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1964-2021



LEADING JOURNAL OF THE IRISH & UK INDUSTRIES JUNE 2021 - €3.50/£3.00

UNITE & FIGHT!

Fishermen unite in show of strength at Cork protest. See Pages 2-5



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Cork Protest Flotilla assembles at Roches Point. Photo: Niall Duffy.

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www.wgbaird.com

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

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Strong support shown by fishermen from all Irish coastal communities



MFV Roman Ross crew on the way to Cork Protest

Fishermen Unite To Fight For The Future

A flotilla of over 60 fishing vessels steamed into Cork City last month to protest over quota cuts, the Brexit Deal, SFPA failures and the disastrous EU Common Fisheries Policy.

The flotilla consisting of boats from Dingle, Castletownbere, Baltimore, Union Hall, Ballycotton, Kinsale, Dunmore East, Crosshaven, Kilmore Quay and other fishing communities steamed in single file from Roches Point, at the mouth of the harbour, to the docks in Cork city centre for a rally that was attended by nearly 1,000 fishermen, friends and family.



Patrick Murphy IS&WFPO addresses the rally

The rally was addressed by Fishing Reps plus 2 West Cork TD's and the tone of the speeches was defiance and resolution to keep demanding change.

Afterwards, 15 skippers and crew members accompanied by the large crowd marched to the office of Taoiseach Micheál Martin in the city to hand in a list of their demands.

The protest was organised by the Irish South and West Fish Producers' Organisation and was aimed at highlighting to the public the difficulties facing the Irish fishing industry

Patrick Murphy, CEO of the IS&WFPO, said the Brexit deal agreed on December 24th last between the European Union and the UK will result in Irish fishermen losing millions of euro in earnings if they are not given a fair share of the fish that swim in Irish waters.

He contrasted the situation in the UK, which will be able to fish for 75 per cent of the fish in their waters as a result of the Brexit deal, with that of Irish fishermen who are limited to fishing just 15 per cent of the stocks in Irish waters.

"Moreover, it is estimated that job losses of 4,000 or more in both the catching sector at sea and the processing sector onshore will inevitably follow these savage cuts," said Mr Murphy.

"Fishermen don't want to be in this situation. It is not what they want to be doing, but they are left with no choice; things are so bad," according to the organisation's chief executive.

"This the fact. This is what we want to show and tell to the public. Fishermen are putting themselves before the public, to show them the boats they have, the huge investment, creating jobs, the families with long traditions who face being forced out of fishing.

"The fishing industry is a vital part of our coastal economy and we need community support. It is a dangerous job which they do every day and they deserve better treatment and recognition for it."

"Despite all their promises, the government has not achieved any improvement in the situation. The EU has continued to support the bigger fishing nations in exploiting Irish waters," according to the ISWFPO.

"There should be a renegotiation of the Common Fisheries Policy so that Ireland is allocated a fair share of fish quotas that reflect the contribution of our fishing grounds to the EU."

When asked about the protest Minister for Agriculture and the Marine Charlie McConalogue

acknowledged that the Brexit trade deal will see quotas reduced to 15% on fishing quotas between now and 2026, which is the "challenge and pain" of what fishermen face.

"Obviously Brexit posed a massive threat to fisheries, a third of all the fish we catch was caught in British waters, so a no-deal would have been quite disastrous for the sector.

"But that's not to take away at all from the outcome that has impacted fisheries in a way that it hasn't impacted other parts of the economy.

"And that's why I've established a taskforce to bring together all of the voices in the

sector to advise the government how we can invest in the sector in the time ahead, how we can mitigate the impact that's there and also maximise what is a tremendous marine resource we have," he said.

Responding to the Minister's comments, Patrick Murphy said: "The minister says it's 'a challenge'. A challenge to me would be a soldiers climbing out of the trenches at the Battle of the Somme to face the machine guns, that's the challenge, we're being annihilated here."

"What's he saying is 'suck it up', I don't want to be disrespectful to a minister, but he's being disrespectful to us."



Dinah Busher and William Power hand over a letter highlighting the issues at the Taoiseach's Cork constituency office. Photo: Larry Cummins

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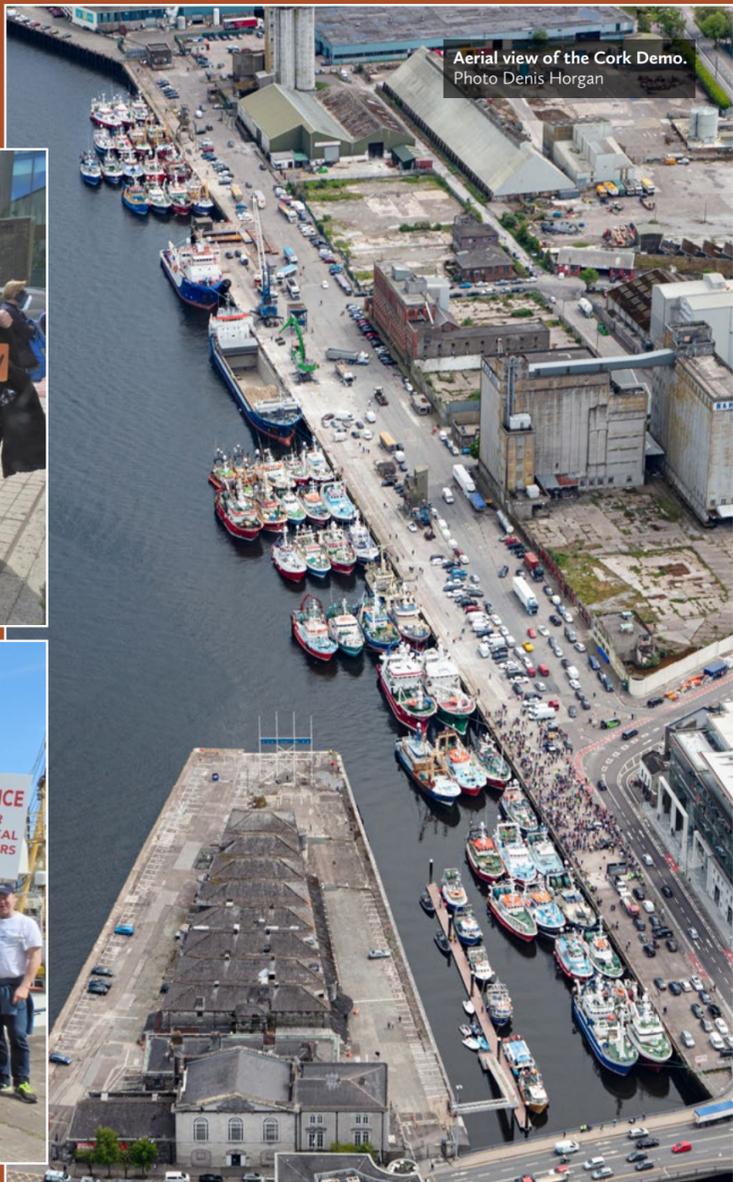
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The Skipper Out & About At The Cork Protest

Photos: Niall Duffy & Provision



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Patrick McClenaghan and Martin Oliver with lights.

Recent Irish Technical Measures

Nephrops

- 300 mm SMP ✓
- SELTRA ✓
- Sorting Grid ✓
- Dual codend ✓

Whitefish

- 90 mm T90 ✓
- 100 mm T90 Review
- 120 mm diamond ✓
- Raised-Fishing Line ✓

Survivability exemptions

- Nephrops ✓
- Cuckoo ray (temporary) ✓
- Seine-caught plaice Review

Shining a light on Irish Fisheries Conservation Work

Dr Ronán Cosgrove

Fisheries Conservation Manager, BIM

Fisheries discards have been high on the public agenda in recent months. Despite a slew of factual inaccuracies, the Netflix 'Seaspiracy' opinion piece has raised awareness around discards and other fisheries environmental challenges. The Journal.ie also published a recent exposé on discards – an age-old fisheries issue.

The Journal article focused on discard figures from an Irish report to the EC on implementation of the landing obligation in 2019. Unfortunately, no mention was made of the technical solutions developed by the Irish Industry and BIM to reduce such unwanted catches, thereby omitting an important part of the picture on Irish fisheries conservation and sustainability.

A total of nine Irish solutions have been implemented in EC legislation in response to the landing obligation with two more currently under review. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but measures such as the 300 mm square-mesh panel (SMP) and survival exemption in the Nephrops fishery greatly reduce unwanted catches and are now widely used and availed of. T90 mesh is increasingly deployed by seiners and trawlers targeting whitefish. In addition to being a highly effective conservation measure for undersize fish, T90 enhances fish quality and value, important attributes given the range of ongoing challenges affecting fisheries profitability.

As outlined in the landing obligation report, 2019 was a particularly good year for development and implementation of Irish technical solutions such as the dual codend in the Nephrops fishery; cuckoo ray survivability; 120 mm diamond-mesh codend, 90 mm T90 codend, and staggered or raised-fishing line (RFL) for mixed demersal fish.

The RFL was tested and developed by BIM and Industry through a series of field trials and a flume tank workshop. The gear significantly reduced low quota cod and plaice, undersize whiting and haddock, and skates and rays by allowing them escape at the mouth of the trawl. Importantly, catches of market-sized whiting and haddock were maintained.

Implemented in the Celtic Sea since last year, the RFL avoids the need for fishery closures so is of benefit to fishers as well as fish stocks. Like fishing, fine-tuning gear to optimise catch performance forms an important part of the gear technology process. Recent research in a US shrimp fishery showed how artificial light can influence fish behaviour and reduce unwanted catches at the mouth of the trawl, suggesting potential application to the RFL.

Led by BIM's Martin Oliver, a preliminary trial on the effect of lights on the RFL was carried out in April in collaboration with Patrick McClenaghan Jnr. and crew of the MFV Foyle Warrior. The vessel targeted mixed demersal fish species in the Celtic Sea using RFL gear with and without green LED lights, supplied by SafetyNet Technologies and Lindgren Pitman. Arrays of 10 lights were mounted on the fishing line with species catch weights recorded by the crew in line with COVID-19 sampling protocols.

Haddock, the main species encountered during the trial, clearly displayed a negative reaction to the lights. Substantially more haddock were caught when the escape gap was illuminated while substantially less haddock were caught when the fishing line or main body of the trawl was lit up. As expected, very few cod were caught with the RFL gear. The lights had minimal impact on whiting although catches of this species were low given the use of a 110 mm codend with a 160 mm SMP in line with current legal requirements. These different behavioural

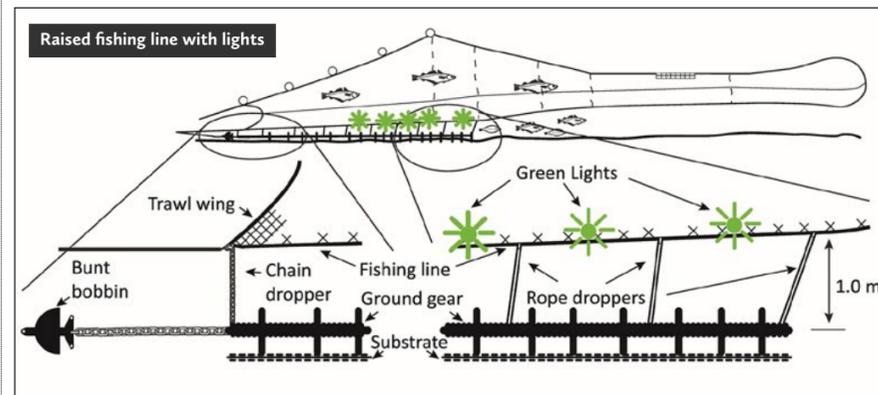
reactions to light are in line with preliminary findings from ongoing Scottish lab experiments.

Our results are encouraging given that quotas are substantially higher for whiting compared with haddock in the Celtic Sea. Codend and SMP mesh sizes have crept upwards in response to mixed species stock advice to the point where the commercial viability of a directed Celtic Sea whiting fishery is currently questionable.

The RFL is a proven cod avoidance measure. More comprehensive testing is needed but incorporating underwater lights on the RFL seems to have great potential for minimising haddock catch. Effective avoidance of these low quota species at the trawl mouth would help towards a case for codend meshes which retain commercially viable quantities of whiting. A previous gear trial on the MFV Foyle Fisher demonstrated extremely good whiting selectivity and quality using 80 mm T90 mesh – worth a potential revisit in future RFL trials.

BIM would like to thank Patrick McClenaghan Jnr. and crew of the MFV Foyle Warrior for a successful collaboration. We also wish to pass on our sincere condolences to the McClenaghan family on the recent passing of Patrick McClenaghan Snr., a great fisherman and a true champion of Irish fisheries conservation work.

This work is supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Funding. A full trial report is available at: www.bim.ie/publications/fisheries



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Original Mary Kate before being lengthened

Dutch Inquiry Shines Light On Mary Kate Saga

By Lorna Siggins

The case of the fishing vessel Mary Kate which failed a stability test here after it had been certified in Germany has been raised with the Dutch Safety Board by Ireland's Marine Survey Office (MSO).

The move follows an interim warning statement issued by the Dutch state board – which investigates shipping, aviation and rail accidents – to the fishery sector in relation to the safety of beam trawlers with a length of less than 24 metres.

In a statement issued on April 8th last, the Dutch board referred to “investigations completed to date into the very serious occurrences involving the trawlers UK-165 in the autumn of 2019 and the UK-171 in the autumn of 2020”.

It said its inquiries to date “reveal that beam trawlers with a length of less than 24 metres can become extremely unstable in an

asymmetric loading condition”.

“An asymmetric loading condition occurs for example if fishing gear is suspended from the outrigger boom on one side of the ship, and not on the other,” the Dutch board’s warning statement said.

“In that situation, the ship no longer floats upright in the water, but adopts a permanent list. This can have such serious consequences for the stability of the ship that it can lead to capsizing and sinking,” it said.

The Dutch board told The Skipper it expects to publish the final report into the capsizing and sinking of these trawlers shortly.

The MSO has confirmed that it contacted the Dutch board at the request of Minister of State for Transport Hildegard Naughton.

Ms Naughton also asked the MSO to advise the Dutch Safety Board of Ireland’s submission to the EU Committee on Safe Seas (COSS) back in 2013, and to “provide assistance to their investigation if they deem it relevant”.

The beam trawler Mary Kate was bought in the Netherlands by CJ Gaffney of Arklow, Co Wicklow and his father in 2007. The Gaffneys are a Wicklow seafaring family, with five generations of service to the RNLI.

The vessel was registered under the German flag, and was certified by Germanischer Lloyd Classification Society.

However, when C.J. Gaffney began fishing the vessel in January 2008, he noticed that it was significantly more unstable than his previous older boat.

He says that “on a few occasions whilst at sea the boat listed, and on one or two occasions the boat almost turned over”.

Mary Kate was surveyed by Maritime Management in Greystones, Co Wicklow, and serious concerns expressed about the stability of the boat, Gaffney says.

“Mary Kate was brought to Howth for stability testing which was undertaken and witnessed by Herman Jansen, the Dutch

company from which the Mary Kate was purchased,” he says.

“It was proved beyond a shadow of a doubt by all experts involved that there was 20 tonnes of unaccounted steel in the Mary Kate,” Gaffney says.

“Five tonnes could be accounted for due to some degree of modifications in the boat since it was built in 1992, but a discrepancy of such magnitude could not be accounted for and certainly could not be overlooked,” he says.

The Gaffney family had borrowed €620,000 to buy the vessel, but it could not put to sea. They opted to lengthen the vessel to 29.78 metres, and so they borrowed an additional €360,000 for this – otherwise the vessel would have been worth scrap value.

“Official stability tests had been carried out and proven by marine experts that the stability issue, and the unaccounted 15 tonnes of steel, had been there since construction,” Gaffney says.

The family initiated legal

action against German surveyors Germanischer Lloyd SE and vessel construction supervisors Berufsgenossenschaft, of Hamburg.

The Gaffneys claimed they were liable for misrepresentation arising out of the construction of the hull of the vessel in Germany in 1992 and its later fit-out in the Netherlands.

They also initiated legal action against the German Marine Safety Authority which had issued two yearly safety certificates.

However jurisdiction could not be established, Gaffney says, and the family had by now run out of money.

“Throughout this period, interest on their loan was accruing as the boat could not be put to sea. Also, legal bills were accruing both in Ireland and in Holland,” he says.

The MSO would not allow the boat fish due to the dangerous stability issue, but issued a stability certificate in 2009 when it had been modified.

“This meant that the family had now to buy additional licence to fish the much larger boat,” Gaffney says.

“It was estimated this would cost approximately €100,000 to obtain a new quota and new licence to fish in the relevant sector,” he says.

“The family had no more money and had no way of obtaining any further finance for the Mary Kate, and the banks were pressing for the loans to be repaid,” he says.

“A buyer was found in Britain for the Mary Kate which had been refitted, lengthened had increased tonnage – in essence a brand new boat at a total cost of approximately €1.2 million,” Gaffney says.

“A British buyer offered £950,000. The bank and family accepted the offer, as was this was their only option to get out of debt,” he says.

However, the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency would not allow it to be registered as it had not sailed for two years – even though the MSO had certified and stamped the stability book to state it was seaworthy.

As a result, the sale fell through.

“The banks subsequently sold the Mary Kate in a fire sale leaving the family with a massive loan of almost

€2 million, which is still outstanding,” Gaffney says.

He says the boat was insured with Allianz Insurance at an annual premium of €13,000.

When the stability issue arose roughly 12 months into the policy, Allianz would not cover the issue due to “latent defect”, Gaffney says.

The case has been raised at EU level by Irish MEPs Mairead McGuinness, Pat the Cope Gallagher, Liada Ni Riada, and Andrew Doyle, and it was referred to the European Parliament’s petitions committee.

“European Ombudsman Emily O’Reilly said her office did not have the power to investigate this type of issue,” Gaffney says.

“Whilst the case received every sympathy and consideration at EU level, the problem originated with a private company – Germanischer Lloyd of which the DG Mare – the EU office of the Directorate of Maritime Affairs – has no jurisdiction or powers to investigate,” he says.

“Both at EU level and at national level, the case of the Mary Kate does not “tick a box”,” he says.

In January 2011, CJ Gaffney, his father, and marine experts made a presentation to DG Mare and DG Move in Brussels.

Gaffney says that it was made clear by a senior EU official that there would be no objections to funding being released from the

EU Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) via the Department of Agriculture Food and Marine in the case of the Mary Kate on hardship grounds.

