

Leading Journal of the Irish & UK Fishing Industries

# The Skipper

JULY 2022 - €3.50/£3.00 Est: 1964

## Irish Fishermen Take Their Case To Brussels

Fairer share of rights to  
fish in our 200 mile EEZ

## SCALLOP TRIALS

New wireless sensor  
trials on gear

### NEW BUILD

Paddy O'Sullivan's  
new MFV 'Dillon  
Owen II'

MAIB highlight  
Stability Issues in  
Fishing Tragedy  
Reports

### FEAS 2022

International  
Blue Whiting  
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Dillon Owen II  
heading into  
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# The Skipper

SERVING THE IRISH & UK FISHING INDUSTRIES



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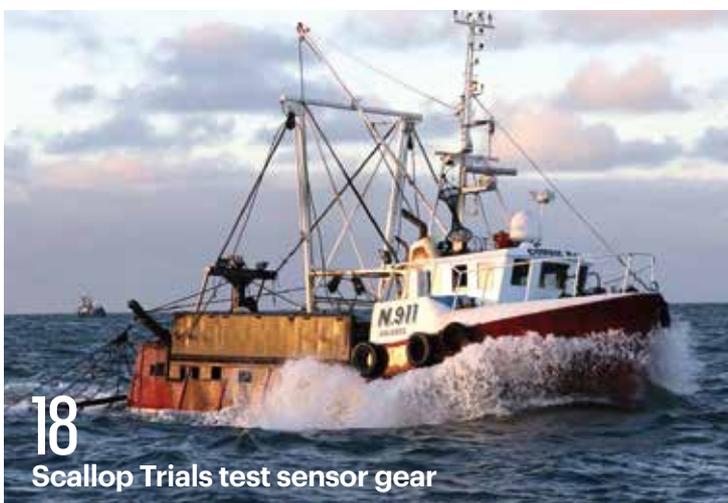
# CONTENTS

## NEWS

- 04 Irish Fishermen take their case to Brussels**  
Fairer rights to fish in EEZ
- 06 MAIB Highlight Stability Issues**  
Fishing Tragedy Reports
- 08 Scottish Skipper Expo 2022 show review**
- 10 Blue Whiting survey**  
Spawning stock results
- 12 Retired fishing gear under Clean Oceans Initiative**
- 13 Safe manning on all fishing vessels required**
- 14 NI News**  
Cash in on prawn season
- 16 UK News**  
Voices highlight Impacts of Brexit in new report
- 18 Scallop sensor trials**  
i-fish test pitch and roll gear
- 20 Shetland News**  
Campaign against gill netting gets new impetus
- 22 Icelandic News**  
Cod quota cut once more



**24** New MFV 'Dillon Owen II'



**18** Scallop Trials test sensor gear



**10** Blue Whiting stock survey

## FEATURES

- 23 Commercial Oils**  
Enjoyed a busy expo
- 24 Vestvaerftet new build**  
Paddy O'Sullivan's 'Dillon Owen II'
- 33 DNA Traceback Fisheries**  
Stock identity and research
- 36 Days Gone By...**
- 38 Out and About**  
Send us your photos
- 39 Breaktime/Crossword**  
Win a Mullion Jacket
- 40 BIM**  
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# Irish Fishermen Take Their Case To Brussels

Irish Fish Producers have called for a fairer share of the rights to fish in the waters of our 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).



IFPO Ceo Aodh O'Donnell and IFPEA CEO Brendan Byrne, meet MEP Colm Markey.

**IRISH FISHERMEN attended a series of meetings in Brussels last month, arranged and hosted by Sinn Fein MEP, Chris McManus. The meetings were attended by the POs, alongside Foyle Fishermen's Cooperative, and the Galway & Aran Fishermen's Cooperative.**

The fishing industry delegation to Brussels was also supported by key fishermen stakeholders from Greencastle, Galway and Clogherhead with first hand contributions to the process.

The fishing industry delegation also met several Irish MEPS including Fine Gael's Colum Markey, a member of the fisheries committee, who has previously hosted a number of fishing industry meetings in Ireland and Brussels. Other MEPs they met on this trip included Fianna Fáil MEP Barry Andrews, and Independent MEPS, Clare Daly and Mick Wallace.

Mr Colm O Súilleabháin, Irish Permanent Representative and EU Marine attaché, also attended some meetings.

The Sinn Fein delegation was arranged and led by MEP Chris MacManus and TD Pdraig MacLochainn, and supported by TD's Rose Conway Walsh, Johnny Mythen & Pa Daly.

The SF team also included Cllr Tom Cunningham, Clogherhead and Cllr Conor Mc Guinness, West Waterford as well as area representatives Clare O Callaghan, Cork SW, and Louis O Hara, Galway East.

## UNITED FRONT

**The fishing organisations presented a united front, engaging with the EU marine and fisheries officials at the highest levels, says IFPO chief executive, Aodh O'Donnell.**

"We met the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament (Pech) and the

Director General of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG Mare).

"Other nations catch about €250m worth of fish a year in our waters – almost twice as much as the Irish fleet catches."

He says the quotas allocated by the EU to the Irish fishing fleet amount to "a paltry 18% of the volume of fish in our 200-mile Zone every year. Other nations take the balance of the fish, but bizarrely some EU States are unable to catch their annual quota allocations in this EU zone.

"So, we are calling on the EU to – at the very least – enable reallocation of annual 'uncaught' quotas in Ireland's EEZ to Irish vessels, to give us a more equitable share."

Mr O'Donnell says the team outlined ways of allocating the uncaught quotas of other EU states for species such as langoustines and monkfish, to Ireland.

"We support calls for a sensible mechanism for an equitable redistribution of all the annual uncaught EU fish quota in EU waters. We acknowledge that any such redistribution would take account of the quota rights of each of these member states.

