the EU and, specifically, the CFP; and that flagships had to be allowed onto the UK fishing register without let or hindrance and be allowed to fish equitably as part of the European project. As such, quota denial was not an

option for Government. In fact, the Court ordered the UK to restore quota to the flagships as if their tie-up losses had not happened.

Flagships had, prior to quota, been a feature of the UK register and, as such, had built an entitlement to quota which was enhanced (and also diminished) through trade (sale).

POs per se did not primarily sell the quota, this was more a vessel to vessel transaction and POs facilitated this through their quota management function which is also bound by legal consequence and EU rules.

Flagships are a direct function of the European concept of EU waters, EU fleet and EU rule. Is it any wonder the UK wants out and some semblance of control repatriated in securing our own waters and access to them?



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NEWS in brief

Mac Lochlainn appointed Sinn Féin's Fisheries spokesperson

Sinn Féin Chief Whip and TD for Donegal, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn was recently appointed Sinn Féin spokesperson for Fisheries and the Marine.

Announcing his appointment, Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald TD said, "Pádraig Mac Lochlainn will be a strong voice for fishing and coastal communities. He has fought for them with passion and determination for the two decades that he has served as a public representative."

Over the past years, she said, Mac Lochlainn has "championed the needs of fishers" and worked "in partnership with fishing representative organisations all along the coast in holding the Minister for the Marine and Department officials to account on policy and legislation."

Illegal Lobsters Seized in Mayo

In late July, following an earlier seizure in the South East, the SFPA seized 28 lobsters which had been caught illegally off the Mayo coast with the intention of selling them directly to the public and restaurants.

Commercial lobster fishing is only permitted by licensed fishermen under a range of conservation measures. Those fishing recreationally without a fishing licence can legally only fish for lobster and crab from May 1st to September 30th every year, fishing up to a maximum of six pots. They are permitted to retain up to five crabs and one lobster daily, which cannot be offered for sale.

€5m funding secured by Bio-Marine Ingredients Ireland

Bio-Marine Ingredients Ireland, an Irish company that extracts proteins, oils and calcium from fish for use in food ingredients and as animal feed, has raised €5 million from small investors.

Secured through the State-backed Employment and Investment Incentive Scheme (EIIS), it brings funding by the company to date to €30 million.

Led by Jason Whooley, former chief executive with BIM, the marine ingredients company is a joint venture between the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation and Norwegian company Biomarine Science Technology.

Gardaí examine allegations of 'misconduct in public office' relating to marine casualty inquiries

GARDAÍ are continuing to examine allegations of "misconduct in public office" in relation to marine casualty investigations, writes Lorna Siggins.

The examination relates to a complaint lodged earlier this year by maritime lawyer Michael Kingston.

He said that he had asked the Garda Commissioner last January to initiate an inquiry.

It is understood that the Garda investigation is at an early stage, and that no findings of wrongdoing had yet been made against anyone.

Mr Kingston's call for an inquiry was supported by Independent TD Mattie McGrath and Anne Marie O'Brien, whose brother John O'Brien and his friend Patrick Esmonde drowned in 2010 off Helvick Head, Co Waterford.

Barrister and maritime lawyer Ciarán McCarthy, who was a Social Democrat candidate for Cork North-West in the recent election, also welcomed the move.

"The recent ECJ ruling on the MCIB is deeply embarrassing to the State, and its judgment speaks for itself in that we are in breach of our obligations," Mr McCarthy said.

The MCIB is responsible under the Merchant Shipping Act and the Merchant Shipping Regulations for

servants on its board.

Mr Kingston, whose father Tim died in the Whiddy Island Betelgeuse explosion 41 years ago, said he welcomed the Garda investigation.

He said that he had asked the Garda Commissioner last January to initiate an inquiry.

It is understood that the Garda investigation is at an early stage, and that no findings of wrongdoing had yet been made against anyone.

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"The recent ECJ ruling on the MCIB is deeply embarrassing to the State, and its judgment speaks for itself in that we are in breach of our obligations," Mr McCarthy said.

The MCIB is responsible under the Merchant Shipping Act and the Merchant Shipping Regulations for

conducting safety investigations and for drawing up reports and recommendations.

It is a non-prosecutorial body which does not enforce legislation, and its investigations do not apportion blame or fault.

The European Commission initiated its case against Ireland over the MCIB in 2018, arguing it was not independent on the basis that the responsibilities and activities of both the Department of Transport and the MSO could conflict with the investigative task.

In its defence, Ireland argued that the MCIB reports are independent.

The ECJ judgment issued on July 9th this year found that Ireland is "not fulfilling its obligations under Article 8(1) of Directive 2009/18" governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector".

It notes the five person MCIB board includes the Department of Transport secretary-general, or his or her deputy, and the Marine Survey Office (MSO) chief surveyor.

Separately, the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has decided that no criminal charges should be brought in relation to the death

of Irish Coast Guard volunteer Caitríona Lucas almost four years ago.

Ms Lucas's death, the first of an Irish Coast Guard volunteer on duty, prompted two state investigations into the incident off Kilkee on September 12, 2016. A Health and Safety Authority (HSA) inquiry was forwarded to the DPP.

A separate MCIB report, published two years after the incident, was critical of the Irish Coast Guard's safety management system, and outlined a number of systems and equipment failures in relation to the Kilkee unit.

The DPP recently informed Bernard Lucas, her husband, that no criminal charges would be brought arising from the HSA inquiry.

Gardai have also confirmed that the DPP has directed no criminal prosecutions will arise from their investigation into the Irish Coast Guard Rescue 116 helicopter crash. Two pilots, Dara Fitzpatrick and Mark Duffy, and winch crew Paul Ormsby and Ciarán Smith died in the crash off the north Mayo coast in March 2017. An HSA inquiry is still ongoing.



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Marliona incident a 'dangerous disregard for Irish sovereignty'

Sinn Féin's spokesperson on Foreign Affairs and Defence, John Brady has expressed his anger at the revelation that a Killybegs-registered trawler, the *Marliona*, was confronted by a British Navy vessel and ordered away from a fishing area off the Irish coast.

An Air Corps maritime patrol aircraft was dispatched and two Irish naval ships placed on standby after the skipper of the fishing vessel reported that a UK frigate had ordered him to leave the area where he was fishing 60 miles off the Donegal coast.

It is understood that *HMS Lancaster* hailed the Killybegs-based fishing vessel on the morning of July 21st, informing the skipper they were commencing a joint operation with a submarine which would continue over the next three days.

The Department of Foreign Affairs has since launched an investigation following the confrontation.

With respect to the incident, the Wicklow TD accused the British Navy of "arrogance of the highest order" and of "once again endangering Irish fishing vessels."

Speaking on July 26th, Teachta Brady said: "On one level, we have the outrageous scenario of a foreign power ordering an Irish vessel out of Irish waters. On the other, we have a situation where a British warship was engaged in a joint operation with a British submarine."

Marliona



"The disregard for Irish sovereignty is arrogance of the highest order. But, alongside this we have the endangerment of Irish fishing vessels and their crews by a British submarine."

"I thought that we had left this carry-on behind with the Cold War."

"For decades, British submarines have infringed on Irish sovereign waters, leading to tragedy and loss of life when submarines have got caught up in fishing nets and pulled trawlers under."

"It is staggering and unacceptable that this flagrant disregard for the safety of Irish fishing crews is continuing. This cannot be allowed to stand."

"I will ensure that this incident will not be allowed to be swept under the carpet. We need answers as to why this has been allowed to happen."

"I understand that the Department of Foreign Affairs has launched an investigation into the incident, and I will be in contact with the Minister to ensure that the government's response reflects the seriousness of the matter."

"I also want to commend the response of the Irish Navy, which ordered Irish vessels to the area to ensure the safety of the fishing vessel in question."

"This incident underlines the need to end the running down of the country's defence forces and naval service by government."



Valentia fisherman Padraig Ring, crew on the *Cisemair*, with an oilfish. A species of snake mackerel, this fish should not be eaten or sold. (Photo courtesy of Kevin Flannery)



Albino monkfish caught just south of the Kinsale gas rigs by the beamer *Mary Kate*. (Photo courtesy of Eamonn Sinnott)

High Court Quashes Permission for Razor Fishery in Waterford Estuary

With implications for a small fishery and a number of livelihoods, in July the High Court ruled in favour of the environmental group Coastwatch in a case taken by the NGO concerning the opening of a razor fishery in Waterford Estuary.

The ruling, issued by the Court on July 13th, quashes permission to dredge for razors in the estuary, on the basis that the permission

granted for the fishery, according to the Court, was given without appropriate environmental assessment.

The case, taken against the SFPA and Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, was brought on the back of an action taken by the NGO last autumn, when they applied for and secured permission to challenge the decision to open the fishery by the SFPA on

environmental grounds. Coastwatch argued that the decision to allow the fishery should not have been granted until an appropriate assessment or screening of the estuary had been conducted in accordance with the EU Habitats Directive. Among the orders being sought was the quashing of the decision to open the area.

Since then, the razor fishery in

the area has been closed, much to the dismay of local razor fishermen who have said that far from insufficient assessment, they had put a huge amount of work over four years into making sure the fishery was opened in accordance with all requirements, and had also brought a management plan for the fishery to the South East Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum.

Check Your EPIRB!

Ocean Signal has issued an important service letter relating to Ocean Signal Safe Sea E100 and E100G EPIRBs.

Owners of Ocean Signal EPIRBs are requested to review the information contained in this service letter which can be found in Marine Notice 29

of 2020, and to carry out the necessary actions described within.

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport also wishes to remind the owners/operators of all EPIRB types of the importance of carrying out regular beacon tests and visual inspections. These checks should be carried out on a monthly basis, in line with specific manufacturer guidelines.

Additionally, owners/operators should ensure that EPIRBs are correctly registered with up to date contact information, EPIRB and vessel details.

The Department requests that if you encounter any issues relating to EPIRBs, or have any related queries, please contact radiosurveyors@dtas.gov.ie.

Marine Notice 29 can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2QqgHFm>

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IRISH SKIPPER EXPO 2021

News Roundup from Killybegs reported by John Cunningham

Activity picking up

Whilst June and July had been relatively quiet in the port of Killybegs, August has been more active. As the sun shines on the pier, French and Spanish boats continue to land their whitefish catches to the already waiting containers and lorries ready to be transported off to France and Spain.

Meanwhile, the *Achieve*

and Progress from Killybegs are fishing on the west coast while the *Westbound* is fishing in Donegal Bay. Also paying a visit to the port are east coast boats from Clogherhead who are fishing Rockall and the west coast.

The first week of August saw the arrival of the Curacao registered *Breiz Klipper*, a 110 metre reefer ship. For over

three days she was loaded with frozen blue whiting from the local factories, before setting sail again on the 7th of August for Lagos, Nigeria.

Albacore Tuna

Four Killybegs trawlers—*Father McKee*, *Brendelen*, *Atlantic Dawn* and *Glór na dTonn*—are still participating in the albacore fishery.

Reports indicate the albacore tuna has been very

patchy this season, with no big concentration of fish in the area. It was a difficult season for the Irish fleet who were fishing north of the Spanish coast in the last days of July. They ended up 80 miles west of Castletownbere by the end of the second week of August.

Meanwhile, north of the Spanish coast reports indicate one pair of boats had 50 ton in one night, while another had 40 tons.



Pacelli pumping blue whiting. (Credit: John Cunningham)

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Bluefin Tuna

The bluefin tuna kicked off with screaming reels setting new boat and country records. On his first day, Michael Callaghan and crew of the *Leah C* caught the first bluefin of the season. Fish number two and three followed minutes later, caught with double hook by *Deep Blue*, skippered by Adrian Molloy. Total catch of the day was seven – *Deep Blue* hooking five, *Leah C*

two, the weights of these fish ranging from 250 -700lbs.

All fish were tagged and released, as per Ireland's Tuna CHART (Catch And Release Tagging) Programme, under which several angling charter vessel skippers around the coast are authorised to operate a scientific fishery, in which anglers catch, tag and release bluefin tuna.



Two of the boats participating in the bluefin scientific fishery, *Fiona Tee* and *Meridan*. (Credit: John Cunningham)

Cool Response from Inshore Reps to FLAG Grants

Eliciting a cool response from Ireland's inshore fishing community, at the end of July former Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Dara Calleary T.D., announced the award of €1.2 million in grants to 93 local community groups and micro-enterprises by six of the seven Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAG) established under Ireland's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) Programme.

Announcing the grants, which are co-funded by the Government and the European Union, Minister Calleary said the FLAG Scheme "is unique in having representatives of our traditional fishing communities make the funding award decisions so that vital local funding gets to the many community development groups and events in our fishing communities, together with important development funding to micro enterprises involved in fisheries and aquaculture, marine tourism and marine leisure activities."

"The one thing that unites all these projects is their contribution to the economic and social development of traditional fishing communities, which is what the FLAG scheme is all about," he said, adding that since the scheme has been in operation "it has gone from strength to strength."

However, pointing to the breakdown of the individual grants awarded "at a time of unprecedented crisis for the fishing industry for which it is getting very little or no meaningful support", inshore representatives NIFA and NIFO were quick to question the direction in which funding was being funnelled when it appears there is none there to help fishermen and women directly.

Funded from a €12 million pot, allocated under Ireland's 2014-2020 EMFF Operational Programme's Fisheries Local Area Development Scheme, earlier this year, during the depths of the coronavirus crisis and with much of the inshore fleet tied up, when

queried by *The Skipper* on the availability of EMFF funds for COVID supports for the Irish fleet, the Department stated that it expected that the €239 million fund (total) would be fully invested by the end of the programme period.

In other words, the funds simply weren't there.

All funds, the Department said, had been allocated to various funding areas. Approved by a Monitoring Committee, any changes to those, they said, would require the agreement of that committee, before adding that the rate of funds committed through grant offers was high, and with the schemes still open for applications, continued to increase!

According to Mr Patrick Murphy of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation (ISWFPO) the tie-up scheme that was eventually put in place for the Irish fleet had up until the end of July cost less than €200,000 in terms of actual payments (with many still pending?) to individual vessel owners.

Little surprise then, in this context, that funding for painters, decorators, yoga centres, lodges and aquaparks has failed to garner much excitement Ireland's fishing community...

The geographical spread of the grant awards announced were as follows:

FLAG	Number projects	Total Investment	Grant Awards
Northwest	15	€469,956	€229,332
South	11	€370,998	€200,465
Southeast	11	€395,837	€200,398
Southwest	14	€316,175	€158,424
West	6	€477,193	€237,641
North	36	€287,430	€203,777
TOTAL	93	€2,317,592	€1,230,040

A breakdown of the individual grant awards can be found at <https://bit.ly/2FOoUWN>

Details of the FLAG scheme and how to apply can be found at www.bim.ie/schemes/

Clogherhead Fishermen's Golf Outing

With most of the fleet in and tied up on account of Storm Ellen, Clogherhead Fishermen's Association enjoyed their annual golf outing on August 21.



Full pier in Clogherhead. (Credit: Cathal Ó hUallacháin)



The winning team from this year's outing. L-R: Terry Power (*Supreme II*), Darren O'Brien (*Stella Nova*), and Philip McEvoy (*Devotion*).

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Inventor creates revolutionary way to farm oysters

A Polish man living in Dungarvan, Co Waterford has quite literally turned oyster farming on its head, by inventing a revolutionary device that allows for three times more oysters within the same area of seabed.

Having worked as an oyster farmer in Dungarvan Bay for over eight years, Grzegorz Skawiński is keenly aware that for oyster farmers space limitations are a constraint – there's more demand for Irish oysters than individual farmers can supply on account of this issue, he reckons.

Thinking through this problem, the idea for his new device began to formulate, and he developed the product, called the Crab Farmer, which uniquely has a rotating cage system, over two years.

