



# The Skipper

MERRY CHRISTMAS

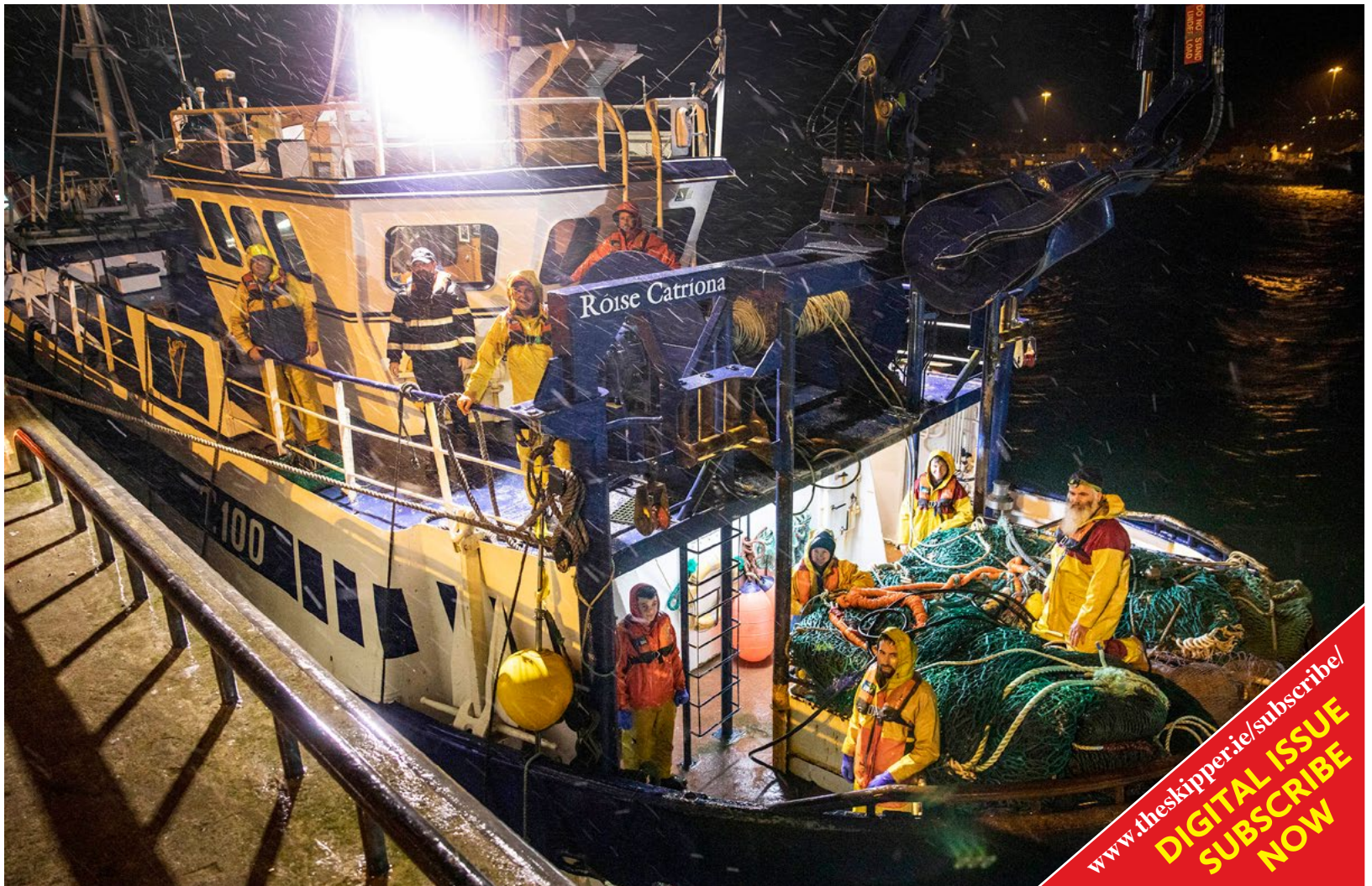
1964-2020



LEADING JOURNAL OF THE IRISH & UK INDUSTRIES DECEMBER 2020 €3.50/£3.00

## SYSTEM FAILURE

New SFPA VALID control system causes confusion. See pages 2-3



Róise Catriona crew with BIM/GMIT staff begin a Plaice discard study trip. (PHOTO: CATHAL NOONAN). See page 8



MERRY  
*Christmas*  
& HAPPY NEW YEAR

Many thanks to our valued customers and friends for your ongoing support, especially over this past year.

We wish you and your loved ones many blessings and a safe, happy 2021.



SKIBBEREEN: Nautic House, Marsh Rd  
CORK: Frankfield Ind. Est., Frankfield Rd

call us on  
**021 4315700**

buy online  
[www.chmarine.com](http://www.chmarine.com)





**EDITOR:** Niall Duffy  
editorial@maramedia.ie  
Mob: 086 823 9608



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

**PRODUCTION /DESIGN:**  
Declan McGrath  
design@maramedia.ie

**MANAGING DIRECTOR:**  
Hugh Bonner  
hugh@maramedia.ie

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:**  
sarah@maramedia.ie  
Tel: 074 95 62828

**PRINTED BY:**  
WG Baird, Antrim, N.I.  
www.wgbaird.com

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

Lorna Siggins  
Lia ní Aodha  
John Cunningham  
Dick James  
Craig Taylor  
Gudjon Einarsson  
Shetland News

**mara**  
media

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

In the compilation of The Skipper, every care is taken to ensure accuracy. Where errors or omissions are brought to the attention of Foilseachán na Mara Teo., future publications will be amended accordingly. However, Foilseachán na Mara Teo. does not accept liability to any person for loss or damage arising from anything contained in this publication or for any error or omission in it, even if such loss or damage is caused by negligence of Foilseachán na Mara Teo., its servants or agents. Opinions and articles featured are not necessarily the opinions of Foilseachán na Mara Teo.

## INSIDE THE DECEMBER ISSUE

P 6

**Minister appeals 6 mile ban judgement**

P 8

**Plaice can survive discarding**

P 24-25

**Quitest vessel in the world launched**

P32-33

**Photographer John Roberts picks his top 5 photos**

Marine & General Insurance Brokers. "Insuring Your World Today"

**Cavanagh Hooper Dolan**  
Insurance Ltd.

Tel: +353 (0)74 9177500 Fax: +353 (0)74 9177200  
Email: info@chd.ie Web: www.chd.ie

Cavanagh Hooper Dolan Insurance Ltd is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland

# New SFPA Control System Causes Confusion

Since the introduction of the new VALID control system by the SFPA The Skipper has been contacted repeatedly by vessel owners and skippers who have received communications from the Fisheries Monitoring Centre (FMC) highlighting errors in their daily electronic fishing reports.

VALID has been developed for the SFPA and the Defence Force's FMC by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine's (DAFM) Information Management Team within the current Integrated Fisheries Information System (IFIS).

SFPA and FMC can now automatically cross-check data information provided in the electronic logbooks by the vessel Master, the vessel's electronic monitoring system (VMS) allowing immediate identification of inconsistencies, errors and missing information.

Under the EU Control Regulation vessels fitted with an Electronic Reporting System are required to submit a logbook daily detailing their fishing activity for the relevant 24 hour period. There are currently 211 Irish fishing boats with the ERS fitted.

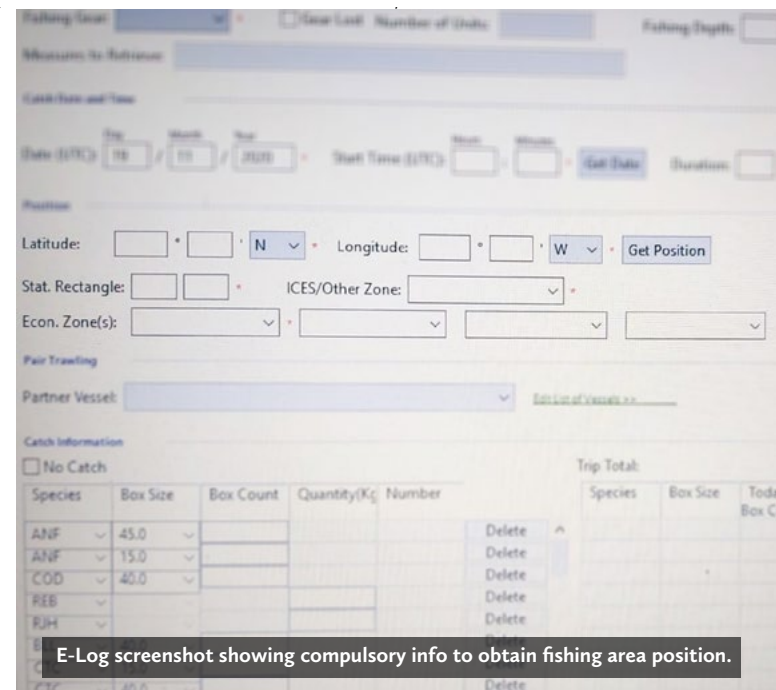
The regulations require that the vessels skipper declare the area in which they were fishing that day by stating the ICES statistical rectangle i.e. ICES area VIa, V11g in the daily logbook.

To obtain this ICES fishing area info the skipper must enter a compulsory Lat/Long position into the electronic logbook supplied by the SFPA.

The new Valid system at SFPA HQ on receipt of the daily report then cross-checks the information provided in the electronic logbooks by the vessel Master with the vessel's electronic monitoring system (VMS) position provided by the FMC.

Previously when manual checks were carried out as long as the VMS positions were in the ICES area stated in the logbooks there was no issue.

However since the launch of the VALID system any deviation between the Lat/Long position which is not a legal requirement and VMS position is being flagged as an error by the vessel and leaving the skipper/vessel open to infringement proceedings and being awarded



penalty points.

Skippers have expressed their frustration at being called regularly by the FMC to check their E-Logs before a trip is finished to correct errors that are not even clearly defined in the SFPA generated error report.

Added to this frustration is that when the SFPA is contacted directly by the skippers when ashore they are being informed that there was no error and not to worry about any further action..

To try and clear up the confusion The Skipper requested the following information from the SFPA;

**Q1: Why does the Valid and FAR report system require a Lat/Long position when the control regulation only specifies a ICES statistical box position?**

Masters and buyers do not input information directly onto the VALID system. It solely automatically cross-checks data information already provided in the electronic logbooks by the vessel Master, the vessel's electronic monitoring system (VMS) as well as information provided by buyers on sales notes, allowing immediate identification of inconsistencies, errors and missing information.

With regard to the FAR report, it uses the Latitude and Longitude entered by the Master into the Electronic Logbook to generate the relevant Statistical Rectangle. The Electronic Logbook in use in Ireland since 2009 (ieCatch) has always

required the Master to enter a position for where he spent most of that operation fishing. The log book application then converts that position from Latitude and Longitude to the relevant Statistical Rectangle and ICES Division. The Lat/long are sought as the master would have them readily available from his on-board systems – GPS/Plotter/etc. The VMS data is forwarded in Latitude and Longitude from the on-board system. For the purpose of the VALID cross check, it is converted to the relevant Statistical Rectangle. VALID simply checks that there is at least one VMS plot in the Statistical Rectangle indicated in the FAR.

**Q2: It appears that this was not an issue when the FAR reports were checked manually therefore is it a parameter issue with the newly introduced Valid system?**

VALID automatically cross-checks data information and is more precise than a manual check and it allows us to cross check 100% of FARs with VMS, which was not possible manually. Consequently it provides more accurate data of the number of fails and passes.

**Q3: As the error highlighted to the vessel requires the Skipper to correct it before the trip log is closed, Is it counted as an infringement or a false error if not modified by the Skipper?**

These will be assessed on a case by case basis depending on

the severity of the mis-recording of the catch area in line with quota management areas.

**Q4: Is it the intention of the SFPA if these errors are classed as infringements to assign penalty points to the vessels?**

These will be assessed on a case by case basis depending on the severity of the mis-recording of the catch area in line with

quota management areas.

As stated above by the SFPA there is no clarification that this is a parameter fault within the new Valid system and no reassurance is being given to the vessels affected that these errors will not be classed as infringements and used in the application of penalty points in the future.

**“The SFPA/FMC will follow up on every detected fail that is notified by the system in relation to data to close them out. This may include them contacting the Master/Owner and notifying them of the action that they may be required to take. More serious fails may result in infringement action being pursued by the SFPA/FMC.”**  
(The Skipper Oct Edition 2020)

## IS&WFPO voice concerns

Many of the vessels contacted by the FMC have also asked their PO's to intervene and after queries made by The Skipper to the IS&WFPO they issued the following statement:

The recent introduction of the VALID system by the SFPA has brought to light issues which will cause significant difficulties for Skippers. Recognising that the system has only just been commissioned and issues may arise, hopefully they can be resolved speedily.

In addition to the issue concerning the FAR reports highlighted by The Skipper, Concerns have been raised regarding the timing of entering the departure report.(DEP). It would seem now that Skippers should only do this immediately prior to leaving port or no sooner than four hours prior to leaving.

Although the ERS (electronic logbook) has improved since it was first introduced (mainly due to owners replacing the Satlink system with their own WiFi) problems still occur through no fault of the Skipper.

It has to be acknowledged that prior to a vessel leaving port, the Skipper's workload is immense and ever increasing. He will have set procedures to go through. From starting main and auxiliary engines, navigation equipment, various safety checks. The list is endless. Nothing should distract the Masters train of thought in getting his vessel away from the pier and safely out of the harbour. However, this

will be compromised when his electronic logbook will fail to sent his DEP.

There is obvious financial implications for the vessel and crew and indeed his partner vessel and his crew if they are pair trawling. Failure to get a successful transmission of the DEP will prevent the vessel from proceeding to sea. Not withstanding the financial costs, the Master of the vessel has to divert all his attention to the ERS, while constantly been aware of tidal or weather conditions hammering his safe departure.

Many Masters prudently sent their DEP well in advance of actually letting go of the ropes, knowing of the potential problems that may occur. This affords them time to seek technical assistance which may not be available late at night or the early hours of the morning.

Technical assistance may not be required. Frequent Window updates can prevent use of the laptop. Occasionally these can take many hours to complete.

As this “error” has only developed since the introduction of VALID, can we seek confirmation that Masters who submit a DEP early to avoid undue stress, will be accepted.

Polling the Vessel Monitoring System should confirm that the vessel is either at the pier or departing at time submitted via ERS.

As The Skipper was going to print we were still receiving reports from vessel owners that the pile of SFPA/FMC error notifications was growing.

**GRACE POOLS LTD**  
POOL & MARINE ENGINEERS

FULLY COMPLIANT H&S, RAPID RESPONSE  
COMMERCIAL DIVING CONTRACTORS.

CLEARANCE OF FOULED PROPELLERS  
UNDERWATER INSPECTIONS  
SEA CHEST BLANKING  
LOCK GATE INSPECTIONS & REPAIRS  
PILE INSPECTION & REPAIRS  
MARINE SALVAGE  
ROV INSPECTIONS

WWW.GRACEPOOLS.CO.UK

EMAIL: MARINE@GRACEPOOLS.CO.UK PHONE: 00353(87)9460148

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**  
**HO HO HO!**  
& a happy new year, from  
**THE SKIPPER**

**ATLANTIC MARINE SUPPLIES LTD**  
DEPARTMENT OF MARINE APPROVED LIFERAFT SERVICE STATION

**PRODUCTS**

- LIFERAFTS
- LIFEJACKETS
- RESCUE BOATS
- IMMERSION SUITS
- PYROTECHNICS
- H.R.U.'S
- BOARDING LADDERS

**SERVICES**

- LIFERAFT SERVICING
- LIFEJACKET SERVICING
- IMMERSION SUIT SERVICING
- HIRE LIFERAFTS

Suppliers of full range of approved lifesaving equipment.  
Service of RFD, DSB, Dunlop - Beaufort, Zodiac and Lifeguard equipment

Donegal Road, Killybegs, Co. Donegal.  
Phone: 074 9731440 Fax: 074 9731699  
After hours; 074 9731332 Email: info@atlanticmarine.ie

**UNION CHANDLERY**  
service to seafarers since 1977

**VETUS HEAVY DUTY WATERLOCKS SPECIFICALLY FOR COMMERCIAL BOATS**

TEMPERATURE RESISTANT UP TO 260°

WWW.UNIONCHANDLERY.IE (021) 455 4334  
23 DOUGHCLOYNE IND ESTATE, CORK



# Galway Pays Tribute To Fishing Family

Tributes have been paid to Galway fishermen Martin and Tom Oliver who died after an incident at sea last month.

By Lorna Siggins

Tributes have been paid to Galway fishermen Martin and Tom Oliver who died after an incident at sea last month.

Martin Oliver, who was almost 62, and his son Tom (37) died within 24 hours of each other after an accident on their potting cataraman in Galway Bay.

The two men had set out on Monday, November 2nd, and were working on the north side of the bay and close to shore in an area between Blackrock and Silverstrand, just east of Barna.

It is understood that Tom Oliver was pulled over the side after becoming entangled in one of the lines attached to a string of gear. Winds were westerly and had freshened very quickly around lunchtime.

The alarm was raised and a Galway RNLI Lifeboat crew launched, while several local vessels also proceeded to the scene.

Tom Oliver was given cardio pulmonary resuscitation on the lifeboat as it headed for the docks, where an ambulance was waiting to take him to University Hospital, Galway.

However, in spite of all the best efforts of his father and the lifeboat crew, Tom did not survive. On Tuesday, November 3rd, it was confirmed that Martin Oliver had died.

Mayor of Galway Mike Cubbard,

Martin and Tom Oliver. Photo: Pat Cantwell



who opened a book of online condolences, paid tribute to the two men as “salt of the earth” and “the best of friends”.

“A dark cloud hangs over the city as the sudden departure of two gentlemen has left a void in the lives of so many,” the mayor said.

“Rest in peace, Martin and Tom Oliver, you will be sorely missed by so many near and far. My deepest sympathies to their families at this sad time,” he said.

The mayor noted that it was only a few weeks since he had recognised the role of the fishermen’s close relatives, Patrick (38) and Morgan (17) Oliver, in rescuing two paddleboarders, Sara Feeney (23)

and Ellen Glynn (17), in Galway Bay last August after 15 hours at sea.

“To go from celebrating the rescue of the two paddleboarders to this tragedy in a couple of months is just terrible,” he said.

“Everybody rejoiced when the two girls were rescued, it gave a lift to everyone and here we are now and the family at the centre of that are mourning the loss of one of their own,” Mayor Cubbard said.

“In August everybody shared in the joy of that rescue and now they will share in this grief with the Oliver family, the fishing community, and the people of the Claddagh and the city,” he said.

The Oliver family are heavily involved in Galway RNLI lifeboat and Galway Sea Scouts, with Patrick’s brothers Ciaran and Dave being coxswains, and Patrick being a member of the shore search team.

Ciaran’s son and Patrick’s nephew, Sean Oliver, was just 14 years old when he and fellow Galway Sea Scouts pulled a man from the river Corrib during the Macnas parade in October 2018.

Just weeks after the paddleboarder rescue, Patrick and Morgan Oliver pulled a man alive from the river Corrib.

Members of the RNLI and the fishing communities along the coast and on the Aran islands travelled to pay their respects outside the funeral on November 6th, which was held in private.

Galway RNLI volunteers and members of the Galway Sea Scouts formed a guard of honour outside Claddagh’s St Mary’s church, where Mass was celebrated by Fr Gerry Jennings of Salthill parish, assisted by Fr Donal Sweeney of the Claddagh’s Dominican community.

