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Dail Committee
investigate problems

IFPEA VIEW

SFPA - Stretch credibility
to galactic levels

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'Day Dawn'

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Breakthrough For A Low
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CONTENTS

NEWS

- 04 Dail Committe Puts SFPA Under Scutiny**
SFPA widely condemned
- 08 SFPA stretch credibility**
IFPEA shocked
- 10 Wind Energy Industry**
Must respect fishing rights
- 11 Taste the Atlantic**
Young Chef Programme
- 12 Marine Scientists discover low impact Scallop Fishery**
- 13 Brexit Voluntary Tie-up Scheme announced**
- 14 NI News**
NIFA Harbour disputes
- 16 UK News**
Plea to Minister on MCA Safety Codes
- 18 Scottish News**
Support for Fishing and Coastal Communities
- 20 Shetland News**
Faroe grants Russia Licence to fish in UK Waters
- 22 Icelandic News**
Drones uncover discards



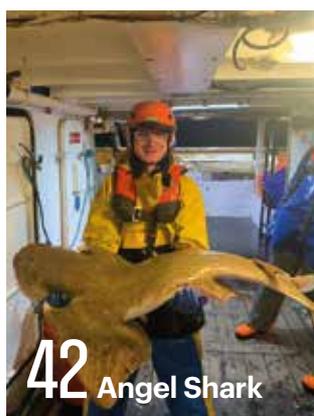
34 Parkol's MFV 'Day Dawn'



24 Scottish Skipper Expo Review



33 Next-Gen EPIRBs



42 Angel Shark

FEATURES

- 23 Simply Blue**
Ireland's Maritime potential
- 24 Scottish Skipper Expo Review 2022**
- 33 ACR Electronics develop Next-Gen EPIRBs**
- 34 Parkol's new MFV 'Day Dawn'**
- 42 Rare Fish**
Angel Shark/Crouch's Crab
- 44 Days Gone By...**
- 46 Out and About**
- 47 Breaktime/Crossword**
- 48 Chairperson McCabe**

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Dail Committee Puts SFPFA Under Scrutiny



The SFPFA has said it hopes the new control plan with the EU will resolve the issue relating to weighing of pelagic fish.

By Lorna Siggins

“I can’t say we’ll crack this nut, but certainly we have proposals in the draft control plan,” SFPFA executive chair PASCHAL HAYES told an Oireachtas committee last month.

Mr Hayes also said he was puzzled as to why the industry had not agreed to trial option one among two options relating to monitoring the weighing of one in 20 landings in the current (interim) control plan. (See panel)

Mr Hayes, and SFPFA colleagues Dr Micheál O’Mahony, senior executive manager and chief scientific advisor, and Olive Loughnane, senior executive manager and director of transformation, had been invited to appear before the Oireachtas committee on agriculture, food and marine on May 18th.

Independent Cork South-West TD Michael Collins, who had issued the invitation, said he hoped it would be the first of many meetings with the SFPFA.

Mr Collins asked if the SFPFA was represented by two senior department of agriculture, food and marine officials – Cecil Beamish and Josephine Kelly – in court cases involving fishing vessels.

The SFPFA is “independent in the performance of its duties,” Mr Hayes said, and the two named officials had represented the department but not the SFPFA.

Responding to further questions from Mr Collins, Mr Hayes said that funding came through the department, and it had responsibility for corporate governance.



SFPFA Executive Chair Pascal Hayes comes under pressure.

A performance contract between the department and the SFPFA was set out under a code of practice for governance of State agencies, Dr O’Mahony said.

Mr Collins was interrupted by the chair when he asked if there was a good working relationship between it and the industry, and named a number of industry organisations.

On the issue of weighing blue whiting landings, Mr Hayes explained the two options available for one in 20 landings.

Dr O’Mahony said that the default position is that fish is weighed immediately on landing, and there are potential derogations – but that authority requires approval by the EU Commission.

Asked about the use of remote cameras, Mr Hayes said this was in the “policy sphere”, and was not part of any regulation.

Mr Collins asked how this technology was not deemed sufficient for control purposes in a factory setting.

Dr O’Mahony said there are risks which a camera cannot manage, such as a flow belt under-

weighing.

Sinn Féin TD Pearse Doherty said the weighing issue was one “causing reputational damage and loss of jobs”.

He asked about Mr Hayes’s reference to a campaign of “misinformation” and “disinformation” in relation to the SFPFA and the Northern Ireland protocol, and the status of the North under existing regulations.

Referring to the SFPFA decision to revoke licences held by two Donegal factories which had purchased fish landed in Derry, Mr Doherty asked how the SFPFA was able to ensure that fish purchased by processors in Derry was weighed there.

“It’s a moot point because they can’t be weighed in Ireland,” Dr O’Mahony said.

Controls in the port where fish were landed are a matter for the port authority, Dr O’Mahony said.

When pressed by Mr Doherty to explain the issue further, Mr Hayes said that they were “seriously straying into an area that we are not comfortable in”.

“We are talking about two particular cases here where it is

likely that files will be forwarded to the Director of Public Prosecutions, and we’d prefer not to talk about individual cases,” Mr Hayes said.

“Convince the committee that this isn’t vindictive in relation to what the SFPFA have done as a result of the controversy that is going on in Killybegs which is very serious,” Mr Doherty said.

“I respect your point in terms of straying into individual issues, but there’s many individuals who lost their jobs, and didn’t have employment as a result of the decisions that are being taken,” Mr Doherty continued.

“There’s many a company that is in serious jeopardy with big loans out,” he said.

Mr Doherty said it was his information that the procedures used by the SFPFA in this instance had never been used before, and asked the SFPFA to give an outline.

“Deputy, this is about sustainability of fish stocks at the end of the day,” Mr Hayes said.

“It’s about making sure there is an accurate account of the fish being killed and landed,” he said, referring to the scientific

assessments for the amount of fish that can be taken.

Mr Hayes recalled a series of meetings from December to February where the ownership model of the weighing device was discussed in the lead-up to the control plan being agreed. The EU had made it clear that the device had to be non-industry owned and non-industry operated.

On February 11th, the catching sector proposed a lease arrangement. At a meeting on February 24th, the processing sector said the catching sector had no authority to enter into a lease arrangement and any such offer was withdrawn, Mr Hayes said.

Mr Hayes said that all points, the SFPA made it clear that the five per cent of bulk landings requiring supervised weighing had to be on a non-industry owned non-industry device such as a weighbridge.

Sinn Féin spokesman Pádraig MacLochlainn asked if they were aware of anywhere else in the EU where a fish processor had CCTV cameras in place monitored by a regulator and data stored for 30 days.

Mr Hayes said there was a need to "take a step back" and referred to the revocation by the European Commission of the control plan in place in April 2021, and conditions in the new control plan.

"I understand the European Commission has said Ireland is the most compliant...and we have a level of oversight that is unprecedented," Mr MacLochlainn said.

Referring back to the High Court case relating to the flow scales, which found the SFPA to be acting "ultra vires", Mr MacLochlainn asked why the SFPA did not use this opportunity to take control of the situation. The industry was in favour of an independent device, he said.

Mr Hayes said it wasn't the court's view that the SFPA should take ownership of the pierside weighing device, but that it should issue a permit for it and this had been taken place.

Mr MacLochlainn also raised the lack of consultation with the SFPA consultative committee.

"What industry in this country would allow round the clock CCTV monitoring of their workers and their operation by a regulator...you are not talking about an industry that is resisting co-operation," he said.

"I have no tolerance for illegal fishing...or an unsustainable approach. I think you do a really important job... we are not a rogue state," Mr MacLochlainn said, referring to Ireland's 98 per cent

compliance rate which, he said, had been a figure issued by the European Commission.

"Why can you not take possession of those scales... that addresses the concerns of everybody," he said.

Mr MacLochlainn said that the SFPA consultative committee had been invited to put a proposal forward in relation to ownership of the device, and the SFPA was still awaiting a response.

Independent TD for Donegal Thomas Pringle asked "if the factories were based on the pier in Killybegs, would we have this problem?"

Mr Hayes said that in other jurisdictions where bulk pelagic fish were landed, and factories were based on the pier, there are "different arrangements in place that certainly aren't as complicated as those we have in Killybegs".

In further questions, Mr MacLochlainn asked if the SFPA could define "non-industry" owned. Mr Hayes said that it was awaiting a response from the industry in relation to its own proposals.

Mr MacLochlainn asked about risk analysis and tools available, ranging from electronic logbooks to VMS data to covert surveillance and joint operations with Garda and Revenue.

He also asked if phone surveillance could be conducted with the Garda and Revenue. Dr O'Mahony said the powers were enshrined in legislation given, and there was no mention whatsoever of such powers.

"We would look at VMS data... if that would fit your criteria of covert," Dr O'Mahony said.

"We conduct joint operations with the gardai which involve us standing at the side of the road and stopping trucks," he said.

"You've really significant powers, you've attained oversight of the factories with CCTV at an unprecedented level that doesn't exist anywhere in Europe, you're seen as the strongest regulator in Europe and we can't get some solution to what's going on in Killybegs that's acceptable," Mr MacLochlainn said.

"You guys have the highest reputation in Europe as regulators," Mr MacLochlainn continued.

"You have to do your job... you have to make sure there's not illegal fishing, you have an array of serious powers," he said.

"Surely we can sort this out, surely we can get to a point where we allow the industry to survive while you do your job which is an important job - that's all I'm asking," Mr MacLochlainn said.

Responding, Mr Hayes said he →

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was glad Deputy MacLochlainn recognised the important job the SFPA did, but there were parameters within which the agency had to work as a regulator.

“We are willing to discuss with anybody how we can advance in relation to that, keeping in mind that we have legislation from you as the Irish legislator, we have EU regulations that you insist that we implement and we have to keep those functions and issues in mind when we are arriving at a regulatory regime that will underpin the sustainability, the authenticity, and prevent food fraud – to be quite straight about it – within the Irish fishing seafood sector and food sector generally,” Mr Hayes said.

Fine Gael senator Tim Lombard, who is vice-chair of the committee, asked Mr Hayes if efforts were being made to resolve the issue in the new control plan, and was told this was taking place. Mr Hayes said he hoped to have the draft new control plan agreed in the third quarter of the year, as the last interim plan was only agreed at the end of last year and that caused difficulties.

When asked by Senator Lombard to outline the relationship with industry, Mr Hayes said it was one of “healthy friction” – a phrase used several times during the three hour hearing, which was suspended during the latter stage for an Oireachtas vote.



LANDING ISSUES

In a lengthy opening statement to the Oireachtas committee, SFPA executive chair Paschal Hayes outlined the background to the weighing of landings issue.

He said the SFPA wished to emphasise that:

In this submission and in our contribution to this Committee, we hope to emphasise the following points:

- SFPA implements the regulations as provided by the Oireachtas and as required under Irish law.

- Fish weighing obligations exist for operators for the express purpose of ensuring that the amount of fish landed is accurately assessed and to ensure sustainable fishing stocks for future generations.

- SFPA does not catch, land, weigh nor declare fish. The accurate weighing of fish is the legal responsibility of the operators not the SFPA.

- Of the approximate 600 landings of bulk pelagic fish on an annual basis, 19 out of every 20 landings currently avail of a derogation in the Interim Fisheries Control Plan to weigh after transport at a processing facility.

- One out of every 20 bulk pelagic landings are subject to a supervised weighing upon landing. Specific control focus on a small proportion of bulk-pelagic landings is an explicit control requirement to

manage the particular risks of such landings, and a significant part of what secures the overall derogation to enable post-transport weighing of all landings to Ireland.

- In the absence of an Interim Control Plan that enables the weighing after transport, every landing into Ireland would be required to be weighed upon landing.

However, Mr Hayes was asked by Sinn Féin’s marine and fisheries spokesman Pádraig MacLochlainn to withdraw a comment towards the end of his statement.

In the comment, Mr Hayes asked committee members to “consider carefully the array of potential motivations of operators choosing to decry the need to weigh 1 out of every 20 landings outside of systems under their immediate control and without availing of systems to maximise accuracy and quality”.

Mr Hayes said he “did not intend it in that way, but if it causes offence I am happy to withdraw it”.

Mr Hayes outlined how in 2014, and again in 2018, the Directorate General of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries at the European Commission (DG-MARE) conducted an audit of bulk pelagic control in Ireland.

“The 2018 audit formed the view that the risk of non-compliance by bulk pelagic operators with their weighing obligations was unacceptably high,” he said.

“That report also highlighted deficiencies in the control

methods being implemented by the SFPA finding that these were not sufficiently robust to ensure operators did not under-declare their catches,” he said.

“A subsequent administrative Inquiry by the Commission was used to quantify the extent of the concerns. The SFPA worked to address the various concerns through enhanced controls,” he said.

“A particular focus of DG-MARE was the perspective that, as part of the overall control regimen allowing most landings to be weighed after transport, there must be some instances of control-authority instigated pre-transport weighing,” he said.

“The SFPA incorporated such events into its pelagic controls from 2020 under the previous 61(1) Control Plan. In response, industry used a pier side device that would actively dewater, then weigh those dewatered fish, before reuniting fish with their original water,” he said.

“Irish courts found no reason in law to prevent the SFPA from approving such a device for weighing and it was used for weighing pelagic landings during 2021,” he said.

“In April 2021, DG-MARE revoked the Irish 61(1) Control Plan as a result of significant and ongoing concerns regarding inaccurate weighing of catches, particularly by operators landing bulk pelagic catches to Ireland. Accordingly, all landings to Ireland which previously would have been weighed at an Irish establishment in accordance with the 61(1) plan were then legally required to be

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weighed at landing," he said.

"At a hearing with this Oireachtas Committee on Tuesday 11th May 2021, members were clear in relaying and endorsing concerns voiced throughout the industry about the impracticality of this. In the case of demersal fish landed in standardised boxes, the Irish 60(1) Sampling Plan remained in place to reduce impact," he said.

"In September 2021 a 61(1) Control Plan, for pelagic and demersal catches, was submitted by the SFPA followed by ongoing dialogue with DG-MARE. During this dialogue it became clear that EU Commission approval would only be achieved with inclusion of pre-transport control-supervised weighing, performed on non-industry-owned, non-industry operated devices such as weighbridge. The SFPA accepted such a Control Plan on an interim basis from January to April 2022 in the interest of facilitating post-transport weighing," he said.

"During the period from the opening of the season in February until the beginning of March, the SFPA accepted weighing on an industry-owned pier side device. It subsequently became clear that the use of this industry-owned pier side device did not fulfil the requirements of the Interim Control Plan, which stipulated that weighing must be conducted on a device under non-industry-ownership," he said.

"It is clear that operation of the Interim Control without fully insisting on the strict terms as

set in the EU approved Control plan is regrettable and detracted from overall implementation," he continued.

Outlining the two options available, he said that "in neither option is there any requirement for the fish to be dried before, during or after control supervised weighing".

For option one, he said that "in this method, fish exiting the vessel are discharged into an industry owned pier-side system which momentarily separates the fish from the water. This fish is immediately placed directly into a tanker that has been pre-filled with water and pre-weighed. The tanker containing the fish and the water is then reweighed on the SFPA approved weighbridge and an accurate weight for the fish is obtained".

For option 2, he said that "in this method, the fish and water exiting the vessel are discharged directly into a pre weighed empty tanker. The tanker containing the fish and the water is then reweighed on the SFPA approved weighbridge. The fish remain with their original water which operators seek to minimise in order to balance quality considerations with fish-weight accuracy concerns.

Mr Hayes said that it was "with genuine concern" that the SFPA became aware of a "sustained campaign of disinformation and misinformation suggesting the SFPA was not adhering to provisions of the Northern Ireland protocol

following the UK departure from the EU".

"The SFPA confirms that there has been no change in the fish weighing on landing arrangements between the Republic of Ireland and other jurisdictions as a result of Brexit," it said.

"Under the EU regulations, which SFPA is bound to implement by this Oireachtas, landings to Northern Ireland could never have been weighed in Killybegs under the terms of an Irish 61(1) control plan," Mr Hayes said.

"That 61(1) derogation is only applicable to post-transport weighing of fishery products when weighed within the member state of landing," he said.

"The only way in which fishery products might be weighed in Killybegs following a landing to Northern Ireland, would be through a Common Control Programme between UK and Ireland approved by the EU Commission," he said.

"It is important to reiterate, no such Common Control Programme has ever existed, either before or after Brexit. Therefore, landings to Northern Ireland are treated similarly to landings in any EU state with which Ireland does not have a Common Control Programme. Irish operators may choose to purchase fish landed to a jurisdiction with which Ireland does not share an approved Common Control Programme, such as Northern Ireland," he said.

"In such cases, the weighing must have taken place in the landing jurisdiction, either through

the default of immediately at landing, or perhaps at a permitted post-transport establishment in that landing territory if a 61(1) control plan exists there," he said.

"Crucially, however, the weight of the fish upon landing in another jurisdiction must be the weight declared by all parties. Declaration of a weight after transport at a processing facility in the jurisdiction of Ireland is not permitted," Mr Hayes said.