Significantly, while researching the issue, both Gaffney and his naval architect discovered that eight other sister boats registered under EU flag may have similar stability problems.

The MSO also notified the EU COSS (Committee of Safe Seas) of this issue when the Gaffney family alerted them to it.

“This family have lost their boat, their fishing quota, their fishing licence, their livelihood and possibly their homes in the coming months. Their total debt is approximately €2 million,” Gaffney says.

He now works as a pilot boat coxswain in Dublin Port.

A number of TDs, most recently Sinn Féin fisheries spokesman Pádraig MacLochlainn, have raised the Gaffney situation in the Dáil with Minister for Marine Charlie McConalogue.

The minister has responded that the purchase of a fishing vessel is “a private commercial transaction between the vendor and the purchaser with the responsibility for ensuring the authenticity of the details of the vessel being purchased resting with the purchaser”.

“The core issue here relates to the safety and safety certification of the vessel purchased. My

department has no function in relation to the safety certification of fishing vessels. The safety of fishing vessels, including matters relating to stability, is the responsibility of my colleague the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport,” he said in the Dáil.

However, a recent online “townhall” meeting, the minister agreed to meet Gaffney on the issue. A spokesman for the minister said that a date was being set up at time of going to press.

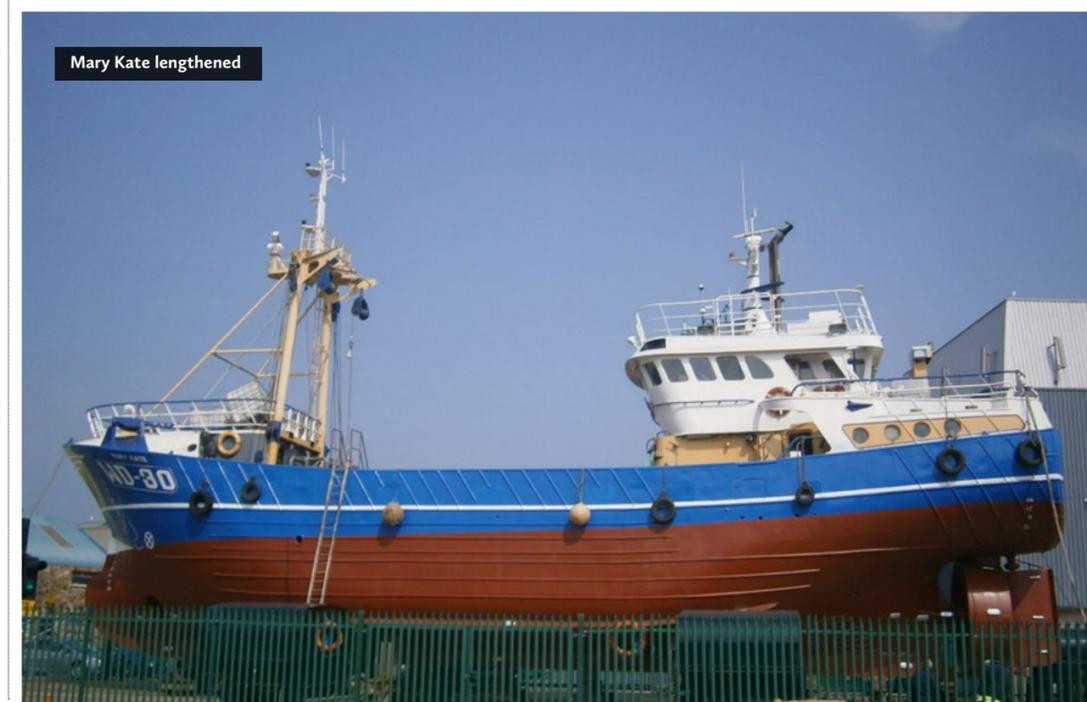
Gaffney has been told by the European Commission’s representative to the International Maritime Organisation Richard Mason that the commission is reviewing its flag state, port state control and accident investigation legislation “with a view to including fishing vessels within their scope”.

“Separately, an evaluation is just starting of the current fishing vessel safety directive,” Mason told the Gaffneys in correspondence.

“In all three cases, there will be an open public consultation,” he said, referring to an online link <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say>

Mason told the Gaffneys they may wish to make some observations.

“Such amendments would then give us the right to intervene in cases such as yours,” Mason has said.



Mary Kate lengthened

2020 Acoustic Surveys of Herring in 6aS/7b

By Michael O'Malley,
Marine Institute

The Marine Institute, in conjunction with industry, conducted a series of mini acoustic surveys for herring in 6aS/7b from November 2020 to January 2021 on small commercial vessels. The objective of these surveys was to quantify the distribution of winter spawning herring in the 6aS/7b area when separate from other stocks.

These scientific surveys are an important opportunity to gain additional information on the stock around spawning time, outside of the main acoustic survey for this stock that is conducted offshore in July. This was the fifth consecutive annual survey of herring in this area, at this time of the year, and the design has evolved since its inception in 2016. The survey area covered in the first three years (2016-18) included significant offshore coverage in areas 6aS and 7b. The survey in 2019 was much reduced and mostly confined to inshore bays because of poor weather. In 2020, the survey design changed considerably and rather than using one larger vessel for one continuous survey, small vessels were chartered for day-long mini-surveys in core bays where herring are known to aggregate prior to spawning. This change in survey design was based on the results of an ICES workshop and from experience gained in previous years.

Six mini surveys were conducted in 2020/21: Lough



Foyle (07/11/2020), Lough Swilly (10/11/2020 and 18/12/2020), Bruckless Bay (26/11/2020), Fintra Bay (26/11/2020), Inver Bay (27/11/2020), and Achill (06/01/2021). Five vessels were involved: MFVs Crystal Dawn, Ros Ard, Johnny G, Abigail S, and St. Catherine. The setup consisted of a pole-mounted echosounder system attached to the gunwale of each vessel with a combi 38 kHz (split) 200 kHz (single) transducer. The total biomass was estimated to be 45,046 tonnes. Herring were again typically distributed inshore in shallow areas (see figure) and the improved survey design resulted in a slightly more precise estimate of biomass for the total combined area. Very strong herring marks were evident in Lough Foyle and Lough Swilly (see figures). Smaller boats partaking in the fishery were also concentrated in these areas. There

were a series of smaller herring marks observed in Bruckless Bay, Fintra Bay and Inver Bay, although this was prior to the main aggregations detected by the fleet in December, January and into February. One survey was conducted in the Achill/Clew Bay area, an important area for herring in the past but less so in recent years. Some small marks of herring were found in this area too.

Biological samples needed to calculate the herring biomass, were sourced from boats partaking in the monitoring fishery. Marine Institute scientists obtained samples of herring from more than 40 individual landings. This provided comprehensive information on the age structure of the catch, a key source of information for the assessment. There was a wide distribution of length classes in all hauls, with most hauls dominated by

larger (> 22 cm) mature fish. The 2- and 3-wr age class of herring accounted for 54% of the overall numbers in 2020.

A number of advantages were apparent with the new design: greater flexibility to avoid poor weather and adapt to changes in fish distribution, the ability to survey very close to shore in smaller vessels, and improved cost effectiveness. Using smaller vessels allowed transects to be conducted in even shallower inshore areas where herring are known to aggregate prior to spawning. The downside is that a small but unknown proportion of the stock will have remained un-surveyed offshore. Although the evolved design resulted in a reduced survey area, there was more intense coverage of most of the important inshore bays where the monitoring fishery takes place. The resulting biomass can therefore be considered a

minimum estimate. Based on previous surveys and feedback from local vessels, the offshore component is thought to be very small. Overall the flexible survey design was successful and will be repeated in 2021, albeit with more survey effort focussed later

in December and January when herring have been showing up in Teelin, Bruckless and Inver Bays in large numbers in recent years. The application of this new stream of data in the 6a herring stock assessment will be considered for the first time at

the upcoming ICES benchmark in January 2022, where it will be decided if this time-series can be added to the current methodology.

Thank you to all vessels that participated in the survey and tender process in 2020. The

Marine Institute intends to run the survey in the same manner in 2021-22. Notices to tender for survey days will issue later in the year.

To view the full survey report visit <https://oar.marine.ie/>

Genetics Splits Herring Stocks in 6a

By Emma White,
Marine Institute

An international research project has developed a genetic approach to successfully differentiate herring from Scottish and Irish waters. An ICES benchmark in January 2022 will determine if 6a herring stocks can once again be assessed separately.

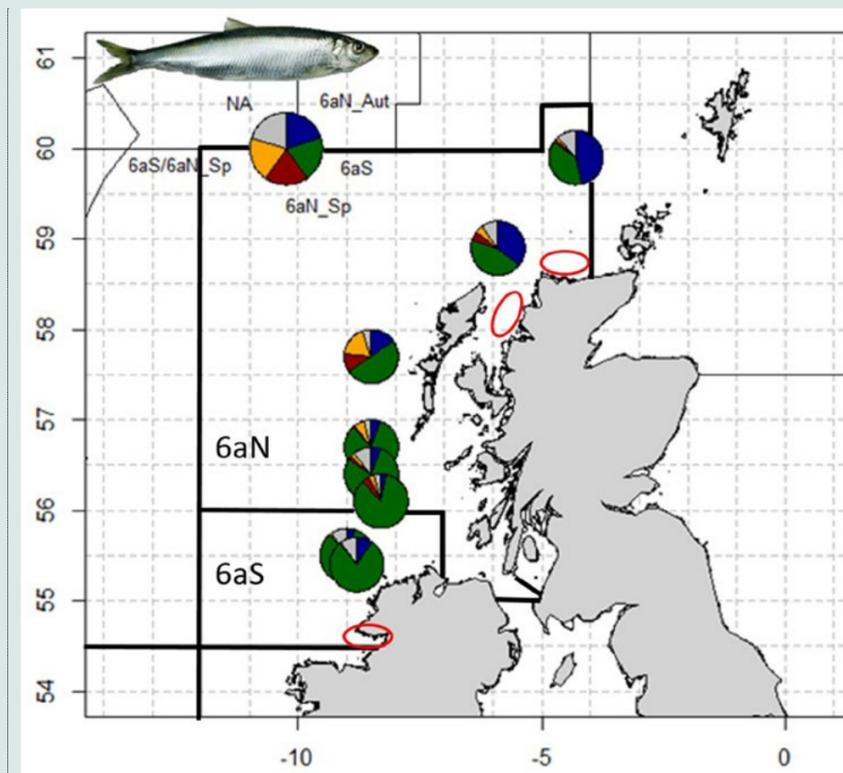
A joint research project involving the Marine Institute, University College Dublin, Marine Scotland Science, the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation, the Scottish Pelagic Fishermen's Association and the Dutch Pelagic Freezer-trawler Association has successfully differentiated herring stocks in ICES Division 6a, potentially solving a long-known assessment problem of stock mixing in the area. Until now, herring caught or surveyed in 6a were crudely assigned to their stock of origin based solely on their geographic location (see figure). With schools of herring from more than one stock known to occur in the offshore area, and no reliable way to tell them apart, ICES had to combine the traditional 6a North and 6a South stock assessments in 2015. This impacted the quality of advice for both stocks.

Different Approaches

The industry and EU funded project (Herring in Divisions 6.a, 7.b and 7.c: Scientific Assessment of the Identity of the Southern and Northern Stocks through Genetic and Morphometric Analysis) builds on over a decade of previous work, and investigated two methods to address this stock discrimination problem: genetics (using Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms) and morphometrics (the study of animal shape). Despite early promise, neither herring body shape nor otolith shape could reliably differentiate the stocks. However, certain genetic markers or combinations of markers successfully identified at least three herring populations in this area: the winter spawning 6a South herring (Donegal), the spring spawning 6a North herring (Minch) and the autumn spawning 6a North herring (Cape Wrath). Interestingly the autumn spawning 6a North herring were genetically indistinguishable from the neighbouring North Sea autumn spawning herring.

What does genetics tell us?

Acoustic surveys carried out by the Marine Institute and Marine Scotland

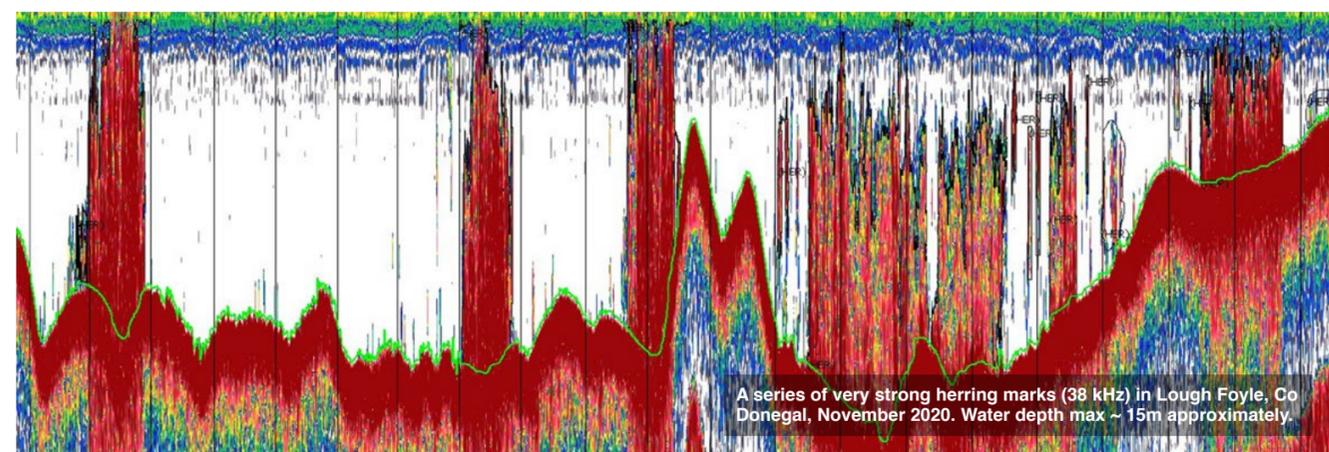


Science along the Malin Shelf every summer have collected genetic data from mixed feeding aggregations of herring since 2014. By comparing the genetic profiles of these mixed herring against the baseline genetic profiles of three herring populations found in the area, it is now possible to split the mixed herring into their population of origin. This provides reliable, separated survey time-series for 6aS and 6aN for the first time, a major step towards separate stock assessments. It was found that 6a South herring are distributed across the entire 6a area and are found at least as far north as Cape Wrath during summer. 6a North autumn-spawning herring comprised a small proportion of the herring sampled and were most abundant in the hauls in close proximity to the 4°W border with the North Sea. 6a North spring-spawning herring are believed to be a small population that spawns in the eastern Minch. In the mixed survey samples, these herring were present in most of the samples taken west of the Hebrides each year and it is important to split them apart from the 6a North Autumn and 6a South stocks.

What next?

The outputs of this project are being prepared for an ICES benchmark meeting in January 2022. The benchmark will evaluate the current data and assessment methodology of the 6a North and South herring stocks with the goal of agreeing an improved approach for generating catch advice in the coming years. Proposed improvements outside of the annual assessment environment, such as the current study, will play an important role. These genetic results will allow the acoustic survey index to be split back to 2014, a major step towards separate 6a assessments. However, much work still remains. While this study provides a proven method to differentiate mixed catches from 6a in the future, the historical mix of catches remains unknown and will need careful consideration before a separate 6a South assessments could again become a reality.

The report 'Herring in divisions 6.a, 7.b and 7.c. Scientific assessment of the identity of the Southern and Northern stocks through genetic and morphometric analysis' is available at <https://op.europa.eu>



A series of very strong herring marks (38 kHz) in Lough Foyle, Co Donegal, November 2020. Water depth max ~ 15m approximately.

Marine Institute Fisheries Surveys during 2020

By Eoghan Kelly, Macdara Ó Cuaig, Ciaran O'Donnell, Jennifer Doyle, Hans Gerritsen, Emma Horgan, Sara-Jane Moore, David Stokes, Jonathan White

Ireland has been undertaking scientific fisheries surveys for more than 150 years, with the earliest record of an offshore survey in Irish waters dating back to 1865/1867, undertaken by the 'Special Commissioners for Irish Fisheries', on the vessel HMS Lighting. The earliest standardised records of Irish fisheries scientific investigations detail surveys off the southwest coast, under the direction of the Reverend William Sportwood Green, in and around the years of 1890 aboard the Fingal. The report even records the crew list and details of the scientific sampling gear used.

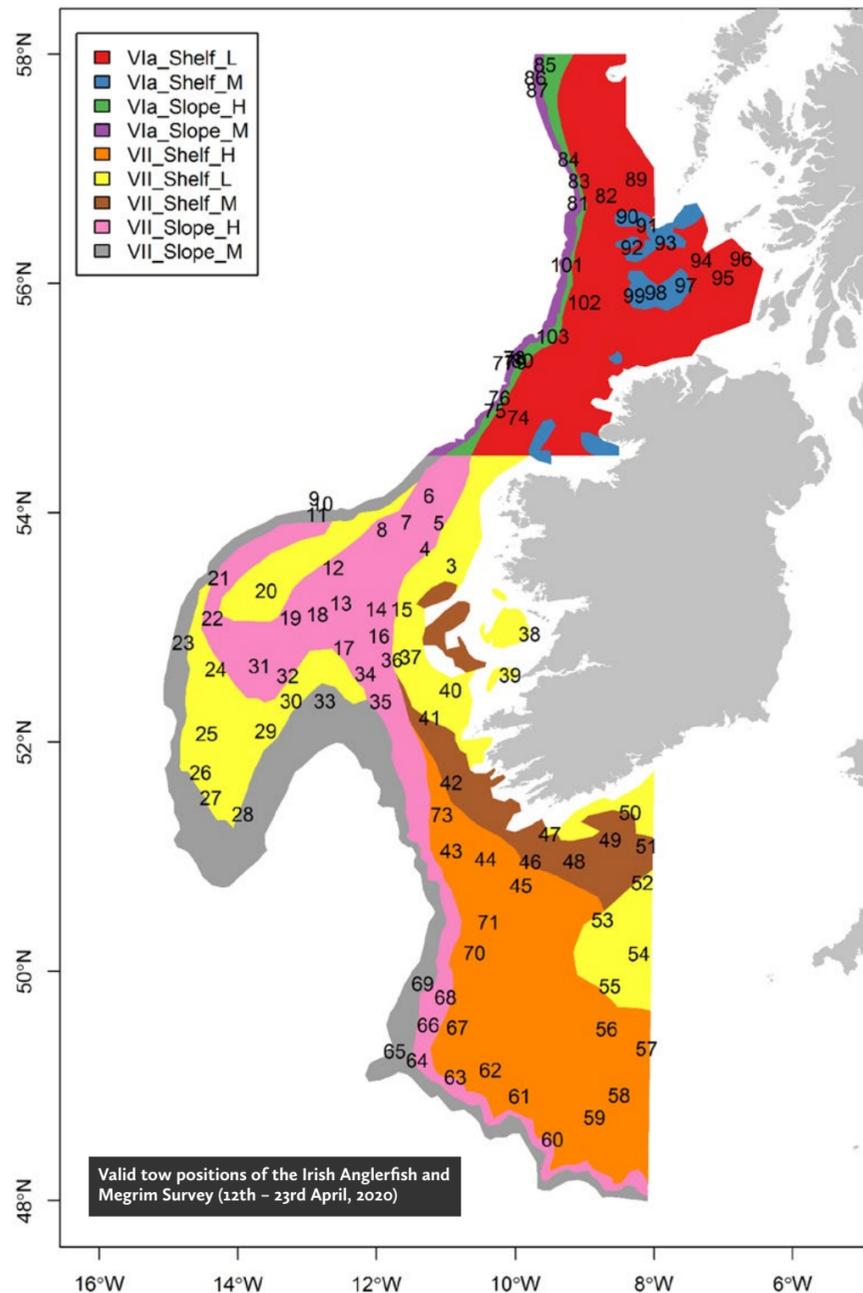
The Marine institute continues to undertake numerous fisheries surveys, primarily using the national research vessels the RV Celtic Explorer and the RV Celtic Voyager. These surveys provide essential independent information on the status of fish and shellfish stocks around Ireland, which are used in preparing fisheries advice for the sustainable management of our marine resources.