Prototyped at sea, rather than the traditional farming of side by side on trestles, with the Crab Farmer oyster bags are placed one above the other, saving space on the seabed and increasing production. When the device rotates, it allows the oysters to move freely, aiding growth.

While normally each oyster bag is turned by hand – five in a row on a trestle, Grzegorz's system allows 16 to be turned in one rotation.

The system, which currently remains in prototype stage, alongside producing a high-quality oyster in terms of shape and meat, means farming in deeper waters that were previously inaccessible is



Grzegorz Skawiński, inventor, with oyster device

possible.

On top of this, because of the rotating system, back pain, common in the industry, is relieved. And given the rubber bands that hold the bags in place on a trestle are no longer required, Grzegorz's invention also has benefits in terms of the environment, working to minimise plastic pollution.

On account of his own experience as a farmer, the inventor saw the potential of a new product that would help ease some of the physicality of

farming, have environmental benefits in terms of less plastic, while also offering rewards in terms of boosting productivity and profits.

"When you work with oysters, you understand intimately how farming methods work, and importantly for me, how they can be improved," he says. "The idea of rotation was born while working on the project. The main goal of the project was to place as many oysters as possible on the seabed surface."

Having started on the project in 2017 and creating the device—which is currently patented in Ireland, along with patents expected in the UK and France—for testing and research purposes, Grzegorz is now keen to move on with the next phase of the business – either to sell the licensed patent, or work with a manufacturer to market the product globally.

For further information visit: <https://newoysterfarm.com/>

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Volume of Landings by Irish Vessels down 8.9% in 2019

Celtic Sea accounts for 28% of the catch

Figures for 2019 show that landings by Irish fishing vessels decreased by 8.9 per cent from 213,897 tonnes in 2018 to 194,956 tonnes last year. Landings by Irish vessels in Ireland fell by 5.7 per cent or 10,453 tonnes, while landings by Irish vessels in foreign ports dropped by 28.7 per cent or 8,487 tonnes. Last year also saw landings by foreign vessels in Ireland drop, falling by 22 per cent or 29,091 tonnes.

Based on data from Ireland's Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SPPA), the figures published in a CSO statistical release in late July indicate that over the period 2010–2019 landings by Irish vessels peaked in 2012 when 249,205 tonnes were landed. The highest level of landings by Irish vessels in foreign ports during the same period was in 2010 when 153,440 tonnes—73,535 tonnes of which was boarfish—were landed.

Mackerel (45,986 tonnes), blue whiting (33,548 tonnes) and horse mackerel (27,898 tonnes) were the top species landed last year. In terms of value, over the 2010–2019 time period mackerel and Norway lobster have consistently been the two species with the highest value landings,

and with mackerel at €66.7 million and Norway lobster at €51.1 million this pattern continued in 2019.

In terms of median prices per tonne for landings by Irish vessels in Ireland, European lobster, black sole and turbot obtained the highest prices. The median price per tonne of lobster, for example, was €18,000. In contrast, species landed with much higher tonnages, like mackerel, obtained lower prices.

According to the figures, 63.1 per cent or 123,067 tonnes of all landings by Irish vessels were landed into Killybegs. For landings by foreign vessels, Killybegs (74,693 tonnes) and Castletownbere (23,329 tonnes) were the ports with the highest tonnages.

The Celtic Sea accounted for 28% (48,620 tonnes) of the catches by Irish vessels that were landed in Ireland in 2019. 22.6% or 39,295 tonnes were caught South-West of Ireland, 12.9% or 22,431 tonnes West of Ireland.

The busiest months for landings by Irish vessels were January to April and October to December, with 64% of last year's catch landed by Irish vessels in the January to April period.



Last year, 63.1% of all landings by Irish vessels were landed into Killybegs. (Photo credit: Mark A. Neeson)

Fish Landings

Source: CSO

2019

Year	Irish Vessels in Ireland	Irish Vessels in Foreign Ports	Total Landings by Irish Vessels	Foreign Vessels in Ireland
2010	164,615	153,440	318,055	81,340
2011	162,303	45,635	207,939	35,153
2012	249,205	57,339	306,544	80,349
2013	202,926	39,709	242,635	76,943
2014	220,344	55,352	275,696	74,039
2015	204,194	29,834	234,028	93,938
2016	207,620	33,933	241,553	68,012
2017	213,501	31,981	245,481	100,305
2018	184,375	29,521	213,897	132,477
2019	173,922	21,034	194,956	103,386

COVID-19: August Markets Remain Volatile

Markets for Irish seafood this month remain volatile on account of the global pandemic, according to Bord Bia's *COVID-19: Impact on Trade Report*, published August 14th.

Though demand for Irish pelagics in China has picked up, demand for high specification mackerel destined for Japan is still relatively weak due to people still working from home and demand for the traditional mackerel based lunchbox consequently low.

In Europe, with competition also from cheaper supply sources from the Faroes and Norway, many customers are still processing from stock purchased earlier in the year so new orders are slow to come through.

European markets for whitefish, which are dominated

by France, Spain and the UK, also remain volatile with demand weak in Spain for species such as megs and monk due to the collapse of the tourism market.

Similar trends are evident across other markets in Europe, while at home sales through independent outlets are strong. With limited menus and some sectors still closed due to COVID restrictions, foodservice, however, is still poor.

In the 16 weeks ending June 14th 2020, data from Kantar has shown that fresh repacked fish mix, prawns, haddock and salmon were the best performing species during this period.

Total haddock sales grew by 2.7 per cent due to a slight increase in shopper numbers as well as consumers buying more volume per trip. Frozen

haddock sales grew by 28.8 per cent, while fresh haddock sales declined by 9.3 per cent.

Bucking the trend, demand for Irish organic salmon has remained strong throughout the year across key markets in Europe, with exporters now planning for the busy traditional end of year sales.

The situation for the oyster sector—export figures for which for the first half of the year indicate volumes are down 56 per cent on the same period last year—remains challenging, with poor demand from France and access to the Chinese market proving to be an issue on account of logistics and nervous consumer sentiment.

A report published by Bord Bia on August 8, and reports from around the coast indicate things remain difficult also for crab fishermen, with very low prices being paid and the

Chinese market now effectively closed once more on account of a skittishness around imported seafood and low prices rendering shipping costs unviable.

Compounding the challenges facing those targeting shellfish, demand in Europe for high-value species such as shrimp, velvet crab and lobster has also remained weak. Demand from Europe for mussels remains sluggish.

With the value of sales down around 50 per cent to Italy, our biggest market, European demand for Irish prawns also remains weak. Export values to the UK are also down 37 per cent on last year for the period January to May 2020. Figures for May compared to April are, however, more encouraging on the prawn front with exports to Italy and Spain showing some, if not much, movement.

New Dates for Scottish Skipper Expo set for 2021

Following consultation with exhibitors and visitors, Mara Media, the organiser of Scottish Skipper Expo 2020 (13 and 14 November) has decided not to stage the event this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and has rolled the show forward to now take place in Aberdeen on 14 and 15 May 2021.

Hugh Bonner, managing director of Mara Media, said, "We are tremendously disappointed to make this decision, but we are confident it is the right move, given the ongoing uncertainty surrounding COVID-19."

"Following consultation with the industry, our overwhelming feeling was it would not have been possible to deliver the high-quality show that the commercial fishing sector expects. The health and safety of exhibitors, visitors and the wider public was also a pivotal factor in the final decision."

"We are now looking forward to next year's event which will return stronger to celebrate its 10th-anniversary show, at the new venue of the P & J Live arena in Aberdeen."

Elspeth Macdonald, CEO

of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said: "It is obviously disappointing that the Scottish Skipper Expo has had to be further postponed, but in the circumstances, it was the responsible thing to do. We very much look forward to welcoming exhibitors and visitors to the Aberdeen show in 2021 and to a brighter future for the industry."

Scottish Skipper Expo will be held on 14 and 15 May 2021. We will continue to keep in touch with the industry and be supportive in any way we can.

For updates please visit www.theskipper.ie



Eamonn and Teresa McHugh celebrate with Bert Leslie, Seaquest Systems, Kent Damgaard and Knud Karstensen from Karstensens Shipyard, at the signing for the new Antarctic.



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ORKNEY NEWS *By Craig Taylor*

50 years RNLI service



John Budge recently retired as Longhope Lifeboat operations manager.

Two milestones were reached for Longhope Lifeboat operations manager John Budge recently, his 70th birthday, and with it, his retirement from the RNLI after 50 years' service.

There was a presentation on Saturday, August 15, at the Stromabank Hotel where John was having a birthday meal with his family.

Iain Cromarty, chairman of RNLI Longhope spoke about John's long career with the lifeboat, and he was joined by the coxswain and crew for a presentation of cards, whisky and flowers for his partner, Florence.

With social distancing in place, it was a relatively quiet affair with the promise of some more Hoy and Walls hospitality to come when circumstances allow.

John's dedicated service to Longhope Lifeboat began in January 1970, when he volunteered as a reserve crew member.

He recalled: "In Longhope, every boy was interested in what the Lifeboat was doing. It was a sort of central figure in the community... and still is."

John became part of the new crew at Longhope after the disaster of 1969 and has served at both Brims (now the Longhope Lifeboat Museum) and at Longhope Pier.

"We were compared to the men that had gone before... It was felt that no

one could ever fill their shoes and we never tried to fill their shoes. That was not possible. We continued what they'd been doing."

Shortly afterwards, a crew member stood down and John became the emergency mechanic, the beginning of a natural progression which was to continue for his 39 years as an active crew member.

He took over from Jimmy Swanson as assistant mechanic and eventually became the mechanic, keeping pace with the increasing amounts of technology in the newer boats. The current Tamar class boat "is like a spaceship" in comparison to the earlier craft, John says.

John remembers with satisfaction the many good outcomes from shouts with the lifeboat. "50 years has gone past very quickly. I've enjoyed what I did with the crew: the camaraderie and the fellowship and the friends that have been made with other stations. And to be able to put your hand out and pull somebody up when they are in grave danger. Serving on the lifeboat gave us that chance and we were all honoured to be able to do that."

John has been at the heart of the work of the RNLI in Longhope, not just at the station, but in the fundraising and social occasions too, often sharing his tales of service with the lifeboat and entertaining with his songs and accordion playing.

And whilst he steps down officially, John continues to support the life-saving work of the RNLI.

For those volunteering now he says, "It's a big commitment, but it's so rewarding. I'm very proud to think that we have always been able to find a crew for the boat."

The volunteer crew and the whole team at Longhope Lifeboat, the Lifeboat Guild, friends and supporters say that they would like to extend a heartfelt thanks for John's lasting and dedicated service and wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement.

COVID OUTBREAK ON TRAWLER

A COVID-19 outbreak saw the Orkney trawler *Aalskere* return to Kirkwall to tie-up.

By August 17, NHS Orkney said that nine positive COVID-19 cases were linked to the fishing vessel cluster in Orkney.

NHS Orkney Director of Public Health Louise Wilson later confirmed in an Incident Management Team meeting that contact tracing in Orkney had been completed and that all those at risk had been spoken to.

In relation to the outbreak, Elspeth Macdonald, chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said: "The whitefish fleet has been operating throughout the COVID outbreak as a key part of the food supply chain, continuing to supply quality Scottish fish to markets at home and abroad.

"In the recent cases linked to a fishing vessel, prompt action was taken by the vessel operators to minimise any further risks to public health, including liaison with the relevant authorities."

Orkney Seafarers' Centre closes for the last time



THE ORKNEY Seafarers' Centre and charity shop has closed its doors for the last time – a sad occasion for those volunteers involved, who wish to thank everyone who have supported them since being established.

Roy Norquoy and Josie Stanger have been at the helm of the centre, which was set-up almost five years ago to extend the hand of friendship and support to visiting seafarers, as well as folk closer to home.

The charity has been established in its rented Castle Street, Kirkwall, premises, since last February, having moved from Junction Road, where it had temporary premises previous to that.

The centre and staff of volunteers provided a friendly welcome and support to seafarers from around the world, many of whom were crew off the large number of cruise ships which visited Orkney pre-COVID.

Working in conjunction with the charity The Sailors Society, volunteers also carried out welfare visits to ships, hearing any concerns or issues, and giving out Bibles if spiritual support was required.

Mr Norquoy and Mrs Stanger said a number of factors had led to the closure of the centre, which had only just opened for the cruise ship season back in March, before quickly being closed again when coronavirus lockdown restrictions were imposed.

This includes the fact that the cruise ships are no longer calling, and that many of their volunteers are vulnerable, with some shielding. They themselves also work full time, and there are plans for the building itself to be redeveloped, they understand.

Looking back they said that the centre and shop, which was very much supported by the Orkney community, could be a busy place, with passengers and crew supporting the shop, and crew using the centre. Many crew were given phone cards and used the internet to enable them to contact home, as they are away from home for months or even years. Others were given items of clothing, including for their children, as well as small toys and knitted hats, and for that act of kindness, they were so grateful.

As for what the future holds for such a facility, that is unknown at present, but if and when cruise ships do return to Orkney, Mr Norquoy and Mrs Stanger say that perhaps some sort of presence could be re-established to support those seafarers who are so far from home, but probably not on the same scale as they have had up until now.

NORTHERN IRELAND NEWS *By Dick James*

HARBOUR AUTHORITY NEW APPOINTMENTS

The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA) have advertised five Board vacancies and invited applications to fill them. At present, the NIFHA board consists of six members so this will be a significant change at Board level. Two Directors will continue in post, Ms Kate Burns, a fish farmer from Rathlin Island and Mr Davy Hill, once a fisherman from Kilkeel but now with general interests in the Kilkeel fishing sector.

Leaving the Board as Chairman is Mr Terry Jarvis, who with 19 years behind him as first Board member and then Chairman has considerable background within the organisation. George McIlroy, Martin McDonald and Helen Henderson will be retiring as Board members, and Ian Morris, previously a Board member died in post during the latest post so is also being replaced. Applications are invited before 14th August and successful applicants in post for 1st January 2021, with existing Directors appointments expiring on 30th July and the Chairman on 25th September.

Currently, the Harbour Authority is subject to independent review over the course of travel in strategy for the future. It is understood that part one of the study is complete and part two is in preparation. The content of the first part of the report is awaiting ministerial sign off before release. The content of this report will form one of the more significant issues for the new Board to consider.

St JOHN'S LIGHTHOUSE BEAM (REPRISE)

The issue of the future aspect of the light based on St John's Point in County Down has resurfaced (yet again). Initially, the proposal was to replace the light mechanism within the tower from a revolving beam based on a mercury bath and conventional lights to a fixed LED light system. A campaign to retain the revolving beam was launched by local residents with the slogan "retain the beam" and inference that the light would be lost. More recently, Irish Lights revised their proposals to retain the beam based on a mechanical rotation device, but then the concern was to retain the liquid mercury bath which it was stated was a health and safety problem.

Local meetings over the issue were held with councillors and politicians present, and now Irish Lights have incensed their opinion by advertising for tender the replacement of two similar lights on Rathlin Island, with inference that this may apply in the future to several other lighthouses including St John's Point. Calls to halt the process are voiced by local politicians, but more recently concerns are being voiced over the use of LED lights and their impact on human and wildlife health. And the options now being given to Irish Lights are to revert to the old original configuration or, preferably, turn the light off altogether.

Worthwhile to note, that the funding for the lights comes from a levy on seafarers through light dues and that their opinion has not been sought by the objectors, particularly on the proposal to turn the light off.



Herons using Orla S as a perch while keeping watch at Ardglass. (Credit: Chris Feenan)

The Fishery

Tis the time of plenty as far as the Irish Sea prawn fishery goes. Boats are largely based in the western Irish Sea with fleets from both North and South getting stuck into their own respective pitches and fishing a bulk of small, largely tailing prawns, the only constraints being crew fatigue, mechanical breakdown, tides and occasional weather eruptions.