"Permitting establishments to weigh after transport at a processing facility following a landing in the Republic of Ireland is a significant exemption available under the Interim Fisheries Control Plan to operators who have the systems to apply such a permit appropriately," he said.

"The SFPA will not accept the misuse of the weigh after transport system, which has the potential to jeopardise the EU Commission approved exemption for the entire fishing and seafood processing sector. If this exemption is revoked, all landings of pelagic and demersal fish across Ireland could be required to be weighed pierside," he said.

"We encourage committee members to see the broader merit of the work being undertaken by the SFPA to ensure fish are weighed completely and accurately, with overall minimal impact on quality," Mr Hayes said.

"In the absence of approval from the European Commission of an interim or full fisheries control plan, there is no exemption to weigh fish after transport at an approved facility and so all landings – pelagic and demersal – would be subjected to weighing upon landing. As the industry and this Committee experienced last year, the ramifications of no Control Plan are experienced right across the seafood sector and in coastal communities around Ireland," he said.

"Control is what SFPA provides. Declaring less fish than are actually caught is a real and ongoing risk that threatens the sustainability of fishing stocks for future generations and the authenticity of Irish seafood. Compliance with the regulations is with the industry – they have a legal onus to comply. Our role is to oversee compliance.

"For those involved in bulk pelagic fishing, the Control Plan enables 19 out of every 20 landings to be weighed after transport.

"The control-supervised weighing of one out of every 20 landings of bulk pelagic fish should be viewed in the context of the very real alternative of 100% of landings needing to be weighed at the pier," he said. ■

SFPA – stretch credibility to galactic levels with their appearance at the Oireachtas Committee – IFPEA

T STRETCHES CREDIBILITY to point never witnessed by many observers, the contents of Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) opening statement to the Oireachtas Committee for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, so stated a very senior politician after the appearance of the SFPA.

The SFPA Stated the following “the only way in which fishery products might be weighed in Killybegs following landing to Northern Ireland, would be through a Common Control plan programme between UK and Ireland approved by the EU Commission. It is important to reiterate, no such Common Control plan programme has ever existed, **either before or after Brexit**”

The defence the SFPA presented is based on trying to convince us that everything is normal and there is nothing new to see here. But, it would be correct to suggest that over 230,000 landings of fish would have occurred in the north of Ireland over the past 25 years, these particular landings of fish made up of demersal, pelagic and shellfish were processed in Irish Fish processing factories during that period. Yet, only two landings of fish during this entire period warranted action on the part of the competent authority. In the words of the SFPA “to the lack of a common control plan between UK and Ireland” – covering the period “before or after Brexit “

The IFPEA consider this to be the 0.00001% rate of application for a non-existent or to this point a fictional regulation, which the SFPA are now trying to convince us and the Oireachtas committee existed all along – in the real world this is the equivalent to the schoolboys’ excuse “that his dog ate the homework”

In terms of the landing into Derry, the SFPA are in effect calling into question the work integrity of the competent authority of Northern Ireland, while at the same time the SFPA are adopting multiple incredible and alternative positions in terms of the status of the northern designated ports, the spirit of the protocol and status of Northern Ireland in the broader terms of the TCA – the situation is completely farcical if not downright bizarre on their part. The first hour of the committee proceedings showed to all that observed how weak and unbelievable the position adopted by the SFPA on these landings really is.

The SFPA, are intentionally targeting and singling out two fish processing factories due to the fact they highlighted the gross unfairness of the regime for weighing blue whiting enforced on them by the SFPA. This very point was made by numerous speakers at yesterday’s meeting and it was further stressed by the committee members that the media attention it seems has forced the SFPA to act for some unknown reason with the resulting actions of the SFPA not based on law or regulation but on emotion and that is what is completely wrong about these events.

This was tangibility demonstrated by the



Norwegian vessel landing fishmeal in Killybegs.

“The IFPEA will maintain a professional engagement with the SFPA as opposed to their desire to have a “healthy friction” between both parties. “

wording of their opening statement, when due to the intervention of Deputies Padraig McLaughlin and Pearse Doherty, the SFPA opening statement had to be withdrawn, as it was singling out processors. The inclusion of such remarks in the opening statement is further proof of the attitude and mentality within the SFPA, there is nothing new here in how the SFPA interact with industry and that is the real problem; this authority is rapidly becoming unmanageable in terms and to the extent it interacts with industry. The embarrassment of withdrawing their statement at least will demonstrate openly to all, the real side of the SFPA.

The IFPEA are shocked at how the SFPA seemed to think it appropriate to either base or describe their relationship between themselves as regulator and industry as being based on a “healthy friction”.

We for our part as an Association of fish processors and exporters, categorise our relationship with the SFPA as “professional and respectful “and there is absolutely no need to have friction as a term of engagement or for the basis for interaction between them as a control authority and the industry in general. To base your engagement with industry in terms of “friction” is self-defeating and confrontational in nature from the outset.

Initially, the SFPA stated Derry was outside

of Ireland and that fish landings “could not be transported from outside Ireland to fish processing plants within Ireland “, and they are suggested these rules existed all along – even put it in writing. But, the SFPA are stating “that fish landings can take place without a common control plan and the competent authority of Northern Ireland are the agency with the authority on this matter”. So, the representatives of the SFPA clearly stated at the Oireachtas Committee hearing last Thursday, well that really clears thing up for us all.

It is easy to understand why various reports into the capabilities of the SFPA have come to the similar conclusions; that they are not fit for purpose and the dial has to be reset to nought. The Oireachtas committee appearance raised serious questions as to the immediate future direction of the SFPA, that ultimately will be matter for the Houses of the Oireachtas.

Independent oversight is immediately required for the SFPA, and if that requires legislative change as the Sea fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Bill is seriously flawed in that regard – that will be eventually a matter for the Dáil and our politicians to deal with.

Yesterday’s 3-hour examination of the SFPA by the Oireachtas committee has shown to the entire country the short comings of the SFPA, industry already knows them too well for we are working with them on a daily basis. ●

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Some energy companies are commencing surveys without discussions on compensation.

Wind Energy Industry Must Respect Fishing Rights

THE FISHING INDUSTRY SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE ENERGY COMPANIES MUST DO THEIR BUSINESS OPENLY. *By Dermot Conway*

OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS I have been dealing with the wind farms and their local agents on the ground, Fishery Liaison Officers. At present we are still dealing with simply the surveys which will allow the Energy companies to prepare their planning applications.

After the Surveys will come the planning application stage, followed by the constructions phase. Then there will be the post construction phase.

The approach being adopted in Ireland is informed by the experience of the Energy Companies in the UK. There is a substantial difference between the legal framework in the UK and here in Ireland. In Ireland we are a constitutional Republic. In the United Kingdom they are a Monarchy with an unwritten constitution. In 1760 the Monarchy transferred ownership of all feudal property to the Crown Estate, a management company. The Crown Lands would be managed on behalf of the Government and the surplus revenue would go to the Treasury. In return, the Monarchy receives a fixed annual payment.

The consequence of this is that when an Energy Company in the UK wishes to develop an Off Shore wind farm it negotiates with the Crown Estate. Accordingly, the learned approach in the UK has been to develop an approach with the fishing industry where publicly they use code words such as 'co-

existence' and 'co-operation'. They organise pier side meetings where the Fishermen are assured about how everyone will just get along.

However, this is lip service and a tactic. The tactic is to firstly tick a box and secondly to put the Fishing Industry on the back foot with charm and assurances. In my opinion, this engagement is not sincere and is not real.

In Ireland the Government is obliged by the Constitution to manage the Economic resources of the State. Under a recent Supreme Court Decision (Barlow) the Supreme Court held that fishing is one such resource. Wind Energy is also a resource of the State.

This is where Ireland and the UK is entirely different. While of course the Energy Companies have enjoyed their experience in the UK, in my opinion copying and pasting that approach to this Country is lazy in its simplicity.

Each and every boat owner has a permission from the State to harvest the economic resource of the State. It is of course highly regulated, but it is none the less, a pre-existing permission from the State. These permissions

are ins existence for many years and in some families, it is multi-generational.

Today the narrative is all about emissions, renewables and green targets. None of us are immune to this conversation and all of us are affected. The State and the Energy Companies still have an obligation to recognise the pre-existing permissions which the State granted, and the Energy Companies now want to compete with.

Not only that, but these Energy Companies use the green label when talking in public and about the enormous profits when talking to shareholders and financiers.

You only need to look at the Wind Energy Ireland Website to see from their past events how they have been lobbying the political community and the public. They are far ahead of any discussion which involves recognition and acknowledgement of the history and pre-existing rights of the fishing industry.

Currently these projects are all at the preplanning phase. The surveys are starting in earnest. In recent weeks I have been told explicitly by 5 separate projects that they intend to avoid the 'compensation culture'. If this was a pub which was going to have to close for 5 weeks or operate limited hours as a result of construction work, no one would have a difficulty with the idea of the pub making a business interruption claim. Indeed, a prudent construction company would enter those discussions before construction begins.

Recent surveys have commenced without those discussions. In 2020 two big surveys took place on the east coast and compensation was agreed in advance. Now energy companies are commencing surveys without discussions on compensation. They are having meetings with Fishermen, but it is a charm offensive. Some recent surveys have started with literally hours' notice and in other instances dates brought forward at the last minute.

My advice to any client is that the Energy Companies need to respect the fact fishing is a pre-existing business, and that the Fishing industry already has the permission of the State to carry out its business.

It is not to say that the progress can be stopped. However, People have borrowed money to buy fishing vessels and capacity. Interrupting these businesses is real. The effects are real. Permanently excluding fishermen from fishing grounds is real. It does not look like co-existence.

These projects will run from Clogherhead to Cork. Sligo and Mayo are mentioned as well. If the Energy Companies are treating the Fishing Industry at the Survey Stage, it begs the question as to what will happen down the road.

My advice is the Industry should not be meeting with these Companies or their representatives in anything other than formal discussions. The Industry should make it clear that the Energy Companies must do their business openly, respectfully and in good faith.

Compensation is not a dirty word. It is real and it is necessary. ■



DERMOT CONWAY is the Managing Partner of Conways Solicitors. Dermot is a graduate of University College Cork, Ireland and holds two degrees; Commerce (BComm) and Law (BCL). He qualified as a Solicitor in 2000 and has specialised in Maritime Law since that time. Dermot has represented Clients in every Court in Ireland in relation to maritime matters. He is a member of the Irish Maritime Law Association. His areas of practise include the defence of Sea Fishing trawlers that are detained for Sea Fishing offences, Salvage, dumping at Sea Legislation, Insurance Claims, Collisions at Sea and Ship arrest and release for contract debt and dispute. He also advises on the Merchant Shipping Acts as well as acting locally for P&I Clubs.



From left: Sean Moylan, (Kelly Oysters), JP McMahon, (Young Chef Mentor, Chef and Co-proprietor of Aniar, Cava), Sarah Browne, (Young Chef Ambassador 2021), Letitia Wade, (Programme Officer, Fáilte Ireland) and Mairtin Walsh, Processing Development Executive, BIM.

Young Chef Ambassador Programme 2022 Announced with 'Taste The Atlantic'

CHEFS GET THE CHANCE TO LEARN ABOUT IRELAND'S PREMIUM SEAFOOD

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood Development Agency, in collaboration with **Chef Network Ireland** and **Fáilte Ireland** have announced the **Taste the Atlantic, Young Chef Ambassador Programme for 2022**. The aim of the programme is to engage with five ambitious young chefs, and over a four-month period mentor them through an exciting journey of learning about Ireland's premium seafood offering along the Atlantic seaboard. This is the second year of the successful programme. Five chefs took part in the programme in 2021.

The selected chefs will benefit from on-site farm visits with *Taste the Atlantic* seafood producers where they will learn first-hand how organic salmon, mussels and oysters are sustainably produced in Ireland. They will also receive training in social media, business, culinary and fish handling skills from experienced industry mentors, such as Michelin starred chef, **JP McMahon**. Each chef will be paired with a *Taste the Atlantic* producer to learn about the provenance of the seafood they produce, broadening their knowledge and inspiring them to create Irish seafood recipes. At the end of the programme, the chefs will work together to create a *Taste the Atlantic* menu, showcasing the skill and knowledge they have gained on

their journey as ambassadors helping to highlight the quality and sustainably produced seafood on the Wild Atlantic Way as well as raising awareness of food tourism.

Máirtín Walsh, Development Executive with BIM said, "BIM is delighted to announce the second year of the programme and looks forward to building on the success of 2021. It was inspiring to work with last year's chefs and to watch them develop such an appreciation of Ireland's valuable aquaculture sector. As a sector, providing direct employment to almost 2,000 people, it's a significant contributor to rural, coastal communities, and was valued at €175 million in 2021. The consumption of seafood in Ireland grew by 3% to €418 million in 2021, with the hospitality sector being the main contributor. We look forward to guiding this year's chefs on their *Taste the Atlantic* seafood journey!"

Sarah Browne from County Kerry was one of the *Young Chef Ambassadors in 2021* and went on to work at Cava Bodega in Galway after the programme. Speaking at the launch of this year's programme, she said:

"I'm passionate about sustainable food and I was so impressed when meeting the producers last year how much emphasis they place

on sustainability and how future-focussed they were. The programme really boosted my confidence in my culinary skills around seafood and it was a huge stepping-stone for my career. I'd highly recommend it."

JP McMahon, chef-proprietor at Michelin-starred Aniar restaurant, will provide mentorship to the chefs again this year and he spoke about why he is so supportive of the programme.

"This program offers a fantastic opportunity for young chefs to develop their appreciation and understanding of the wealth of Irish seafood available to them. They will get to know producers, understand how the seafood is produced and develop their culinary creativity and confidence, learning how to prepare beautiful seafood dishes. Locally sourced produce is key to any good menu, and it doesn't get much better than the seafood offering along the Wild Atlantic Way!"

Chef Network is a professional network connecting chefs across the island of Ireland, with over 4,500 members. Programme Manager, Ruth Hegarty said,

"The *Taste the Atlantic* Young Chef Ambassador programme is a really exciting collaboration which brings together Ireland's up and coming culinary talent with our wonderful seafood producers to explore the food tourism potential along the Wild

Atlantic Way. It is so important to keep young chefs motivated and curious through opportunities to gain experience, upskill, and explore their creativity, and in my experience, meeting food producers is hugely inspiring and motivating for chefs, which is why I am genuinely delighted that Chef Network have the opportunity to run this programme alongside BIM and Fáilte Ireland."

The Ambassador programme is now open for nominations, with full details available on www.chefnetwork.ie.

■ The closing date for nominations is May 24th. Interviews will take place in June, following which we will announce the five successful 2022 young chef ambassadors, who will embark on their *Taste the Atlantic* seafood journey from June-September

■ **The Young Chef Ambassador Programme is co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union, under the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).**





L-R, Dr Rob Enever and Jon Ashworth skipper of the FV Three Jays.



Scallops caught during the PotLight trials.

Marine Scientists Discover Breakthrough For A Low Impact Scallop Fishery

A partnership between marine scientists and fishermen in England's South West has uncovered a new environmentally friendly fishing method for catching scallops using innovative illuminated pots which have been dubbed 'scallop discos'.

Currently, most commercial scallop harvesting is carried out using dredges, a fishing method which is widely reported to cause extensive harm to sensitive marine habitats and species. This discovery, a global first, paves the way for the creation of a new low-impact inshore fishery which could reduce the pressure from scallop dredges.

Scientists from **Fishtek Marine**, a world leader in bycatch prevention technology, made the discovery whilst trialling 'PotLights' which are small underwater lights used to 'bait' crab and lobster pots. They were invented by the Devon-based company to protect fish stocks by replacing the need to use fish to bait pots.

Working with **Jon Ashworth**, a fisherman based in Newlyn, Cornwall, **Dr Rob Enever** and his Fishtek team discovered that the lights, combined with specially modified pots, were

attracting unprecedented numbers of scallops in addition to the crabs and lobsters that Jon was targeting.

Scallops have 200 tiny eyes, so the lights proved irresistible to the shellfish. Dr Enever said: "I couldn't believe my eyes! I was sceptical that it would work, but the first time we hauled the pots and saw the scallops inside we knew we had discovered something significant. It was so exciting that I could hardly sleep for a couple of nights!"

Funding from the UK government's Seafood Innovation Fund delivered by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and Natural England, allowed further trials in which Dr Enever's team tested several pot designs and proved the PotLight technique consistently attracts scallops. This discovery is just the beginning of an exciting work programme which, with further development, could transform commercial scallop harvesting.

Fisheries Minister, **Victoria Prentis**, said: "It is great to see Fishtek Marine benefitting from our Seafood Innovation Fund, and developing a world-first method for catching scallops in an environmentally sustainable way. The funding is supporting innovation, helping industry use cutting edge technology and protecting the marine environment."