Survey work has continued during the past year, with the exception of the International Blue Whiting Spawning Stock Survey in March 2020. This survey did not take place following the withdrawal of all other survey partners due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then, all planned fisheries surveys have proceeded, with both research vessels implementing modified schedules, practices and boarding requirements to ensure compliance with all health and safety recommendations and requirements.

Surveys on the RV Celtic Explorer have proceeded with reductions in scientific crew and focused on the primary survey objectives. The Irish Anglerfish and Megrim Survey (12th - 23rd April) traditionally carries out 24-hour fishing operations, while in 2020 the survey was limited to 12 hour operations. In order to maximise the number of trawl samples, distances between hauls were reduced, and longer distances were covered at night. In this way the broad spatial coverage of the survey could be maintained while still sampling 98 valid stations.

Since the completion of the 2020 Irish Anglerfish and Megrim Survey, other fisheries surveys have continued with similar adaptations, including the Western European Shelf Pelagic Acoustic Survey (1st June - 12th July), the Celtic Sea Herring Acoustic Survey (4th - 24th October) and the Irish Groundfish Survey (25th October - 10th December).

In addition to the surveys on the RV Celtic Explorer, fisheries surveys also proceeded on the RV Celtic Voyager. Underwater TV surveys for Nephrops were carried out on the Aran-Porcupine prawn grounds (26th June - 7th July) and Celtic Sea prawn grounds (9th - 19th July and 8th - 16th August).



Surveys were run with a scientific crew of two people, working opposite shifts with vessel crew support. Through adaptations of work plans and focussing on essential at-sea data collection, surveys were conducted successfully and a total of 288 survey stations were completed. Post-processing, reviewing and counting, which have usually been undertaken as sea, were conducted ashore along with mapping, abundance estimation and stock assessment activities.

The Marine Institute has continued data collection at sea by adapting protocols and modifying survey objectives. The 2020 Marine Institute survey reports and findings are in the process of being finalised, and will be placed in state online

archives, joining those of the 'Special Commissioners for Irish Fisheries', and Reverend Green's in the history of Irish scientific investigations.

Fisheries surveys are an important part of Ireland's obligations under the EU Data Collection Framework to support the Common Fisheries Policy. All information regarding Ireland's data collection work programme is available at <https://www.demap-ireland.ie/> Ireland's Data Collection Framework Programme is supported by the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EU Regulation No. 508/2014).

Historic, and current reports are available online from the Marine Institute Open Access Repository at <https://oar.marine.ie>.

KILLYBEGS ROUNDUP

by John Cunningham

Killybegs Stevedoring

Killybegs Stevedoring was incorporated in 2003, by John Boyle and his wife Lily, and today enjoys the unique position of being the only family owned and managed, independent stevedoring and cargo handling company in the country. The company owes its genesis to the late Kevin McHugh, who approached John Boyle in 1987, with a request that he organise the unloading of Ireland's first ever, fish processing vessel, the MFV Veronica, upon her arrival back in to her home port of Killybegs. And so it began, that at the end of January 1988, that 14 local men, together with 3 of John's sons, unloaded their first cargo of frozen fish onto the quayside in Killybegs, working together as the newly formed, John J. Boyle (Fish-Handlers).

Today the company employs over 40 staff on a permanent basis, and has been managed since 1999 by John's son Manus, who is the first to acknowledge that the greatest asset of any company, are the people who work for it, without whose dedicated efforts, nothing would get done. Some of those very first employees back in 1988, stayed with the company until their retirement, only in the last few years (John Nicholson, Seamus Shovlin, John Roddie and Francis Murrin) to name just a few. It was the work ethic epitomised by these men, working in all kinds of weather, and often in sub-zero conditions, that have earned Killybegs Stevedoring, its reputation, of getting the job done, in an efficient, timely and client focused manner.

Thanks to the much valued patronage of all of the Killybegs



fish processors, in engaging the company to load out their reefer vessels, by 1995 with the introduction of electric forklifts into the vessel compartments, loading productivity rates had increased to 1,200 tonnes a day, and often more, thus facilitating the recent loading of the largest reefer vessel ever loaded in Killybegs, the MV Pacific Mermaid, in under a week, for the Atlantic Dawn Group.

In 1997, under the aegis of Sinbad Marine Services, the company began providing on shore cargo handling services to the oil and gas industry. Accordingly all employees were trained and remain qualified to the highest industry recognised standards, be they crane or forklift operators and drivers, general operatives, or skilled banksmen, who with their

combined wealth of knowledge and experience have over the intervening years handled many diverse project cargoes, of wind turbines, oil and gas project equipment, pipes and tubulars of various specifications.

Over the years some more unusual services have been accommodated also, both at the company's base within the excellence infrastructure of the Killybegs Fishery Harbour Centre, and further afield.

Such as the unloading of the components of a custom built Mammoet 1,200 MT Crawler Crane, from a vessel into 52 containers, and then involvement with its subsequent assembly in Carrick On Shannon, for the construction of a bridge there. Righting of collapsed cold storage warehousing, has also been undertaken - with the idea being, that if those Killybegs Stevedoring men, can load reefer vessels, day in and day out, they can handle most things!

As a direct result of the company's expertise, other interested parties were able to engage in their services as they tendered for various other project cargoes particularly in the Wind Energy Industry secure in the knowledge that the company had both the proven expertise required. Killybegs stevedoring company have been involved in the handling of the wind turbines for over a decade. The company's experienced staff has skilfully handled many cargoes of towers, blades, nacelles and containers of assorted parts for

many of the world's leading wind turbine manufacturers such as Nordex, Enercon, Gamesa, and GEwind energy. Siemens and Vestas. Over the years these components have grown in length from 35 metres to 65 metres therefore the company's skills have successfully adjusted accordingly. The Killybegs port is the optimum location to discharge, store and ship the wind turbines which are destined for north and west Ireland.

The company is independent trading position and will work for and with anyone wishing to engage their services.

The Killybegs Stevedoring Company would like to acknowledge their gratitude to the late Kevin Mc Hugh (without him they would not be in existence today) and also the support of The Atlantic Dawn Group and all who have sought their business for over a few lean years.

Further info at: www.killybegsstevedoring.com

Pelagic Fleet

■ The Pelagic Fleet are all tied up until the Autumn except for a few smaller vessels which will be heading to the Tuna fishery in the Bay of Biscay in June and a few of them heading for other Countries for maintenance and painting. Western Endeavour to Spain. Neptune to Fraserburgh and Pacelli to Norway.



NORTHERN IRELAND NEWS *By Dick James*

THE FISHERY

May is an in between month when the spring fishery is over but the summer one has not kicked in yet. However, at sea things appear to be early this year with the bottom mud having softened early, perhaps the clear April sky brought the plankton on early with strong intense light triggering the start of the change over. There has been a fishery for prawns when weather let the fleet out as the cool clear April changed to a more tempestuous May but the inshore tailing season is not yet on us. Fishing was again mainly in the western Irish Sea albeit there was a week or two on the Cumbrian grounds favoured by the Kilkeel fleet with the southern grounds still closed to them although the Irish flagged locally based boats did not put much effort in there also. The Clyde was taken as

an option when fishing in the Irish Sea tailed off later in the month about the effects of the fleet restricted to home grounds reflected in quota uptake where the area VII Nephrops quota is under pressure with the main fishery yet to come. Scallops are all but finished for the year and the whitefish front is similarly disappointing with the Haddock on the very small size and with limited access to fishing grounds.

The Unity as a consequence remains working out of Newlyn working on a mix of species many of them non quota (which helps) and making the most of the new electronic auction they have in Newlyn which is helping both volume sales and prices by all accounts.

The Porcupine Bank fishery is much talked about in the County Down ports whether

anybody goes there remains to be seen but accounts are that the fishery is good although the Maracestina remains port bound although the Apollo is apparently on the way there renewing the pattern which was disrupted last year with the Covid linked market problems. Ports of landing may well need a rethink with Dingle off the allowed list.

The North Sea fishery is having well documented problems this year with Norway and Faeroe closed the boats normally fishing there are displaced to the North Sea and further displacement from whitefish to prawns has led to a quota pinch there so interest is being shown in the Area VII prawn grounds. Some boats have already shown up and if others follow it could adversely hit the local fleets.

The pelagics are on their summer holidays the next action will probably be late July/ August when the Herring start. At least quotas are settled and with the enhanced Irish and North sea allocations if the market holds up it should be a good year. This year there is more English/Dutch interest with quota uplift but it remains to be seen if the factory fleet can make it work.

Inshore things are starting to get ready with the seasonal boats preparing for the upcoming season and getting gear out to claim their spot for the summer. There is hope for the markets as there is for most species with the lock down being sequentially lifted and with the restaurant trade restarting and a promise of summer holidays hopefully things will take off under full power.

Fishermen's Mission Covid Vaccination Program For Crew

The Northern Ireland branch of the Royal Mission for Deep Sea Fishermen launched an initiative in respect of foreign fishermen acting as crew on Northern Ireland based vessels to inoculate them against Covid 19.

Over the weekend of the 7th and 8th of May and in conjunction with the south-east health trust the mission centres at Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie were used as a base to inoculate some 151

fishermen, most of them foreign deckhands but also including some local fishermen and skippers with the first of the required two jabs.

Organised by Mission staff Leslie Hammond and Ingrid Perry the scheme required pre-registration with ID documentation and co-ordination with public health authorities.

Some 25/30 crewmen volunteering for vaccination could not be accommodated in this first round mainly due to

pre-registration requirements but are to be picked up in a second call in the near future. The second jab is also to be administered in the appropriate time slot.

This initiative will not only protect these crew from the worst of Covid infection but also make travel to home country and back again easier as foreign travel may be dependant on proof of inoculation and many of these crew are now regular rather than visitor workers.

The three mission centres in Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie have been closed since the start of the pandemic and in Northern Ireland a valuable service they provided in providing laundry facility has been covered by outside help (in Ardglass the local GAA sports club provided facilities) is to be returned with the installation of outdoor laundry machines operated by card or cash. Hopefully the centres may be reopened soon as lock down restrictions ease.

Ardglass Harbour Sub-Bathymetric Survey

A survey commissioned by the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority on the layering of the seabed and approaches of Ardglass Harbour was reported on in May.

The survey was done in March 2021 using a small surface craft with acoustic equipment and satellite positioning technology. The purpose was to determine what layers of soft material

overlaid the bedrock of the harbour to show what dredging depths might be achieved by dredging without the expense and trouble of removing bedrock which could bring other under mining problems with it. The survey was also to show the foundations of the harbour and what lies beneath them which would have implications for piling to underpin the walls if significant dredging was to be

undertaken.

The seabed of the entire harbour was surveyed with the outer basin, saw-pit basin and harbour approaches being done in greater definition to show the sub-bathymetric profiles. Two levels of sediment were detected above bedrock. The top one of sand and below that a coarser layer of gravel or till. Depths of both were fairly consistent according to depth but an area in

the harbour approaches jutting out from the north shore showed a spur of bedrock which may define depth in the approaches although the breadth of the present channel remains largely unimpacted by this spur.

The data from this survey will enable engineers to more accurately assess dredging and piling costs should the harbour be deepened.

Fishing For Litter Program To Be Reinstated

The fishing for litter program run and managed by the Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority is to be reinstated under the stewardship of the Environmental Officer employed by the Authority.

Previously this had been a Department of Environment initiative and all the hardware in terms of refuse bags forklift skips and holding skips remain from the previous initiative. Being launched in all three NIFHA harbours it will be interesting to see what volume of litter will be found. Whereas there are reasonably well known hot spots where litter may be found it is generally less common in deeper water than that found on the shoreline and beaches.

Harbour Authority already have the responsibility of garbage collection from the boats it is hoped that collection through fishing may condition decks to be more conscious of waste derived from the galley and other ship related activity.

Assembly Debate On Brexit And Fishing

A debate on fishing in respect of fisheries took place in the Northern Ireland Assembly in mid April. The issue of customs compliance for Northern Irish vessels fishing from Northern Ireland ports and landing back into those ports and having to complete customs import documentation was raised. The message was that UK interpretation was that documentation required was the same as pre-Brexit but the EU may have a different take on that. Discussions are ongoing.

On the issue of quota the Minister said that the Northern Ireland fleet was better off to the tune of 10% but that did not match the expectation either he or the industry felt was due and that the issue of access rights enjoyed by fleets both North and South was ongoing but that reversion to the pre Brexit status was one which was opposed by Ireland despite the unclear definition of the Voisinage agreement, its history and interpretation. The 0-6 mile zone was the one for which there is agreement and a list of qualifying vessels had yet to be agreed for access to that zone on either side



Ardglass Fishing For Litter Launch.

of the border but the 6-12 mile zone was not yet in those discussions on which the Minister commented "the previous scheme worked extremely well, if there is any holding back on that it is not coming from the Northern Ireland side."

Unclear Quota Uplift Allocation

Whereas other Government administrations have dealt with the issue of allocation between fleet sectors of the "bonus" uplift of quota as a result of Brexit with each announcing its own individual methodology the Northern Ireland Department for Fisheries has yet to conclude its own solution.

Whereas within the industry there seems to be a preference for allocation based on the FQA holdings of vessels/individuals/representative bodies there seems to be some disagreement over the extent of the Department holding back a not Inconsiderable quantity for the non-sector (boats outwith PO membership).

This has resulted in the computer generated spreadsheets showing a volume of unallocated quota which given the progression of time deep into the year leaves uncertainty on quantities allowed to be

caught by individual boats and generally making management more difficult than it needs be. 846 tonnes of Nephrops remains unallocated and uptake in 2021 is high.

Fisheries Sustainability Officer

The Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation have advertised for the recruitment of a fisheries sustainability officer part of the work program being directed at Marine Stewardship Council certification qualification for fisheries including Irish Sea Nephrops as well as maintaining the certification of the Irish Sea Herring fishery.

The position is to be grant aid funded for, initially a period of 21 months. Other initiatives scheduled for the officer are the creation of voluntary management plans for various fisheries, planning disposal of end of life fishing gear and a movement to carbon neutral fishing operation.

Previous application for Marine Stewardship Accreditation for a Nephrops fishery was in the Clyde which failed over the issue of functional unit management and concern for environmentally sensitive Sea Pens.

Minister Poots Releases Report On Capital Financing Needs

The Minister responsible for Fisheries in the Northern Ireland Assembly has released a report on the findings into the investment needs of the Northern Ireland fishing and seafood sector going into the future. The report was produced in the name of the Fishing and Seafood Development Program (FSDP) set up by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Strategic Investment Board but written by consultant Rod Cappel of Poseidon consulting.

The report focuses on recommendations in relation to capital investment at the main fishery harbours of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie highlighting challenges and opportunities for the wider industry that could be addressed through a future fisheries financial support scheme.

The main conclusion of the report is that the existing harbour infrastructure is inadequate to cater for existing fleet needs in terms of space and depth in the three Northern

Ireland Harbours and that shore side space in the harbour estates is also inadequate for present and future needs. There is a disincentive for vessel owners and operators to invest in modern vessels which would operate sustainably and efficiently and attract crew and meet environmental objectives.

Ardglass harbour capacity should be enhanced to secure fishing and processing sectors with depth of water in the main basin being a significant constraint and harbour properties need to be acquired to enable harbour side development. For Kilkeel the vision of an Irish Sea hub requires greater water depth and greater capacity with an increase in the harbour estate making extra land for business expansion and new opportunities. The vision for Portavogie is to maintain existing infrastructure and prepare the harbour estate for future Blue Economy opportunities. The costs of meeting these objectives are €98 million with an investment of €73 million in Kilkeel, €20 million in Ardglass and €5 million

in Portavogie. This is subject to technical feasibility and more detailed cost estimates with private investment needed if development is needed for pelagic shore-side development at Kilkeel. Other investment needs at non Fishery Harbour Authority ports and for innovation, de carbonisation, efficiency, training marketing, aquaculture and further FSDP studies are budgeted at €4 million to be taken from the standing budget for fisheries grant support. FSDP studies are expected to cover Blue Economy opportunities.

The report identifies the fact that the Northern Ireland fishery sector is disadvantaged in the United Kingdom terms in that it is underdeveloped in fleet structure but that benefits in terms of enhanced fishing opportunities should accrue through Brexit in terms of increase in quota share through enhancement through the rebalancing exercise and scrapping of Hague Preference which reduced quota availability for key Irish Sea demersal species for Northern Ireland to the benefit

of Ireland. In respect of the Blue Economy the development of offshore renewable energy facilities would give a boost to the fleet through guard ship and service vessels which could be based in one or other of the fishing ports and allow for a diversification of opportunity. Whether this would be at the expense of fishing or a supplement to it is not theorised.