There is a fishing to the south on the Smalls grounds but this is more prone to tides, and to the north, in the west of Scotland waters of the south Minch, some Kilkeel vessels are trying their luck in a 'more fishy' prawn fishery, less impacted by quota.

In recent days, a fishery has appeared in the Clyde as well with a few Portavogie men in amongst the locals. This may be more a portent for the future autumn/winter time when traditionally the Irish Sea slacks off. There remains one sole Northern Ireland boat on the Porcupine Bank – the market being a constraint on the fleet usually seen there.

On the whitefish front, many of the boats previously in that sector have decamped to the prawns – again, this may yet be an important winter fishery when things get slack otherwise, but this could be reliant on local markets as the demand on the UK

mainland is limited though improving.

Scallops and queen scallops seem rare locally with some diverted effort to the north in Scottish waters, but a generally slack market with supplies from elsewhere being sufficient to satiate it.

Inshore, the potters are starting to see things picking up, and although the market is not brilliant it has picked up from previously in the year. Brown crab on the offshore ground will, hopefully, soon be displaced by the migration inshore. Some of the small crabbers which are fit have switched to a shallow water night trawl fishery for prawns and are generally doing OK, but this is not seen to be a long-term option.

Quota could yet be an issue after a very slow start to the year due to COVID tie-up and reduced effort since then – the prawn quota has taken a hit in area VII and is running tight. Some slack exists in Scottish holdings, but things generally work out... although there is always a first time. Irish Sea cod is also quota tight, along with other cod stocks in the wider area.

There is movement in the pelagic sector with the participants preparing for the start of the season and vessels and gear being readied.

Brown crab legislation

On the 31st July, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs announced they had made two Statutory Rules in respect of edible crabs, laid at the Assembly on the 29th July and due into force on the 22nd August 2020.

This may appear rapid but, in fact, the process started in 2011 when a report by Poseidon Consultants commissioned by the Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation first laid out the options for management of this fishery. Following initial consultation, the process resurfaced on the 1st May 2019 with a further consultation on ten options for action, with a synopsis of response following later which conveyed opinion

that there was a broad support for increase of minimum size, of prohibition of taking berried crab, and prohibition of the practice of declawing brown crab.

After a period of inaction due to the Northern Ireland Assembly being in lockdown, the new Minister Poots announced that action involving legislation would be enacted as a priority. The Statutory Rules announced an increase in minimum size from 130 to 140mm and a prohibition on the landing of berried crab, which was broadly in line with the industry's support. Declawing was not seen as an option due to conflicting EU legislation, and limitations on pot limits and other effort restrictions were confounded by a variety of options

and positions of lost opportunities. A ban on soft crab landing was not considered in the last consultation after featuring in the 2011 report.

In general, the legislation has industry support but some opinion has it that the opportunity was lost for more far reaching changes, and that the new minimum size merely raised the level of minimum size to that of our neighbours in Ireland and the rest of the UK.

Due to COVID-19 impact, the level of brown crab fishing has now reduced from previously extreme levels and this will also assist population recovery. This legislation applies to UK-registered vessels only as the European Commission was not consulted before the action, although it will apply to all vessels post-Brexit.

NEWS in brief

SEAFLAG FUND HARBOUR ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

The fisheries community funding agency SEAFLAG has announced funding to the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority for a project officer to improve waste management and environmental concerns within the harbours of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie.

The new appointee will be involved in litter management and beach cleans, as well as fishing gear disposal and introducing environmental best practice within the harbours and harbour users.

HOME AND DRY

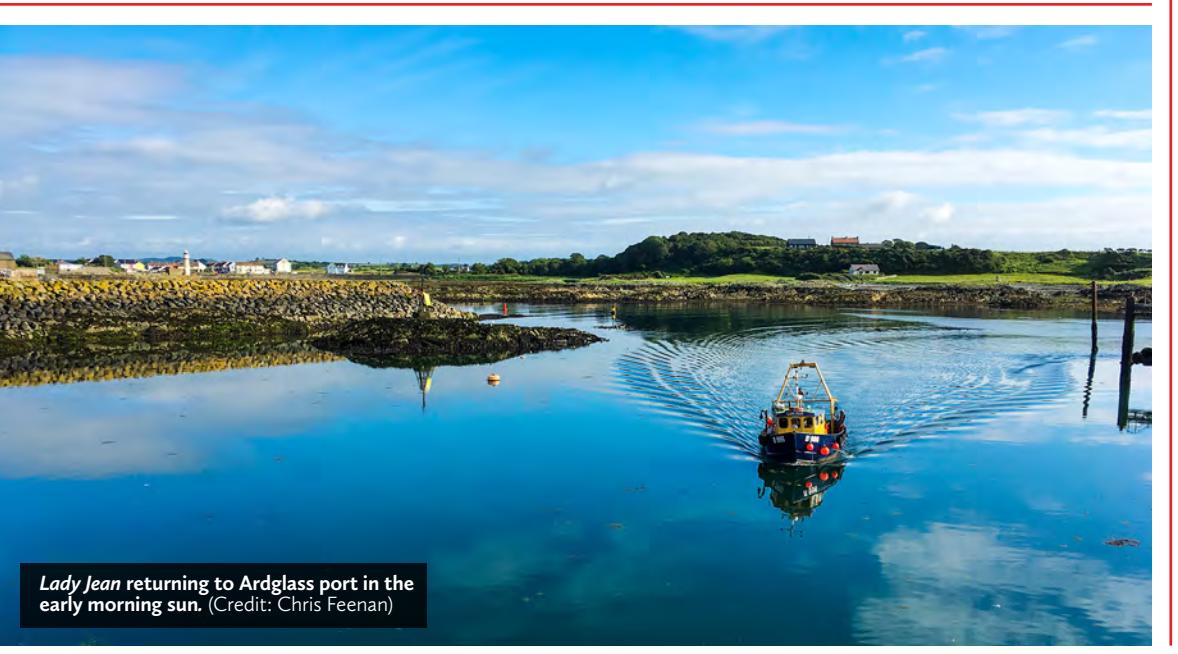
A new safety initiative has been launched for fishermen throughout the UK based on the slogan 'Home and Dry.' Within the County Down fishing harbours, giant plastic posters have been erected promoting the message, but failing to clarify if the 'DRY' refers to the internal or external state of the intended message recipients.

RED DIESEL DENIED

At the last UK budget, Treasury announced that the use of red diesel which has duty concession was going to be relisted as far as concessionary use applied. Agriculture was one of the industries exempted and it was assumed that fisheries would continue to fit within this distinction. That, it now transpires, is not the case and from April 2020 fishing vessels will have to replace the use of red diesel with white, and the consequential significant increase in duty costs with the added 20 per cent Value Added Tax (VAT) increased as a consequence.

Although the duty and VAT can be reclaimed (presumably) there remains a large cash flow impact which will reflect on the economics of a fishing vessel, particularly through weekly expenses and crew settlements, which can only further discourage crew recruitment if they too have to wait on a reclaim process with its own implications.

This issue is, at present, out to consultation and whilst this process is usually seen as a rubber stamp it is probably worth making an objection. Treasury, after all, will incur no losses, it will reflect only on the size of their loan indebtedness.



Lady Jean returning to Ardglass port in the early morning sun. (Credit: Chris Feenan)



SCOTLAND NEWS

John C. Gowie – Distant water skipper and fishing journalist

By Keith Broomfield



John C. Gowie, the former technical editor of *Scottish Fishing Weekly*, sadly passed away recently.

A former fisherman from Aberdeen, his love of fishing and everything related to the industry always shone through, as did his compassion and wonderful sense of humour.

After retiring from sea, he became *Scottish Fishing Weekly's* technical editor in 1989. Based in Aberdeen, John covered a wide range within his work. As well as boat reviews and general reporting from the east coast, he wrote the popular 'Gearbox' column, where he looked at technical issues facing the successful operation of a fishing vessel. He was especially interested in fishing gear and how to maximise catching performance under different sea conditions.

John was in so many ways ahead of his time, being very aware of the importance of sustainability and conservation, and of finding ways to ensure that trawls released juvenile or unwanted fish species. He cared about the industry and its sustainability.

Born on 2 April 1937, John first went to sea as a deck hand aged 16

on fishing boats working the distant water grounds towards the Arctic, serving on vessels such as *Aberdeen Venturer*, *Japonica*, *Ben Brackie*, and *Ben Loyal*. Quickly recognised for his leadership potential and sound common-sense, he worked his way up to skipper boats for the Ben fishing fleet, becoming one of the top skippers of his time.

He was particularly proud of serving on the Ben Asdale, which had developed a formidable reputation as a top fish catcher.

John loved fishing but he never talked much about his time at sea, despite the many adventures and experiences he must have faced in truly challenging conditions. Although, he once let slip in a private conversation that on one occasion he was washed overboard from his vessel in stormy and icy seas, only for the next wave to send him crashing back onto the deck again!

On retiring from sea in the late 1980s, he was the perfect choice for the then fledgeling *Scottish Fishing Weekly* (SFW) newspaper, based in Oban, to become its east coast correspondent and technical editor, bringing fishing knowledge and experience to the small team of journalists working on the paper at the time.

Davy Shaw, one of the first editors of *Scottish Fishing Weekly*, said: 'John was the original salty sea dog, with a world of experience.'

Alison Chadwick, who also became the paper's editor, along with Finlay Oman and myself who were part of the editorial team, remember him as being generous and kind-hearted, and always with a mischievous twinkle in his eye. He was a formidable mentor, keen to offer advice and guidance,

and quickly pointing out if he felt something was wrong or unfair.

Alison said: 'I was privileged to work with John on SFW for many years. He was a true Aberdonian – 'stoic throughout' and a better colleague and friend you could not have wished to work alongside.

John was the first Scottish correspondent based on the east coast for SFW, which was part of the Oban Times Group. From his office on the quayside in Aberdeen, he would cast a sharp eye over the comings and goings of the fleet of fishing and commercial boats and many folk called-in to get his 'craic' and great sense of humour.

'Fit like' and 'How's it going' were his eternal catchphrases – and everyone in the Oban office looked forward to John's visits from Aberdeen. He entertained the office, regaling everyone with his sense of humour and great company. He was a true character, the like of which we don't see today. He was held in high respect within the industry at all levels.'

After retiring from SFW, John kept on writing with his popular column Shootin' the Breeze with Jake Jilsen – borne out of his extensive fishing experience. It was an educational sometimes quizzical look at fishing techniques with John's inimitable slant overriding everything. He will be much missed across many sectors of life. For John, the sea was everything.'

Finlay Oman another journalist on the SFW team added: 'Having been around the West Coast fishing fleet most of my life, exposure to the experiences of John Gowie through the *Scottish Fishing Weekly* was an eyeopener. A long steam for me was from the Kilbrannan Sound to

the Minch, but here was a man who talked of ships and trips to Bear Island in the Barents Sea and weather experienced by no ordinary men.

John commanded respect within the industry with his extensive knowledge of fishing gear; knowledge that he was extremely willing to share with the up and coming generations. He rubbed shoulders with many of the top North East skippers and was very proud of his friendship with the likes of Terry Taylor, taking great delight in writing the review of each newly built vessel as it was launched.

It was always a delight to meet up with John and his wife Sheila at the annual fishing exhibitions in Glasgow and Aberdeen, with many fine tales of his life at sea. He was like a magnet to the East Coast skippers of his generation, bringing many leads to the table.

John lived and breathed the fishing industry and was very proud to have served and contributed on all levels.

Thankfully, he took the time to write down much of what he had learnt at sea, generating a sizeable volume of column inches in the 'Wee Paper' and consequently not everything has been lost in his passing.'

John was a true Arctic fisherman and the trips he went on were long and arduous – often lasting over three weeks with only three days off at a time, depending on where he was fishing. It was not great for family life, but he made up for this when he was back and latterly in retirement loved to spend time with his family and grandchildren, of whom he was enormously proud.

He and his wife Sheila had five children, 16 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

SCFF LODGES PETITION FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW AGAINST SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

The Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation (SCFF) have lodged a petition for judicial review of the Scottish Government's decision to refuse an application by the North West Responsible Fishermen's Association (MWRFA) for a fisheries pilot proposal in the Inner Sound of Skye.

The petition has been lodged with the assistance of Fish Legal, previously known as the Anglers Conservation Association.

Submitted under the Scottish Government's Inshore Fisheries Pilots programme, the NWRFA

pilot proposal was, according to the SCFF, "designed to trial different aspects of gear restriction (separating mobile and static fishing gear) in order to improve the evidence informing inshore fisheries management".

More specifically, the proposal was designed to examine the environmental and economic benefits of a 'creel only' zone in the *Nephrops* fishery in the Inner Sound.

"There is a growing concern that *Nephrops* trawling has caused the chronic decline in west coast fish populations because of its very high

levels of bycatch," say the SCFF. They say the review has been sought on the grounds that Marine Scotland, the executive agency responsible for managing Scotland's fisheries, "refused the Inner Sound Pilot based on the results of a public consultation rather than applying the criteria that their own pilot programme guidance had set out as the basis on which applications would be determined."

Consultation responses, they claim, "were dominated by members of the trawl industry."

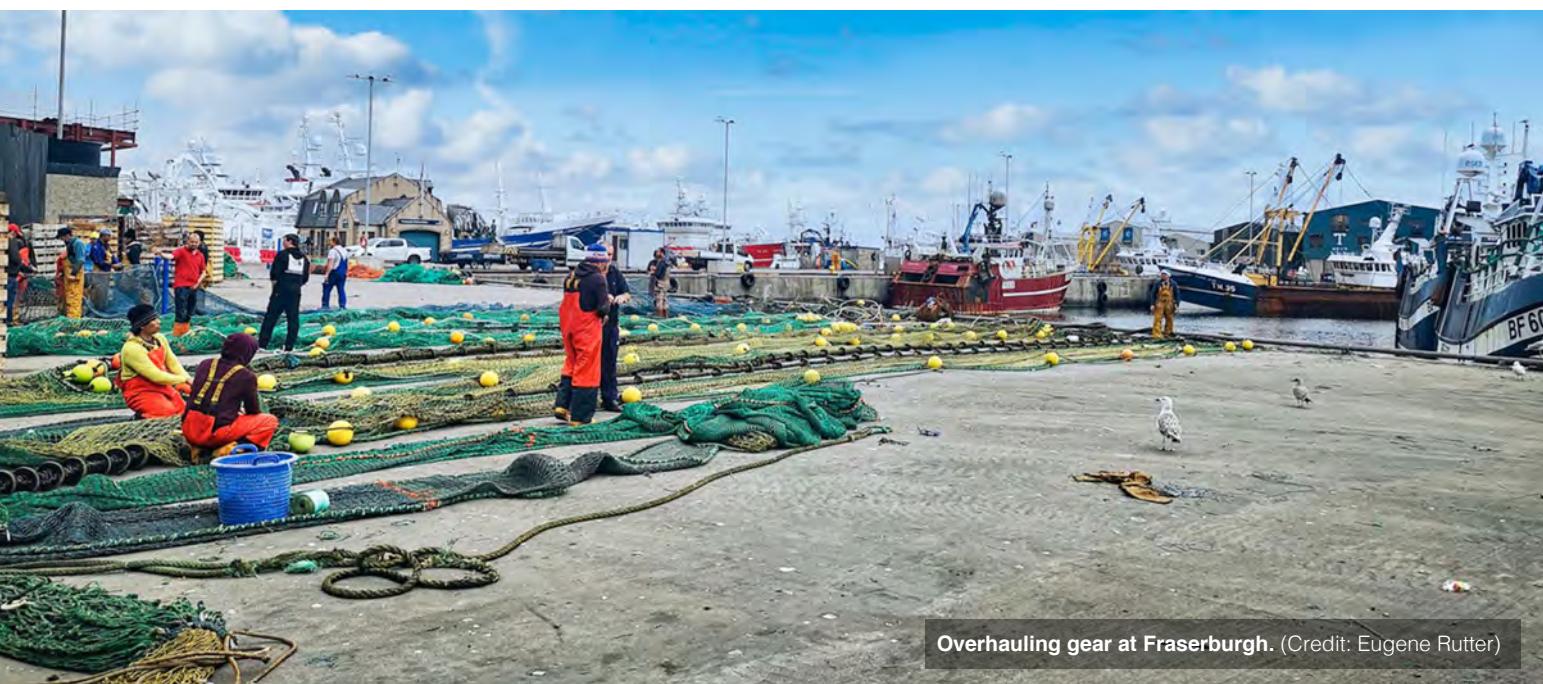
In a comment to *The Skipper* a spokesperson for the Clyde

Fishermen's Association (CFA), who represent a mixture of both static and mobile gear operators, said that they "resolutely believe" that working through the Inshore Fisheries Group network is the fairest way to have a sustainable and viable future, adding:

"Decisions made through this framework give all fishermen a voice. Of course, we don't expect that every proposals will always go through to implementation for a range of reasons, but in our view it's still the best way to work with other fishermen, static, mobile and dive."