Suzanna Neville, Seafood Innovation Fund programme manager at Cefas, said: "This is an important project that has the potential to make a real difference to the sustainability of the scallop fishery. The opportunity to transform commercial scallop harvesting has been made possible

by providing funding for the development of early stage ideas. This is exactly the sort of innovative project that the SIF was set up to support, helping the UK lead the way in developing a sustainable seafood sector."

With the help of local fishermen, pot makers and scientists from the Universities of Exeter and York, the team is developing two new pot designs specifically for retaining scallops attracted by the PotLights and is experimenting with different coloured lights. Each small light is powered by two rechargeable AA batteries. They are clipped inside each pot and can be used multiple times.

Results of the trials have now been peer-reviewed and published in the journal 'Fisheries Research'.

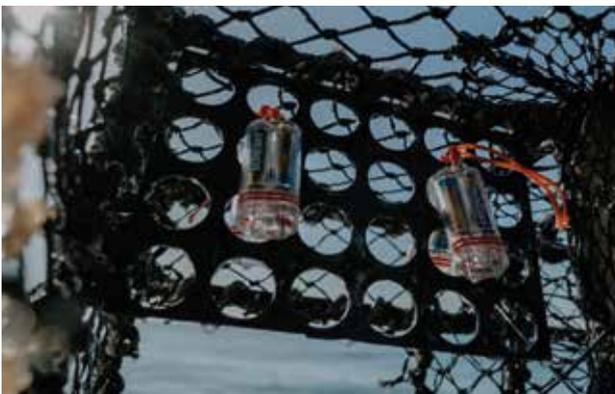
Pete Kibel, co-founder and director of Fishtek Marine said: "The potential of this new approach to scallop harvesting is massive, offering notable benefits to the marine environment while creating a new commercial opportunity to fisheries around the world."

He added: "Ultimately, the success of the trial is further evidence that collaboration between industry, scientists and government bodies can drive product innovation and underpin sustainable fishing efforts."

Jon Ashworth skipper of the FV Three Jays said: "The first day out was just excitement after excitement. Pretty much every pot that we hauled had scallops in them and yet every haul without lights had no scallops. It was conclusive, there and then. To have proven that lights can be used to catch scallops has got to have some awesome implications looking forward."

Bryce Stewart, senior lecturer at the University of York commented: "This is one of the most exciting research findings I have been involved with in my career. We knew scallops were sensitive to light, but not that they could be attracted in this way. These findings have the potential to provide a valuable and low impact boost to inshore fisheries."

Fishtek now plans to work with other inshore fishermen around the UK to develop the scallop potting technique with the aim of establishing a commercially viable low impact fishery. ●



Fishtek Marine PotLights installed in a specially design pot.



A second tranche of supports for voluntary tie-up of polyvalent and beam trawl vessels has been announced.



McConalogue announces Brexit Voluntary Tie-up Scheme

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine Charlie McConalogue has announced a 2022 Brexit Voluntary Temporary Fishing Vessel Tie-up Scheme for the polyvalent and beam trawl fleets.

The scheme is an extension of the 2021 Tie-up scheme, with some modifications, and will help mitigate the impacts of quota cuts for 2022 arising from the Brexit Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The scheme delivers on a recommendation of the **Report of the Seafood Task Force – ‘Navigating Change’** (October 2021) and is proposed for funding under the EU Brexit Adjustment Reserve.

The Minister said: “I am pleased to announce a second tranche of supports for voluntary tie-up of polyvalent and beam trawl vessels to mitigate the impacts of TCA quota cuts on fishers’ incomes in 2022.

The object of the scheme is to enable a reduction in quota uptake so as to improve quota availability for the fleet overall throughout the remainder of the year. The €24 million scheme I am announcing today delivers on a key recommendation of the Report of the Seafood Task Force – Navigating Change (October 2021).

In light of the quota cuts taking effect in 2022 I have modified the scheme so that vessel owners can, if they wish, choose to tie-up for up to two calendar months. This enhanced tie up opportunity will free up additional quota for those vessels continuing to fish, supporting viability in the wider fleet.”

Payment rates will be the same as the 2021 scheme. Vessel owners participating in the 2022

scheme will again be required to distribute one third of that payment to crew. In order to maintain the supply of fish to processors and fish mongers, vessels choosing to tie-up for two months must maintain a two-month gap between tie-up months, for example June and September or July and October.

The scheme will initially be expected to operate over the period June to October, but the Minister will be asking the European Commission to amend the approval of the scheme to encompass November so as to provide for an additional August/November tie up option. Payment rates will be the same as the 2021 scheme. Further details will be published by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM).

The following payment rates will apply.

Calculation based on income minus variable costs (fuel, provisions)

Payment per 1 month tie-up period.

| Size of vessel | Payment |
|----------------|---------|
| Under 10m | €4,600 |
| 10m - 11.99m | €7,100 |
| 12m - 14.99m | €14,200 |
| 15m - 17.99m | €24,500 |
| 18m - 20.99m | €45,400 |
| 21m - 23.99m | €59,000 |
| 24m - 39.99m | €88,700 |

The Scheme will be administered by Bord Iascaigh Mhara and further details will be available from BIM at bim.ie/fisheries/funding/

In March 2021, Minister McConalogue set up the Seafood Sector Task Force to examine the implications for the Irish Fishing industry and coastal communities particularly dependent upon it

arising from the Brexit Trade and Cooperation Agreement, agreed between the European Union and the UK. The Task Force was charged with recommending initiatives that could be taken to provide supports for development and restructuring, so as to ensure

a sustainable fishing fleet and to identify opportunities for jobs and economic activity in coastal communities dependent on fishing.

Minister McConalogue received the **Report of the Seafood Task Force – Navigating Change** on 11 October 2021. The report recommended 16 support schemes at a total estimated cost of €423 million. These stakeholder recommendations are being urgently examined across Government with particular regard to available funds, eligibility of the recommended measures for funding under the EU Brexit Adjustment Reserve and with regard to State Aid rules and the Public Spending Code. This process is very well advanced, with five schemes already announced. A number of additional support schemes are with the European Commission for State Aid approval.

A Brexit Voluntary Temporary Fleet Tie-up Schemes for 2021 was recommended by the Task Force Report and was implemented over the period October to December 2021 at a cost of €10 million. Some 177 vessels participated in the scheme. ●

National Fisheries Colleges of Ireland

Ireland's Seafood Development Agency

Upcoming Courses 2022

JUNE

- Enhanced Safety Training (1 day):
9th June - Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training:
13th - 15th June - Greencastle
- Navigational Control Course (NCC):
13th - 24th June - Greencastle
- Advanced Fire Fighting:
20th - 24th June - Castletownbere
- GMDSS GOC Radio Course:
20th June - 1st July - Greencastle
- Medical Care Aboard Ship:
27th June - 1st July - Castletownbere

JULY

- GMDSS SRC Radio Course:
4th - 6th July - Greencastle
- Navigational Control Course (NCC):
4th - 15th July - Castletownbere
- STCW Medical First Aid Aboard Ship:
11th - 13th July - Greencastle
- Three Day Basic Safety Training:
18th - 20th July - Greencastle

SEPTEMBER

- Three Day Basic Safety Training:
5th - 7th Sept - Greencastle
- Medical Care Aboard Ship:
12th - 16th Sept - Castletownbere
- STCW Personal Safety & Social Responsibility:
15th Sept - Greencastle
- Commercial Scuba Diving:
26th Sept - 21st Oct - Castletownbere

NOVEMBER

- Surface Supply Diving:
31st Oct - 25th Nov - Castletownbere

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The Fishery

FISHERY UPDATE:

Good times are back! After a fashion.

By Dick James

HERE ARE PRAWNS on the go in the Irish sea and the Clyde as well. The fleet has reappeared (as if from nowhere) perhaps not in the numbers it once was but from returning guardships, vessels from distant grounds (North Sea) and those that were hibernating they were putting on a good showing in all the local grounds.

The Whitehaven grounds came on strong and the larger fleet elements made good fishing there until the Marine Management Organisation's chartered policing vessel the *Marine Sentinel* showed up and proceeded to throw its weight about with boardings lasting for 5 plus hours picking out detail of net configuration whilst fishing was totally stopped, cautions duly issued before allowing work to continue.

As the fishing came on strong in the channel to the west of the Isle of Man, most of the boats moved over to get peace of mind and peace for fishing. A fleet of Belgium beamers were fishing in Liverpool Bay at the time so the *Marine Sentinel* passed them by and then moved out of the area.

The immediate offshore grounds showed up well and volumes of landings picked up also. The price of tails is now re-established at £6 plus per kilo with whole prawns making a more modest recovery but enough that, never mind the price of fuel returns were enough to give decent wages once more.

Fishing was from the **rig grounds** off Portavogie to the very south off (12 miles out) the Bay of Dundalk. One regular feature in the prawning environment happened, as ever, with the "sleach" on the seabed fouling nets with the necessity to rebalance rigs for greater spread. A sacrifice made to the cause of "blue carbon" which carries on as ever!

From the first of May when the unilateral Scottish Cod recovery plan expired a few boats tried the southern reaches of the Clyde and found a good fishing of prawns there which encouraged more boats to give it a go and in the absence of any interference from fishery protection or border force they continued to fish with good

returns.

Some one or two boats worked further north in the south Minch but these were the usual suspects with various reasons for being oddballs. The *Maracestina* ploughed a lonely (for UK registered boats) furrow on the Porcupine Banks landing regularly into Castletownbere and latterly joined by the *Rocco Reed* (previously the *Unity*) but the *Tigers* was back in Kilkeel for maintenance.

The *Apollo* moved out of Peterhead round to the west of Ireland to start his summer fishing on the Porcupine whilst others apparently wait for final preparations before making their move both *Boy Connor* and *Lucinda Ann* lying in wait. This coincides with the closure of the Banks for the Irish fleet which seems to have relocated to the **Smalls ground** in the Bristol Channel where it will scrape away until that is done and then on to the **Bay of Dundalk**, the last resort. That is the consequence of deleting options for a fleet under stress which will only be amplified when further ground closures come about such as the Smalls windfarm as promised by the UK licensing authority.

Scallopers continue to work out of Kilkeel presumably until the Irish Sea close season kicks in at the end of May with the best of the fishing this year being off the Welsh coast and away from the local and Isle of Man more traditional grounds. Again price has made some recovery so the season has paid off despite high fuel prices and market disruption due to covid.

On the **inshore side** it is very much the quiet season with some boats laid up for paint and maintenance before the high summer season takes over.

Pelagic-wise it is similar. Times are quiet with the odd landing of blue whiting into Ardglass and away from the EU/SFPA rumpus but the consequence of that may well come into play this summer as the landings into Northern Ireland for consignment south or west may become a feature as it was last year and subject to dispute though hopefully not to the detriment of the local market. ■



Unity B106. PHOTO: LESLIE CAMBELL

MSC Brown Crab Accreditation

A meeting was convened on the evening of the 4th May at Kilkeel to explain the progress made on the pre-assessment of the Northern Ireland Brown Crab fishery under the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) program. The pre-assessment is basically an internal assessment on behalf of the participants which highlights the chances of gaining full accreditation under the MSC label and what measures may need to be taken to improve environmental standards to achieve that status.

This accreditation is supposed to improve the marketing opportunities for the product under assessment and hopefully the price. What concern the Chinese market has for these environmental standards is not known and China was the market leader prior to Covid and other recent trade upsets.

Should the next phase be for full assessment leading to accreditation then it may be assumed that some management measures may need to be introduced to meet the required standard. The team leading the process is usually comprised of scientists of various persuasions and the measures proposed may or may not meet the fishermen's expectations. Whatever it seems to be the way of today's world.



More NIFHA Harbour Disputes

The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority (NIFHA) have over the years been a vehicle for many disputes, criticisms and general manure throwing. However, of late, this has risen to a new level which is as much a reflection of the expectation of the NIFHA rather than the performance per se.

The Rod Capell seafood report gave a green light for development aspirations for both Ardglass and Kilkeel involving major deepening and expansion targets which has been taken on board by NIFHA and more importantly the Minister and his Department responsible for fisheries. Inevitably the process of taking these developments through to fruition is long and complex with a fairly long timespan of getting in place the various approvals and consents and never mind the money before a physical manifestation in shape of excavation and building commences.

However, on a more mundane front there has been dissatisfaction of late over various projects involving the harbours of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie all managed by NIFHA. The renewal and new construction of harbour administration offices has attracted criticism as has the new pedestrian safety works recently done with apparently inconvenience to owners of harbour properties and harbour users generally.

The Kilkeel dredger has been under maintenance and its licence to dump spoil has expired meaning that the sandbar at Kilkeel harbour mouth has grown, the refurbished fishmarket in Kilkeel had no chill extension, ice plants are breaking down slipways, shutting for replenishment resulting in these and any other gripes that can be laid at NIFHA's door are finding their way into the social media. This culminated in late April

in a public stakeholders meeting in Kilkeel where the issues were aired and following that a letter of no confidence in NIFHE and its leadership was sent to the Chair of NIFHE calling for resignation of the Chief Executive and whoever else could be held liable.

The authors of the letter were the Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation who are an amalgamation of the two PO's (*Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers Organisation and the Northern Ireland Fish Producers Organisation*) and signed by Brian Chambers and Trevor McKee, the respective chairpersons of those two organisations and sent to the chair of NIFHA, Mr Robert McConnell.

Unfortunately, this letter has been widely leaked through social media and is now in the public domain.

Meanwhile, Ards and North Down Borough Council have approved plans for a new civic focal point and reorientation of the memorial statue in Portavogie along with the installation of street furniture pillars and raised planters, replacement of street lighting with feature columns and the extension and refurbishment of existing pedestrian walls with feature inlays. There will be new decorative surfaces to all footpaths, art work on gable wall, a winch anchor point relocation of Armoco barrier and concrete hard standing at the existing winch house. All of these works are in and about the harbour area. Hope they cleared this with NIFHA and the Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation first!



Final Days for NI SEAFLAG programme?

The Northern Ireland SEAFLAG program is an EU inspired grant aid program which is targeted at fishing communities rather than fishing per se. Thus it tends to focus on shore connections to the fishing industry/community and generally comes up with some interesting grant scenarios which otherwise would fall outside more conventional grant programs.

The Northern Ireland scheme is now coming to the end of its second phase and with BREXIT now a reality what form (if in fact any form) will it take in the future is uncertain. Now in its wind down mode, approved projects must be completed by December this year.

SEAFLAG identified its operational area from the start as being within 7 miles of one of the three County Down fishing harbours (Ardglass, Kilkeel and

Portavogie) with some of the peripheries being amongst the more innovative.

The initiative to modify the operation of the Carlingford ferry to take on a tourist role offering cruises and parties onboard for corporate and individual participants was possibly reaching the 7 mile range to close to its limit depending of course where you start to measure from. Seafood was to be a part of the experience but what else was involved only those who took on the experience would know.

Seafood promotion was a favourite theme in both phases of the program with direct grant to fast food and restaurant facilities in Portavogie and Annalong in phase 1 and in phase 2 a "sea to



service" concept based at Down Business Park focussing on seafood in hospitality with training workshops on site in the Park. A dogfood processing project based on fish waste and skin was a Kilkeel based project.

Feedback on the acceptability of the various products developed has yet to be published by SEAFLAG.

G Smyth Boat and Ian Newell fabrications were two companies in the boat service sector to benefit from SEAFLAG grants which otherwise would have been left wanting support for very valid development projects.

Also of note in Portavogie was the conversion of derelict properties on the Harbour Road to three business units which

should enhance the service and processing capacity in the village. The Promenade revitalisation project was undertaken by the local Council to enhance visitor attraction for the village and specifically the harbour area.

The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority sourced funding from the SEAFLAG to extend phase one projects in supplying bait storage for pot fishermen at all three harbours through phase two and to refund its fishing for litter, beach cleans, waste management and end of life fishing gear recycling schemes.

The conclusion must be that the SEAFLAG scheme has met its aims and objectives in an innovative fashion and what if anything comes to replace it will have a strong foundation to go forward from. ■



Plea to Minister on MCA Safety Code

An NFFO delegation recently met with Transport Minister, Robert Courts MP, to make the case for a review of the way that the Under-15m Safety Code is currently being applied. The Federation has received multiple approaches from fishermen “at the end of their tether” as the MCA applies the new regime introduced in September last year.

The meeting was convened by the Shadow Fisheries Spokesman, Daniel Zeichner MP, who has heard of cases at first hand during his port visits to the East Coast and the South West.

At the outset of the meeting with the Minister, the Federation emphasised its absolute commitment to improving safety across the whole fleet. It pointed, however, to the unavoidable conclusion the code is being applied in a way that is giving rise to multiple examples of extreme stress from the small-scale fleet as vessels face inspections under the new rules. Daniel Zeichner read out an email from one fisherman whose livelihood had been put at jeopardy despite a 45-year career without incident and who was, along with his family, under extreme stress as a result.