"At present, non-EU fishing vessels can fish large volumes of pelagic fish on Ireland's west coast, based on annual access agreements negotiated to benefit other EU States. At the same time, the Irish fleet finds itself tied up at port, hindered from catching these same fish by low quotas. This needs to be addressed in a meaningful way so that our share of the important catch is more equitable."

The delegation said the quotas transferred to the UK under Brexit's Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) were inequitable. "In particular, Irish fishing vessels were excluded from traditional fishing grounds in the waters around Rockall. So, we made the

case that quotas needed to be adjusted to rebalance long term losses and to restore access to these areas."

He says fishing organisations are united in a call for an urgent review of how the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) is implemented. "In particular, we want changes in how the annual quota of fish is allocated to the Irish fishing fleet and to rebalance the significant Brexit losses. We also believe allocations should be based on having greater rights to fish in our own Zones.

This would be more democratic, and reduce the carbon footprint of EU fishing vessels, as they would travel shorter distances. It would also strengthen the economic and social linkage between those catching the fish and their coastal communities."

The IFPO say it's also time now to examine diversification opportunities and allocate a quota for Atlantic bluefin tuna.



EU Commission DG Mare Meeting.

"It's proven to be in abundance and available on the West Coast within the Irish EEZ and could be worth €150 million annually in revenues to the Irish fishing and Tourism Sectors."

This initiative could also impact favourably on the carbon footprint in terms of reducing long transit routes of distant water fleets to these waters from countries such as Japan, large vessels that travel halfway around the globe to harvest this high valued tuna fishery.

### A WELCOME NEW APPROACH

**The IFPEA welcomed the Sinn Fein initiative to bring the Irish Fishing industry to Brussels as it afforded the industry an opportunity to directly engage with the EU Commission and their representatives. A similar opportunity was provided to the IFPEA by Fine Gael MEP Colm Markey in late April.**

*Brendan Byrne, CEO, IFPEA told The Skipper;*

"The meeting which we held with the Director General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Ms Charlina Vitcheva was in my view very open, frank at times but extremely transparent; which in the view of the IFPEA is a much-welcomed departure in this industry when dealing with officials. I can only judge on the openness of the discussion and the depth of interaction between us as industry and themselves as the authority of the Commission on matters Marine and Fisheries.

"A strong and robust case was made by all present on the unfairness of the TCA /Brexit agreement, the disproportionate loss of quota by Ireland, the historical unfairness of the Common Fisheries Policy, the need for eventual reform of the CFP as the present engagement is only the compiling of a report into the functioning of the CFP.

"As each of us, selected a point to speak to in order to keep the meeting orderly, I spoke directly to matters relating to the pelagic industry, other speakers dealt with the Demersal sector and the entirety of fisheries and marine challenges facing Ireland at present.

"I made the argument, that the disproportionate hit suffered by the pelagic sector due to the Trade and Co-operation Agreement, was impacting negatively on the entire pelagic sector. The unfair imposition of quota transfer needed to be addressed by the EU Commission and that the period between now and late autumn was an opportunity to seek solutions and more importantly

deliver those solutions through the coastal states' negotiations, with potential opportunity in mackerel quota and blue whiting.

"The Commission for their part, understood the legacy of unfairness and were open to proposals from Ireland and made a point of inviting proposals on what industry thought would be possible solutions to these issues. Highlighting the fact, that this was the first opportunity for the DG Mare to sit around a table with a wide-ranging representation of fishing representatives, it was self-evident that the DG was a supporter of such integrated approach of engagement.

"The various speakers from right across the industry spoke with passion and honesty regarding the present state of affairs in the fishing industry. It was a very united approach, one which was genuinely motivated and solution orientated. That I believe was one of the things which most impressed the EU Commission representatives.

"Yet one of my main out-takes from the meeting for the IFPEA was – why is there such a divergence of opinion coming from our own Government in Dublin and the Commission in Brussels/Europe.

"It is due to the fact our own department has spent its entire career on blaming Europe for everything, insisting that it is Europe that is imposing these measures on us as a Member State.

"While I suppose the very opposite can be said, and the EU blame everything on Ireland.

"I am an ardent and fervent European and always will be, so in the balance of probabilities I would usually credit the version coming from Europe more times than I would what I hear from our own political system or department, that is a belief I have held since I entered politics over 20 years ago – so things will get better when time itself forces Ireland to change its approach, because the present trajectory is one of failure and has been for some time.

"One thing that was absolutely certain, Ireland is last in the class in submitting an operational programme for EMFAF, all other coastal states have long since submitted their programmes. Much to the annoyance of the EU, we are still fumbling around – well something's never change, our Department are dragging up the rear again."

**The Commission officials took note of the submissions and undertook to have an additional follow up meeting in Ireland. ●**

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# MAIB highlight Stability Issues in Fishing Tragedy Reports

Fishermen advised to have a better understanding of small vessel stability and modifications that can effect boat safety.

**T**HE UK MARINE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCH (MAIB) has advised Fishermen to have a better understanding of small vessel stability and the effects that modifications can have of a boats safety.

Andrew Moll OBE, Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents, said:

"We have published our reports into the loss of **Joanna C**, and **Nicola Faith**. Both were small fishing vessels that capsized while working fishing gear and together, tragically, they account for the loss of five lives. There are important lessons about stability from these accidents that must be understood and acted upon by all small fishing boat operators.

"The first lesson is that modifications, unless properly planned, can significantly erode a vessel's margin of stability. The scallop dredger *Joanna C* had been modified, but the process of assessing the effect of the alterations had not been completed before the vessel returned to fishing.

Unfortunately, the modifications had eroded *Joanna C*'s stability to the extent that simply snagging a dredge on a string of pots was enough to capsize the vessel. Tragically, only one of the three crew survived the accident. It is essential that skippers know the limitations of their vessels, and that any modifications to the vessel or changes to fishing methods are properly assessed and approved before fishing resumes.

