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NO GREATER TASK!

Seafood Taskforce seeks fishermen's views over Brexit deal measures. See Pages 2-3



Glór na Dtonn fishing off the west coast. Photo: John Roberts

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Killybegs Harbour. Photo: John Cunningham.

Taskforce Seeks Input From Fishing Industry

The Seafood Sector Taskforce is seeking submissions from fishermen and seafood companies in advance of the release of an interim report on possible decommissioning and tie-up Schemes.

The Taskforce is charged to produce the report by the end of April and its findings will inform government action for the sector.

At the inaugural Task force meeting Industry reps put forward a united clear message that decommissioning schemes introduced in the past has not solved Ireland's lack of fishing opportunities but instead has had a detrimental effect on our small ports, harbours and off-shore Islands communities.

Instead industry wants burden sharing as its No. 1. Priority i.e. a rebalance of the % share of fish the member states were forced to contribute to the UK/EU TCA deal.

Also the financial package required to aid the fishing Industry to stave off thousands of Job losses should be directed to the vessel owners and crews primarily.

Another industry requirement is that the task force must address the unfairness of the Common Fishery Policy where Ireland's EEZ is now the largest contributor in both waters and fish to the European Union but our share is not representative of this.

It was also put forward that the UK achieved much of their demands of more fish based on the fact that the fish are in their waters and they controlled access, Ireland are no different and uncontrolled access to our EEZ will damage stocks and thus jeopardize the sustainability of not just our fish stocks but damage the Biodiversity of all marine life off our shores.

The Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM), Charlie McConalogue T.D., announced the establishment of the Seafood Sector Taskforce on 26 February 2021. The

Taskforce was established to make recommendations to the Minister on measures to mitigate the impacts of the fish quota share reductions, arising from the EU/UK Trade & Cooperation Agreement (TCA), on the Irish Fishing industry and on the coastal communities that depend on fisheries

The Minister for Agriculture Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D., attended the inaugural meeting of the Seafood Sector Taskforce

Addressing the Taskforce, Minister McConalogue said, "The outcome of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement will lead to a loss of €43 million per year in fish quotas for our fisheries sector, with knock-on effects on marine support industries and our coastal communities. The quota reductions in some of our most important stocks will be felt immediately by our fishing industry when the full annual EU quotas for 2021 are determined shortly. The impacts for Ireland's fishing sector are disproportionate compared to other Member States and I again call on the Commission and other Member States to find a more equitable solution to the quota transfers to the UK."

Minister McConalogue added, "I can assure this Task Force that the Government will work to ensure that the fisheries sector, and the coastal communities that depend on it, are supported through the period ahead. The Work of this Task Force will inform funding priorities for the coming years under my Department's Seafood Development Programme 2021-27 and under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve."

Terms of Reference

The Task Force will examine the implications arising from the EU/UK TCA for the Irish Fishing industry and coastal communities particularly dependent upon it.

It will, in particular, outline initiatives that could be taken to provide supports for development and restructuring so as to ensure a profitable and sustainable fishing fleet and to identify opportunities for jobs and economic activity in coastal communities dependent on fishing.

The Task Force will consider how all available funding streams could be used to address, to the extent possible, the initiatives identified and the State agencies to support those initiatives.

The Task Force will also consider and recommend constructive actions that would help to alleviate the inequitable relative contribution of quota share by Ireland in the EU/UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

The examination and initiatives identified will relate to:

- the Irish fishing fleet
- the Irish seafood processing industry
- other marine support industries
- coastal communities particularly dependent on the seafood industry.

Work Programme

The Task Force will be charged with producing an interim report within two months of establishment.

This will focus on arrangements for a temporary voluntary fleet tie up scheme, to counter the impact of the reduction in quotas which will begin to occur from April. The Task Force will also be charged with producing a full report within four months.

This will cover the arrangements for a voluntary decommissioning scheme or other initiatives to address the implications of the Trade & Co-operation Agreement and outline other developmental strategies to strengthen and enhance coastal communities especially dependent on the seafood industry.

It will also review the options and recommend actions that may be pursued which would assist in reducing the burden on Ireland from

the transfers of quota shares to the UK.

In producing the reports, the Task Force will take account of the possibilities created by all available funding streams.

Chairperson & Steering Group

The Task Force will consist of a Chairperson, Steering Group and wider Committee of Members. The Chairperson and two other Members will make up the Steering Group. The Steering Group as part of the Taskforce, will be responsible for preparing and signing off on the interim and final report of the Taskforce.

Task Force Steering Committee

Chairperson Aidan Cotter
Steering Group
Margaret Daly
Michéal O' Cinneide

Task Force Main Committee Membership

- One representative each from:
- Killybegs Fishermens Organisation,
 - Irish Fish Producers Organisation,
 - Irish South & West Fishermans Organisation,
 - Irish South & East Fishermans Organisation,
 - Irish Fish Processors & Exporters Organisation,
 - National Inshore Fisheries Forum,
 - Fisheries Local Action Groups,
 - Irish Islands Marine Resource Organisation
 - IFA Aquaculture
 - Foyle Fishermen's Cooperative
 - Castletownbere Fishermens Cooperative
 - Clogherhead Fishermen's Cooperative
 - Galway & Aran Fishetmen's Cooperative
 - Irish Local Development Network
 - Údarás na Gaeltachta
 - Two Representatives from:
 - Local Authority Manager's Association

The Committee will also include representation from DAFM; BIM; Bord Bia; Tourism Ireland; Enterprise Ireland. The Secretariat will be provided by BIM.

Public consultation

The Seafood Sector task force committee is now seeking written submissions or observations within the scope of the terms of reference in advance of publication of the interim report.

Please email your submissions to taskforce@bim.ie before 22 April 2021.

BIM is collecting the submissions to inform the Task Force Committee. All submissions, including the name of the person, or organisation, will be published in the final report. If you wish to make a submission but not be identified publicly this can be accommodated provided it is clearly indicated when the submission is made. When making a submission please indicate if you agree, or not, to your name being published.

All submissions and comments submitted for this purpose are subject to release under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014 and the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations 2007- 2014. Submissions are also subject to Data Protection legislation. Personal, confidential or commercially sensitive information should not be included in your submission and it will be presumed that all information contained in your submission is releasable under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.

EU Funding

On 25 December 2020, the European Commission published a Proposal for an EU Regulation establishing a Brexit Adjustment Reserve.

The objective of the proposed BAR is to provide support to counter the adverse consequences of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union in Member States, regions and sectors, in particular those that are worst affected by that withdrawal, and to mitigate the related impact on the economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The draft Regulation is subject to negotiations in the Council and European Parliament and its provisions may change. It is proposed that the BAR would have a budget of €5.37 billion in current prices and the Commission proposal states that approximately €1 billion would be allocated to Ireland in 2021 as pre-financing to assist Ireland in funding appropriate measures in 2021 and 2022 to assist the worst affected sectors of our economy.

Any support measures for the seafood sector proposed under Ireland's BAR allocation need to be considered at a national level in the context of competing demands from other areas of our economy that have been impacted by Brexit.

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McConalogue responds to criticism over Brexit Deal

In an interview with Lorna Siggins, Minister McConalogue responded to the criticism over the Irish Governments handling of Brexit and appears to rest Irish hopes on the outcome of the CFP review in 2023.

Brexit compensation Fund

Minister for Marine Charlie McConalogue says Ireland is determined to secure the 1 billion euro in EU compensation for the impact of Brexit, in spite of France's attempt to reduce this country's share.

Speaking to The Skipper, Mr McConalogue said it was not yet clear what proportion of this funding would be allocated to the fishing industry, but the sector was recognised as having borne the most severe impact of the final deal.

He said that there would also be national exchequer funding for the sector, in addition to the monies from the Brexit Adjustment Reserve – as the EU's 5 billion euro compensation package is known.

Fears that France is trying to cut Ireland's share were reported by The Irish Times last month, which said that Paris was proposing a different "allocation key" that would result in extra money going to bigger states like France, Spain and Italy.

The newspaper reported that this would come at the expense

of 14 other countries and would hit Ireland the hardest, removing €200 million from the expected €1 billion that had been due to arrive this year, according to calculations by Belgian MEP Pascal Arimont, the European Parliament's rapporteur on the Brexit Adjustment Reserve.

Part of the remit of the seafood task force established by Mr McConalogue would be to recommend best ways for EU and national exchequer funding to be spent to support the seafood sector and coastal communities, he said.

"There's no doubt and no equivocating at Government level that there's a real detrimental impact to a fishing sector as a result of Brexit, with a 15% overall loss of quota over the next five years, and that was a real blow. And one that is going to have a real live impacts as well, and there's a very clear recognition by Government of that, and also a recognition by myself as minister – and the government – on the importance of supporting the fishing sector."

There was a commitment to addressing this over the next

number of years, he said, and for this reason he believed that the "best way forward" was to put together a task force which would bring together "the collective minds and expertise of all across the sector and industry".

It would also harness the expertise of "all of those involved in, and supporting, coastal communities" with a remit to "consider the outcome of Brexit, to consider the impact it is going to have, and how best the government can invest and support the sector" and "invest and support coastal communities to grow".

Taskforce

The taskforce would identify routes "through investment to mitigate the impact that's going to be there from the 15% loss of quota in the fish sector itself, but also particularly looking at other opportunities in terms of secondary industries and also in terms of the marine resources in general".

McConalogue said that under the chairmanship of Aidan Cotter, the task force would meet

on a regular basis, and would be charged with producing an interim report in two months.

Its final report would have to be completed in four months, he stressed.

"I've also asked it to look at advising in relation to their thoughts on the necessity for a tie-up scheme in the short term".

"I also asked them to look at – to consider and advise – in relation to the long-term, and whether they believe is that there is a role for a small level of decommissioning".

Their "advice and insights" would enable the government to "continue to bring the battle to European level in relation to means by which we can look to address the heavy burden share and disproportionate share experienced by our own fleet coming out of Brexit".

This advice would also "relate to the next EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as well, and "ensure burden sharing is a part of that".

It would also advise on the "best approach to seeking a [better] quota share for Ireland as part of that CFP as well".

Decommissioning

Asked how he responded to the industry's call for more fish, rather than a fleet decommissioning scheme, McConalogue said that he was "absolutely...with the industry on that".

"It's fish we want, it's fish that drives the life blood of the fisheries sector," he said, and sustains secondary processing and onshore employment.

Any reduction on fish would have an impact on employment at sea and onshore, and this is something he recognised.

"That is absolutely my position, and has been my position throughout the Brexit negotiations in terms of doing everything we could as a government to protect the sector and try and protect quotas," he said.

Mr McConalogue said there was no budget as yet for a tie-up or decommissioning scheme, as the "starting point" was to "look at what options there are, and how we can invest and support the sector and coastal communities".

Ireland would have to "find ways" to address the unfair burden at European level, he said, and to "get fish back".

"But there is no doubt that coming out of Brexit, there is a readjustment of the European fleet in terms of quota readjustments."

"We carry the biggest burden in proportion to other member states which have taken a burden as well – the Dutch at 10 per cent for example, and the French at eight per cent," he said.

He says the government hopes to "try and find ways to address this" and seek additional fishing quota for the fleet.

Brexit Deal

"Across the European fleet, there is a reallocation...we can fight about the size of that burden but there is undoubtedly going to be a burden, and we have look to mitigate that, and will be informed by the advice of task force in how we do that,

He suggested it was almost inevitable that once Britain had put the fishing industry and reclamation of its waters "front and centre" of the Brexit campaign, there would be a negative outcome for the seafood industry and coastal communities here.

He defended Ireland's decision not to use a veto, in contrast to France which had clearly threatened it – in spite of the French fishing industry's small influence in terms of gross

domestic product.

"In a "no deal" scenario, given that we catch one third of total fish in UK waters, a "no deal" scenario would have been quite disastrous as that one third would have been locked off and there would have been significant displacement of other EU fleets into our waters".

"We saw the difficulties experienced by some of our Northern Irish registered boats in terms of access to ports".

"This was a very small proportion of our national fleet – so imagine the scale of what the challenge would have been if all our fleet didn't have access to British waters, "The fact is that a "no deal" was avoided."

"It was a tremendous disappointment that fish was contained within deal, and involved a 15 per cent quota loss to Ireland," he said. "We fought really really hard at all stages, working with one voice and one approach with the sector and in very close collaboration and co-operation with them".

Ireland worked with the EU task force, and "worked hand in glove with our EU fisheries counterparts and government counterparts". "The approach of the EU task force was as hardball as it could be".

"The unfortunately reality was that it was unavoidable that some level of fish ended up as part of that deal," he said, and it was "most disappointing" that Ireland took a greater hit.

"All member states drove a very very hard line right throughout the negotiations. but I think there was recognition there at the end that unfortunately, it was unavoidable that fish had to be part of the... some level of fish had to be part of the agreement if there was to be a deal, and that was unfortunately the final reality, and unfortunately there was a disappointing outcome, very very disappointing outcome from our point of view in terms of fact that there is more of a burden on ourselves than some other EU member states, and that's something that we recognise.."

Industry Criticism

Mr McConalogue also rejected criticism from the fishing industry that he had not met EU Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier at a critical period from November 27th to relay the Irish industry's concerns.

In response to a parliamentary question tabled by Independent TD for Donegal, Thomas Pringle, he gave dates of four meetings he had participated in with Mr

Barnier as part of the "group of eight", involving Ireland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Denmark and Sweden on the EU-UK Brexit negotiations.

There was no meeting between November 27th and January 20th, he confirmed.

However, Mr McConalogue said there was "ongoing engagement at all stages between the Government and the [EU] task force in relation to advocating our national interests, and co-ordinated obviously through the Taoiseach's office".

"The British position was they were looking for full zonal attachment – as in all fish caught by non UK boats, they wanted 100 per cent of that. They wanted control of waters, and they were holding out in terms of reciprocal access, while the EU didn't want to concede any fish".

"We didn't want to give any fish, and we wanted continued access to waters and reciprocal access," he said. "The approach at all times was to try and leverage the vulnerable position of Britain against other aspects of the trade agreements emphasising fish was tied to the trade agreement at all times. "So that was the position right through".

"As it came to the end, the task force realised there would have to be some fish on the table for there to be a deal. Britain wanted 100 per cent and got 25 per cent, and continued reciprocal access to waters," he said, in spite of the fact that Britain had "pressed the nuclear button" with Brexit in the first place.

He noted that there had been a "very bad reaction" in the British fishing sector. But from my perspective and the EU perspective, giving 25 per cent was too much. "There was a strong willingness there and on part of government – while working for a deal – to support sectors that would be affected, and central to that is fisheries. The deal has avoided many of the real damaging aspects to sectors of the economy impacted by a "no deal" scenario".

CFP Review

Asked to respond to a call by former BIM scientist Dr Peter Tyndall for Ireland to take a legal case against the EU, employing the best legal expertise, Mr McConalogue said that Ireland's approach to the CFP review in 2023 was part of the remit of the seafood task force.

Over the next 18 months, the review of the CFP is going to be



Charlie McConalogue

ongoing, and I am bringing the minds and collective wisdom of our sector together in the task force.

"Part of their considerations will be on advising on ideas and mechanisms and options on burden share and the CFP review to seek to ensure we have the best possible outcome in terms of quota. Every member state is exceptionally protective of the fish share they have, as we are, but I at each council meeting since the deal have been clear that my first priority is to seek ways to address the burden on us in the short term".

"But on the CFP, as well, I intend to work very closely with sector – as I have at all times – and we are working on quotas for the year ahead".

MPAs and Rockall

Asked about the exclusion of his department from the marine planning bill questions and the fact that marine protected area designation is being handled by the Department of Housing, Mr McConalogue said he was "working closely" with this latter department.

"It also very much a priority of mine is in relation to how we continue to deal with aquaculture licensing and the inshore, I am very keen to ensure we have best capacity to develop that sector.

We are still finalising and engaged in relation to final outcome of that bill... and my priority is to ensure there is a system most suitable for developing aquaculture".

He concluded by saying Ireland was continuing to engage with both the Scottish and British governments on Rockall.

"We are holding firm that we have traditional rights within Rockall's 12 mile zone and we are hoping for diplomatic solution".

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6 Mile Ban Back In Place

The Court of Appeal has reinstated the Policy Directive excluding large vessels from trawling in inshore waters within 6 miles of the coast. This will apply at least until the full hearing of the case by the Court of Appeal in late June.

After hearing the motion on Friday 19th March last, the Court was persuaded that the balance of justice leaned in favour of the State at this time and granted a stay on the order of the High Court up until the hearing of the substantive appeal in June, at which time the matter of the stay will be reconsidered by the Court.

This decision will mean that vessels over 18 metres in length are prohibited from trawling inside our 6 miles zone, at least until late June, except for a restricted sprat fishery, which would usually not occur during the late spring / summer period. The stay has only been granted up until the June hearing.”

Patrick Murphy, chief executive of the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation, said that the directive still required scientific backing to support it.

“There are more questions being raised by this latest ruling, such as evidence as to what it is protecting,” he said. “We do not want a situation where boats over 18



Girl Stephanie waiting to land at Killybegs. Photo John Cunningham

metres are being forced to fish further out, risking their safety.”

The policy directive was introduced in March 2019 and came into effect on January 1, 2020. It said that “all trawling by large vessels, over 18 metres in length overall, in coastal waters inside Ireland’s six mile zone was to cease, other than for

a sprat fishery which was to be phased out during 2020 and 2021”.

The policy directive was declared “void/ or of no legal effect” last October by the High Court, which also refused a stay on the order last December.

The full hearing by the Court of Appeal is listed for June 22 and 23.

Provisional Quotas Extended Till 31st July

EU ministers have agreed to extend to the end of July the provisional catch limits for EU fish stocks shared with Britain, to ensure fishing can continue uninterrupted while Brussels and London seek a full-year deal.