The Minister listened courteously and asked a number of forensic questions, as would be expected from someone who trained as a barrister. The NFFO’s central message was that the code is young but already it is clear that the way it is being implemented requires a different approach.

The Minister committed to examining the issues raised during the meeting and the Federation expressed its willingness to work closely with the MCA and the Department on improvements.

Charles Blyth, recently appointed as the new NFFO Safety lead, and who has a background as a naval architect and MCA surveyor, highlighted the Federation’s central concerns and suggestions for improvements.

■ *The roll test stability assessment in the New*

Code of Practise (which is only indicative and not an objective means to test a vessel’s stability) is resulting in perfectly capable vessels with faultless safety records being tied up or forced to spend significant amounts (£6-8000) on stability book and MCA approval. – MCA should revise this policy and allow for compliance with alternative stability assessments such as Heel test and/or Offset load test to help reduce economic impact on industry.

■ *Previously certificated vessels are being required to alter their original design (often against manufacturer recommendations) to adhere to the CoP. Fisherman are concerned that this blanket approach may make certain vessels less safe and create over reliance on machinery (such as bilge pumps) which can fail. – Specific water freeing arrangements should be considered on a risk based, individual approach by MCA, taking into account their original designs purpose, fishing method and area of intended operation.*

■ *Fisherman are annoyed at the significant time and expense (£147 per hour) they are currently facing when waiting for specific outcomes such as stability approval and decisions relating to individual vessels. There are many instances of stability approval taking years to complete. – MCA should agree to set a service standard on their work for stability; one week to make decisions, especially when vessels have been tied up by the MCA is reasonable.*

■ *Fisherman are confused when faced with new stability chapter and how to present vessel for stability assessment. If they fail, they are expected to pay for a second visit- this can mean a big economic impact for small scale fisherman and coastal communities. – MCA should waive charges for return visits for stability purposes for under 15m Fvs.*

■ *There are concerns about the unfair use of detention for lack of compliance with new CoP – MCA should only detain/ remove certification in the most extreme cases and ensure that all other possible avenues of compliance are sought before such drastic action; i.e. restricting loading, limiting area of operation etc.*

■ *Fishermen are being overwhelmed with complex information sources and the new CoP language (e.g. there are 4 different definitions of a ‘new vessel’) – MCA should pursue a simplified CoP with assistance given to FV owners as to what the new CoP means for their vessel. The amount of information sources should be consolidated (information regarding the roll test and what it means for a vessel is currently spread out over 4 different documents) and be written in a way that can be easily understood by fishermen*

■ *There are concerns with the attitude and lack of engagement of surveyors used to inspect fishing vessels. Many fishermen are very anxious about their vessels being tied up for reasons they don’t understand, leading to lack of income, job losses, economic impact in coastal communities – MCA should offer human element training for surveyors to help them engage and work alongside fisherman to improve safety. The employment of surveyors with backgrounds other than large vessel merchant shipping (e.g. ex FV skippers) to assist in MCA inspection should be explored*

The Federation will be engaging with the MCA on this agenda in the coming weeks and months and following the meeting is hopeful of enlightened political guidance from the top.



Fuel Costs ‘Jeopardising’ UK Fishing Fleet, Warns NFFO

THE NFFO has warned that the industry is in an ‘inherently unstable and fragile balance’ which could result in vessels being taken out of the water.

Soaring fuel costs have now risen to a “level that jeopardises the viability of parts of the fleet”, and could affect supply from UK fishing boats over the coming months, the National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations has warned.

The viability of the fleet was currently being supported by high fish prices, the industry body said this week. However, the sector was still in an “inherently unstable and fragile balance”, which could soon result in vessels being taken out of the water.

The four fishing federations representing England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland that make up the NFFO recently met with fisheries minister Victoria Prentis to warn about the fuel “crisis engulfing the fishing industry”, it said.

They made the case to the minister that contingency plans were needed from the government on the occasion that vessels had to be tied up, something it warned could happen quickly over the summer.

This would have huge knock-on effects on the whole fish supply chain, the group said, as they called for the need to collaboratively

build a case to the Treasury for a contingency should the situation worsen over the next few weeks and months.

Fuel costs were not the only burden on the industry, the NFFO also emphasised, as in addition to direct fuel costs, the increasing price of ancillary but oil-based products such as rope and sheet netting were also rising rapidly.

Other issues discussed with the minister included displacement, shortage of whitefish in the market, labour shortages and immigration policy.

This issue has been on the horizon since April when industry experts warned about the fuel prices making fishing “uneconomical”. Data from Seafish previously revealed that in a worst-case scenario up to two-thirds of the fleet might not be able to cover operational costs.

Whitby Seafoods said at the time it had been relying on catch from last summer to service its supermarket contracts and that it had no choice but to pay more to fishers, otherwise “we will lose the industry”.

In response to the requests from the industry body, the minister pointed to the mitigating effect of high fish prices and the challenges in persuading the Treasury to provide support when difficulties face the entire economy.

Demersal non quota species Fisheries Management Plan

Marine Management Organisation will lead stakeholder engagement and drafting of the Fisheries Management Plan (FMP) for demersal non-quota species (NQS) in the English Channel.

FMPs are a cornerstone of the Government's approach to fisheries management now the UK has left the EU's Common Fisheries Policy.

The Channel NQS FMP will include ICES divisions 7d and 7e and will cover demersal species such as red, tub and grey gurnards, cuttlefish, squid, octopus, john dory, surmullet and lesser spotted dogfish.

Development of a plan specifically for demersal non-quota species in the Channel was highlighted by the fishing industry and other key marine stakeholders as a necessary move because of concern about potential over-exploitation of some stocks and a lack of data about non-quota stocks in general.

This FMP is one of 43 FMPs to be developed under the Joint Fisheries Statement to support a sustainable and profitable fishing industry.



The Channel NQS FMP will be among the first of six frontrunner FMPs being developed, with an aim to publish the plans at the end of 2023.

MMO is currently working on a series of face-to-face events with stakeholders, especially the fishing industry on England's south coast, to be held in mid to late June as a critical first step in developing the Channel NQS FMP.

MMO will provide more information on how stakeholders can get involved in the coming

Non Quota species like Gurnard are included in the MMO plan. PHOTO: SEAFISH.

weeks in its fortnightly Fishers and Seafood Exporters Bulletin, on its website and social media platforms.

To be included in more detailed communications for the Channel NQS FMP send your details in confidence and a summary of your particular interest to **FMP@marinemanagement.org.uk**

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Support For Fishing and Coastal Communities

A NEW ROUND OF FUNDING TO support fishing businesses and wider marine organisations in coastal communities is open for applications.

Now in its second year, the Marine Fund Scotland has an overall budget of up to £14 million.

It was introduced by the Scottish Government to replace the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which UK businesses no longer have access to following Brexit.

Marine Fund Scotland will support projects which contribute to innovative and sustainable marine sectors, reduce carbon emissions and support coastal communities. It will reflect Scotland's Blue Economy Vision, which was published earlier this year. Helping to improve safety standards will also be a key aim, including individual fishers upskilling their safety training.

Announcing the second year of the Fund at the Skipper Expo in Aberdeen, Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon said: "Building on the success of the first year of the Marine Fund Scotland, the renewed focus of the Fund this year will be on supporting our ambitions set

out in the Blue Economy Vision.

"It highlights our commitment to investing in Scotland's seafood and wider marine sectors and the communities which rely on them, supporting jobs and livelihoods while helping to protect the marine environment.

"The funding we have will be used to deliver maximum effect, but we will also continue to press the UK Government to respect the devolution of marine funding and to recognise the size and importance of Scotland's marine sectors."

Awards from the first year of the Marine Fund Scotland included supporting young fishers to purchase their first vessels, the purchase of safety equipment, enhancing gear selectivity and sustainable fishing practices, data collection, marine litter collection, marine research, and assistance to the seafood processing and aquaculture sectors, including to implement more sustainable practices.

In 2022-23 the funding is made up of a competitive grant fund and funding for key strategic work, including projects delivering wider benefits for the marine sectors.



Mairi Gougeon – Scottish Fisheries Minister, announcing more funds.

Marine Fund Scotland is designed to sit alongside, but is distinct from, other funds including the Nature Restoration Fund and the Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund (SMEEF).

Applicants to the Marine Fund Scotland will be asked, where

relevant, to demonstrate that they understand the impact of their project on nature and biodiversity, and are taking appropriate steps to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts and enhance any positive impacts relative to their current position.

SCOTTISH FISHERMEN TAKE THE PLUNGE

FUNDED EVENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING POOL HIGHLIGHTED THE DANGERS OF FALLING OVERBOARD FISHING VESSELS.

FALLING OVERBOARD is the biggest single cause of workplace fatalities in the fishing industry. In 2021, ten fishermen have tragically lost their lives at sea. Six of these were recorded as man overboard fatalities by the Marine Accident Investigation Branch.

The Fishing Industry Safety Group secured £260,000 to help prevent man overboard incidents.

This is being used to fund delivery of in-water awareness events to explain how to avoid going over the side and what can be done to improve the chances of survival.

The environment pools aim to create some of the conditions experienced at sea with a wave machine and rain.

At a recent event in Aberdeen timed to coincide with the Scottish Skipper Expo over fifty fishermen from Shetland, Orkney and the mainland participated.

In the environmental pool at **Survivex**, under the watchful eye of **Frankie Horne**, RNLI Fishing Safety Team, they experienced wind and wave conditions similar to what could be expected if they found themselves in a man overboard situation.



The training environment pool at Survivex.

The fishermen attending jumped into the pool in full fishing gear without any safety gear to experience what it feels like to try and stay afloat and aware in deteriorating sea state. Many of the fishermen struggled to stay afloat and the pool rescue swimmer was kept busy guiding the participants to the safety of the poolside.

The exercise was repeated with everyone wearing a type approved PFD and it was plain to observe the difference in flotation and maintaining a calmer approach to the situation that it provided.

The fishermen attending then took part in a pool exercise to board a liferaft under the same open water conditions and were given advice on teamwork and techniques to ensure survival at sea.

The consensus among the fishermen after this experience was that it was an eye opener and all pledged to never venture to sea again without first donning a PFD.

Man overboard Awareness events are run by Seafish and the RNLI at environmental training pools across the UK. Anyone working on a commercial fishing vessel is encouraged to book up to attend the events, which are fully funded.

FWA Question Migrant Fishermen Abuse Report

FULL STATEMENT FROM THE FISHERMEN'S WELFARE ALLIANCE ON REPORTS ON ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Speaking on behalf of The Fishermen's Welfare Alliance, Elspeth Macdonald, chief executive of the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, said: "It is a reality that migrant workers are a vital and likely permanent feature of parts of the UK fishing sector – much as they are in other industries and professions. We value the contributions these workers make to our industry and in turn we want them to feel valued. They are skilled individuals, and fishing industry representatives worked hard for fishing crew to rightly be recognised as skilled workers in the government's new immigration system.

"The FWA therefore unreservedly condemns the reports of abuse and exploitation that were published last week. Such behaviour is deplorable and utterly indefensible. However, it is wrong to assume that the issues raised are endemic across the UK fishing fleet – they are not, and indeed the University of Nottingham report made clear that its findings were based on a small sample that was not chosen at random, so its findings cannot be generalised.

"The UK fishing industry strives to be a modern and attractive employer. It is clear that these reports, while they represent a very small and atypical minority, undermine the credibility of this ambition. We are disappointed that, rather than working with us, the University of Nottingham and the ITF chose not to engage the FWA in its work, or to share the details of their research prior to its release.

"Lurid headlines leave a stain on the whole

industry, regardless of the sample size and methodology used. They tar the vast majority of fishermen who are horrified by these reports with the same brush as the perpetrators of the crimes. They also serve to undermine the efforts industry is making to encourage fishers to come to the UK through the skilled worker route. We deplore ill treatment of anyone in our industry, but we also deplore the misrepresentation of our industry.

"There is a raft of strong, protective modern legislation in place in the UK fishing industry, and active and engaged regulatory bodies with powers to enforce it. The MCA recently undertook an unannounced inspection campaign of hundreds of fishing vessels across the whole of the UK. The MCA did not raise any issues with industry concerning the working and living conditions or treatment of fishing crew.

"What the reports have done, however, is shine a light on issues that we have been raising with government for many years – that the transit visa system is flawed and that the skilled worker route which is now available, is not working. It is unfortunate that the reports did not tell the full story. Those parts of the fishing industry that rely on migrant crew have been seeking an alternative to the transit visa for many years now. We hope that the ITF research highlights why the fishing industry needs an alternative immigration option, and why the government must work with us to make the skilled worker route actually work."

Ms Macdonald added that the immigration system needs to work better, the task ahead cannot just rest with the fishing industry. The FWA is calling on government (including Defra,

Home Office and MCA) to work collaboratively on this and is:

- Seeking a roundtable with Defra and the Home Office to address, once and for all, the issues that exist with the transit visa and to identify and implement the appropriate solutions for the catching sector to recruit the crew it needs.
- Engaging directly with MCA on the enforcement of the ILO.188 regulations and their concentrated inspection campaigns
- Inviting the ITF, Seafarers Charity and the University of Nottingham to meet to discuss their findings, to share details of the work that industry has been doing over several years and to establish what further steps may need to be taken. "There is no benefit to anyone, least of all migrant crew, from further embedding polarised perspectives on this matter," said Ms Macdonald.
- Seeking to establish a forum that will bring together all parties in the supply chain so that we can look at this as a shared problem and explore shared collective solutions.

"Finally, given the severity of the issues contained in these reports, we fully expect that the information has been shared with the police and other relevant authorities so that the appropriate action can be taken. We neither want nor will tolerate individuals who behave in the manner alleged in our industry."



Spaces are limited so early sign up is recommended.

These are strenuous, physical events, which are not for the faint-hearted. You should be in good physical condition to take part. Participants will be in the pool to experience a realistic man overboard experience under controlled conditions. The events give

attendees experience of what it might be like to be rescued by a helicopter.

Trinity House and The Maritime & Coastguard Agency have provided the funding for the events. This means fishermen can be reimbursed for travel and subsistence costs in

Shetland and Orkney fishermen attending the course in Aberdeen.

attending. They can also claim accommodation costs if required.

■ For more information on the events and to book a place, email the Fishermen's Training team at training@seafish.co.uk

New Fishing Partnership Enters Industry

A new fishing partnership has entered the shetland industry after buying the whitefish trawler *Devotion* (LK801) from skipper Gary Smith and partners.

Brodie Ramsay, Jack Garrick (19), and skipper John Williamson (53) are joint owners of the 23-metre vessel, built in 1993.

The sale of the vessel, including licences and quota, marks another chapter in the ongoing process of younger crews taking over.

Twenty year old Ramsay, from Ollaberry, who has already been at the fishing for the last five years, said the move felt like a “good opportunity to get into the industry”.

Former skipper Gary Smith said he had been at the fishing for 33 years and had been wanting to downsize for some time. He has now switched to working inshore with his own creel boat.

Ramsay said he accepted that this was not the easiest time to join the industry, which is suffering from ever increasing running costs.

“It will be difficult with the price of fuel and the quota just



New ownership Devotion LK 801 leaving on the crews maiden trip headed to the fishing grounds north of Shetland.

now, but we are hoping it will improve in the future. Fuel prices surely can't stay like this for ever,” he said.

He said they were hoping to head out to the fishing ground soon, landing their first catch at the Lerwick fish market towards the end of May.

Earlier this year a younger crew took over the *Copious* (LK985) as part of a generational shift within the local fishing industry, and in December last year the *Sedulous* (LK308) and *Defiant* (LK371) changed hands.

The *Copious* was renamed *Brighter Hope* (LK98) and *Sedulous* is now *Comrades* (LK308).



New Owners and crew, from L-R, Engineer Jethro Smith, Jack Garrick, Brodie Ramsey and Skipper John Williamson. PHOTOS: IVAN REID.

SFA SCOTTISH SKIPPER EXPO VISIT

A TEAM FROM THE SHETLAND FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION attended the recent Skipper Expo in Aberdeen to lobby on a range of issues on behalf of the local industry. Top of the list was the looming spatial squeeze from highly protected marine areas (HPMAs), offshore wind farms and increased fishing effort in the waters around Shetland which the industry fears will displace food production.

Executive officer Sheila Keith took the opportunity to press the case for fishing directly to Scottish rural affairs minister Mairi Gougeon and her officials. “The Scottish Government needs to realise that while we need more renewables it cannot come at the cost of an already climate smart industry,” she said.

“If you constrict the fishing grounds you lose high protein, low carbon sustainable seafood and that has to be replaced with alternative forms of food, the vast majority of which are much more carbon intensive. It is a matter of getting the locations right, away from grounds that have yielded catches for hundreds of years. Fish catching needs enough marine space to succeed.”

The team also highlighted the new Land in Shetland campaign, which the SFA is backing, designed to encourage non-Shetland vessels to land to the two fantastic new markets in the isles and save fuel in the process.