"The second lesson is that any vessel can become unstable if overloaded. *Nicola Faith* had been modified, and the modification had not been approved. Nonetheless, the vessel could have been operated safely with care. On the day of the accident, the crew were relocating their pots to a new area and were carrying a full day's catch as well. The combined weight of the catch and fishing gear piled on deck was far more than the boat was designed to carry; it capsized, and all three crew were lost in that accident. Fishermen will always be tempted to land a big catch but moving fishing gear at the same time can be overwhelming.

"As fuel prices soar, the temptation to carry more and do fewer trips makes economic sense, but where stability is concerned the results can be catastrophic.

"Five families' lives have been shattered by these two accidents, both of which were entirely avoidable. To all fishing vessel crews I have this simple message: Safety begins with good stability; know your boat's limitations and operate within them."

## Nicola Faith

### SUMMARY

**On 27 January 2021, the whelk potter *Nicola Faith* capsized and sank 1.9 miles north of Rhos-on-Sea, north Wales with the loss of its three crew members.**

The vessel had been extensively modified during its life which had



The wreck of the *Nicola Faith*.

significantly reduced its margin of positive stability. On the day of the accident the *Nicola Faith* had been loaded with catch and retrieved strings of pots to the point of instability, which resulted in the capsize and subsequently sinking of the vessel. *Nicola Faith* had not been fitted with a mandatory emergency beacon to alert to the capsize, and it was not reported as overdue until 1000 the next day.

Following its salvage by the MAIB, a thorough inspection of the vessel was carried out to determine possible modes of capsize and a full assessment of its stability was undertaken.

### The key safety issues identified were:

*Nicola Faith* was operated in an unsafe manner and was loaded with a combination of catch and retrieved fishing gear to the point of instability.

A mandatory Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) was not fitted to the vessel and the crew were not equipped with personal locator beacons.

*Nicola Faith* was found to have been extensively modified; these modifications had eroded its margin of positive stability.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency surveyors had noted some of the modifications, however, the guidance concerning modifications that would have triggered a stability assessment was not sufficiently clear.

Although available on board, the crew did not routinely wear personal flotation devices.

### SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is recommended to:

- Revise the wording in MSN 1871 Amendment No. 2 (F) The Code of Practice for the Safety of Small Fishing Vessels of Less than 15m Length Overall to refer to a load limit rather than a catch limit.
- Review and enhance the guidance to surveyors contained in MSIS 27 Chapter 3 to clarify what level of modification triggers further investigation into a vessel's stability.
- The Big Ship Ltd is recommended to: Ensure that a written agreement is in place to identify the organisation or person with responsibility for the operation of any vessels that it may own.

## Joanna C

### SUMMARY

**Early in the morning on 21 November 2020, the scallop dredger *Joanna C* capsized south of Newhaven, England; only one of the three crew survived.**

*Joanna C*'s crew was hauling the gear when they noticed that the starboard dredge bar had become snagged on a line of whelk pots. The snag caused a heel to starboard from which the vessel could not recover, and it capsized rapidly.

The MAIB's investigation found that through-life modifications, culminating in extensive alterations in 2019, had reduced *Joanna C*'s previously good stability to a state where it had very low reserves of positive stability and increased vulnerability to capsize. The detrimental effect of the modifications was unknown to the crew and regulator alike because, although a stability assessment had begun after the 2019 modifications,



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**Joanna C: liferaft had insufficient buoyancy to initiate the inflation mechanism.**

the analysis was never completed, and the vessel was free to continue operation.

During the capsize *Joanna C's* mate was thrown into the water and the skipper later managed to escape as the inverted vessel sank; however, the deckhand remained trapped inside. The vessel's liferaft did not inflate during the accident because the uninflated liferaft had insufficient buoyancy to initiate the inflation mechanism. The absence of a liferaft adversely affected the survivability of the crew in the sea after the vessel sank.

**SAFETY ISSUES**

- Reserves of stability are critical to allow fishing vessels to operate safely and ensure recovery back to upright from a heel induced by

the environmental conditions or a snagging. *Joanna C's* very low margin of positive stability left the vessel extremely vulnerable to capsize.

- Liferafts fitted for 'float-free' operation must have sufficient buoyancy in the uninflated state to activate the inflation mechanism. Although a buoyancy standard existed for larger SOLAS liferafts there was no corresponding requirement for smaller, non-SOLAS liferafts such as those fitted to fishing vessels.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

A safety recommendation (2022/124) has been made to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to ensure that stability requirements for small fishing vessels are applied as intended

and that, where stability checks are required, fishing operations should be suspended until a vessel has been satisfactorily assessed.

During the investigation a safety recommendation (2021/116) was made to the British Standards Institution to propose the introduction of a minimum buoyancy requirement for liferafts certified by the International Organization for Standardization. The International Organization for Standardization's technical committee subsequently agreed to include a buoyancy requirement in its revised liferaft standard.

**RELATED PUBLICATIONS**

In parallel with our reports safety flyers has been released to the fishing industry highlighting the need to consider the impact that modifications could have to the vessel's stability, and the importance of checking where 'float free' arrangements are in place, that the buoyancy of the liferaft will be sufficient to overcome the inflation mechanism.

**Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents, Andrew Moll OBE, concluded:**

"The MAIB's investigation into the loss of *Joanna C* set out to answer two key questions: why did it capsize, and why did only one of the three crew survive? We are publishing the report that answers both these questions. *Joanna C* capsized because it had insufficient reserves of stability to recover from the heel created when the fishing gear became snagged.