The substance of the FSDP which is the driving force behind this report and involved in its implementation is not clear. A steering committee was initially formed to launch the project with all interested parties (including industry) being members but this has not met since the start of the process nor has considered the fact and consequence of the report so involvement in the implementation is also uncertain. The next process is to prepare a business case for all elements of the report proposals and technical and environmental inputs which will be at Government level and with no disruption construction is envisaged to commence in 2023.



UK NEWS

Will EU Seiners Spell The End Of UK Under 10 Fleet?

By Jerry Percy,
NUFTA

NUTFA has been receiving reports of the increasing number of fly shooters operating initially in the eastern Channel but now fishing as far as western waters for a couple of years now.

From initial reports of relatively small numbers of these vessels taking significant quantities of Bass, suddenly we seem to have a vast fleet [75] of high powered fly shooters working our waters, everywhere from the eastern Channel through to western waters, all licenced by the MMO, despite the fact that they admit to not having complete catch records for this method in these waters, reliant instead on member state data, including that from France who have been penalized in the past for failures to provide accurate information in this respect.

Representatives of the fly shooters from the UK, Netherlands, Belgium and France have apparently made an agreement among themselves to limit the 75 massive vessels [the UK ones are all flag ships owned by Dutch interests] to only using 3200 metres of 55mm diameter seine ropes with a weight of 2kg/metre and with a minimum mesh size of 80mm.

They have limited their effort to 8 days at sea per 14 day block and readers in the Channel will be relieved to hear that the Dutch and Belgian vessels, all 30 of them will keep outside the 9 mile line in VIID but outside the 12 mile off Normandy. Quite why these rules don't also apply to the 17 Dutch owned flag ships registered in the UK or to the 28 French vessels is questionable. [and according to French inshore fishermen, it is a waste of time going to sea after these boats have been fishing locally as there is nothing left {sounds like the pulse debacle all over again}]

DEFRA have only heard about this agreement recently and are apparently trying to understand more about it and its potential impacts [I suggest they ask any British Channel fisherman], who was involved, how it will be enforced and how it might work with management measures elsewhere.

Taking a step back, it now appears that the MMO are keen

Osprey leaving Whitby. Photo Mick Bayes



to licence every Tom, Dick and Harry fly shooter [or Johann, Pierre and Gaston] despite not having complete track records. UK fisheries management seems to be made up by foreign interests in our own waters and our own government until recently have been unaware of it. The promise by Johnson of "world leading fisheries management" seems to be about as trustworthy as all the previous promises regarding UK fisheries and all the while, OUR resources are being plundered by a virtually uncontrolled fleet of foreign boats, to the detriment of our own fleet, big and small.

As a postscript to this, the MMO tell us that they have licenced all 75 vessels but are reviewing their impact before deciding on any longer term access arrangements. What could possibly go wrong with that approach?

But again, we can be reassured here because the Dutch representative, Pim Visser has said that "the purpose of this agreement is to ensure a sustainable future for all fishermen and their families". Try telling that to the UK's inshore fleet fishing the Channel, and their families.

NUTFA had raised the fly shooter issue with DEFRA many weeks ago but have yet to receive any substantive response.

In the letter to DEFRA we said "we have concerns regarding the clear increase in the presence of very large and powerful fly

shooters that are being seen increasingly in our western waters. We have received an increasing number of calls over the last couple of years with regard to the fishing effort and impacts of these vessels in the eastern Channel, especially with regard to non quota stocks. It does appear from our perspective that their presence in western waters is something of the marine equivalent of a land grab and this has not been helped by the reported lack of data on the number of vessels using this method of fishing and their catches, either historically or presently.

We are apparently reliant on what data the EU holds and this is certainly not the firm foundation that should be necessary to grant access to this element of the EU fleet. I am aware that the French especially have failed year on year to provide detailed catch data to the EU and this does little to give any confidence in the information on which access is being granted.

In a written answer in this respect, Fisheries Minister Ms Prentis said: "The MMO uses data published by the EU Commission to estimate EU landings from UK waters as part of the annual MMO EEZA report. The MMO does not hold comprehensive, historical records of activities by EU vessels, as these are held by their flag state."

So my points in this respect

are firstly that the UK should not underestimate the fishing power of these vessels. Their gear and fishing method covers a much larger swept area than other forms of mobile gear and secondly their main target species such as cuttlefish, red mullet, bass etc are of vital importance to our sector.

Finally, the lack of sound data should preclude the granting of any right of access to these vessels, not only on the basis of the above but also that having spoken to a number of SW fishermen who have traditionally fished these waters, the presence of this modern fleet of fly shooters is something new to them and therefore has no historical basis for being given access and not least in light of the Minister's comment above that "The MMO does not hold comprehensive, historical records of activities by EU vessels, as these are held by their flag state."

We would like to give DEFRA and the MMO the benefit of the doubt and we await a robust response to the longer term licencing of these vessels but based on the abject failure of government to stand up to European interests under the Brexit arrangements, the surrender of the 6-12 mile zone and the apparent enthusiasm shown by the MMO to licence an armada of EU vessels in our waters, we are not holding our breath.

The new Fisheries Act gives

the UK the power to provide or deny access to our waters based on the social and economic benefits of individual vessel operations to our own coastal communities.

If anyone can provide evidence of any such benefits that these powerful foreign owned vessels deliver then we would be pleased to hear from them.

NUTFA campaigned hard to get pulse fishing banned in UK waters but was undermined by the NFFO who instead promoted a continuation based on specific fishing areas.

It now appears that the UK representative on the group promoting this massive fleet is Dutchman Andries de Boer, one of two Dutch Directors of the NFFO. All we need now is for some academic to turn up to tell us that the method is fine despite the first hand observations of many inshore fishermen to the contrary, in

the same way as happened with the pulse lobby to complete the similarity.

But this article is not about partisan fishing politics, the subject and impacts are far too serious for that.

The under ten fleet in the UK has been hanging on by its fingertips for years, increasingly reliant on fewer and fewer species, hemmed in by everyone from the EU fleet parked on our 6 mile line to increased calls for inshore MPA's, licences capped, promises of a fair allocation of quota broken time and again, a draconian licencing regime and yet more restrictions on those few species that we are allowed to catch.

Yet a fleet of hugely impactful, foreign owned vessels that provide next to no social, economic or environmental benefits to our coastal communities are licenced to fish in our waters whilst the powers that be decide



Atlanta II just out of slings at Bridlington shiplift Photo Mick Bayes

on longer term access. Shutting the door after the horse has bolted comes to mind.

Pulse fishing crept up and bit us in the backside and was only initially exposed by the witness of many of our inshore guys. It seems that fly shooting is

following a similar course.

From reports coming in from both sides of the Channel, if DEFRA / MMO grant longer term licences to this fleet then it will certainly spell the end for the under ten sector in that area as we know it.

Lords Appointment Triggers NFFO Change To MPA Policy



The appointment of Richard Benyon as Defra minister in the House of Lords has prompted a rethink within the NFFO on its approach to the management of marine protected areas.

To this point, their approach has been to challenge the Government's shift from an evidence-based, adaptive, approach to one with more resemblance to a bulldozer. The appointment of the author of the highly partisan Benyon Report on Highly Protected Marine Areas to ministerial responsibility is a tipping point and suggests that this approach is a pointless furrow to plough.

There is only one question now. What is Government policy towards the many hundreds of fishermen who will now be displaced from their fishing grounds? In English waters, Defra/MMO's intention is

to introduce management measures for 40 offshore MPAs over the next three years – an insanely rushed approach that will leave no time for careful consideration, collation of evidence, or dialogue. Inshore, the picture is worse. Inshore vessels tend to have a more limited range and IFCAs are already overwhelmed by the task of implementing MPAs within the 6mile limit. 60% of their activities now relate to MPAs.

Meaningful discussion with the fishing industry on how to achieve the conservation objectives for each MPA site, whilst maintaining fishing activities consistent with those objectives, offers the most equitable and effective way to manage MPAs. This approach has now been abandoned in England. Scotland, meanwhile, remains committed to a measured, careful, policy focussed on implementing MPAs whilst minimising the impact on fishing businesses and communities.

Put bluntly, Defra is now intent on a reckless gung-ho approach to the implementation of MPAs in English waters. Serious displacement of fishing activities will be an unavoidable consequence.

This ministerial appointment makes it clear that for English waters there will be no turning back to dialogue, evidence and collaboration. Defra Ministers are not going to go against the recommendations made by one of their number. Only questions relating to displacement remain:

What will be the scale of displacement effects as vessels are forced off their grounds in a kind of marine Highland Clearance?

What is the Government's policy to deal with the social, economic and environmental fallout of the new approach?

How does this fit with the Government's levelling up agenda?

At present there is no policy on displacement. There is a void. Silence. Nothing has been done to assess the extent of displacement. Nothing has been done to mitigate displacement. Nothing has been done to assure the fishing industry that its interests will be seriously taken into account or its views listened to.

For those that think that our response to the shift in policy is alarmist, even a little hysterical, we would point to the debacle that is the EU landing obligation. Here was a policy in 2012 driven by a media campaign and political opportunism.

Eight years on, it is widely recognised as an utter failure, a classic example of form over substance. It has destabilised fisheries management. The jury is out on whether it has reduced discards. Choke risks are a substantial and serious threat that distorts fishing activity and management measures. And all because of dishonest presentation of statistics whipping up a public hysteria. The Government is now looking for a way out of the disastrous policy that it advocated and supported without losing face.

It will not escape notice that the Defra minister leading the charge on the landing obligation and taking the green glory was – Richard Benyon MP.

The full NFFO blog post is available to read at: <https://www.nffo.org.uk/prepare-for-displacement>

SCOTLAND NEWS

New Cabinet Secretary For Scottish Fisheries

Mairi Gougeon MSP has been appointed as the new Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands. The post includes responsibility for fisheries and aquaculture as well as cross-government coordination of policies for island communities.

She will replace Fergus Ewing who held the position for the past five years.

Mairi Gougeon was previously a councillor for Brechin and Edzell, during which she was chairwoman of the East of Scotland European Consortium.

She is a history graduate from the University of Aberdeen and was elected as the MSP for Angus North and Mearns in May 2016

The SNP MSP is no stranger to the issues facing the industry as she previously served as junior minister for rural affairs and the

natural environment – a role she held for more than two years until December.

Nicola Sturgeon had described Mairi Gougeon at the time as a “highly effective rural affairs minister working with stakeholders, balancing competing interests and taking on difficult policy challenges”

Elsbeth Macdonald, chief executive of Scottish Fishermen’s Federation (SFF), told The Skipper:

“Congratulations to Mairi Gougeon on her appointment to the Rural Affairs Cabinet post within the Scottish Government. We look forward to engaging at the earliest opportunity on the many challenges that confront the sector. Thanks also to Fergus Ewing, who has stood down from the government, for his support, commitment and willingness to listen to the industry.”

Mairi Gougeon, MSP.



Northeast Atlantic mackerel advice needs to be reviewed.

Peterhead Reports Better Than Expected Trading Year

Peterhead Port Authority managed to maintain a highly respectable turnover of £12.5 million last year despite the severe impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on operations.

The 2020 figure was down by just 6.5% on 2019’s earnings of £13.3 million, although higher costs due to the outbreak understandably forced profits down to £1.7 million from £2.8 million the previous year.

The overall value of fish handled through the port slipped from the record high of £210 million in 2019 to £190 million, with much reduced volumes and prices for whitefish.

And the annual gross tonnage of commercial shipping using the Port was down to 8 million tonnes from 9.4 million tonnes in 2019.

PPA chief executive Simon Brebner said: “The year 2020 was incredibly challenging, with Covid-19, a low oil price and

uncertainty surrounding Brexit. “However, through careful planning and fantastic support from our employees and the wider port community of clients, users and suppliers, we have been able to report a much stronger trading year than we had anticipated through our re-forecasting.

“Looking ahead, the final Brexit agreement and the disruption to seafood exports it has caused, along with Covid-19 restrictions, mean the whitefish and shellfish sectors will remain under pressure for the foreseeable future.

“Within the energy sector, the oil price is starting to recover and operators are beginning to tackle the backlog of maintenance and investment offshore.

“In our continuous quests to improve the harbour infrastructure and operational capabilities, the Port itself is pressing ahead with a

series of substantial initiatives this year.”

Work will begin in May on refurbishing and reinstating approximately 160m of the rock revetment along Alexandra Parade, which has been damaged and eroded since it was constructed in the 1980s. The contractor is MacLaughlin & Harvey, with RPS Group the project consultants.

This £5.5 million project, involving the installation of rock armour up to 25,000 tonnes in weight, including around 300 large X-block units, will provide improved protection from overtopping seas both to vehicles on the roadway below and the nearby fish market and other properties.

The work had to be postponed last year and a series of rock-filled containers was erected along the front of the fish market to provide temporary protection.

PPA is also driving ahead with its long-term plan for net zero emissions, having secured EMFF funding for an all-electric utility van for harbour security and transfer of staff around the harbour and an electric road sweeper for quays and roads.

Funding was also gained for 30 sets of waste handling receptacles to be located around the fishing harbour, with green bins for recyclable waste and red ones for landfill material.

The Board decided to impose a standstill on all port, vessel and cargo related charges for 2021 to assist customers and stakeholders in a much needed path to recovery.

Mr Brebner said it was important to demonstrate to customers that the Port’s value proposition remained strong while recognising the challenges caused by Covid, Brexit and fish quota cuts.

Fishermen Call For Review Panel To Assess Scientific Catch Advice

Scotland’s two largest fishing associations are urging Scottish ministers to create a special panel to review stock assessments after wild swings in catch advice in recent years.

The Shetland Fishermen’s Association (SFA) and the Scottish White Fish Producers’ Association (SWFPA) are advocating the establishment of a body equivalent to the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee to evaluate recommendations from the International Council for the

Exploration of the Sea (ICES).

They argue that insufficient account is taken of the often “shaky foundations” on which ICES stock assessments are made, with most derived from computer models and complex mathematical algorithms based on highly simplistic assumptions.

In support of their claims they cite the example of Northeast Atlantic mackerel advice which swung from 857,000 tonnes in 2017 down to 318,000 tonnes in 2018 and then back up to

922,000 tonnes in 2019, after ICES reviewed its modelling and adjusted its algorithms.

Also North Sea cod, where ICES has failed to take account in its advice of the changing distribution of the stock from the southern to the northern part of the North Sea and where the uncertainty in the assessment of the size of the stock between 2008 and 2017 amounted to 58,000 tonnes annually, dwarfing the annual catch.

SFA executive officer Simon Collins said: “It is essential that limits on what fishermen can catch are informed by science. But unfortunately the advice produced by ICES can turn out to be erroneous, resulting in unnecessary damage to the fishing industry and the communities that depend on it.

“As everyone knows, fish cannot be counted like trees, so what ICES has to do is model stock changes mathematically, often with very little real data, starting with an assessment that is itself a modelled outcome.

“Vast swings in stock advice can result from tweaks to these models and what skippers end up with is catching opportunities that bear little resemblance to the abundance of different species on their fishing grounds. Often to

their severe detriment.”

Mike Park, chief executive of the SWFPA, added: “The drawbacks of the ICES modelling are compounded by the fact that there are no alternative sources of advice, there is no peer review of the advice and fisheries managers are not obliged to consider advice or information from other sources.

“So we have ended up with a monoculture that needs to be redressed, and that is why we are advocating the creation of a Fisheries Advice Panel charged with reviewing scientific advice for the benefit of the Scottish fisheries minister, particularly when it comes to negotiations over Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and quotas.

“It would be similar to the BoE Monetary Policy Committee, which evaluates economic data and weighs it in the light of other information.

“The Panel could meet every time that ICES publishes advice on stocks of interest to Scotland to consider it. It would then report to the fisheries minister with an opinion on each stock as to whether it is credible or unreliable.

“It would allow erroneous assessments produced from ICES modelling to be set aside.”



Landing the catch at Peterhead Fish Market.

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

New Toft pier opens



Lindsay Laurenson & Alastair Cooper Toft pier

The New £3.5 million Toft pier, in Shetland, was officially opened with a low-key ceremony on 17 May almost a full year after its initial completion date of August last year.

The new pier, which replaces a previous structure that had been deemed unsafe, was welcomed as a major boost to the inshore fishing fleet but also to the islands' aquaculture industry.

Public access to the busy but crumbling pier was blocked off in December 2016, creating some controversy in fishing circles.

Now, four and half years later,

it is expected to become once again a major landing spot for local shellfish boats.

First to use the new facility however was local mussel farming firm Blueshell, landing nine tonnes of mussels ready to go on the overnight ferry to Aberdeen.

Overseeing the transfer of the large bags filled with mussels, the company's operations manager Lindsay Laurenson said the new pier makes landing fish and other seafood easier and safer.

"It is just so much easier to work from here, and it is a fine sheltered pier where you leave a

boat overnight too," he said.

"There will be possibly more shellfish boats based here, I think the new pier could well be the springboard for a few new things. It's been four and half years that the pier has been here and it is good thing that it is back.

"This is a really good pier as far as logistics goes; it is an easy place to get to and it is nearer to where the activity is taking place."

Initially priced at £3 million, with one million coming from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), work to demolish the old structure got

under way in September 2019 after Shetland Islands Council contracted Teignmouth Maritime Services from Devon to rebuild the pier.

However, poor winter weather, unforeseen ground conditions and Covid-19 restrictions all contributed to an additional cost of half a million pounds, while the timetable for completion slipped to spring this year.

Compared to the old structure which had been built in the 1970 the working area of the new pier is at 1,100 square metres around three times larger, and it also includes shore power and lighting.

Chair of the council's harbour board Andrea Manson said there had been calls for a replacement pier since the new ferry terminal was built at Toft in 2004.

"Maritime and coastal industries are so important to our community and they are well supported by the council's management of several ports and harbours around Shetland," she said.

Councillor for the area, Alastair Cooper, added that he had a long battle to get the money for the infrastructure project approved: "There was a genuine belief in the council that it wasn't needed, yet the new pier will make industry work better and more efficiently.

"Toft pier is a strategically important site for shellfish landings and has potential to support tidal energy projects too."

Shellfish men aggrieved at way the sector is managed locally

A Group of disgruntled fishermen are challenging the local inshore shellfish fishery organisation - calling for it to become more transparent and accountable.

They claim the Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO) has become a "closed shop", preventing new fishermen from entering the inshore fishery sector.