Afterwards, Martin’s daughter and Tom’s sister Susanne and her mother Eileen were consoled by many friends, and relatives, as Galway city centre came to a standstill and construction work stopped as a mark of respect.

Crew with Badóirí an Cladaigh and the Galway Hooker Sailing Club had rigged the gleoiteog Manuela - named after the late Swiss student Manuela Riedo - along with the leath-bhád Croi an

Mourners lined Galway Docks to pay their respects



Photos: Joe O'Shaughnessy

Cladaigh, and the bád mór Naomh Crónán in full sail in the Claddagh basin.

On board the Naomh Crónán, musician Sharon Shannon played soft airs as the service continued inside the church.

There was silence for some moments afterwards, as a Garda escort led the cortege over Wolfe Tone bridge and around by Long Walk and into Galway docks.

Several hundred people lined both sides of the streets on the route. Two orange flares were released on the water surface, and members of Galway Bay Sailing Club then lit hand-held flares as a mark of respect on the dockside, where State research ship Celtic Voyager and a number of fishing and angling vessels were berthed.

The rich chords of harpist Una Ní Fhlannagáin resonated as members of the Oliver and Griffin families cast flowers at the water’s edge in bright sunshine.

The cortege paused for a few moments at the docks, and more

tears were shed before the two hearses continued up to Ragoon cemetery overlooking the city. In the graveyard, the father and son – who had been inseparable in life – were buried side by side.

Galway harbourmaster Brian Sheridan, who was among the hundreds present, said it was a “profoundly sorrowful tragedy for the Oliver family, and the wider fishing community”.

There have been at least four incidents where inshore fishermen have fallen overboard in Galway bay in the past 20 years, with several fatalities.

In September 2016, Patsy Kelly (68) of Ballinacourty near Clarenbridge, Co Galway set out to recover shellfish pots in his 6m vessel. The alarm was raised when his boat was found empty and with its engine running south of Tawin Island near Oranmore.

After an extensive search co-ordinated by Valentia Coastguard radio station, Mr Kelly was found in the water a mile west

Claddagh Basin floating tribute



of Blackrock, Salthill by the RNLI Aran lifeboat – having been swept in a north-westerly direction across the bay.

Mr Kelly was wearing a lifejacket and was showing signs

of life, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation was administered.

He was rushed to University Hospital Galway by ambulance but was pronounced dead shortly after arrival.

## Bere Island Boatyard Ltd

Ballinakilla, Bere Island, Beara, Co. Cork P75 XC94



Wishing all our customers a Happy Christmas and a Happy & Prosperous 2020

www.bereislandboatyard.com  
E: bereislandboatyard@gmail.com  
T: 00353 27 75975



HELP US TO HELP OTHERS.  
WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT.

Contact  
info@last.ie | www.last.ie



SEASONS GREETINGS  
from everyone at CHPM



Unit 18, Cessna Avenue,  
Airport Business Park, Killowen, Co Waterford  
Phone: 051306017 Fax: 051306018  
Mobile: 0872574507

E: info@chpm.ie W: www.chpm.ie



Industrial & Marine Engines

Marine Engines 400hp to 1000hp

**WESTWARD SCANIA**

Tel +353 71 9634532 Mob +353 86 6082909  
e-mail Peter.Mallon@westwardscania.com



**SEASONS GREETINGS**

FROM ALL THE TEAM AT ARKLOW MARINE SERVICES

Arklow Marine Services, North Quay, Arklow, Co.Wicklow, Ireland  
Tel: +353 (0)402 32126Fax: +353 (0)402 39839  
email: info@arklowmarine.com



## McConalogue Lodges Legal Appeal Against 6 Mile Ban Court Decision

In December 2018, following a public consultation process in which over 900 submissions were received, the then Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine announced that vessels over 18 metres will be excluded from trawling in inshore waters inside the six nautical mile zone and the baselines from 1 January 2020. A transition period of three years for vessels over 18 metres targeting sprat was allowed to enable adjustment for these vessels, as the sprat fishery is concentrated inside the six nautical mile zone.

A Policy Directive was issued by the Minister to the independent Licensing Authority for Sea Fishing Boats under Statute and was intended to give effect to the measures announced by the then Minister excluding vessels over 18 metres in length from trawling inside six nautical miles.

A Judicial Review was taken by two applicant fishermen challenging the validity of the Policy.

The High Court's ruling of Judicial Review proceedings which relate to the Policy Directive has been appealed by the State to the Court of Appeal and a stay is being sought on the orders granted therein.

Minister McConalogue said that "As this matter is sub judice, I am not in a position to comment on the Policy until the matter can be resolved before the Courts. However, I am committed to the sustainability of fishing in Irish waters and to implementing the commitment made in our Programme for Government that inshore waters continue to be protected for smaller fishing vessels and pair trawling be prohibited inside

the six-mile limit."

### Inshore Groups reaction

The National Inshore Fishermen's Association CLG (NIFA) and the National Inshore Fishermen's Organisation CLG (NIFO) issued a joint statement in relation Ministers McConalogue's decision to appeal the High Courts decision.

### The statement read:

Both NIFA and NIFO welcome the Ministers decision to appeal the ruling of the High Court's judicial review and sincerely hope that the State is successful in getting the stay being sought on the orders granted therein.

We appreciate any appeals process may be lengthy and we understand the need for due process. Acknowledging that it is extremely important for the future of the Inshore Sector that the stay order be granted, particularly given the increase in activity of larger vessels inside the 6nm limit in recent weeks, since the High Court's ruling.

Many of our members disagree with the ruling of the High Court, which was critical of the consultation process leading up to the decision. They see no issue with the process which saw an unprecedented response.

The Judgement refers to dependency. In terms of dependency inshore vessels are more far more dependant than larger vessels on the resources inside the 6nm limit. In the context of Sprat, we have members that are highly

dependent on sprat exclusively inside the 6nm limit.

They had no issues with the consultation process but are likely to go out of business if the stay order isn't granted as they cannot compete alongside larger industrial vessels operating in our Inshore waters.

### Ruling Will stand

The IS&WFPO who represent the 2 vessel owners who took the judicial review believe the judgement will stand any test or appeal and that the complete consultation process may need to be reviewed.

CEO Patrick Murphy told The Skipper:

*The IS&WFPO has a diverse membership of 53 vessels fishing both inshore and further offshore. Our members adopt a variety of different fishing practices including trawling, pelagic fishing, gillnetting, seining, dredging and potting and a majority of our members are involved in more than one type of fishing during a particular year.*

*Sprat fishing has been undertaken for many decades by the vessels now labelled as Industrial sized and why it is only now that members in other fishermen's organisations are suddenly claiming, after decades of them also fishing, that they cannot compete and they will be put out of business unless the bigger boats stop fishing and give their income up and leave the Sprat fishing business, see the irony?*

*We in our Organisation the IS&WFPO work continuously with our Marine Scientists to protect the sustainability of all stocks not just sprat and never in any of our meetings was*

*concern expressed to us that the activity of sprat fishing was a risk in any shape or form to any other species or fisherman.*

*I call on those who claim to be representing an entire section of our countries fishermen and women to provide clearer details of their recent claims, some evidence would be nice, as the views expressed simply do not, from our decades experience in this Industry, ring true.*

*My personal view is once again our Industry is being divided and is amazing to see the new alliances being formed with environmental groups, where in the past fisheries such as the traditional wild Salmon fishery was a huge divisive issue between them, is now forgotten, forgiven even.*

*In Summary we still believe that what was submitted by the IS&WFPO at the outset of previous Minister Michael Creeds process consultation was correct. That was that the rationale and supporting reports behind the 6 mile ban was fundamentally flawed,*

*However while we in the Irish South & West Fish Producers Organization welcome all and any consultation process initiated by any Minister relating to any area of Sea Fisheries, whether in the area of Licensing, Conservation of Fish Stocks, Equality of Opportunity across Segments, Access to Waters, Access to Stocks and/or the Conditions to be imposed when granting Fishing Opportunities to any single Fishing Boat or Class of Fishing Boat, we reserve the right to challenge the veracity of any evidence put forward if the outcome is severely detrimental to our members.*

## Fishy Friday Fundraiser Launched

Ireland's only fishing charity LAST (Lost At Sea Tragedies) has launched a major fundraising event which gives the public an opportunity to support our fishermen whilst enjoying a mouthwatering fish & chip dinner.

The "Fishy Friday Fundraiser" will take place nationwide on Friday 4th December and many of Ireland top Fish & Chip Takeaways and Restaurants have already committed to donate part of their sales from the day to LAST to support our fishing communities and families.

Participants include: Fish Box Dingle, IASC Dungarvan, West Coast Grill Castletownbere, The Lobsterman Aghada, Doran's on the Pier Howth, Quinlan's Seafood Bars Cork, Kenmare, Killarney, Killorglin and Tralee. More venues have expressed an interest and will be added over the coming weeks.

A full list of those taking part will be posted on the LAST website (www.last.ie) and on social media closer to the day. Everyone is encouraged to spread the word to their families & friends to help make the day special.

If you own or know of a takeaway/restaurant that would like to take part please contact Last Trustee: **Niall Duffy** 0868937916 or email [info@last.ie](mailto:info@last.ie)

### LAST's Aims

Tragedy and inconsolable death are an all too regular occurrence for our seafaring communities. Whilst the fishermen who brave our Atlantic seas bear the risks with equanimity it is often the bereaved neighbours, friends and of course the families who are left to mourn the price that the sea demands from its harvesters. LAST has arisen from such tragedies and its aims are:

- To provide support for bereaved communities and fundraise on an ongoing basis to ensure that sufficient funds are available at the instance of a tragedy, i.e. to be able to provide assistance such as media relations, liaison services, counselling, support to search and rescue staff, etc.
- To promote & campaign for the preservation of our fishing heritage
- To provide a structured ready-made vehicle to allow bereaved communities to support their neighbours at their time of need, firstly at the time of the event itself and thereafter in organising fundraising
- To actively promote safety at sea for our fishing men and women

## National Fisheries College of Ireland Latest Course Schedule



### Basic Safety Training

- 12-14 January, NFC Castletownbere
- 18-20 January, NFC Greencastle
- 25-27 January, NFC Greencastle
- 16-18 February, NFC Castletownbere
- 01-03 March, NFC Greencastle
- 09-11 March, NFC Castletownbere
- 22-24 March, NFC Greencastle
- 13-15 April, NFC Castletownbere

### Enhanced Safety Training

- 06 January, NFC Greencastle
- 04 March, NFC Greencastle

### Deckhand Foundation Programme

- 01 Feb-12 Mar, NFC, Greencastle

### GMDSS General Operators Certificate (GOC)

- 18-29 January, NFC Castletownbere

### Advanced Fire Fighting and Prevention

- 01-05 February, NFC Castletownbere

### Commercial Scuba Diving

- 22 Feb-20 March, NFC Castletownbere

### Surface Supply Diving

- 06 April-30 April, NFC Castletownbere

For courses taking place in National Fisheries College, Castletownbere

Contact Della O'Sullivan

T +353 27 71230  
E [Della.osullivan@bim.ie](mailto:Della.osullivan@bim.ie)

For courses taking place in National Fisheries College, Greencastle

Contact Maria McCarron

T +353 74 938 1068  
E [maria.mccarron@bim.ie](mailto:maria.mccarron@bim.ie)

For courses taking place in the Coastal Training Unit

Contact Bob Walsh

T +353 87 6837134

A complete list of upcoming courses from BIM is available on [www.bim.ie/training](http://www.bim.ie/training)



An Roinn Talmhaíochta, Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine



EUROPEAN UNION  
This measure is part-financed by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

[www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie)



"Serving Fishermen on the South & West Coasts of Ireland"

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year



[Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation CLG](http://IrishSouth&WestFishProducersOrganisationCLG)

The Pier, Castletownbere, Co. Cork

Email: [info@irishsouthandwest.ie](mailto:info@irishsouthandwest.ie)

Tel: 027-70670 or 027-70607



THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF KT NETS WISH ALL THEIR CUSTOMERS & FRIENDS A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

Contact: 074-9741498 / 087-2347601  
[www.ktnets.ie](http://www.ktnets.ie) [danny@ktnets.ie](mailto:danny@ktnets.ie)



# Fish Survivability on the Pier

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

**B**ord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood Development Agency, has developed a new mobile fish holding unit which facilitates localised survivability experiments close to the action on the fishing grounds.

Recently christened on the pier in Castletownbere, the unit, supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, consists of a 40 ft refrigerated reefer with fish holding tanks hooked up to a water-recirculation system. BIM conducted a full survivability experiment on seine-caught plaice in collaboration with Damien Turner and the crew of the MFV Róisín Catriona and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT). Operating on fishing grounds up to 130 km south of Castletownbere, the vessel caught and stored 145 plaice in fish bins with a flow-through of sea water. The vessel

landed the fish directly adjacent to the new unit for captive monitoring over 15 days. A strong 71% survival result at the end of this period will be used to apply for a survivability exemption off the south west coast where plaice quotas are low.

Martin Oliver and Matthew McHugh from BIM devised and assembled the system so that it could be easily transported to different locations around the coast. This reduces mortalities and potentially negatively biased results associated with transporting fish over long distances to the fixed holding system in Galway. It also aligns with an increasing need for full survivability experiments to be conducted in localised areas to ensure results are representative of the fishery in question.

Readers of previous editions may recall another article on survivability of seine-caught plaice earlier this year. That study assessed and categorised the condition or vitality of fish in the Irish seine fishery, and inferred survival from a full captive



monitoring experiment conducted in Denmark. The European Commission's Scientific Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries previously granted a survivability exemption on this basis but recently changed tack, recommending that full captive monitoring experiments are needed in the future. The new study available at [www.bim.ie/our-publications/fisheries](http://www.bim.ie/our-publications/fisheries) takes full account of that recommendation.

BIM would like to thank

Damien Turner, the crew of the MFV Róisín Catriona and Anita Talbot from GMIT for a successful collaboration. Thanks also to the Harbour Master, Cormac McGinley and John Nolan from Castletownbere Fishermen's Co-op for assistance with logistics around set up on the pier.

All of us in BIM wish to pass on our sincere condolences to our colleague Martin and to all the Oliver family on their recent loss of Martin and Tom Oliver.



Shore Road, Killybegs  
Co. Donegal, Ireland  
Tel: +353 74 97 31152  
[info@mooneyboats.ie](mailto:info@mooneyboats.ie)



Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year  
From All At Mooney Boats!

Boat Building • Boat Repairs • Marine Chandlery

[www.mooneyboats.ie](http://www.mooneyboats.ie)



**Irish South and East Fish  
Producers Organisation**



*WISHING YOU ALL  
A VERY HAPPY  
CHRISTMAS AND  
A PROSPEROUS NEW  
YEAR FROM ALL AT  
ISEFPO*

Viewmount Hse, Viewmount Park, Dunmore Rd, Waterford.  
Tel (Office): 051 853627 Mobile: 086 0222090  
Email: [ISEFPO@gmail.com](mailto:ISEFPO@gmail.com)



**Killybegs Fishermen's  
ORGANISATION LTD.**

**KFO would like to wish  
everyone a very Merry Christmas  
& Prosperous New Year**

Head Office: Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation Ltd,  
Bruach na Mara, St. Catherine's Road, Killybegs.

Phone: (074) 9731089 / 31305. Fax: (074) 9731577.  
Email: [kfo@kfo.ie](mailto:kfo@kfo.ie) Website: [www.kfo.ie](http://www.kfo.ie)

Dublin Office: Phone: (01) 825 8846. Fax: (01) 825 8847.  
Email: [kfo@kfo.ie](mailto:kfo@kfo.ie)



**ACT NOW  
TO GET  
BREXIT  
READY**

➔ Go to [www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie)  
to find a range of supports and  
guidance to help you prepare for Brexit

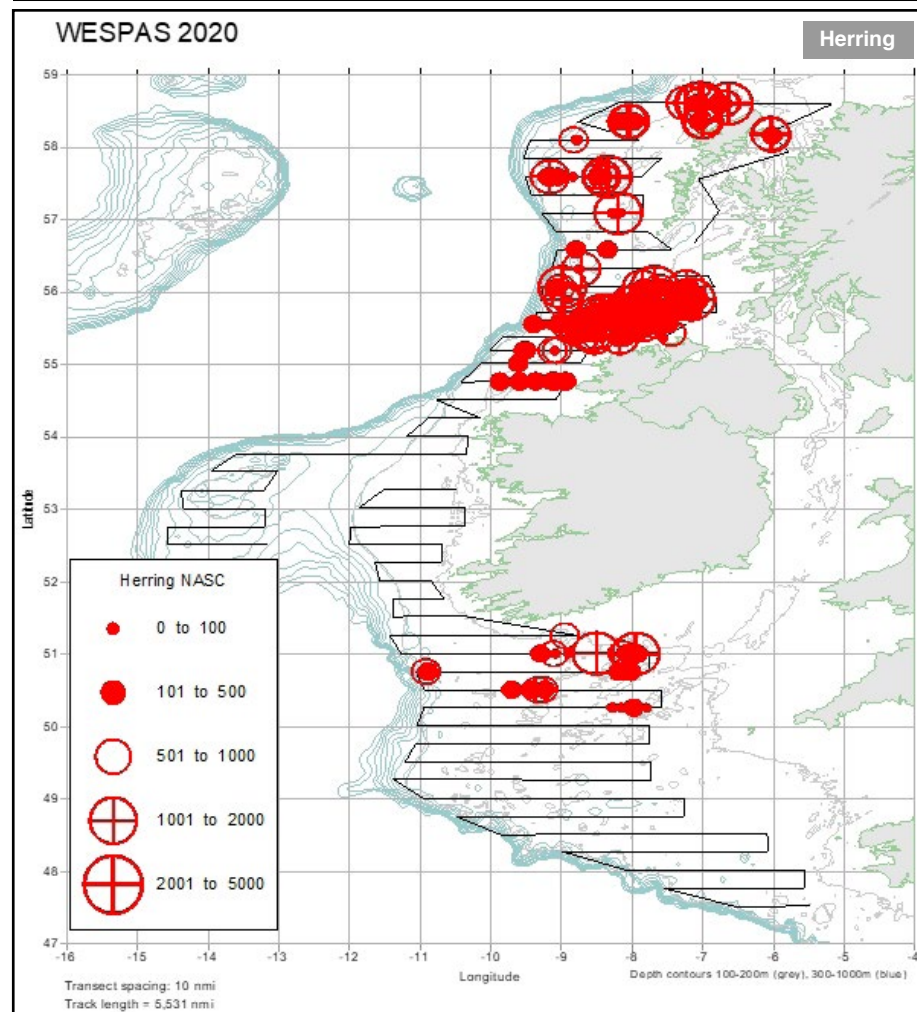
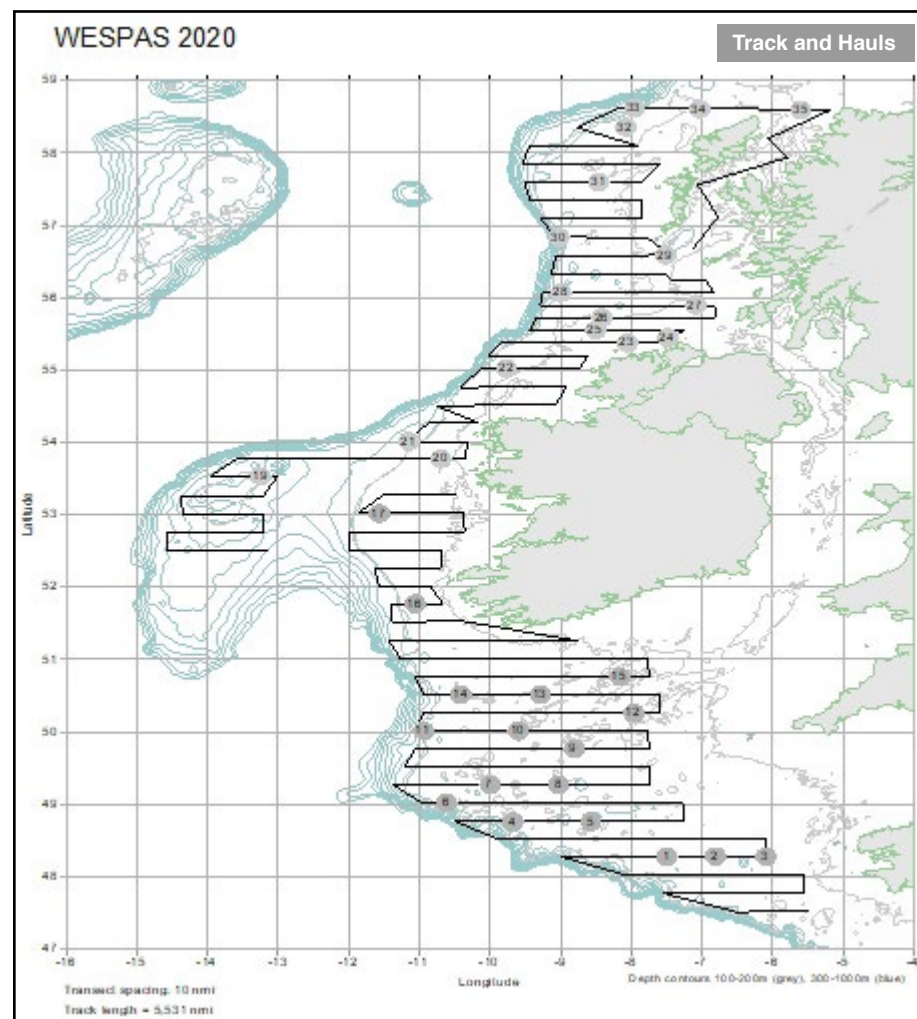
Telephone: **01 214 4100**  
Email: [brexit@bim.ie](mailto:brexit@bim.ie)





# WESPAS ACOUSTIC SURVEY 2020

## Fisheries Ecosystem Advisory Services (FEAS)



The 2020 WESPAS acoustic survey was carried out over a 6-week period from the start of June and covered an extensive area spanning waters from northern Biscay to north of the Hebrides. The survey provides an opportunity to monitor feeding and spawning phases of some of our key pelagic resources including herring, horse mackerel and boarfish. The survey is a multi-disciplinary resource survey, incorporating research programs in collaboration with national third level institutions.