Sheila Keith SFA, meets with Rural Affairs Cabinet Secretary Mairi Gougeon.

Faroe Grants Russia Licence To Fish In UK Waters

THE 1ST MATE OF SHETLAND PELAGIC trawler *Altaire* has written to prime minister Boris Johnson urging the UK Government to act over Russian factory ships fishing for blue whiting in UK waters around 100 miles to the west of the isles.

Colin Leask said that at the time of writing in early May there were 11 Russian vessels in the UK's shared zone with the Faroe Islands fishing for a "ridiculously inflated" quota of 75,000 tonnes of blue whiting.

The crewman's appeal is the latest attempt by the industry to get the government to close a loophole that enables Russian vessels to fish inside UK waters at a time of "supposedly strict sanctions" against the country in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

Leask wrote: "With Russia still carrying out horrific atrocities against the Ukrainian people on a daily basis, and with the EU and UK supposedly having strict sanctions set in place against Russia, how are 11 Russian factory ships allowed to openly fish in UK waters?"

Fishing minister Victoria Prentis said in parliament in late April that the UK had no jurisdiction over vessels fishing in the 'Special Area' operating under licences issued by the Faroese government.

The Special Area is the result of continental shelf boundary negotiations between the UK and Faroe allowing both countries to implement separate fisheries management measures in these waters.

On 6 May the Faroese Parliament agreed sanctions against Russia and Belarus, but decided to keep ports open to Russian fishing vessels.

In a statement, the government said: "Faroese sanctions will largely follow and resemble those of the EU and like-minded partners.

"The Faroe Islands intends to adopt Faroese port closures for Russian vessels. The Faroe Islands and Russia have for decades cooperated on fisheries, jointly managing fish stocks in the North Atlantic, including some of the world's largest fish stocks. This cooperation is a necessity for joint fishery management.

"To the same extent as some like-minded

partners, the government of the Faroe Islands takes into account the potential long-term destabilising consequences of a port closure for Russian fishing vessels for this joint management. For these reasons, port closures will not apply to Russian fishing vessels."

Faroese prime minister Bárður á Steig Nielsen said the current agreement does not allow Faroe to restrict the access of Russian vessels to the Special Area in 2022.

The 45th Joint Faroese – Russian Fisheries Commission Agreement – signed on the 26 November 2021 – gives Faroese fishing vessels access to 15,356 tonnes of cod, 2,343 tonnes of haddock, 900 tonnes of flatfish and 2,500 tonnes of shrimp in the Barents Sea. Leask continued: "Regarding fishing access and quota distribution, how can the Faroese Government be in a position to grant Russia an allocation of 75,000 tonnes of blue whiting quota to be fished within UK waters?"

"This 75,000 tonnes allocated from Faroe to Russia is actually 28.5 per cent more than the allocated quota given to the entire UK pelagic fleet for fishing within its own waters.

"With the total UK blue whiting quota for 2022 only being 58,939 tonnes, how is a third-party country allowed to be allocated more quota within our waters than our own UK vessels?"

Leask said what he does not understand is why the fisheries exchange agreement between Russia and the Faroe Islands is being allowed to be fished in UK waters.

"How can this be an equally shared zone when 100 per cent of the zone is inside UK waters?" he asked, and added: "This irresponsible allocation of quota by Faroe in the long term will be devastating for the UK pelagic sector."

"Regarding fishing access and quota distribution, how can the Faroese Government be in a position to grant Russia an allocation of 75,000 tonnes of blue whiting quota to be fished within UK waters?" Colin Leask

Election Candidate Said It Would Be 'Inappropriate' To Give Pledge To One Lobby Group

While the overwhelming majority of candidates signed a pledge to actively support the Shetland fishing industry ahead of the 5 May council election, some decided against putting pen to paper.

Explaining his decision to "respectfully decline" the invitation to sign the pledge, Lerwick South candidate Dennis Leask (below) said: "For me, a councillor is elected to serve their voters on ward issues and Shetland-wide where appropriate.

"To give a pledge to any one lobby group would be simply inappropriate."

Mr Leask won the vote with 302 first preference votes ahead of John Fraser, Cecil Smith and Neil Pearson



who were all elected to represent the four councillors ward on Shetland Islands Council.

Leask continued: "I am quite sure that most people, including

the fishing industry, would find it unacceptable if (Scottish first minister) Nicola Sturgeon openly signed a pledge by the offshore wind energy sector or agriculture but not fishing.

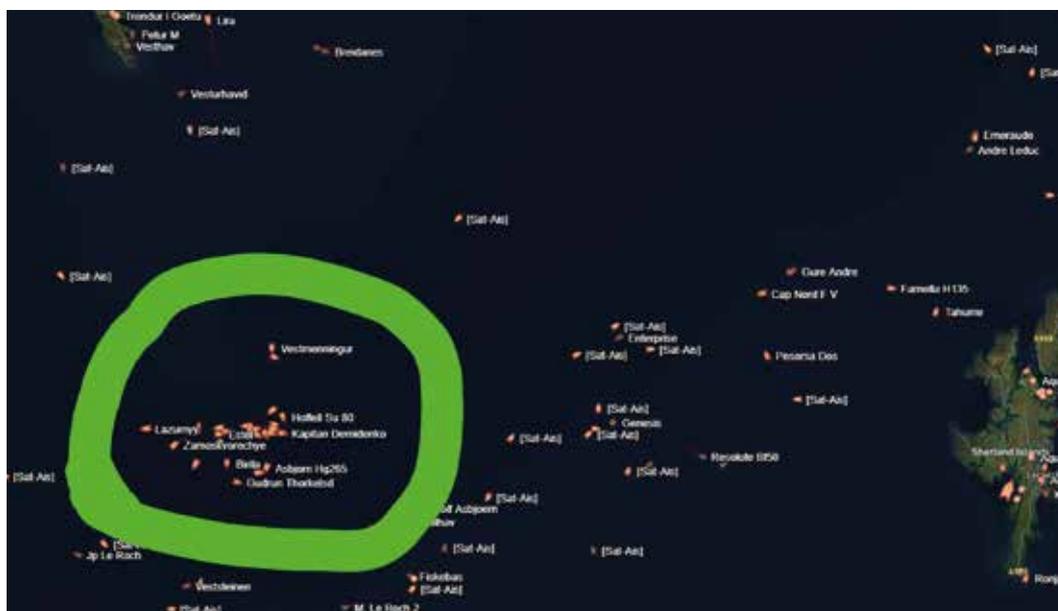
"Issues such as offshore wind versus fishing, NorthLink tourism capacity versus fish capacity, or where there may be competition for funding need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and not taken with the shadow of a pledge hanging over one's shoulder."

A total of 27 out of 35 candidates had signed the pledge which was organised and promoted by Shetland Fishermen's Association.

Executive officer Daniel Lawson said: "Even among those candidates who felt unable to sign, there was broad support for the local fishing fleet, and a reluctance to sign any kind of pledge – rather than reluctance to support fishing in particular," he said.

Leask added that if elected he would "of course" be a strong supporter of Shetland's fishing industry.

"Surely that is a given for any Shetland councillor for such an important part of our island economy," he said. ●



How are 11 Russian factory ships allowed to openly fish in UK waters while the war in Ukraine rages on?

Fishermen are not very pleased with being spied on from the sky.



DRONES UNCOVER GREATER DISCARDS

THE INTRODUCTION OF DRONES during fishery inspections in Iceland has revealed that discards are probably ten times more frequent than previously thought. At the beginning of 2021, the Directorate of Fisheries in Iceland started monitoring discards at sea with the help of drones. Prior to that time the number of discard cases were usually less than 10 annually. For example, there was only one such case reported between the 1st of September 2020 and mid-January 2021.

Spike in discard cases

By the end of 2021, however, about 140 discard cases had been reported, almost all of them uncovered during drone surveillance. Discards were detected from about 48% of all boats that were flown over by drones regardless of the type of fishing gear used. Some of the cases involved the discard of two or more fish per minute and up to one third of a vessel's total catch, according to a report in Iceland Review.

Mostly close to shore

It has been pointed out that the drone surveillance is mostly carried out from land, and as a consequence, the cases mostly involve smaller and medium-size vessels that fish closer to the shore. Some drone surveillance, however, is carried out from ships and four discard cases involved bottom trawlers of the largest size.

The drones used by the Directorate of Fisheries have a flying range of 10-15 kilometers but this summer a larger drone will be acquired and placed onboard a coast guard vessel on a trial basis with the intention of increasing the monitoring of the trawler fleet.

Most cases without punishment

Most of the discard cases last year concluded with a letter from the Directorate of Fisheries stating that it is against the law to throw catch back into the sea, while three cases resulted in formal warnings and one in a temporary suspension of a fishing license. That particular boat was caught throwing back into the ocean at least 72 bottom fish, mostly cod, during a 40 minute video taping by the drone.

Personal privacy

It goes without saying that fishermen caught in the act are

not very pleased with being spied on from the sky while they are going about their business and have accused the authorities of not respecting their personal privacy when sneaking upon them like that. The Directorate of Fisheries has countered that the drone surveillance is fully in accordance with the law on the right to privacy in Iceland.

Data being processed

The Directorate of Fisheries assesses, after this first year of drone surveillance, that the extent of illegal discards in Icelandic waters is far greater than previously thought. However, the data collected needs to be better processed and records revamped

The Directorate of Fisheries has countered that the drone surveillance is fully in accordance with the law on the right to privacy in Iceland.

to facilitate statistical analysis in order to accurately assess the scope. That work is now ongoing.



All types of boats have been monitored by drones.

Communication is the Key to Unlocking Ireland's Maritime Potential

'Communication works for those who work at it.'

By Capt Brian FitzGerald, Simply Blue Group

THROUGHOUT 2021, with the excellent help of our Fishery Liaison Officers, I visited fishing piers along the coast from the Aran Islands to Kilmore Quay. While there I met some of the hardest working people in Ireland as they put to sea in some of the roughest seas in the world to earn their livelihood harvesting some of the finest food in the world for all to enjoy. Today, on foot of the triple whammy of climate, biodiversity and energy security crises, those rough seas have attracted an offshore renewable energy industry to Ireland, the likes of which has never been seen before. The economic opportunity for maritime Ireland and its coastal communities is enormous as the scale of the technology, its supply chain and its consequent route to market match the scale of Ireland's met-ocean conditions, geostrategic location, and continental shelf to represent the renewable energy equivalent of a huge resource find that will never diminish.

Arising from conversations with the fishermen on those piers, the Emerald and Western Star projects sponsored and drove a Seafarer's Conference to explore the maritime skills and qualifications needed to optimise the opportunity from this dramatic new era for maritime Ireland. The Conference was held at the NMCI in March and demonstrated that fishing communities are worried about the future for their industry while also revealing a healthy scepticism towards offshore renewable energy developments. Nonetheless, the Conference delivered six actions for both communities and environmental interests to work towards a co-existent, prosperous, and sustainable future. Three of the recommendations from the Conference depend upon trusted and detailed communication. *These recommendations comprise:*

- A requirement that Ireland must build and sustain an agile maritime workforce to meet the skills needs for a zero-carbon economy.
- That the offshore renewable energy industry and Ireland's fishing industry must work together.
- That Ireland should prioritise investment in building a supply chain to optimize local content opportunities as renewable energy developments unfold.

For Ireland to realise the opportunities from offshore renewable energy, the consenting regime and associated planning processes for developments are thorough and detailed. Importantly, within the licencing and consenting process, an offshore energy project must engage with statutory consultees. The recommendations, called "licence conditions", from such consultees include the appointment of a fishery liaison officer (FLO) to consult with



John Power and Brian FitzGerald, FLO on Dingle Pier.

fishermen and relevant fishermen's groups in order that appropriate actions can be taken to avoid or minimise any interactions with ongoing fishing activities in the area during survey work and investigations. This is also the practice internationally.

To conduct this required fishery liaison work, the Emerald Project appointed 'Fishery Liaisons' Ltd from Cork, and the Western Star Project appointed 'Emerald Marine Environmental Consultancy' Ltd from Galway. It is as important to both Emerald and Western Star, the respective fishery liaison companies, and the fishing communities alike that all our communications are thorough, frequent, and trusted in order to ensure that effected fishermen and other stakeholders are fully informed of all associated activity that may impact on their activity. We achieve this by putting our values into action as both the Emerald and Western Star Projects champion safety of life at sea and a sustainable future for all throughout our dealings. Our fishery liaison officers disseminate accurate project information that is clear and concise, so that fishers can make well-informed decisions. Fishermen can expect that our fishery liaison officers guarantee clear and transparent engagement as they occupy a delicate space between two industries whereby their own fishing, maritime and environmental expertise enables understanding.

Through extensive, trusted, and timely communications, understanding can be achieved towards a brighter future for Ireland's fishing and coastal communities in healthy and sustainable co-existence with offshore renewable energy.

Today's milestone announcement of the

appointment of Captain Robert McCabe as the Chair of Ireland's Seafood/Offshore Renewable Energy Working Group is a timely development.

It is hoped that this working group will develop guidelines for an agreed scheme for compensation to deal with fishermen and others who will be displaced by the development of offshore renewable energy projects.

Through such schemes our fishermen and the foreign direct investors needed by Ireland to deliver its climate action targets and our maritime potential will be able to plan towards that sustainable future for all. In addition, it is expected that the Seafood WG will agree an arbitration process for dispute resolution.

Meanwhile, should any fisherman feel unfairly treated by the systems in place nationally or with individual developers, as with all things in Ireland's constitutional democracy, pursuit of a legal remedy through the Courts is always a fall-back option.

However, as we in the offshore renewable energy industry and our associated fishery liaison officers continue to work on trusted communications with our stakeholders, we hope that Ireland's fishing community works with us every step of the way, so that Ireland, and our fishing and coastal communities reap the full benefits of what can be described as a golden opportunity. Through our working together, the many challenges before us can be resolved towards a brighter and sustainable future for all. Once again, *Ní neart go chur le chéile.* ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Captain Brian FitzGerald is the Director of External Affairs and Stakeholder Liaison at Simply Blue Group. www.simplyblueenergy.com



Scottish Skipper Expo 2022 SHOW REVIEW

SHOW SPONSOR



P&J LIVE, Aberdeen, 13-14th May, 2022



SHOW OPENING HOURS: Friday: 10am-6pm Saturday: 10am-4pm



SHOWSTOPPER: The new larger venue P&J Live in Aberdeen proved to be a big hit.

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Mairi Gougeon and SFF Chief Executive Elspeth Macdonald with show organisers Hugh Bonner and Sharon Boyle.

Scottish Skipper Expo 2022 rides the crest of a wave

EVEN BEFORE THE doors opened at Scottish Skipper Expo 2022 there was a perceptible air of excitement among the exhibitors at the superb exhibiting hall of the P&J Live arena in Aberdeen. The visitors' car park was filling-up nicely and after a challenging two years caused by the pandemic, the Scottish fishing industry was once more looking forward to a showcase exhibition.

Once the show opened at 10am on Friday 13 May, the exhibition hall filled quickly and there was a real buzz in the atmosphere. This had all the hallmarks of being a great show – and so it proved, with energy coursing through the aisles as people relished the opportunity to meet with exhibiting companies, as well friends and colleagues, in a face-to-face setting again.

The expo was opened by Elspeth Macdonald, CEO of the **Scottish Fishermen's Federation**, who sponsored the show, and **Mairi Gougeon**, Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, who wished everyone a fabulous couple of days at the expo. "It is fantastic that everyone is able to get together today," she said in her opening address.

Elspeth Macdonald said: "It was a pleasure to welcome Rural Affairs Secretary Mairi Gougeon MSP to the Skipper Expo,

which I'm pleased to say was very busy after two years with no collective industry events."

Excellent business was conducted across the two days, with exhibitors noting the benefit of meeting customers in person and networking with other companies – it really was an opportunity to be cherished. One major beneficiary was boatbuilder Parkol Marine, who signed a contract for a new vessel to be constructed for Andy and Joshua Buchan.

Among the star attractions in the spacious exhibiting hall was a fishing vessel display from Poleson Marine, which offered visitors the opportunity to experience at first hand a new boat design.

At the end of the first day, a complimentary show reception was held in the Douglas Hotel, sponsored by **Sunderland Marine** and **Commercial Oils**. This proved the perfect venue for the industry to come together and catch up with one another in a social setting. The highest quality Scottish seafood on the night was supplied by fish merchants **G J Jack** and **Messrs' J Smith**.

Sharon Boyle, Commercial Fishing Manager for show organiser, Mara Media, said she was thrilled by the success of the show and especially pleased with the new



Scottish Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs Mairi Gougeon meets Skipper editor Niall Duffy.

venue at the P&J Live.

"The P&J Live was superb and the popularity of the event resulted in us receiving interest from exhibitors in the run up to the show, with the larger venue enabling us to accommodate new exhibitors at the last minute, which added to the huge variety of stands available to visit. There were over 180 exhibiting companies present, which ensured that this was a show that had something for everyone.