Scotland frozen out of maritime and fisheries discussions

Brexit continues to expose tensions in the Union



Overhauling gear at Fraserburgh. (Credit: Eugene Rutter)

By Lia ñ Aodha

Concerns from Scotland once more, as Brexit continues to expose tensions in the Union, with Scotland's Justice Secretary, Humza Yousaf expressing deep concerns that Scotland has been excluded from Brexit Ministerial talks and in late July calling for an urgent four-nation ministerial meeting on fisheries and maritime security.

Writing to the UK Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, Mr Yousaf complained that devolved governments have been omitted from the UK Government's Ministerial EU Exit Operations Committee, where maritime issues are being discussed.

According to Mr Yousaf, the UK Government has had no Ministerial level discussions so far this year with the Scottish Government on post-Brexit maritime security, while the EU Exit Operations Committee has had a number of meetings recently to discuss the matter, without invitation to the devolved governments.

This is despite the fact that Scotland's waters cover 62% of the UK's domestic Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and many functions relating to maritime security are devolved, including fisheries protection. On top of this, most of the UK fishing industry is located in Scotland, both in terms of landings and value.

Mr Yousaf said, "While we remain opposed to leaving the EU and believe it is extremely reckless to rule out an extension to the Transition Period, as a responsible government we want to be as fully prepared for Brexit as possible, including working with the other UK Governments."

"Decisions made through this framework give all fishermen a voice. Of course, we don't expect that every proposals will always go through to implementation for a range of reasons, but in our view it's still the best way to work with other fishermen, static, mobile and dive."

"The Scottish Government has responsibility for many aspects of maritime security, in particular marine and fisheries protection, and given Scotland represents a large area of UK waters, we have extensive expertise to share.

"We have had a good working relation with the UK Government, but it is deeply concerning that devolved governments have now been frozen out of UK Ministers' maritime Brexit

discussions.

"This is more than just another example of UK Ministers seeking to undermine devolution and respect for devolved competencies – it compromises our ability to protect Scottish interests and seriously hampers the UK's Brexit preparations on this critical matter.

"I have written to the UK's Transport Secretary Grant Shapps calling for an urgent four nation ministerial meeting so we can properly address these issues."

Referencing international talks, but in a similar vein, the *Press and Journal* reported last month that Fisheries Minister, Fergus Ewing has said that it would potentially be detrimental to Scotland if the Scottish Government was denied full involvement in international fisheries talks.

With the Brexit clock once again quickly ticking down, the main fisheries points of concern for Scotland include the loss of markets, a lack of clarity about the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and the continued availability of labour after Brexit.

Mr Ewing said that despite repeated requests the UK Government had not agreed to Scotland's full participation in international fisheries negotiations.

Addressing the Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee, he said that though Scottish officials had been involved to some extent, the risk was that "unless they are to the fuller extent, that we would normally enjoy in the annual round of negotiations in Brussels and also the vital negotiations with Norway, Faroes and Iceland, then there is the risk that decisions are taken without Scotland's position being fully set out, expanded and advocated, leading to a potential detriment to Scotland."

Drawing attention to some of these issues, and using fisheries policy as a specific example of how Brexit has exposed weaknesses in intergovernmental relations in the UK, how Brexit has affected the relationship between the UK and Scottish Governments was discussed in a paper published late last autumn in *The Political Quarterly* entitled 'Brexit, Fisheries and Scottish Devolution: An Intergovernmental

Disruption.'

Written by a team of UK-based academics, the paper highlighted that disagreements between the UK and Scottish governments over where the line between devolved and reserved lies in fisheries policy has led to difficulties in formulating a post-Brexit fisheries framework.

Fisheries, usually considered a devolved matter, are unique in that it is the only devolved policy area where the majority of economic activity (in terms of total value of landings) is in Scotland. Indeed, of the total value of fish landed in the UK, around 60 per cent is landed in Scotland.

International negotiations, on the other hand, is a reserved matter.

Until Brexit, say the authors, fisheries policy, alongside a number of other policy areas, were stable in terms of the constitutional understanding between the Scottish and UK governments about where decisions were made and implemented, since some of these policy areas were decided in Brussels and implemented at the level of the devolved administration.

For instance, with respect fisheries, under the Common Fisheries Policy Marine Scotland is responsible for the management of Scotland's seas and controlling the activities of boats within the Scottish EEZ, while decisions regarding annual TACs are taken at EU level by Ministers at the Council of Fisheries.

And, until now, the UK minister has

normally been accompanied by the devolved equivalents, and negotiations are arrived at by discussion between both Marine Scotland and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

However, the Brexit process, creating a power vacuum, has disrupted this 'constitutional understanding', and the two governments have been slow to reach an agreement on where control over a number of policy areas, including fisheries, should reside once Brexit proper occurs.

In other words, in several areas, it has not been quite so clear as to who it is that is actually going to be 'taking back control.'

SHETLAND NEWS

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

Shetland's two new state-of-the-art fish markets now operational



Lerwick Fishmarket receives its first whitefish landings from local vessel *Sedulous LK308*, overseen by skipper, John Wishart. (Credit: John Coutts)



First fish at Scalloway market. (Credit: Shetland Islands Council)

Following months of delays due to movement restrictions to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, Shetland's two new fish markets, in Lerwick and in Scalloway, both became operational in early August.

Local trawler *Sedulous* (LK308) was the first to land whitefish at the new Lerwick market on 4 August for sale the following day. A week later, Scalloway received its first landing, provided by the *Radiant Star* (LK71).

Executive officer with Shetland Fishermen's Association, Simon Collins, hailed both new markets as a "tangible sign" of where the sector is heading after Brexit.

The new market in Lerwick, supported by £1.73 million of grant funding from the European

Maritime and Fisheries Fund, and a further £500,000 from Highlands and Islands Enterprise, completes the Lerwick Port Authority's multi-million-pound investment in a new fisheries hub in the Holmsgarth area.

"The market is the latest demonstration of our commitment to the sustainability of the sector," Port Authority chief executive Captain Calum Grains added. "The interlocking dredging, building Mair's Quay, Mair's Pier and market, along with associated improvements, have created a modern hub for the industry in the harbour's Holmsgarth area at a cost of more than £30 million, increasing co-ordination and co-operation of its activities and reinforcing our position as a leading UK port for the sector."

Work on installing a brand new and state of the art electronic fish auction system is expected to start later in August, while fishing agent LHD and the Shetland Fish Producers' Association will move their offices from Lerwick town centre into the building.

Meanwhile, the new £5.4 million fish market at Scalloway, serving the rich fishing grounds to the west of the isles, was built by a decade ago and which have transformed the harbour and operations.

"The market is the latest demonstration of our commitment to the sustainability of the sector," Port Authority chairman Ronnie Gair said. "It is the final phase in a series of major projects, the catalyst for which was an extensive dredging programme more than

The chilling system is more environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient. There is increased space for palletising fish and a 400 square metre chilled dispatch area.

The location on Mair's Quay means improved access both by sea, including better-suited landings at all states of tide, quayside water depth and approaches having been deepened to 6.2 metres, and by land for uplifting fish, the port authority said.

The site is adjacent to the L-shaped Mair's Pier, which provides more working area and



Radiant Star skipper Victor Laurenson

Shetland Islands Council without any financial help from government agencies after a bid for EMFF funds was turned down.

Chair of the council's harbour board Andrea Manson said she wanted to congratulate *Radiant Star* skipper Victor Laurenson for being the first to land at the new market.

"The newly rebuilt and expanded fish market is a significant asset to the local whitefish industry and I hope we'll see many more boxes landed here for many years to come," she said.

Collins said the new markets were "a tangible sign of where we are going". He said timing of opening both new facilities was perfect for the fishing industry.

"Together with Scalloway market it shows the magnitude of the local fishing industry's ambition as we are heading into this new brave era," he said.

"And even without Brexit the existing system was well under strain, and they were looking to grow in any case."

"The two new markets come at exactly the right time, as of next year, we are looking at seriously building our capacity as we start to catch more of our own fish."

The new Scalloway market offers around double the floor area of the previous market, and has been built on the same site as the previous building, parts of which were around 40 years old.

In recent weeks, the final tasks to meet food hygiene requirements have been completed along with other minor works, such as floor lining and fitting of fixtures.

The Lerwick market's four temperature-controlled/chilled bays extend to 1,600 square metres, compared to 726 square metres in the old market.

The chilling system is more environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient. There is increased space for palletising fish and a 400 square metre chilled dispatch area.

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The site is adjacent to the L-shaped Mair's Pier, which provides more working area and

Toft Pier now expected to be completed in December

THE EXPECTED completion date of work on a revamped Toft Pier has slipped to December following the coronavirus crisis.

The project had already suffered delays associated with weather and obtaining marine licences.

In March, there was a hope that it would be "substantially complete by summer 2020".

The project to rebuild and extend the run-down pier, which was used by a number of inshore fishing boats, was approved by councillors last year, with the hope that it could attract more fishing traffic.

The work is being carried out by Devon-based contractor Teignmouth Marine Services, with the project costing nearly £3 million.

One-third of the cost is being covered by grant money from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

A spokesperson for Shetland Islands Council said earlier this month: "The current completion date is December 2020, though we're obviously aware that adverse weather conditions might affect this."



Toft Pier demolition. (Credit: Steven Spence)

Fishermen urge Greenpeace to tackle the 'real issues'

A LOCAL fishermen's leader has urged environmental pressure group Greenpeace to focus on the "real issues" and "stop playing on the ignorance" of its many thousands of followers.

Earlier in August, Greenpeace raised again the issue of super trawlers spending an increased amount of time fishing in the UK's Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), including some in the north of Scotland.

They said banning those trawlers, some of them more than 100 metres in length, would be a good starting point to better protect those designated areas.

But executive officer for Shetland Fishermen's

Association, Simon Collins, said the environmentalist's public statements were misleading since MPAs are "not no-fishing areas" and the super trawlers had the quota to fish in these areas legally.

The real issue, he said, is how the companies behind the trawlers had been able to obtain the necessary quota through the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP); an issue that can only be resolved once the UK is an independent coastal state following Brexit.

He added that these vessels were fishing mainly with English quota and described it as a lesser issue in Scotland.

"It would be good if NGOs [non-governmental organisations]

would spend less time on imaginary stories and more on real issues such as the amount of gill nets dumped at sea," he added.

There are more than 30 MPAs in Scottish waters each protection certain habitats, wildlife and geology.

Greenpeace said super trawlers had spent 5,590 hours fishing in 19 protected areas during the first six months of this year, double the amount of fishing time in MPAs during the whole of last year.

Chris Thorne, an oceans campaigner at Greenpeace UK, said: "Our government cannot continue to allow super trawlers to fish with ever increasing

intensity in parts of our waters that are supposed to be protected.

"It must step in and put a stop to industrial super trawler operations within our offshore marine protected areas, something which will be possible after Britain leaves the Common Fisheries Policy.

"Industrial fishing operations have no place in our protected areas. At least 30 per cent of the UK's waters should be off limits to all industrial fishing activity in a network of fully or highly protected marine areas.

"A good start towards achieving this would be to ban super trawlers from fishing in our protected areas for thousands of hours every year."

Fishing boat owners need to register as food businesses

OWNERS of fishing boats have been urged to contact their local authority's environmental health department to register their vessels as 'food businesses'.

They are also required to have their vessels inspected by council officials.

Shetland Islands Council advises that it is a legal requirement for fishing partnerships who intend to export their catch, either directly

or indirectly, to any EU Member State once the UK has left the European Union on 31 December.

Exemptions apply if your catch is intended either for personal consumption, or if it does not exceed 25kg and is for direct sale from the quayside.

Vessel owners are responsible for this registration process, and failure to do so may

mean that their catches cannot be exported to EU Member States at the end of the transition period," the council said.

More details and a registration form can be obtained at <https://bit.ly/3hcD7ui> or by e-mailing fishingvessels@shetland.gov.uk

Food Standards Scotland has also written to fishing vessel owners across Scotland on this subject.



UK NEWS

'Calm before the storm.' Economic estimates 2019 for the UK fishing fleet

Revenues, landings and fuel down, total operating profit largely unchanged



Fleet economic performance data depicts how the fleet was positioned just before the pandemic hit. (Credit: Seafish)

Depicting how the fleet was positioned just before the global pandemic hit, Seafish has published the first economic performance estimates for the UK fishing fleet in 2019.

Based on preliminary landings data and the results of Seafish's 2019 fleet survey, the Fleet Economic Performance data indicates the UK fleet saw a decrease in fishing revenues to £980 million in 2019, compared to £1,025 million in 2018.

There was a notable reduction in the weight of landings, which decreased by 12% from 700,170 tonnes in 2018 to 619,553 tonnes in 2019 – half of which is associated with the reduction of mackerel fishing opportunities, with the rest driven by lower herring and blue whiting landings.

While the average price per tonne landed increased to £1,582 (8% higher than in 2018) this was partly due to the change in composition of landings by the UK fleet.

Lower priced small pelagics as a share of total UK fleet landings by weight decreased from 55% in 2018 to 50% in 2019. At the same time, and due to reduction of supply, the average price per tonne of pelagic

species increased by 10%. The average price per tonne for demersal species remained stable, while shellfish species saw a 3% decrease.

Fuel costs fell in 2019, with prices between 46.9 and 53.4 pence per litre during the course of the year, which saw the estimated total spend on marine fuel fall to £132 million (7% less than in 2018) – although this has been relatively stable when taken as a proportion of total income (14% in 2018 and 13% in 2019).

At an estimated £240 million in 2019, total operating profit was largely unchanged (down 1% compared to 2018's £243 million), representing 24% of total income in 2019.

There were 4,491 active fishing vessels in the UK fleet in 2019 (a small decrease compared from 4,590 in the previous year), 1,524 of which were 'low activity vessels' with a fishing income of less than £10,000.

Commenting on the results Arina Motova, Chief Economist at Seafish said, "This data from 2019 shows how the UK's fishing fleet was positioned just before having to deal with a major shock to the system. It represents 'the calm before the storm' that COVID-19 would bring just

months later.

"The consequences of the global pandemic will continue to be felt throughout the seafood supply chain. Fishing businesses will continue to face them as they navigate through the challenges and opportunities ahead as the UK leaves the Common Fisheries Policy and develops a new trading relationship with the EU."

"While estimated overall economic performance in 2019 did not vary greatly from the previous year, these figures represent an overall picture averaged across the fleet," she highlighted.