They further allege that the organisation, created more than 20 years ago, is acting against the spirits of its founders by allowing fishing permits to change hands for as much as £40,000.

The SSMO has strongly defended its approach to managing the inshore waters by saying new entrance licences were being issued regularly, though the application process is usually oversubscribed.

The organisation is tasked with ensuring the long-term biological, environmental and economic sustainability of the local shellfish sector.

Some of the group of around 15 men who feel mistreated by the SSMO met in Scalloway in late April to vent their frustration after an exchange of e-mails produced "unsatisfactory" responses to their many questions.

Group spokesman Gary Smith said he had unsuccessfully been trying to obtain an SSMO licence for the past 14 years, with no explanation given why his applications have been turned down.

"They hide behind the science, but don't share the science," he said, adding that all they were asking for was a level playing field.

Arnold Goodlad said he handed back his licence in the early 2000s on the understanding that he would be able to get a new one once he wanted to get back into the industry, but other than a licence to catch

queen scallops (queenies) he has been unsuccessful in his efforts.

Smith said all men in the group had different grievances with the way the SSMO is managed, and alleges that members are looking after their own interests rather than those of the whole inshore sector.

The group said that the number of fishing permits dropped from 160 to now just over 100, thereby concentrating fishing rights in fewer hands and making it near impossible for young men to enter the industry.

Shetland is the only region in Scotland that has been granted a regulating order allowing a locally controlled organisation to manage its own inshore shellfish sector out to the six miles limit to guarantee a sustainable fishery.

Since 2000, the local quota is managed by a board of eleven members, including boat owners, representatives from community councils, the Shetland Fishermen's Association and the shellfish processing sector.

The SSMO can close fisheries to allow stock to recover, and it sets minimum landing sizes for brown crab, velvet crab, lobster, scallops and buckies, and regulates the number of creels any vessel can use.

SSMO has Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) accreditation for three of its fisheries: velvet crab, brown crab and dredged king scallops.

But critics say that some vessels with a licence fish with more than 600 creels and that "there are unmarked creels [ghost creels] everywhere", an issue that has been acknowledged by the SSMO.

SSMO chairman Ian Walterson rejected the accusation that the organisation is a closed shop as "totally false".

"An illustration of this is that during recent years nine new



Shellfish men Arnold Goodland, Gary Smith and Ronnie Young ©HM

entrant licences have been issued, plus another 15 new entrants to the shellfish sector have been allowed through the succession system with five more currently in the process of doing so," he said.

"Whenever the new entrant process is carried out it is always over subscribed in relation to the number of licences to be issued and those who are unsuccessful are understandably disappointed.

"For example, a recent new entrant licensing round to issue five licences had 52 applicants, this meant that there were 47 who were not successful on that occasion.

"The majority of unsuccessful applicants accept that this is how the process works, but there are sometimes a few who cannot accept that they did not get a shellfish licence even though the procedure is explained to them."

He added that the number of licenses issued by the organisation had gone down to reflect the fact the vessel sizes and fishing capabilities had gone up.

"At the time of introduction in 1999 when the Shetland Regulating Order gained all party approval at the Scottish Parliament, fishermen who applied for a SSMO licence were granted one," Walterson said.

"This resulted in around 160 licences being issued to fishermen who had a previous record of

shellfish landings.

"The current total number of licences today is a reflection on the fact that most replacement vessels over the years have been of a more modern design for safety and comfort of the crew and therefore also have a greater catching capacity.

"The total number of licenced vessels and the overall catching capacity is balanced against shellfish stock assessment data compiled for the SSMO by the NAFC Marine Centre who obtain the figures from log sheet returns provided by the fishermen."

In an e-mail exchange with the group, SSMO also stated that it was aware of the fact that permits were changing hands for large sums of money but it had "no remit to interfere in transactions between two private individuals".

The SSMO further acknowledged that it has neither mandates or resources to enforce the law against unlicensed fishing within the six-mile limit.

"Complaints should be taken to the Fisheries Office [Marine Scotland]," they said.

"Compliance would require more resources from the Scottish Government. In the meantime, the government is seeking to put cameras on scallop and possible creel vessels to tackle the problem."

Failure to strike UK-Norway fishing deal welcomed

Local fishermen are putting a positive spin on the failure of the UK and Norway to reach an agreement on a fishing deal.

They said past agreements were brokered by the European Union and therefore heavily skewed against the local pelagic and demersal fleets.

Shetland Fishermen's Association chief officer Simon Collins said: "This brings a long-awaited end to past practice in which the EU used to hand substantial amounts of Scottish quota to Norway largely to

the benefit of a single foreign multinational that claimed to be English."

In contrast, the chief executive of UK Fisheries Jane Sandell said it is a "very black day for Britain" and claimed that hundreds of fishermen would be left out of work as a result.

The lack of a deal means UK fleets will not have access to Norway's sub-Arctic seas, and Norwegian vessels won't be able to fish in UK waters.

Collins said that "in practical terms, Norway's loss of access to our waters this year will remove

a substantial presence of their pelagic fleet during the autumn mackerel fishery in particular".

SFA chairman and whitefish skipper James Anderson added that the inability of Norwegian vessels to fish for demersal stocks in the UK zone would lift the pressure of a highly active gillnet and longliner fleet to the east of Shetland.

"We are convinced that mutually advantageous annual agreements on access and quota transfers can be struck with Norway in the future," he said.

"But Norway has to understand

that we are not going to cave in, [European] Commission-style, to the detriment of Scottish businesses. It is far better to make that clear at the outset, and we are glad that this has been done.

"We appreciate the efforts of the highly influential Scottish negotiators, who worked closely with industry and listened carefully to our concerns throughout four months of very difficult talks."

The trade talks come following the UK's exit from the European Union (EU). Norway is not a member of the EU.

Brown crab and king scallop fisheries retain eco label

Shetland Shellfish Management Organisation (SSMO), the organisation which manages the local inshore shellfish fishery, has passed its annual Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification audit for the brown crab and king scallop fisheries.

In 2012 both fisheries became the only such sector of the industry in Europe to gain MSC accreditation, an ecological endorsement that was almost lost when the Open Seas charity challenged the certification in 2017 saying scallop dredging was causing unacceptable damage to the marine environment.

Following a lengthy, and

expensive, adjudication process the MSC eventually renewed the sustainable status of the isles scallop fishery.

The annual renewal of the certification is being carried out by independent assessors from the Marine Institute of Ireland and Heriot Watt University, and it is based on regular stock assessment and scientific advice from the NAFC Marine Centre in Scalloway.

SSMO inshore co-ordinator Carole Laignel said the organisation's licensing policy was reviewed annually, like all of its other policies.

And, responding to criticism

from a number of local fishermen who recently accused the organisation of being a closed shop that was only looking after themselves, Laignel added that allowing new entrants to the fishery was dependent on stock assessment advice.

"The directors also recently amended the licensing rules to allow new entrants in through the route of succession," she said.

"This is a process whereby a fisherman who is retiring out of the industry can add someone onto their licence and once this person has been named on the licence for a set period of time they are able to

take over the vessel and the SSMO licence.

"This has been very successful with 15 fishermen entering through this method in the last few years and another five en route to do so this year.

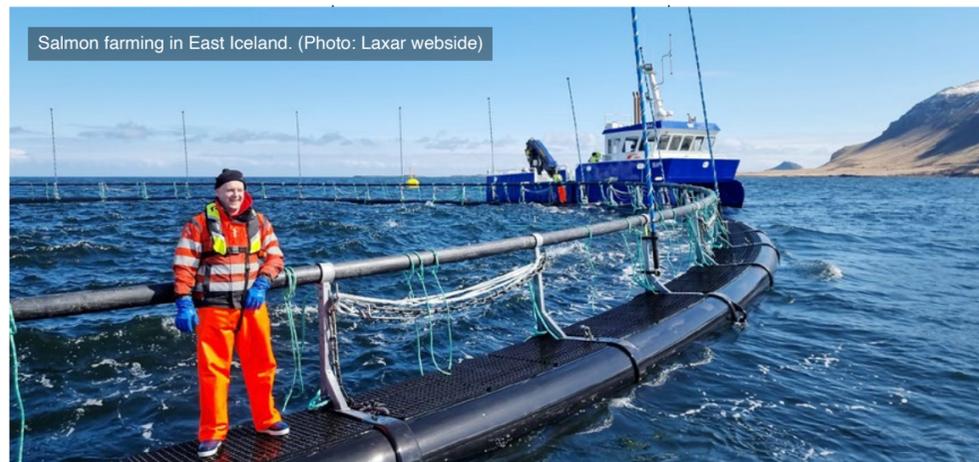
"The route of succession is a way whereby younger entrants can get into the fishery and which also allows existing vessels to remain in the local fleet."

SSMO was granted the legal right to sustainably manage commercial shellfish fisheries out to the six nautical mile limit by the Shetland Islands Regulated Fishery (Scotland) Order 1999.

ICELAND NEWS *By Gudjón Einarsson*

Eightfold increase in fish farming

Salmon farming in East Iceland. (Photo: Laxar website)



During the last decade there has been a significant growth in aquaculture in Iceland with fish farming production increasing eightfold. The amount produced in 2020 was 40.6 thousand tons. Most of the growth has been in salmon farming where the yield has gone from 1,068 tons in 2010 to 34,000 tons in 2020. Arctic char is the second largest bred species with 5,000 tons produced in 2020.

The number of people employed in aquaculture in Iceland in 2019 was 488 and the

expected revenue for 2020 is 32 billion Icelandic kronas, the equivalent of 213 million Euros.

Important for small communities

Fish farms have been established mostly in the West fjords and the East fjords of Iceland, many of them with the help of investors from Norway who also provide the necessary know-how. People in these sparsely populated parts of the country welcome this initiative wholeheartedly and see it as a

great opportunity to counteract the long time decline of their communities. Fish farms create hundreds of jobs, directly and indirectly, and bring a lot of money to these small towns and villages.

Environmental concern

However, not everyone is pleased. Spokesmen for conservation societies and angling associations warn that fish farming plans on a grand scale could harm the environment and ruin the wild

salmon stocks in the respected areas. Farmed salmon inevitably escapes in some degree from sea cages and can breed with wild salmon, as has happened in Norway. The damage to the wild stocks would be irreparable, they say. Fish farmers do not deny that accidents can happen but maintain that strict precautionary measures are applied. Fish farming is dependent on government licenses and the rules and regulations are based on advice from the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute of Iceland and other official institutions. Fish farms in Iceland are located

Norway is the giant

Fish farming in Iceland is still tiny compared with its next door neighbor. Norway is by far the largest producer of farmed salmon in Europe with 85% of the total production according to Eurostat (see table). In 2019 Norway's production amounted to 1.364 thousand tons. The UK came second with 204 thousand tons. The Faro Islands produced 78 thousand tons, Iceland 27 thousand tons and Ireland 11 thousand tons.

Business as usual in spite of Covid-19

For the Icelandic fishermen the year 2020 was not much different from previous years in spite of the pandemic. The value of catch on first sale in Iceland in 2020 amounted to 148 billion Icelandic kronas, the equivalent of 980 million Euros, which is a 2% increase from 2019. The total catch of Icelandic vessels, however, decreased by 3% and was 1,021 thousand tons. The fishing fleet operated mostly uninterrupted and all major fishing plants in the country managed to stay open.

That does not mean that the fishing sector was not at all affected by Covid-19. Following lockdowns on both sides of the Atlantic, the fresh fish markets collapsed and the fishing plants had to rearrange their production and switch to more frozen and salted products. The export value of fish products (fob) in 2020 turned out to be 270 billion ISK (1.789 million Euros) which was a 4% increase compared to 2019 in the local currency, thanks to a devaluation of the krona, but a 7% decrease in foreign currency.



Fishing in Iceland was mostly uninterrupted by the pandemic.

It's Good to Talk: Co-Existence between Fisheries and Offshore Wind

By Val Cummins,
Simply Blue Energy Kinsale

It is a pleasure to introduce this article by Mitra Kamidelivand, focusing on research that was concluded in UCC in 2020. Little did I expect as Coordinator of the Eirwind Project at the time, that I would be introducing this research from the offshore wind industry side of the table, less than a year later. This work on co-existence was achieved after extensive interviews with numerous stakeholders. As a result, it provides important guidance on how co-existence can be facilitated. This is a priority for developers such as Simply Blue Energy Kinsale, as well as being vitally important to both the offshore wind and fishing sectors, at the dawn of a new era of offshore activity, in Ireland's contribution to the fight against climate change.

Summary of community benefit options

Extracted from Kamidelivand and Cummins (2020) An investigation of co-existence between the fishing and offshore wind sectors, and the perceptions of benefit sharing. Graphics by Sarah Kandrat.

By Dr Mitra Kamidelivand,
University College Cork

Ireland has an amazing opportunity to develop offshore energy and to harvest food from the sea at the same time. It has already been found that fish and sea life can prosper near offshore windfarm monopiles, where these act as artificial reefs. This can benefit fish stocks, with a positive knock-on effect for fisheries through the formation of new habitats. However, the increased demand for sea space for offshore wind energy developments will have impacts for the fishing sector. It is therefore necessary to examine how these different users of the sea can cooperate and co-exist together.

This article outlines some of the key findings from a study undertaken as part of the EirWind project in UCC: The Eirwind Fisheries and Offshore Wind Co-Existence research project, which ran from 2019 to 2020. The objective of the research was to provide recommendations for improving the potential for co-existence between commercial fishers and offshore wind developers in Ireland.

The project was supported by Science Foundation Ireland, run through the Research Centre for Energy, Climate and Marine research and innovation (MaREI) at Cork. It

involved 33 in-depth interviews with representatives from ten different port locations, between March 2019 and February 2020. Interviews were held with a range of different fishers from across the country, representatives of fisheries associations, Fisheries Liaison Officers (FLOs), and Eirwind industry partners. Some informal interviews with experts in various topics such as community co-ownership programs were also held.

The project included a review of how best to identify offshore communities of interest in wind farm development; community benefit sharing options; the status of the Irish fishing industry; the impacts of offshore wind farms on fish; and best practice in fisheries liaisons.

Key conclusions and recommendations that come from this research were:

- That listening to stakeholders contributes to an understanding of how to grow successful co-existence practices between offshore wind and the fishing sector;
- There is a need to engage with fishers early to ensure that the developer can minimise any impact on fisheries and to build mutual understanding and trust with fishers;
- Building trust and coexistence between two commercial marine sectors needs a strategic plan; it needs the involvement of fisheries organizations at a high level and of government as well;
- Ensuring benefits flow to the coastal community and the fishing community from offshore wind development is central; alternative or additional employment opportunities for fishers servicing offshore wind farms would assist fishers to diversify if they so choose;
- Allocating part of the potential community benefit fund under the Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) to meet the needs of fishers and the fishing community is an option for policy-makers;
- Implementing a fair and transparent approach to Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) may give clarity to current and future uses of marine sectors;
- Promoting supply chain growth by creating offshore wind hubs at Irish ports would bring local socio-economic benefits for fishing communities;
- The socio-economic impact of offshore renewables on fishers, fish catches, as well as any impacts on fish



populations and behaviour needs ongoing studies;

- Potential socio-economic impacts of multi-use of space (co-location) of offshore wind energy with marine protection areas (similar to the UK) or other fisheries sectors, such as aquaculture, should be considered for future research.

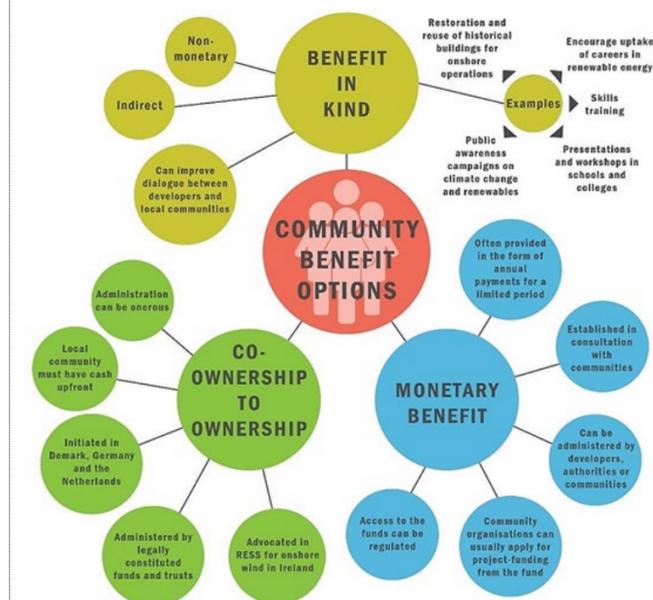
As might be expected, early communication and consultation is the first step towards mutually beneficial co-existence. This is necessary to deal with the concerns expressed by fishers i.e. less space to fish; increased fishing time and fuel consumption; increased competition between fishers; and the loss of crews. The fishers emphasised that the Regional Fisheries Forums and the Fish Producer Organizations need to be contacted from the very beginning of the site selection process.

During the course of the study the interviewees also emphasized the valuable role of an experienced Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) in facilitating dialogue between fishers and developers. Furthermore,

interviewees proposed that trust can be built if a representative from the fishing industry works proactively with the FLO from the initial project scoping stage. This is in line with UK guidelines of the Fishery Liaison with the Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables Group (FLOWW). In the FLOWW, the FLO and the Fishing Industry Representative (FIR) are two key roles for liaising between fishers and offshore wind developers.

One of the major recommendations of the study is the need for a National Inter-sector Liaison Forum to build collaboration and agreement between the all the relevant stakeholders. Principles of best practice in approaches to coexistence can be agreed by such a forum. Government has a key role to play in facilitating this process. It is clear from the research that there will be strong support for such an initiative from both the offshore wind and the fisheries sectors.

The full report is available for download at: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4678938>



Dark Blonde Ray (Raja brachyuran) captured in the Celtic Sea

By Declan Quigley

On 21 April 2021 the MFV Verlaine (WD5) [Skipper: James Taite, Dunmore East, Co Waterford] captured an unusual dark-coloured mature female Blonde Ray (*Raja brachyura*) measuring c.108 cm TL and c.72 cm DW along with a juvenile male Blue Skate (*Dipturus batis*) measuring c.72 cm TL and c.52 cm DW while trawling at a depth of 113 m in the Celtic Sea off Co Cork (Fig. 1). Both specimens were photographed prior to being released alive.