"I would like to thank all exhibitors for their tremendous support, and we are already making plans for Scottish Skipper Expo 2023 – watch this space!" ●

BROUGHT TO YOU WITH





VISITING TIME: Noreen Boyle, Mara Media, welcomes visitors at the registration desk.



FUTURE SKIPPER? Nice beanie hat!



BAGS OF FUN: Happy guests flood in.

COMPLIMENTARY SHOW RECEPTION AT THE DOUGLAS HOTEL



EXHIBITORS RECEPTION: The industry enjoyed the complimentary reception at the Douglas Hotel, with seafood supplied by G J Jack and Messrs' J Smith.



SUNDERLAND MARINE TEAM: Main sponsors of the Exhibitors Reception night.



COMMERCIAL OILS TEAM: Main sponsors of the Exhibitors Reception night.



Julian Osbourne of Mermaid Marine discussing the latest products with visitors.



Hero Bouwman, Yanmar, catching up with Ole Knarberg, Lyngaa Marine, and Svein Tore Tande of Nogva.



Armon Shipyards UK representative Pete Ekers greeting visitors.



Steven Wood of Woodsons showcasing the latest products to Cabinet Secretary, Mairi Gougeon and SFF CEO Elspeth Macdonald.



Vignir Óskarsson presenting gear at the Mar Wear stand.



David Buchan and Margie Davidson of Buchanhaven Heritage Group.



Visitors enjoying a close up look at the Poleson Marine boat design.



Andy and Joshua Buchan signing a new boat deal with Parkol Marine.



Henrik Andreassen of Thyboron Trawldoors showcasing their latest products.



Steve Henry L&M Engineering at their impressive stand with Cummins.



Andrew Masson discussing potential deals with customers at Echomaster Marine.



George Youngson meeting visitors at the Marport stand.



Alex Firth of R&D Marine demonstrating to visitors.



Attendees checking out the information on offer at the Trefjar stand.



Colin Stephen, Harvest Hope catching up with industry friends.



Maloy Maritime Group discussing recent boat builds with Andy Buchan.



Visitors check out the innovative products at the Proteum stand.



Swan Net's James Cunningham showcasing the latest designs.



The Scottish Fishermen's Federation (Show Sponsors) stand was awash with visitors throughout the weekend.



Ivan Wilde catching up with colleague Michael Chase.



Trainee Fisherman of the Year, Isla Gale celebrating her award at the Sunderland Marine stand.



Ashley Mullenger 'The Female Fisherman' and crewmate Nigel visits the show.



The youth of the industry checking out what each stand had to offer.



David Ash of Mantsbrite Marine demonstrating products.



John Sinclair greeting customers at the Caithness Creels stand.



Jim Cowie of JC Hydraulics happy to be catching up with customers.



Sebastien Duvail of Guy Cotten presenting the range of gear to customers.



Daniel Vlietland of Padmos, caught up with Dutch fishermen at the show.



Visitors trying out the products on the Solent Engineering stand with David Ash.



Finning's Gordon Dalrymple introducing their latest products to potential customers.



Furuno's flagship stand caught the attention of visitors throughout the show.



Shetland Fishermen, George Anderson, Fred Polson, Bobby Polson and Stuart Anderson enjoying the show.

Safe Manning Rules Come into Force

BIM urges owners and skippers of 15m vessels and above to endorse Certificate of Competency as transitional period for compliance with new Safe Manning Legislation ends

As the transitional period for compliance with Safe Manning legislation ends, Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's Seafood Development Agency is urging all skippers of vessels of 15 metres in length and above that hold a Second Hand Limited (SHL) certificate, to ensure their Certificate of Competency is endorsed for service as Second Hand Special.

Skippers and owners should check whether they need a second crewmember with a Certificate of Competency to be on board to comply with the regulations.

Information on certificates of competency and endorsements may be obtained at www.seafarers.ie.

At least 12 months of sea service is required to obtain an endorsement to a SHL certificate. Safe manning relates to the

safe operation of fishing vessels and takes account of the safe navigation of the vessel, operations, machinery, and maintenance. On December 19th, 2019 it became a legal requirement for all fishing vessels of 15 metres in length and above, to apply a safe manning document from the Marine Survey Office (MSO) and Department of Transport. Application forms are available from Gov.ie (MSO Application forms - FV Less than 500gt)

BIM is an approved provider of maritime training on behalf of the MSO. Its two National Fisheries Colleges of Ireland in Greencastle, Co Donegal and in Castletownbere, Co Cork and its mobile Coastal Training Units deliver training to fishers throughout Ireland, to support a safe and professional industry.

To apply to endorse your certificate of competency contact the Mercantile Marine Office at the address below or to find out more information, please contact either of the BIM colleges by email or phone.



BIM provides training at the National Fisheries College in Castletownbere.

Mercantile Marine Office (MMO)
Maritime Services Division,
Irish Maritime Administration,
Department of Transport, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, D02TR60.
Tel: +353 (0) 1 6783480
Email: Admin@seafarers.ie

BIM National Fisheries College of Ireland, Greencastle, Co Donegal

Tel: + 353 74 938 1068

Email: maria.mccarron@bim.ie

BIM National Fisheries College of Ireland, Castletownbere, Co Cork

Tel: + 353 27 7 1220

Email: della.osullivan@bim.ie

Deckhand Foundation Programme Certificate



Learn essential skills from experienced trainers which include **Basic Net Mending, Rope Work, Stability, Chartwork, Care of the Catch, Sustainability, Food Safety and Marine Engine Operations.**

An introduction to these skills will allow you successfully start your career as a deckhand in the fishing industry. A range of sector certificates will also be obtained during the course if successfully completed.

Certification

STCW Certificate in:

- Personal Survival Techniques
- Elementary First Aid
- Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities
- Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting
- Issued with a BIM Safety Card
- GMDSS Short Range Radio Certificate issued by the Department of Transport

Course Dates

Six-week programme running from Monday 12th September 2022 - Friday 21st October 2022

Venue

BIM National Fisheries College of Ireland, Greencastle, Co. Donegal.

Further Information and booking

Contact

Maria McCarron, College Administrator,

T +353 (0) 749 381068
E maria.mccarron@bim.ie



Rialtas na hÉireann
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Irish Skipper Expo 2023



Your Industry – Your Show

UL Sport Limerick 24-25th February, 2023

SHOW OPENING HOURS: Friday: 10am-6pm Saturday: 10am-4pm



Niall Connolly

- Louth:

*"Good show.
Good venue.
Showcased our
industry in a good
professional
manner."*



- Bigger Venue
- Outside Display Area
- Special Hotel Rates
- Complimentary Show Reception

Robert McCabe

- Mayo:

*"Much more than
a show. Great access
to multiple suppliers
with expert advice
and products
on hand."*



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Mob: 00353 (0)86 8401250

Email: sharon@maramedia.ie

Web: www.theskipper.ie

SHOW ORGANISERS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
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Ireland on the Water Expo – Busy summer ahead in the Marine Leisure Industry

FIRST INTERNATIONAL WATER SPORTS EXHIBITION CONTINUES TO GROW

AS THE COUNTDOWN continues to Ireland's first international water sports exhibition, the industry continues to grow from strength to strength. With a newfound passion for all things water related, from sea swimming to pleasure boat trips and kayaking, the response to the announcement of **Ireland on the Water Expo** has been phenomenal.

Set to take place at the **Eikon Centre**, Lisburn (home to the Balmoral Show), **Ireland on the Water Expo**, from 4th – 5th March 2023, will showcase the breadth of products, gear and services available to consumers throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland.

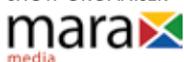
Grace McDermott, show organiser, is overwhelmed by the positive response from potential visitors and exhibitors since the launch. "Since the initial launch, the team and I have taken to the road to visit a range of shows throughout the country to discuss the show concept with potential clients.

"The feedback has been amazing, and there is a genuine sense of excitement among exhibitors to bring the entire marine leisure industry together under one roof. Our aim is to design a show with maximum reward potential for our exhibitors, while maintaining full focus on developing an unforgettable experience for our visitors."

With the view of generating an exciting social media campaign, that not only promotes the show but also highlights the range of sea-based activities taking place throughout the country, the Ireland on the Water team will travel to events over the summer to bring a taste of the show to all. Whether you are looking for an engine for an angling boat, or a wet suit for the new kayaking season, **Ireland on the Water Expo** will have everything you need under one roof.

Interested in exhibiting at the show?

SHOW ORGANISER



To find out more about exhibiting at the show, contact Grace Mc Dermott... Email: grace@maramedia.ie or Tel: 0867748216



Ireland on the Water Expo will have everything under one roof.



SHOW DATES
March 4-5th
2023

EIKON
Exhibition Centre
The show will be held at the state-of-the-art Eikon Exhibition Centre, Northern Ireland's largest events campus.



www.irelandonthewaterexpo.ie





ACR Electronics and Ocean Signal will introduce new AIS EPIRBs this year.

ACR Electronics and Ocean Signal develop Next-Gen EPIRBs

MORE FEATURES AND UPDATED STANDARDS

Safety specialists ACR Electronics and Ocean Signal have announced the development of next generation EPIRBs which meet upcoming standards and incorporate more features to significantly enhance the chance of rescue in an emergency.

Introducing integrated AIS (Automatic Identification System) within their EPIRBs for the first time in conjunction with further new technology, ACR and Ocean Signal will launch the advanced beacons this year ahead of the enforcement of new updated IMO (International Maritime Organization) Maritime Safety Committee EPIRB regulations.

AIS EPIRBs will offer both recreational and commercial users the extra reassurance that other nearby vessels will be notified in an emergency, in addition to the beacon's traditional capabilities to transmit a 406 MHz distress signal via the Cospas-Sarsat satellite system to contact global rescue services.

Effective from July 1, 2022, the new IMO rules state that vessels under SOLAS regulations will have to fit a new EPIRB with an internal AIS locating signal and an internal GNSS receiver, along with the 406 MHz and 121.5 MHz transmitters, when current devices are due for replacement.

Recreational boats and other non-SOLAS vessels can continue to install the EPIRBs permitted under their national regulations, with many countries expected to enforce the IMO AIS EPIRB mandate in one to two years' time due to the life-saving benefits offered by these

new beacons.

The IMO updated its EPIRB requirements in June 2019 to instigate essential improvements in performance and design of one of the most important safety devices carried onboard by a range of recreational and commercial vessels.

EPIRBs (Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons) are installed on a vessel for activation in a life-threatening emergency, such as sinking, collision and accident. Using the 406 MHz frequency and the Cospas-Sarsat satellite system, the devices have saved thousands of lives, but recovery by rescue services may be



ACR have integrated AIS within their EPIRBs for the first time in conjunction with further new technology.

“ACR and Ocean Signal emphasize to all boat owners and operators that EPIRBs are a vital element of your safety kit.”

delayed, especially in remote ocean areas.

Introducing the AIS locating signal ensures a signal will also be received by all vessels and aircraft equipped with AIS in the vicinity, enabling them to respond with immediate assistance.

Further new standards for EPIRBs enforced by the IMO make a GNSS receiver mandatory to improve the accuracy of the location provided to the rescue services, whilst also requiring an infrared light, as well as visible light, to facilitate rescue in poor visibility or at night.

The combination of an accurate location received via the Cospas-Sarsat satellites and an AIS signal from the EPIRB will enable Search and Rescue authorities to direct search efforts via satellite communications to the area of the incident, whereupon the ship's own AIS equipment will enable them to locate the EPIRB, thus effecting a speedier rescue in remote locations.

Mikele D'Arcangelo, Vice President of Global Marketing and Product Management for ACR Electronics, said: “We are delighted to confirm that ACR Electronics and Ocean Signal are in the final stages of developing and testing next generation EPIRBs which will offer much more than the newly mandated technology.

The feedback and demand from our customers about the features they want are clear, so we have listened and incorporated innovations within our new EPIRBs that will set new standards in the industry. These beacons will meet all regulatory requirements and offer the leading EPIRB solution for all vessels.

“EPIRBs have always been effective at alerting the rescue services to an emergency via satellite, but they were not good at notifying other vessels nearby. AIS changes this and is a feature that is of benefit to recreational vessels, as well as SOLAS ones, in that it enables you and other vessels nearby to aid in the rescue.

“As leading safety specialists and beacon innovators for many years, ACR and Ocean Signal emphasize to all boat owners and operators that EPIRBs are a vital element of your safety kit. For those people affected by the IMO AIS EPIRB mandate and for any boaters who want the additional reassurance of AIS or to ensure they meet future regulations, our latest EPIRBs will be ready for the July 2022 deadline. Our existing EPIRBs will continue to be approved and available for use in applications that do not have to comply with the new IMO requirements.” ●

■ ACR agents in Ireland are Swan Net Gundry and CH Marine.

■ For more information on Ocean Signal beacons and other safety equipment, go to: www.sng.ie/fishing or www.chmarine.com





Parkol's new MFV 'Day Dawn'

**BRUCE BROTHERS NEW VESSEL
ARRIVES IN FRASERBURGH**

WORDS: MIKE MONTGOMERIE PHOTOS: EUGENE RUTTER

Above: Day Dawn heads out for her fishing trials.

Recently the new 22.2 metre twin rig trawler, *Day Dawn FR 90*, for skipper Chaz Bruce and his brother Martin Bruce, in partnership with **P and J Johnstone**, completed engine trials where she achieved a speed of 11.1 knots. Several days later Day Dawn left the Parkol yard in Whitby to steam to Fraserburgh to take on the trawl gear and undertake fishing trials. Having completed their fishing trials Chaz said, *'The boat performed well, it was very quiet, generally really impressed and everything seems to have worked out well, I'm very pleased with the new boat'*. Day Dawn is a replacement for Chaz and Martin's previous vessel, the 19m long *MFV Challenger*, also FR90 that was completed by Parkol in 2010.

Challenger remains in Fraserburgh, having been sold to James and AJ Third and renamed the Harvest Moon. Chaz and

Martin have named their new vessel Day Dawn to honour the memory of their father as that was the name of the boat that he had when they both started at sea with him.

Construction of the new vessel, that was designed by Ian Paton of **SC McAllister and Co Ltd**, started in Parkol Marine Engineering yard in February 2021 and she was lifted into the water just over a year later on March 12th 2022.

Day Dawn, insured by **Sunderland Marine**, is built in steel, of round bilge construction with a bulbous bow and an aluminium wheelhouse atop the steel deck housing. She is 22.2metres overall length with a beam of 7.5 metres and a gross tonnage of 215 tonnes. The boat has an impressive crest on the stem of an 8 pointed compass star with the skippers clan name 'Bruce' above it and the clan motto 'Fumius' below.



The Shelter deck showing the gilson gantry and Seaquest systems crane and gilson.

“The boat performed well, it was very quiet, generally really impressed and everything seems to have worked out well, I’m very pleased with the new boat” Chaz Bruce

Like their last vessel the new boat is powered by a **Caterpillar** main engine. This vessel is fitted with a Cat C32 rated at 492 KW driving a Masson MM W7400 gear box with a reduction ration of 9.077 to one. This turns an innovative 2.5m diameter six bladed propellor in a nozzle, both supplied by Promarin. This combination is to improve efficiency and give quieter running with less vibration. This appears to be working as Chaz confirmed that the boat was very quiet without any vibration during the sea trials.

In recent years **Promarin** have supplied several propellers to other UK fishing vessels with good results. The three auxiliary engines are also from Caterpillar, one C12 rated at 340 hp mounted on top of the port fuel tank to power the main hydraulic pumps. On the starboard fuel tank at the other side of the engine room



Parkol
Marine Engineering | Est.1971

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 Web: www.parkol.co.uk



Congratulations to Chaz, Martin and Fuimus LLP with your new vessel ‘Day Dawn’. We wish you safe and successful fishing.



Aft view of the wheelhouse with the winch controls and office space.



Caterpillar propulsion engine.

are two smaller Caterpillar C4.4 marine open generator sets providing electrical power for the vessel. Bilge and deck wash duties are provided by two Azcue CA-80-5a general service pumps, with two Azcue 80/17 pumps on deck for clearing the deck sumps.

The exhausts from all the engines are channelled upwards through the main deckhouse and out above the aft port corner of the wheelhouse.

A total of 18,700 litres of fuel is stored in four tanks. 17,600 litres of fresh water is stored in a tank under the fish room floor. The vessel is divided below decks by water tight bulkheads into four areas, the accommodation aft, then moving forward the engine room and then the fish room and right forward the forepeak, housing the KT 12L 500mm diameter bow thruster.

The fish room can hold in the region of 700 boxes and is fully insulated and fibre glassed lined. The fish room is refrigerated by an air blown system supplied and fitted by **Airo-tech Solutions** from Fraserburgh. They also supplied the Geneglance 2.5 ton ice machine. All the refrigeration machinery, including the ice machinery, is housed in a central compartment alongside the fish hopper on the main deck, cleverly utilising some of the void below the fish hopper. This system has already been fitted to several other NE boats

There is a small tugger winch from **Seaquest Systems** rated at 1.5 tonne fitted in the fish room for hauling the tiers of boxes forward to below the landing hatch. This winch has local fixed controls and a push button type radio control.