Age stratified stock abundance estimates of boarfish, herring (Malin Shelf and Celtic Sea) and horse mackerel were calculated using acoustic density and biological data from trawl sampling. Stock summaries were submitted to ICES for use within the stock assessment process.

### AREA COVERAGE

The survey covered shelf and shelf edge waters from 47°30' N to 59°30' N and extended westward to the Porcupine Bank (Figure 1). The survey effort and geographical coverage is consistent with previous surveys and ensures continuity in the time series. In total, the 2020 survey covered 5,531 nautical miles over 57 transects with a total area coverage of over 64,723 nmi<sup>2</sup>.

Survey scientist Ciaran O'Donnell said "Results from the WESPAS survey over recent years indicate varying degrees of spawning success for the key pelagic species monitored during the survey. Most notable is boarfish with evidence of above average year classes in each of 2017, 2018 and 2019. Increases in the abundance of juvenile herring were also apparent in 2017 and 2018 both in the Celtic Sea and on the Malin Shelf. For the Celtic

Sea stock this is significant given current poor state of the stock. For horse mackerel, the 2017-year class (3-year old fish in 2020) appears to be above average. While increased numbers of young fish are always welcome, the potential contribution to the spawning stock will not be realised until the fish are fully mature. Early indications from survey data are that favourable spawning conditions (temperature and salinity) and post larval prey availability (zooplankton abundance) for young fish contributed over this period".

### MALIN SHELF HERRING

Herring were well distributed throughout the Malin Shelf survey area in 2020, especially in the area to the north and west of Tory Island (south of 56°N), north of the mouth of Lough Swilly and Lough Foyle/west of Islay (Figure 2). There were good signs of immature herring in the Malin Shelf area overall, particularly 1 and 2 winter ring (wr). Maturity analysis of herring samples from the survey indicated that 48% of herring were mature (in the 2019 survey, 79% of herring were mature). Maturity analysis indicates that 28% of 2-wr, 65% of 3-wr fish, and 100% of fish of 4-wr and older were mature. The age profile of survey samples in 2020 is dominated by young fish (1-3wr), accounting for 75% of the total biomass (or 86% of the total abundance). There were also good indications of adult herring to the northwest of Tory in deep water and around St. Kilda.

Overall, there was an increase in the total SSB in 2020 compared to 2019. There was also a large increase in TSB, driven mainly by an increase in the proportion of young (immature) fish. The final

SSB estimate for herring in 6a (combined 6aS, 7bc and 6aN) will be completed by including the biomass and abundance estimates from the survey of 6aN to the north of 58°30N and west of 4°W carried out by the RV Scotia at the same time.

The survey is conducted during the summer feeding phase when the 6aN and 6aS stocks are mixed. Genetic and morphometric research is ongoing to develop methods for splitting the overall survey estimate into separate stock estimates which will allow the stocks to be managed separately in future.

### BOARFISH

The distribution of boarfish in 2020 followed a similar pattern to previous years (Figure 3). Both the number and acoustic density of schools was notably higher across all survey strata in 2020, with the exception of the Porcupine Bank. The highest occurrence was recorded in the Celtic Sea where over 65% of the total biomass was observed and included a high proportion of immature fish for the third consecutive year. Older fish dominate the adult stock, with 8-year-old fish and older representing 55% of the total stock biomass, 10% of the total biomass (41% in terms of abundance) consists of immature fish. The positive influence of the strong year class of 2017 and 2018 will become apparent when they fully recruit to the spawning stock in the near future.

Overall, the biomass of boarfish observed in 2020 was over double that observed in 2019 and is comparable to the biomass observed in 2013.

### HORSE MACKEREL

Horse mackerel were observed both along the west coast of Ireland and in Celtic Sea (Figure 4). The number of schools and overall acoustic density were lower than observed in 2019.

Compared to recent surveys, the distribution of horse mackerel was patchy and of lower abundance than in 2020. No large aggregations of horse

mackerel were observed over the duration of the survey and of the seven strata surveyed, three contained horse mackerel. The Celtic Sea stratum contained the largest proportion of biomass (55% of total biomass), followed by the west coast (33%) and the southern Hebrides (3%).

The 3-year age class dominated this year's survey estimate representing over 21% of the total stock biomass. Four-year old fish ranked second representing over (19%) and seven-year-old fish were ranked third (13%). In combination, these three age classes represented almost 53% of the total biomass observed.

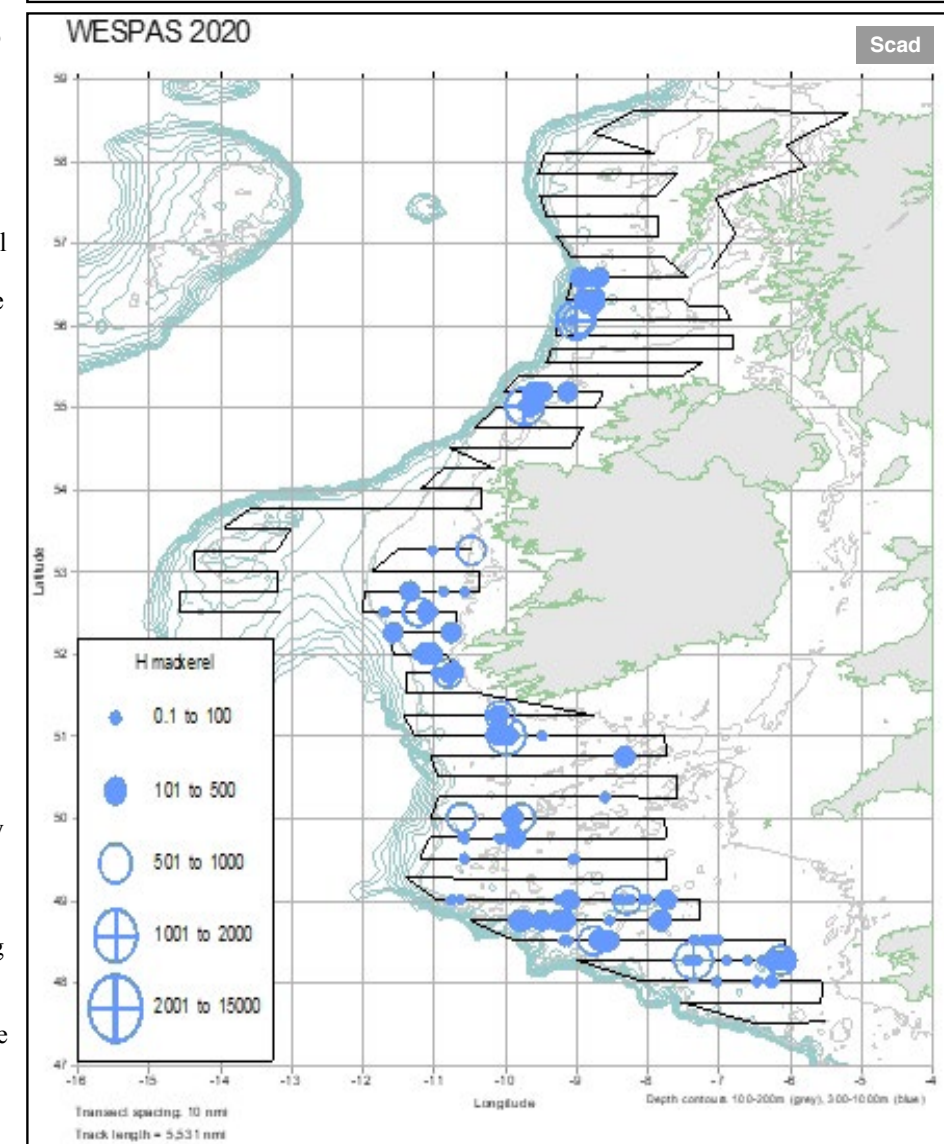
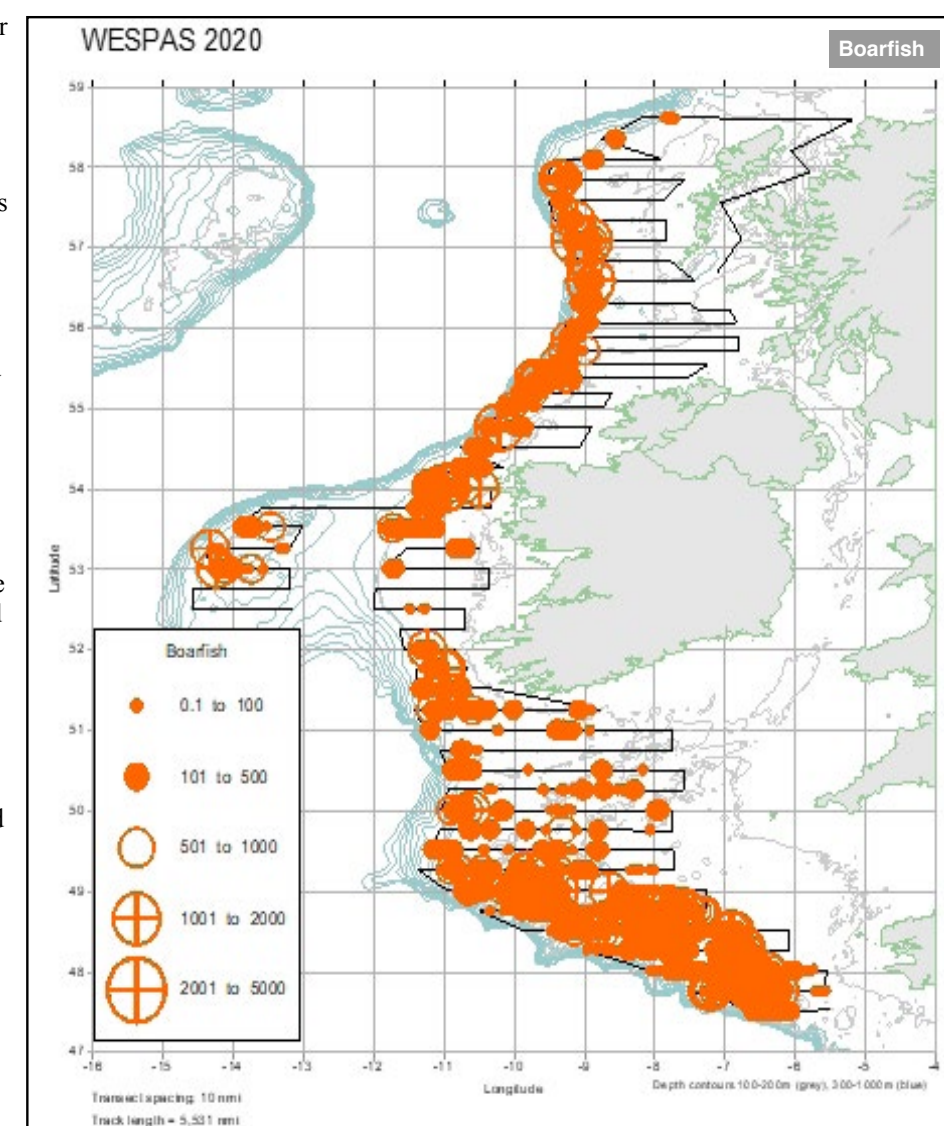
Maturity analysis of horse mackerel samples indicated 91% of the total bio-mass was mature. Maturity analysis by age class showed that all fish of two years and older were fully mature.

### CELTIC SEA HERRING

Aggregations of Celtic Sea herring were observed during the survey in the western and southern feeding grounds around the Pistola and Labadie Banks respectively (Figure 2). Two winter ring fish dominated the total survey estimate, representing 63% of total biomass (67% of total abundance). Three winter ring fish ranked second contributing 25% of the total biomass and 23% of total abundance. Combined, these two age classes represented over 88% of total survey biomass and over 90% of total abundance.

Maturity analysis of Celtic Sea herring samples indicated 48% of 2 winter ring fish were mature, rising to 96% for 3 winter ring fish. Maturity analysis indicated over 64% of the total stock biomass was mature and 58% of total stock numbers.

O'Donnell added "the importance of the two and three winter ring fish to the potential rebuilding capacity of the Celtic Sea stock cannot be stressed enough given the current low stock level. The Celtic Sea herring survey will take place in October and provide an estimate of stock size for use in the stock assessment."





## Marine Institute CEO elected to the ICES Bureau



Dr Paul Connolly, CEO Marine Institute.  
Photo: Andrew Downes, Xposure

**D**r Paul Connolly, CEO of the Marine Institute, has been elected to the Bureau of The International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES).

ICES is an intergovernmental marine science organisation, with a network of 6000 scientists from over 700 marine institutes in the 20 member countries that border the North Atlantic. Ireland joined ICES in 1925 and is a strong supporter of the organisation. The Marine Institute provides a broad range of dedicated marine scientists that make a valuable contribution to the work of ICES.

Through strategic partnerships, ICES work in the Atlantic Ocean also extends into the Arctic, the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea,

and the North Pacific Ocean. 2500 scientists participate in ICES activities annually. ICES advance and share scientific understanding of marine ecosystems and the services they provide and use this knowledge to generate state-of-the-art advice for meeting conservation, management, and sustainability goals.

The Council is the principal decision and policy-making body of the organisation and the Bureau acts as the Executive Committee of the Council (the Board of the organisation). The Council has two representatives from each Member state known as delegates. The current delegates for Ireland are Dr Paul Connolly and Dr Ciaran Kelly (Marine Institute).

Charlie McConalogue, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine congratulated Dr Connolly on his appointment to the ICES Bureau. "The Marine Institute's work with ICES is essential to the delivery of quality advisory, scientific and technical services to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, as well as other government departments and agencies. Ireland relies on the work of ICES to support the sustainable use of our seas and oceans and Dr Connolly's election will further enhance Ireland's contribution to this valued international organisation".

Dr Connolly has served the ICES

community since he was first appointed Irish delegate in 2000, when he took up his role as Director of Fisheries and Ecosystems Advisory Services at the Marine Institute. Dr Connolly was elected Vice President of ICES in 2003 and served on its Board until 2005. He then served as MCAP Chair (Management Committee on the Advisory Process) from 2005 to 2008. Dr Connolly was elected President of ICES from 2012 to 2015, and led the development of the ICES Strategic Plan (2014 - 2018) which was adopted by 20 member countries. Dr Connolly was appointed CEO of the Marine Institute in October 2019.

Welcoming the appointment, Chairman of the Marine Institute Dr John Killeen said, "On behalf of the board, I congratulate Dr Connolly on his election by the Member Countries of ICES to this prestigious and important position. The Marine Institute has a long-standing relationship with ICES and regard it as an essential forum for our scientists to collaborate with their international colleagues to deliver impartial advice for our decision makers".

This year's ICES Council meeting dealt with a broad range of marine issues including the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on scientific data collection, analysis and advice delivery; on the finances of the organisation and on how ICES might contribute to the UN Decade of the Ocean (2021 to 2019).

## Swan-Net Gundry SNG's ongoing technology continues to revolutionise pelagic catching sector.

By John Cunningham

"SWAN Fast Flow Codend" is still topping the charts at the start of the Mackerel season. The new Swan Fast flow Codend has a major success for SNG, this Codend was designed to improve the quality of trawled fish with very positive feedback from customers and buyers, and we feel the objective of this project has been achieved.

The Swan Fast Flow Codend has been designed with the aim to increase the volume of area within the Codend, which in turn allows the catch to be less stressed and compacted. The quality of the catch has been reported to be of excellent standard, and sample fillets taken in the factories have shown fish to be very fresh. Blood spots in the flesh have been significantly reduced and a lot of catch landings are reporting practically zero blood spots.

To accommodate the new Swan Fast Flow Codend, SNG has devised a new system of running the Codend splitter ropes through Dynice Handles. This system has eliminated the need for stainless steel rings. The benefits of this system are that it is lighter to handle, it reduces constant wear, and it will extend the working life of the Codend splitter ropes.

### THE NEW "SWAN GUIDER TRAWL"

Since SNG introduced the SWAN GUIDER TRAWL to the market, the success of the trawl has been significant; the

aim of the design concept was to increase the herding power. This was achieved by adding additional meshing to the side wing panel of the trawls; this in turn reduced the possibility of fish escaping out through the sides of the trawl which would have been the case with trawls of older design. The gap in the sides of some trawls can range from 30m up to 250m on different model types.

The Swan Guider Trawl has also extended the fishing area as the spread on the trawl will increase. SNG have now had success with the trawl of the Mackerel, Horse Mackerel, Herring and again most recently at the Albacore Tuna fishery. The feedback from customers has been very positive.

### THE NEW "SWAN GUIDER-PLUS TRAWL"

This trawl has the same design concept as the Swan Guider Trawl, but with this version the bridle arrangement changes from the standard 4 bridle to a new 8 bridle arrangement. The additional 4 extra bridles are added to close the escape area to its furthest point in the sides of the trawl. We have found this version to be most successful.

SNG has built both versions of this trawl for single boat trawling and also for pair trawling. Older trawls of all types can and have been modified to the Guider system. The company's chief gear designer Cathal Boyle says we at SNG believe the Guider Trawl is a "game changer" for all sizes of vessels as it can even give a small trawl as much increased reach.