This happened because of modifications to the vessel that had severely eroded its stability characteristics, and this went undetected. Of equal importance today, I want to highlight the findings

of our investigation regarding *Joanna C's* liferaft; this issue reaches beyond the fishing industry to any vessel carrying a 'non-SOLAS' liferaft. Lifesaving appliances are just that – for saving life, so it is vital that such equipment will function correctly in the event of an emergency. Unfortunately, *Joanna C's* 'float-free' liferaft arrangements did not work as expected. Although the liferaft was released from its cradle as the vessel sank, it did not come to the surface and inflate.

This significantly impacted the chances of survival for the two crew in the water, only one of whom survived. The MAIB's investigation found that the uninflated liferaft had insufficient buoyancy to trigger the gas inflation system, leaving it suspended mid-water still attached to the sunken vessel. Furthermore, the liferaft had not been manufactured to meet any specific standard, although this was acceptable for a small fishing vessel at the time. Prior to publication of today's report, an immediate MAIB recommendation was made to amend the International Standard Organisation's standard for non-SOLAS liferafts (known as ISO-9650) to ensure they have sufficient buoyancy in the uninflated state to activate the inflation mechanism, where 'float-free' arrangements are in place.

The safety message is that it is vital to ensure that lifesaving appliances will work as expected. Where 'float-free' arrangements are in place, the liferaft must have sufficient buoyancy to trigger the inflation mechanism once it has been released from the cradle as the vessel sinks."

■ Both MAIB reports can be downloaded here: <https://www.gov.uk/maib-reports>

# Get it in the diary – Scottish Skipper Expo 2023 – 12th and 13th May



**F**OLLOWING THE SUCCESS of this year's exhibition, dates have now been finalised for **Scottish Skipper Expo 2023, which will be held on 12 and 13 May at the P&J Live in Aberdeen.**

Planning is already underway to ensure an even bigger and better show for 2023 and organiser Mara Media has been assessing exhibitor and visitor feedback to optimise the overall experience.

From this, it has been decided that the show will be held on a Friday and Saturday as before, with many visitors stating that this is essential to enable them to complete their work and still attend the show. The opening hours will be changed to 10am to 5pm on the first day of event, with the final hour until 6pm dedicated to exhibitor networking and catch-up. The complimentary show reception will take place at the Douglas Hotel Aberdeen on Friday 12th at 7:30pm.

Feedback from Scottish Skipper Expo 2022 was overwhelmingly positive, with exhibitors and visitors praising the new venue at the P&J Live in Aberdeen and the overall positive aura that surged through the aisles, making it a productive place to conduct business in a friendly atmosphere.

**Ashley Mullenger**, a visitor from Norfolk, summed-



up the overall feeling by stating: *"It was great to be able to meet up with people again and amazing to see all the products, innovations, and technologies on offer. The P&J Live is a great venue in a great location, and I appreciated the warm welcome given by the Mara Media staff both in the exhibition hall and at the evening event."*

**Ryan Langley, an exhibitor with Hercules Hydraulics**, added: *"It was easily the best fishing exhibition we have undertaken, ranging from the venue to the logistics and the quality of visitors, as well as the networking opportunities offered with fellow exhibitors."*

**Sharon Boyle, Commercial fishing Manager of Mara Media**, said: *"Visitors and exhibitors were delighted with the venue this year and we were thrilled at how successful the show was. We are eagerly anticipating Scottish Skipper Expo 2023, which will provide another great event, showcasing the very best products, equipment, and services available to the fishing industry."*

Companies keen to exhibit, should get in touch with Sharon Boyle at Mara Media to secure their stand booking.

Telephone: **00353 868401250**

Email: **sharon@maramedia.ie**

## VISITOR TESTIMONIALS

**Paul Dent** – Northumberland, UK  
*The Expo 22 was a breath of fresh air to the industry. After the last two years of covid 19 we all needed this. A big thank you from myself.*

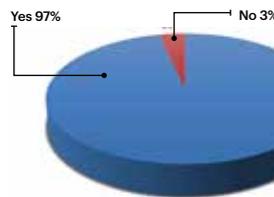
**Leon Ball** – UK  
*The show had a huge variety of exhibitors offering so much for visitors. The facilities were great. easy to get to, park and register.*

**George Anderson** – Shetland  
*It was great to be among fishing friends and the exhibitors again. Great Show, good atmosphere and well organised. Hats off to the Skipper team.*

**John Duthie** – Aberdeenshire  
*Really good to get back and the 2-day show was really good with a lot to offer. I got what I was looking for and a lot more.*

**Tracey Clark** – Shetland  
*I attended the show in Aberdeen. This is the first time I have been at the P&J Arena and I think it was an excellent venue to host the show. I was given a map of the stands which was easy to navigate around to find what I was most interested in looking at. I attended the show with my stepfather who is a commercial fisherman. I find the show interesting and a good place to meet old and new pals. You don't need to be a fisherman to attend the show.*

Would you recommend to others to visit the show? (Visitors)



## EXHIBITOR TESTIMONIALS

**Diane Campbell** – Certas Energy T/A Commercial Oils  
 ■ Fantastic show from start to finish! Well organised, well attended and productive too! Huge thanks to Sharon and the team for another great event!

**Tommy** – Poleson Marine  
 ■ This was my first show and what a great experience it has been. We will be attending next year again and hope to take a boat to exhibit again. Thank you Skipper Expo team.

**Stephen Paterson** - Peterhead Port Authority  
 ■ Great to be back at an event which was well organised and attended. Stand visitors remained steady throughout which provided some really good discussions.

**Ian Lockyer** – Icom UK Ltd  
 ■ It was an excellent show and well attended. It was great to catch up and talk to customers and our dealers... they all seemed very pleased with the expo.