In their post-Brexit trade deal, the EU and Britain agreed to jointly set limits each year for fishing their shared stocks after Britain completed its exit from the 27-country bloc on Dec. 31.

They had hoped to negotiate this month a full-year agreement on fishing opportunities for 2021.

As a temporary solution, EU ministers agreed to keep applying last year’s EU catch limits for shared stocks until July 31. The temporary rule, covering stocks including plaice, cod, haddock and whiting, was due to expire on March 31.

“We found a solution so that EU fleets can continue to operate in their traditional fishing

grounds after 31 March,” said Portuguese maritime minister Ricardo Serrao Santos, who chaired the meeting.

A European Commission representative said EU-British talks last week made significant progress towards a proper agreement, but that the roughly 75 fish stocks concerned meant the talks were complex and required further time.

In line with the EU / UK Trade and Co-operation Agreement, these provisional quotas for 7 months will follow scientific advice. The Council agreed increases in the provisional quotas for important stocks such as Monkfish in Area 7 (+8%) and Nephrops in the Porcupine Bank (+25%), compared to 2020. The provisional quota for the pollock stocks has remained at the level set for the first three months reflecting the precautionary advice from ICES.

For pelagic species, including Mackerel, Arctic herring and Blue Whiting, the full twelve month quotas has been agreed by Council.

Minister McConalogue said, “I am pleased with the outcome of the consultations

with Norway in respect of Blue Whiting. The ICES advice is for a 20% cut in this stock and this advice is being followed. I took a strong line internally in the EU in relation to the recently concluded EU negotiations with Norway.”

“As a result, EU negotiated successfully to reduce the customary transfer of this stock to Norway. This reduced transfer of EU Blue Whiting to Norway has resulted in the necessary scientific cut to the Total Allowable Catch being significantly mitigated. As a result Ireland’s quota has been reduced by only 8%, giving us a quota of 35,373 tonnes.”

“The level of transfer of EU Blue Whiting to Norway for 2021 has been set at the lowest transfer level we have seen and represents a recognition at EU level of the need to use every opportunity to improve the situation for our pelagic fleet.”

The EU and Britain are also negotiating catch limits for shared deep-sea stocks in 2022.

Separately, Norway, Britain and the EU this month reached a deal on catch limits for jointly managed North Sea fish stocks

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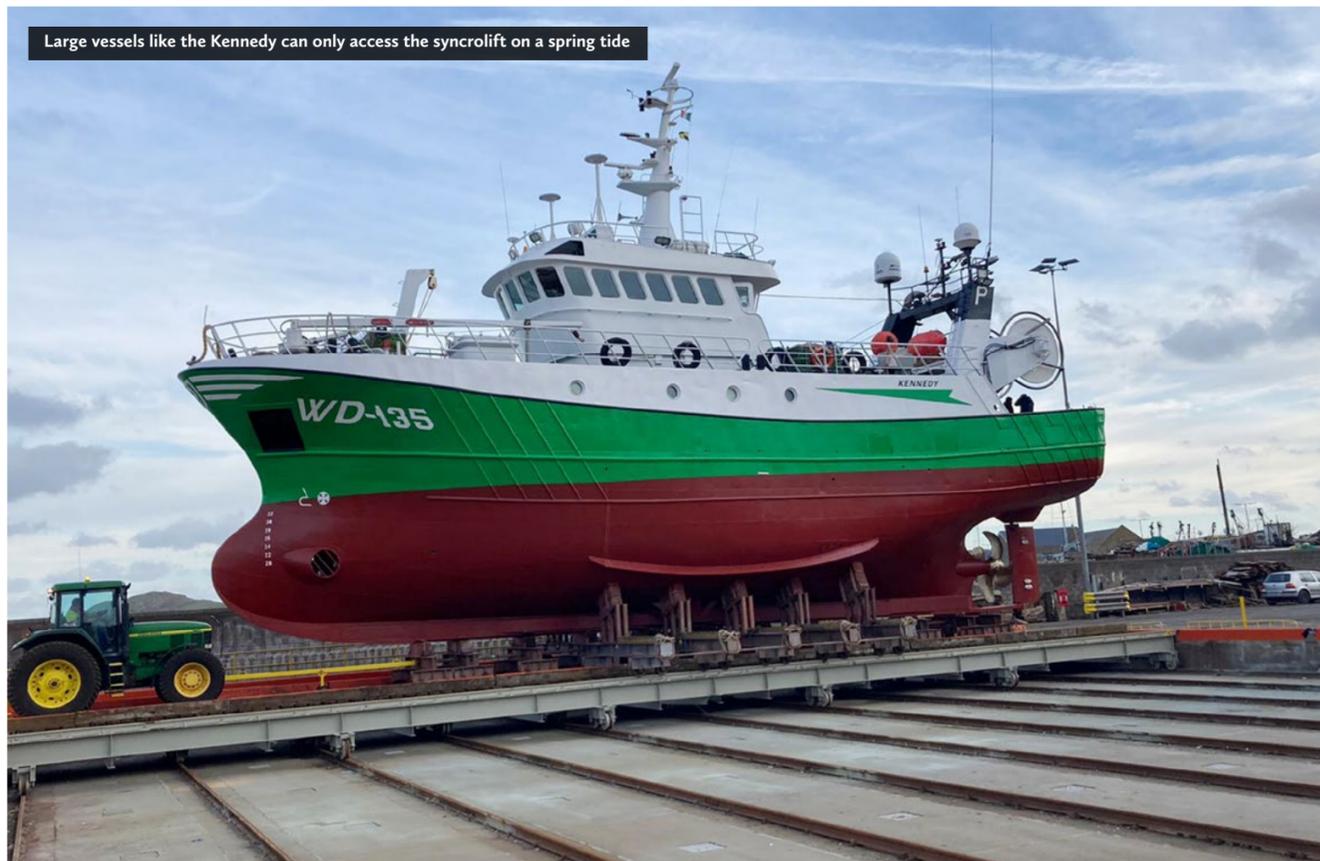
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Large vessels like the Kennedy can only access the syncrolift on a spring tide

Howth Dredging and Reclamation

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), the harbour authority for Howth Harbour Fishery Centre, are proposing to dredge seabed material from within the harbour to provide better water access to the fishing, leisure, and RNLI craft using the harbour. It is proposed to reuse the material to create an area for public realm on the west side of the West Pier.

The volume of material to be removed is approximately 240,000m³, and the area to be created is approximately 4.8ha.

To this end DAFM are preparing a planning application, EIAR and NIS for a proposed dredging and reclamation project at Howth Harbour FHC. While a town hall public consultation exercise would normally be undertaken to inform the preparation of a planning application with an EIAR, because of COVID restrictions, this public consultation exercise is being undertaken virtually.

The proposed development will be the subject of a planning application by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the

Marine and relates to the following main elements:

- Dredging of the harbour and reclamation of land on the west side of the West Pier using treated dredge material;
- The dredge material will be treated using soil stabilisation techniques prior to placement in the reclamation area. This will improve the strength of soil, bind in contaminants and minimise the potential for leachate;
- Coastal protection works to the perimeter of the reclaimed area;
- Landscaping on the reclaimed area and construction of foot-ways, roadways and parking areas;
- Construction of viewing points and a slipway for access to the water;
- Construction of storage areas for harbour activities;
- Provision of necessary services

Speaking to The Skipper, CEO of the IS&EFPO, John Lynch

said “The dredging of Howth Harbour is long overdue and the syncro lift will soon become redundant if the area underneath is not dredged to its original depth.”

“Howth harbour is currently undergoing some major redevelopment with the widening of the middle pier, the building of modern serviced units for repair and service facilities and the upgrading and renewal of the tracks from the syncro lift to the repair yard along with general improvements around the harbour.”

“With all of these projects in hand it would be expected that the harbour will be extremely busy in the future and indeed it would be fantastic to see the boatyard full with boats up for their surveys or annual paint up and repairs.”

“Unfortunately there are some serious issues that will hinder this from being the normal, that is the fact that after more than forty years since the harbour was developed as a fishery harbour centre the basin and in particular the area under the syncro lift has become silted up with the

larger vessels and most are larger vessels these days having to wait for spring tides to use the facility. There are also safety implications to be taken into account here with some vessels unable to enter the harbour for three or four hours either side of high water and having to wait outside the harbour in bad weather until the tide rises enough to enter.”

“The dredging of the area under the syncro lift would almost certainly guarantee that the boatyard at Howth fishery harbour will be very productive long into the future. The vessel owners using Howth harbour would be grateful if this is attended to as a matter of urgency as it has become impossible for them to use the boatyard facilities in Howth. This would greatly benefit both the harbour and the fishing fleet.”

You may email any comments you have on the proposed application to the design team at howthengineering@agriculture.gov.ie. Comments received will be addressed as appropriate in the EIAR and NIS which will be submitted with the application.

Dates announced for Irish Skipper Expo 2022 and Scottish Skipper Expo 2022



Over 230 companies exhibited at Scottish Skipper Expo 2019



Hugh Bonner (right) MD Skipper Expos, Caitlin Uí Aodha, Founding Member of the Women in Fisheries Network along with sponsors Charlie Cavanagh, Cavanagh Hooper Dolan and Jim O'Toole, BIM CE, at Irish Skipper Expo 2019.

Irish Skipper Expo 2022 will be held on 25 and 26 March (Friday and Saturday) at the UL Sport Arena in Limerick, while Scottish Skipper Expo 2022 will take place on 13 and 14 May (Friday and Saturday) at the P & J Live arena in Aberdeen.

Show organiser Mara Media

had recently consulted exhibitors and visitors on the expos, and the consensus was that the current two-day format, held on a Friday and Saturday, was the most suitable option.

Both expos will feature virtually every type of equipment and support service available to the commercial fishing sector,

with the events providing a vitally important showcase to help reinvigorate the industry.

Sharon Boyle, commercial fishing manager for Mara Media said: “We are delighted to confirm these dates for next year. I would like to express my sincere thanks to exhibitors and the wider industry for their

tremendous support during this challenging period.

Both expos will provide the perfect opportunity for fishermen to see at first hand the latest products and services available to the fishing industry and offer businesses an invaluable marketing platform to promote their ranges.

Skipper PRESENTS



IRISH SKIPPER EXPO

25-26 MAR 2022



SCOTTISH SKIPPER EXPO

13-14 MAY 2022



2022 DATES CONFIRMED

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Skipper

EU Exit Carnage Inflicted On The UK Fishing Industry

NUFTA CEO Jerry Percy looks back at the fallout from the Brexit Deal



Jerry Percy

Fishing was the undoubted poster boy for Brexit, underpinned by expansive promises from senior Government officials of taking back control, being an independent coastal state and benefiting from a windfall of hundreds of thousands of tons more fish.

The reality is almost the complete reverse. The UK's fishing industry has been thrown under the bus without a second thought, with Jacob Rees-Mogg encapsulating the Government's apparent post EU Exit lack of care or concern by smugly suggesting that we had got our fish back and that "they're now British fish and they're better and happier fish for it". Suitably translated, many within the industry read this as an extension of Johnson's earlier comment to "F**k business" to now include fishermen.

This is history repeating itself. Edward Heath infamously gave away most of the UK's fishing rights to Europe when we joined the EEC.

In the recent negotiations Johnson similarly appears to have given away almost everything, vitally including the UK's exclusive access to our 6-12 mile limit, a firm promise made repeatedly by Ministers, including the fisheries minister Victoria Prentis. Ms Prentis (who infamously admitted to having not read the Withdrawal Agreement as she was too busy organising her local Nativity Trail) promised that "...any access negotiated with the EU will cover only the UK's exclusive economic zone, and not the 0 to 12 mile zone. That remains the case".

To put this into perspective, the week before the Agreement was signed there were 17 large Belgian beam trawlers working the six mile line between Hastings

and Brighton. It is little wonder then that our own inshore fishermen's main complaint these days is that there are few fish making it through this European curtain of large scale fishing effort and to within reach of these smaller scale fishermen.

At the same time, more than three quarters of the UK fleet are vessels of less than 10 metres in length, and 80 percent of this sector uses passive gear such as pots, nets or lines rather than trawls.

Having the continued presence of massive EU trawlers still able to fish up to our six mile limit effectively pins our smaller boats into the coastal strip in order to avoid having their fishing gear towed away should they venture out to 6.1 miles.

So where are we now as the UK fishing industry?

The Scottish Government described the deal as a terrible outcome for Scotland's coastal communities as the key stocks that the Scottish industry relies on, far from seeing a big increase, will actually fall in the quantity of fish they can land.

"Taking back control" has resulted in only a net nine percent increase in fish and with the species concerned, almost nothing of value for the UK's smaller scale fleet, who already have to subsist on only two percent of the national quota, despite making up 79 percent of the fleet by number.

Oh, and more than a fifth of the UK's overall increase in quota species will go to foreign interests who own much of the UK registered fleet.

The vast majority of shellfish that we catch is exported to the EU and here, all those vacuous promises come home to roost.

Rather than a reduction in red tape, shellfish exporters now have dozens of new forms to fill in, with any minor mistakes, including the misspelling of the Latin name for a species, risking a whole truck load of live shellfish being turned around, with massive economic losses for those concerned.

For a mixed load of live shellfish from the UK to Europe, the paperwork has gone from one to around several hundred pages and the main worry now is the permanent loss of markets in



Weymouth

Europe and consequently fishing and exporting businesses here.

Among all the examples of EU Exit carnage inflicted on the fishing industry, the complete ban on the export to the EU of almost all live bivalves, such as mussels and clams has had possibly the worse real time impact, with businesses built up over many years on the verge of losing everything.

George Eustice, Secretary of State has claimed repeatedly that this ban was the fault of the EU, that he was surprised that the EU had changed their position and that the ban had been sprung upon us rather casually.

The legislation has in fact been in existence for some years and the truth of the matter only became clear when a letter from Mr Eustice, written on December 10 showed that he had in fact been aware of the forthcoming apocalypse at that time.

Much has been made in the media of the loss of cheap foreign labour to the agriculture sector, with fruit and flowers rotting in the fields for lack of pickers.

The fish processing sector also relies on similar workers, as do many of the larger scale trawl fleet in the UK who have been unable to attract local crews.

A recent relaxation in freedom of movement will allow these foreign workers entry and this can either be considered to be a vital

lifeline for these vessels to keep operating or yet another nail in the coffin of local jobs on local boats.

There have been comments criticizing the fishing fleet for so willingly supporting the very Brexit that has now wreaked so much damage on our sector.

In defence, British fishermen have long felt rightfully aggrieved at the deal done by Edward Heath that gave away so much of our fish and fishing grounds to Europe.

We saw EU Exit as a way of rebalancing access to our waters and this was drummed home relentlessly by the Government both before and after the referendum. The Sea of Opportunity diatribe much vaunted by the larger scale sector of the fleet, who rely on quota, drowned out many of the voices of smaller scale fishermen reliant on shellfish exports who had been raising their concerns for many months.

We are promised world leading fisheries management and an opportunity to revisit the deal in five and a half years' time. Unless there is a rapid and dramatic approach by Government to the former then the latter date will be meaningless as many of the smaller scale, sustainable fishermen that Brexit promised to protect and prosper will not be around to see it.

PFD Crotch Straps

Why are crotch straps a benefit when using a PFD?

Frankie Horne, RNLI Commercial Fishing Safety Manager is asking fishermen to ensure they are using their PFD's properly by ensuring that the crotch strap is correctly attached and will give maximum benefit if needed.

Frankie advises: "When I'm out and about on the quayside with fishermen talking about PFDs, one of the main conversations is around the need to use the crotch strap."

"Comments would be "it's a snag hazard". "It gets in the way when bending down". "it cuts my oilskins".

"Well, there are quite a few

benefits to using the crotch strap should you need your PFD."

It will hold the PFD down on the casualty when inflated.

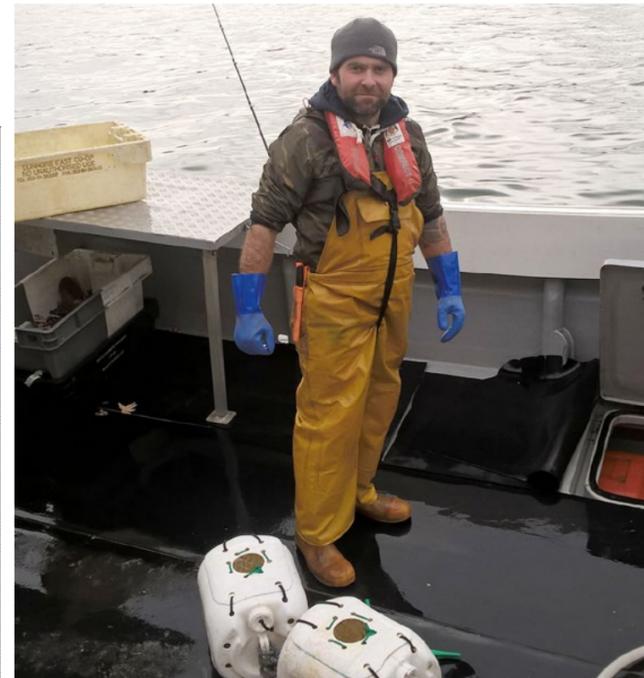
It will bring the legs of the casualty up to a better position in the water to prevent bobbing.

It will hold the casualty in a better position for self-righting.

It will prevent the PFD coming off over the casualty's head in a recovery event.

Some tips to make the crotch strap more user friendly.

Try wearing a belt around the oilskin and crotch strap, this will hold it in place and stop it flailing when bending down. This is also a benefit should you go overboard by holding all your clothing in place, you can also attach a knife to the belt.