SWAN Fast Flow Codend in action off Scotland

## Killybegs Coast Guard



**N**ovember saw the launch of a new short film "The Shout" highlighted online by The Skipper. Focusing on the Irish Coast Guard Unit based in Killybegs, the video demonstrates how the volunteers in the service respond to the typical colloquially known among the emergency services nationwide as "getting the shout". The Killybegs Coast Guard Unit commissioned local photographer Alan Hennigan to produce the film.

Commenting on the film Alan told us...

"When the lads approached me to shoot the film it was basically just a straight forward recruitment video. However, as the Covid 19 situation continued to deteriorate into the autumn we were severely restricted as to what we could

safely shoot, so we tried to make it a more personal film that attempted to document how a volunteer reacts and feels to receiving a call to help a stranger the middle of the night".

Shane Mc Crudden, deputy officer in charge of the Killybegs Unit said, "one of the main things we wanted to get across was that the Irish Coast Guard, in spite of its volunteer status is very much an organisation which operates to a professional standard. Working with Alan we have managed to capture that".

You can find out more about the Killybegs Coast Guard and the work they do for their community on Facebook, likewise you can check Alan Hennigan's work on Facebook, instagram and on his website, alanhenniganphotography.ie.



SAFE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

For the latest information and guidance on sea-fisheries regulations and seafood safety, visit:

[sfpa.ie](http://sfpa.ie)

Committed to the effective and fair regulation of the Irish sea-fishing and seafood sectors.

Telephone:  
+353 (0)23 885 9300

Confidential Line:  
1890 767 676



## GROW YOUR BRAND



### WITH THE SKIPPER & SKIPPER EXPOS

- Average Monthly Circulation: 4.5k
- Average Monthly Readers: 11.5k
- Average Monthly Website Visitors: 26k
- Social Media Followers: 78k
- Newsletter Subscriptions: 7k



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

### Print Advertising Rates

SIZE	MONO	COLOUR
Full Page	€1,000	€1,200
1/2 Page	€600	€725
1/4 Page	€400	€500
1/8 Page	€200	€250
65x95mm	€95	€120

Contact Sharon  
+353 (0)86 8401250  
+353 (0)74 9548037  
[sharon@maramedia.ie](mailto:sharon@maramedia.ie)



# NORTHERN IRELAND NEWS *By Dick James*

## THE FISHERY

Not much happening! Usual for this time of year but normally you would find some hardy souls game to make a go of things usually by travelling to some distant seas to make what they can in times of local poverty.

This year the weather has played its usual disruptive effects and with the seasonal prawn slack season in the western Irish Sea the local fishery has suffered but to add to that this year the tie up scheme now in full swing with a significant part of the fleet laid up in harbour counting their compensation and others waiting their turn in the second tranche of tie-up to take them through to the New Year and a fresh start.

What few boats did try the local fishery off County Down coast were not really making anything except giving some wage to foreign crew. The small trawlers based in Portavogie did give it a shot on the local rig grounds early on when the weather suited but come the wind small boat trawling is not to be recommended and so this activity came to a halt. There was better news in the Clyde where a showing of prawns got interest from the Portavogie usual suspects and the more desperate Ardglass men, then it took off and later came back again to present on option for those interested and not tie-up bound.

Kilkeel for the prawners was having a very slack time with little incentive to put to sea although, paradoxically some markets were not only open for prawn but calling for supplies to meet market commitments. North Shields is usually an option at this time of year and whilst some boats did go on their winter cruise limited market and indifferent reports from the fishery curtailed any enthusiasm to make the trip around.

Maracestina did her usual thing on the Porcupine braving the weather which at this time of year can be dire out there, hopefully any grossing made it worth the discomfort.

Another seasonal change which usually turns up at this time of year is the Scallop fishery which opened on 1st November (as usual) but with quota restricting to 16/17 bags per day (700kgs) in the Manx sector. Grossing were obviously limited and only the smaller easy to run boats could take this option although prices defied the gloom forecast to give a daily return in the mid range. Better than the prawns and better than nothing!



Boats safely tied at Ardglass harbour Photo Linda Crangle

Landing restrictions applied in the Isle of Man and home vessels were allowed in whilst visitors were restricted to landing (though not allowed to go ashore) in Douglas and Peel only. Most of the County Down boats chose to base at home.

Some in the County Down fleet were also on tie-up duty and waiting their turn to go to it on 28th November when part one of the scheme was replaced by part two and the cast of players changed over with the second lot hoping for a Christmas bonus. The County Down coast after an initial expression of activity was reasonably light on attendance possibly down to the prevailing wind direction although some activity occurred in Millisle Bay and maybe this non quota option might be found on this coast later on for whoever tries it.

On the white fish front a disappointing year is dragging to an end with the usual individuals picking away off the County Louth shore on the Haddock unconstrained by quota but limited by market and the smaller run of fish found this year. Some activity carried on in the North Channel for a mix of fish which generally was light enough to find a local market and again better returns than the prawns.

The Bangor/Kilkeel based Unity finished her year back in Kilkeel after fishing the Autumn in the South West based on whitefish and then the cuttlefish when quota ran out.

The Pelagics ended their season early with quota caught and a period of rest now and preparation for the new year Mackerel run. All three local boats finished off the Mackerel with the Stefanie M and Havilah landing into Shetland before steaming south on the way home to pick up the last of the Irish Sea Herring quota landing into Belfast before lifting off the gear for upkeep and storage prior to 2021 and whatever that brings. Voyager finished up in Killybegs before making for her winter home in Skagen, Denmark.

The Irish boats working the Herring to the west of the Isle of Man fished in rota with one pair at a time entering the fishery and making daily (nightly) landings into Ardglass before being replaced by the next relay pair. A well managed fishery in all for 2020 for a sector relatively unaffected by Covid19 pandemic and market but who knows what 2021 will bring with Brexit, fishing opportunity and market access?

For the inshore fleet the effects of Covid limiting markets has been most disruptive and the fall back local markets have suffered with the hospitality lock-down and one can only hope that the recently announced aid package comes in time for Christmas and that the market boost usually associated with the festive season lifts the spirits (in more ways than one) before the New Year brings what it will.

## Fisheries Minister Visits Ardglass

■ Fisheries Minister Edwin Poots fulfilled his long made pledge and visited Ardglass on the 22nd October the day a victim of Coronavirus which following the just announced mini lock-down featured strongly in the arrangements made for the visit with spaced meeting zones, spatial distancing, masks where necessary and individual transport.

The visit took in all working parts of the Harbour and highlighted development aspirations of the local fishing community. This included the deepening requirement necessary for the more modern type of vessel using the Harbour of late, protective structures to calm weather induced motion inside the Harbour and a dedicated pontoon based facility to house the small boat inshore fleet.

The needs of the fleet using the Harbour as a pelagic landing base were emphasised with a landing by the pairing of Rachel Jay and Tempo having taken

place earlier that morning and a visit to the local pelagic factory of C&O Mulligan followed where the catch of Irish Sea Herring was being processed, frozen and cold stored. To see the process in full swing emphasised the importance of Herring to the village with the factory fully manned and in busy mode.

The Minister was at pains to emphasise his support for the local fishing industry with the announcement of the latest Covid support measures recently announced raising the overall support in direct aid to £3.2 million in 2020. He also recognised the place within an industry that lands top quality seafood of all species from Nephrops, Crab and lobster Herring, Mackerel Scallop and whitefish in Northern Ireland which is a continuation in Ardglass which has a long and rich history and should continue as a sustainable and prosperous future.

The Minister also pledged to support the industry in its growth through the BREXIT transition into a future underpinned by

equitable access to Irish Sea fisheries.

Support on a similar theme was voiced by other politicians present at the visit.

Whilst touring the harbour the Minister was accosted by local fishermen who by chance had the opportunity to point out the disparity between gear types used in the local Nephrops fishery in nets authorised by the EU authorities and those demanded by the Northern Irish authorities. The differences were highlighted as two nets were laid out adjacent to each other in the repair yard one from an Ardglass boat the other from an EU boat based in Ardglass. Officials explained the differences by claiming that local fishermen were more proficient at catching cod than their EU counterparts.

The usual pleasantries were exchanged following the visit but following the visit an announcement was made that the Northern Ireland Harbour Authority were to receive a grant in conjunction with the Ardglass Harbour Developments Company for a sub seabed bathymetric survey as a prelude

to any deepening project that may be planned in the future.

## NIFPO AGM

■ The Annual General Meeting of the Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation will be held this year via Zoom Video Conference on Saturday 5th December at 14-00 Hrs due to restriction on face to face meetings with the Covid19 pandemic and Government regulation.

Members are asked to notify the PO of their e-mail address prior to the meeting if those details are not known to the PO in order that log-in details can be sent out. As well as normal business this year Rules changes are on the agenda for discussion.

Meanwhile following the second (semi) lock-down the staff of NIFPO are on a limited hours scheme boosted by the new furlough rules whilst the Assembly plots the future Covid regime and its implications. Skippers and crew also benefit from self-employed furlough rules.



**MCM Insurance Brokers Limited - Specialist broker to the Irish fishing sector.**



**MCM WISHES YOU AND YOURS A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND PROSPEROUS 2021**

**Are you having problems with premium increases or just need advice on your current policy. Why not give us a call ? MCM Insurance Brokers Ltd have 20 years plus experience in the Irish market.**

**At MCM we cover all classes and sizes of vessels, with insurers that provide full cover on your engine and your crew. We can tailor make a policy to suit you and your vessels needs.**

**MCM Insurance Brokers have exclusive arrangements with Insurers who can provide Hull & Machinery and all liabilities including Crew and Public Liability, removal of wreck amongst many other covers.**

**We also provide cover for the fishing industries associated industries such as processors, engine repairs, hydraulic, electrical components to name but a few.**

**Give us a call at anytime;**

**Office: 096 72977  
Eugene: 087 2339591  
Email: [info@mcminsurancebrokers.com](mailto:info@mcminsurancebrokers.com)  
Website: [www.mcminsurancebrokers.com](http://www.mcminsurancebrokers.com)**

**MCM Insurance Brokers Ltd. are regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland**

## Covid19 Compensation Scheme For Static Gear Boats Announced

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has launched its' long promised scheme for aid to static gear boats hit by the effects of Covid19 on the market and the vessels profitability.

This for vessels using static gears only since November 2018 and will take the form of a contribution toward a vessels fixed costs as shown in the financial accounts of the vessel over the previous three years. Grant will be based on 50% of the average costs based on a monthly average of those costs for a period of 4 months capped at £1250 per month giving a maximum

payout of £5,000.

This scheme is authorised under Legislative Assembly powers and is based on local funding. Eligibility criteria for consideration under the scheme are;

- The vessel must have fished for at least 3 months between 1 June 2020 and 31 October 2020 with at least 12 landings within that period,
- Landings to the value of £10,000 during the year 2019 must be shown, Over the previous 24 months the vessel must have used static gear only, The vessel must be registered and based in Northern Ireland,

- The vessel must have landed 50% by value of its catch in Northern Ireland during the previous 2 years,
- The vessel must be seaworthy with a valid MCA safety certificate, The vessel must be insured for commercial fishing operations,
- The vessel must have a current and valid Certificate of Registration

Other EU requirements must be adhered to in respect of De Minimis and maximum allowed grant aid per individual enterprise. Paperwork in the form of 3 years accounts, insurance cover and MCA issued

safety certificates must be submitted with the completed application forms.

The expenditures upon which the aid calculations will be based are those used by the Seafish Industry Authority in calculating profit and loss annual statistics but are not required for individual applicants. This list is very extensive with 37 headings covering domestic, tax and transport headings and includes salaries and pension costs, entertainment, cleaning, laundry, postage and stationary as well as the running costs more usually associated with operating an inshore fishing vessel.





UK NEWS

Joint letter to PM from NFFO and SFF

In a joint letter to the Prime Minister, the representatives of the UK fishing industry – SFF and NFFO – have urged the Government to stand firm in the Brexit negotiations to ensure that sovereignty is regained over UK waters and fishing opportunities agreed in international discussions. The full text of the letter reads:

Dear Prime Minister

As the government enters into the final stages of the negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU, we are writing to you to press the case once more for securing a successful outcome for the fishing industry. There is no better example of how leaving the EU can bring an immediate and demonstrable benefit for the UK.

The EU's unreasonable and legally unsustainable position reflects the deeply unfair situation that has persisted since the creation of the Common Fisheries Policy, when so much was lost to our industry here in the UK. It simply cannot be right for an independent island nation to give away 70% of the fish caught in our waters. Compare and contrast this with our friends and neighbours in Norway, whose fleet catches well in excess of 80% of all the fish caught in Norwegian seas. In Iceland the figure is even higher, exceeding 90%.

Both SFF and NFFO have welcomed the repeated assurances by you and your government that at the end of this year, the UK will reclaim sovereignty and control access to our exclusive economic zone through annual negotiations with the EU as sovereign equals, just as the EU does with other independent countries, and that your government will not accept any proposals that compromise this.

We must be in a position to negotiate annually and have

a much fairer share of the resources in our own waters. These rights to control and manage our waters will return automatically once we leave the CFP and are no more and no less than other independent coastal States like Norway, and indeed like the EU itself, are entitled to.

In effect, it is up to the EU which of two routes it wishes to take towards the UK becoming a coastal State – through a stable framework agreement that respects UK sovereignty and follows similar arrangements that the EU has with other coastal states in the north-east Atlantic, or via a much more uncertain route for the EU, with no framework agreement in place.

No other country in the world gives away its fish in the way the UK has for the last 40 years. This is the time to right these wrongs. This is the UK's once-in-a-lifetime opportunity – the Sea of Opportunity – to climb the ladder of successful seafood nations and for the UK to reap the greatest benefit from our sovereign natural resources – not to continue to give them away for the benefit of others.

We have never been in a stronger position than we are now, and SFF and NFFO stand ready to welcome the right deal on fishing. Any Fisheries Agreement must be judged on its own merits as to whether it is in the best long-term interests of the sector, because the wrong deal on fishing would constitute failure to deliver on those promises made to the industry, and would perpetuate the deeply unfair arrangements under EU membership. Anything given away now will never be regained, so we urge you hold firm and bring back a deal that our proud industry can get behind.

Yours sincerely  
Barrie Deas, Chief Executive, NFFO  
Elspeth Macdonald, Chief Executive, SFF

MMO Seeks Views On Protections For English Marine Sites

England's seas and marine wildlife could benefit from better protection and management as the Marine Management Organisation launches a call for evidence on proposals for managing five of England's Marine Protected Areas.

The sites which could be further protected include The Canyons, a deep-sea habitat which harbours cold water corals, and Dogger Bank, the largest shallow sandbank in British waters, which are home to species such as sand eels, the favourite food of puffins and porpoises.

The Government plans to use the powers in the Fisheries Bill to put any new measures in place after the UK leaves the transition period.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice said:

"The UK is already leading the rest of the world by protecting over 30% of our waters - but we know there is more to do to allow our seas to fully recover.

Leaving the EU means we can introduce stronger measures and the Fisheries Bill proposes new powers to better manage and control our Marine Protected Areas. This call for evidence represents the next step in that journey, ensuring our marine life can recover and thrive."

To date around 40% of England's seas have been designated for protection and management measures have already been introduced in many inshore sites, through byelaws introduced by both Marine Management Organisation and the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities.

The Marine Management Organisation is now seeking additional evidence and views on the draft assessments of four priority offshore and one inshore Marine Protected Areas.

Tom McCormack, Chief Executive Officer of MMO, said:

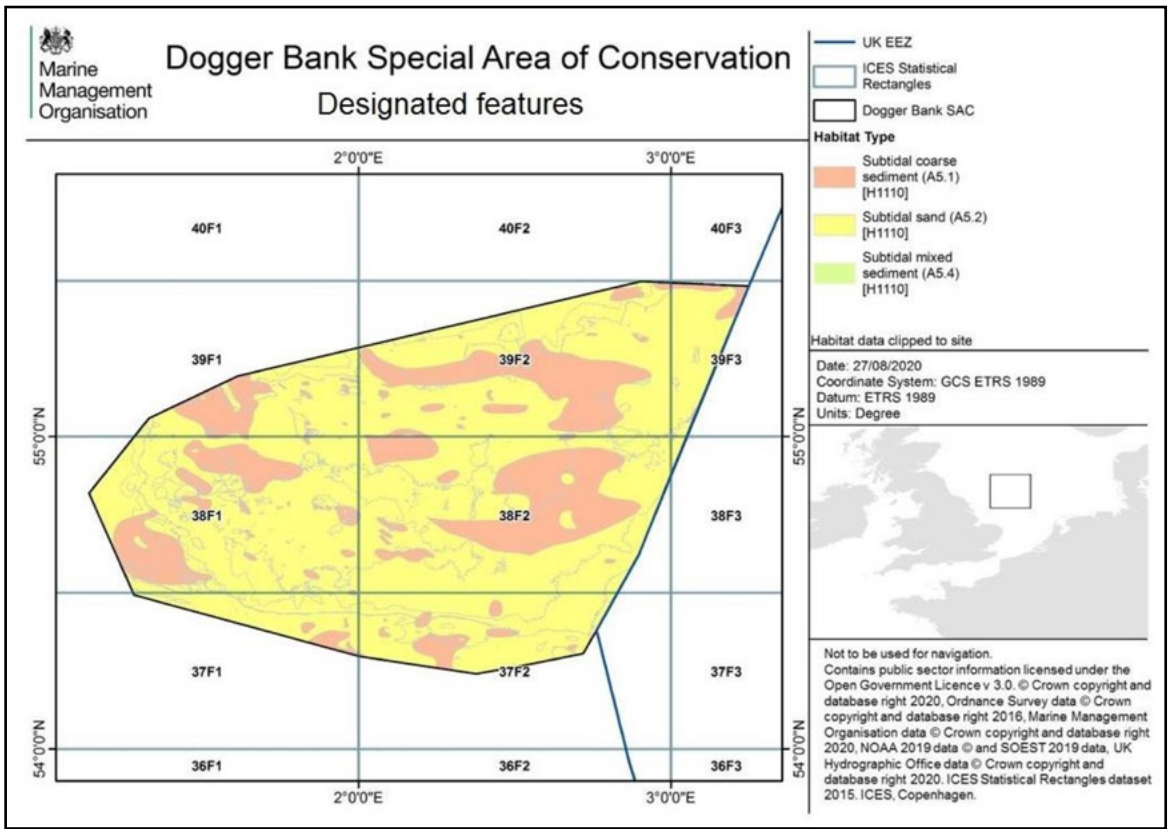
"Our purpose is to protect and enhance our precious marine environment and support UK

economic growth. We enable sustainable marine activities, such as fisheries or renewable energy, to co-exist with other users of the seas, while still protecting our precious marine environment for the benefit of future generations. This call for evidence to support new management proposals for these five areas signals our commitment to better protect and manage our seas and coasts. We are looking forward to engaging with our stakeholders, so that together we can create 'win-win' outcomes for the benefit of the environment, people and the economy, now and for the future."

This new 'call for evidence' relating to five sites is the first, informal stage of the process. It is part of a planned programme to ensure England's seas are better protected and managed for the benefit of generations to come.

Initially, the Marine Management Organisation is seeking views and additional evidence on its draft assessments for the following four offshore Marine Protected Areas:

- Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation (East of England)
- Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge (Lincolnshire coast in the vicinity of Skegness)
- South Dorset Marine Conservation Zone (South West - Dorset)
- The Canyons Marine



Conservation Zone (South West – Cornwall)

The draft assessments cover the protected features of each site, as well as proposed management options for certain activities within these areas.