**Henrik Andreassen** – Thyboron Trawldoors  
 ■ Best arranged exhibition that we participate in, and we do a lot.

**David Ash** – Mantsbrite  
 ■ It was great to be back at Aberdeen after 3 years, meeting up with friends and customers alike. The show was well worth us attending, we received a great amount of interest and some orders on our FIFISH underwater drones. Having the demonstration tank on the stand really helped show its capabilities and the kids loved it too! Looking forward to 2023.

**John Brun Christensen** – FF Skagen A/S  
 ■ Well organized, and always very informally. Good place to meet up with friends, and most appreciated suppliers.

# Supporting the industry



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**BLUE WHITING.** The 2022 survey detected significant numbers of both immature and maturing (1 & 2-year old) fish.

# INTERNATIONAL BLUE WHITING SPAWNING STOCK SURVEY (IBWSS) 2022

FISHERIES ECOSYSTEMS ADVISORY SERVICES (FEAS). *By Ciaran O'Donnell*

**In March the RV Celtic Explorer took part in the International Blue Whiting Acoustic Survey. This survey estimates the size of the spawning stock of blue whiting (*Micromesistius poutassou*) in western waters and is conducted by vessels from Ireland, the Faroe Islands, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain. The survey is an important source of information for the annual ICES stock assessment. Ireland has participated in this survey since 2004.**

## Area coverage

■ The Celtic Explorer began surveying on the 23rd March, along with vessels from the Netherlands (RV *Tridens*), Norway (FV *Vendla*), the Faroe Islands (RV *Jákuþ Sverri*). In combination, this ensured almost continuous synoptic coverage over 15 days from the Porcupine sea bight northwards to the Faroe/Shetland Ridge including Rockall and offshore banks south of the Faroes (**Figure 1**).

The combined survey effort

covered over 5,800 nmi (nautical miles) of transects representing 126 thousand nmi<sup>2</sup> of spatial coverage. The spatial coverage, survey effort and timing were comparable to the 2021 survey.

Each of the vessels followed a predetermined survey grid, working in a northerly direction, with the combined coverage providing high resolution transect spacing. Survey scientist Ciaran O'Donnell said *"This year the bulk of the stock was located to the west and the north of the Porcupine Bank, which is a little further south than seen at the same time last year. Blue whiting were also found further west than observed in recent years, with mature fish observed to the west of the Rockall Bank"*.

## Stock distribution

■ The spawning distribution of blue whiting is influenced by the North Atlantic Sub-Polar Gyre, a large body of relatively cool, fresher water of northern origin. The size and strength of the gyre varies over time, changing the

hydrographic conditions in the Rockall region. During spawning, blue whiting seek out suitable areas of stable, high salinity water. In years when the gyre is strong the effect is to restrict spawning to areas along the shelf edge as fish seek out suitable habitat provided by the relatively narrow northward flowing shelf edge current.

Conversely, in weaker gyre years, Atlantic waters dominate and suitable spawning habitat expand westwards through the Rockall Trough and Rockall Bank providing an extended spawning habitat.

The trend in recent years (2020 onwards) has seen a weakening of the gyre and this continues into 2022 and is reflected by the expansion westward distribution of Blue Whiting in the Rockall Trough and to the west of the Rockall Bank.

In 2022, the survey indicated that the bulk of the stock was located within the three survey strata bounding the shelf edge; Porcupine Bank, north Porcupine

Bank and the Rockall Trough (**Figure 1**). When combined, these strata accounted for 83.5% of the total observed biomass (similar to 2021).

The Rockall Bank, South Faroes and Faroe/Shetland Channel strata accounted for 16% of the total biomass. The Porcupine Seabight stratum, which was extended southwards in 2021 to ensure containment of the stock on the southern boundary, contributed the remaining 0.5% of the total observed biomass.

The main body of the stock in 2022 was detected to the west and north of the Porcupine Bank. As in previous years, the largest aggregations of blue whiting were found distributed along the shelf edge. However, high density aggregations extended as far as 50 nmi into the Rockall Trough in 2022, which is in contrast to recent years.

The northernmost survey strata are historically dominated by low numbers of immature blue whiting to the east and west of the Faroe Islands and in the

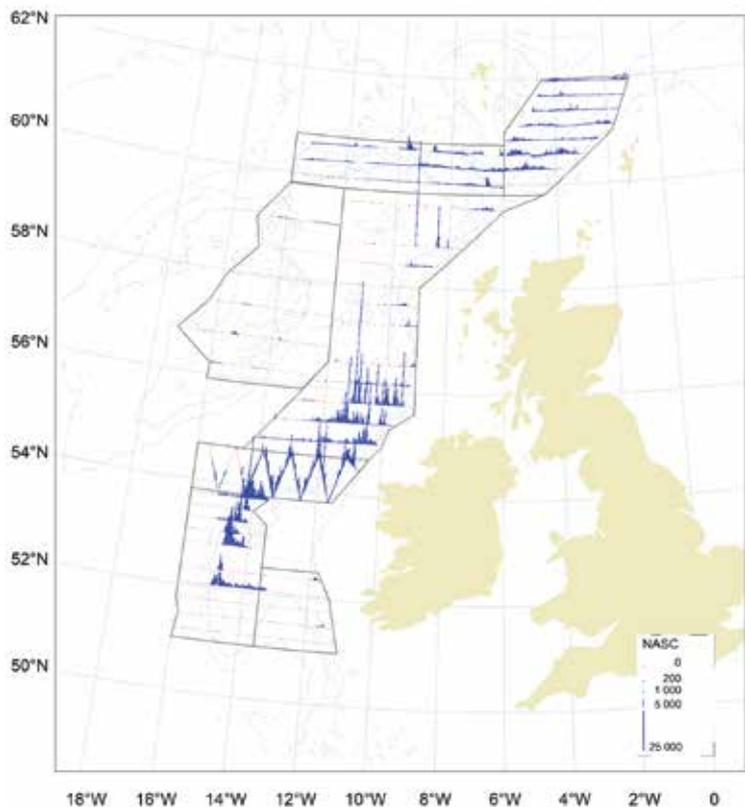


Figure 1. Blue whiting distribution (acoustic density) from combined survey effort.