Try putting the crotch strap down inside your oilskin trousers, however this only works when you have no oilskin top on. The shorter the PFD is the longer the crotch strap is. Many users then choose to wear it without the crotch strap. This

will not make the PFD useless. However, the lower the waist band is, the more important the crotch strap is. For more safety information visit: www.rnli.org/safety/choose-your-activity/commercial-fishing

Conways Solicitors Welcomes Campaigning Marine Lawyer Onboard

Cork based Solicitors Conways headed by Dermot Conway have welcomed the appointment of International Marine Lawyer Michael Kingston to their practice.

Michael Kingston, is from Goleen, Co Cork, and comes from a long family history of fishing and merchant seafaring.

Michael works as an International Maritime Organization Consultant on Polar issues and Fishing vessel safety. He was awarded the 2014 - 2015 Lloyd's List Global Maritime Lawyer of the Year for his contribution to safety of life at sea

Michael has also played a key role in instigating Ireland's recent application to becoming an Observing Member of the Arctic Council in order to assist with the response to key environmental issues affecting Ireland's climate, as well as other key opportunities for Ireland.

Michael has advised several Governments and international organizations, and is currently representing the Government of Iceland in a world group of interested parties developing draft guidance to assist competent authorities in the implementation of the 2012 Cape Town Agreement for the safety of fishing vessels. He is also currently advising the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Transport and Communication Networks in relation to the proposed amendments to the Merchant Shipping (investigation of



Michael Kingston

Marine Casualties) Amendment Bill (the Proposed Act)

Speaking to The Skipper Michael said he was looking forward to working with Conways

"I am delighted to be joining Conways Solicitors as a Consultant. As someone who has been deeply involved in the development of world regulation for the protection of merchant seafarers and fishermen I have admired the work that Conways have been doing."

"Conways are a firm that stand up for clients wholeheartedly and with great skill when they face difficulties in the maritime sector and I am pleased to be associated with such a successful firm which complements my own area of work to date"

Seafood Sector Taskforce Public Consultation

A Seafood Sector Taskforce has been established by Minister Charlie McConalogue T.D. The aim of the Taskforce is to make recommendations on measures to mitigate the impacts of the fish quota share reductions arising from the EU/UK Trade & Cooperation Agreement (TCA) on the Irish Fishing industry and on the coastal communities that depend on fisheries.

The Taskforce is made up of industry stakeholders and public bodies. They will examine initiatives that could be taken to provide supports for development and restructuring to ensure a profitable and sustainable fishing fleet and to identify opportunities for jobs and economic activity in coastal communities dependent on fishing.

Initiatives being examined will relate to:

- The Irish fishing fleet
- The Irish seafood processing industry
- Other marine support industries
- Coastal communities particularly dependent on the seafood industry

Accordingly, the Taskforce hereby invites **written submissions or observations from industry and the general public** in advance of publication of the Taskforce interim report.

All responses should be emailed to taskforce@bim.ie before **Thursday 22 April 2021**.

For more information see www.bim.ie



Fishing vessels will encounter more algal blooms as Irish waters warm up

Changes in Harmful Algal Bloom patterns show climate change is evident in Irish waters

Latest research has shown that the impacts of climate change are already evident in Irish marine waters, with the patterns of harmful algal blooms changing in recent decades. The research, undertaken by the Marine Institute, also indicates that the ocean off southwest Ireland will likely become warmer and less salty by the year 2035.

Naturally occurring blooms of microscopic algae species can sometimes harm ocean health. While most microalgae in the sea are beneficial, some species can produce chemicals that can be passed on via filter feeding shellfish and occasionally make these shellfish unfit for human consumption. These harmful algal blooms can therefore cause substantial damage to the shellfish industry through prolonged farm closures and loss of produce. Ireland has a national monitoring programme in place to ensure that all Irish shellfish placed on the market are tested and safe for human consumption.

By investigating harmful algal bloom patterns in Irish marine waters over a 20-year period, from 1997 – 2016, Marine Institute scientists discovered that the timing of harmful algal blooms have changed. Two species, *Karenia mikimotoi* and *Dinophysis acuta*, show a clear recent increase in their average monthly abundances, peaking later in the year compared to the previous decade. The data from recent years also shows a notable increase in the number of weeks these organisms are present each year.

Dr Caroline Cusack of the Marine Institute said, "By looking at the data on harmful algal blooms over the past two decades, we can see that climate change is already having an impact on our marine environment. Harmful algae usually bloom during the warm summer season or when water temperatures are warmer than usual. As human-induced climate change continues to impact our ocean, we must remain vigilant to the stress and damage this is having on marine ecosystems."

Researchers at the Marine Institute also developed computer models to investigate the regional oceanic climate off the southwest of Ireland. This climate model indicates that under future projected medium and high greenhouse gas emissions, the ocean off southwest Ireland will become warmer and less saline by the year 2035. The results of the ocean climate model are consistent with other European climate models and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) climate models.

Mick Gillooly, Director of Ocean Climate and Information Services at the Marine Institute said, "Our ocean and climate are inextricably linked. Small changes in the marine ecosystem, such as changing harmful algal bloom patterns, could have a big effect on our shellfish industry, economy and marine environment over the next decades. Adapting to a changing climate is one of the greatest challenges facing society, and scientific knowledge is essential to forecast changes in our oceans, so Ireland can effectively respond

to, mitigate and adapt to those changes in our ocean and climate."

This research was carried out by the Marine Institute, as the project coordinator of the CoCliME (Co-development of Climate Services for adaptation to changing Marine Ecosystems) Project, funded by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the European Commission and other European national funders.

CoCliME modelling efforts undertaken by project partners in France, show that existing ocean currents have the potential to bring tropical warm water species such as the microalgae *Ostreopsis* to the southern shores of Ireland. One potentially harmful *Ostreopsis* species is now confirmed in coastal regions off southwest France with genetic markers detected off the Brittany coast indicating it can establish in areas further north.

The CoCliME study indicates that the ocean is changing with similar trends to that observed by other European and global predictions in both climate scenarios and altered harmful algal blooms occurrence patterns in the last two decades.

This project is funded under the EPA Research Programme 2014-2020. The EPA Research Programme is a Government of Ireland initiative funded by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. It is administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, which has the statutory function of co-ordinating and promoting environmental research.

KILLYBEGS ROUNDUP

by John Cunningham

Onwards and upwards for Barry Electronics Ltd.

Ireland's premier Marine Electronics Company, Barry Electronics Ltd, is looking forward to another busy year, according to one of its owners, John Cormack. Since the company's foundation in 1979, it has been the driving force in Irish Marine Electronics. Over the last 40 years Barry Electronics has been working from its main office in Killybegs to provide support to its customer base all over the island of Ireland and beyond.

The last 12 months have been a strange time for everyone and this has been no different for Barry Electronics, according to John. Service and installations have required much more thought and planning than ever before. Combined with this, strict protocols had to be introduced in the office and on board customer boats to best protect both crew and Engineers.

Thankfully, the company has a healthy program of work in the short and medium term, a very busy summer and autumn is coming up for all staff. A number of major projects, which have been the subject of a lot of planning over the last 18 months, are gradually coming together.

Outside the country, Barry Electronics Ltd are delighted to be back in various European shipyards, including Karstensen Shipyard on the new Antarctic, Vastvaertfret Shipyard for a number of Irish projects including the Danny Finn and Ocean Crest and also Cemre Shipyard in Turkey for Atlantic Dawn Ltd's three sister ships – Leila, Lauren and Veronica. According to John 'It's great after a long planning process to finally see these projects coming together and we look forward to seeing these boats back in their Irish home ports when complete. These ships will all be absolutely state of the art with radical new wheelhouse layouts, never before seen on an Irish ship.'

Closer to home, Barry Electronics are delighted to continue to work closely with Mooney boats, who continue to go from strength to strength in their new building expertise. Barry Electronics have a very busy schedule in their shipyard for the next 18 months. Along with this, day to day service in all the fishing and commercial ports around the country make for a very quick



week, according to John.

This year, in response to the limited ability for customer travel, Barry Electronics have opened a new web shop as part of their existing website. Customer response has been good and Barry Electronics plan to build on this side of the business over the course of the next year.

Another core part of Barry Electronics' business is communications, particularly Vsat. Barry Electronics are the only company in Ireland with their full Vsat support located in Ireland. This local contact, along with quick service anywhere in the country,

has made Barry Electronics by far the biggest provider of Vsat services on the island. This business continues to grow.

The current pelagic season has been busy with Irish customers and also with visiting ships on the Blue Whiting fishery. Barry Electronics are very well regarded by these European fleets and it's a welcome boost at the tail end of the Irish pelagic season.

Business continues to be good for this local Irish company and with their long-standing customers; Barry Electronics hopes to continue to do what they do best for years to come.

Blue whiting fishery

The blue whiting season is off to a great start with most of the Irish fleet having the present quota allocation taken and waiting for the final allocation to be issued. Three

Scottish boats, Quantus, Lunar Bow and Pathway have been making regular landings into Killybegs landing mostly to the fresh market. The Danish vessel Gette has been making frequent visits with all their fish going to Atlantic Dawn

for processing. There has been a steady flow of Norwegian Boats landing fish meal also.

Killybegs Port

Killybegs Stevedores have been kept extremely busy with

four reefers calling to port to be loaded with frozen Blue whiting.

Meanwhile another two giant vessels have arrived carrying 33 wind turbine blades each weighing 18 ton and 65 metres in length.

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NORTHERN IRELAND NEWS *By Dick James*

THE FISHERY

February was in general a month lost to fishing due to poor weather. Nothing strange there and at least it could be said that the fragile market for fisheries products was not tested in extremis!

However on the home front it was a case of those desperate enough to try and get the odd day in here and there for little enough gain. Even the Clyde, which is usually sheltered enough from most wind directions did not really get a testing, possibly because the thought of an uncomfortable passage to get there was daunting enough.

Come March things changed with a break in the weather giving the boats a chance to release their pent up frustrations and to put to sea with serious intent and not to stop until the weather closed in again about mid- month.

Fishing was in the west Irish Sea generally in the deep water mid channel with whole intact prawns being most prominent in the landings. Again all fishing south of the border-line was out as authorities don't seem able (or willing) to resolve any issue relating to the

post Brexit fishing regime.

No doubt we will soon be regaled with accusation and counter accusation and reports of deadlines (no doubt missed) and in the meantime all we can do "is keep calm and carry on"!

The North Sea prawn fishery was similarly quiet with few enough local boats left there and the west of Scotland grounds the same. There seems to be a recovery of sorts on the Porcupine Bank with a considerable fleet taking part and the local boats Maracestina and Tigers putting in regular trips.

In the North Irish Sea the Brixham super-Beamer is again putting in regular trips using Holyhead as a landing base but the various Belgium Beamers have not yet shown a determination to join in.

The white fish fleet are working grounds in the mid Irish Sea outwith the Ireland/EU 12 mile line for a run of small Haddock or going to the North Channel for the species mix found there. The unresolved issues relating to quota could end up being an embarrassment there as limited availability of Cod in particular means boats are fishing into the unknown.

The Unity is continuing to work in the English Channel approaches based on Haddock availability though quota problems for other species seem to be giving the local boats some concerns no doubt this will also limit the Unity's expectations.

Difficulties with a positive Covid test occasioned the Unity to quarantine for a period but no long lasting effects developed.

On the Pelagic front the season draws slowly to an end with the Irish duo Buddy M and Cisemar landing Mackerel into Ardglass with the Voyager finishing up on western Horse Mackerel before putting in a landing of Irish Sea Herring to finish off with and go into summer hibernation in Skagen.

Inshore boats are in a slack period for Brown Crab and effort deployed on Lobster is only marking time between weather systems and the other winter alternatives being similarly affected.

Meanwhile they still wait with ever diminishing hope for the Covid compensation promised for Christmas last, maybe now Easter or possibly next Christmas?



Drone view of Red Bay Harbour. Photo Stephen Jones

Harbour Changes

The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority has appointed an Environmental Officer to take forward and promote environmental issues at the three County Down harbours of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie.

Jennifer Lau has started work and an early initiative is to do an on-line series of presentations entitled "KNOW YOUR COAST" to which participants are invited to attend (virtually).

This is to be done in partnership with the Ulster Wildlife Trust who will front with Gala Podgornik the Ulster Wildlife Trusts living seas officer. The first presentation is titled "From Local to Global and Back" and will be followed by three others "Our Living Seas" "What a Waste! What Now?" and "Be Inspired and Get Involved".

The Ulster Wildlife Trust has a track record of disputes with the Northern Ireland fishing industry having been involved in the closures in the Strangford Lough fishery after lobbying the EU to threaten infraction proceedings against the Northern Ireland administration for not implementing closures in the fishery.

As a consequence of this further closures were made under the aspiration to recover Horse Mussel beds and then a restrictive licensing regime imposed whereby 23 licences were issued to individuals to fish what area of the Lough was left with static gear only.

The number of licences issued initially was 23 with several unsuccessful appeals, this has now reduced to 12 licences and despite promise to instate

replacement applicants this has not happened. The fishery is evolving to full closure with licences reducing to zero and the Horse Mussels show no signs of coming back! The area off the mouth of Strangford Lough is now due to be environmentally designated with a ban on mobile gear and unspecified management control of static gear fishing.

A survey of the bed of Ardglass Harbour and its approaches is due in March to ascertain the depth of sand over bedrock in the Harbour and approaches which should give data on which deepening of the Harbour and the cost of such works can be more accurately planned. The survey should be done in a day and will give also an insight as to what can be achieved within the natural configuration of the Harbour and surrounds.

The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority are engaging in works funded under the EU grant aid EMFF scheme to upgrade and renovate the Authorities office complexes which are used by Harbour Authority staff as well as Government fishery officers, environmental health officers, fisheries scientists and other official bodies.

The Kilkeel complex nears completion with Ardglass started and Portavogie to follow. The Ardglass structure will involve incorporating the old/original ice plant and store into the administrative block making for an imposing building which will rival the facade of the many existing castles in the village. What a fitting CFP leaving present from the EU which will probably be filled with Brexit administering staff!

A Government of Ireland measure brought to you by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Public Consultation

MPA Advisory Group Report entitled "Expanding Ireland's Marine Protected Area Network"

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, TD, and Minister of State with responsibility for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan, TD, invite submissions, observations and comments on the final report of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Advisory Group, entitled "Expanding Ireland's Marine Protected Area Network". In general terms, MPAs are geographically defined maritime areas with certain protections for conservation purposes.

Having a clean, healthy, diverse and productive marine environment will help protect marine biodiversity, our well-being and our economy. The Government is aiming to have 30% MPA coverage of Ireland's maritime area by 2030.

Full details on this public consultation, including the online survey, are available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultations/>

To have your say, please complete the online survey. You can download a PDF version of the survey form at the above web link as well.

If you are unable to use the online survey you can send your completed survey form by email or by post. You can also send in other views, observations or material as follows:

By post to:

MPA Public Consultation 2021,
c/o Marine Environment,
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage,
Newtown, Wexford, Y35 AP90.

By email to: marine.env@housing.gov.ie

Please note that this public consultation will close at 5pm on Friday 30 July, 2021.

This is a public Consultation and the Freedom of Information Act 2014 applies.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Obituary Roy Shaw

Roy Shaw passed away during March at his home in Portavogie after a short illness.

Born in October 1940 Roy went to the fishing as a rite of passage as was usual in the Portavogie fishing community in the days following the second world war. He did the usual progression from deck to wheelhouse starting on his own in the Scarlet Thread before progressing to the Silver Scout in which he doubled his fishing operations with cargo transport to the Isle of Man before regular ferries became the norm.

Following that he moved up to the Herd & McKenzie built Fragrant Rose at which point in his life Roy became a Board Member of the local Northern Ireland Fish Producer Organisation helping steer that young organisation through the early difficult years as he became Chairman of the Organisation later on and moved boats once again to the Eyemouth built Incentive 11 which he purchased from that port.

During his period as Chairman of the "PO" the transition from a purely marketing and

withdrawal of fish from market for EU compensation body to one which engaged in political representation and even into Chandlery sales took place. From there the advent of sectoral quota management by PO's evolved with the NIFPO with Roy as Chair very much to the fore. Roy fished the Incentive well into his 60's before passing the boat over to son in law Clements Booth which still fishes from Portavogie with Roy's Grandson Ben working onboard with his father in one of the traditional family boat operations left on the coast.

Roy was predeceased by his wife Betty (nee Pearson) and is survived by daughter Sharon and Grandchildren Lisa, Ben and Roy Jnr. The funeral was in Portavogie on the 4th March following a drive past the Harbour with limited numbers in attendance as is required these days. Roy's daughter Sharon works in the Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation as office manager but in some instance the power behind the organisation and a fitting testimony to her father Roy.

RIP Roy Shaw

Report On Fisheries Financial Support

On the fifth of March Declan McAleer of Sinn Fein reported to the Northern Ireland Assembly that the Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs in their 2020 budget expenditure had secured £41.7 million of Covid related funding of which £25 million was destined for the Agri-Food sector and £1.5 million for fisheries of which £1.32 million funded 171 successful applications from fishing vessel owners to cover market difficulties arising from Covid.

A second tranche of aid for the fishing sector was secured later in the year, again to compensate for depressed markets, of £1.3 million of which £1.1 million was distributed to 66 vessel owners but the smaller vessels catching mainly crab and lobster scheme based on fixed costs analysis had yet to be paid as enabling legislation had yet to be identified.

On Brexit costs, estimates covered the need for the ports of Larne and Belfast of 25 Vets, 75 Portal officers and 12 Admin officers. Local authorities had in addition identified 30 Environmental Health officers

18 Plant officers and 3 Fishery officers. A UK Treasury allocation of £45 million plus £5 million contingency was allocated for this.

Also featuring in this Agriculture Committee report was mention of Covid funding for environmental NGO's. For what purpose it does not say but if the agenda is fishing you may be sure it is not to the benefit of fishermen!