In addition to the four offshore sites, Marine Management Organisation is also seeking views on possible management options within the inshore Studland Bay Marine Conservation Zone, home to

seahorses and seagrass beds, it's also a popular area for recreational activities.

Marine Management Organisation's draft assessments and marine management options are available until 15 December 2020. The evidence put forward at this stage will help shape and inform MMO's assessments and options ahead of any formal consultation on management of the sites in early 2021.

The Marine Management

Organisation is the regulator and manager of 230,000 square kilometres of hugely diverse seas, almost double that of England's land mass, including some of the busiest seas in the world.

The draft MMO assessment documents, including all relevant information on how to contribute to this process, is available at this link: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-fisheries-in-marine-protection-areas-call-for-evidence](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-fisheries-in-marine-protection-areas-call-for-evidence)



NFFO Welcomes Fisheries Act 2020

The Fisheries Bill, after a long and at times tortuous journey, has successfully completed its final parliamentary scrutiny stage. The House of Lords accepted the amendments made in the House of Commons and didn't pass any further amendments of their own. The House of Lords had run out of constitutional ways to shape the legislation.

The Bill now goes to the Queen for signature and will become the Fisheries Act 2020.

Despite its sometime difficult passage across, over a general election and two separate administrations, the end result looks very similar to the original Bill tabled by the Government, with a few technical improvements. A

number of potentially damaging amendments, which if successful would have replicated some of the most grievous weaknesses in the Common Fisheries Policy were defeated.

The Act will provide the legislative framework for future fisheries management in the UK for the next 20, or perhaps 40 years. It was essential, therefore, that the new framework avoided the pitfalls of the CFP and delivered the potential for a much more agile and flexible system.

Behind the scenes, the passage of this landmark Bill has involved a mountain of work and the NFFO has been helped by parliamentary specialists, Connect, to arrange meetings with key legislators and prepare briefing notes at all of the key stages.





## SCOTLAND NEWS

### £1 Million Assistance For Prawn Group

A new resilience group has been granted £1 million funding to support the Langoustine (Nephrops) sector through the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Scottish Nephrops Working Group will investigate the scale of the challenges facing the sector and develop a long-term strategic vision to cement Scotland's position as the global leader of high quality Langoustine.

The Langoustine (Nephrops) sector in Scotland has been particularly badly impacted by COVID-19, with the loss of important domestic and export markets.

These challenges have been further exacerbated by the lack of clarity regarding Brexit given that Langoustine is the most important shellfish species in terms of landed value and socio-economic importance to Scottish coastal communities and the wider supply chain.

Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing said: "Nephrops are critically important to the future of our seafood sector and many coastal communities in Scotland, supporting thousands of local jobs and producing the finest prawns and langoustines in the world."

"They are Scotland's second largest seafood export and the coronavirus pandemic has had

a significant effect on the sector with markets remaining depressed and low prices throughout the supply chain. As a result, many businesses are struggling and operating on the edge of viability."

"The working group will provide valuable support to the future viability of the Nephrops sector in Scotland and the £1 million funding is a significant boost to get their work underway."

Chair of the Scottish Nephrops Working Group Uel Morton said:

"The Scottish Nephrops Working Group will be critical to the sectors future. The sector is one of the most fragile areas of Scotland's economy, yet it delivers so much in terms of employment and exports. Although this group is focussed on the particular challenges facing the Nephrops sector, the recommendations from this group will also provide valuable lessons for the wider seafood industry in Scotland at this difficult time."

The Scottish Nephrops Working Group is expected to oversee the implementation and progress of the new strategy over the next two years.

The Scottish Nephrops fleet is 450 vessels. The value of Scottish Nephrops is approximately £80 million – the second highest value seafood



Value of Scottish Nephrops is approximately £80 million the second highest value seafood product in Scotland

product in Scotland.

The economic value of the Nephrops industry to Scotland can be indicated through two measures: Gross Value Added (GVA) and employment. The direct GVA generated by the nephrops fleet and related processing amounts to an estimated £36.8 million.

Total direct, indirect, and induced employment generated from catching and primary processing of nephrops in Scotland is estimated to be 2,077 full time equivalent (FTE) posts.

### No Evidence For Alleged 'Benefits' Of Three-Mile Limit

There is no evidence that a three-mile limit around Scotland's coastline banning fishing vessels with mobile gear would improve sustainability or raise earnings in the creel fleet.

That is the conclusion of a new Scottish Fishermen's Federation paper, SFF The 3 Mile Limit History Facts, on the issue which follows a sustained campaign by environmental NGOs and some creelers.

It states that those pushing for a limit are taking a protectionist line, "keeping the grounds inside the three-mile limit open for only one type of fishing [which would] only suit those who fish that gear".

The consequence would be that other types of fishers would be displaced, "but not on the basis of science that demonstrates this is necessary for the right protection to sensitive environments and features".

SFF policy officer Malcolm Morrison, said: "All fishing methods, mobile and static, will impact on the environment in some way, just as navigation, tourism, offshore energy generation or even just weather



Antares LK419 north of the Island Skerries searching for mackerel. Photo: Ivan Reid

do; this is a fact everyone needs to accept as a compromise in the wider concept of securing food."

"If areas or features are found to need extra protection, the SFF welcomes their inclusion in the existing management frameworks, based on objective evidence."

Mr Morrison added that an expansion of the creel sector, as things stand, with the lack of rigorous science, would not be sensible. Markets would suffer and losing the trawl catch would necessitate a tenfold increase

in creels in the water (from an estimated 1.2 million to 12 million) as well as requiring an adjustment of price differentials.

"Given the lack of verified science needed for responsible fisheries management, a lot of new research would be required to bring the database for the creel fishery up to the standard required by ICES."

"There is no basis in the evidence for the eNGOs' sustainability claims. There are so many unknowns – stock status, exact number of creels deployed, soak time, the number of 'ghost'

creels on the seabed."

Mr Morrison highlighted a 2017 report into the nephrops industry in Scotland which found no evidence that creeling was more economically beneficial than trawling.

"In fact, as the same study highlighted, the diversity of the sector is well suited to the geography of Scotland."

"The SFF questions whether a three-mile limit would solve gear conflict. Co-existence is much better than exclusion. Any ban would simply move the problem just outside the limit."

### Launch Of Inshore Fisheries Pilot

Outer Hebrides Inshore Fisheries Pilot Area



reducing gear conflict within an area to the East of the Outer Hebrides.

Starting on 5 November, the Outer Hebrides Inshore Fisheries Pilot will introduce locally agreed limits on creel numbers and soak time.

Forty vessels will also be testing a low-cost tracking system as part of the 'Modernisation of the Inshore Fleet Programme', paving the way for more responsive fisheries management decision making.

This pilot will provide the Scottish Government with insights into how well a localised approach to modernising inshore fishing is working. Marine Scotland Science will then analyse data outputs, comparing historical data held on the pilot area to that gathered during its life cycle to measure any notable changes and there will be an evaluation of the wider social and economic impacts of the pilot for fishers and fishing businesses.

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Economy and Tourism, Fergus Ewing said: "The launch of the Outer Hebrides Pilot is an

important milestone in our work to test and trial new fisheries management arrangements. This pilot will help inform our Future of Fisheries Management Strategy in Scotland, helping support sustainable growth in the sector and enable coastal communities to make the most of their waters."

Duncan Macinnes of the Outer Hebrides Regional Inshore Fisheries Group added: "We welcome the strong support provided by the Scottish Government to the Outer Hebrides Regional Inshore Fisheries Group, in taking forward this innovative approach to the local management of the static gear fishery in the pilot area"

"The tracking technology fitted to vessels will provide additional information to the Scottish Government by identifying fishing effort and catches from more localised grounds."

"Hopefully, the findings from the pilot can be used to extend the principle of local management of creel fisheries to other inshore areas around Scotland."

Working in partnership with the local fishing industry via Regional Inshore Fisheries Groups,

the Scottish Government has developed a pilot scheme that will test approaches to improving valuable shellfish stocks and

# Happy Holidays!

Wishing you a Safe and Happy Holidays  
from all of us at Riverdale Mills



RIVERDALE MILLS CORP

MANUFACTURERS OF AQUAMESH®

+1.508.234.8715 • sales@riverdale.com • www.riverdale.com







## SHETLAND NEWS *By Hans J Marter and Chris Cope / www.shetnews.co.uk*

# Half of fish in local waters landed by EU vessels, report claims

**M**ORE than half of the fish and shellfish caught in Shetland waters is landed by EU fishing boats, while the local fleet gets less than one sixth, a new report by Dr Ian Napier of the NAFC Marine Centre UHI claims.

The stark figures highlight just how rich the islands' waters are, with a third of all fish and shellfish landed from UK waters coming from what is termed 'Shetland's Exclusive Economic Zone' (EEZ).

Drawing on official figures for an area of 127,000 km<sup>2</sup> around Shetland, bounded by Faroese, Norwegian and the remainder of UK waters, Dr Napier calculated that local vessels land just 14 per cent of the fish and shellfish by weight and 21 per cent by value.

By contrast, EU boats land 56 per cent by weight and 38 per cent by value, with other UK vessels making up the remainder.

Simon Collins, executive officer of Shetland Fishermen's Association, said: "We've long known that Shetland's waters are teeming with fish and that under the Common Fisheries Policy EU vessels are permitted to plunder our traditional fishing grounds.

"What this report does is illustrate in detail just how bad the situation has become, and how severe the imbalance is.

"It serves as a reminder, if one were needed, to the UK's Brexit negotiators that they must resist all attempts by the EU to maintain the status quo.



Norways 2001 built 27.3mx7.5m purse seiner Vibeke Helene heading into Lerwick. Photo: Ivan Reid

The UK must have control of its own waters and have the power to determine who gets access to our stocks."

In all, 450,000 tonnes of fish and shellfish worth £370 million were landed from the 'Shetland EEZ' by UK and EU boats annually from 2016 to 2018.

On average, Shetland boats landed 120,000 tonnes worth £116 million - 63,000 tonnes and £77

million of which was caught in the 'Shetland EEZ'.

Pelagic fish dominate catches – four fifths (79 per cent) by weight and more than half (58 per cent) by value, with demersal fish accounting for 18 per cent by weight and 38 per cent by value.

The 'Shetland EEZ' accounts for 17 per cent of the UK EEZ and just over a quarter (27 per cent) of the Scottish part of the UK EEZ.

# Fishing industry prepares for negotiating marathon ahead of Brexit

**F**ollowing the signing of fisheries framework agreements with Norway and the Faroe Islands, all eyes are now on the UK negotiating teams tasked with the job to strike advantageous deals on fishing entitlements and access to waters local communities have been hoping for ever since the Brexit vote in 2016.

With consent on total allowable

catches (TAQs) on blue whiting and Atlanto-Scandian herring reached earlier in October the focus now shifts to the nitty-gritty of the UK's future relationships with Norway, Faroe and the European Union.

In preparation for life beyond 2021 the UK has been given permission to act as an independent coastal state for the first time in 40 years, ahead of the end of the

transition period on 31 December.

Bilateral talks between the UK and Faroe as well as trilateral negotiations between Norway, the UK and the EU over shared stocks are all set to take place over the coming weeks.

The ongoing negotiations between the UK and the EU, and the question whether or not a trade deal will be reached at the last minute,

will have an impact on a fluid situation.

Setting the scene, Simon Collins, executive officer at the Shetland Fishermen's Association (SFA), said: "Once we have some clarity on the Brexit talks, we will be able to set the dates for trilateral negotiations with Norway and the EU, and then there will be three bilaterals in early December and the background to all that is a mixed bag on science."

No dates have been set yet, but there will be some considerable interest in the forthcoming talks with neighbouring Faroe after years of complaints over the amount of mackerel Faroese vessels have been taking from UK waters, with Faroese fishing boats working within Shetland's own 12-mile limit a particularly sore point.

Collins said the UK is "absolutely determined" to reduce the Faroese access to mackerel and added that he did not expect a complete shutdown as "there are deals to be done particularly over access to demersal stocks in Faroese waters".

An annual report on the "utilisation of the EU-Faroese bilateral access agreement" by SeaFish, a government agency

supporting the industry, calculates that in 2019 the access arrangement was worth £35 million to the Faroese and just £700,000 to EU vessels.

Collins said the EU never had any real interest in this particular deal, very much to the detriment of the Scottish industry, but this is something likely to change as the UK will conduct its own negotiations.

Meanwhile, trilateral talks between the UK, Norway and the EU over shared stocks in the North Sea have been pencilled in for the end of November.

This will be followed by a set of three bilateral negotiations (UK – Norway, Norway – EU, and UK-EU) over stocks shared by just two partners including swabbing arrangements and access rules between individual countries.

A "mixed bag" of recommendations for next year's quotas will add further challenge to all of that.

Scientists from ICES [the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas] have advised caution on cod, a massive rise in haddock and a cut in the saithe quota, all adding to the headache for local fishermen.

Collins described the recommended increase in the haddock quota of 66 per cent as "unrealistic" and as something fishermen do not want, while a further cut on the cod quota would be devastating, particularly since cod is abundant in the Northern North Sea and can hardly be avoided to be caught in a mixed fishery.

The EU discard ban meanwhile will continue to be in force until the UK and Scotland are able to put an alternative policy in place.

Collins said "the guys don't want a 66 per cent increase in haddock" and called for a more modest increase, something that could be built on in future years.

And pointing to recent swings in recommendations for mackerel quotas (down 60 per cent from 2018 to 2019, followed by an almost 200 per cent increase from 2019 to 2020), he said the huge swings did not give stability to fishing businesses and rather said "something about the modelling rather than the stocks".

Collins, together with his colleagues from the Scottish Fishermen's Federation as well as its UK counterparts, has been discussing objectives and tactics with officials at the UK and Scottish governments for the last four years, ever since the UK voted to leave the European Union.

"I am confident that our priorities are pretty much the same," Collins said, adding that what comes out of the discussions is not a matter for the UK but for both sides in the negotiations, but he is assured that the industry and government officials "are pretty much working towards the same direction".

# MP demands guarantee of recognition for skilled deckhands

**O**rkney and Shetland MP Alistair Carmichael has written to the Home Secretary to ask for a guarantee that deckhands for fishing vessels will be recognised as a "shortage occupation" under future immigration rules, ensuring access to skilled workers for fishing vessels.

The letter follows the UK's Government's decision to reject advice by their own migration advisory committee

that would have included fishing vessel deckhands on the 'skilled worker' list.

Carmichael said: "Fishermen need access to skilled deckhands but the government appears to be standing in the way. I am asking for a commitment that when the new immigration system is put in place there will be an official recognition of the needs of the fishing industry.

"The home secretary has

rejected the advice of the migration advisory committee on the basis that coronavirus has changed the job market too much.

"That may in fact be the case for some jobs but the need for skilled deckhands on fishing vessels is long-standing and unlikely to change as a result of Covid-19.

"The industry expects to expand further after Brexit so this demand for skilled workers is not going away."



Venture LK641 leaving Lerwick passing by Rova Head

# Areas regularly fished should be kept clear of offshore turbines, association chief says

**A** local fishing leader has reiterated his view that offshore wind farms should "located in areas that are not regularly fished".

Shetland Fishermen's Association chief officer Simon Collins said the organisation is "not keen on any offshore wind farm that destroys sustainable jobs such as fishing".

His comments came after a possible site located to the east of Shetland was included in a new Scottish Government plan for future offshore wind development.

Collins said much of the area identified to the east of Shetland - which amounts to 751 square kilometres - is fished regularly, but not all of it.

"Another problem that the authorities have already identified with the site in question is that it contains known spawning areas for fish species such as cod," he added.

"Given that we are all trying to safeguard healthy fish stocks in our waters, this may render the area unsuitable for development in any case."

The plan said that these risks would "need to be addressed by project-level mitigation measures".

It also noted that for the area off Shetland there is "some potential for significant cost impacts associated with the loss of fishing grounds".

In their response to a consultation on the draft marine

plan earlier this year the Scottish Fishermen's Federation and the Scottish White Fish Producers' Association suggested altering the coordinates of most of the proposed areas, including to the east of Shetland, to allow fishing and offshore wind farms to "co-exist".

Collins said the association is "actively monitoring the situation and have raised our concerns directly with the Scottish fisheries minister".

"At the same time, we understand national priorities regarding renewable energy and will always talk to developers about where offshore projects are best sited to avoid undermining our seafood sector," he said.



Renown LK52 towing for Scallops off the east side of Shetland





## ORKNEY NEWS *By Craig Taylor*

### McArthur raises concerns about risk of illegal fishing post Brexit

Orkney's MSP, Liam McArthur, has raised concerns with Police Scotland about the risk of illegal fishing post Brexit.

During a meeting of the Justice Sub Committee on Policing recently, Mr McArthur highlighted that illegal fishing is one of the key threats identified post-Brexit and sought clarity from Deputy Chief Constable, Will Kerr on Police Scotland's role in preventing it from

happening.

In response, the Deputy Chief Constable acknowledged the risk and explained that it was probably 'unrealistic and impractical' for Police Scotland to be considering onboarding of fishing vessels, particularly in the winter months. He did highlight, however, that they are looking at contingency planning and protocols to gather evidence, including by

increasing police capacity in ports, to prevent on-shore incidents.

Following the exchange, Mr McArthur commented: "There is undoubtedly widespread concern within the fishing sector about the heightened risk of illegal fishing in Scottish waters post Brexit and the damage this could do to the industry if these incidents occur.

"Any illegal activity not only impacts on the livelihoods of fishermen but could also result in confrontations that put the safety of crews at risk. For this reason, our fishing sector needs confidence that arrangements are being made by Police Scotland, SFPA and others to minimise the risks and respond in a timely fashion to incidents should they occur.

"I was therefore pleased to hear the Deputy Chief Constable provide assurances that contingency planning is underway and that additional capacity has been made available to police our ports. Hopefully this proactive approach will help reduce the risk and address some of the concerns felt by Scotland's fishing sector.

"DCC Kerr was also right to highlight the importance of not inflaming the situation by use of more extreme language. We have seen in the past how quickly such incidents can escalate. That is not in anyone's interests at a time when emotions are already running high."



### Carmichael secures commitment from Prime Minister to take forward fishing visa issue

Orkney and Shetland MP, Alistair Carmichael, has secured a commitment from the Prime Minister to take up fishermen's concerns about access to skilled deckhands with the Home Secretary.

Mr Carmichael spoke in Prime Minister's Questions in support of his constituent, Ronnie Norquoy, who wrote to Boris Johnson this week of his frustration with the government's refusal to implement the advice of the Migration Advisory Committee on visas for fishing deckhands.

Mr Carmichael has already

written to the Home Secretary to ask for a guarantee that deckhands for fishing vessels will be recognised as a "shortage occupation" under future immigration rules, ensuring access to skilled workers for fishing vessels. The Migration Advisory Committee advice would have included fishing vessel deckhands on the "skilled worker" list but the Home Secretary rejected this approach.

Speaking in the House of Commons, Mr Carmichael said: "The Prime Minister will doubtless remember meeting my

constituent Ronnie Norquoy on board his crab boat, the Carvela, when he visited Stromness in Orkney in July. I know that Mr Norquoy told the Prime Minister of the problems caused by the Migration Advisory Committee classing deckhands as "unskilled labour".

"Since his conversation, which must have landed quite well, because he was allowed back on to dry land safely, the Migration Advisory Committee has changed their advice so that deckhands are now regarded as "skilled labour", for whom visas can be issued. The

Home Secretary, unfortunately, refuses to implement that advice. Will he put the Home Secretary straight on this one please, and get it sorted?"