"The picture will vary for individual businesses and some types of vessels will find themselves in a challenging position. For example, these preliminary figures show that the economic performance of North Sea beam trawlers has been significantly affected. These vessels were facing average reductions in revenues of 30-50%."

The Economics of the UK Fishing Fleet report for 2019 will be published later this year.

Meanwhile, work has already begun on the 2020 Fleet Survey and vessel owners across the UK are being asked to take part.

All owners of UK registered vessel will be contacted by Seafish, inviting them to complete the annual socio-economic survey, which asks questions about the financial and operational performance of fishing businesses.

Questions on the impact of COVID-19 are a major part of the survey this year. There will also be an opportunity for vessel owners to say how effective government support measures have been for their businesses.

Usually undertaken by a team of researchers visiting hundreds of ports and harbours across the UK, however,



Fraserburgh harbour
(Credit: Seafish)

due to COVID-19 and challenges with travel and physical distancing, a different approach to the fleet survey is being taken this year.

Vessel owners will be posted a pack containing the survey form and guidance on how to complete it. Survey forms can be completed and returned Freepost to Seafish or alternatively, they can be done online or over the phone.

"About 70% of the fishermen we meet in ports take part in our survey. Unfortunately this year our researchers aren't able to meet vessel owners in person so we're inviting them to complete the survey another way. It should only take 15 minutes to complete and our researchers will be available by phone or video chat to help if requested," says Kirsten Milliken, Economics Project Manager at Seafish.

"Vessel owners can also arrange an in-depth discussion with our researchers if they want to tell us more about how their business is being affected by current challenges and their expectations for the future."

The results, which are shared with industry and government, help policymakers better understand the challenges and opportunities facing the fleet.

In recent months, data from last year's survey was used when designing targeted COVID-19 support packages for the industry.

While governments decided on what support should be offered, it was survey data from vessel owners which helped ensure that the most up-to date costs of operating a fishing business could be taken into account.

Dale Rodmell, Assistant Chief Executive of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO), has called on vessel owners to complete the survey. "The way Seafish will be conducting the fleet survey this year has had to change, but the need for us all to have the most up-to-date and accurate picture of the UK fishing fleet has not," he said.

"I encourage all vessel owners to engage with Seafish to complete the survey in whatever way suits them best to ensure that we all have access to this vital data on how fishing businesses across the country are faring through COVID-19 and other challenges."

Survey packs will be making their way to all UK vessel owners from 21 August. Completed survey forms should be returned to Seafish by 30 September.

For further information or support with completing the survey form contact Seafish at fleet.survey@seafish.co.uk or on 07876 035 759.

Fisheries Statistics indicate smaller vessels harder hit by the pandemic

Published in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide timely evidence on impacts on commercial sea fishing activity, according to the UK's monthly *Ad hoc statistical release: UK Sea Fisheries Statistics* for June, smaller vessels, due to their dependence on shellfish, have been hardest hit by the pandemic.

Comparing fishing activity recorded in June 2020 with that of June 2019, figures published July 28 indicate volumes landed by UK vessels were down 13 per cent (or just over 26,500 tonnes), while values fell by 32 per cent to £42,500,000. The number of trips by UK vessels fell by 22 per cent, to just over 12,500 trips.

The greatest impact was on smaller vessels, with the value of landings by the under 10m and the 10-12m fleet falling by 41 and 52 per cent respectively, while the quantity of their landings fell by 23 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. In comparison, the value and quantity of landings by over 12m vessels fell by 27 per cent and 11 per cent respectively.

Explaining this, by species, the greatest impact of coronavirus is still in the shellfish sector. Shellfish—a species on which there is greatest reliance among the 10-12m sector—saw a 24 per cent decrease in quantity landed and a 47 per cent decrease in value. And while the value of shellfish continues to contribute significantly to the total value of UK landings, this has also fallen from 58 per cent to 45 per cent.

According to the release, this severe impact on the shellfish sector—which throughout lockdown has suffered the greatest impact—is likely contributing to Northern Ireland seeing the greatest decrease in the value of landings (47 per cent) and vessel trips (40 per cent) as 89 per cent of their June catch was made up of shellfish both last year and again this year.

Comparing January to June 2020 to the same period in 2019 shows that before COVID-19 restrictions, landings for UK vessels were higher in 2020, with values 10 per cent higher in January 2020 compared to January 2019 and 43 per cent higher in February 2020.

This began to change, however, from March, when the fleet began to be affected by the pandemic, with a more severe impact in April, due to this being the first full month of lockdown in the UK. Though the quantity of landings began to recover in May to a similar level to 2019, however, the value of these landings was still down by 42 per cent.



Potters alongside in Whitby.
(Credit: Mick Bayes Jnr.)



Dogger Bank Closure Extended

At the beginning of August, scallop fishing in the North Sea around Dogger Bank was suspended for a further three weeks until August 30, following preliminary analysis of the state of the shellfish stock.

Since the initial four-week closure was brought in on 12 July, sampling by Cefas had demonstrated scallops in the area are currently either spawning or about to spawn.

After reviewing the early stock samples, the four Fisheries Administrations (FAs) determined a three-week extension was needed to finish data gathering, produce a detailed analysis of the research and to start preparing a longer-term management plan for the affected sea areas.

Jim Portus, Chief Executive of South West Producer Organisation and Chairman of the Scallop Industry Consultative Group said that having been informed that spawning was still ongoing on many parts of the Bank there was "no hesitation in agreeing the Defra proposed additional three weeks closure."

"The industry would, of course, want Defra and the FAs to consult more fully with the industry and the wider supply chain if any further extension of the closure is contemplated or advised," he said.

Since then, a consultation has been launched, closing August 24, on extending the closure until October 1 to provide increased protection for spawning scallop stocks in the area.

NFFO: No-deal currently most likely outcome

As Brexit negotiations continue, in what seems to be around in circles, the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations (NFFO) has said currently the oppositional positions of the UK and EU mean the most likely outcome at present is a no-deal.

Though difficult to discern from the official statements after each round of EU/UK negotiations, the overall impression, they say, is that while there has been progress on a number of fronts, gaps remain included among them a huge gulf on fisheries.

According to the NFFO, though the political ambition on both sides is to reach a deal "the Prime Minister and Chief Negotiator, David Frost, have made it clear that on fisheries the EU will have to travel a very long way from its current position—which is very close to the status quo—if a deal is to be made."

The Commission, on the other hand, is operating under a mandate from Member States which makes compromise impossible, they say.

"These two opposing factors make the likelihood on no deal, at present, the most likely outcome."

In the meantime, talks continue.

Two fishermen rescued after vessel sinks

Two fishermen were rescued off the North East coast on August 16, after HM Coastguard was contacted by a family member who was concerned that their fishing vessel, *Diamond D*, which was fishing for prawns with two crew on board, was overdue.

The vessel was subsequently found 18 miles off the North East coast and contact was made with the crew, who over the VHF explained they had hauled up a large boulder onto the deck after bringing their nets in.

Shortly after, all contact with the vessel was lost and their Emergency Position Indicator Radio Beacon (EPIRB) was activated. Humber Coastguard Operations Centre quickly tasked Tynemouth RNLI lifeboat and the Coastguard search and rescue helicopter to the vessel's location.

Thankfully the two crew, who were wearing lifejackets, had managed to get into a life raft after the vessel capsized and sank. They were taken onboard Tynemouth lifeboat and brought to shore.

Bev Allen, Duty Controller for HM Coastguard said the crew "were extremely lucky".

"Thankfully, the crew were wearing their lifejackets and were able to get into their life raft and are now both safe and well," she said.

"We knew where the crew were but if we hadn't Personal Location Beacons (PLBs) and EPIRBs are a vital tool in an emergency, but even more so if they are registered to a person and vessel, so help us to help you, and make sure you and your vessel are registered and up to date. It's free to do."

A Guide to Auxiliary Power Options – Marine Applications



Sarah Louise



Still Pristine Past 50

Working vessels that need to ensure optimum profitability and power efficiently often require auxiliary power, which is achieved by using a range of solutions utilising both pump drives and PTOs.

Auxiliary power is commonly required mostly in the form of hydraulics operating equipment such as cranes, fishing equipment, winches, pot haulers and water pumps, enabling vessels to be more efficient and run multiple types of equipment direct from the power train or gensets. Operators appreciate the additional benefits auxiliary can deliver; however, available solutions can vary depending on the operation, accessible power and specific installation requirements.

Pump drives, available in several ratios, allow hydraulics to work in a more efficient speed window. They also allow for shorter installed length and remove the need for multiple belts and pulleys, providing a neater, resilient and safer solution. Whereas, PFI clutches enable pump drives to be clutched from a remote location anywhere on the vessel with straightforward wiring, requiring only a 12/24v connection to function. This solution is more commonly achieved with manual clutches; however, they need to be engaged manually in the engine space. PFI clutches alleviate the need to operate within the engine room.

For users where space is imperative, multi-head pump drives can be sandwiched between the engine and gearbox, to utilise space in the engine room better. Furthermore, coupling solutions provide a direct drive from the engine crank, removing the need for additional belts.

When looking at auxiliary power, one consideration that must not be overlooked is varying installation factors and engine models. Various coupling options and connection interfaces can be used to ensure the benefits of hydraulic power solutions are available to all operators offering:

- Front and back engine mounting
- Flexible or rigid mounted
- Clutched and live options
- Speed up/down ratios
- Driveshaft options for remote mounting on pumps, clutch or pump drive.

Users should also ensure full six degrees of freedom and TVA calculations are completed to confirm acceptability and control of torsional and linear vibrations. Modular and commercially available options are the smart solution due to varying application needs and requirements.

MIT, who since 1974 has been designing, supplying and servicing transmissions and driveline systems across the UK/Ireland, has supplied several auxiliary power solutions and have equipment successfully installed onboard vessels such as fishing boats, FI-FI vessels, ferries and superyachts, and can work with you to specify the best solution for your application.

The UK and Ireland distributors of Twin Disc, Transfluid, Rubber Design, Arneson, Rolla and Quincy compressors, MIT has bases in southern and northern England, providing comprehensive UK and Ireland coverage along with an established global mobile support service, delivered by a highly trained and dedicated technical engineering team and a significant inventory of world-class brands, including new and refurbished transmissions, driveline systems and spare parts.

For more visit <https://www.mitgroup.co.uk/>

SNG 'coupling' with HDG to provide added strength and increased safety for fishermen

"A chain is only as strong as its weakest link" is a well-known phrase but one that is particularly pertinent on the deck of a fishing vessel where the strength of links and connectors plays a vital role in smooth operations and the safety of the crew.

And, for this very reason, many fishermen have to spend much time ensuring that such links, connectors and hooks are all in good working order so that any mishaps at sea can be avoided.

But such concerns can be put aside with a new range of Swedish-made Gunnebo Draglinks, Masterlinks, BK Hooks and BKL Hooks (with swivel attached) available from SwanNet-Gundry Ltd. (SNG) through Gunnebo's new HDG technology.

With equal or even higher strength than existing products currently on the market, this new range requires less maintenance whilst also giving an expected working life of five to ten years (and longer in certain types of fishing vessels) – compared to current types which have an average life span of three to five years.

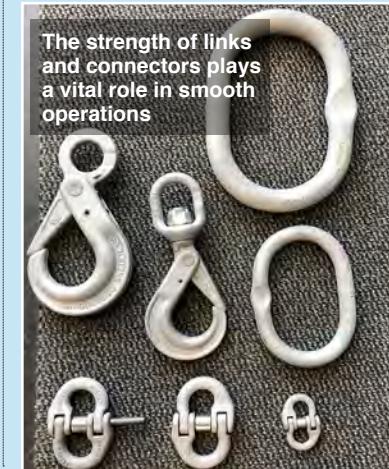
This longevity is the result of the use of carefully forged high tensile steel (quenched and tempered, Grade 8/80) which is then galvanised hot-dipped (to ISO 1461:2009 standard) with an average coating thickness of 70 µm on the components which greatly reduces

usual corrosion expectancy levels.

Naturally, such new anti-corrosion technology means that these products command a slightly more expensive price but the savings in the long run, with an item's lifetime increased by two or three times and with much less maintenance required, means that any price difference will more than pay for itself in the long term.

Demand is already high for this new range and it has been difficult to keep up with in-house stock so SNG are now taking orders for the next delivery.

Contact SNG at www.sng.ie or call any SNG outlets nationwide (see list of contacts on website)



The strength of links and connectors plays a vital role in smooth operations

A better take on Antarctic toothfishing – right down the line

When asked why a group of Norwegians would go all-in for longline fishing in Antarctic waters, oceans apart from their North Sea home base, Arne Birkeland has a disarmingly sincere reply: "We are fishermen," explains Birkeland, CEO of Pesquera Azul, a Norwegian-owned longline fishing company operating out of Uruguay. "Any new opportunity in the fishing industry is exciting for us."

Birkeland and his founding partners see huge potential in the Patagonian Toothfish industry, not least because the current fleet is characterised by ageing assets and inefficient methods. With an innovative new vessel design and longline technology to increase both volume and quality of the catch, Birkeland and Pesquera Azul are set to change all that.

Less lost catch, fewer lost lines

Arguably, the main challenge for longline toothfishing is the whale population taking fish from the lines in large numbers. Studies have shown that as much as 70 per cent of the catch is devoured by whales. "This reduces the catch, and depletes fish stock as well," says Birkeland. "Toothfish stock is slow to build. If we can reduce the number of caught fish needed to fill quotas, we can help maintain the strength of the stock."

Pesquera Azul's innovative "Sago Extreme" concept, developed by Sago Solutions AS, encloses the catch using a cage that runs along the line, collecting and protecting live fish until they can be landed in the boat. Damage to the fish caused by gaffing when hauling laden lines is also eliminated.

Lost fishing lines are another major issue facing the Patagonian Toothfish industry. "Some of the most productive fishing grounds are contaminated by lost equipment," says Birkeland. For years the fleet has had to avoid these good fishing grounds due to these so-called "ghost lines". Now Pesquera Azul is taking initiative for the cleanup.

Their new vessel, *Ocean Azul*, will be equipped with the "Ghost Gear Cleaner" toolkit to collect lost gear and return it to shore. The new boat will also employ stronger line to reduce breakage, thus reducing both lost catch and lost gear. "Our goal is to have a vessel that retrieves more lines than it loses," Birkeland states.

Meeting the challenges of Antarctica

Ocean Azul is designed and built specifically to face challenging Antarctic conditions, a departure from current practice, Birkeland relates. "Most longliners operating today are under-dimensioned for the Antarctic climate, and there are frequent incidents of hull damage due to ice."

Ocean Azul is built to the highest ice class for commercial vessels, ensuring a higher level of safety for both the crew and the environment. "We have also installed a redundant power supply, to ensure safe return to port in the event of main power plant failure," he says.

Pesquera Azul will use stronger line to reduce breakage, thus reducing both lost catch and lost gear

A key feature of the new vessel is an extension housing the "Sago Pool", an adjustable opening in the bottom of the ship that allows landing the catch in a protected space, as opposed to landing lines on the side of the vessel or in a traditional moon pool. In addition, the Sago Pool improves working conditions by calming the waves inside the pool.

Baited lines are also deployed from the enclosed Sago Pool. Traditional methods expose the lines to sea birds that get caught when they try to feed on the bait. "By deploying the line from inside the ship, we can eliminate this risk to the birds," Birkeland says.

Using model testing of the design, the team has learned that the Sago Pool itself reduces long-line movement by 40 per cent. "This makes it easier to work in the aft section of the boat, which was has been difficult with traditional design due to excess vessel motion," Birkeland says.

The Sago Pool design means added safety for crew as well, giving them a protected work environment in harsh Antarctic conditions.