No Decommissioning

In the United Kingdom House of Commons the Agriculture Minister responsible for Fisheries, Victoria Prentiss,

has repeatedly responded to enquiries that there will be no decommissioning scheme for fishing boats as a response to Brexit difficulties but that £100 million is available to upgrade the industry although no specific details are as yet available.

A compensation scheme for fishing vessels has, however, been announced to compensate for Brexit difficulties mainly as a consequence of marketing problems to be administered on a UK wide basis and administered by the Marine Management Organisation rather than devolved administrations.



UK NEWS

Consultation On Future Role Of Seafish To Get Underway In June

Strategic Review of Seafish will ask seafood industry to share views on the organisation's future direction and funding.

Seafish, the public body that supports the seafood industry in the UK, will ask the seafood industry to share views on the organisation's future direction and funding as part of a strategic review this year.

As a public body, Seafish must carry out strategic reviews from time to time. The Seafish Board decided in November 2019 to carry out a review in 2020 but the Covid-19 pandemic delayed this process. Preparations for the review started at the end of 2020 and the industry consultation will launch on 1st June.

Over 8 weeks, individuals, businesses and organisations will be asked to share views on how Seafish can best serve the seafood sector in the UK and how it can be funded. There will be two ways to take part:

- Supply Chain Workshops, drawing together stakeholders from all sectors and from all four nations of the UK. These will be held virtually due to the current pandemic situation. Seafish will contact people over the next few weeks, inviting them

to take part.

- Respond to questions in a written submission or by answering an online survey. This will be available to anyone who wants to share their views. Details on how to take part this way will be shared when the industry consultation starts in June.

Marcus Coleman, Chief Executive at Seafish, said: "The aim of this strategic review is to strengthen our offering.

We want to ensure we are set up and funded in the best way to help our seafood sector throughout the UK to thrive now and in the future.

"The nature of the seafood industry is always evolving. It's now facing the challenges that have come from the Covid-19 pandemic and as we get used to trading, fishing and working outside the EU. We are committed to helping the industry through these changes so it's crucial to ask seafood businesses how we can best support them."

Seafish is working with the UK's four governments to ensure that the strategic review process is fair and transparent. A Strategic Review Steering Group, including Seafish and all four



Fishing Fleet Researcher

government administrations, is overseeing the process and ensuring the strategic review fulfils the Government's needs for a review of a public body.

An independent facilitator will lead the stakeholder workshops and the written submissions part of the industry consultation. The steering group is guiding the review process through to submission of a report to government by the Seafish board in November 2021.

An Invitation to Tender for independent experts to manage the two elements of the industry consultation is available on the Seafish website.

£1.3m For Welsh Fishing To Deal With Brexit And Covid



Anchored up in Cardigan Bay

The Welsh Government has launched a new £1.3m scheme to help the Welsh fishing and aquaculture sector following the twin hits to their businesses caused by leaving the EU and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The sector in Wales - whose largest export trading partner is the EU - has been hit hard by the UK/EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) which came into force January 1 this year.

Welsh fishers have suffered severe trade disruption, and many of our aquaculture businesses trading in live bivalve molluscs - such as mussels - have seen a total cessation of trade.

This disruption has exacerbated what was already a critical situation for the Welsh seafood sector following the closure of hospitality markets due to Covid-19 restrictions

The new Welsh Seafood Sector Resilience Scheme will support seafood businesses through two elements.

The first part of the scheme will see a targeted one-off grant made available to eligible Welsh vessel-owning fishing businesses, with the grant equivalent to three months' vessel costs, capped at £10,000.

The payments will be based on vessel size and the number of corresponding categories.

While similar to the UK Government's Seafood Response Fund, the qualifying reference period for the Welsh scheme will be longer, providing support to more Welsh fishing businesses who need support.

The qualifying criteria will be similar to that of the 2020 Welsh Fisheries Grant.

The second part will see support provided to aquaculture businesses, including those trading in live bivalve molluscs.

Businesses will be able to apply for a grant for the first three months of 2021, to provide half of the average of their monthly gross revenue for each month, at a maximum cap of £40,500.

The scheme will be open for applications from Wednesday, March 17 and close on Wednesday, March 31.

The new funds were announced by Lesley Griffiths, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs.

The Minister said: "Since January, seafood businesses in Wales have suffered severe trade disruption - with businesses who supply live bivalve molluscs from class B waters facing closure as their EU

markets disappeared.

"Many other businesses have faced a further blow from the closure of hospitality markets due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

While I welcome the support provided by the UK Government via its Seafood Response Fund, it only gives partial support for Welsh fisheries and aquaculture businesses. As such, I felt it was vital that we give seafood businesses the support they need during these difficult times.

"The support provided will help those eligible to cover their costs during this difficult time, and ensure we have a competitive seafood sector once this crisis has passed.

"We were promised we would not receive 'a penny less' after leaving the EU. Clearly this deal has been broken. I will continue to lobby the UK Government to come good on the commitment they made to our fishing and aquaculture sector."

In addition to the support provided via the scheme, the remaining European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will target Covid-19 recovery, offering fishers the opportunity to add value to catch.

The new approach to the programme should start in June, with further details due from Rural Payment Wales.

Small Scale Coastal Infrastructure Scheme

Also announced was the Small Scale Coastal Infrastructure Scheme - a £1m fund available to all port authorities and coastal local authorities to make improvements to ports and harbours, providing the infrastructure needed as businesses transition towards environmentally sustainable operations.

The scheme will provide grants of up to £100,000 for capital investment into ports and harbours, allowing for environmental, operational, safety and security improvements.

The Minister added: "As trading businesses look to the future and recovery, well-maintained infrastructure is key to allowing them to succeed.

"The Small Scale Coastal Infrastructure Scheme will allow for improvements at ports and harbours across Wales."

UK Parliament Considers Kosmos System For Fish Export Issues

During an International Trade Committee on the EU-UK trading relationship, the British House of Commons zoomed in on the possibilities KOSMOS has to offer, she decided to get in touch with us.

Trawler Agents, Shetland Seafood Auction and Stevenson Newlyn have already made the switch and are very pleased with the wide range of possibilities KOSMOS has to offer, she decided to get in touch with us.

Mrs. Portman strongly believes that the digital platform KOSMOS can offer an answer to the significant additional export paperwork in the UK fishing industry.

KOSMOS cannot only be used to process the fish supply and to sell the products: also

the after-sales processes are covered.

Reports can easily be exported to local and central authorities or third parties to support with the EU import process.

KOSMOS collects a complete package of data, which is very useful for the preparation of EU-compliant export paperwork.

The KOSMOS data can be efficiently consulted online by various users - from suppliers, buyers, exporters and auction staff to the entire fishing industry - when using their PC, tablet or smartphone.

Aucxis' E-Trade Manager Patrick Bauwens "We have extensive experience in data capture and data exchange in the fishing industry. We already exchange data and generate reports for other European auctions.

Therefore, we believe that by implementing KOSMOS we can help the UK fishing industry in centralising all fishing data and generating the necessary reports and certificates, e.g. for export and traceability purposes. We can also cross-check data with other systems."

The screenshot displays the Aucxis E-Trade Manager interface. At the top, it shows the current lot: 'SOLE 7' with a price of 84.6. Below this, there are sections for 'Upcoming lots' and 'Transactions'. The 'Upcoming lots' table lists various fish species and quantities. The 'Transactions' table shows a list of sales with details like species, quantity, and price. A central circular gauge shows the current price of 18.20 GBP. At the bottom, there is a 'Price overview' table and a 'Click controls' section for managing the auction.

SCOTLAND NEWS

Extra Support For Ports and Harbours

Up to 20 ports and harbours that have lost income from landing fees due to the disruption caused by Brexit have received a share of a £1.8 million fund.

The funding will provide necessary investment at ports and harbours for safety improvements and repair works.

The support includes £180,000 to install shore power for the fishing fleet at Mallaig, £125,000 for resurfacing works and dredging at Eyemouth, £534,979 for repair work at Fraserburgh and £182,000 for new lighting and a fish landing crane at Lerwick Port.

Fisheries Secretary Fergus Ewing announced details ahead of the third meeting of the Scottish Seafood Exports Taskforce where he called on the UK Government to improve collaboration on border and customs process for the EU. Limited, complex guidance and the requirement to use multiple systems for catch and export certification and customs controls is leading to a number of EU vessels choosing to land into other countries like Norway, Denmark and Ireland.

EU flagged vessels account for around 7% of all landings by value into Scottish ports in 2019 and were worth £35.5 million, however there is more of a reliance on them in smaller communities like Ullapool where around 13% of landings by value were estimated to be from EU vessels.

Mr Ewing said:

“Ports and harbours are the lifeblood of many of our coastal communities up and down the country. As a result of the botched Brexit deal and through no fault of their own, many are losing key landing fees from vessels and need this essential investment.

“Previously we committed £1 million but I am pleased to be able to increase this to £1.8 million so we can provide even more funding to approximately 20 ports and harbours and support jobs and livelihoods in our coastal communities. We’ve been working closely with the British Ports Association on this support and the ports and harbours will be able to start essential works immediately.

“While this funding will help our ports and harbours with longer term recovery I am calling on the Scottish Seafood Exports Taskforce to provide

urgent short term solutions and produce clear guidance so EU vessels and their agents can understand and have confidence in the requirements, and continue to land in our ports, which rely on them for employment and economic stability.”

Background

Funding for ports and harbours was announced as part of a package of support by Fisheries Secretary Fergus Ewing on 3 February. Due to the high level of demand for the fund, the initial £1m was increased to £1.8m.

Ports and harbours are an essential part of the infrastructure for the seafood sector and have a value of £186 million. The latest figures on EU vessel landings into Scotland can be found in the Scottish Sea Fisheries Statistics 2019.

The Scottish Government has also announced funding for new seafood experts to help businesses navigate paperwork, and funding for the Fishermen’s Mission.

The Seafood Producers Resilience Fund is still open for aquaculture businesses.

The list of ports and harbours confirmed to receive funding at present is below with discussions continuing with further potential applicants.

Location	Works Planned
Cromarty	Surfacing and stone work to harbour pier
Dunbar	Safety rails, and bridge works
Sandhaven	Repair work to breakwater
North Berwick	Repair to harbour walls
Fraserburgh	Numerous repairs
Ullapool	Improvement to existing fish house to comply with export regulations
Eyemouth	Resurfacing works, dredging
Scrabster	Fendor works, Quay surface
Tarbert Loch Fyne	Upgrade of CCTV, Shoreside power, Install Fish Bait store
Lerwick	New lighting, Fish landing crane, Automation of weighbridge
Peterhead	Various improvements ranging from collection and disposal of waste from fishing fleet to quay cleaning.
Mallaig	Installation of shore power for fishing fleet
Aberdeenshire	Chart plotter for pilot boat, quayside ladders, davit
Barra, Western Isles	Refurbishment of ice machine and external conveyors, Chain replacement



Eyemouth allocated funds for dredging.

New Measures To Protect Flapper Skate

The critically endangered flapper skate is to gain further protection following the urgent designation of a new Marine Protected Area (MPA) within the Inner Sound of Skye.

The site will protect a nationally important flapper skate egg nursery area, which is the largest of its kind to be identified in Scotland.

Flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) are a critically endangered species. They were historically abundant in the North-east Atlantic and widely distributed in the seas surrounding the British Isles, however its range has reduced significantly and catch rates declined throughout the 20th century.

The flapper skate now only occurs in the

northern North Sea and off Scotland’s north-west coast.

Now considered its own species, it was once thought that flapper skate and blue skate were the same species, called common skate. Flapper skate and blue skate (*Dipturus batis*) are now known as part of the common skate complex.



Flapper-Skate.

Management measures prohibiting a number of marine activities such as fishing, diving and construction within the site will initially last for a period of 12 months and will come into force on 17 March 2021.

If, after this time permanent protection is found to be necessary, then proposals

will undergo a full stakeholder engagement process, public consultation and impact assessments.

Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment Ben Macpherson said:

“The flapper skate, which was once abundant in our seas, is now only found in

the northern area of the North Sea and off Scotland’s north-west coast.

“The designation of this new Marine Protected Area will allow further information to be gathered to inform permanent proposals and will safeguard an area of vital importance to this critically endangered species. This will support conservation efforts to help it recover back to a healthy status in Scottish waters.”

This is the second urgent Marine Protected Area (MPA) to be created using powers within the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010, the first being the Loch Carron urgent MPA created to protect flame shell beds in 2017. The Loch Carron MPA was made permanent in 2019.

Scotland’s Marine Protected Area (MPA) network covers in excess of 37% of our sea area, exceeding the proposed new global target of 30% coverage by 2030.

Each site in the network is managed to achieve its conservation objectives and work is underway to develop fisheries management proposals for a number of the sites.

These areas not only protect the flapper skate but a wide variety of species and habitats including other iconic species like the minke whale, basking sharks and Risso’s dolphins.

Fisheries Innovation Scotland Announce New Projects

Fisheries Innovation Scotland (FIS) have announced two new projects, following invitations for pioneering research issued in late 2020.

FIS, which brings together seafood experts, scientists and Scottish Government to champion practical innovation in fishing, sought new ideas to explore digitalisation of the Scottish fleet and understand greenhouse gas emissions from fishing vessels. Both projects offer opportunities for FIS to help the sector build business reputation, resilience and new routes to market.

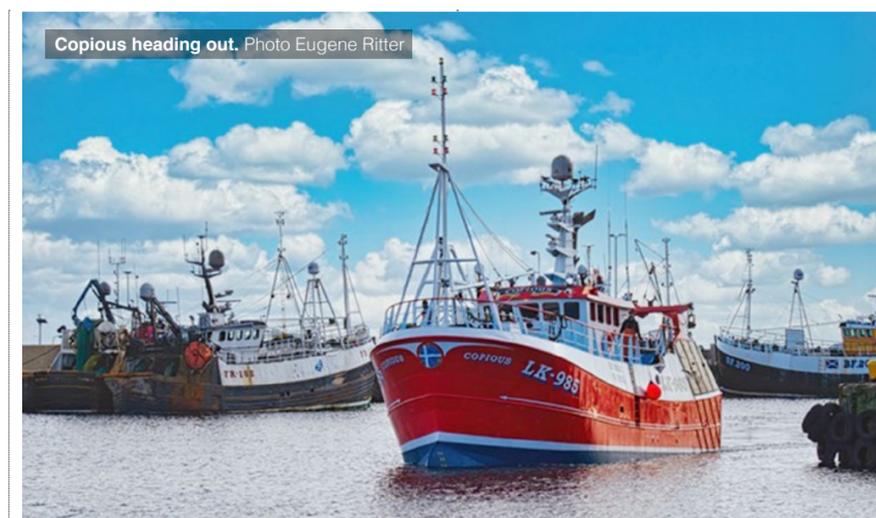
Kara Brydson, Executive Director of FIS said: “These projects are designed and led by our industry, bringing heads together to create sustainable business opportunities in the new political and market contexts we’re facing together.”

Responding to the need to combat greenhouse gas emissions across all industries, FIS will partner with consultancy MarFishEco (MFE) and Heriot-Watt University to explore specific emission issues from each fleet segment within Scottish fishing. FIS hopes this piece of research will be an important contribution by the Scottish fishing industry, especially as the Glasgow-hosted 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) edges closer.

Experts from MFE and Heriot-Watt University will look to inform the development of a practical tool to measure and validate changes in carbon use at an individual vessel level and inform national action to reduce fleet emissions, including identifying technological solutions, costs and pathways to transition.

“MFE are excited to be selected to undertake this work as such emissions baselines are becoming increasingly important in terms of nationally determined contributions to reduce carbon emissions,” said Andrew Johnson, MarFishEco Chief Executive.

“Scotland has such a large biomass of fish landed at its ports making it an obvious place to begin such work and understand what the picture looks like. It will then be equally important to engage with policy and industry to find practicable



Copious heading out. Photo Eugene Ritter

solutions to mitigating carbon emissions as best possible without detrimental impact on the economic viability of different fisheries.

We hope this work will provide an important baseline upon which to build so that Scotland can be ahead of the curve and place itself as a world leader both in terms of high-quality seafood but also in terms of industry initiatives to help curb the negative impacts of industrial activities.”

With technology playing an increasingly critical role in many crucial aspects of Scottish fisheries, through in-water gear selectivity, real-time reporting apps, and more, FIS recognised the need to accelerate its understanding of how to provide business and research intelligence to fishers, scientists and managers.

FIS will work with Verifact, a company that provides software and advisory services to the seafood sector, to audit the Scottish fishing fleet’s current and future digital capabilities, and look for opportunities learned within other sectors in order to support FIS in identifying practical, innovative

projects.

Frank Fleming, CEO of Verifact said:

“We are looking forward to working with FIS to identify how emerging technologies can play a key role in adding value to the Scottish seafood sector. The project will explore how digitalisation can add value to catches and build efficiencies in supply chains while contributing to scientific data collection and sustainable practices. FIS are forward-thinking by looking at this project. Other food sectors are also investing in this area and it is important that the Scottish seafood sector maps out what it can do in the short and medium-term to inform its decision making in the coming years.”

Over the next five weeks, both organisations will be working on their respective projects, with support from FIS, its members and other experts. Once the initial desk-based research is complete, FIS members will decide on the next steps for practical innovation projects. More information about the project teams will be released on social media channels over the next month.

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

Fisheries deal makes life ‘unnecessarily difficult’ for local fishermen



SFA chairman James Anderson

The first ever post-Brexit fisheries deal between Norway, the EU and the UK for joint stocks in the North Sea has been described as “flawed” and not in tune with the reality on the fishing grounds. Shetland Fishermen’s Association (SFA) had to accept

a further cut in fishing rights for cod, one of the most important species for local fishermen. The SFA also said that the gains in quota share from Brexit were not enough to make up for the cut in cod quota. The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for 2021 for the six jointly

managed stocks are as follows:

- Cod, minus 10 per cent
- Saithe, minus 25 per cent
- Herring, minus 7.4 per cent
- Plaice, minus 2.3 per cent
- Haddock, plus 20 per cent
- Whiting, plus 19.1 per cent

SFA chairman James Anderson said the further cut in the TAC for cod was based on outdated scientific advice and puts fisherman in a difficult situation.