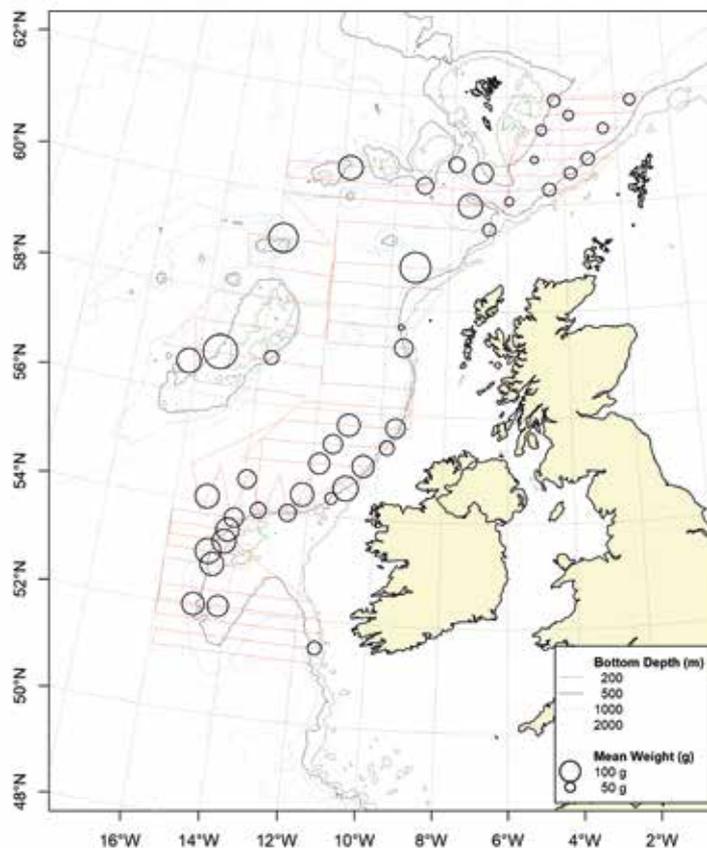


Figure 2. Mean weight of blue whiting (g) from 47 survey trawls.



CELTIC EXPLORER. The combined survey effort covered over 5,800 nmi (nautical miles).  
DAVID BRANNIGAN OCEANSPORT PHOTOGRAPHY

The main body of the stock in 2022 was detected to the west and north of the Porcupine Bank. The largest aggregations of blue whiting were found distributed along the shelf edge.

Faroe/Shetland Channel. The 2022 survey detected significant numbers of both immature and maturing (1 & 2-year old) fish – greater than that previously observed in the survey time series.

### Stock composition

The age composition of the stock was determined from 47 trawl samples taken during the survey (Figure 2). Trawl samples yielded 2,372 individual blue whiting age measurements ranging from 1 to 14 years old and 6,499 length measurements.

The main contribution to the biomass was from age groups 2, 4, 3 and 5 years, respectively. In combination, these age cohorts represent 69% of total stock biomass (TSB).

In terms of total stock numbers (TSN), 2-year-olds (2020 year-class) were most abundant (30%), followed by the 4-year-olds (17%), 3-year-olds and 5-year-olds (8%) respectively. Immature fish represented 12.6% of biomass and 23.8% of TSN. Over 71% of the 2-year old fish were mature and therefore contribute to the spawning stock.

### Stock size

The total stock estimate of blue whiting for 2022 saw an increase of 15% in TSB and a corresponding 56% increase in TSN compared to 2021, with comparable survey effort and coverage. The increase in the 2022 estimate is largely driven by the abundance of the maturing 2020-year class. Indications are that this year class appears to exceed that of the record 2014-year class. The IBWSS survey is a spawning stock survey, recording the abundance of mature fish on the spawning grounds. The ability

of the survey to identify emerging year class strength is limited until they begin to recruit to mature spawning population as 2-year old fish.

O'Donnell added "The IBWSS survey recorded a high number of 1 and 2-year old fish in the northern area in 2022, the abundance of which were notably higher than we have seen in recent years. Surveys to be carried out in the Norwegian Sea this summer will provide further insights into the strength of the 2021-year class before they emerge as mature fish during the blue whiting survey next year." ●

# The future for retired fishing gear under the Clean Oceans Initiative

**M**inister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue TD, recently launched a **Fishing Gear Retirement Scheme**, as part of the 2022 *Clean Oceans Initiative*. BIM plays a key role in supporting the Irish seafood sector and our local communities together under the Clean Oceans Initiative to ensure waste impacts are minimised and mitigation efforts are developed and recognised.

Plastics in the marine environment are now high on the sustainability agenda. In response to this, the EU has published several strategies with supporting legislation for Member States. These cover areas such as the circular economy, waste action plans and accountability for priority areas such as electrical waste, construction and demolition waste, food waste, textiles and plastics. Many other sectors have existing **Extended Producer Responsibility** (EPR) Schemes for packaging, electrical goods, batteries, vehicles and farm plastics.

New EPR schemes for specific types of packaging (including drinks bottles and tobacco products) as well as fishing and aquaculture gear will be coming into place over the next four years.

The Clean Oceans Initiative will work with the wider marine sector in developing pathways for the responsible retirement of end-of-life fishing gear, in advance of the upcoming EPR.

**BIM**, in partnership with the sector, will be developing the coordinated recovery and recording of retired gear (both placed on and taken off the market). Working with new stakeholders in the plastics supply chain to ensure the transparent management of these materials will be a key aspect, and one that aligns with the new directives and the forthcoming EPR for fishing gear

due to be in place for December 2024.