Responding, the Prime Minister said: "I am grateful to the Rt Hon Gentleman, it is a subject on which I have a keen interest because I had a wonderful morning on that crab boat, they had fantastic, prodigious quantities of crab - they were selling to China as I recollect - and I will make sure that the Home Secretary is immediately seized of the matter and we take it forward."

### OLECG backing for fishing vessel inspection call

Orkney Local Emergency Co-ordination Group (OLECG) is supporting efforts to encourage local fishing vessel owners to register their boats as soon as possible - as the end of the Brexit transition period gets closer.

The group involves a broad range of organisations, including the emergency and public services, transport providers, the utilities and voluntary sector, and met today (Thursday 5 November) as part of

preparations for Britain's exit from the EU at the end of the year.

The meeting, which was held virtually, was chaired by Chief Inspector Matt Webb, Police Scotland Area Commander for Orkney.

"There will be a range of implications Orkney and we will be meeting regularly over the weeks ahead and considering how these are best addressed on behalf of our community by the organisations

OLECG brings together," he said.

"An early example of this is the need for local fishing vessels large and small to be registered with and inspected by the Environmental Health team at Orkney Islands Council as quickly as possible.

"The implications for owners of not doing this are potentially severe. Depending on whether an agreed trade deal is in place by the end of the year, they could end up being unable to export their catch

to Europe - directly or through another company they supply.

"There are around 120 fishing vessels in Orkney and just over 50 of those have registered so far. On behalf of OLECG, I would urge the other owners to contact Environmental Health as a matter of urgency."

To get in touch with the Environmental Health team, send an email to env.health@orkney.gov.uk



## ICELAND NEWS *By Guðjón Einarsson*

### New live whitefish role for Western Chieftain



Samherji, Iceland's largest fishing company, has purchased an Irish pelagic vessel, Western Chieftain, which is now being converted for demersal fishing at Karstensen shipyard in Denmark. The ship will be lengthened by 10 meters, from 45 meters to 55 meters, thus making room for a traditional fish hold and a production line of the kind that is customary in fresh fish trawlers.

#### Catch pumped onboard

Following the conversion of the vessel, it will be possible to pump fish onboard and store it alive in specially equipped tanks. This arrangement offers much more flexibility in the handling of the catch and better control of workload onboard and in processing on land, according to a press

release issued by Samherji.

As the fish is kept alive in tanks it is possible to either process it later onboard or bring the fish ashore alive. The method involves catching the fish in a traditional bottom trawl, but instead of taking the bag on deck and pour from it, which puts a lot of pressure and stress on the fish, the bag is moved to the side of the vessel and then the catch is pumped on board with a vacuum pump system.

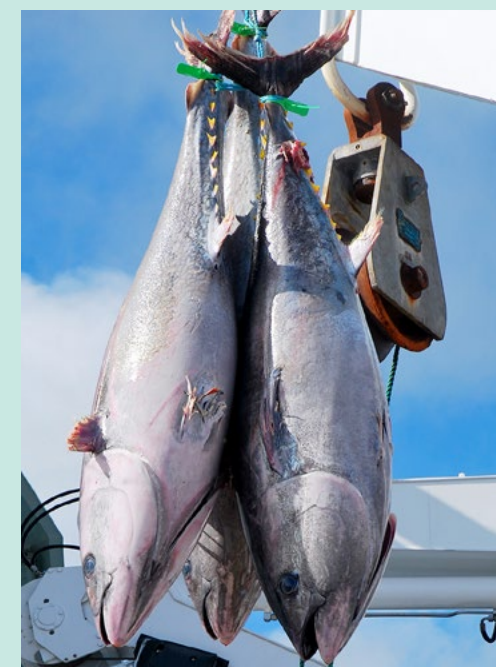
#### Novelty in Iceland

This method of storing and transferring live fish is a novelty in Iceland but has been implemented in Norway to a considerable extent in recent years, especially in fish farming but also when it comes to bottom fish.

Samherji is convinced that

there are many opportunities for progress using this method. The time between catch and delivery to land processing could be shortened from 3-5 days down to 0-12 hours. The company also maintains that security of supply for land processing will significantly increase. Storing the fish in cages near fishing plants can compensate for short-term fluctuations when shortages occur due to bad weather or fluctuations in catch. The possibilities of entering new markets with fresh fish will also increase due to longer shelf life of the product and a more stable supply.

The converted ship, which will be called Oddeyrin, is to be delivered in April 2021 and is expected to start catching and storing live fish, especially cod, next summer.



### Tuna fishing in Iceland on hold

Tuna fishing is not a part of the traditional fisheries in Iceland. However, the country has in recent years been allotted a small blue fin tuna quota by the International Commission for the Conservation of the Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The allotment is based on knowledge acquired from experimental fishing by Japanese tuna boats within Iceland's jurisdiction south of the country that started in 1996.

#### Successful at first

Blue fin tuna had often, albeit irregularly, been detected in Icelandic waters, especially in times when sea temperature was favourable, but no direct targeting of this species had been conducted until the Japanese got permission to try their luck. At first the Japanese long liners were fairly successful. Their catches peaked in 1998 when 2,259 fishes were caught, weighing 244 tons in total. Subsequently the catches started to drop sharply and in 2002 the Japanese gave up on their fishery in Icelandic waters entirely and retreated southward.

#### Iceland's experience

The initial success of the Japanese fleet, especially in 1998, sparked interest among Icelandic vessel owners and one boat was converted for the purpose of fishing tuna and freeze the catch onboard. Unfortunately, it arrived too late, the tuna had for the most part abandoned the fishing field. Several other Icelandic boats have tried their luck but mostly without success, except for Jóhanna Gísladóttir GK from the town of Grindavík. That boat tried this fishery during three consecutive autumns. In 2014 the catch amounted to 122 fishes (22 tons total), in 2015 they caught 155 (27 tons) but in 2016 the catch was only 17 fishes (3 tons). Since then the fishery has been deemed unprofitable.

Iceland's blue fin tuna quota for this year, allocated by ICCAT, is 180 tons. At present no one seems to be interested.





# BRINGING SCIENTISTS TO SILENT SEAS

Recent repairs and overhauls have been carried out on vessels from Iceland, Russia, Greenland, Norway, UK and Ireland including the Killybegs based Father McKee

## New Oceanic Research Vessel from MEST Shipyard in the Faroe Islands

The naming ceremony of the new Faroese research vessel 'Jákup Sverri' took place at MEST Shipyard's facilities for the owners, Faroe Islands' Marine Research Institute in November.

The new research vessel is probably one of the most quiet vessels in the world – according to recognised underwater noise measurements. The ship, is built under the Silent-R class, which is for vessels requiring extremely low underwater noise radiation.

### THE VESSEL IS EQUIPPED WITH STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY

The vessel is 54 metres long

and 13,6 metres wide and has a max speed of 15 knots. In accommodation, Crew welfare and environment are emphasized with large common areas including a meeting room and a fitness room. The accommodation capacity consists of 13 single cabins and 6 double cabins as well as a hospital with 2 beds. The vessel has 7 decks, including Tank Top and Wheelhouse.

'Jákup Sverri' is arranged and equipped with state-of-the-art technology in order to carry out a wide variety of research work, including fish finding, oceanographic research as well as seismic surveys. With its vibration- and noise-damped diesel engines

and the super silent 5-bladed propeller driven by el-propulsion motors, 'Jákup Sverri' is an ultra silent vessel.

In addition the vessel is equipped with a drop keel enabling the sensitive instruments to be lowered 3 m below the bottom of the vessel, and thus have optimal working conditions.

The vessel has a factory, laboratory and special rooms for scientific work.

'Jákup Sverri' is built with a diesel-electric propulsion system not only because of better operation economy, but also because of the noise requirements. The propulsion system is based on an advanced AC system. For the same reason, the ship is not equipped with a gearbox, but has direct running of propeller from an AC electric propulsion motor. The propulsion system has a capacity of 2400 kW. The power supply is generated from two double elastic mounted diesel generators, type Wärtsilä 8L20, each with an output of 1500 kW.

Moreover the vessel is equipped with electric winches. This solution is supposed to offer the best operating result in course of time. In addition, this solution implies that hydraulic pipes are replaced by electric cables, and the risk for leakage in the hydraulic system is eliminated. Thus a

very tidy and clean solution onboard is achieved. The vessel is equipped with custom made cranes

from MelCal which are modified to the clients request and needs.

### MEST SHIPYARD INVOLVED IN THE ENTIRE PROCESS

The new vessel 'Jákup Sverri' was designed by MEST Shipyard who has been responsible for the entire building process including concept design, detailed design, various calculations as well as project management throughout the process. In addition to MEST's own 500 strong workforce some 10-15 suppliers have delivered various equipment and installations.

The hull arrived in the Faroe Islands in September 2019 and after naming of the vessel the vessel will be heading for operations in Faroese waters.

### MEST OVER 100 YEARS OF SERVICE

MEST Shipyard is a modern shipyard with traditions dating back to 1898. The company consists of 2 shipyards and 1 stainless steel workshop. MEST Shipyard has delivered more than 120 vessels over the last 120 years.

Using the Faroe Islands as an alternative port and service hub is getting more and more relevant as fishing activities are increasing east of the Faroe Islands.

MEST Shipyard offers efficient and reliable solutions to a number of international customers.



Recent repairs and overhauls have been carried out on vessels from Iceland, Russia, Greenland, Norway, UK and Ireland including the Killybegs based Father McKee. They have modern facilities with three slips and a dry dock. The benefit for fishing vessels include:

- Proximity to the Faroe Islands – close to sailing routes
- Up to date equipment and facilities
- Spare parts – well equipped

spare parts store

- Excellent logistics to and from the Faroes – frequent connections daily
- About 1 hour flight to Bergen, Edinburgh and Reykjavik

MEST Shipyard offers dry docking and maintenance work on the quayside at 2 shipyards – one in the capital, Tórshavn and one in Skála which is the longest fjord in the islands.

The facilities in Skála consist of a dry dock ( length 115 meters, width 20 meters and depth 6,5 meters), a slipway 1.200 tonnes, mechanical workshop and construction hall.

The shipyard in Tórshavn consists of 2 slipways – one 2500 tons and the other 1000 tons capacity. Two construction halls and modern workshops with a large spareparts store. In addition MEST has 3 tugboats with a

bollard pull of 4, 12 and 39 tons which also are used as workboats, if need be. In Runavik MEST has a Stainless Steel Division.

### CONTACTS AND MORE INFORMATION

*If you need any additional information please visit us on [www.mest.fo/uk](http://www.mest.fo/uk) or contact us on Mail: [sales@mest.fo](mailto:sales@mest.fo), Tel: +298 301100*

## YOUR NEXT DOCKING



## - SAVE SAILING TIME AND MONEY!

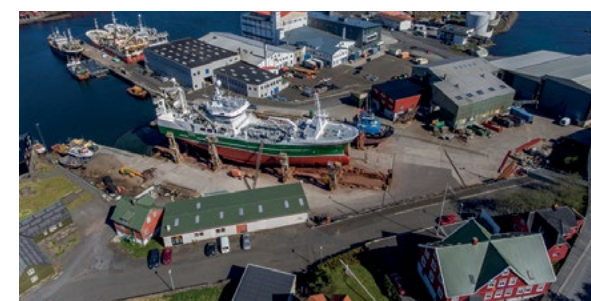


## MEST SHIPYARD - A MODERN SHIPYARD IN THE FAROE ISLANDS

- Ship repair and conversions
- Professional project and drawing department

- Frequent Airbus flights
- Competitive price level

**ASK US FOR A QUOTE!**



300 employees, 2 shipyards and more than 120 years experience

Tel. +298 30 11 00 • [sales@mest.fo](mailto:sales@mest.fo) • [www.mest.fo](http://www.mest.fo) • [www.mest.fo/fo/flipbook23](http://www.mest.fo/fo/flipbook23)





Sharon Anne on sea trials



# SHARON ANNE

## ANOTHER KILKEEL CAT COMPLETED

**N**ovember saw another G Smyth multipurpose catamaran trawler "Sharon Anne" delivered to new owners Pechers Ecosse Limited.

Following hot on the heels of the recent similar build "Shazleah" for Killybegs, this was the 3rd build in the Maxus 12m Catamaran series and the second to be fitted out with trawling capabilities.

Skipped by Garry Stewart the "Sharon Anne" will fish from the harbour at Amble on the Scottish border and target Crab & Prawns with a mixture of potting/trawling.

The project began in Dec 2019 and progressed well until a brief shut down due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Coordinating companies after the lockdown was a challenge but soon life returned to near normal at the Kilkeel yard and Sharon Anne was finally completed in October 2020.

Commenting on the build Gerry Smyth told The Skipper

"Sharon Anne was a stunning boat to work on. There was no expense spared. All fittings were specified by the owners to be 316 Stainless steel. Stainless steel was

used to protect the side, stern and back of wheelhouse and comfort for the crew was a priority all round."

"We hope Garry has many happy days fishing Sharon Anne BH124"

Powered by twin Cummins QSL9 with ZF 3-1 gearboxes supplied by South Shore Marine & Diesel the vessel uses Clements Marine 34"x36" 4 B1 Hyperform props on 2.5" shafts. The engines are placed forward to give maximum space to the two refrigerated fish rooms designed and fitted out get the optimum freshness with their catch by

Cooltemp Refrigeration Ltd

The vessel is kitted out with a forward wheelhouse, housing a spacious galley, appliances and bunks. Access to engine room can also be achieved from the wheelhouse.

Auxillary electrical power is provided by Fischer Panda genset.

Killybegs hydraulic machinery specialists SeaQuest designed, supplied and installed the trawl equipment which included twin 3ton Trawl Winches, with grooved drums to suit the trawl wire, a 3ton Split Net Drum and a 2ton Bagging Winch.



A Wire Counter unit for trawl winches was added and the hydraulic valves were upgraded for remote control operation from the deck.

Woodson's provided the extensive electronics systems for the vessel which consisted of:

- 1 com M506E VHF with DSC
- 1 Sailor 6210 VHF
- 1 Navitron NT921MKII
- 2 Furuno GP39 GPS receiver
- 1 Simrad R3016 Halo3 Broadband radar
- 1 Transas Class B AIS

transceiver

- 1 JRC JLR21 satellite compass
- 1 CCTV system c/w 4 deck cameras
- 1 Olex 3D seabed mapping system
- 1 Soden Easywin plotting system
- 1 Hondex HE7300 Echounder with
- 1 Sailor GMDSS Hand Held VHF
- 6 Neovo X17 Monitor
- 1 Jotron TRON60GPS EPIRB with Float free bracket

**SeaQuest Systems**



### The largest stock of Fish Hose in Europe

#### We supply, design and install Hydraulic Systems

- Fish Hose 8"-20" in lengths of up to 80 metres Seaquest fish hose fittings, inserts, quick release couplings, rail bends, adaptors to go up or down in hose sizes and leak proof stainless steel swivels to connect directly to hose fittings.
- Fish Pumps 8" dual outlet, 12", 14/16", 18" and our new Mega Pump 24" Fish pump fittings include hose inserts, hose clamps, quick release fittings, adaptors that go up and down in hose size
- Net sounder cable 3,000 metres in length - ex stock

To see our pumps and new swivels working click videos on [www.seaquest.ie](http://www.seaquest.ie).

Best wishes to the owners and crew from Seaquest systems, proud suppliers of the new Sharon Anne.

Stay up to date, follow us on Facebook or check out our projects section on our website

**SeaQuest Systems**

Killybegs Industrial Road, Killybegs, Co Donegal, Ireland  
Tel: +353 (0)7 4973 1542 - Fax: +353 (0)7 4973 1573  
Email: [sales@seaquest.ie](mailto:sales@seaquest.ie) - [www.seaquest.ie](http://www.seaquest.ie)



G. SMYTH BOATS

We wish Pechers Ecosse Ltd, with their skipper Garry many years of safe and successful fishing with your new vessel Sharon Anne.



57-59, The Harbour, Kilkeel, Co. Down, N.Ireland, BT34 4AX  
Email: [info@gsmythboats.com](mailto:info@gsmythboats.com) | Web: [www.gsmythboats.com](http://www.gsmythboats.com)  
Tel: 0044 (0)28 417 61010 | Mobile: 0044 (0)7711452763



**COOLTEMP**  
REFRIGERATION

Best wishes to Pechers Ecosse Ltd, and their skipper Garry with your new vessel SHARON ANNE. Many years of safe and successful fishing from all at COOLTEMP.



28 Fairgreen Road, Markethill, Co Armagh, BT60 1PR | T: 028 37552995  
M: 077 39099599/600 | E: [info@cooltemp.org.uk](mailto:info@cooltemp.org.uk) | W: [www.cooltemp.org.uk](http://www.cooltemp.org.uk)





## FACT FILES

## MFV SHARON ANNE

## SKIPPER(S):

Garry Stewart

REGISTRATION: BH124

HOMEPORT: Amble

VESSEL TYPE: Multi-Purpose  
Catamaran Trawler

BUILD YEAR: 2020

BOATYARD: G Smyth Kilkeel

LENGTH: 11.95

BEAM: 5.5 metres

DRAFT: 2.15 metres





### South Shore Marine & Diesel

Ireland's authorised dealer for Cummins Marine Engines and Cummins Onan Generators.



Contact us for more information about engine sales, parts and servicing




27 Annaloise Rd, Kinnego Marine, Oxford Island, Lurgan, Co Armagh, BT66 6NJ

T:0044 (0) 2838341010 E: info@southshoremarine.co.uk W: southshoremarine.co.uk

Simply Blue  
Energy

# An Introduction to Floating Offshore Wind



Photo courtesy of Principle Power. Artist: DOCK90

by Val Cummins,  
*Simply Blue Energy*

**T**he battle to control climate change will be lost or won this decade.

Extreme climate events are already having widespread impacts on people and the planet. We know that continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause pervasive and irreversible impacts on our marine and terrestrial ecosystems. Renewable energy forms part of the solution to moving towards a zero-carbon economy by 2050.

Offshore wind provides a clean, renewable source of energy, that avails of our abundance of wind and vast marine resources. In Ireland, we have focused almost exclusively on onshore wind in recent years, however government has a vision to go offshore — this plan will set out a path to achieving 5GW capacity in offshore wind by 2030 off Ireland's Eastern and Southern coasts, and a stated ambition of more than 30GW of floating wind in our deep Atlantic waters.

The deployment of floating wind can breathe life back into rural Ireland, where coastal communities are struggling to provide quality jobs to retain younger generations. For example, the development and construction of the Emerald floating wind farm will require over 2 billion euro of investment from industry. It will rely on a backbone of maritime infrastructure in the form of ports and harbours, coupled with engineering, environmental and operational know-how. Once built, an offshore wind farm will operate for 25 years, ensuring the long-term need for jobs to support operations and maintenance.

If we get this right, the deployment of floating wind technology means that Ireland will be able to export energy to Europe and further afield, from 2030. Floating wind is

potentially therefore to Ireland, what North Sea oil was to Norway.

The question is, how best to manage our shared and valuable marine resources, so that these benefits can be realized for current and future generations? In particular, how can floating wind technology and fisheries co-exist? The answer to this question starts with information sharing. This is the first of a series of six articles to be featured in The Skipper to present insights into the floating offshore wind sector. The series, sponsored by Simply Blue Energy, aims to provide fishers and other relevant stakeholders with insights into: the status of floating wind development, how the technology works, opportunities for benefit sharing between floating wind and fisheries, the floating wind supply chain, case studies (e.g. of floating wind in the UK, Portugal and France), and training and capacity-building opportunities.