“We knew as soon as the scientific advice was issued last year that the outlook for cod and saithe in particular was very difficult,” he said.

“Cod has already been cut savagely (-33 per cent in 2019 and -50 per cent in 2020), reflecting the fact that the science has not caught up with a northerly movement in the distribution of the cod stock.

“The ICES [International Council for the Exploration of the Sea] process still focuses on a lack of cod in the southern North Sea and takes no account of its abundance in the northern North Sea, and particularly around

Shetland. “It leaves the industry in an unnecessarily difficult situation – we are facing steep cuts in quota for a stock that is virtually impossible to avoid in our mixed fisheries.”

SFA executive officer Simon Collins said he hoped for better scientific advice in the future when ICES reviews the state of cod science this year.

“We might hope for more accurate recommendations following that exercise, and of course the UK is now able to take an independent view of scientific advice outside the CFP, but it will all be too late for this year,” he said.

“Without full control of access to our waters, we have had little leverage to match quotas with what we are seeing on the fishing grounds.

“In the circumstances, with few cards to play, Scottish government negotiators worked hard to deliver quotas for these species that would undoubtedly have been worse for us if we had still been in the EU and this had been the usual EU-Norway bilateral.”

Christina S FR224 steaming in through Lerwicks North entrance with a good shot of mackerel on-board.



No confidence in fishing minister

Northern Isles MP Alistair Carmichael has called for UK fishing minister George Eustice to resign after fishing communities have lost all confidence in the secretary of state. Seafood Scotland manager Donna Fordyce has warned that the cost associated with the new checks and paperwork following

the end of the Brexit transition period was too much to bear for the industry leading to long-term damage to the sector.

“After a litany of failures, missteps and ignorance on the part of DEFRA ministers it is hard to see how the fishing industry can have any confidence in George Eustice going forward,”

Carmichael said. “He has treated fishermen as a problem to be managed rather than as real people with real concerns. They are living with the consequences of this government’s contempt.” “We are already seeing in parts of the country that seafood businesses are going under because

they cannot afford to trade on the terms created by the Government’s deal. “Without meaningful improvement from the Government we may yet see that across the industry. There needs to be a reset of efforts by ministers – starting with a reset of those at the top of DEFRA.”

Reworked Toft pier in line to reopen in spring

The revamped Toft pier could be ready to be reopened by the end of the April.

A meeting of Shetland Islands Council’s harbour board heard earlier in March that work on the £3.5 million project has made good progress despite the recent cold spell causing problems with concrete work.

One third of the cost for the new pier that caters for a number of local inshore fishing boats is being covered by grant money from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

Marine and airport infrastructure manager Andrew Inkster told the harbour board: “The good news is that we are now very, very close to

completion.” There are some delays on electrical equipment arriving, however, such as lighting columns, and Inkster was unsure if this may be linked to coronavirus or Brexit.

Last year councillors approved an extra £500,000 on the project following delays, which did not sit too kindly with some elected members.

Shetland Central member Davie Sandison, a former manager of the local office of Scottish Salmon Producers’ Organisation, asked if the council had requested more EMFF funding from the Scottish Government on the back of the increased cost.

“The approach was made, and unfortunately it came back negative,” Inkster said.

Government gives in on fishing deckhand visas

Deckhands on large fishing vessels are being added to the list of occupations that are eligible for the skilled worker visa to allow them working in the UK.

The move has been welcomed by Orkney and Shetland MP Alistair Carmichael who has been campaigning on the issue for

many months. After initially refusing calls for a change in the visa policy from fishermen and pressure from Mr Carmichael in Parliament, the UK Government has released a revision of its visa rules.

“This change of course is a victory for fishermen who have been let down by Home Office

rules for too long. The change should have been made months ago but I am glad that we have finally made the government see sense,” the Lib Dems MP said.

“In future ministers need to listen to skippers first rather than dictating to the industry on their own priorities.

“While we should encourage

local uptake in deckhand jobs as much as possible, non-EEA deckhands have been a vital part of the industry for years and appreciated in our communities.

“If we want the industry to expand further in the coming years then demand for further worker support will not be going away.”

Fundraiser ‘speechless’ after appeal for fisherman’s family

The woman behind a fundraising appeal for the family of a fisherman who died after falling overboard off Shetland in February says she is “speechless” after the campaign hit £47,000.

Robie Johnson set up the online appeal after her friend Joseph Lacaste, who worked on the local trawler Copious trawler, died after the incident around 30 miles south east of Sumburgh.

She looked to raise money for the 45-year old father of two’s family back home in the Philippines to assist them with mortgage payments, as well as living and travel costs.

Within days of the tragedy the campaign had raised £35,000, and amount that has now risen to almost £48,000.

She said the money would now pay off the mortgage on Lacaste’s house.

“I feel really overwhelmed how the public has supported it, not just here - everywhere, nationwide I would say,” Johnson said. “A lot of people have reached

out on Facebook telling me that they would be sharing my post.

“It’s really amazing, and I’m very thankful to all my friends here in Shetland, the Filipino community - they’re behind my back helping me. And to all the public here in Shetland.”

Johnson, who lives in Gulberwick in Shetland, said she has spoken to Lacaste’s wife since starting the fundraiser.

“When I told her that her house is paid for, she just cried,” she said.

“She never thought that her house was going to be paid. But at the same time she lost her husband. She’s happy that we’re helping her, but at the same time she said I just wish I’d get my husband back.”

The police, meanwhile, said the incident remains under investigation by Police Scotland and the Marine Accident Investigation Branch. A report will be submitted to the Procurator Fiscal.

The Sumburgh based coastguard helicopter recovered

Robie Johnson



Lacaste from the sea in the early hours of 18 February, but his

death was later confirmed by police.



UK NEWS EXTRA

Increased MMO Presence At Sea Deters Illegal Fishing

Vastly increased offshore patrols, aerial surveillance and monitoring have ensured illegal fishing has been kept at bay in England's seas since the UK became an independent coastal state on 1 January this year according to Michael Coyle, MMO Head of Compliance and Control.

With additional government investment of £32m, the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has enhanced its surveillance and fisheries control capacity. It has more marine officers on shore, more patrol ships at sea, increased aerial and radar surveillance to complement existing electronic monitoring systems.

MMO automatically receives position data from all fishing vessels over 12m long in its 200-mile exclusion zone to make sure it has an up to date picture of fishing activity in our waters. Where MMO detects unusual or potentially illegal patterns of activity we deploy surface and aerial surveillance assets to further investigate.

Working with other partners in maritime security, this sophisticated intelligence network is operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Based on intelligence, the risk of potential illegal fishing is assessed and if necessary, and when it is safe to do so, inspections of vessels are undertaken either at sea or at the quayside.

MMO activity at sea or on shore follows operates on a risk based, intelligence led approach and matches the seasonal pattern of fishing activity. Levels of activity are usually reduced during the winter months. The overall intent is to enable fishermen to go about their business while MMO exercises control duties in a proportionate and reasonable way.

To give operational response options throughout our waters, in January and February this year, four patrol vessels were operational at sea 24/7 to provide overt presence to deter and detect illegal activity; there was



Ocean Osprey

daily aerial surveillance and the activities of all vessels in UK waters were closely monitored.

This was during the third national lockdown and with growing rates of infection both in UK and neighbouring EU coastal states who operate fishing vessels in our waters, to ensure the safety of fishermen, the wider public, MMO officers, vessel crews and their families, inspections were reduced. Only high-risk vessels would have been inspected, had there been any. Inspections continued as usual at the quayside.

When infection levels reduced in March, inspections resumed at a higher level than ever due to the increased capacity. There have been 41 inspections so far in March; 15 of these were UK vessels and 26 were EU vessels.

Since January, 13 EU vessels that appeared to be fishing in the wrong location were hailed and advised to move which they did immediately. All but one of these appeared to be unintentional. Under the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, licensed EU vessels are allowed to fish in UK waters in accordance with their licence conditions.

So far this year there have



been 9 infringements of legal requirements, of which one was serious enough to result in an official written warning. This is typical for this time of year, when there is less fishing taking place.

While inspections help the MMO gather important data that could lead to prosecution, such as incorrect mesh sizes, undersized species, undeclared catch - they are not the means by which the government acquires data on what is being fished where and when. This information comes from fishing catch, landing and sales records that all fishing vessels and merchants are legally required

to supply.

The UK currently has the ability to request data on EU fishing vessels to support enforcement efforts. It does not currently have access to a comprehensive feed of all data covering volumes of fish caught in the UK Exclusive Economic Zone by EU registered fishing vessels.

However, the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement provides the framework for continued data exchange and there are ongoing technical conversations with the European Commission to rapidly establish a mechanism to allow sharing of this data moving forward.



ICELAND NEWS *By Gudjón Einarsson*

The price of starting fishing

There was a time when it was relatively easy to become a small boat fisherman in Iceland. You only had to acquire a boat and start fishing. That is not so simple anymore. Now it requires a major investment because of the sky-high prices of fishing quotas.

70-80% of quotas have changed hands

Those fortunate enough to have been in the fishing business when the quota system was adopted received a quota in line with their previous fishing experience. These quotas have always been transferable and now it is estimated that 70-80% of the quotas in the small boat system have changed hands. That means that on average those operating small boats today base 20-30% of their fishing on their previous fishing experience but the rest is obtained by purchasing quotas from others. Most small boat owners have built up their fishing business gradually, both by renting quotas and by buying permanent ones.

The cost of starting from scratch

But what would it cost for a newcomer to enter the small boat fleet and start fishing?

Orn Pálsson, executive of the National Union of Small Boat Owners in Iceland estimates that the investment would never be less than 1,1 million Euros,



Small boats in harbour in Iceland

whereof the price of a decent used boat, the size of up to 15 gross tons, would be around 130,000 Euros and the rest would be needed for a permanent quota of 70 tons. In this example it is assumed that the price of a permanent cod quota is around 15.60 Euros per kilo and for a haddock quota 11.70 Euros per kilo.

5.5 million Euros

If you, however, want to invest in a brand new 15 gross ton boat and buy a quota of 300 tons

(mostly cod but also haddock and other species) the price would be a total of 5.5 million Euros, whereof close to one million Euros for the boat itself.

Pálsson asserted that those interested in joining the small boat fleet needed to have considerable equity for the operation to pay off.

Other ways to start

Still there are other ways to start. Alongside the actual small boat system there exists another category for small

boats introduced in 2009, called "coastal fishery". It is free for all (i.e. no quota is needed) but with heavy restrictions. The fishery is confined to the summer months (May-August), each participant has 12 fishing days a month, four reels are allowed per boat and the daily catch is limited to 774 kilos.

People eager to make their way into commercial fishing might start in this system while still having another occupation to attend to and then expand the fishing by renting quotas and purchasing permanent ones little by little.

Successful Capelin Season

The capelin season in Iceland, which came to an end in the middle of March, proved very successful. In total the quota amounted to 127,000 tons, whereof 70,000 tons were allotted to Icelandic vessels and the rest to foreign ones (from Norway, Greenland and the Faroe Islands).

As was reported in the March issue of The Skipper the Icelandic operators were eager to make the most of a limited quota and planned to catch the capelin during the short period of time when it was close to spawning.

By doing this they intended to process the catch in the most valuable way, either as capelin with the roe inside or extracting the roe and freezing it separately while turning the rest into meal and oil. To do this successfully the weather for fishing had to be favourable at exactly the right time.

Everything turned out well and the export value of this capelin season in Iceland is estimated at 162 million Euros.



Capelin roe is the most valuable product



by Ruairi Hand

The Irish government has identified offshore wind as a major contributor to our future climate and energy needs, including significant capacity for export, particularly considering the potential of floating offshore wind (FOW) technology. Major investment is required to develop these ambitions which could present many opportunities for fishing communities, while creating a greener world for future generations. This article is the third in a series, sponsored by Simply Blue Energy, that aims to provide fishers and other relevant stakeholders with insights into the status of FOW, how the technology works and the opportunities it represents.

Since the mid-2000s, offshore wind farms have gained rapidly in popularity as European countries, driven by renewable electricity targets, turned to the vast untapped potential of their seas. Significant deployment has seen the costs of traditional, bottom-fixed offshore wind fall by over two thirds in a decade, now comparable with fossil fuels. Ireland has put offshore wind at the heart of its 2030 climate and clean energy ambitions, with a goal to reach 5GW of offshore wind by 2030. To realise this ambition, both traditional offshore wind and an emerging new technology, floating, have critical roles to play.

Fixed-bottom offshore turbine foundations are generally piled into the seabed, either with a single, large diameter monopile in water depths up to approximately 30m or with a cluster of smaller piles and a steel jacket structure in depths up to 60-80m. Other technologies such as gravity base, piled tripod and suction caissons can be used, depending on depth and seabed composition. Turbine sizes have grown rapidly from around 2MW maximum capacity in 2000 to recent announcements by turbine manufacturer Vestas of a 15MW unit (with a rotor diameter of 236m), expected to be in serial production by 2024.

Fixed-bottom wind, as the cheapest form of offshore wind available today, will likely form the backbone of Ireland's 2030 targets. However, fixed turbines are limited by water depth, with around 80m being the economic maximum for this technology. In Ireland, this limitation largely restricts options for offshore wind farm sites to the East and South-East Coasts. This is where floating offshore wind (FOW) foundations come in.

Since the first FOW prototype



Floating Offshore Wind Technology Overview

was deployed off Italy in 2007, many new technologies and concepts have been developed including floating barge, semi-submersible, vertical spar and tension-leg platforms (TLP). Except for TLPs which are moored using vertical tensioned cabling, floating platforms are generally moored using catenary cable lines anchored to the seabed either by friction/gravity anchors or small diameter piles. The huge advantage of FOW is that it can access deeper waters and a wider range of sites which can help to reduce cumulative visual and environmental impacts of offshore wind developments. FOW foundations, however, are currently more expensive than monopiles but recent studies suggest costs will decrease rapidly with increased deployment, reaching grid parity by circa 2030.

The increased flexibility of FOW also allows for meaningful engagement with fishers on site boundaries to help mitigate impacts on fishing activities. Additional benefits are a potential reduction in ecological impacts during both construction and operation phases because of lower physical disturbances necessary to anchor the foundations in place, and lower transmission of noise and vibrations to the marine environment through the foundations, thereby reducing potential impacts on fish stocks. Other environmental mitigations include burying electrical cables to negate potential effects of

electromagnetic fields on animals while also avoiding snagging with fishing gear.

FOW engineering is a marriage of established floating platform design from the deep-water oil and gas industry, and state of the art wind turbine technology, both on- and off-shore. Utilising this experience and long history of successful operation, floating foundations are already being planned in regions prone to hurricane force conditions.

Since 2007, numerous FOW concepts have been field-tested around the world with demonstration sites currently exporting energy to the grid in numerous European countries and further afield. Scottish waters play host to two of the world's largest FOW farms, the 30MW capacity Hywind Scotland site using Equinor's spar concept and the 50MW capacity Kincardine site utilising Principle Power Inc.'s WindFloat semi-submersible floaters. Ideol's Damping Pool design has been deployed in Japan and their Eolmed site, due to start construction later this year, will provide 30MW to the French grid by the end of 2022.

With FOW moving rapidly from early-commercial development to industrialization, the number of projects in the development pipeline is growing exponentially with at least five projects currently planned in Ireland alone, with a potential combined capacity of up to 5.6GW. This includes Simply Blue Energy's Western Star project

and, in JV partnership with Shell, the Emerald project. Elsewhere in Europe, projects such as Hywind Tampen, an 88MW FOW farm off Norway is currently in the construction phase while numerous FOW projects in the UK and France are in advanced planning stages. These include Simply Blue Energy/Total's Erebus and Valoros projects off Pembrokeshire with a combined capacity of 400MW which obtained partial Crown Estate seabed lease in August last year and EOLFI (a member of the Shell group) and partner's 28.5MW Groix & Belle-Ile project off Brittany due to be completed by 2024.

Ireland made history in 2004 when the Arklow Bank offshore wind farm was completed with the erection of seven 3.6 MW turbines, the largest installed turbines in the world at that time. Since then, offshore wind energy development here has stalled, even though, as an island nation, our greatest opportunity is offshore.

Perched on the edge of the Atlantic, Ireland has enviable access to some of the strongest and most consistent wind resources anywhere in the world. We need but cast an eye over the landscapes of Connemara or the Burren, at innumerable stunted trees, bent over landward from the sustained onslaught of the ocean gales or listen to the tales of generations of brave Atlantic fishermen, to gauge the magnitude of this opportunity. Floating turbines are now here to unlock it.

Finding the Sweet Spot For Nephrops



Nephrops (aka Norwegian Lobster, Prawns) are some of the most valuable species in European fisheries. One of the overwhelming issues in the fishery is Skippers have no idea where they are catching Nephrops on a trawl tow. A Captain cannot see Nephrops on a shipboard fish finder/sonar.

As seen on the FV Glittfors, the Notus Echo finally gives a way to detect where Nephrops are being caught on a tow. Echo is a game changer for this fishery.

Echo was developed for the shrimp fishery as there was no reliable way to detect shrimp. Notus cooperated with fishermen on the west coast of the USA to develop the system. Basically, when shrimp hit the grate, they make a very distinctive sound. Echo listens for this sound and transmits the data back to the vessel wirelessly to be displayed on a graph. Echo doubled and sometimes tripled catch rates.

The Swedish vessel FV Glittfors installed Echo this past Fall to detect Norwegian Lobster. They fish around Sweden and Denmark using twin trawls. Echo is installed on the sorting grid with shipboard equipment (command unit, hydrophone and computer) receiving and displaying data. Echo is tuned for Nephrops as their sound signature is different than shrimp.