The normal dorsal colouration of Blonde Rays is light brown with a few creamy-white blotches and dense dark spots which extend up to the very edge of the disc and on to the tail. Although the dark-coloured Blonde Ray exhibited pale creamy-white blotches on the dorsal surface, the normally dense dark spotting appeared to be lacking.

The current specimen appears to represent the first record of this unusual dark-colouration in Blonde Rays from Irish waters. However, similar specimens have been observed in French fish markets, so it is possible that these aberrantly dark-coloured Blonde Rays may occur more frequently in Irish waters. Although the aetiology of the condition is unknown, it may be a local phenotypic colour adaptation to specific environments and/or substrate types.

A number of other abnormal colouration conditions have been reported in Blonde Rays from Irish waters (Irish Sea), including albinism (Fig.2) and leucism (Fig.3). A xanthochromic Blonde Ray was also recorded from Guernsey during 2011.

Declan is always interested in receiving reports about unusual specimens. declanquigley2021@gmail.com; 087-6458485.



Fig.3 Leucistic Blonde Ray (*Raja brachyura*), Irish Sea



Fig.2 Albino Blonde Ray (*Raja brachyura*), Irish Sea

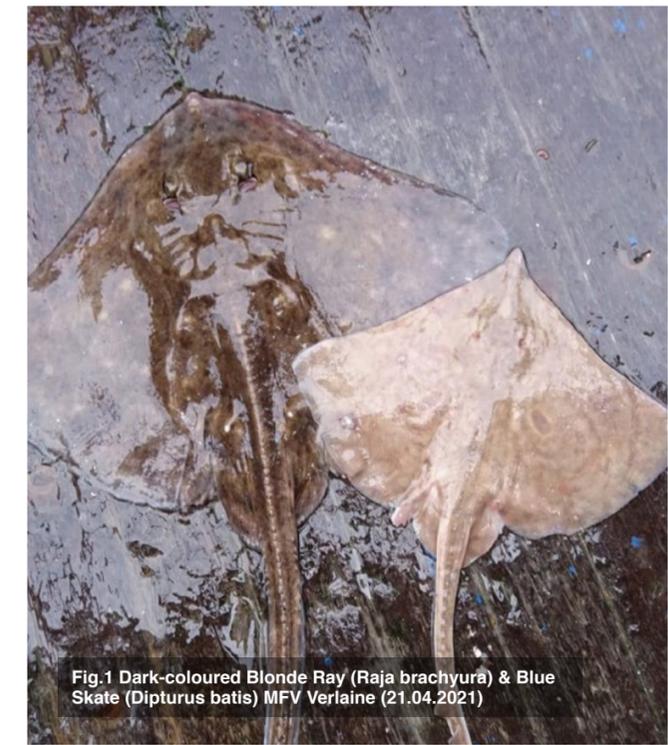
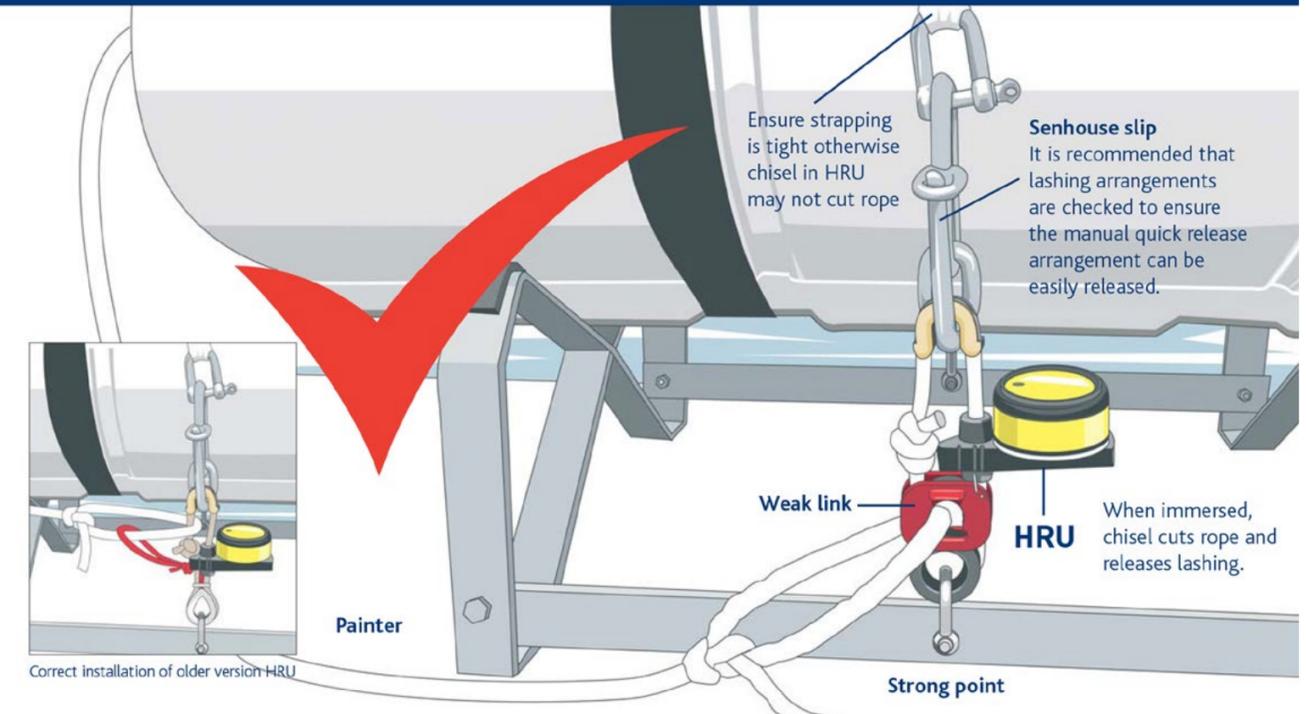


Fig.1 Dark-coloured Blonde Ray (*Raja brachyura*) & Blue Skate (*Dipturus batis*) MFV Verlaine (21.04.2021)

RNLI FISHING SAFETY HYDROSTATIC RELEASE UNIT (HRU) INSTALLATION



Lifeboats



HRU (Hydrostatic Release Unit)

Importance of correct fitting

The correct fitting of any Hydrostatic Release Unit (HRU) is vital to the successful deployment of a vessel's Liferaft or EPIRB should the vessel have a rapid capsizing or foundering. During my visits to fishing ports, it is one piece of safety equipment that I can visually see on board a vessel from the quayside, more so than from the deck of the vessel in some cases.

I personally have seen up to 50% of rafts in some ports fitted **incorrectly**. While the unit is easy to fit correctly, it is also easy to fit incorrectly, even though the manufacturers have put great effort into producing guidance. You can find images of correctly fitted HRUs on the MCA website.

Incorrect fitting of HRU'S has, in the past resulted in the liferaft/EPIRB not deploying to the surface, therefore no emergency signal has been sent to the rescue services to assist fishermen in difficulty, resulting in long delays in starting a Search and Rescue (SAR) mission, sometimes resulting in loss of life.

Correct fitting has resulted in fishermen's lives being saved.

Two reasons an incorrect fitting can occur are either (1) When a Life-raft or EPIRB has

been returned to the vessel from servicing and is being resecured to the vessel or (2) when the HRU expiry date is up and it has been replaced with a new unit.

The most common HRU used in the fishing industry for Liferafes and EPIRB's are the Hammer units. There are two different coloured units, Yellow and Green.

The yellow unit is for a larger raft's up to 25 persons and is also used on a vessel coded under SOLAS regulations.

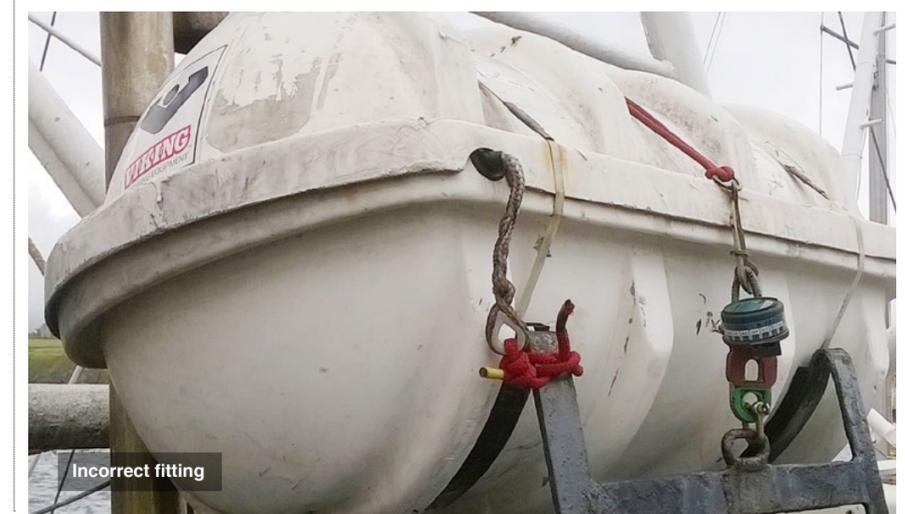
The GREEN HRU is for small liferafts 4 to

12 persons. NON SOLAS regulations.

The correct fitting example above is for both units.

Remember; The activation of the Hydrostatic Release Unit (HRU) is the last resort method of life-raft / EPIRB deployment if fishermen are unable to manually deploy the life-saving equipment themselves so "Get Rigged and Ready" for such an incident.

Consult manufactures guidance on correct fitting of your HRU. Please take time to look at examples to identify correct fitting.



Celtic Explorer



INTERNATIONAL BLUE WHITING SPAWNING STOCK SURVEY (IBWSS) 2021

By Ciaran O'Donnell, Fisheries Ecosystems Advisory Services, Marine Institute

In March 2021, the RV Celtic Explorer took part in the International Blue Whiting Acoustic Survey. This

survey acoustically measures the size of the spawning stock of blue whiting (*Micromesistius poutassou*) in western waters and is conducted by vessels from Ireland, the Faroe Islands, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain. It is an important source of information for the annual ICES stock assessment. Ireland has participated in this survey since 2004.

AREA COVERAGE

The RV Celtic Explorer began surveying on the 21st March, along with vessels from the Netherlands (RV Tridens), Norway (FV Vendla), the Faroe Islands (RV Jákup Sverri) and Spain (RV Vizconde de Eza). The combined effort ensured almost continuous synoptic coverage over 19 days from the Porcupine sea bight northwards to the Faroe/Shetland Ridge including Rockall and offshore banks

south of the Faroes (Figure 1). The combined survey effort covered over 7,794 nmi (nautical miles) of transects representing almost 118,169 nmi² of spatial coverage. Spatial coverage, survey effort and timing were comparable to the previous survey 2019 (2020 was cancelled due to the impacts of restrictions arising from the COVID pandemic).

The design of the survey has each of the participating vessels working in a northerly direction, interlacing transects with the other vessels to provide high resolution transect spacing. Survey scientist Ciaran O'Donnell said "the weather was poor for long periods of the survey this year. That said, good coverage was achieved and we contained the stock within the survey area".

STOCK DISTRIBUTION

The spawning distribution of blue whiting is influenced

by the multi-year dynamics of the North Atlantic Sub-Polar Gyre, and the effect it has on ambient salinity on the spawning grounds. The gyre is a large body of relatively cool, fresher water of northern origin. During spawning, blue whiting will actively seek out suitable areas of stable, high salinity. In years when the influence of the gyre is significant, such as this year, the spawning area is restricted to areas along the shelf edge as fish seek out suitable habitat provided by the relatively narrow northward flowing shelf edge current. Conversely, in weaker gyre years, Atlantic waters dominate and suitable spawning habitat expand westwards through the Rockall Trough and Rockall Bank providing an extended spawning habitat.

In 2021, the survey indicated that the bulk of the stock was located within the three survey strata bounding the shelf edge; Porcupine Bank, north Porcupine Bank and the Rockall Trough (Figure 1). When combined, these strata accounted for 84% of total biomass observed. The three strata outside the core shelf edge area (Rockall Bank, South Faroes and Faroe/Shetland Channel) accounted for 10% of total biomass. The Porcupine Seabight stratum, which was extended southwards in 2021 to contain the southern distribution of the northern stock, contributed the remaining 6% of the total observed biomass.

Overall, the distribution of blue whiting was compressed against the shelf edge from south to north, with the main body of the stock located in the mid-latitudes to the north of the Porcupine Bank. The northern strata were dominated by immature blue whiting which is consistent with observations from previous surveys.

STOCK COMPOSITION

The age composition of the stock was determined from a total of 45 trawl samples taken during the survey (Figure 2). These hauls yielded 2,089 individual blue whiting age measurements ranging from 1 to 13 years old and 12,019 length measurements. The main contribution to the spawning stock biomass was composed of the age groups 5-7, which represented 63% of the total biomass. Five year olds (2016 year-class) were the most abundant (20%), followed by the 7-year-olds (17%) and 6-year-olds (16%). Immature fish represented 3.6% of the total biomass and 10% of total abundance.

STOCK SIZE

The total stock biomass estimate of blue whiting for the 2021 survey is 44% lower than in 2019. No survey was carried out in 2020. The strong 2014-year class remains an important component



of the total stock but, for the first time in several years, was not the dominant age class in the survey. There is no indication of a strong year class emerging since

2015 which is likely to lead to a further decline in stock size over the short to medium term as the older age classes decline in number.

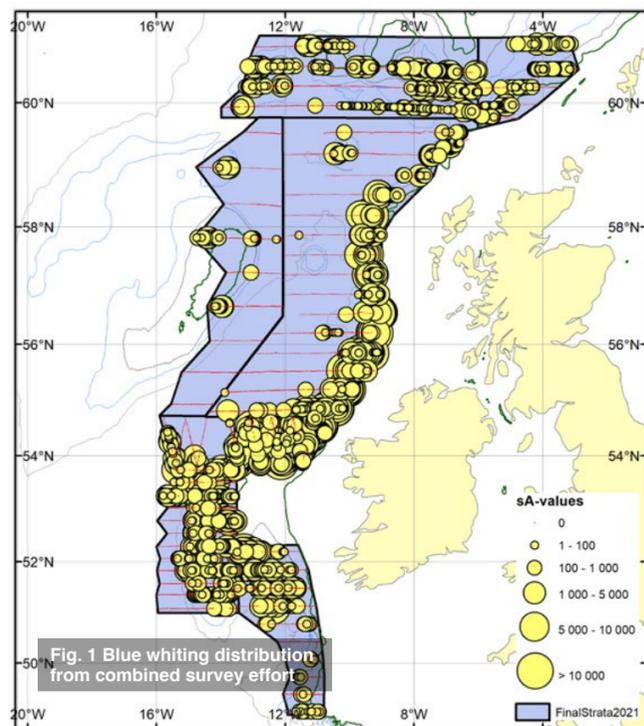


Fig. 1 Blue whiting distribution from combined survey effort

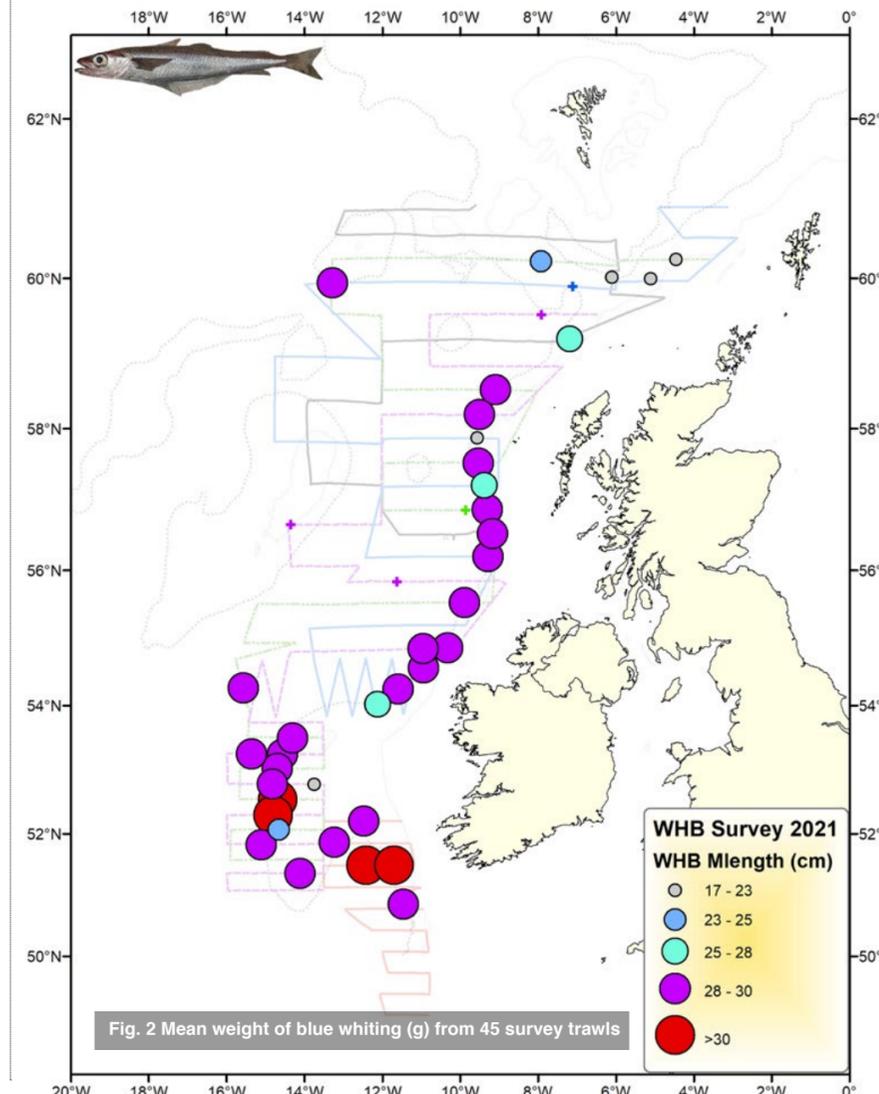


Fig. 2 Mean weight of blue whiting (g) from 45 survey trawls

Green Rebel Group

We will shortly commence our South Coast Multi-Client Survey. The purpose of the survey will be to collect low-impact geophysical data intended to inform offshore wind developer EIA applications and engineering considerations. The work will produce geophysical data revealing the nature of the seabed using methods comparable to the INFOMAR government funded program. It will involve the use of multi-beam echo-sounder, sub-bottom profilers, side-scan sonar and magnetometers.