### What is Floating Offshore Wind (FLOW)?

FLOW is a fast-maturing renewable technology, that accesses deeper water depths (i.e. circa 60-1000m). Floating offshore technology is at an early commercial phase, requiring development at volume and scale, to bring the cost down. It is expected that FLOW technology will be cost competitive against bottom-fixed (piled) offshore wind technology by 2030.

Demonstration projects deployed in Europe include Hywind Scotland 30MW; Kincardine 50MW; Groix Belle Ile 30 MW; and WindFloat Atlantic 25MW. The Erebus 96MW pre-commercial FLOW demonstrator is in development off the coast of Wales, via a joint venture between Total and Simply Blue Energy. The UK government recently announced a target for 1GW of FLOW by 2030. FLOW projects are also being progressed in other jurisdictions such as the US, Vietnam, Japan and South Korea.

### What is happening in Ireland?

The Irish Government has set a target for 5GW of offshore wind by 2030, as part of the climate action plan. The so-called 'relevant projects' constitute bottom-fixed offshore wind farms in the Irish Sea. However, given project attrition likely to occur during consenting, and constraints for space in the Irish Sea, the sector is advocating for Celtic Sea FLOW projects to be progressed, in order to meet the 2030 target.

There are three FLOW projects proposed in the Celtic Sea: The Emerald energy transition project in the vicinity of the Kinsale gas field by Simply Blue Energy (1GW); the Inis Ealga project by DP Energy (700MW) and the Celtic Sea Array by SSE (800MW). A new FLOW proposal is being developed off the coast of West Clare, The Western Star Project, by Simply Blue Energy.

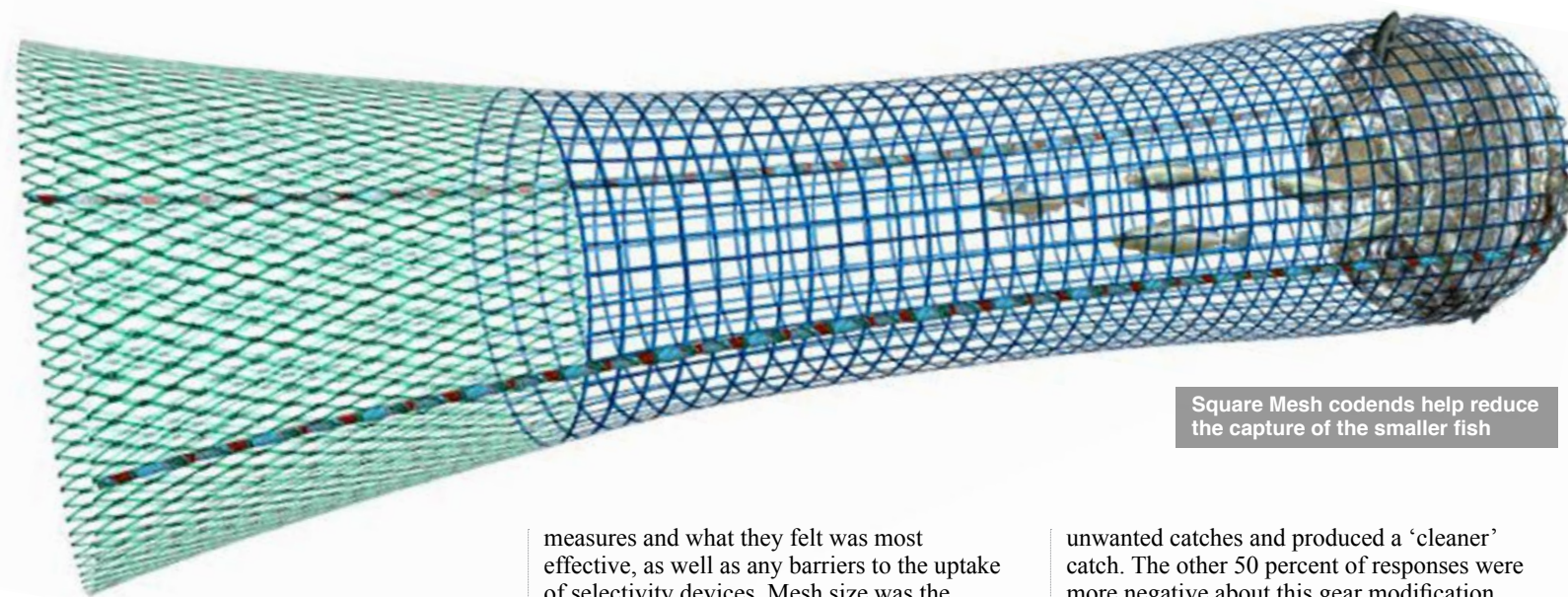
The enactment of the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill, expected early next year, is central to these projects being progressed. Route to market is another key issue for FLOW projects, requiring planning and investment in grid, interconnectors and green hydrogen production. The decade ahead will see the foundation stones for the FLOW sector in Ireland being laid. This is already creating opportunities in the supply chain, for example with 80 new jobs recently announced by Green Rebel Marine for a survey and training hub in Crosshaven.

The keystone is the relationship between FLOW developers and the fishing industry, acknowledging that commercial fishers, dependent on the sea for their livelihoods, are the principal stakeholders to be considered. Benefit-sharing opportunities will be explored in a subsequent article, presenting work done as part of the UCC EirWind project, which captured the views from 33 in-depth interviews with members of the fishing industry.



# Straight from the Fishes Mouth!

## What we learn from speaking to Irish fishermen about discard avoidance measures



Square Mesh codends help reduce the capture of the smaller fish

By Julia Calderwood, Marine Institute

Since the full introduction of the Landing Obligation in Irish fisheries in 2019 there has been a need to reduce unwanted catches in an attempt to avoid potential “choke” situations, whereby fishing has to stop once any one quota is exceeded even if quota remains for other species. An emphasis has been put on the adoption of more selective gears to help in reducing catches of non-target or quota restricted species. Tactical decisions can also be important in better targeting certain catches. In order to find out how members of the fishing industry viewed different technical and tactical methods to reduce unwanted catches in demersal fisheries, researchers at the Marine Institute went direct to the source. Twenty-one individuals were interviewed by researchers from the Marine Institute between July 2016 and September 2017 representing skippers, vessel owners, co-op managers and officials from fisher representative bodies. All those interviewed had an interest in demersal fisheries representing a range of vessel sizes. (The views extended by fishers in the survey do not necessarily represent those of the Marine Institute)

This work was carried out as part of the EU funded DiscardLess project to specifically determine what measures industry thought might be effective in reducing discards in light of the introduction of the Landing Obligation. Responses were then compared with management advice in Ireland to determine how the two align. This research is particularly important to identify what barriers exist that hinder the industry in improving selectivity and avoiding ‘choke’ situations. This work also helps to identify where there are potential differences between the experiences of industry and the management advice they receive, highlighting areas for possible improvement.

Interviewees were asked about their experience with different gear selectivity

measures and what they felt was most effective, as well as any barriers to the uptake of selectivity devices. Mesh size was the most discussed measure with the majority of responses mentioning the positive effects of using larger meshes to reduce discards, with many seeing it as the most effective measure to reduce catches of undersize fish. This view reflects regulations regarding minimum mesh sizes, which have increased across many sectors in the past few years.

Additional selectivity devices were viewed with mixed opinions. Square mesh panel is a widely tested selectivity device which has proven to be effective in releasing undersize catches. Fifty percent of those who discussed square mesh panels, for example viewed them favourably, suggesting they helped to reduce

unwanted catches and produced a ‘cleaner’ catch. The other 50 percent of responses were more negative about this gear modification. Frustration was apparent with interviewees indicating that the square mesh panel is wrongly placed, making it less effective. Some skippers felt it would be more effective if they could rig it differently but legislation didn’t allow for this. Fishers felt they had limited ability to contribute to the regulatory process, and so had very little say in the resulting gear regulations. Improvements have been made in this regard since the time of the interviews. The 2019 and 2020 discard plans included the provision to add new gear measures with equivalent selectivity based on joint recommendations from EU regions to the European Commission. Following positive assessments by the STECF

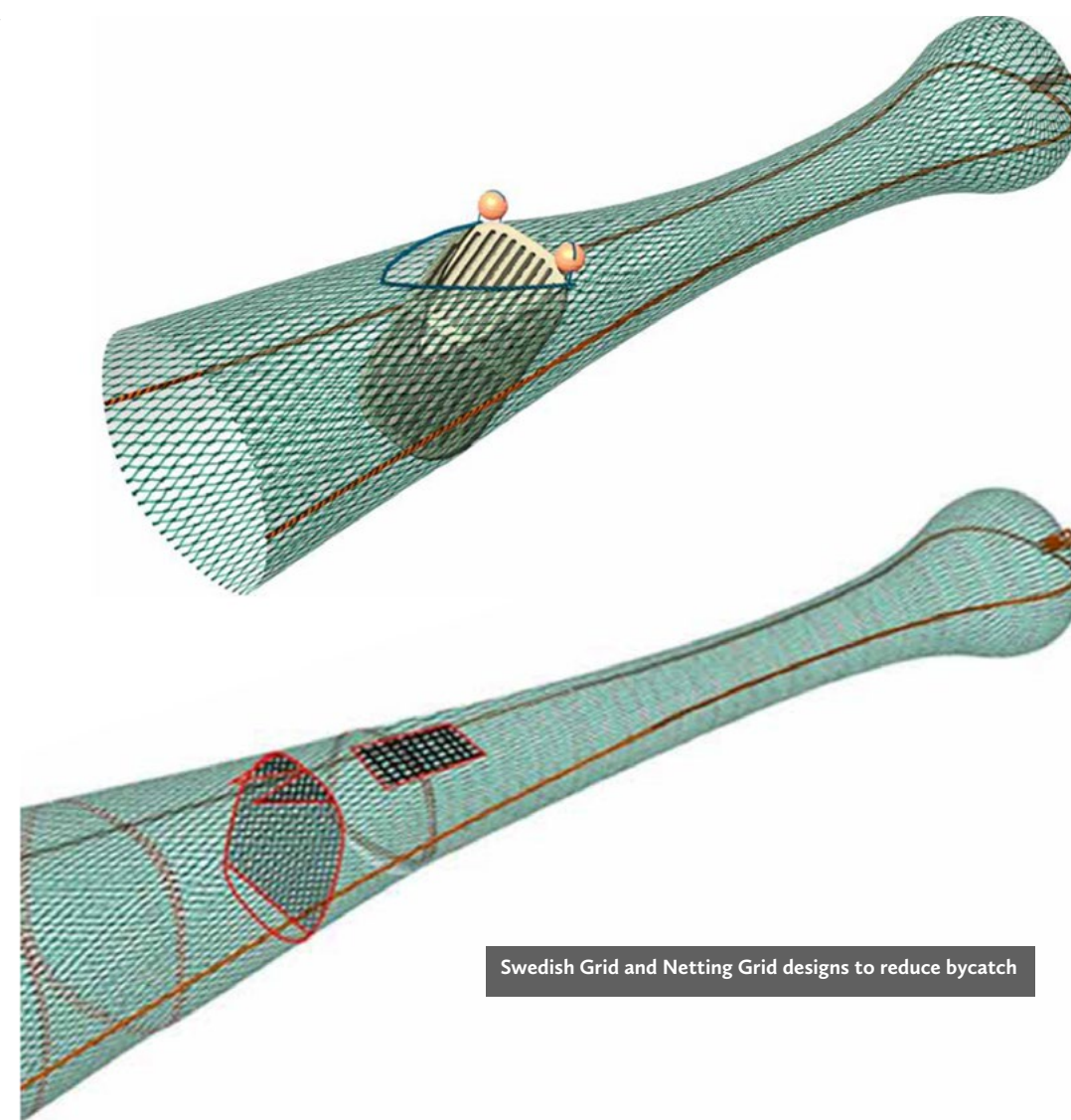


Too mesh as a measure to improve size selectivity

(Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries) for example, dual cod-ends were added as a new gear option in the 2020 Nephrops fishery. However, there remains an opportunity for improvement to better incorporate both findings from scientific trials and the experience of fishers in legislation to provide a more flexible approach to certain gear regulations into the future.

Additional selectivity devices such as Swedish grids and the Seltra box were described as ‘poppycock’. While fishers understood the potential utility of selectivity devices, they explained that in reality it can be very hard to get right and operational in the real world. Numbers of those interviewed had been involved in gear trials, and industry-led trials such as those run by BIM were seen as particularly useful and important. However, interviewees suggested that more investment was required for longer term trials involving multiple vessel types so that regulators could take results into account when setting legislation regarding gear. The response to the uptake of new gears was also fairly negative, with the lack of rewards and incentives to do so being frequently mentioned. Support is offered to the fishing community through agencies such as BIM and their technology services that assist the sector to fish more selectively. Grant aid for purchasing new gears that increase selectivity is also available to cover some of these costs. However, fishers indicated that it may not be sufficient. Additional economic losses associated with adopting new selective gears were also highlighted, such as a fall in overall catches when they are used. Although it was also noted that reducing overall catch can improve the quality and value of catches. Fishers did suggest, however, that rewards through additional quotas or other incentives when using more selective gears could help in encouraging the uptake of additional selectivity devices.

Fishing tactics to avoid unwanted catches were also discussed. Interviewees described how knowledge built up over many years of fishing is used to direct where to fish and which areas to avoid to prevent undersize fish being caught. It was acknowledged that those targeting Nephrops are restricted to specific grounds and have less options to use alternative fishing grounds in an attempt to reduce by-catch. For those targeting whitefish there was general consensus that you would move on to new fishing grounds following unwanted catches. Fishers had a mixed response to being asked if additional resources, such as fish hotspot maps developed by the Marine Institute such as the DiscardLess mapping app (<https://shiny.marine.ie/discardless>), would be useful in helping to better target certain catches. Some individuals thought such resources wouldn’t add anything new to the knowledge skippers already have. Others were enthusiastic for any information collected by scientists to be made more accessible and fed back to industry, such as through the DiscardLess app, and the Marine Institute’s digital Stock Book (<https://shiny.marine.ie/stockbook>) and the Fisheries Management Charts (<http://www.fisheriesmanagementchart.ie>). It was noted that these kind of resources would be more useful if they were more interactive and provided near-real-time data. This is being explored through the Real Time Incentives project (<http://rti-for-fisheries.info>) and the new IFISH (Irish Fisheries Information Sharing Network



Swedish Grid and Netting Grid designs to reduce bycatch

Development) project which is exploring how information sharing across the fleet could assist in providing near real time information on where unwanted catches are found.

In order to provide real-time information and updates, information sharing within the fleet may be required. Skippers explained that while they talked to others vessels when they were out fishing there was a lot of secrecy concerning information on their actual catches. How much information anyone was willing to share varied a lot from person to person and a lack of trust of others was mentioned as a reason not to share catch information. There was also concern about how sharing of information with scientists or government officials could have undesirable consequences. The new IFISH project hopes to address these issues by ensuring any new information sharing tools developed will ensure shared information can only be accessed and viewed by other skippers willing to also share information. The IFISH project also aims to focus on sharing information on undersize fish avoidance as it was acknowledged that there might be greater willingness to share information on the location of catch skippers wish to avoid as opposed to commercially important catches.

Overall there was no consensus among all those interviewed as the best approaches to take. Both technical and tactical measures were acknowledged by industry as being important to avoid unwanted catches and optimise quotas in demersal fisheries. Differences in opinions reflect the variability within Irish demersal fisheries. It also highlights that there is a need for a combination of approaches to

help effectively reduce discards and manage the Landing Obligation. This research also highlights that to encourage the uptake of further selectivity measures and behaviours, fishers should be involved in the design, testing, and decision-making processes. Incorporating fishers’ experiences into the gear design process and providing options for more flexibility is likely to be beneficial in boosting the uptake of selectivity devices.

Talking to industry and better understanding their views on how to improve selectivity in demersal adds value to the information base on which management decisions can be made. This is also true of any tools and resources scientists develop and provide to the fishing industry. Having open discussions with industry input improves the saliency of the tools developed. Researchers from the Marine Institute are very grateful to all those who took the time to take part in the interviews and share their opinions. We hope to continue these discussions in the future to ensure the outputs of our latest projects are useful and can assist in reducing unwanted catches. We are currently looking to talk to people for the new IFISH project to discuss the ideas of information sharing in the fishing industry and anyone who would like to share their opinions or get involved in this work should contact Julia Calderwood ([julia.calderwood@marine.ie](mailto:julia.calderwood@marine.ie)).

The full original article, Technical and tactical measures to reduce unwanted catches in mixed fisheries: Do the opinions of Irish fishers align with management advice? is available at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308597X20309362>.



# Some of our top fishing photographers pick their top 5 photos

## JOHN ROBERTS



Curious Orca whale off the Scottish coast



At Sea it's First come, First served



Fine lobster off Ballycotton



Sunrise chat between friends at the Mackerel



Eye of the storm in Donegal Bay



**Name:** John Roberts  
**Location:** Castletownbere  
**Camera:** Canon 5D MK IV  
**Favourite Lens:** Canon 100-400 mm  
**Website:** [www.johnroberts1.smugmug.com](http://www.johnroberts1.smugmug.com)  
**Facebook:** Irishfishingboats  
**Instagram:** Irishfishingphotos

**Top Tips:** When shooting boats at sea always use a high speed and check exposure after first shot. Try and shoot in manual mode but include some shots in Auto/ AV mode to allow for the light changing. Clean camera equipment after every trip to prevent sea spray causing corrosion.

*John Roberts*  
 IRISH FISHING PHOTOS



## THE MARINE INSURANCE SPECIALISTS

Potting and Netting Vessels  
Work and Charter Boats  
Crew Liability  
Passenger Boats  
Boat Yards  
Employers Liability

For quotations phone 091 773 601  
For all your marine insurance needs

### AQUABROKER

MARINE INSURANCE SPECIALISTS

Aquabroker Ltd., 7 Kilkerri Park 4, Tuam Road, Galway.  
Tel: 091 773 601/2 Fax: 091 773 603  
[www.aquabroker.ie](http://www.aquabroker.ie)

Aquabroker Ltd., T/A Aquabroker, is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

## Conways Solicitors

MARITIME SOLICITORS  
DERMOT F. CONWAY B.COMM. B.C.L

40 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN  
FISHERIES LAW

DETENTIONS AND ARRESTS  
INJURIES AT SEA  
MARITIME MORTGAGES  
COLLISIONS AT SEA

TRANSFERS OF QUOTAS/VESSELS

WE PROVIDE A 365 DAY 24/7  
ALL IRELAND SERVICE

CONTACT US AT  
OFFICE NUMBER: 0214901000  
Twitter @ConwaysLaw  
EMERGENCY MOBILE 24/7: 0876793478  
[WWW.MARITIME.CONWAYS.IE](http://WWW.MARITIME.CONWAYS.IE)

## FAFEB

[findafishingboat.com](http://findafishingboat.com)

The **EASY** way to  
**BUY** or **SELL**  
fishing boats and equipment



Commercial & Recreational boats,  
Marine equipment, Crew adverts  
Weather Forecasts...and much more

The website for all  
commercial fishermen

## O'HARA MARINE LTD.

NAVAL ARCHITECTURE  
&  
MARINE SURVEYING  
SERVICES

Commercial Craft Services include:

- Fishing Vessel Code of Practice Surveys, under 15m
- Vessel design
- Stability Books & Inclining Experiments
- Submissions to MSO

M: +353 (0) 86 4059426

E: [niall@oharamarine.com](mailto:niall@oharamarine.com)

W: [www.oharamarine.com](http://www.oharamarine.com)

## CHARLES CLEGHORN LTD

BRONZE PUMP SPECIALIST  
SINCE 1971



We will discuss/advise/  
recommend the correct  
marine pump for you

CONTACT US TODAY  
E: [enquiries@ccleghornltd.com](mailto:enquiries@ccleghornltd.com)  
W: [www.ccleghornltd.com](http://www.ccleghornltd.com)  
T: +44 (0) 1223 208384

## SEA ICE

Ireland's only Ice  
Machine Manufacturer

Contact John White  
for details of a range of ice machines



Kilkeel, Co. Down.