Skipper Thomas says "We installed Echo to see where we are catching Norwegian Lobster. The Echo is becoming a very useful tool. We are finding the areas on our tow with more Norwegian lobster."

Analysis of the Echo data indicate that Nephrops congregate in "hives." That is, they are not spread out over the fishing ground. They congregate together in specific areas. Echo allows the Captain to locate these hives - the sweet spot and tow back over them.

Echo also showed catch rates between hives can be almost

nothing. Therefore, a real waste of fuel and time.

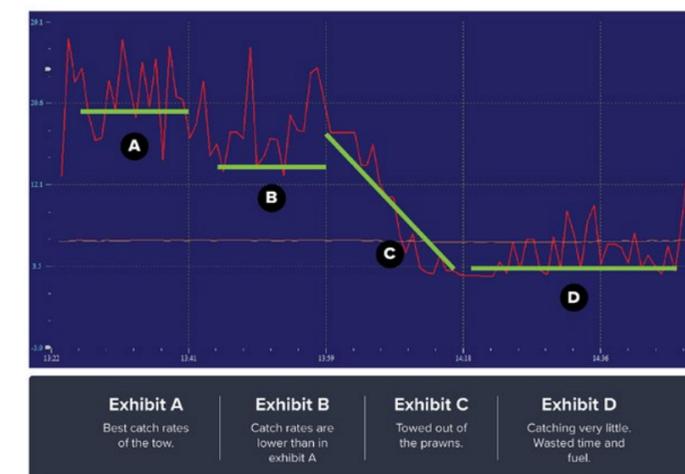
The graph on the right is from a Nephrop tow. Areas A and B are the best catch rates (the sweet spot). In area C and D the vessel towed out of Nephrops. Echo data for this 2 hour tow indicated the vessel was only catching Nephrops for 30 mins (25%) of the tow. With Echo, the vessel can now target areas A & B.

Skipper Thomas makes an overall comment: "We can also see when we are not catching anything and wasting fuel. We are very glad for the Echo sensor it is working very good."

The Echo is also showing good results in the UK fleet. They do not use many grids so an acoustic pickup device was developed to give a similar catch result.

For more information:
www.notus.ca, +1 709 753 0652

ECHO Graph



NOTUS



Marine Institute tracking Atlantic Bluefin Tuna caught off the Irish coast

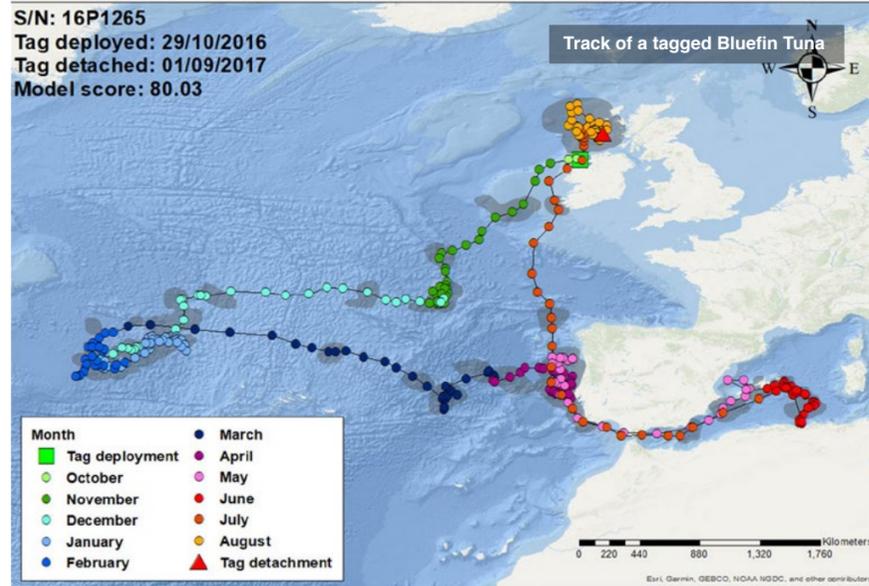
By Niall Ó Maoiléidigh, Macdara Ó Cuaig, Alan Drumm, Ross O'Neill, Hugo Maxwell and Joe Cooney.

Atlantic bluefin tuna, the largest tuna in the world, frequent Irish coastal waters to feed during its annual migration through North Atlantic waters. The Marine Institute has been involved in international Bluefin tuna migration research since 2016. Electronic tagging programmes have enabled the Marine Institute and collaborators to investigate the distribution and movements of Atlantic bluefin tuna in Irish waters.

Bluefin tuna were regularly encountered in Irish waters in the early 2000s. However, a sudden and dramatic decrease in their occurrence was noted after 2005. A decade later, bluefin tuna began to return and are currently appearing consistently in Irish waters and the North Sea. This reappearance coincides with recent stock assessments by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna (ICCAT) indicating that stocks of bluefin tuna have increased following a decade of dedicated international stock recovery actions.

Our understanding of the migrations of these large pelagic predatory fish in Irish waters came from tagging studies using electronic tracking tags, in particular tagging carried out by Stanford University in California, which highlighted the potential importance of the coast of Ireland and the UK as migratory routes for Atlantic bluefin tuna. A 191cm fish tagged in waters off North Carolina showed trans-Atlantic migrations to the Mediterranean Sea and multi-annual site fidelity to waters off Ireland and the UK. This single track suggested that after a juvenile foraging period in the west, Atlantic bluefin foraged in the waters of the east Atlantic off Ireland and then undertook migrations to the Balearics and other known Mediterranean spawning areas. Other western released fish have now also been shown to move into these waters.

ICCAT is an inter-governmental fishery organisation responsible for the conservation of tunas and tuna-like species in the Atlantic Ocean and its adjacent seas. ICCAT compiles fishery statistics from its members and from all entities fishing for these species in the Atlantic Ocean,



coordinates research, including stock assessment, on behalf of its members, develops scientific-based management advice, provides a mechanism for Contracting Parties to agree on management measures, and produces relevant publications. The ICCAT "Atlantic-wide" research programme for bluefin tuna was officially adopted by the ICCAT Commission in 2008 with a key priority being to improve understanding of key biological and ecological processes through electronic tagging experiments to determine habitat and migration routes.

ICCAT manage Atlantic bluefin stocks under a two stock hypothesis for management and assessment - Eastern Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea stock, which spawns in the Mediterranean Sea, and Western Atlantic Ocean stock, which spawns in the Gulf of Mexico. The "boundary line" dividing the stocks is at 45° W longitude.

Results of previous research as well as a dedicated electronic tagging survey in Irish waters indicates that movement across the currently assumed east-west boundary in the Atlantic, does occur and that this needs to be taken into account in stock management. This first Irish tagging was conducted in 2003 and 2004 by a scientific team from Stanford University and Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM). Tagging of fish in Irish waters demonstrated that Atlantic bluefin released in Irish waters travel between European foraging grounds, known eastern breeding regions (Mediterranean Sea; Malta) and western Atlantic waters. This data also highlighted a tentative link between bluefin caught off Ireland and western management regions.

Following the apparent and sudden disappearance of bluefin tuna in Irish waters after 2005, it was not until 2016 that the further investigations were possible. The Marine Institute in collaboration with Stanford University (USA),

University of Acadia (Nova Scotia, Canada) and the University of Exeter successfully tagged and released 16 Atlantic bluefin tuna off the coast of Donegal with satellite tags to identify spawning areas and the level of mixing of stocks in Irish waters.

The published results of this work, showed that most of the daily locations occurred east of 45°W, the current stock management boundary for Atlantic bluefin tuna. Tuna were shown to be present in Irish coastal waters for up to seven months from early summer right through to winter. Key habitats occupied were the Bay of Biscay and the Central North Atlantic, with two migratory patterns evident: an east-west Atlantic group and an eastern Atlantic resident group. Five out of six tags that remained attached until July 2017 returned to the northeast Atlantic after having migrated as far as the Canary Islands, the Mediterranean Sea and the Central North Atlantic. Tracked bluefin tuna exhibited a diel depth-use pattern occupying shallower depths at night and deeper depths during the day. Four bluefin tuna visited known spawning grounds in the central and western Mediterranean, and one may have spawned, based on the recovered data showing oscillatory dives transecting the thermocline on 15 nights. These findings demonstrate the complexity of the aggregation of Atlantic bluefin tuna in Irish waters, more broadly in the northeast Atlantic, and highlighted the need for dedicated future research to conserve this important aggregation.

Since 2016, satellite tagging has continued in Irish waters with funding from ICCAT and also from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund for sustainable fisheries operated by BIM. To date, over 90 satellite tags have been deployed by the Marine Institute and their collaborators Stanford University in Irish waters with many providing full annual seasonal tracks. This consortium works closely with ICCAT. The satellite tagging programme has been expanded to include tagging with specialised "accelerometer tags" with partners in Trinity College Dublin and Queens University Belfast, to examine the immediate behaviour of tagged fish following release to ensure that tagging and handling do not impair subsequent survival and migration. In 2020, the tagging locations were expanded and satellite tagging has also taken place off the Cork coast to examine if there are differences in the stocks which appear in different areas around Ireland and the UK.

In addition, recent electronic tagging off Scotland has also shown local movements of Atlantic bluefin tuna around Scottish waters, to the north of Ireland, and further south. Scientists have used the spatial data from satellite tagged fish to improve management models. ICCAT now recognises the need to develop quantitative knowledge of mixing rates and integrate this knowledge into the current assessments, as

well as new models to improve the multiple stock evaluation processes.

Investigation of the distribution and movements of Atlantic bluefin tuna in Irish waters is now a research priority for Ireland. Given the insights obtained from satellite tagging, it is important that stock origin, habitat utilisation and large-scale movement patterns of these Atlantic bluefin are characterised in more detail to ensure that the population models used in Atlantic bluefin tuna stock assessment are as accurate as possible.

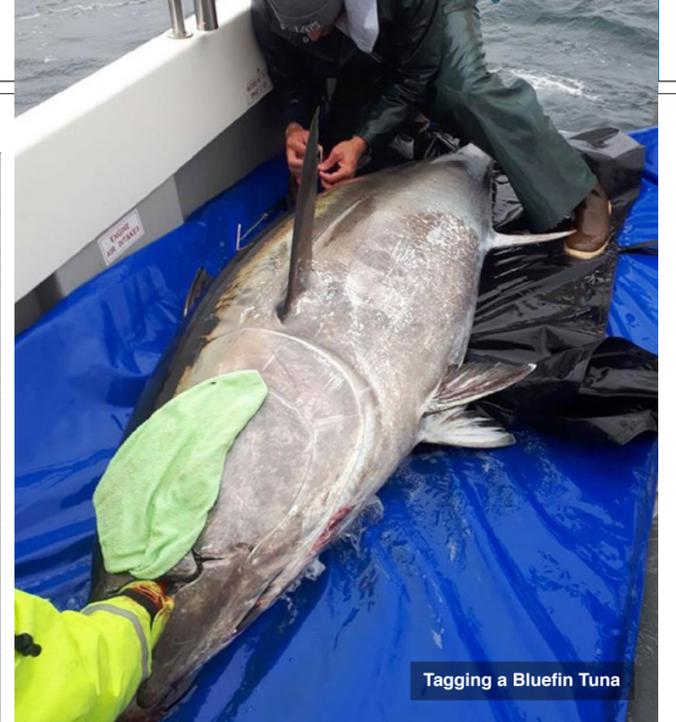
The ocean waters off Ireland are currently regarded by ICCAT as an important area for Atlantic bluefin tuna and recent indications are that significant numbers arrive in the area from August to November each year. The Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM) are supporting this research and the collaborative programme is fully aligned with the ongoing ICCAT Grand Bluefin Year Programme (GBYP) Atlantic-wide research programme for bluefin tuna.

In addition to the Marine Institute's scientific research programme, following the observed increase in tuna stocks in the North Atlantic, a new management plan for bluefin tuna in the Mediterranean and East Atlantic was proposed by the EU. Ireland was successful in securing agreement, as part of the new management plan, that allowed countries without a commercial quota to set up a recreational/sport catch-tag-release fishery to contribute to the collection of scientific data. Member states are encouraged to collect scientific data regarding the numbers of bluefin tuna in particular areas to improve information on the stock origin and breeding grounds for different stocks under the following conditions:

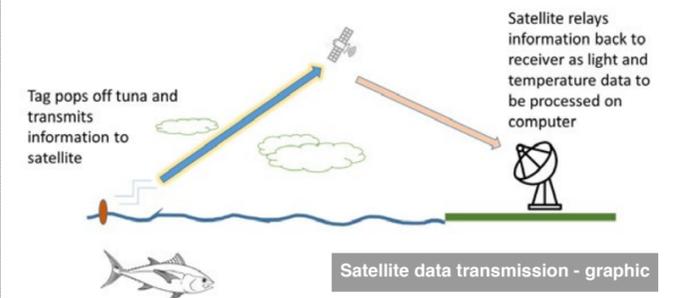
- Vessels require specific authorisations.
- Vessels must be operating in the context of a scientific project of a research institute.
- Results must be communicated to ICCAT annually.
- Tagging with conventional tags must be performed by trained personnel.

In response to this, a collaborative scientific data collection programme between Inland Fisheries Ireland, the Marine Institute and the Sea Fisheries Protection Agency, in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications was developed. Under this programme, a catch-tag-release data collection fishery for authorised recreational angling vessels has been in place in Ireland since 2019. The information generated by anglers will be also used to inform stock assessments and management of bluefin tuna stocks in the North Atlantic over the coming years.

The use of electronic tracking tags for fisheries research is now extremely advanced. The Marine



Tagging a Bluefin Tuna



Institute and their collaborators will be expanding the satellite/accelerometer tagging research in the coming years using acoustic tags and strategically placed acoustic arrays to monitor annual movements of bluefin and other species in coastal waters. Data storage tags will also be deployed to obtain longer time series of data from individual fish (up to six years have been reported for some individual tagged bluefin tuna).

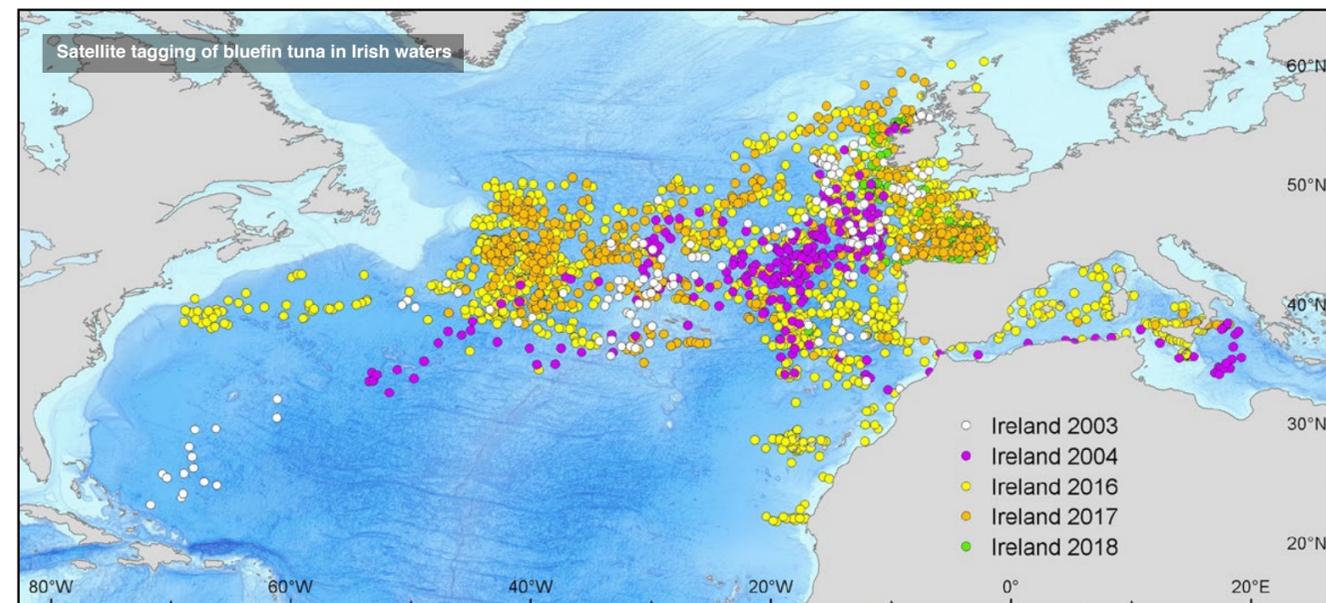
A Marine Institute Cullen Scholarship has been awarded recently by the Marine Institute to Trinity College Dublin and Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology which will investigate migrations and genetic stock origins of bluefin tuna in Irish waters over the next three years. This will involve studies of coastal environmental conditions (increasing sea water temperature and salinity) and biological conditions (improved feeding opportunities) related to climate change. Tracked tuna have been shown to return to Irish waters immediately following spawning in June and may remain there for up to 5 months. The main focus of the Marine Institute's work will be on investigating the movements and behaviour of bluefin tuna specifically in Irish waters to find out what has brought these large predators back into our waters after more than a decade and most importantly, if they will continue to return to Irish waters in the coming years.

Tagging Locations and Methods

Pop-up Satellite Transmitting Tags (PSATs) are designed to track the large scale movements and behavior of pelagic fish and other animals. Depth, temperature and light-level data are used to estimate location. Daily longitude of the migration track, is calculated onboard the PSAT using geo-location by light level techniques. Daily latitude can be calculated from transmitted light level curves using software provided by the tag manufacturer. The results provide the migration path and depth and temperature preferences of the study animal, as well as oceanographic data, in the form of depth-temperature profiles.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Adrian Molloy and Michael Callaghan who skipped the vessels in Donegal and David Edwards in Cork and to a number of anglers who caught fish for the project, Barbara Block, Mike Castleton, Robbie Schallert and Mike Stokesbury (Stanford University), Nick Payne and Haley Dolton from Trinity College, for their accelerometer deployments/retrievals, Queens University and Exeter University at various times during the tagging period. We gratefully acknowledge the funding provided by the Marine Institute, ICCAT and the European Union EMFF (administered by BIM).