In addition to the operational advantages provided by *Ocean Azul*, there is the economic benefit for the local and regional economies. "We have a local representative running the company in Uruguay, and the *Ocean Azul* will be an Uruguayan-registered vessel employing local crews," Birkeland says. He reports that the overall enterprise should create 40-50 new local jobs.

"Sustainable fishing is a high priority for regional and local authorities, and our concept can help them achieve this goal," says Birkeland. "A big part of what we are doing is helping to bring a higher standard of operations to the region."

Ready to go to work

After experiencing construction delays, the new vessel is basically ready for deployment, Birkeland says. "COVID-19 restrictions have made transportation of the necessary expertise to the yard a challenge, but we have now made



With an innovative new vessel design and longline technology, Pesquera Azul will increase both volume and quality of the catch

arrangements to get people where we need them."

The Sago Extreme fish protection solution is also ready to go. "The equipment is on the quayside, ready to deploy," Birkeland confirms. "The concept has been around for a while, but we have leveraged the technology and experience needed to put it to work." He notes that support from Innovation Norway has provided a welcome boost to the development process.

While the innovative technology has been fully proven in sea trials, *Ocean Azul* is capable of employing traditional methods if needed. "This is not a gamble," Birkeland assures. "We have backup systems that will allow us to operate even if we experience difficulties with the new systems."

Pesquera Azul will be conducting tests of the new systems as they go along, providing an objective comparison with traditional methods, Birkeland tells. The tests will be documented by third parties to ensure validity, including local scientists and experts.

Citing this and other examples of bilateral cooperation in the project, Birkeland views Pesquera Azul as a joint Norwegian-Uruguayan project: "We are in contact with the Uruguayan authorities in order to present the benefits of this project to both countries, and to Antarctic longline fishing."

He notes that the foreign ministry of Uruguay has expressed their support for the project. "Uruguay wants to be known as a secure investment environment, and we feel confident in getting their full support for this significant investment in the Uruguayan economy."

Arne Birkeland feels certain that the *Ocean Azul* concept is an idea whose time has come: "We can improve the catch and strengthen fish stock, while significantly improving working conditions and safety for crews," he concludes. "At the end of the day, these are the things that really matter for everyone in the fishing industry."

BIM Launches Water Stewardship Programme for Seafood Processors

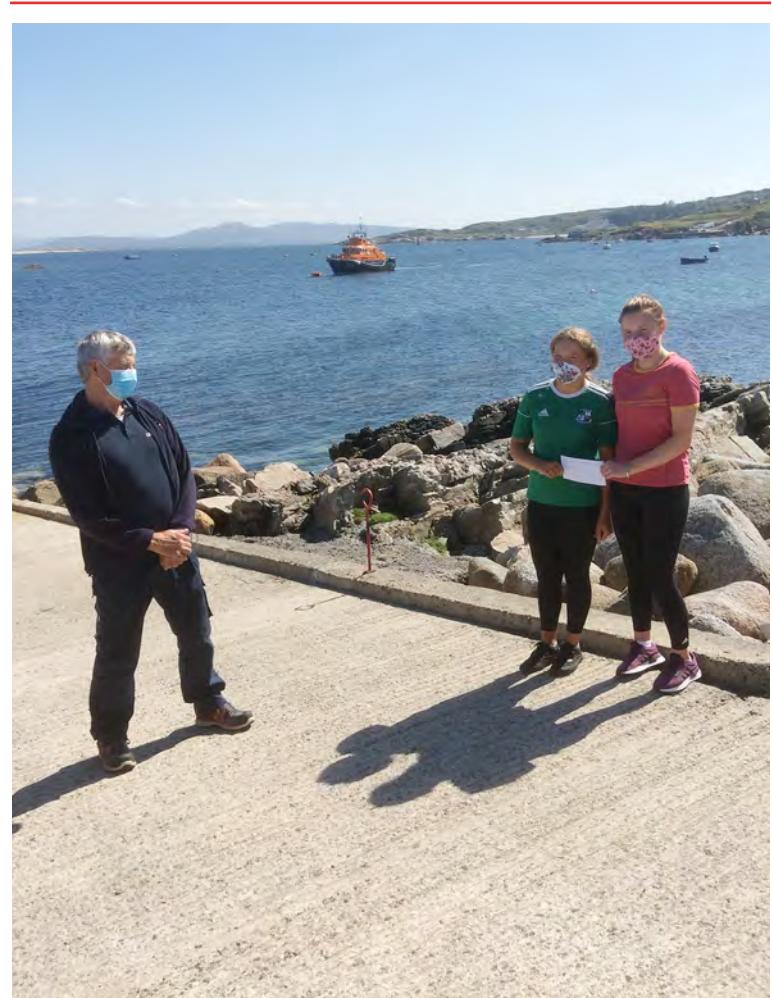


A new Water Stewardship Support Programme for seafood processors was launched by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) on Tuesday, 25 August 2020.

The BIM Water Stewardship Support Programme, run in partnership with Central Solutions and funded under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, aims to assist Irish seafood processing

businesses to undertake a series of onsite actions for improving their water management practices and reducing water related impacts.

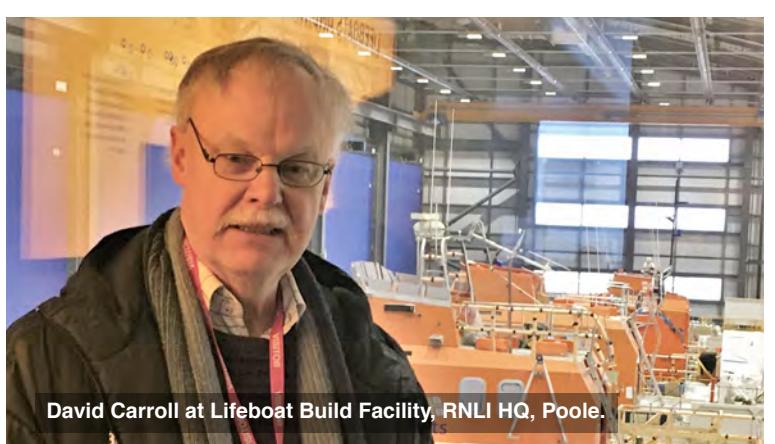
The programme, which will also be accepted as part of Bord Bia's Origin Green programme, was successfully piloted last year delivering significant efficiencies and cost savings for participating firms.



Arranmore RNLI Coxswain, Jimmy Early receiving a donation from Roisin Lynch and her cousin Marie McDonald from Wexford, who made and sold masks during their holidays on Arranmore and donated part of the proceeds to the Arranmore RNLI. Well done girls!

"As a small boy, I used to

Dauntless Courage: Book Celebrating the History of Dunmore East RNLI



Dunmore East RNLI has been saving lives off the South East coast since 1884. Since then, lifeboats based in the village have launched nearly 1000 times, saved over 305 lives and aided 1315 people in distress on the seas along the Waterford and Wexford coasts.

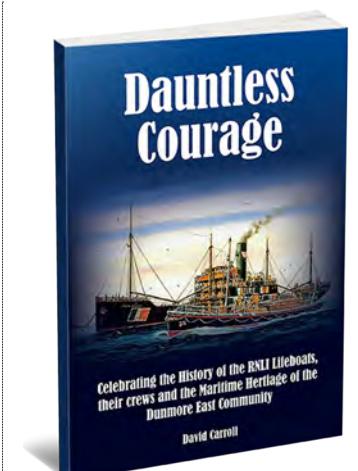
David Carroll, son of Captain Desmond Carroll, a former Harbour Master in Dunmore is currently completing a book on the history of the Dunmore East RNLI lifeboats and the community from which the crews are drawn.

David, who has spent nearly two years researching the book which is now near completion, grew up in Dunmore East and whilst moving from the village in his 20s to pursue a career he has always retained a great love for the maritime heritage he inherited growing up in the village.

The book, *Dauntless Courage: Celebrating the History of the Dunmore East RNLI, their crews and the Maritime Heritage of the Local Community*, which is based on archives both here in Ireland and the RNLI archives in Poole, England, will detail the boats that were stationed in Dunmore and the stories of the rescues they carried out.

Also included will be many interesting and unique photographs that have not appeared in public before. The story of the village itself, and its link as a fishing community with the lifeboats and crews, brings the reader from the earliest times of saving lives at sea in the area up to the present.

David Carroll, author of *Dauntless Courage* said: "I feel that I have been extremely fortunate to have been given this wonderful opportunity of writing a history of the Dunmore East RNLI Lifeboats and their volunteer crews.



see the names of the *Henry Dodd* and *Fanny Harriet* on the records boards that were in a small fuel store on the pier. I never could have imagined that one day, I would be researching and writing about these famous lifeboats".

Brendan Dunne, RNLI volunteer crew with Dunmore East RNLI said: "As crew we are delighted to see a book of this calibre been written. It is a testimony to the maritime history of the village and the volunteers who go to sea to rescue people in distress.

"David has ensured that the legacy of RNLI volunteers and supporters past and present will always be remembered in times eye and that the Lifeboat is an integral part of the community in Dunmore and surrounding areas."

All proceeds from the book will be going to the local Dunmore East Lifeboat Fundraising Branch to support the saving of lives on our seas.

For pre-orders and further information on the book visit: www.dunmorelifeboatbook.com

Alternatively, you can email: dunmorelifeboatbook@gmail.com

MGPS Ltd Launches Ultraguard Antifouling



Marine Growth Prevention Specialists Ltd (MGPS), world leaders in supplying environmentally friendly antifouling solutions to the commercial marine industry, are immensely proud to launch their new Ultraguard commercial ultrasonic antifouling system into the market.

Having worked closely with shipping companies and vessel owners, listening to their feedback and understanding their requirements, this insight led us to the realisation that the best way we could supply the industry with what they need was to develop and build our own system and Ultraguard Antifouling was born.

Ultraguard has been designed, developed and manufactured entirely within the UK. The majority of this work has taken place within the Central Belt of Scotland. Believing in the strength of local business, MGPS also chose to source as much of the components from UK suppliers as possible.

Scotland's industrial heartland has been at the forefront of innovation and manufacturing for centuries. MGPS has drawn on that knowledge bank and skilled workforce to design an antifouling system at the cutting edge of technology.

The system uses pulses of ultrasonic sound at various frequencies to create an environment where marine growth can't colonise the surface and begin its life cycle. By keeping the ship's hull, sea chests, pipework and cooling system free from marine growth, it saves vessel owners fuel and maintenance costs whilst reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

Because Ultraguard uses ultrasonic technology and not biocides, it achieves all this whilst emitting zero pollutants into the marine ecosystem. The system doesn't require a vessel to be dry docked to install it and it doesn't use any expensive consumables such as Impressed Current Antifouling (ICAF) anodes.

Ultraguard has also been designed with a modular construction where each transducer has its own separate power supply and control PCB allowing easy maintenance and repairs if they are damaged. Ship's staff can simply switch out the damaged component in minutes. It also has a unique memory and programming function which allows system logs to be taken and parameters to be adjusted quickly in situ.

With Ultraguard, MGPS have moved the ultrasonic antifouling sector into the future and as the only commercial ultrasonic antifouling system designed and manufactured in the United Kingdom, Ultraguard has put Britain on the front line of environmentally friendly antifouling solutions.



OBITUARIES

Louis Dillon: Skipper and author

Irish fishing lost one of its most colourful characters. On July 1st when well-known skipper and author Louis Dillon passed away in Bantry Hospital.

An extremely experienced fisherman who was originally from Cobh, Louis skippered boats on both sides of the Atlantic and authored several books.

After joining his first fishing vessel at just fourteen, Louis would go on to study journalism in Dublin, graduating in 1970, and during his journalistic career wrote for several publications, including *News of the World* and *Irish Press*.

Towards the end of that decade, the draw of the sea would lure Louis from the notebooks back to fishing, and his work as a skipper in the North Atlantic would bring him as far as the Faroes, Iceland and Newfoundland, before his eventual return to Ireland in the 1980s, where he would settle in Kerry, and go on to skipper several Irish

vessels, while also writing for several fishing publications, including on occasion this one.

Eventually, Louis and his wife Vera would move to Castletownbere, where, in his retirement, he went on to publish a collection of short stories, *Tales of Iveragh and Beara (Volumes I and II)*, about the modernisation of the south-west of Ireland.

Just two years ago Louis published *The Saga of Fiach and Tadhg*, a historical novel set in the Hiberno-Norse age of the Viking invasions of Ireland.

Pre-deceased by his wife Vera, Louis will be deeply missed and remembered by his three children Róisín, Fiach and Sadhbh, grandchildren Tadhg, Aoibheann and Meara, siblings Amelia, Ann Marie and Robert, son-in-law Sean, Sadhbh's partner P.J., brother-in-law and good friend Alfie Jones along with his extended family, neighbours and friends.

In accordance with Government and HSE COVID guidelines on public gatherings, Louis' funeral on Saturday, July 4th was private. His colleagues and friends got a chance to bid him farewell, however, when his hearse travelled from Harrington's Funeral Home, Castletownbere and made the slow journey down the town's pier for his final trip.

The Skipper would like to extend our sincere condolences and deepest sympathies to Louis' family and friends, both in Ireland and abroad.

May he rest in peace.



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Michael D (Slim) O'Sullivan

Beara fisherman makes final trip down Castletownbere pier

West Cork's tight-knit fishing community were left mourning one of their own last month, when well-known and respected Beara fisherman, Michael D (Slim) O'Sullivan of 28 St Joseph's Villas, Castletownbere and Bere Island, Beara, Co Cork passed away peacefully in the presence of his loving family and the excellent care staff at Castletownbere Community Hospital on July 30th.

Originally from Bere Island, and fondly known by everyone as Slim, he began his career on Michael Crowley's *Seaflower* which was later tragically lost with all five crew before he went on to fish on Mick Orpen's *Ardent*. Michael fished his own boat, the 65' trawler *San Pablo*, very successfully for many years around the South West, and was a regular visitor at Dunmore East for the Celtic Sea herring.

After the *San Pablo* was lost off Dursey Island in 1994, Michael fished on several vessels from

Castletownbere before retiring from the sea. A familiar sight around the town's piers he was always generous with his time and knowledge to many young fishermen starting off and ready with a needle in his hand to help any fishermen mend their gear.

From a well-known fishing family, two of Michael's brothers, Pat and John, also made their living from the sea, fishing their own boats. Today, carrying on that family tradition, both his sons Joe and Darren are skippers.

On account of the current guidelines in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, Michael's funeral at The Church of the Sacred Heart, Castletownbere was private. After his requiem mass, which took place on Saturday, August 1st, the funeral cortège made their way down Castletownbere pier, where fishermen from far and near carried his coffin the length of the pier, while many others lined the route observing social distancing guidelines to pay their respects to their

friend and colleague on his final trip.

Beloved husband of Angela (nee Corbett), and much loved father of Tracy, Darren and Joe, Michael is deeply mourned and sadly missed by his cherished grandsons Donal and William, Joe's partner Olivia and Darren's partner Sophie, his sister Mary, brothers Pat, Dan and John, sisters-in-law, brother-in-law, nephews, nieces, extended family, neighbours and friends.

The Skipper team would like to express their deepest condolences to Michael's family, extended family and many friends around the coast.

May he rest in peace.



International collaboration on Smart Lobster project in Galway Bay

New project to monitor prawn burrowing

The Marine Institute is collaborating with scientists in Spain as part of a new project, Smart Lobster, to monitor the digging activity and maintenance of burrows of the *Nephrops norvegicus*, commonly known as the Dublin Bay Prawn, using the EMSO SmartBay Observatory located in Galway Bay.

Current methods for counting populations cannot account for variability in the animals emerging from their burrows. This study will solve that problem by helping to understand the magnitude of that variability and lead to a more accurate assessment of population numbers to ensure a sustainable fishery into the future.