The catch arrives into the fish room by way of a chute direct from deck into a small reception selection tray ready

for final weighing and packing. Weighing done with set of VCU scales supplied by **Woodsons of Aberdeen**, that delivers the information directly up to the E log station in the wheelhouse helping to provide full catch traceability.

MAIN DECK

On the main deck right forward is a weather tight compartment housing the two speed, three drum 32.7 tone twin rig trawl winch with hydraulic spooling, that was supplied (along with the other deck machinery) net drums and crane etc, by **Seaquest Systems of Killybegs**. Each barrel of this winch is spooled with 300 fathoms of warp supplied by **Karl Thomson, Buckie**.

The trawl winch has been designed to be able to be fully controlled from the wheelhouse

in a similar manner to if it were three split winches as well as local controls. Full video camera surveillance of all moving parts of this system ensures safe operation. The three warps are led from the winch up above the shelter deck and aft to the three Fleming fairleads hanging blocks on the gantry aft.

Aft of this is, the separated by a watertight bulkhead is the main fish processing area, this has the deck sheathed in blue epoxy resin from **PBP Services** in Fraserburgh. To starboard is the fish reception hopper leading into a fish selection tray running aft down the starboard with space for the crew between it and the vessel side.

Running along the inboard side of the selection tray there is a narrow separate section for the crew to put the prawn tails in. From here they get washed aft

into a basket ready for washing in one of the two prawn washers. Inboard of this section is a raised rack to hold 10 baskets for selecting the other prawns and fish into. The fish/prawn selection tray and prawn washers were supplied by **Seagate Fabrications from Peterhead**.

After being washed the baskets of prawns are stowed in racks on the deck before being passed down into the fish room for weighing and packing. Alongside the fish hopper, forward is a compartment housing the refrigeration equipment and the 2.5t *Geneglance ice machine* that leads directly into the ice lockers in the fish room below.

The main fish room landing hatch in the main deck is slightly offset to port with a dedicated and crew access hatch further forward on the port side of the vessel. This gives the crew easier and safer access to the fish room when at sea. The landing hatch in the shelter deck is also offset that helps to give a clear run aft for the centre. At the port side of the main deck is a hatch and stairwell providing the main access to the shelter deck. At the after end port side is fitted with basket storage racks.

GALLEY AND MESS

Aft of the processing deck is the galley and mess deck accessed through the changing room oilskin storage/walkway on the port side. This area has heated racks and hanging space for the crews' oilskins, boots, and lifejackets to keep the dry, this area is also has a resin sheathed floor. From this compartment there is access, through watertight doors, forward to the main processing deck and right aft to the trawl quarter deck and to starboard is the main





access to the accommodation section.

Immediately inside the accommodation unit on the left is a stairwell up to the wheelhouse above, opposite this is the stacked washing machine and tumble dryer, then the doorway leading down to the crew accommodation. Opposite this is the toilet and shower. Straight ahead is the roomy and well equipped galley fitted out with light coloured moulded worktops. Galley equipment includes, along the aft bulkhead, a full height fridge/freezer, a full height freezer, Siemens oven, hob, and microwave and a Quooker boiling water tap to save the need for a kettle on the worktop.

Opposite this is a large galley table, again in the same light colour moulding, with adequate seating for the whole crew and a 55inch flat screen television mounted high on the bulkhead to allow the crew to keep up to date with the latest programs. Under the work surface are storage cupboards and above, there are

many electric sockets complete with USB charging points.

The crew accommodation is accessed by a stairwell from the galley area and consists of two single berth cabins and two cabin 'areas' each with 3 bunks. A hatch allows access to the **Wills Ridley** steering gear. Like many of Parkol's new builds all the sharp bulkhead corners are rounded off giving a roomier feel to the cabin area.

HANDLING AREA

Moving further aft on the main deck to the quarter deck, the main gear handling area dominated by the two **15.6 ton Seaquest Systems split net drums** positioned either side. These net drums have a flange diameter of 2.2 metres and a core pull of 15.6 tonne. The controls for the net drums are positioned aft below the central ramp for the clump weight. The four twin rig trawls supplied by **Faithlie Trawl, Fraserburgh**, are spooled on the two split net drums.

“A weather-tight housing compartment contains the two speed, three drum 32.7 tone twin rig trawl winch with hydraulic spooling, that was supplied by Seaquest Systems of Killybegs”



Prawn washers beside basket storage racks.

The trawls are 2 X 180ft letterbox style trawls with 30ft wide mouths and 2 X 170ft scraper trawls with 20ft mouths, all are rigged on disc footropes. All the nets are made predominately in the latest 'Breztech' twine that has shown to be strong and long lasting in the North Sea prawn fishery, with many skippers specifically requesting this netting for their trawls. Faithlie Trawls also supplied a full rig of sweeps, bridles and a set of Thyboron 72 trawl doors to spread the gear. Shackles, swivels and other chandlery for rigging the gear was from **Jackson Trawls, Fraserburgh.**

Right aft on the are the two large net hatches with rail rollers, in between them, is the plastic covered ramp for secure housing of the centre clump weight when its hauled. The net drum controls are fitted at head height just ahead of this ramp. Access from this gear deck to the shelter deck is by a hatch with ladder situated forward between the two net drums. At shelter deck level above the net drums is the robust gantry with the port and starboard trawl gallows at either side and in the centre, the hanging block for the centre warp, all with trawl blocks are from Fleming Fairleads.

THE GANTRY

Fitted on top of the gantry is the **Seaquest powerblock crane** rated at 1.5 tonnes at 6.5 metres reach to help with gear handling. This crane has the ability to rotate a full 360 degrees. the controls for the Seaquest crane and powerblock are protected in a bespoke stainless steel housing with opening top to access the levers that is fitted right aft on this deck and by a remote radio control



Wheelhouse looking forward with the e log office space in foreground.



The 16 pointed compass star.

unit. Below the gantry there are 2 gear storage pounds each with a double hinged aluminium cover for general gear storage. The idea of the aluminium fitted lids is to protect the stored spare sweeps and netting exposure to the elements and keep them dry until needed. Just ahead of these is the hatch for accessing the aft deck.

Attached to the hand rails around the top of the hatch is the Quicksling man overboard rescue



Fish processing tray.

device in a convenient position to where crew are be working on the open deck.

THE WHEELHOUSE

On the port side, just forward of this hatch is the entry to the wheelhouse from shelter deck level. On the port side immediately in the wheelhouse door is a small sink with a chilled cabinet below, then the hatch to the galley tucked in ahead of this. The wheelhouse is finished in a light wood laminate walls with all sharp corners rounded off and edges trimmed with solid oak along with grey timber effect Karndean floor complete with a 16 point compass star with the vessel name inset into this.

The centre piece of the wheelhouse is the **Norsap wheelhouse chair** with three

55inch 4K flat screens monitors fitted, low level immediately in front. Around the wheelhouse chair is an island console with the *Navitron Autopilot*, engine controls, plotter controls and various radio telephones both on the console and in the overhead displays.

There is full access all around the centre console giving easy access to the steering positions at both sides of the wheelhouse. There are also 8 other 24inch widescreen monitors around the wheelhouse

The whole boat is covered by 10 CCTV cameras, these can be displayed in any configuration on the various monitors in the wheelhouse and a *Phonetech talkback* system to keep the skipper in contact with the crew throughout the boat. The 55inch 4K monitors are operated through



The fishroom showing the refrigeration unit and ice chute.



The Faithlie scraper nets being shot away on sea trials



The two split net drums with Faithlie trawl scraper nets.

a dedicated 4K Multiview wall control system that enables each one to be divided into as many as 9 smaller screens to show radar, plotters, sounders, CCTV cameras etc in whatever configuration that the skipper prefers.

They can also display any of the items on full screen, such as the radar when an expanded presentation would be beneficial, such as when working close to several other vessels or coming into port. All the wheelhouse electronics were supplied and fitted by Woodsons of Aberdeen.

There are engine, bow thruster and steering controls beside the wheelhouse chair, at either side of the wheelhouse and aft alongside the controls for the winch. Immediately behind the wheelhouse chair is a small 'office' space to house the computer for the e log and sat phone etc. In the

starboard aft corner are two more lounge style seats and a table between them.

Forward of the wheelhouse on top of the shelter deck, above the reception hopper, there is a robust Gilson gantry for taking the codend onboard. At its base is a *Seaquest Systems 7 Tonne Gilson* winch. This winch can and the hydraulic ram operating the deck hatch can both be controlled from the wheelhouse, or locally if required. Just ahead of this the anchor and chain is stowed in bespoke shallow deck pound. On the port side forward is the *Seaquest systems fixed boom landing crane* rated at 1000kg at 8 metres reach. Controls for this crane are similar to that of the power block crane with local controls protected in a stainless steel housing and the option to use wireless remote controls. ●

MFV DAY DAWN FR 90

Designer: SC McAllister

Boatyard: Parkol Marine Engineering, Whitby

DIMENSIONS & CAPACITIES

Length overall: 22.2m **Length Registered:** 21.15m

Beam: 7.5m **Depth moulded:** 4.m **Draught:** 4.60m

Tonnage: 215 tonnes gross. **Fuel:** 18,700 litres.

Fresh water: 17,600 litres. **Fish room:** 700 boxes.

ENGINE ROOM

Main engine: Caterpillar C32IMO11 660hp at 1600-1800rpm.

Gearbox: Masson MMW77400, Ratio 9.077 : 1.

Propellor: Promarin six bladed in Promarin nozzle.

Auxiliary engines: Caterpillar C12 340hp at 1800 rpm – Hydraulics.

Two Caterpillar C4.4 marine generator sets rated at 6 ekW at 50Hz, 415 volt.

Bow thruster: KT 120L with a thrust of 800kg.

DECK MACHINERY

Supplier – Seaquest Systems, Killybegs

- One 3 drum 2 speed trawl winch 23.7 tonnes core pull, complete with local and remote controls.

- Two Split net drums 2.2m diameter with a core pull of 15.6 tonnes.

- One Gilson winch with 7 tonne core pull, complete with local and wheelhouse controls.

- One fish room winch with a 1.5 tonne pull. Delivered with local controls and remote radio controls.

- One powerblock crane with a lifting capacity of 1.5 tonne and a reach of 6.5 metres. Delivered with local controls and remote radio controls.

- One fixed boom landing crane with a capacity of 1000kg and reach of 8 metres. Supplied with local controls and remote radio control.

CATCH HANDLING & STORAGE

Catch handling system: **Seagate Fabrications, Peterhead.**

Fish room refrigeration: **Airo-tech Solutions, Fraserburgh.**

Ice Machine: 2 X 2.5 ton *Geneglance* supplied by **Airo-tech Solutions, Fraserburgh.**

ELECTRONICS

Supplier: Woodsons, Aberdeen.

Fish detection: JRC JFC 180BB black box plotter/sounder

Navigation: Olex 3D seabed mapping system, two Sodena

Communications: JRC JSS 2150 150W GMDSS MF/HF SSB, a Sailor

6210 VHF, Two Icom M330 VHF with DSC, one Jotron Class A AIS

and an eSEA60Ka INTERNET communications system.

A Phontech 3100 talkback system. A CCTV system with 10

cameras, an eSEA60 Satellite TV system. One e-SEA 60 Satellite

TV system, 4 K Video Wall control system c/w 3 55inch 4 K

monitors and 8 Neovo X24 wide screen monitors.

Safety Equipment: Entel HT649 GMDSS Handheld VHF,

JRC NAVTEX Receiver, Jotron TRON 60 EPIRB with GPS

Woodsons also supplied the vessels VCU catch management

system and weighing scales.

FISHING GEAR

Supplier: Faithlie Trawl supplied 2 X 180ft letterbox style trawls with 30ft wide mouths rigged on 8 inch and 6 inch discs. 2 x 170ft scraper trawls with 20ft mouths, rigged on 10 inch, 8 inch and 6 inch discs. Faithlie Trawl also supplied all the sweeps and bridles for the trawls.

Trawl Doors: **Thyboron type 72 trawl doors** supplied by Faithlie Trawl.

Warp: 3 x 300 fathoms of 20mm diameter wire supplied by

Karl Thomson, Buckie.



Figure 1. Conor Lynch carefully holding the Angel Shark (*Squatina squatina*) tagged & released by the MFV Eblana in the Central Irish Sea.



Figure 2. Angel Shark (dorsal view).



Figure 3. Angel Shark (ventral view) [note male claspers].



Figure 4. Angel Shark tagged on second dorsal fin (Tag No. 47480).

Angel Shark

(*Squatina squatina*) tagged and released by the MFV 'Eblana' in the Central Irish Sea

On 25 February 2022, the MFV 'Eblana' (D379) [Skipper: Brendan Lynch, Howth] tagged and released a mature male Angel Shark (*Squatina squatina*) measuring 135 cm total length (TL), 73 cm disc width (DW) and weighing 24 kg, while demersal trawling at a depth of 124 m, in the Central Irish Sea (ICES VIIa; 35E4; 53.1833oN, 5.3167oW) off Co Wicklow (Figs. 1-4). Since 2011, the Eblana has tagged and released a total of seven Angel Sharks in the Central Irish Sea.

Although Angel Sharks were historically described as widespread and 'common' in European seas, the species is now regarded as *Critically Endangered* by the *International Union for Conservation of Nature* (IUCN), and is designated as a 'prohibited species' under European Union Regulation No. 2019/1241, which states, inter alia, "When caught

accidentally, the species shall not be harmed and specimens shall be promptly released back into the sea, except for the purpose of allowing scientific research on accidentally killed specimens".

Commercial fishers and recreational anglers have a very important role to play in contributing to the conservation of the Angel Shark in Irish waters. Apart from releasing incidental captures unharmed, and where possible contributing to the tagging effort, they can help fill the current knowledge gaps about the species distribution and abundance by logging all discards.

GET IN TOUCH

Declan is always interested in receiving reports about unusual and rarely recorded species in Irish waters. Contact him at: declanquigley2021@gmail.com **WhatsApp: 087-645848**

Couch's Crab & Bryer's Nut Crab

Couch's Crab (*Monodaeus couchi*) and Bryer's Nut Crab (*Ebalia tumefacta*) captured by the MFV 'Realt an Oileain II' off Inishturk, Co Galway

During December 2021, the MFV 'Realt an Oileain II' (G733) [Skipper: David Heaney] captured two diminutive and rarely recorded species of crabs while potting for Lobster at a depth of 64 m W of Inishturk (53.7167oN, 10.2500oW), Co Galway.



Figure 1. Couch's Crab (*Monodaeus couchi*), W Inishturk, Co Galway, (dorsal view).

Couch's Crab (*Monodaeus couchi*)

■ On 17 December 2021, David captured and released a male Couch's Crab (*Monodaeus couchi*) [*Xantho couchi*] measuring c.10 mm carapace width (CW) [Figs. 1-2].

Couch's Crab attains a maximum CW of c. 26 mm. The species occurs in the Eastern Atlantic from Pobies Bank, NE Shetland (60.5333oN, 0.1833oW) southwards via the Mediterranean to Angola (17.3000oS, 11.4000oE) at depths ranging from 7 m to 1415 m. Due to historical confusion with superficially similar and closely related *Xantho* crab species, there are relatively few confirmed records of *M. couchi* from Irish waters.

Definitive specimens of *M. couchi* have previously been recorded off Co Galway (Aran Islands), Co Kerry (Tearaght & Skellig Islands), and Co Cork (Berehaven). There are unconfirmed reports from NW Co Donegal, Co Waterford (Mine Head), and the Irish Sea (Cardigan Bay, Liverpool Bay, Isle of Man & Belfast Lough). The current specimen from Inishturk would appear to represent the northernmost confirmed record of *M. couchi* from Irish waters.



Figure 2. Couch's Crab (*Monodaeus couchi*), (ventral view).

Byer's Nut Crab (*Ebalia tumefacta*)

■ On 22 December 2021, David captured and released a female Byer's Nut Crab (*Ebalia tumefacta*) [*Ebalia bryerii*] measuring c.10 mm CW while potting at the same location (Figs. 3-4).

Byer's Nut Crab attains a maximum CW of 12 mm. The species ranges from Norway (near Bergen; 60.3833oN, 5.4000oE), southwards along the European Atlantic coast (including the southern North Sea) to NW Africa (M de Angrade de Cintra, Spanish Sahara; 23.0000oN, 16.2500oW) at depths ranging from 2 m to 155 m.

Although *E. tumefacta* has previously been recorded on several occasions from Co Galway and Co Mayo, there are only a few isolated records from other areas around the Irish coast, including Belfast Bay, and Co Kerry (Dingle & Valencia). During the 1970s, the late Michael Long discovered two specimens in the stomach of Dabs (*Limanda limanda*) captured in Dingle Bay. ●



Figure 3. Byer's Nut Crab (*Ebalia tumefacta*), (dorsal view).