Phone/Fax: (028) 417 63802  
(code 048 from ROI)  
[www.seaice.co.uk](http://www.seaice.co.uk)  
Email: [john@seaice.co.uk](mailto:john@seaice.co.uk)

**Art Kavanagh QFA**  
Marine Finance Consultant

Glenlee  
Killybegs  
Co. Donegal  
Ireland  
353-74-9732915  
353-87-6774455  
[artokavanagh@gmail.com](mailto:artokavanagh@gmail.com)

## CLEGGAN MARINE



Install some  
peace of mind,  
fit a  
Prop Protector  
today!

Tel: (095) 44037 Mob: 087 7759405  
Email: [salesclegganmarine@gmail.com](mailto:salesclegganmarine@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.clegganmarine.com](http://www.clegganmarine.com)

**Jimmy Walsh**  
**propellers**  
& Marine Engineering

- Propeller Sales & Repairs
- Propeller Replating
- Propeller Rebalancing
- Dynamic Balancing
- Stern Gear Sales
- Engine & Hull Repairs
- Steel Fabrication
- Welding Specialists

SOLAS VOLVO PERCUTAN SUZUKI HONDA YAMAHA

The One Stop Prop Shop  
Rosslare Harbour, Co Wexford.  
Tel: 086 3702499  
Email: [jimmy@onestoppropshop.ie](mailto:jimmy@onestoppropshop.ie)  
[www.onestoppropshop.ie](http://www.onestoppropshop.ie)

## Crab/ Velvet/ Lobster Pots for Sale



DELIVERING  
TO UK AND  
NORTHERN  
IRELAND

Manufactured to customer requirements  
Liam McDermott, Carndonagh,  
Co Donegal. Tel: 086 8341662

and Derek Noble  
SPARES, NEW AND USED EQUIPMENT  
Over 20 years supplying Ireland's top  
fishermen. Trawl winches,  
Pot and Net haulers, Trawl blocks etc.  
Tel/Fax: 086 9474175  
Mobile: 087 2791274  
Lake Road, Waterville, Co. Kerry

## Beaming Capacity For Sale

Please contact MJ Power & Co,  
Chartered Certified Accountants

10 New St, Garrick on Suir,  
Co Tipperary,

Tel: 00353 (0)51 649922  
Email: [maurice@mjpowersandco.ie](mailto:maurice@mjpowersandco.ie)

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



# MONTHLY COMPETITION

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

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

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:**  
Simply get your phones and cameras out, and send us your hi-res photos by email to [editorial@maramedia.ie](mailto: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.



**DECEMBER WINNER:**  
**IVAN REID, WHALSAY, SHETLAND**

**82 METER PELAGIC GIANT SERENE EMERGES FROM THE MIST AT THE CREWS HOME PORT SYMBISTER WHALSAY FOR THEIR FESTIVE BREAK.**

**THE MONTHLY PRIZE**

The winner  
will receive  
a *Sotra Fleece* by



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

**The Skipper**

## French Shrimp Pots

Out fished all other pot types in recent years. Source BIM Surveys.

**SORRY,** UNLIKE PALE IMITATION OUR SHRIMP POTS DO NOT CATCH VELVET, SQUID OR JELLYFISH, BUT THEY DO CATCH SHRIMPS!

SAME ORIGINAL FRENCH DESIGN SINCE 1970

EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTORS FOR ALL OVER EUROPE

ASK FOR THE REAL THING!

For further information contact:  
**BREIZON LTD, INVERIN, CO. GALWAY**  
TEL: 00353 (0) 91 572157  
Email: [info@breizon.com](mailto:info@breizon.com)



## SAVE THE DATE



**MARCH 2021**  
FRIDAY/SATURDAY  
**12-13**  
@ UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK  
YOUR INDUSTRY  
YOUR SHOW

[WWW.THESKIPPER.IE](http://WWW.THESKIPPER.IE)

PLACE YOUR ADVERT IN OUR  
**BUSINESS DIRECTORY**  
Contact Sharon for  
more information  
[Sharon@maramedia.ie](mailto:Sharon@maramedia.ie)  
Prices from €75



- Trawler all risk cover •
- Employers Liability • Public Liability •
- Collision Liability • Pollution, Stranding, Salvage Cleanup etc. • Personal Accident Cover • Total Loss Packages •
- Other Marine related

**D&D Insurances Ltd**  
Block A - Unit 3, Nutgrove Office Park,  
Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.  
Main line: 01 20 514 05  
Fax: 01 20 513 57  
E-mail: [barry@ddinsurances.ie](mailto:barry@ddinsurances.ie)  
[mark@ddinsurances.ie](mailto:mark@ddinsurances.ie)

"D&D Insurances Ltd is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland"

Marine & General Insurance Brokers.  
"Insuring Your World Today"

- Hull & Machinery
- Crew Cover
- Passenger Vessels
- Ferries
- Chartered Angling
- Pleasure Craft
- Workboats
- Employers & Public Liability
- Business Packages

Mobile: +353 (0)86 2504826 (Charlie)  
Direct: +353 (0)74 91 77500  
Fax: +353 (0)74 91 77200  
Email: [info@chd.ie](mailto:info@chd.ie) Web: [www.chd.ie](http://www.chd.ie)

Cavanagh Hooper Dolan Insurances Ltd is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland

## SAVE THE DATE



**MAY 2021**  
FRIDAY/SATURDAY  
**14-15**  
@ P&J LIVE, ABERDEEN  
YOUR INDUSTRY  
YOUR SHOW

[WWW.THESKIPPER.IE](http://WWW.THESKIPPER.IE)



# Days Gone By...

Large prints available of any picture below, €20 including P&P



SEND US  
YOUR OLD  
IMAGES



If you have copies of any images that you would like us to include in our Days Gone By page, please email them to [editorial@maramedia.ie](mailto:editorial@maramedia.ie). If possible include details, names, location and date. To order any of the above images please email [design@maramedia.ie](mailto:design@maramedia.ie)

## Green Rebel Marine & Fisheries Liaisons Ltd Announces Partnership

**G**reen Rebel Marine, the Cork-based business established to service the future needs of offshore wind farms, has announced a new strategic partnership with Fisheries Liaisons Ltd. The partnership is seen as being a key factor in communicating with the wider marine and fishing community as development of offshore wind farms picks up pace.

The relationship between Fisheries Liaisons Limited and Green Rebel Marine is designed to ensure coastal communities are consulted with in advance of any work, and fully informed of the latest developments involving wind farm operations.

Fisheries Liaison Limited has three full time staff, who will be based from the headquarters of Green Rebel Marine in Crosshaven, Co Cork. Since its creation, Fishery Liaisons has built a solid reputation conducting site specific risk analysis for a wide array of marine projects. In recent years, the company has evolved into the main stakeholder engagement partner for offshore wind project developers and the fishing community at large.

The team, all stemming from strong fishing heritage, apply decades of offshore and fishing liaison experience, to facilitate clear and transparent dialogue between the project developers and the fishing communities. Fishery Liaisons strive to develop good communication between the developers and the fishing communities, enabling them to co-exist throughout the project lifecycle. This collaboration with Green Rebel Marine will enable the team to continue to grow its expertise and expand its service offering well into the future.



Trudy McIntyre, David Hyde & Mark O'Reilly of Fisheries Liaisons pictured at Crosshaven Boatyard

Mark O'Reilly of Fisheries Liaisons Ltd says, "This is an opportunity for us to grow our team and provide a better service to the stakeholders concerned with this developing industry. We can now expand our presence on the ground and provide even more efficient support. Joining forces with Green Rebel Marine provides the platform we need to safeguard our fishing communities whilst enabling the development of offshore renewable energy towards a greener future for all. With energy companies now looking to place infrastructure at sea, we need to ensure that there is advance engagement at every turn, and that the fishing communities know they can rely on us to both listen and to convey their opinions in a timely and meaningful way."

Plans for offshore wind farms are at an advanced stage with a number of potential fixed and floating operators examining sites along the coast from Dundalk in County Louth, to the Cork coast and beyond. Their construction will not only increase Ireland's ability to produce renewable energy, it will also create an entire new sector dedicated to servicing their operation.

Pearse Flynn of Green Rebel Marine says, "Having come from a fishing community, I really appreciate the importance of the industry to livelihoods around the coast. The roll out of offshore wind will cross with the fishing industry at a number of points, and this new relationship with Fisheries Liaisons Ltd will mean that fishermen and their representatives organisations will be kept in the loop at all times. We aim to create a one-stop-shop between the fishing sector, their communities and the energy companies looking to place wind farms in Irish territorial waters. This new sector will create jobs and secure the future of our coastal communities."

Green Rebel Marine also said it had bought Crosshaven Boatyard in Co Cork. The nine acre site will serve as a base for the new operation to survey, equip and service a network of planned wind farms along the Irish coast. Crosshaven Boatyard will continue its normal operations as a boat yard.

Pearse Flynn has invested €10m of his own money into the project, including the purchase of two specially equipped, high tech ships to service this growing industry. The first vessel - the Bibby Athena, which will be renamed to Roman Rebel - has already arrived into Cork. The second is scheduled to arrive later this year.



The Bibby Athena which will be renamed to Roman Rebel has already arrived into Cork





A different view of Rossaveal  
Photo John Loughlin



Lonely pot at Ballywater  
harbour. Photo Stephen McKee



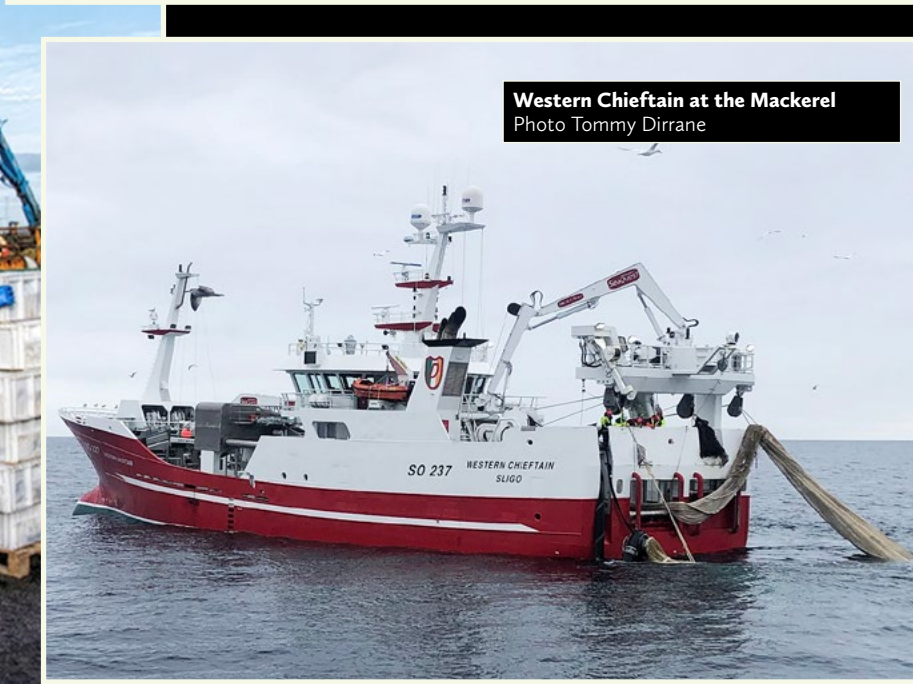
Landing the catch at Fraserburgh.  
Photo Eugene Ritter



Cathal ó Griofa checking the catch  
Photo Aodan Griffin



Eternal Dawn & Green Isle at the NW Herring.  
Photo David McGloin



Western Chieftain at the Mackerel  
Photo Tommy Dirrane

Marine & General Insurance Brokers.  
"Insuring Your World Today"

**Cavanagh Hooper Dolan**  
Insurances Ltd.

Tel: +353 (0)74 9177500 Fax: +353 (0)74 9177200  
Email: info@chd.ie Web: www.chd.ie

Cavanagh Hooper Dolan Insurances Ltd is regulated  
by the Central Bank of Ireland

#### ACROSS

1. Unpredictable
4. Alaskan river
7. Unsociably
8. Egg-like shapes
9. Mouthful of abuse
12. Lack of generosity
15. Mexican resort city
17. Filleting
18. Superhero magazine
21. Abhorred
22. Now
23. Wearing down

#### DOWN

1. And so on (2,6)
2. Not sinking
3. Coffee shop
4. Child's toy (2-2)
5. Massaged
6. Henpecks
10. Actress, ... Blunt
11. Chocolate substitute
13. Toiling
14. Drinks server
16. Propose
18. Chinwag
19. Potter's medium
20. Naked

**Cavanagh Hooper Dolan**  
Insurances Ltd.

Proud sponsors of The Skipper crossword

Send entries before 17th DECEMBER 2020 to:  
Crossword Competition, The Skipper,  
Annagry, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.  
(Photocopies not accepted).

You can now take a picture of your  
completed crossword and email your  
entry along with relevant details to  
design@maramedia.ie.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

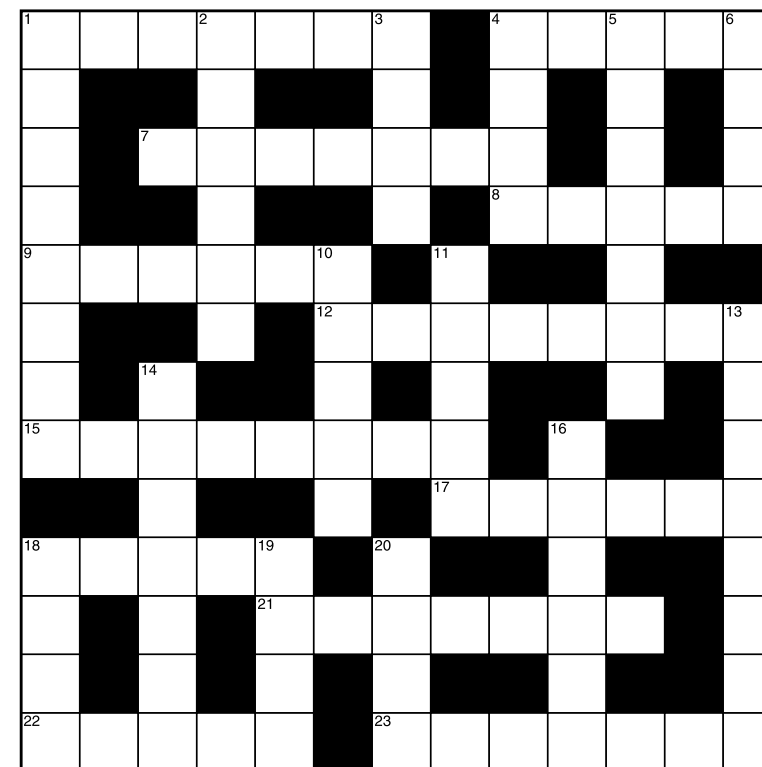
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TEL: (REQUIRED): \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT PLEASE INDICATE JACKET SIZE:**

SMALL ■ MEDIUM ■ LARGE ■ XL ■ 2XL ■



\*Failure to select jacket size will result in void entry

#### NOVEMBER SOLUTION

U	S	A	L	S	H	A	A
N							
S	U	D	A	N	Y	G	O
E	S	A	F	E	G	U	A
E	O	S	E	I	U		
N	E	B	R	A	S	K	A
C	H	I	N	S	M	U	G
O	V	A					
F	A	I	R	G	R	O	U
F	O	I	V	Y	O	U	N
E	Q	U	A	L	L	E	D
E	S	E	N	A	G	A	I

#### NOVEMBER WINNERS

1ST - Mullion Softshell Jacket  
PADDY RATH, ARKH ANGELL  
CLOUGHHERHEAD, CO LOUTH  
2ND - Skipper Beanie  
AODH O' DOMHNAILL  
CARNA, CO. GALWAY



**MULLION SOFTSHELL JACKET**  
*as worn by Tony Brown, Mullion Technician*

**1st prize in The Skipper Crossword**  
visit: [www.mullion.com](http://www.mullion.com)

**MULLION** **SICEN**

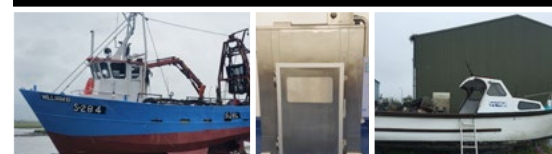


**DIGITAL ISSUE**  
€25 - 12 Issues / 1yr  
€3 - Single Issue

**HARD COPY**  
1 Yr / 12 Issues  
IRL/EU €45 - €55  
UK £45

**ORDER NOW IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS**  
visit: [www.theskipper.ie/subscribe/](http://www.theskipper.ie/subscribe/)

#### FREE BUY & SELL LISTINGS



- Vessels • Equipment
- Wanted • Tonnage
- Gear • Miscellaneous

Contact Sharon now on:  
Tel +353 (0)74 95 48037 or  
Email: [sharon@maramedia.ie](mailto:sharon@maramedia.ie)



Henry O'Donnell with support vessel off the NW coast. Photo: Rory O'Donnell

# Unusual Fins Appear In Irish Waters

Ag Méadú Eolas Muirí  
Ag Soláthair Seirbhísí Mara

Building Ocean Knowledge  
Delivering Ocean Services

**marine.ie**

 *Foras na Mara*  
Marine Institute

Fishermen around the coast should keep an eye out for a strange sight in our waters this winter!

A former army ranger has dived into a new challenge - to become the first person to circumnavigate a country by fin-swimming.

Donegal man Henry O'Donnell was keen to remain busy when the Covid-19 pandemic curtailed his work as a security consultant for airlines and oil companies.

With time on his hands during the coronavirus restrictions, Henry decided to start training for what he describes as "one of the most inspiring, unique and challenging marine projects ever attempted in Irish coastal waters".

His mission is to attempt to fin swim around Ireland to become the first person ever to circumnavigate a country by fin swimming and in doing so will help to raise funds for two charities, Water Safety Ireland and the Irish Cancer Society.

The watersport is growing in popularity and involves surface swimming using fins on your feet along with a breathing mask and snorkel.

The 56-year-old from

Carrickfinn is a former army ranger and has undertaken numerous challenges following his recovery from a sporting accident in the 1990s, which left him paralysed for a period of time.

He led the first relay swim around Ireland in 2006 and has completed 'lowest to highest point' expeditions on four continents.

He left Carrickfinn beach in West Donegal in September to fin-swim the first leg of his clockwise expedition around the island of Ireland and is currently making his way down the east coast stopping off in many of the Irish seas fishing harbours.

Since his journey began many fishermen around the coast have lent their support to the challenge and helped Henry by donating fuel for the support boat and provisions for him and the crew.

The weather will dictate the pace of the swim but Henry said it could take up to one year to complete.

You can follow Henry's progress at <https://finswim2020.com/swim-tracker/> and donate to the charities at [https://www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/11390779\\_fin-swim-2020-s-page.html](https://www.idonate.ie/fundraiser/11390779_fin-swim-2020-s-page.html)

**BE SAFE AT SEA - WEAR YOUR PFD**

**SAVE THE DATE**

 **MARCH 2021**  
FRIDAY/SATURDAY  
**12-13**  
th  
@ UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK  
YOUR INDUSTRY  
YOUR SHOW

[WWW.THESKIPPER.IE](http://WWW.THESKIPPER.IE)

ISSN 2009-3489

 12 >  
9 772009 348025