Developing the interest of a committed Irish fleet, the expertise of fishing gear suppliers, the knowledge of local harbour masters and the Irish businesses eager to advance a national plastics recycling industry will ensure that the introduction of the upcoming EPR can be seen as an opportunity rather than a burden. Through a transparent and effective national net recovery system, Ireland has a great opportunity to become a leader in this field.

In order to prepare the sector for this new approach, the **Department of Environment, Climate & Communications** (DECC) funded two related projects, in 2021, under their Circular Economy Innovation Grant Scheme – one looking at

how Irish polyethylene (PE) nets can be recovered and recycled, the second developing an online system to track the recovered materials so that the 'recycling story' can be told. The collective impact that these two projects bring – the correct sourcing and transparent tracking of materials – is very important for manufactures who want to use recovered plastics with a provenance story in their products.

In fact, the narrative of the origin of these plastics – the local fishermen and gear suppliers supporting the initiative – increases their monetary value. Such authentic stories are increasing in recognition as global brands such as Hyundai and Patagonia are expanding their use of responsibly sourced plastics from the fishing industry.

**BIM, in partnership with the sector, will be developing the coordinated recovery and recording of retired gear**



Pictured at the launch of the Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) Clean Oceans Initiative Fishing Gear Retirement Scheme to coincide with World Oceans Day on 8 June are: BIM Chairman Aidan Cotter, fisher David Kirwan, Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D. and BIM CEO Jim O'Toole.





An Roinn Iompair  
Department of Transport

# Safe manning a requirement of all fishing vessels

## OWNERS AND SKIPPERS REMINDED TO APPLY FOR A SAFE MANNING DOCUMENT

Owners and skippers of fishing vessels are reminded to apply for a Safe Manning Document from the Marine Survey Office at the Department of Transport. Safe manning is an important factor in the safe operation of fishing vessels and takes account of the vessel's operations, machinery, and maintenance.

Since the 19th of December 2019, it has been a legal requirement for owners of sea-going fishing vessels, 15 metres in length or over, to ensure that the vessel is manned by a competent skipper and to apply to the Marine Survey Office for a Safe Manning Document. A transitional period is in place to allow fishing vessel owners time to comply with the requirement for a safe manning document.

The deadline for applications is determined by the date of completion for the renewal of the fishing vessel safety certificate or certificate of compliance. The owner is also required to ensure that the fishing vessel is manned in line with the minimum requirements set out in the regulations.

The Marine Survey Office will consider the safe navigation of the vessel, the vessel's operations, its machinery and maintenance before issuing the Safe Manning Document. Once the relevant transitional period is over (it will have already passed for some owners), it is against the law for a fishing vessel to go to sea without a Safe Manning Document on board, or for the vessel to be operated below the level set out in the Safe Manning Document. Depending upon the qualifications of crew and proposed manning arrangements, the initial Safe Manning Document may only be valid for a period of two years.

Owners and Skippers can apply for a Safe Manning Document by completing the application form which is available on [www.gov.ie/SafeManningForm](http://www.gov.ie/SafeManningForm) and returning it to the Marine Survey Office. There are guidance notes on the application form to assist Owners and Skippers. Any queries should be directed to [mso@transport.gov.ie](mailto:mso@transport.gov.ie)



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# Fishery update

Time to cash in on the prawn season.

By Dick James

**The time has come for the Northern Ireland fleet to take advantage of the prawn season and to cash in with an all out effort before Autumn arrives and the season of bounty switches to one of drought and economic pain.**

The omens are good at present with solid prices showing no sign of decline, an abundance of prawns on the traditional grounds and no sign of a glut from more distant fisheries.

This is reflected in the activities around the local ports of late with near empty harbour reflecting the rewards to be harvested by going to sea. The crew problem seems to have been recently resolved although there are forces about who would dearly wish to change that, and even the high price of fuel is offset by high price for fish with abundant catches.

Long may it last but we all know that come October the situation will change and fishermen will be back to seeking alternative options to get by. Even quota is not a hindrance with quota limits set as an aspiration rather than a limit to activity.

Specifically, a brief explosion of action off the Cumbrian coast has now reverted to the local boats monopolising the scene with the occasional County Down traveller putting in the odd appearance for what specific reason is not known.

**The West of Scotland grounds** to the south end of the Minch attract the odd visitor from Northern Ireland drawn there one suspects by the promise of a



Strathmore in Kilkeel Harbour. PHOTO: LESLIE CAMBELL

few choice groundfish to top up landing returns. In the North Sea the two or three regulars remain one suspects not inclined to go to the hassle of tripping round to the Irish Sea side.

**The Smalls grounds** whilst well populated by Irish vessels on the tidal cycle have attracted no northerners possibly due to the distance for travel and potential landing problems.

On the plus side the western Irish Sea has seen most effort with northern and Irish boats fishing the southern end off the Bay of Dundalk whilst off the County Down coast most action remains in the deeper water or on the Island side the inshore Down coast not yet in its full summer mode.

**The Clyde** has also attracted a level of interest after the long shutdown period ended on the first of May and anticipated hassle from various authorities did not

happen as feared. On times this was the favoured spot but heavy workloads in tailing predominately scampi sized prawns tired crew which were generally grateful for the weekend closure in the Clyde and the rest that afforded.

**On the Porcupine** the deep water langoustine fishery has attracted more interest with five Northern Ireland associated boats involved and possibly two more due to join in. Some interest is also being shown by Scottish based boats on the hunt for quota to give them the "ticket to ride". Frozen at sea prices remain buoyant and as long as that remains the case then interest will continue.

**On the whitefish front** the semi-pelagic interest seems to have shifted towards the North Channel with the seasonal change happening there and a Hake/mixed fishery replacing the predominately Haddock fishery

of the mid Irish Sea which is only just recovering from the annual spawning cycle. There is some groundfish being landed from the quad-riggers reportedly the choice element finding shipping markets.