Smart Lobster is monitoring the burrow emergence behaviour of *Nephrops norvegicus* by using the underwater camera on the EMSO SmartBay Observatory. The Observatory is located on the seabed (20m to 25m depth) off the coast of Spiddal in Galway Bay and this area is one of the North East Atlantic fishery grounds for this species. The project will also involve the use of a new autonomous imaging device, which has been designed for long-term deployment.

The project's chief scientist, Dr Jacopo Aguzzi from the Institute of Marine Sciences (ICM-CSIC) in Spain is working with Marine Institute scientists Jennifer Doyle and Dr Colm Lordan to provide specialist fishery management and policy knowledge. The scientists will evaluate and analyse the video

footage provided by the camera to assess the digging activity and maintenance of burrows by *Nephrops*. Scientists will also analyse the role of ecological and environmental factors that modulate burrow emergence, such as the presence of prey or predators.

The results of the Smart Lobster project will have implications for stock assessment of this species, allowing standardisation of demographic data obtained with trawl nets (fishery-dependent sampling) and towed sledges (fishery-independent sampling) upon animals' burrow emergence variability.

Dr Paul Connolly, CEO of the Marine Institute said, "Off the coast of Ireland, the behaviour of *Nephrops* are being tracked using video-cabled observatory technology for the first-time. *Nephrops* are one of the most important commercial fishery resources in Europe, and the knowledge from the Smart Lobster project will assist in the sustainable management of this species. It is vital that countries come together to work on international projects like these, so we can share data, expertise and infrastructure, and deepen our knowledge on our marine resources."

The Marine Institute is also coordinating the operational aspects of the project. A steel frame was constructed to assist with monitoring the activity of the *Nephrops norvegicus* and was deployed by a team of divers. The camera and the imaging device will record the activity of up to 15 *Nephrops*



Nephrops emerging from burrow

norvegicus within the frame over the next 12 months.

Commenting on the EMSO SmartBay Observatory, Dr Aguzzi said, "Coastal cabled observatories of this kind represent an excellent opportunity to provide pilot studies to technologically advance more classic stock assessment approaches, providing new ecological data in multidisciplinary and highly-integrated fashion."

Alan Berry, Marine Institute's Research Infrastructure Manager said, "By supporting and promoting national research infrastructure such as the EMSO SmartBay Observatory in Galway Bay, the Marine Institute facilitates world class scientific research and supports new knowledge for improving marine ecosystem management."

The Smart Lobster project is one of three transnational access projects funded by the EMSO-Link project (Grant Agreement 731036).

platforms across Europe. As a member of the EuroGOOS (European Global Ocean Observing Systems) Ocean Literacy Network, which aims to broaden ocean literacy efforts globally, the IOLN is cooperating with experts from 20 organisations across eight

countries.

The IOLN also participated in the first Ocean Literacy Summit on World Oceans Day in June 2020 where the successes of the Ocean Literacy community worldwide were celebrated and shared, enabling collaborations to transform scientific

knowledge into action at a local level. "We are delighted to connect with other organisations across Europe – as a collective we can reach broader audiences and generate a larger impact. We can join our efforts in achieving ocean literacy, share

knowledge and best practice, and collaborate on projects and initiatives," Dr Noirin Burke said. "After all, our ocean connects us all."

For more information on the IOLN or how to become a member, visit the IOLN website at <https://irishoceanliteracy.ie/>

INFOMAR: Laying the foundation for mapping and understanding our ocean resources

Ireland through its national seabed mapping programme, INFOMAR has achieved global recognition for its endeavour to systematically map the seabed of its entire marine territory, and to unlock and sustainably manage the associated resources. International partnership and collaboration between governments, industry, and academia have evolved as Ireland influences the roadmap towards better ocean governance, essential for the safety of society, our future food security, our energy, and for positive climate action and adaptation.

The Marine Institute and Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) INFOMAR programme team aim to complete Ireland's seabed mapping by end 2026, potentially being the first country globally to do so. In parallel, they are raising the awareness and impact of seabed mapping, and the innovation and technology development opportunities that Ireland can potentially derive from this world-leading endeavour.

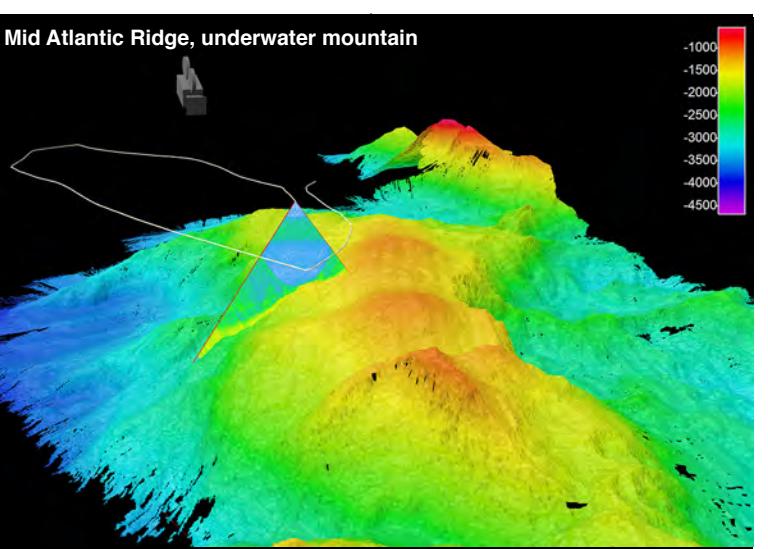
Sean Cullen, GSI Joint INFOMAR Manager highlighted that "a recent special publication accepted by the Geological Society of London entitled 'Mapping Ireland's coastal, shelf and deep water environments' features case studies demonstrating the multiple applications of INFOMAR data and products".

Thomas Furey, Marine Institute Joint INFOMAR Manager relayed that "from an innovation perspective, the INFOMAR team are coordinating a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) project, co-funded by Marine Institute and Enterprise Ireland. It will fund innovative approaches to image focussed seaweed identification, mapping and resource assessment, developing technologies or services that may have multiple applications in coastal zone management and marine environmental monitoring".

As an island nation, Ireland has historically looked to the sea as a means of trade, transport and exploration. We are intrinsically linked with all things maritime, backed by a rich seafaring heritage & culture. At the end of the 20th Century, Ireland set out to fully investigate the ocean of opportunity that is our vast marine territory. Through the Government of Ireland resourced Irish National Seabed Survey (1999-2005) and its successor INFOMAR (2006-2026), Irish efforts in systematically mapping our entire seabed will complete the Real Map of Ireland, leave a legacy for future generations, and provide a scientific foundation for accelerated coastal and marine economic growth.

INFOMAR—the national seabed mapping programme which is resourced through the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE), and managed jointly by Marine Institute and Geological Survey Ireland—provides seabed depth, habitat, and geology data, critical for multi-sectoral marine activity and growth. Site selection for offshore renewable energy and telecommunications infrastructure, navigation charts for safe shipping, transport and marine leisure, and protecting sensitive habitats and fish nurseries grounds, all rely on accurate seabed maps.

In *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth*, the State's national marine plan, INFOMAR is tasked with completing our seabed mapping, an essential task to realise the country's coastal and maritime sustainable growth potential. Overarching drivers relate to; (i) exploration to achieve knowledge and understanding of this complex system, (ii) resource assessment to determine living and natural resource distribution, (iii) protection to conserve sensitive habitats and predict marine and coastal risk, and (iv) governance to legislate and manage coastal



and offshore Ireland and support maritime spatial planning.

One of the actions of the DCCAE Climate Action Plan 2019 is to complete the mapping of all Irish offshore waters through the INFOMAR Programme to support site selection for offshore renewable energy, ocean energy research, development and demonstration pathway for emerging marine technologies (wave, tidal, floating wind) and associated test infrastructure.

In 2008, PricewaterhouseCoopers assessed the potential return on investment of the 20 year INFOMAR programme investment of €80 million.

Having taken a cautious approach, a 4-6 times return on investment to the state was indicated based on sectoral growth projections. This seminal seabed mapping related economic assessment has been widely cited, supporting business cases for the launch of strategic national mapping programmes elsewhere globally, including in the UK, Norway and USA.

The INFOMAR programme is on budget and on target to deliver for Marine Ireland. Ireland has achieved international recognition in the hydrographic and seabed mapping communities for its approach and achievements to

date. INFOMAR's systematic mapping approach has been adopted in the "AORA Seabed Mapping Roadmap" published by the EU, USA, and Canada composed Atlantic Seabed Mapping International Working Group. The extensive international network developed by INFOMAR is a key pathway to channel future associated Irish innovation, products and services.

INFOMAR's open data policy and digital maps and products provide a window for Ireland's SME sector to develop and market their services. Opportunities are diverse, including the use of INFOMAR shipwreck maps and 3D models to attract international dive and angling tourism trade, the use of stunning seabed imagery on clothing, or the use of the accurate depth data to model how much aquaculture an inshore bay can sustainably support. The Marine Institute and Geological Survey Ireland will continue to raise the profile and impact of the INFOMAR programme to support industry growth, research and innovation, to provide a scientific data-based foundation for government decision support, and to inform the public through innovative platforms such as interactive story maps.

The next generation at the heart of our ocean's future



Primary school students learn about the ocean through the Marine Institute's Explorers Education Programme.
(Credit: Brian Lougheed)

"While our ocean covers two-thirds of the Earth's surface, the vast majority of people know very little about our ocean and its influence on our lives. Since the Irish Ocean Literacy Network formed in 2016, we have facilitated collaborations, supported initiatives, grown our network and engaged with others to increase ocean literacy in Ireland. To ensure a healthy ocean for us now and for future generations, we all need to be better informed about how the ocean affects us and how what we do affects the oceans."

The IOLN, which involves 40 organisations and 100 individuals from industry, education, government organisations and charities, are working together to achieve an 'Ocean Literate Society' across Ireland. An ocean literate person is someone who understands their influence on the ocean and its influence on their daily life, and can make positive choices for a sustainable ocean for the future."

As well as raising awareness about the importance of the ocean across Ireland, the IOLN is now collaborating further afield, and connecting with

The health of our ocean relies on the next generation to be ocean leaders, striving for change and inspired to work together to sustainably protect our marine resource. Many organisations across Ireland have been raising awareness about the importance of our ocean and our influence on the ocean to our young people. Now, through the Irish Ocean Literacy Network (IOLN), these organisations are working together to increase our understanding of our ocean wealth, not just in Ireland but further afield.

Our ocean is vital to life itself, providing us with more than half of the oxygen we breathe. The ocean is the world's largest ecosystem and home to nearly a million known species. As well as providing us with food, the ocean is a gateway for shipping and influences our weather and climate.

Dr Noirin Burke of Galway Atlantaquaria and Co-Secretariat for the IOLN said,

Risks and opportunities for demersal fisheries in warming seas

More black sole, less monk and megs



Sowenna passing Calf Rock on her way out to sea. (Credit: Alan O'Shea)

By Lia ní Aodha

Adding to the already existing work that shows how climate change has affected marine fish populations and their associated fisheries, new research was published last month (August) investigating the potential future effects of climate change on several commercially important fish stocks in the Celtic Sea, English Channel and southern North Sea, and fished by a number of countries including Ireland, the UK, France and Holland.

Waters in these regions have already experienced significant warming over the past 40 years. And with further increases in sea temperatures expected over the coming decades, projecting future changes may help prepare the fishing industry and the systems that manage those fisheries for the resulting effects, say the authors.

Carried out by researchers from the University of Exeter, University of Bristol, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the Met Office Hadley Centre, the study indicates changes in the availability and catchability of several species over the coming decades which could have implications for fishing, fisheries management, and future fish diets.

Estimating changes in abundance through the rest of the twenty first century under a range of climate scenarios, eight demersal fish species—monkfish, Atlantic cod, black sole, European plaice, John dory, lemon sole, megrim, and red mullet—were chosen by the authors based on prior assessment of landing statistics and their social and economic importance to fisheries within the region.

In terms of ensuring long-term sustainability, future management will need to balance facilitating industry adaptation and access for fishermen, while also setting catching levels that reduce climate impacts on fish species, say the researchers.

Good news for some, bad for others, their projections suggest increases in abundance of warm-adapted species red mullet, black sole, John dory and lemon sole, and decreases in abundance of cold-adapted species cod, monk and megrim. Projections for plaice were relatively stable across all scenarios up until the 2040s – beyond this,

however, the outlook for this species was more uncertain.

For John dory and red mullet, projected increases and expansions across the region continue a trend that has been documented since the mid-1990s within the North Sea and Celtic Sea.

The decreasing projections for monk, cod and megs, say the authors, appear highly likely given the majority of their climate projections indicate declines. These findings are also in line with existing work suggesting a northward shift and/or deepening of these species in response to warming.

These projected changes in abundance and distribution will mean that fishermen and women will very likely have to adapt to changes in catching opportunities and compositions in the coming decades.

On the one hand, they could see fishing opportunities for traditional species diminished. On the other, they may provide new fishing opportunities and see effort spread more widely.

As people who fish know all too well, however, whether or not these opportunities can be realised will depend on a number of factors, including their capacity to modify fishing practices, consumer demand and markets.

Management, of course, will also be an important factor in all this. And these changes, say the researchers, are likely to challenge current management systems with implications for decisions on future fishing mortality rates, effort and allowable catches.

In terms of ensuring long-term sustainability, future management will need to balance facilitating industry adaptation and access for fishermen, while also setting catching levels that reduce climate impacts on fish species, say the researchers.

Here, the multispecies nature of many of the fisheries in the region, whereby several species are caught at the same time with the same gear, could pose challenges.

For example, management may impose reduced fishing mortality rates on species experiencing localised declines, which could

consequently see traditional species become choke species, and in turn, work to restrict other catches of species that are still abundant or, potentially, even increasing.

Navigating this tightrope will require increasingly flexible and adaptive management approaches – approaches which the researchers say will be crucial to allow those fishing adapt to future changes.

The ‘on-the-ground’ experiences of people who fish should be incorporated with scientific information to inform future management decisions and facilitate this balance, they say.

One of the study’s co-authors, University of Exeter’s Louise Rutherford said, “We know from working with fishers that warmer water species are appearing in catches more. Bringing together their ‘on-the-ground’ experiences with studies like ours will help inform future management decisions that enable sustainable exploitation while supporting fishers’ adaptation.”

And not just people who fish. With changing catches, consumers onshore will also have a role to play and may need to adapt their diets to eat species that could benefit under future warming. (Maybe we will see people deep frying black sole and eating it with chips after all...?)

Lead author Dr Katherine Maltby, who undertook the research while at Cefas, said, “Our results show that climate change will continue to affect fish stocks within this sea region into the future, presenting both potential risks but some opportunities that fishers will likely have to adapt to.

“Consumers can help fishers take advantage of these fishing opportunities by seeking out other fish species to eat and enjoy.”