The principle objective of the multi-client approach is to limit the potential ecological and environmental disturbance that might otherwise be caused if each developer commissioned individual surveys, but also to reduce the possible disruption to everyday fishing activities. Our core belief is that these surveys can and should be done in consultation and co-operation with all marine stakeholders for the public good.

Green Rebel recognises the importance of building enduring relationships with the fishing community. We value the importance of

transparency and ongoing stakeholder engagement.

Fishing, shipping, construction, and surveying all impact the marine environment to some degree. At Green Rebel, we do not shy away from this fact and instead, we try to proactively address such issues. This coupled with the fact that we are a wholly Irish company, creating Irish jobs makes us truly unique.

The potential of the sea to produce renewable energy is currently unharnessed, and we at Green Rebel believe that a network of offshore wind farms can be

constructed in such a way that the vital resource of the sea is protected, and that fishing continues with as little disruption as possible.

For our part, we have devised innovative methods of maximising productivity and cooperation to minimise potential impacts to the environment, and the fishing industry. We aim to become the survey company that is most conscious of both the environment and other users of our oceans, resources, and we are happy to sit down with any organisation who wishes to go through our plan in detail.



Ocean Surveys Take To The Air

The first digital aerial ecology surveys of Irish coastal waters to be undertaken by a domestic company are about to begin following the arrival of a new special mission aircraft owned by Green Rebel Group into Cork Airport. The company is leading efforts to establish Cork Harbour as a Green Energy Hub, beginning with a new partnership between Green Rebel Group, Cork Airport, the Atlantic Flight Training Academy (AFTA) and Weston Aviation.

Green Rebel Group acquired the aircraft to undertake ecological assessments as part of the planning process for marine renewable energy projects, including offshore wind farms. The new €1.5 million twin-engine Diamond Air DA42 aircraft will be used to survey thousands of square miles of ocean. The DA-42 is the most environmentally-friendly aircraft of its class on the market, in keeping with Green Rebel Group's mission to reduce the dependence on energy from fossil fuels. The aircraft - with tail registration EI-GRM - will be permanently based at Cork Airport.

With the purchase of this aircraft, Green Rebel Group will be the only domestic Irish company offering digital aerial surveys for ecological assessments associated with marine renewable energy projects. Green Rebel has partnered with AFTA, which will be the specialist operator (SPO) for the aircraft. The aircraft will be based at the Weston Aviation hangar at Cork Airport. Its arrival has resulted in the creation of 15 direct jobs, and there are plans for further job creation over the coming years, which will ensure Cork is one of the leading players in the green energy sector.

Each aerial survey flight will generate terabytes of high-quality imagery. In order to store, process, and backup this data, Green Rebel Group has also built a world-class marine data centre. The high-spec server and supporting



Niall MacCarthy, Managing Director at Cork Airport, Sarah Kandrot, Head of Aerial Surveys with Green Rebel Group, Paul Daly, Weston Aviation and pilot Gerry Humphreys, AFTA

IT infrastructure are housed in a secure location at the Cork Airport Business Park. The data will be used to map the abundance of marine wildlife, which is critical to ensure wind farms are built in the most suitable locations.

Sarah Kandrot, Head of Aerial Surveys with Green Rebel Group said: "This aircraft will help us to compile information that will ensure offshore wind farms are built in the best locations to protect the ecology of the ocean. We are delighted that our aircraft has arrived in Cork, which means we can now begin conducting these important surveys. With this aircraft, large sections of the ocean can be surveyed over a shorter period of time than can be achieved with traditional boat-based surveys. Thanks to the ultra high-spec of our camera equipment, our aircraft will be flying at heights that will not cause any disturbance to birds or marine megafauna while at the same time allowing us to collect the highest-quality digital imagery."

Mick Horgan, CEO of Green Rebel Group said: "I am hugely proud of the Green Rebel team and what they have achieved. We have put together an amazing team of data acquisition specialists and data scientists who are all experts in their respective fields. I have every faith that our aerial survey division will be second to none."

Mark Casey, CEO of AFTA said: "AFTA are delighted to have been chosen as the SPO operator for the specialist air survey delivery for Green Rebel Marine. It is fantastic to see local investment by GRM in aviation and marine infrastructure creating high quality local jobs for the Munster region. The Special Mission DA42 NG is an environmentally friendly low impact survey and reconnaissance and survey platform. The aircraft is powered by the AE300 aero diesel power plant and can run on 100% Algae based Biofuel. AFTA are proud to be a part of Green Rebel's mission to reduce the dependence on energy from fossil fuels and move towards a sustainable offshore wind energy solution."

Sustainability is critical to withstanding the tests of time

The fishing industry was impacted greatly by the global pandemic due to disruptions in export markets, the loss of restaurant sales, and a decline in seafood prices. No strangers to challenges, fishermen pivoted to weather the storm head on. Most who curtailed their fishing during the early months of the pandemic have resumed fishing instead of leaving the industry.

"During times of crisis, fishing fleets have always stayed on the path of sustainability," said Jim Knott, CEO of Riverdale Mills. "It builds resilience and accelerates economic recovery."

Creating and cultivating strategic and resilient business partnerships has allowed Northbridge, MA (USA)-based Riverdale Mills to remain relevant and in demand for over 40 years. The company provides their global customers with premium wire mesh, essential tools, and sage advice.

"Innovation, quality products and customer solutions are key components of a great business," says Knott. "Partnering with fishermen and women across the U.K. and providing sustainable and money saving products like Aquamesh® has been one of the keys to our long-term success."

Aquamesh® is versatile marine wire mesh that resists rust, algae, and hard fouling, reduces

plastic waste and energy consumption, and fishermen spend less time repairing and a lot more time fishing. Creels, trays and cages made exclusively with Aquamesh® last for years and are a top choice for catching lobsters and cultivating shellfish. Aquamesh® pots, cages, traps and wire can currently be purchased through GT Products Marine (www.gtproductsmarine.com), a longtime distributor of Riverdale's marine and aquaculture products.

For over 40 years, Riverdale Mills has successfully weathered many storms. Knott acknowledges the keys to the company's success lie in an unwavering determination to deliver superior products, and a commitment to staying ahead of business developments, industry trends and, most importantly, the customer's needs.

"We exist, have always existed, to help lobstermen lobster better, fishermen fish better, and to ensure our business partners can deliver our premium quality products," said Knott

Riverdale has seen a steady increase in global sales since January 2021. While that may be due to pent up demand, Knott gives its global distributors and business partners tremendous credit for adopting proactive strategies to adapt. "They are innovating and building back better and stronger."



All Riverdale Mills products are made in the United States. (www.riverdale.com)

AMANDA OF LADRAM



All images by Laurence Hartwell.

NEW WATERDANCE NETTER

By Quentin Bates

New netter Amanda of Ladram narrowly managed to make a start with a couple of days' fishing after making its delivery trip from Whitby to Newlyn, before an unusually big spring tide ruled out netting and kept the new boat alongside for a few days. The first new netter of its size for the UK fleet for at least fifteen years, Amanda of Ladram is built for English fishing company Waterdance at Parkol in Whitby

to a design by Ian Paton at SC McAllister. The build process was hampered by Covid restriction, as construction began just as the UK went into its first lockdown last year – but the yard made up time and completed Amanda of Ladram on time. Sea trials were carried out off Whitby and skipper John Walsh and his crew steamed the new boat home to Newlyn, with a call on the way at Brixham to pick up a couple more crew members, before putting the gear on board and heading out for a first trip. The first landing was made

in Newlyn, with the fish sold at the Brixham auction – and the first box of Amanda of Ladram's fish was sold to the Greendale Farm Shop, a partner company within the group that owns Waterdance. The first box fetched £550 for the Fishermen's Mission, which was matched by Brixham Trawler Agents and added to with a contribution from Parkol. As well as having grown steadily to become one of the largest English fishing operators with a series of acquisitions in recent years, Waterdance has already made some significant investments in new

capacity, having built potter Nichola of Ladram and beamer Georgina of Ladram at Luyt in the Netherlands. Amanda of Ladram is the first of its new vessels to be built in the UK, and is an addition to the fleet, which has seen some changes taking place among the netters fishing from Newlyn for hake, monk and turbot. John Walsh had skippered Padstow netter Charisma for more than twenty years before it was acquired by Waterdance, and a few years later the company bought Scottish trawler Asteria, which was refitted as a netter and renamed Amanda of Ladram. John Walsh and his crew moved across to the new vessel, which Stacy Gambrill took over Charisma.

Now John Walsh and his crew have moved across to the newbuild, the former Amanda of Ladram has been renamed Rachel of Ladram, now worked by Stacy Gambrill and the crew who had worked Charisma. In turn, Charisma of Ladram is now skippered by Alan Dwan as he joins the Waterdance fleet. 'We're very pleased with the build, the project management and the speed of delivery,' said Waterdance Head of Fisheries Martyn Youell, commenting that Amanda of Ladram joining the fleet is part of a broader theme of strengthening the company's activities in Newlyn. He commented that in going to Parkol and designer Ian Paton at SC MacAllister, they were looking for an efficient, stable and safe new netter. 'We're very pleased to be building in the UK. Amanda of



The new pounds under the after shelterdeck can contain all the gear Amanda of Ladram needs



The main and auxiliary engines are Volvo Pentax

Ladram is relatively small in length terms, but this is a larger, more stable vessel. It's also efficient, with much lower emissions,' he said. 'We are investing at a challenging time, but we're taking a long-term view and are confident that prices will return to their previous levels. We're not being put off making future investments.' The netting fleet's primary target species of hake has also become increasingly important to Waterdance as the market for this fish continues to expand. 'Hake has become very important to us, and the sustainability credentials for this are crucial for marketing. We see a growing demand for hake and a broad and growing range of buyers at the Brixham and Plymouth auctions, ranging from small-scale fish sellers to larger buyers who are looking to export,' he said. 'Hake is one of the species that has been hit hard by Covid and prices have been erratic through lockdown, but have now been relatively good for the last couple of weeks. Hake is a very important part of the business, along with sole, monkfish and plaice.' Amanda of Ladram has an overall length of 20.40 metres and

a moulded breadth of 7.70 metres. The steel hull is topped by an aluminium aft wheelhouse. The non-weather-tight full-length shelterdeck and the mast are also fabricated in aluminium. A Thistlelift MFB8 crane is mounted on the shelterdeck for landing Amanda of Ladram's catches. The layout places the 500-box capacity fishroom with its Geneglace icemaker forward, with the engine room amidships and accommodation for up to ten crew and passengers aft, along with the compartment for the Wills Ridley steering gear. At main deck level the hauling position is on the starboard side, with a Spencer Carter hauler arranged to swing into its working position as the hydraulic hatch opens. The catch handling hoppers and washer are located on the forward deck, with fishing gear taken aft through a channel leading under the wheelhouse on the port side. The superstructure amidships contains the galley, mess area, washroom and oilskin store. Fifteen net pounds are arranged under the aft shelterdeck, with capacity to hold all of Amanda of Ladram's trammel and gill net gear, with no need to put

gear ashore when switching between trammels and gill nets. A John Leach net flaking system capable of traversing in any direction runs on rails above the pounds to place the Net-Op net flaker where required. Amanda of Ladram's main engine is a Volvo Penta D16MH, developing 484kW to power the 2300mm diameter, controllable pitch, four-bladed propeller via a Nogva Heimdal CPP-HG389S reduction gearbox. The bow thruster is a Kort KT90. The main engine is used solely for propulsion and the twin Volvo Penta D5A-BTA gensets, each developing 100KVA, are run alternately to provide power for Amanda of Ladram's energy requirements. The wheelhouse systems have been supplied by Echowater Marine, with AG Nevo 22-inch and 19-inch displays for the electronics and the E-Logbook PC. The fishfinder is a Hondex HDX-121 Black box chartplotter/echosounder with dual 50 and 200kHz frequencies and seabed mapping. The plotters are an Olex 3D seabed chartplotter with AIS and HT modules, and a Maxsea Timezero, supplied to Waterdance by Globe Marine, with PBG and AIS modules. Echowater Marine also supplied

the JRC JLR-21 GPS compass, Furuno GP39 GPS receiver and a pair of Simrad radars, an NSO Evo3 with Halo 6 Pulse Compression and an NSO Evo3 with Halo 4 Pulse Compression, as well as the Navitron NT777 autopilot with NT920 watch alarm, NT920NFU remote steering levers and 920RAI rudder indicators. The communications package includes an Icom IC-M423G VHF DSC radio, a Sailor 6210 VHF set and a JRC JSS-2150 MF/HF DSC set. The GM1600E GMDSS liferaft radio is from Icom and there is an ICS NAV6+ paperless Navtex receiver. The V60Ka band VSAT antenna system for internet at sea with wifi is from Intellian. Amanda of Ladram has a 16-channel CCTV system with 4MP cameras mounted in key working areas, plus a hull-mounted camera providing a view of the propeller and rudder. Echowater Marine supplied the VEP8 GPS EPIRB and the Phontek 10 station Intercom system for internal communication on board. The I6PE 60cm Satellite TV antenna with messdeck freesat TV and bluetooth soundbar is an Intellian system.



Congratulations to Waterdance, Skipper and Crew with your new Amanda of Ladram. We wish you safe and successful fishing.

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Amanda of Ladram's skipper John Walsh



Wishing Waterdance, Skipper & Crew many years of safe & successful fishing on the Amanda of Ladram

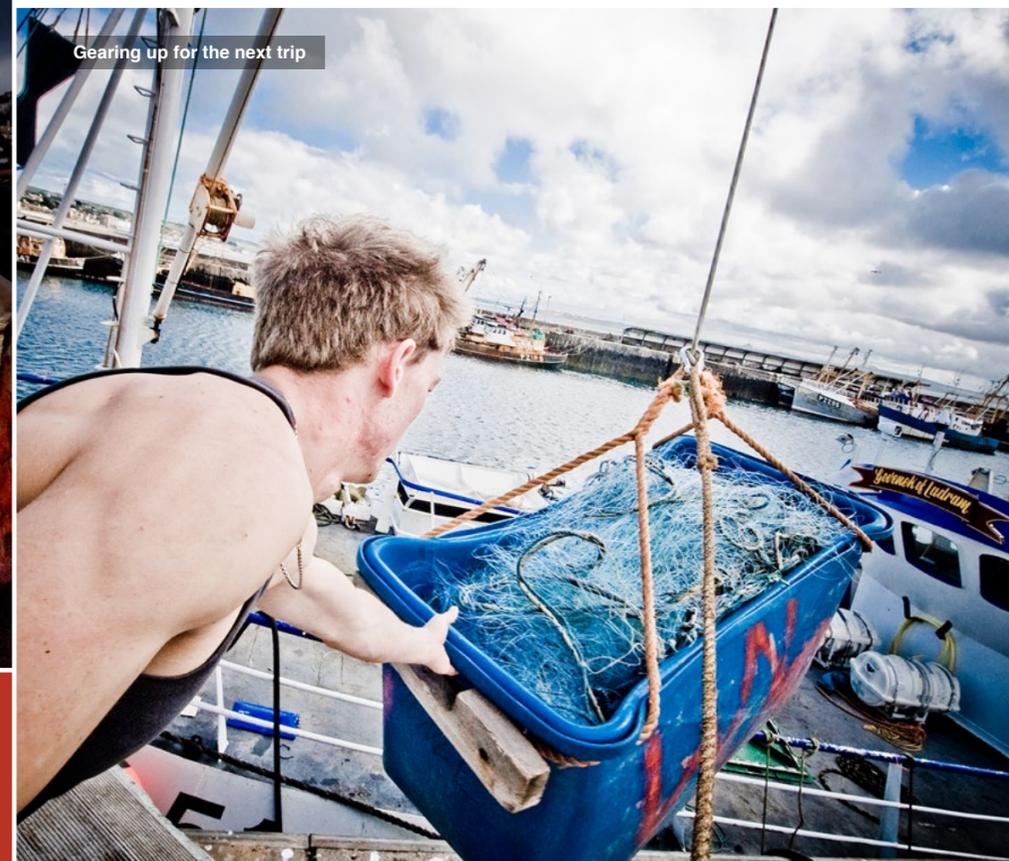
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Some of our top fishing photographers pick their top 5 photos