Figure 4. Byer's Nut Crab (*Ebalia tumefacta*), (ventral view).

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MONTHLY COMPETITION

Send in your best fishing related photo and you could win a Sotra Fleece by Guy Cotten.

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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.



PHOTO OF THE MONTH

WINNER:

Fintan Harrington
Atlantic Fisher hauling gillnets



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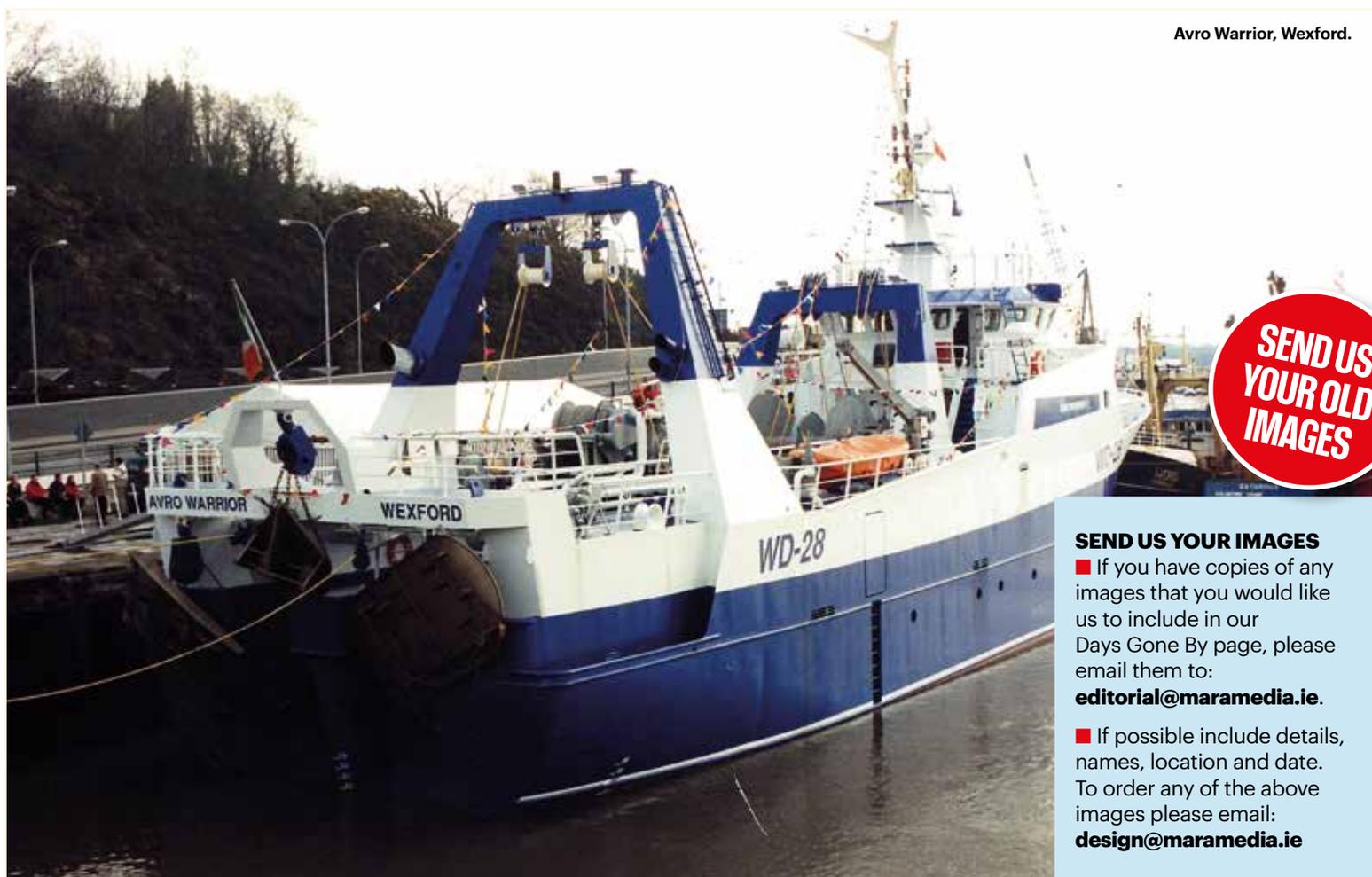
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L-R John Hickey, John Murray & Trevor Simpson arranging the delivery of a thousand juvenile lobsters to Dunabrattin

The Skipper Archives June 1990

MAIN HEADLINES:

- **1,000 BOATS 'NOT ON' QUOTA FISH.** A case has been put to the Minister for the Marine that over 1,000 boats in the national fleet do NOT fish quota species and are under 10 tonnes G.R.T.
- **FIRST STEPS TAKEN TO MOVE DUBLIN MARKET.** Dublin Corporation carrying out survey of opinion regarding the future of the market, a potential move north-west of the city has been mooted.
- **CONFRONTING A VILLAIN IN SPAIN.** Spaniards find longlining to have advantages in that when spotted by protection vessels the lines can be cut to be picked up later, while it takes time to haul in trawl gear.
- **COURT CLEARS 13 SKIPPERS.** 13 skippers awarded costs after prosecuting council failed to appear for the third time.



Isabella Portnaguran.



Paddy O'Malley onboard the new An Capall Ban.



L-R, Hans Jurgen Kruse, Manager of Unifish Germany, with Michael Noonan, then Minister for Marine and Joe Somers of BIM on a visit to Bremerhaven, Germany

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First steps taken to move Dublin Market

1,000 BOATS 'NOT ON' QUOTA FISH

Call for G.R.T. review

Good day for seiner

Court clears 13 skippers

Murrin challenged

Confronting a villain in Spain

DUBLIN CORPORATION is carrying out a survey of opinion regarding the future of the Dublin Fish Market, which receives supplies from many ports throughout Ireland.

This follows a motion put to the Corporation by Councillor Pui McCartan T.D., requesting a "full valuation of the current use and operations of the Dublin Fish Market, and prepare a report on the need to develop better, more efficient and if necessary alternative facilities for such a market in the city."

While many of the boat holders in the market are happy with the present site, despite the narrow cluttered streets which impede traffic around the market, its position adds to the cost of delivering and removing fish from the market, and this is borne by the fishermen.

A commercially-operated market somewhere to the north-west of the city has been mooted by some businessmen, but this idea seems to be in abeyance. One of the vacant sites on the North side of Dublin docks has also been suggested.

Howth to get auction hall

AN AUCTION HALL is to be built adjacent to the ice plant in Howth harbour as part of an £800,000 improvement scheme in the Co. Dublin port.

Construction work will begin this year, and the hall will be finished next year. The overall scheme will include resurfacing a portion of the east pier; provision of a secure area for storage of nets and gear; fencing to alleviate the problem of dumping on the west pier; and refurbishing the harbourmaster's office.

The former yacht club premises have been leased to Len Doonan, the fleet operators, but the ground floor is to be made available to the Howth Fishermen's Association.

Murrin challenged

THE MINISTER for the Marine issued a statement last month saying that the allegation of Lucy Murrin, Chairman of the Killybegs Fishermen's Association, that licences had been procured on a political basis was "bun."

"I challenge Mr Murrin to name the four people. Let him put up or shut up," the statement said.

"Every fisherman wants to know what criteria has been laid down for licences," Mr Murrin told THE IRISH SKIPPER, but no indications have been given. He said that five calls to his office had confirmed his information that four persons had received licences which, he considered, had political connotations.

The matter was all the more urgent because he was aware that Spanish yards had orders on hand for over 66,000 tonnes of fishing vessels.

Confronting a villain in Spain

NICKO MURPHY, the Irish south-eastern skipper, has reason to ponder on seeing the Autumn Swallow during a recent group visit to La Coruna, Spain. This was the vessel, that tried to ram him on Irish grounds last year and is one of a hundred or so British boats which have fished from Spain but are to re-register in Britain again in order to gain the benefits of British access to work longlines.

It is generally believed that the Spaniards find longlining to have advantages in that when spotted by protection vessels the lines can be cut to be picked up later, while it takes time to haul in trawl gear.

A report on Page 7 of the group's findings during their visit to La Coruna contains startling facts which should be widely known in this industry.

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Boarding the gear on Virtuous. PHOTO: NIALL DUFFY



Sorting the catch at Fraserburgh Harbour. PHOTO: NIALL DUFFY



Members of Inward Ardgroom who took part in An Taisce Annual Spring Clean organised by Westpoint Shellfish Ltd.



Greencastle Harbour. PHOTO: MACDARA O CUAIG.



Boy John leaving Lerwick. PHOTO: CALUM GRAY

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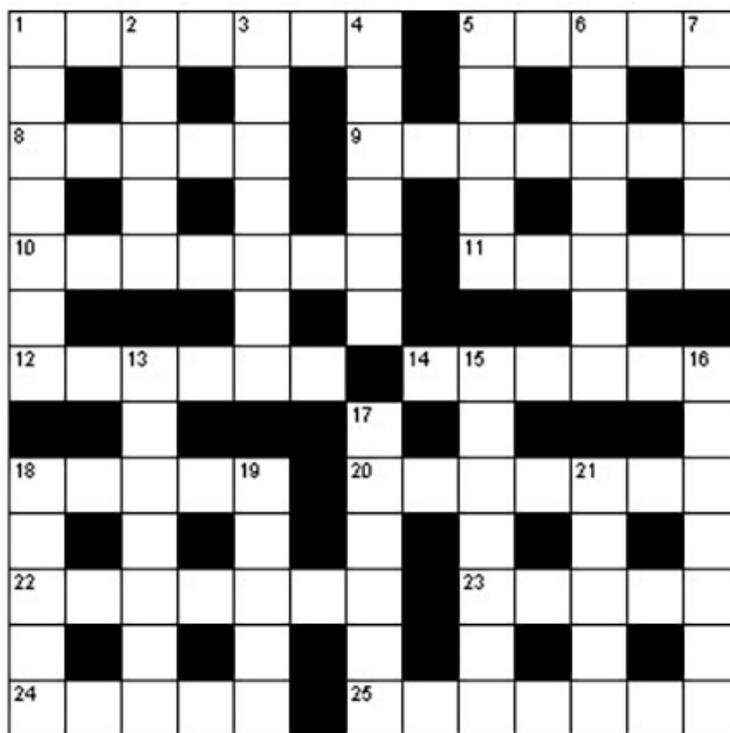
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ACROSS

- 1 Marionettes (7)
- 5 Canal boat (5)
- 8 Short-legged breed of dog (5)
- 9 Embarrassing mistake (7)
- 10 Uncertain (2,5)
- 11 Unclean, soiled (5)
- 12 Language of Israel (6)
- 14 Beginning (6)
- 18 Secret agents (5)
- 20 Blackberry bush (7)
- 22 Frenzied (7)
- 23 Ethical (5)
- 24 Assisted (5)
- 25 Calmed with drugs (7)

DOWN

- 1 Rather hungry (7)
- 2 Trimmed, peeled (5)
- 3 Gourmet (7)
- 4 Wooden shoes (6)
- 5 Wide (5)
- 6 Comments (7)
- 7 Before the expected time (5)
- 13 Bandit (7)
- 15 Without weapons (7)
- 16 Increased threefold (7)
- 17 Counting-frame (6)
- 18 Capital of Bulgaria (5)
- 19 Located (5)
- 21 Split asunder (5)



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Chairperson Of The Seafood/Offshore Renewable Energy Working Group Appointed

Captain Robert McCabe to serve for two years

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, has appointed Captain Robert McCabe as chairperson of the Seafood / Offshore Renewable Energy Working Group for a two-year period.

Captain McCabe is a qualified Master Mariner (Trinity College) who has extensive maritime experience in a variety of senior roles throughout a 35 year career with the Commissioners of Irish Lights. Among the roles undertaken by Captain McCabe during this period included serving as the First Master of

the *ILV Granuaile*, before later being appointed to a variety of management positions within the Commissioners of Irish Lights, including Assistant Inspector, Deputy Head of Marine, Head of Marine, and Director of Operations and Navigation.

He has also served as the President of the Irish Chamber of Shipping and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICoS), and is a current member of a number of marine bodies, including the Nautical Institute and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).

The Seafood/ORE Working

Former Commissioner of Irish Lights, Captain McCabe brings extensive knowledge of both the Seafood and ORE sector.



Group has been established to facilitate discussion on matters arising from the interaction of the seafood and offshore renewable energy industries, to promote and share best practice, and to encourage liaison with other sectors in the marine environment.

Following the appointment, Minister O'Brien said:

"I welcome the appointment of the Chairperson and look forward to enhanced constructive engagement between both sectors. I recognise the marine space is a shared resource and the seafood sector delivers significant economic benefits, while sustaining many coastal communities. The establishment of offshore wind energy will create new opportunities and offers potential benefits for all, in addition to enhancing our energy security. The development of our offshore wind energy capacity will dramatically lessen our dependence on imported fossil fuels, and bring an unprecedented reduction in CO2 emissions for a climate neutral future.

With regard to this specific role, Captain McCabe brings extensive knowledge of both the Seafood and ORE sectors, having previously worked with both in relation to maritime navigational safety. His work has enabled him to gain an extensive knowledge of the Irish coast and maritime activity across all sectors, and he brings a record of effective delivery of offshore engineering and navigation safety projects, which will prove valuable within the setting of this group.

Minister for Agriculture,

"The challenge for all of us involved in the marine space is to find a pathway that recognises the value that our ocean territory has for our economy and that balances how we harness its natural resources."

Charlie McConalogue

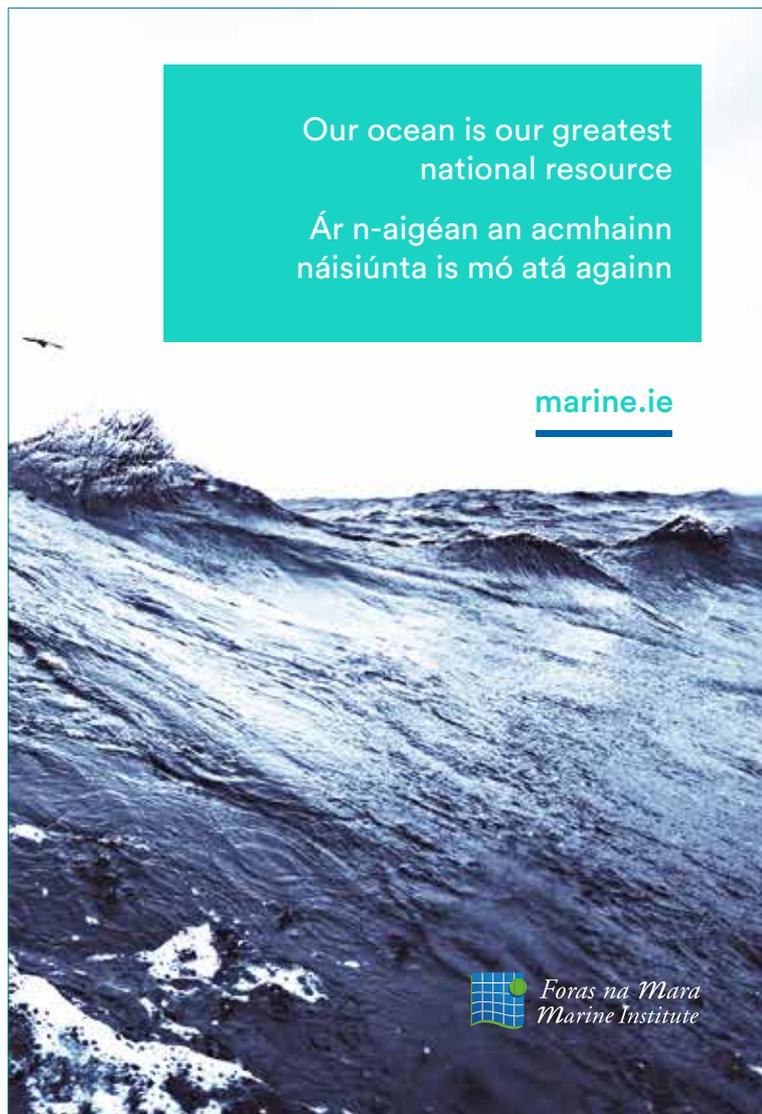
Food and Marine, Charlie McConalogue, stated:

"I am pleased that we now have a Chairperson appointed and can get this initiative up and running. Our seas are unquestionably our greatest natural resources. The challenge for all of us involved in the marine space is to find a pathway that recognises the value that our ocean territory has for our economy and that balances how we harness its natural resources. Food Vision 2030, the agri-food sector strategy adopted as government policy, calls for greater recognition, respect and support for primary producers for their key societal role in addressing our climate and biodiversity emergency. It is essential that the needs and experience of our seafood producers are factored into scoping, planning and designing of any offshore renewable energy projects and I hope that the sector representatives will support the work of the Chair in this regard." ●

Our ocean is our greatest national resource

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