Saving Seafood and Harnessing our Ocean Wealth

A Submission to Government by the Irish South & West Fish Producers' Organisation



The Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation and Octavian Consulting have compiled a submission to Government on a strategy for action and investment in Ireland's Seafood Sector.

In the submission they set out a 12-point recovery strategy from now until 2025, covering three phases: industry survival (2021-2022), industry recovery (2022-2024) and, finally, industry growth and internationalization (2024-2025)

Summary

Ireland's seafood sector industry has huge potential for sustainable, community-based recovery in coastal areas most affected by Covid-19. Under the National Development Plan and the Recovery Plan, it should be a prime candidate for investment:

- Carbon emissions from the fishing industry are a small fraction of those from other animal-based food production industries. Seafood also has significant advantages in promoting physical and mental health.
- The Seafood industry's economic hinterland contains over half a million people. Compared to other coastal economies of Europe it has fewer economic opportunities such as mass tourism, commercial port activity or

oil and gas exploration and support services. Fishing is one of the natural industries it has left.

- Relative to other animal-based food industries, Seafood is both climate and health-friendly and community and family-oriented. It is therefore ideal for promoting recovery and employment growth in those coastal communities that were already marginalized before Covid-19 and most affected by it and by Brexit.

Unlike most other sectors, seafood failed to benefit from Ireland's pre-Covid recovery. Investment, employment and activity declined at a time when these were booming in other sectors between 2015 and 2019.

Loss of access to fishing waters will reduce the catch from €251.6 million per annum to €208.6 million per annum. So even before Covid, the industry was set to shrink by one fifth. New fishing opportunities – particularly in high-value species like bluefin tuna and swordfish – must now be obtained to compensate for this.

Ireland's global reputation for sustainable food excellence and growing world and EU demand creates huge opportunities. Major investment is needed to increase value-added, as recommended in the 2014 Focusing the Future Report. 1.5 per cent of GNI The scars of Brexit will be

more permanent and harder to heal for fishing than for other sectors due to a loss of fishing waters, quotas and entitlement to catch fundamental stocks.

As other fishing nations adjust to a loss of access to British waters, they will divert their superior fleets to fishing in Irish waters. Ireland's fleet needs significant investment to compete with this.

Despite greater need – the need for fishing crews to share confined spaces – Covid aid to the fishing sector has been lower than other food sectors and poorly designed, with low industry take up. Investment in a sustainable, pandemic-resilient fleet is an urgent necessity.

Consistent with the Government's aim for a spatially balanced "town/village centered" recovery across all of Ireland, our fishing industry must be far more regionally balanced than is now the case.

- Between the €10.1 billion allocated to capital spending in Budget 2021 and the €3.4 billion National Recovery Fund, there are ample resources to invest in a sector that has seen far too little investment during the good times, as consistent with 2014 Shelman report.
- This unique and significant opportunity to invest in creating a vibrant, sustainable industry that drives healthier eating habits must not be

missed. The absence of a substantive commitment to developing Seafood in the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill must be corrected immediately.

- Ireland's fishing industry should not be disadvantaged due to the fact that negotiations for a new Government were ongoing when the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) was increased by over €500 million in June 2020 to assist the industry in responding to Covid-19.

As well as ensuring Ireland's fair share of EMFF funding enhancements, outdated legacy quotas and Total Allowable Catch restrictions must be revisited and reset in a fair and proportionate manner.

Why We Must Act Now

Rural and coastal Ireland is facing a crisis. A crisis of similar magnitude to the great depopulations of the past. Already denuded by the pull of urban Ireland, coastal communities have - despite a modest recovery pre-Covid - been further decimated by Brexit and the ravages of lockdown. Compared to other affected sectors, the Fishing industry has perhaps suffered the most because of its dependence on hotel and restaurant-led demand,

the logistical difficulties of spatial distancing on fishing vessels, and decades of underinvestment and neglect.

As the graph clearly shows, growth in investment in the fishing industry by Government in 2019 – despite strong growth in both GDP and GNI* measures of the economy – was half the rate of economic growth and very significantly short of overall investment in the economy. As a result, the industry has suffered in several ways:

- **Falling Trends**
 - In a year where GDP rose significantly, Ireland's seafood GDP fell by 2 per cent year-on-year in 2019, from €1.25bn to €1.22 bn (Bord Iascaigh Mhara, 2020).
 - From 2,127 vessels in 2018 the fishing fleet shrank to 2,022 in 2019, or by 4 per cent (Bord Iascaigh Mhara, 2020). The number of polyvalent boats over 18 meters in length had already fallen from 280 to 164 between 2006 and 2016 and is now set to fall even further as a result of reduced quotas and opportunities for Irish Fishers.
 - Compared to a 3.5 per cent rise in overall employment, direct fishery employment fell from 3,231 to 3,033 in 2019, or by 6.1 per cent (Central Statistics Office, 2020).
 - In contrast to a €69.6bn, or 75 per cent, rise in overall annual investment flows in the Irish economy during 2019, investment in seafood fell from €267m to €258m in 2019, a fall of 3.4 per cent (Central Statistics Office, 2020)(Bord Iascaigh Mhara, 2020). Net exports declined from €322m to €285m in 2019 in contrast with most other sectors.

These trends preceded the impacts of Brexit and Covid which have, since 2019, wreaked further devastation:

- **Brexit**
 - Whereas other sectors will suffer mostly transitional – although serious - impacts from Brexit, the seafood sector's loss of access to UK waters is existential and permanent. As well as reduced capacity to generate raw material, this brings more EU vessels into Irish waters, displacing Irish vessels in our own waters and drastically cuts Fishing opportunities for Irish Fishing vessels in both UK and Irish waters.
 - The agreement of December 24th 2020 with the UK poses significant uncertainty as it only lasts for five and a half years. Long-term investment

requires a more permanent approach.

- The contrast with Brexit supports given to the beef industry is marked and – given the greater healthiness and climate friendliness of fish compared to meat – inconsistent with the PFG.
- **Covid-19 recovery**
 - Factors including confined spaces on fishing vessels and the fact restaurants and hotels are a major buyer of fresh fish (and therefore the closure or partial closure of these businesses has had a significant impact on demand), makes the impact of Covid on seafood more existential.
 - The contrast with Covid supports to the beef industry is instructive as is the failure of the Temporary Tie Up scheme to attract any significant degree of industry buy-in.
 - Involving industry representatives in designing measures to drive the recovery is imperative. A clear and spatially balanced industry stakeholder dialogue is needed to drive policy.

In 2014 the Shelman Report recommended investment in Ireland's seafood industry to improve its scale, increase its quantity of value-added products, and expand its global reach. As the analysis above demonstrates, these recommendations were – despite robust recovery and tax resources between 2014 and 2019 – never realised. This must now be rectified as a matter of priority. The fundamental reason for this failure to drive investment in Ireland's Seafood industry is grounded on the unmentionable – we are precluded from growing our own industry and availing of the wealth around our own coastline as a result of Common Fishery Policy of "Relative Stability" embedded since 1983. This protects coastal communities of the EU mainland that – unlike Ireland's coastal economy - enjoy other sources of economic advantage. Instead of punishing Europe's most peripheral coastal economies, policy should assist them.

It shouldn't be happening

For several reasons, Ireland's seafood industry is one of vast potential:

- Ireland's geographical position means our waters stretch to the continental shelf. This means we have the most productive fishing waters in Europe, if not the entire northern hemisphere.
- Ireland's global reputation for producing fresh, sustainable

Investment In The Fishing Industry By Government 2018 - 2019

	2018 (€ million)	2019 (€ million)	Change
Gross Domestic Fixed Capital Formation	92,749	162,362	75.1%
GDP	326,986	356,051	8.9%
GNI*	197,450	213,700	8.2%
Domestic consumption (BIM data)	486	496	2.1%
Private investment	267	258	-3.4%
Exports - imports	322	285	-11.5%
Government investment in the fishing industry	170	177	4.1%

and safe food produce, and our significant coastline of clean, accessible seawater.

EU per capita consumption of fish is, at 24.4 kg per person per annum, low by global standards (European Market Observatory for Fisheries and Aquaculture Products, 2020).

- EU consumption convergence with global norms will lead to growth in demand. With 20 per cent of EU waters, Ireland is well placed to serve this need if investment in upscaling and technology is made.
- Irish consumption (23.1 kg per person per annum) is lower still, and well below potential. Targeting increased fish consumption is environmentally sustainable. Fish consumption is also healthier and more consistent with Paris Climate targets (see below).

With natural advantages other EU countries do not enjoy, and with the potential and need (for human health and climate action reasons) to increase European fish consumption, Ireland is ideally positioned to lead Europe in responsible, sustainable fishing.

The enhancement of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) in June 2020 occurred before Ireland had formed a Government. Government must now engage actively with the EU to ensure that Ireland retrospectively gets its fair share of the more than €500 million in additional funding that was allocated as a result of Covid-19. At the same time, the legacy of fixed Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and Quotas set in the 1980s must be addressed to put Ireland's

fishing industry on a level playing field compared to French, Dutch, Belgian and Spanish fleets.

Sustainable & Diverse Recovery

As a leading study (Parker, April 2018) shows, global fisheries account for just 4% of carbon emissions related to total food production and the carbon footprint of CO2 emitted per kilogram of protein is substantially lower for fishery products than for pork, lamb or beef.

And yet, compared to investment in Ireland's beef and dairy sector, far less environmentally sustainable sectors, fishery remains substantially under-invested in.

Investing in Ireland's fishery industry is therefore essential to securing the Programme for Government's (PFG) commitments on achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 as targeted by the 2020 Climate Change Bill. The PFG commits to, among other areas, the following:

- Carbon emission reductions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.
- Developing a new integrated marine strategy
- Improving biodiversity

In several reports (Bord Iascaigh Mhara, 2018) Bord Iascaigh Mhara has stressed the importance of and potential for Ireland's seafood industry to advance the agenda of environmental sustainability. Initiatives such as the promotion of Origin Green in the industry, organic certification, fishing for litter and co-ordinated aquaculture management systems demonstrate a growing commitment to preserving the environment that

needs now to be matched by a commitment to preserving jobs.

However in its recent report to government, the National Biodiversity Forum has highlighted the potential damage to biodiversity from our food industry. The Fishing industry will be a willing partner in this but success in this area requires investment and consultation as well as action by industry.

Ireland's strong commitment to environmental sustainability means it is imperative that we show an example to other EU member states by leading the responsible fishing of Irish waters. This requires investing in Ireland's fishing fleet.

The Programme for Government (PFG) has stressed the importance of focusing not only on economic goals as a metric of success, but on quality-of-life indicators, including public health.

Successive studies have shown that the benefits of eating fish include increased brain capacity, benefits to unborn children, and

Where We Could Be

A good way to contrast the current state of Ireland's seafood potential is to contrast it with Portugal. Although Portugal has double Ireland's population, Ireland has a significantly longer coastline and Ireland's GDP per capita is three times that of Portugal. Yet Portugal's per capita consumption of fish is nearly three times larger, its fishing fleet almost four times larger and its industry employment level over five times larger than those of Ireland.

Portugal

- Coastline 1,793 km
- Population 10.2 million
- GDP per capita as % EU average 76.7%
- Per capita fish consumption 60.9 kg per person per annum
- Total number of vessels 7,825
- Numbers employed in fishery 16,208

Ireland

- Coastline 4,577 km
- Population 5.0 million
- GDP per capita as % EU average 220%
- Per capita fish consumption 23.1 kg per person per annum
- Total number of vessels 1,943
- Numbers employed in fishery 3,049



a possible reduction of risk for a range of disorders, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, Alzheimer's, dementia and depression (Bord Bia, 2020).

According to one study, over half a million people in the Republic of Ireland inhabit Ireland's coastline economy (Curtin, 2018).

This significant population is equivalent to the population of Dublin city. It is dispersed however and therefore benefits less from Ireland's success in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and from other industries where population clustering is an advantage.

Unlike the coastal economies of other countries – Portugal, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France – these coastal populations do not enjoy the advantages of climate, in terms of facilitating large tourist industries (as in Spain or Portugal) or geographical advantages that facilitate economic and commercial ports (as in Belgium and France).

As well as being deprived of the advantages of their peers in other coastal parts of Europe, these communities are now witnessing the removal of oil and gas exploration and storage as an economic activity.

Seafood and tourism activities related to the natural and marine environment, such as Agri-tourism, together constitute the one single advantage and chance

for economic survival that these communities have left. They must not have that taken away as well.

As well as being environmentally sustainable and healthy, the seafood industry is also diverse in more than one respect: It is one of Ireland's most diverse food sectors in terms of the destination of its exports. It is also an industry committed to gender diversification.

Last but not least, it is part of a marine economy that has vast potential to diversify its product base into higher, value-added branded products, ranging from processed foods to cosmetics and health products.

While dependent to a significant degree on UK waters for access to fishing waters, the fishing industry is far less dependent than other sectors on UK markets.

In contrast to meat products, which depend upon the UK for almost half of all exports (CSO), fishery exports to the UK constitute a significantly smaller proportion of total exports.

Another encouraging factor for Ireland's seafood sector is the recent growth in exports to Asia, where per capita consumption is significantly higher than in the rest of the world.

Asia's – and particularly China's – growing economic importance, together with the post Covid-19 heightened consciousness of the importance of healthy and sustainable fish

produce, presents Ireland with a significant opportunity to expand production and exporting.

Through the "Women in Seafood" initiative of Bord Iascaigh Mhara, the seafood industry has consciously embraced and is pursuing the objective of gender diversity.

By growing and investing in this sector, Government can provide more women with the opportunity to participate in a natural, sustainable, community and family-oriented industry.

If Government invests in upscaling, and research and innovation – to improve the industry's value-added – then there is enormous potential for seafood to become part of an integrated maritime economy, encapsulating not just fresh fish, but, increasingly, high, value-added processed fish, cosmetics, and health products of strong appeal to high-income consumers.

Species diversity must also be enhanced. As species like bluefin tuna, albacore tuna, swordfish, sardines and anchovies migrate northwards, Ireland must be given a fair chance to access them in a sustainable way. The Marine Institute should update government and industry on the potential for sustainable development of these species.

The IS&WFPO welcomes any comments or observations on our submission. Please email to info@irishsouthandwest.ie

5-year Recovery Strategy

The challenges facing Ireland's seafood and fishing industry are vast. But so is the potential. As the Government prepares to invest in the localised and sustainable recovery of the Irish economy, the time is now ripe for this most localised and sustainable of industries.

Below we set out a 12-point recovery strategy from now until 2025, covering three phases: industry survival (2021-2022), industry recovery (2022-2024) and, finally, industry growth and internationalization (2024-2025).

The overlap between the periods enables flexibility when it comes to future shocks and unforeseen developments, as well as differing challenges across the different sub sectors of the industry in question. This approach provides a flexible conceptual toolkit with phases that will enable the strategic identification of separate steps – some needed urgently, others important but more relevant to the medium or long-term – to ensure the Irish seafood industry becomes all that it can be.

Step 1: Design and delivery of a comprehensive industry rescue plan as an urgent priority for the 2021-2022 period. This should be part of the integrated marine development plan envisaged in the Programme for Government. This must be a substantial plan that:

- Corrects past underinvestment.
- Reflects the importance of the Fishing industry in the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill.
- Clearly recognizes and proportionately allocates resources to realise the industry's full potential.
- Prioritises spending in the following key areas.

Step 2: Identify and negotiate a fair allocation of Ireland's share of the additional revenues from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund allocated in July 2020.

Step 3: Target and negotiate a modernization of Ireland's fishing fleet – and fishery employment – from the current level of less than 2.5 per cent to a share more consistent with Ireland's EEZ share of EU fishing waters. While a fully proportionate fleet share is neither realistic nor desirable, the current low percentage is too low. Portugal should be used as a benchmark.

Step 4: Design and deliver a comprehensive plan to address the industry's needs in relation to Covid-19, replacing the Temporary Tie Up scheme with a comprehensive and properly negotiated package of investments and supports to make Ireland's



fishing fleet pandemic proof and environmentally sustainable.

Step 5: Develop (in consultation with industry over the remainder of 2021) and deliver from 2022 a comprehensive marine and seafood strategy to replace Our Ocean Wealth, as promised in the Programme for Government (PFG). This should contain several steps including:

- To design and deliver a systematic drive to gather all scientific data on the changes to the make-up of stocks in Irish waters in recent years as a prelude to a significant negotiation drive – at both EU Council and Commission levels and within ICAT – to enable Ireland to benefit from increased allocation in species such as bluefin tuna, albacore tuna, swordfish, anchovy and sardines, whose populations have increased.
- Ensure regional growth and recovery is balanced and monitored. Identify fishing ports along Ireland's coast for strategic investment and development to ensure the recovery benefits the entire country equally.
- Include the establishment of permanent and well-resourced structures for industry consultation.
- Unambiguously and clearly set out a vision of Ireland as a leading EU fish-producing nation. Renew commitment to the 2014 Shelman report.
- Be integrated – for investment planning purposes - with structures and initiatives for regional recovery and planning such as regional versions of Project Ireland 2040 and regional, county and local development plans.

- Be consistent and aligned, or merged, with the Project Ireland Marine 2040 as promised in the PFG. Detail and quantify planned increases in industry investment levels.
- Emphasise Ireland's green food brand and sustainability advantage as a key to a global marketing drive for Irish seafood and recognize that to credibly market this advantage globally Ireland must have a fleet that is upgraded to be consistent with the goals of climate action and Covid/pandemic resilience. Additionally, large climate adverse fleets fishing in Irish waters must be actively discouraged.
- Greatly enhance the Fisheries Local Area Group programme in line with the PFG's commitment to a localized "town centered" recovery.