The paper, entitled ‘Projected impacts of warming seas on commercially fished species at a biogeographic boundary of the European continental shelf’ was published in the *Journal of Applied Ecology*. It can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3iq0USV>

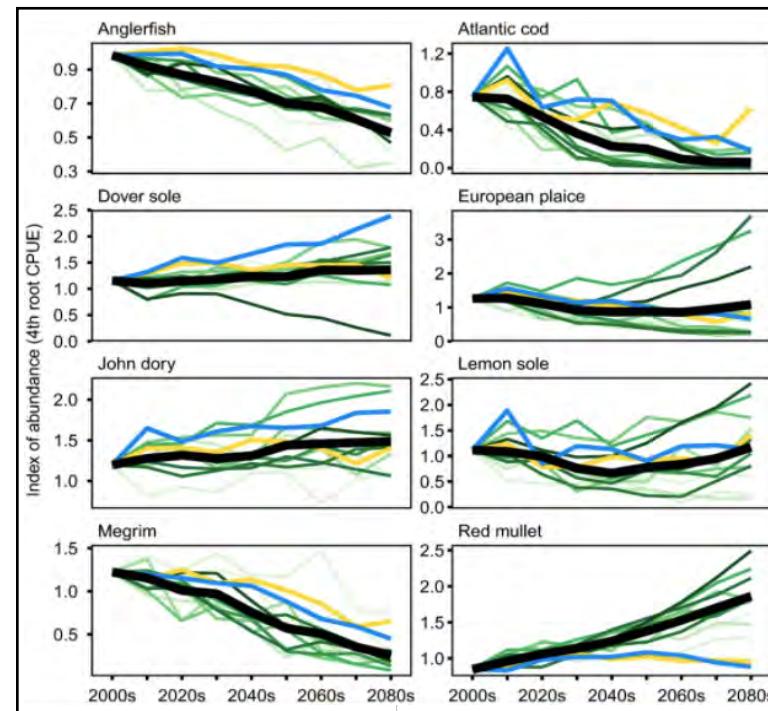


Figure 1: Projected changes in an index of abundance (4th rooted CPUE) from 2000s until 2080s for all species. Each coloured line represents a particular projection, with black lines representing the mean across several projections.

Broken Down Vessel towed to Safety by Donaghadee Lifeboat



The lifeboat was tasked to assist a 15m vessel with one person onboard

Donaghadee lifeboat were tasked at 2.44am on Tuesday 18 August by Belfast Coastguard to come to the assistance of a 15m fishing boat with one person on board.

The vessel, which was on passage from Ardglass to Mallaig in Scotland, ran into mechanical difficulties in the early hours of the morning and drifted ashore at Templepatrick, just south of Ballyvester beach.

The RNLI all weather lifeboat *Saxon* was launched at 3.00am and in flat calm sea conditions and driving rain made full speed to be on scene in less than 10 minutes. As the stricken vessel was so far inshore with a falling tide, the daughter lifeboat was launched also. On assessment, it was decided they should attempt a tow, however, due to tidal conditions this was ultimately unsuccessful.

After liaising with Belfast Coastguard and the boat's skipper, the decision was made that the best plan of action would

be for the lifeboat to return when the tide had risen.

After a couple of hours sleep, the lifeboat crew relaunched at 8.00am and in similar conditions made their way back to the fishing boat at Templepatrick, and the crew managed to establish a tow while the salvage pump removed any excess water, and the boat was towed off the rocks stern first.

The tow rope was then transferred to the bow of the vessel, and an assessment was made to ensure there was no damage to the hull.

Saxon then proceeded a slow tow to Bangor. While waiting permission to enter the harbour, the lifeboat mechanic was transferred aboard and was able to assess the mechanical difficulties and restart the fishing boats engine.

After discussions with the skipper and the coastguard, agreement was made that the vessel, now being under its own power, was able to proceed onwards to Mallaig.

You tear them and he'll mend them



Ex-skipper Alastair McBride with Edwin Murnaghan. A vital cog in Kilkeel's fishing industry, and still busy mending nets, on July 30th Alastair celebrated his 79th birthday. Happy Birthday Alastair! (Credit: Leslie Campbell).

CREW SHOTS

The global pandemic has been especially hard on the fishing industry. To celebrate those who fish & their resilience we've been asking you to send in your crew shots to us at *The Skipper*. Here is just one of the great shots we've received over the past month from around the coast.

If you have a great crew shot you would like to send in, whether you're tied up or fishing, working inshore or offshore, you can email us at: editorial@maramedia.ie

The best picture(s) each month will be featured in *The Skipper*, with the best overall picture featuring on the cover of the October issue of *The Skipper*. To be in with a chance all you have to do is make sure to send in the original hi-res version of the image and email it to us rather than sending via social media.

Please make sure you include names of everyone in the photo (from left to right), what you are fishing, the boat, the home port and the location of the shot (if not the home port).



John Paul Baska, crewman of *Channel Venture II* with *The Skipper*'s Sharon Boyle on the pier in Burtonport.



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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.



AUGUST WINNER: MARK A. NEESON
TRIPLE VISION: CARMAROSE, COLMCILLE AND WESTWARD ISLE IN KILLYBEGS.
IMAGE BY: MARK A. NEESON, TYRONE

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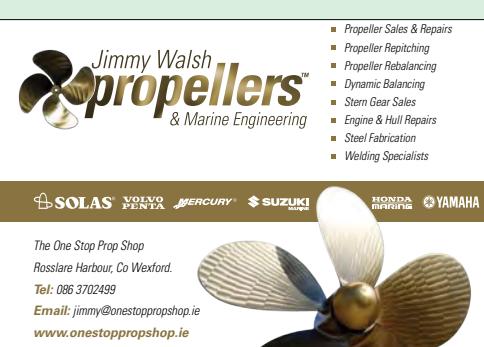
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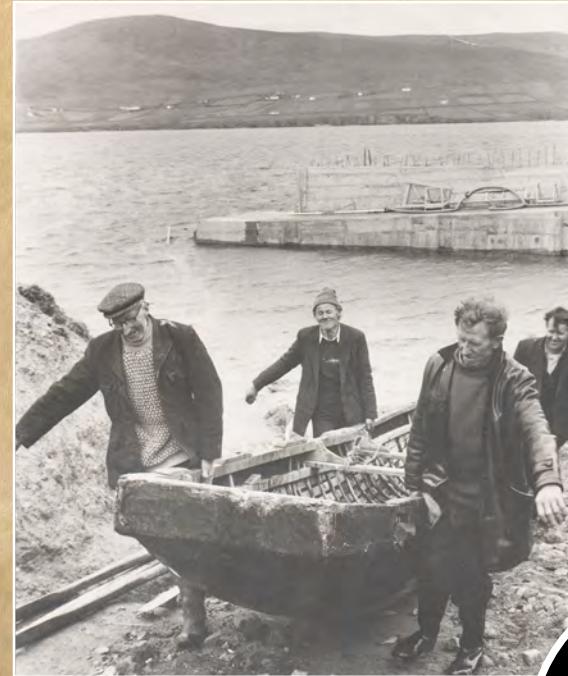
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The Archives - SEPTEMBER 1980

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EUROPE'S COMMON MUTINY



Left: Fishermen from east coast ports, members of the Irish Fishermen's Organisation, giving away free fish in the forecourt of B.I.M.'s headquarters in Dublin. Right: French trawlers drawn up in the blockade in Cherbourg with a Townsend Thoresen ferry in the background. The fishermen of both countries were protesting against the E.E.C.'s "open door" fish import policy.

French Government forced to offer some help

ON THE THIRTEENTH day of the French fishermen's blockade of the English channel ferry ports in protest against Common Market fish imports and high fuel prices, the French Government began making concessionary offers to the trawlermen.

The blockade made front-page headlines in newspapers throughout the E.E.C. and were endorsed by fishermen in several countries.

In Ireland, in protest against similar circumstances which are playing havoc with incomes, fish was given away freely on the streets at various centres by members of the Irish Fishermen's Organisation. (See report and pictures in page 7).

The French fishermen's protest was mounted after careful preparations. The fishermen's representatives first sought and gained the support of the CGT, the powerful trade union group, which resulted in lorries of imported fish being stopped at Boulogne fish market.

PRICES COMPLAINT

The French fishermen were not demonstrating against the import of fish into France, because only slightly more than half of France's fish needs comes

from the home fleet. They were objecting to imports from Third Countries at lower-than-economic prices.

Because the Paris Government controls the oil industry by holding share blocks in the big distributors such as Elf and Total, French industry, including fishermen, receive an indirect fuel subsidy by reduced prices. To the fleet, this is estimated to be worth £1 million a week.

However, French fishermen demanded that oil prices be brought down further, as the trawler owners have been calling for crew reductions to offset the oil costs.

It is interesting to note that oil is cheaper by 25% in France than in Ireland, and fish prices markedly higher.

Cheap imports into the E.E.C. are to blame, an I.F.O. spokesman said. "The protesting French fishermen are getting 25p more per lb for their catches than we are."

Fish dumped

Over a ton of fish was dumped by Dunmore East fishermen late last month. The fish — mermig, sole, dabs and ling, do not come under the withdrawal price scheme.

"The protesting French fishermen are getting 25p more per lb for their catches than we are."

FISH EXPORTS DISGRUNTLER THE PIGS

Despite the cheap fish imports from Third Countries into the E.E.C., Ireland's fish exports for 1979 rose to £35.4 million as against £32.8 in 1978. Fish exports are now ahead of our mutton and lamb exports at £26.7 million and equal to our combined overseas trade in bacon, ham and pork for 1979.

The principal markets for

Irish fish in 1979 were Britain £9.3 million; Netherlands £6.7 million; France £5.3 million; Germany £4.7 million; Northern Ireland £1.9 million and Belgium/Luxembourg £1.1 million; Sweden, Spain, Norway and Italy took over £2 million worth of fish from this country.

The main varieties figuring in our export statistics were

FIRST TWO 133-FT. TRAWLERS NOW BUILT

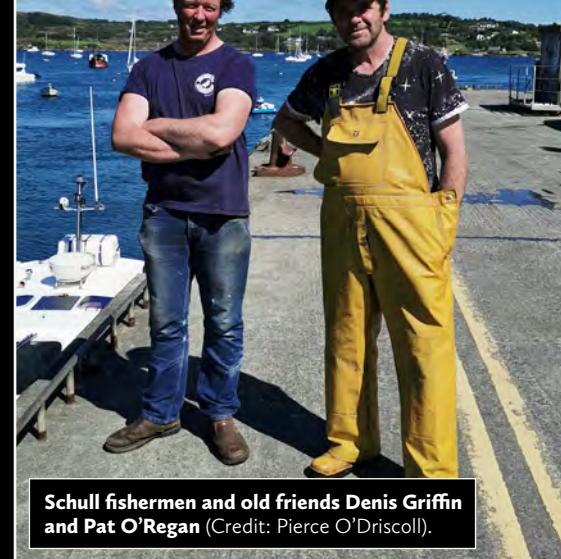
TWO IDENTICAL 133' trawlers were due in Killybegs this month for Skippers, Teddy O'Shea and Kevin McHugh. The first was built in the Sterkoder Mek, Verksted yard at Kristiansund, Norway, and is named Sheanne, while Kevin McHugh has called his ship Antarctic. It was built by Voldnes Skipsverft, Fossnag, Norway.

These £2 million vessel are the beginning of a middlewater fleet for Ireland. Three more of this size are on order for other skippers.

The two ships are fitted with MAK 2,100 n.p. engines and mainly Furuno electronics supplied and serviced by Barry Electronics. The vessels draw 19' of water.

Each ship has its own ice-maker with a four-ton a day output, and each has three sonars as well as two vertical sounders.

THE IRISH SKIPPER,
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its 200th issue.



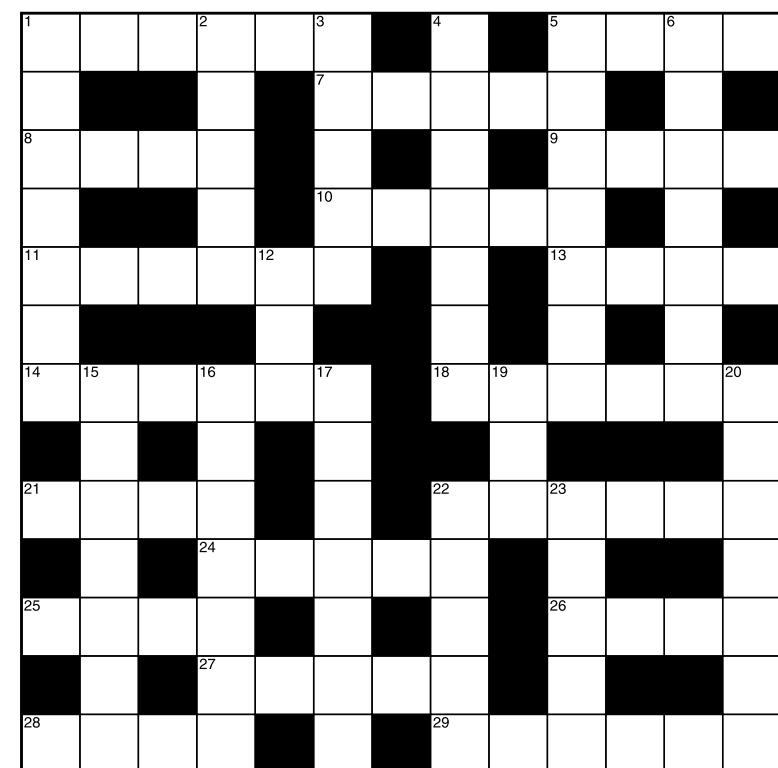
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ACROSS

1. Supply & ...
5. Angry crowds
7. Unhitch
8. Brass instrument
9. Iconic whale, ... Dick
10. Hit the road
11. Drives forward
13. Fingertip cover
14. Leafy side dishes
18. Slow-moving mammals
21. Tax
22. Portable
24. Car stopping device
25. Tropical tuber
26. Burial chamber
27. Risky
28. Seductive
29. Spend (3,3)

DOWN

1. Little tunes
2. Die down
3. Loses shine
4. Desperate, in dire ...
5. Relic
6. Childish & silly
12. Young chap
15. Arithmetic mean
16. Anyone
17. Relieve itch
19. Zodiac sign
20. Fizzy powder
22. Actress, ... Streep
23. Fragmented



*Failure to select jacket size will result in void entry

AUGUST SOLUTION

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U	S	H	E	R	S	A	E	E	
P	U	U	A	N	I	S	E	D	
L	S	I	N	R					
Q	U	A	R	T	E	F	R	S	
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E	P	L	R	V	I				
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Irish tuna boats return with their first landings of Albacore into Castletownbere this year

(Images: Niall Duffy)



August Tie-Up Scheme Sees Extremely Low Uptake

By Lia ní Aodha

Upake of the Department's COVID-19 Tie-Up Scheme for the fleet was extremely low for August, with figures from Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), who are administering the scheme, showing that only five boats participated in the scheme in its last month.

According to those figures, just ten applications were received for the August scheme in total, half of which were closed (i.e. deemed ineligible) for various reasons.

In terms of a breakdown, of those that were deemed eligible, one vessel was over 24 metres, four were under ten metres. Of the five that were turned down, three were vessels less than 12 metres in length, two these were under ten metres.

Earlier figures from BIM indicate 107 applications were received for the July scheme, with 63 deemed eligible. 104 applications were received in June, with 65 ultimately approved.

Mired in controversy from the start, under the temporary scheme which was announced by then Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Michael Creed last May, vessels could voluntarily tie up for one or two of three months, operational from June 1st and running through August.

Supports under the scheme, supposed to support fixed costs, would range from €6,000 to €500 per month, depending on a vessel's length. "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, however, quickly met with sharp criticism from the industry. Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation Chief Executive, Séan O'Donoghue said it was "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," he said.

Similar sentiments were expressed by inshore representatives who said that on the back of the supports being offered many inshore vessels would not be able to afford to tie up, and would have no option but to stay fishing.

A statement in response from the then Minister said the Government's "primary objective" was "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 said.

"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".

Three months on (and sales notes controversy aside), it looks like Ireland's fishermen and women, by and large, 'chose' to stay fishing. Viable or not is another question.

Fishermen around the coast are still citing extremely difficult market conditions, and market reports back their experiences up. Turnovers are down more than 50%, they say. Crab prices are on the floor. Bord Bia says frozen prawn exports for the first half of this year are down 37% compared to last, 50% down to Italy.

But with several of the Government's horizontal measures effectively closed to them on account of various criteria and a scheme that, by many accounts, was "designed to fail"... is it any wonder Ireland's fishermen and women have stayed fishing?

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