Larry Hartwell



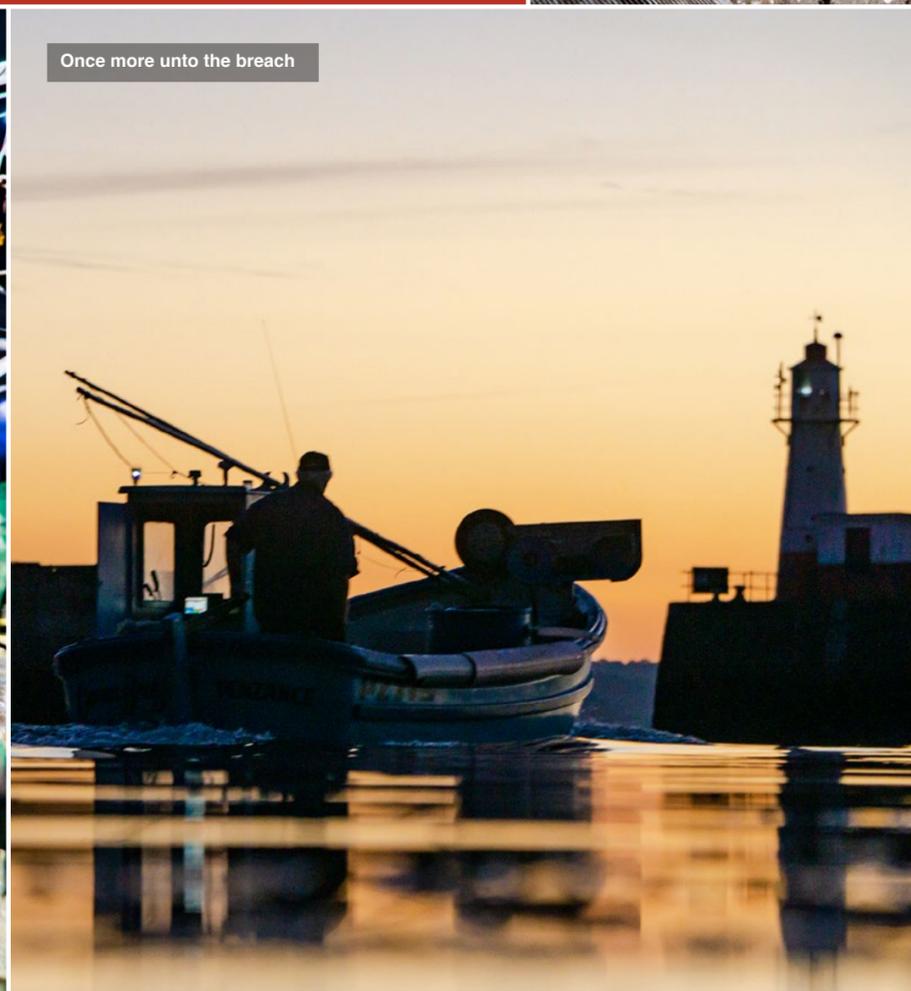
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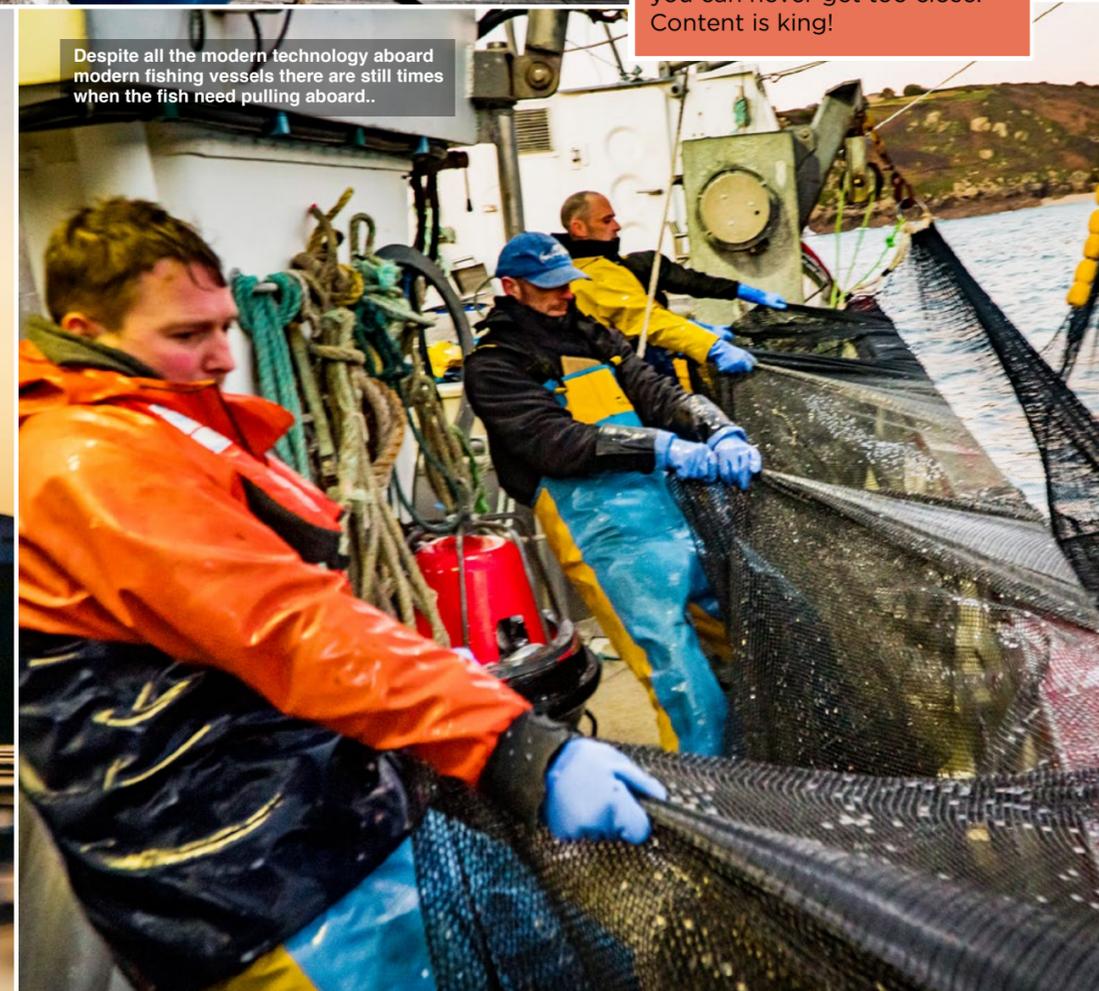
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Location: Larry Hartwell
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Website: https://blog.through-the-gaps.co.uk/
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MONTHLY COMPETITION

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

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: Simply get your phones and cameras out, and send us your hi-res photos by email to editorial@maramedia.ie and don't forget to mention your name and details, as well as a brief description of the scene depicted. The photos must be taken by the person sending it to us, and it is understood that they are free of copyrights.

JUNE WINNER: JASON O'BOYLE

LANDING HERRING AT THE SLIP IN KILLYBEGS HARBOUR

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MFV Sea Spray after re-painting, summer of 1980. Crew: Skipper Frank Downey (RIP), Willie Kirkham, Kevin Downey and Joe Faherty.



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The Archives - APRIL 1982

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The mackerel that hooked the votes in Cork

TOUR OF PORTS PLANNED BY NEW MINISTER

Keen to learn of problems

By an Irish Skipper Reporter



THE NEW Minister for fisheries, Brendan Daly, told THE IRISH SKIPPER shortly after his appointment last month that his 'door was wide open' to the representatives of the various facets of the industry who had the development of the industry at heart.

Mr. Daly, at 42 the youngest person in recent years to hold the post, last month topped the poll in Clare with 11,933 first preference votes in the three-seat constituency. His selection by Mr. Haughey to handle Fisheries is linked both to his election success in a coastal area, and also to his family's long association with an aspect of fisheries. He was first elected in 1973.

His father was secretary of Limerick Board of Fishery Conservators for over two decades, and Brendan Daly himself has served as an assistant secretary to that board.

"We had the fishery office in the family home for a very long time," he told me in an interview in which he briefly outlined his ideas. "Of course I'll need time to go over the various aspects of the industry with my Department officials," he said, "and I'll be visiting the ports within the next few weeks."

Because of his connections with the Limerick board, which was mainly concerned with salmon and inland fisheries (it is now replaced), Mr. Daly is already well informed on the salmon position. "I am in favour of hatcheries and the careful protection of the salmon stock," he said, "and am anxious to halt its recent decline where necessary."

Mr. Daly's remarks contained an omen for poachers and those who broke netting laws when he said that such protection included the "free access to rivers" of salmon. He paid a tribute to the E.S.B.'s work at Parteen and elsewhere for salmon stocks. His own pastime is angling.

Outside of fisheries, Mr. Daly's political record shows him to be keenly interested in youth employment and the decentralisation from Dublin of



Brendan Daly, the new Minister for Fisheries and Forestry.

semi-State agencies. This may or may not mean that R.I.M. will be moved to Kilkee, but in 1980 Mr. Daly was in favour of moving the Agricultural Credit Corporation to Ennis.

Two organisations to confer regularly

The chairmen and secretaries of the Irish Fishermen's Organisation and the Irish Fish Producers' Organisation are to meet on a monthly basis - or more often if necessary - to discuss matters of mutual interest. This was agreed at a meeting on January 30th, the first between the two organisations on a formal basis.

While the I.F.O. is mainly concerned with protecting fishermen's interests through unity and political influence, the producers' organisation handles the E.E.C.-devised marketing scheme

Greencastle grant offer accepted

A grant offer of £1,451,000 has been accepted by Donegal County Council for the Greencastle harbour improvement scheme, which is to cost almost £2 million. 400 feet of extra berthage is to be provided with 12 feet depth. A fish auction hall is to be built and 8,250 yards of land is to be reclaimed for the port's use.

New net factory

An application for planning permission for a new net factory at Castletownbere harbour has been made in the names of the Castletownbere Net Co and Boris (Ir) Ltd. The site is to be on Danish Island. Local persons associated with the project are Billy O'Driscoll, Mick Orpen and John Arthur.

Land needed for factories

The shortage of land zoned for industrial purposes will hold back the creation of 1,000 more jobs in Killybegs, says Joey Murrin, Chief Executive of the Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation.

A site of 100 acres within easy reach of the port is needed and should be found by the county council immediately, he said.

One year to dial

A site has been chosen in Killybegs Fishery Harbour Centre for the new telephone exchange which will put the Co. Donegal port on dial call. The site has been bought from the Department of Fisheries.

The building contract will be placed shortly, and the exchange should be working by "the middle of next year." Phone installations in the port are to be speeded up.

Just as one can "use a sprat to catch a mackerel," as the old saying goes, so one can use a mackerel to catch a vote, as the victorious new Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, is proving in this election campaign "walk-about" photograph from Cork.

SEE INSIDE

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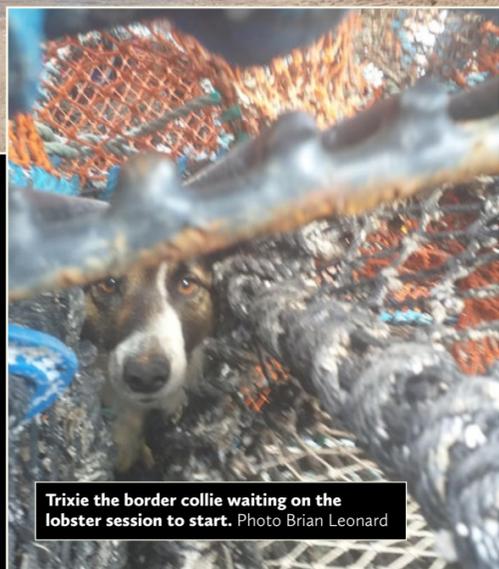
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Beaching of the MFV Ocean Dawn on Kelly's beach, Fenit. Photo Mary Browne



OUT & ABOUT

GOT A GREAT PHOTO?
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Trixie the border collie waiting on the lobster session to start. Photo Brian Leonard



Two swallows on a northerly course of zero degrees by Schull fisherman Kerian Mulloy on watch on trawler Laetitia



Hugh mc Clenaghan and granddaughter Rose Duffy.



Buddy M in Greencastle. Photo Andrew McKeever

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ACROSS

- 1 Woodwind instrument (4)
- 3 Copied (8)
- 9 Go down (7)
- 10 Unadorned (5)
- 11 Defeated contestant (5)
- 12 Patron saint of Scotland (6)
- 14 Infuriate (6)
- 16 Member of the legal profession (6)
- 19 Go aboard (6)
- 21 Open space in a wood (5)
- 24 Sudden uncontrollable fear (5)
- 25 Anxious (7)
- 26 Habitually silent (8)
- 27 Merely (4)

DOWN

- 1 Former sweetheart (3,5)
- 2 Fertile tract in desert (5)
- 4 Noon (6)
- 5 Lukewarm (5)
- 6 Gyrated (anag) (7)
- 7 Have a meal (4)
- 8 Funeral car (6)
- 13 Amicable (8)
- 15 Devilish (7)
- 17 Soft fluffy wool (6)
- 18 Rod on which pieces of food are roasted (6)
- 20 Racecourse near Windsor (5)
- 22 Arrange in line (5)
- 23 Petty quarrel (4)

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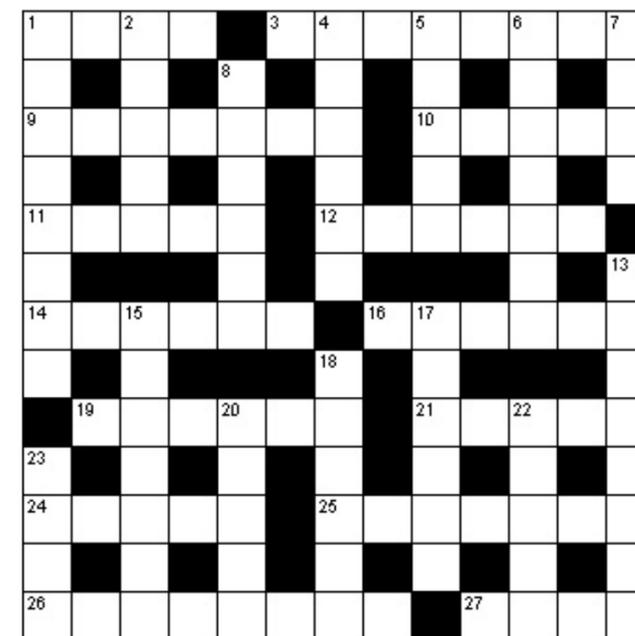
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Giving Irish Fishermen A Voice

The Skipper has joined up with The Fishers Voice to get the message out to the public

The Fisher's Voice is a series of online video documentaries about life in our coastal communities that will be available online from The Skipper to be shared with the wider public.

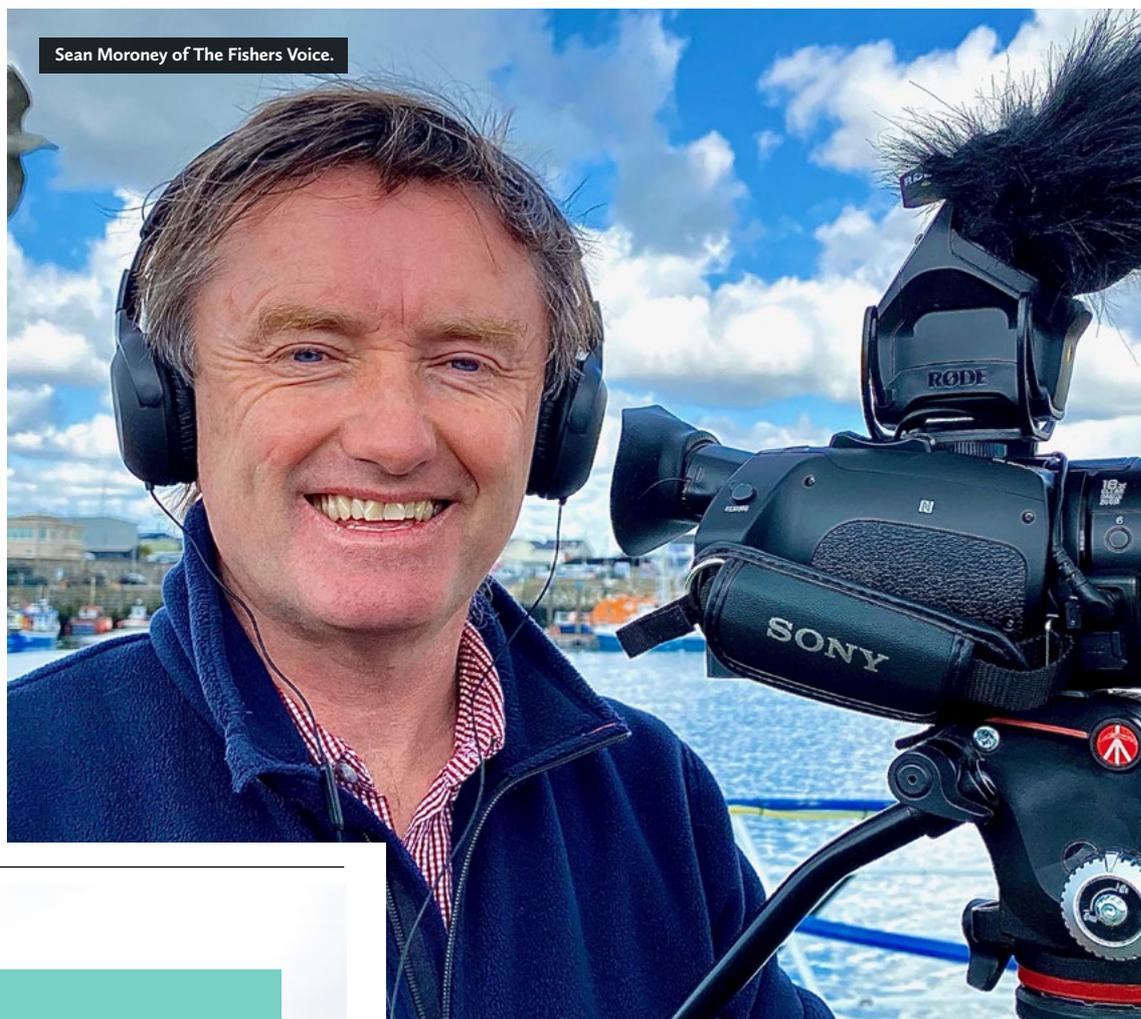
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- Will there be too much regulation?
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- Will there be crews available?

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You are asked to contact Sean - The Fisher's Voice by email at fishersvoice@gmail.com or Niall - The Skipper at editorial@maramedia.ie

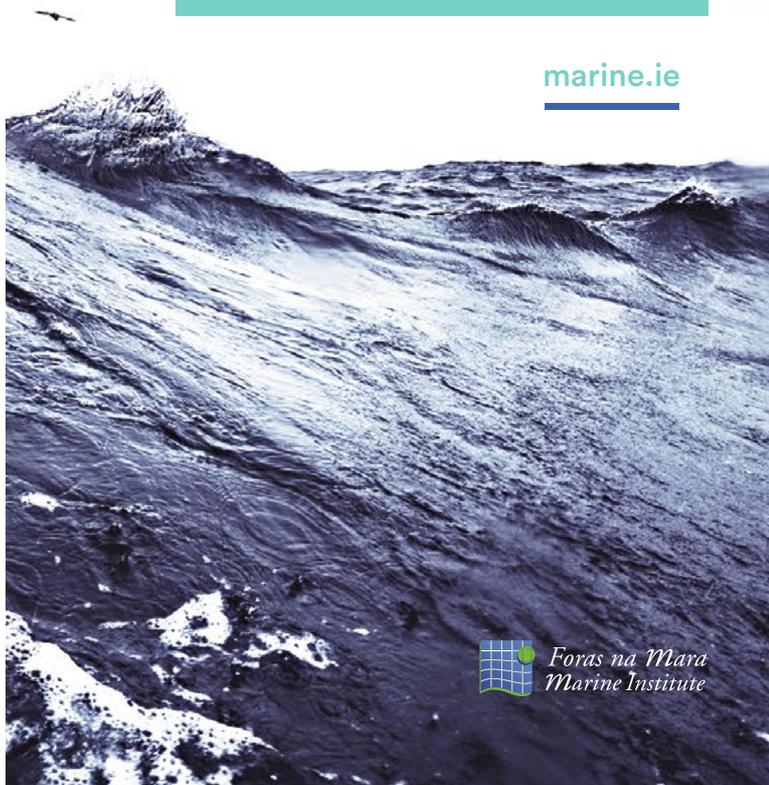


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ISSN 2009-3489



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