Step 6: Engage with the EU in renegotiating the Common Fisheries Policy and negotiate associated annual quotas that balance a commitment to maximum sustainable yield principles with Ireland's rightful aspiration as an island nation lying - separately and apart from EU mainland waters - to be one of Europe's leading fish producers.

Step 7: Identify industry investment requirements to meet emerging EU commitments on marine protection and coastal blue carbon and ensure these are adequately resourced through Government and EU investment.

Step 8: Promote – in collaboration with the EU – an aggressive drive to increase per capita fish consumption in Ireland and across the EU.

Step 9: Develop – in consultation with industry over the remainder of 2021 – and deliver from 2024 a comprehensive plan for research into and development of innovative and new value-added product lines with high potential amongst high-income consumers, including:

- High, value-added processed seafood
- Seaweed based cosmetic and health products.
- Maritime cuisine and Agri-tourism

This step should be conducted in tandem with step 10

Step 10: Develop – in consultation and collaboration with "Team Ireland" and Bord Bia / Bord Iascaigh Mhara – a comprehensive market penetration strategy and plan for high income, high fish consuming markets and demographics, particularly in Asia.

Step 11: Set a clear and ambitious targets for industry employment in 2030. Using the industry consultation mechanism identified in Step 5 (see above), ensure a supportive policy ecosystem exists to deliver skills, research and innovation (this will entail collaboration with third-level educational institutions) investment and, where relevant, partnerships between Irish fish producers and larger multinational companies and larger indigenous companies

Step 12: Conduct a strategic review and restructuring of the architecture of institutions governing the industry to ensure effectiveness, efficiency, fitness for purpose, good governance and an avoidance of duplication and conflict of interest.

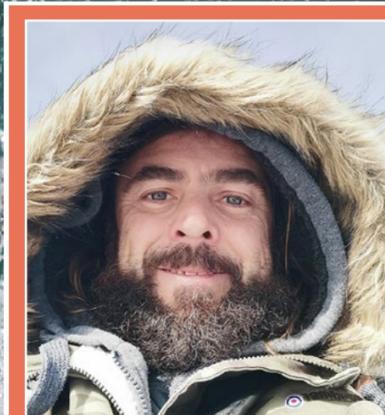
Storm Emma hits Howth Harbour



Some of our top fishing photographers pick their top 5 photos

Padhraic Cuthbert

Dolphin in Dublin Bay



Name: Padhraic Cuthbert
Location: Howth
Camera: Canon EOS 6D
Favourite lens: One that works
Instagram: PadhraicCuthbertPhotography
Website: www.padhraiccuthbertphotography.com
Top Tips and Messages: Shoot everything and everybody, don't be shy. Get in their face. Try to capture three different angles of every subject. Uncover every stone post edit room.

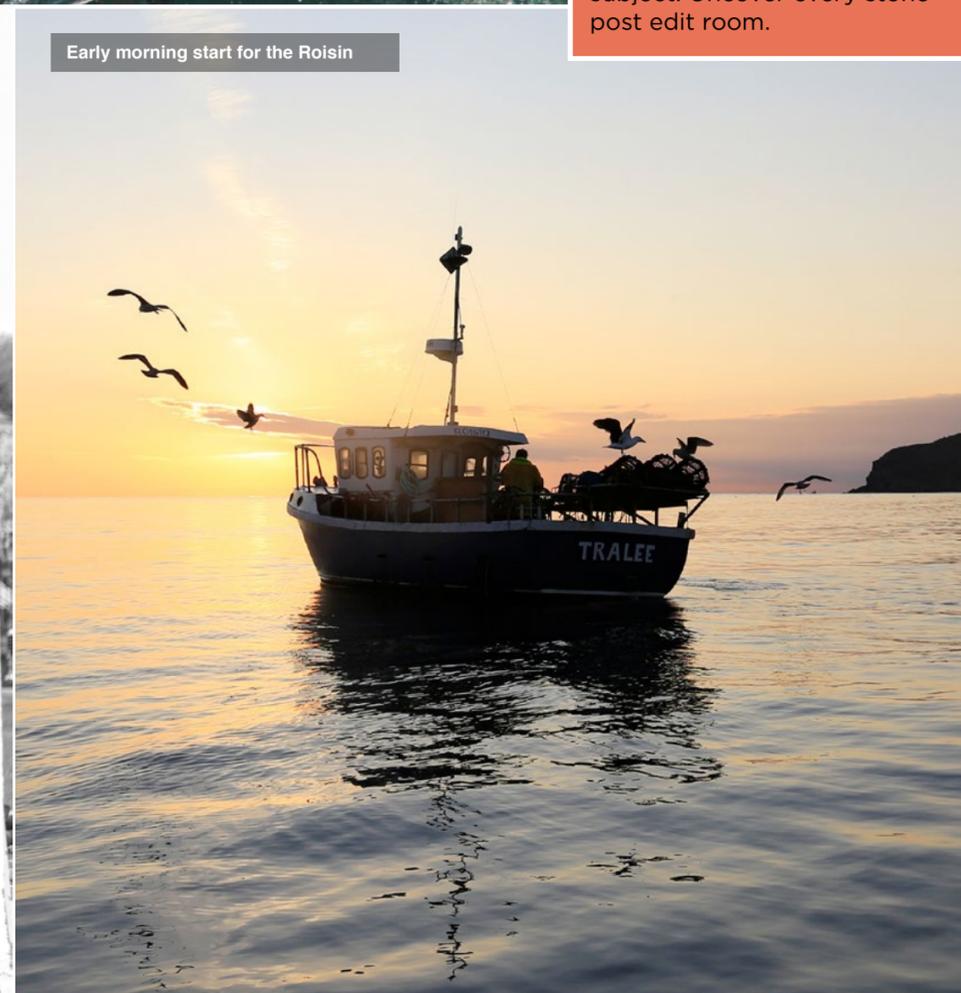


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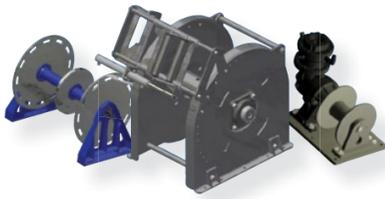
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E.C. MAY BAN THE DRIFT NET

A PROPOSAL by the E.C. Commissioner of Fisheries, Manuel Marin, to outlaw drift nets in E.C. waters is to be sent to the Council of Ministers for approval. Its application could virtually wipe out hundreds of Irish vessels.

The Commissioner's action is in line with the United Nations resolution adopted last December condemning the use of drift nets in the Pacific (see article in page 12).

A powerful environmental lobby claims that drift nets are indiscriminate and take immature fish as well as protected dolphins. Although this is not the case in Irish waters, the proposal as drafted does not make any distinctions.

Their use by French tuna fishermen in the Bay of Biscay

Support by Irish M.P.s

Last January, the Irish Euro M.P., Mary Banotti (F.G.), spoke out in Strasbourg against drift netting in the Pacific. She is chairperson of the European Parliament's Intergroup on animal welfare, of which T.J. Maher is also a member (see opinion Page 3).

Since then the notion has gained momentum, and some fishing nations have seen the trend as an opportunity to eliminate particular competitors. British Tories, for instance, with salmon angling and netting rights on rivers in Britain, have actively opposed this method when used for salmon, claiming that Irish and other drift net boats were interfering with the run of fish to their rivers.

Two years ago, scientists had agreed that sea levels would rise by a metre by the time the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere doubled. "We now say that the rise will be about a third of a metre," the director of the Institute of Arctic and

has caused a major dispute with Spanish skippers who have claimed that France is over-exploiting the Biscay tuna stocks.

The E.C. ban would outlaw the use of drift nets in the north-east Atlantic, but would not initially apply to the Mediterranean (which is not covered by current E.C. conservation policy).

The drift net legislation would, however, automatically be extended to the Mediterranean once a conservation policy is established in the area.

Guinness is good for who?

Liffey estuary salmon netsmen suffered damage to nets last month when an estimated 5,000 gallons of oil spilled via storm drains from the Guinness brewery at St. James's Gate.

Prompt action prevented much damage and stopped the oil from reaching the sea. One of the Guinness ships, Miranda, placed a boom across the river to catch most of the leak.

Boffins alter their tide notion

WHEN SCIENTISTS let it be known that sea levels would rise as a result of global warming, many fishermen working from small ports thought with satisfaction of their harbours becoming deeper. But now U.S. experts are saying that the forecasts were exaggerated.

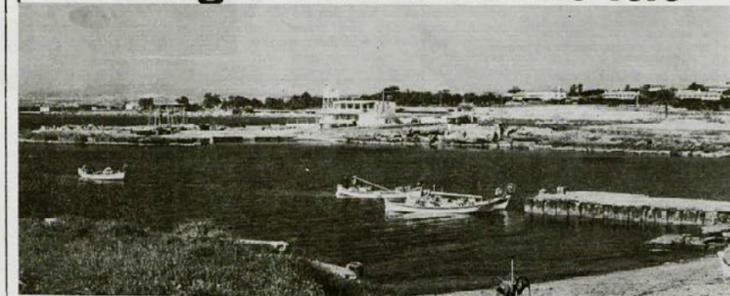
Two years ago, scientists had agreed that sea levels would rise by a metre by the time the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere doubled. "We now say that the rise will be about a third of a metre," the director of the Institute of Arctic and

Alpine Research at the University of Colorado, Mr Mark Meier, has said.

They had originally estimated that this doubling in airborne carbon dioxide would occur by 2010, but this is now expected to occur between 2030 and 2050. Much depends on other factors, such as the melting of the polar ice-caps.

Also, a "rolling snowball" effect has been predicted by researchers at the University of Chicago. They indicate that as the world begins to warm — because of heat trapped in the atmosphere by greenhouse gases

Fishing from a sunshine isle



These Cypriot fishermen, working from a jetty in Larnaca Bay, are bothered — not by the foul gales of winter — but by the 330 days of sunshine which graces their island and the dearth of fish to satisfy the insatiable market on their doorstep. Report on page 11.

Turbots pull big rewards

FISHERMEN thinking of selling their turbot nets are having second thoughts as a result of the phenomenally high prices paid recently for these fish — even surpassing black sole.

Gerry Shea's beamer, Marie Jacob, was paid £700 for a single box of turbot, but even this was surpassed by a skipper in Grimsby, who recently got £1,000 for one box of this fish.

A check on the Dutch market shows that prices have been steady for turbot there at £15 per kilo.

Long search for man's body

After a 19-day intensive search the body of Skipper John Corrigan of Achill was found near Galway docks last month. A tribute to John, who leaves a wife and seven children, appears on page 18.

Make lifejackets a law, says T.D.

AUSTIN DEASY (F.G., Waterford) proposed in the Dail recently that lifejackets should be compulsory wear at sea, when the terms of a new merchant shipping safety Bill, which is to be introduced to the Dail before the summer recess, were outlined.

He said that the same arguments were being used against lifejackets as had been used

against car safety belts 25 years ago, yet people were being drowned even within yards of the shore.

The Minister for State for the Marine, Michael Noonan, pointed out that fishermen could easily become entangled in machinery if wearing the type of lifejackets currently in use and it would not be practical to introduce such a law.

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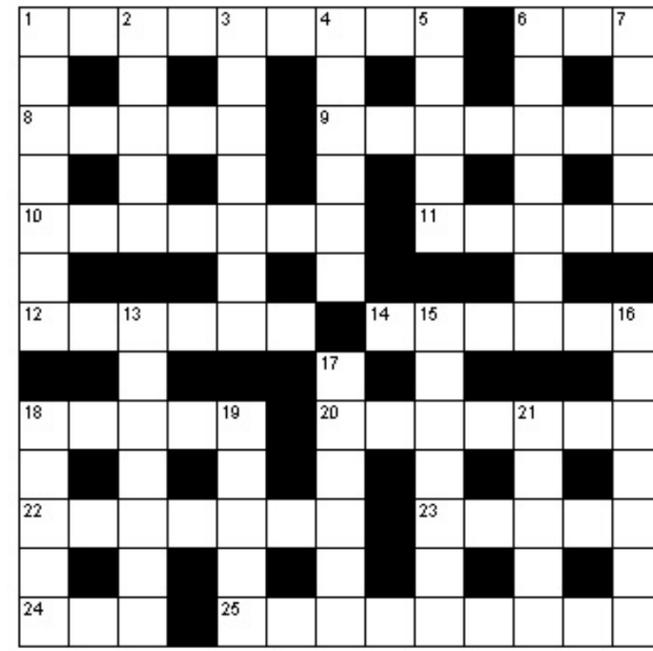
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ACROSS

- 1 Polar region (9)
- 6 Attempt (3)
- 8 Upright (5)
- 9 Hazy (7)
- 10 Nazi police (7)
- 11 Trité (5)
- 12 Wealthier (6)
- 14 Pandemonium (6)
- 18 Eerie (5)
- 20 Against the law (7)
- 22 Omitted (4,3)
- 23 Punctuation mark (5)
- 24 Japanese branch of Buddhism (3)
- 25 Scenic picture (9)

DOWN

- 1 Engrave (anag) (7)
- 2 Lock of hair (5)
- 3 Go over again (7)
- 4 Also (2,4)
- 5 Fragment of bread (5)
- 6 Capital of Ontario (7)
- 7 Sing in Tyrolean fashion (5)
- 13 Sheer fabric of silk or rayon (7)
- 15 Royal residences (7)
- 16 Set free (7)
- 17 Paradise Lost poet (6)
- 18 Ballroom dance (5)
- 19 Salivate (5)
- 21 Letter after beta (5)



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New EU Fisheries Control System Approved

The EU Parliament has adopted its negotiating position on the new Fisheries Control system, which will reform the rules that have governed EU fishing activities since 2010.

By 401 votes in favour, 247 against and 47 abstentions, MEPs agreed to use new technologies to better enforce fishing rules and improve security and transparency. They also insist that consumers must know when, where and how the products they buy are caught.

New rules that were approved include:

- On-board cameras (CCTV) to be compulsory for vessels that are likely to not comply
- Recreational fishermen who do not respect EU conservation measures or fisheries rules should be penalised
- New measures to address loss of fishing gear
- Fish should be traced throughout the whole food chain, including processed and imported products

The use of on-board cameras (CCTV) to carry out checks on



MFV Antarctic leaving Killybegs for the last time before her replacement arrives this summer. Photo: John Cunningham

landing obligations should be compulsory for a “minimum

percentage” of vessels longer than 12 meters and which have been identified as “posing a serious risk of non-compliance”. The equipment will also be imposed as an accompanying sanction for all vessels that commit two or more serious infringements. Vessels that are willing to adopt CCTV on a voluntary basis should be offered incentives such as additional allocation of quotas or having their infringement points removed.

MEPs back the proposal to harmonise sanctions and demand that a “European Union Register” of infringements be set up to centralise information from all member states. They also call for an “appropriate system of sanctions” for infringements committed by recreational fishermen.

In line with the EU’s Farm-to-Fork Strategy, The Parliament demands that the origin of fishery and aquaculture products must be traceable throughout the whole food chain, including processed and imported products. Data on

the species of fish, the location, date and time it was caught, and the type of gear used should be made available.

In an effort to reduce marine litter, MEPs agree that all vessels should be obliged to notify national authorities when they lose fishing gear and to carry on board the necessary equipment to retrieve it.

All vessels should also be equipped with a geolocation device allowing them to be automatically located and identified, a measure deemed necessary to improve security at sea, according to the adopted text.

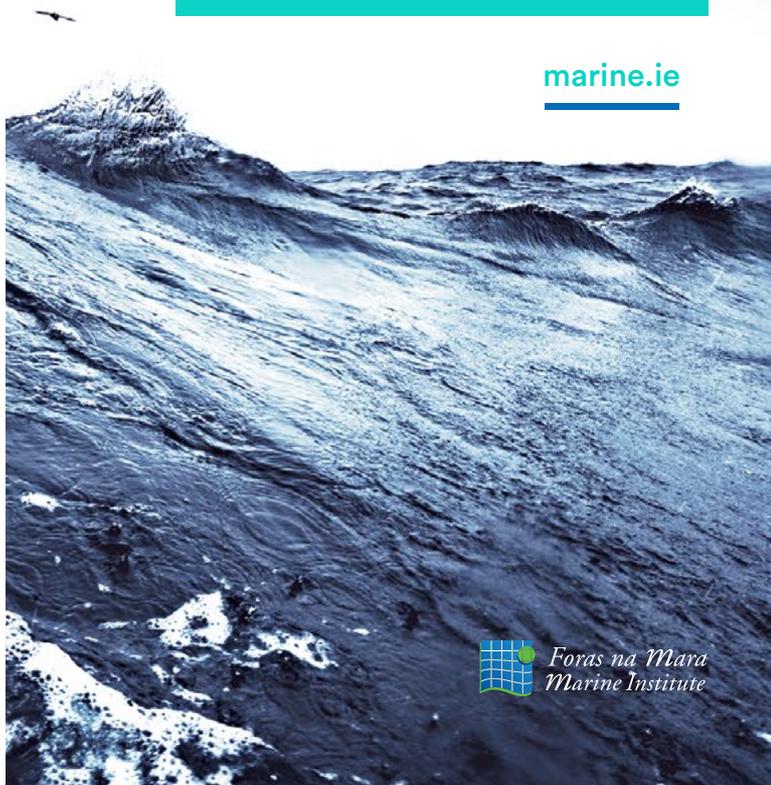
The Parliament also proposes to increase the margin of error accepted on the weight of some species estimated by fishermen on board (margin of tolerance).

With the vote, Parliament is now ready to start negotiations with Council. According to the current proposal, operators would have four years following the entry into force of the rules to equip vessels with the new technologies required.

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