**On the Pelagic front** there is no local activity as it is very much out of season until the North Sea Herring fishery may start late June and into July but the Irish sea Herring will not kick in until August.

This year there is increased doubt about quota and Brexit politics. The Department of Agriculture have with-held some 440 tonnes of 2022 Irish Sea Herring quota from the initial NI allocation wondering whether to re-allocate it to the Mourne skiffs or other undefined "small boats".

There is also the usual pre-season juggling of quota from the non Irish Sea interests to local catchers through swap or

## Dredging works at the mouth of Kilkeel

The Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority have chartered a dredger from England to undertake dredging works at the mouth of Kilkeel Harbour to remove the sandbar which has built up over the winter months.

Initially, this work was to be done by the Harbours own dredger the *Kilmourne* but breakdown this winter resulted in a lengthy wait for parts to repair the dredger followed by an apparent lack of a dumping licence curtailing operations and then long term crewing problems

led to a search for a contract crew to operate the dredger which ended in failure so now a contracted in dredger the *Admiral Day* has been brought in to clear the obstruction to the entrance of the harbour.

The build-up of sand at Kilkeel Harbour entrance is a persistent and frequent problem which requires clearance often several times over the year.

In the past Harbour staff have resorted to utilising land based diggers to clear the worst of the sand bar and the

Authorities dredger was commissioned and built some 20 plus years ago to keep the harbour entrance clear as well as maintaining the depth in the main harbour basin which with a river flowing through the harbour also is subject to regular silting requiring dredging.

The temporary loss of the local dredger has led to emergency contract to resolve the problems on a temporary basis but the crewing and maintenance issues involving the *Kilmourne* still needs to be resolved on a long term basis.



ABIGAIL III entering Portavogie harbour. Photo: Stephen McKee

## Under 12 Meter Vessel Monitoring System

**The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs have issued a consultation document seeking views on the imposition of requirements for fishing vessels of less than 12 meters in length to install and operate remote position and catch reporting equipment.**

The over 12 meter fishing vessels are already required to carry positioning and remote catch reporting equipment but the requirement to extend this to the smaller boats would use a different technology as the satellite system used by the larger vessels has a significant operating cost and is expensive to fit and maintain.

The under 12 meter equipment would attract grant aid but operating costs will be a

burden for the vessel.

The Department justify this imposition by stating that more complete catch reporting is required upon which to base fisheries management plans but the obvious consequence is that the effort of submitting and verifying the catch positioning logging and catch reporting will now lie with the fisherman rather than with the fishery officers who previously would input the data from written logs and declarations.

A previous scheme was instigated in Strangford Lough as a condition of licence to fish Strangford Lough but this failed in short order as maintenance of the installed equipment proved problematic in small open boats.

A precursor of this scheme has previously been launched

in England and has met with considerable criticism as approved equipment proved deficient and opposition on technical deficiencies surfaced.

It is to be hoped that the failings in England are now resolved to allow a smoother implementation in Northern Ireland. One consequence of this initiative is that the workload of the port fishery officers will now be significantly reduced and with the modern trend to work from home one wonders if their presence in the ports is now as necessary as it once was. In fact virtual fishery officers may now be a reality as more and more of the traditional workload is digitised.

The Department also announced information workshops to complement this consultation but on workdays in working hours which meant that attendance by working fishermen would be difficult but if you have a mobile phone no doubt you could zoom into the workshop with those holding the workshop using zoom too leaving the process fully virtual.

If only this technology could be used for tailing prawns then life would truly be easier for everybody! Just watch this space remote vessel operations are now being trialled for merchant ships could fishing be next the Orwellian Big Brother will soon be with us!



purchase. This year the post Brexit option of landing into Northern Ireland for transport to Irish factories and then weighing is very much an unknown factor in whatever way the fishery will pan out for all participants in the fishery and we can only wait and see what is decided on high or what is ignored!

The inshore fleets are working away with good prices and markets seemingly anticipated for the summer/autumn fishery and onshore pot storage finding their way back out to the fishing grounds. ■

## FISHING FOR LITTER REVIEW

**THE NORTHERN IRELAND FISHING FOR LITTER INITIATIVE** has recently been reviewed after one year of its relaunch with a "catch" of 5.7 tonnes from some 55 participating vessels from the three main trawler based ports of Ardglass, Kilkeel and Portavogie.

Co-ordinated by the **Northern Ireland Harbour Authority** and its environment officer **Jenny Lau** this was a relaunch of the scheme originally funded by the Environment Department with skips provided at the three ports and collection bags this time supplied by the Harbour Authority and the Northern Ireland P O's.

The idea is to recover the litter incidentally caught in the trawling operation and returning it to port for disposal through the Harbour Authorities refuse disposal channels.

Although marine litter is reckoned globally to be a growing problem the local collection has in dictated that 80% of that collected came originally from shore based discard and that litter from vessel based discard is a decreasing problem locally as the issue of marine litter is frequently highlighted in television

documentaries and as regulation has got more intense.

Ferry routes in the past used to be a rich resource for discarded litter but that is now dramatically reduced as the clean seas message has been accepted.

In a recent survey in the Clyde a most significant litter component was traffic cones blown into the sea from roadworks on coastal highways.

Conversations with local fishermen revealed that in recent years, following the initial initiative, the fishermen were in the habit of bringing litter caught at sea ashore for disposal anyway but the recent initiative re-enforced the message of the importance of doing this if only to improve the image of fishing in an environmental context as well as maintaining the environment fishing takes place in.

Scientists tell us that the prawn fishing grounds in the north Irish Sea are trawled over as much as 10 times in a given year so on that basis (not allowing for sustainability gear modification) the mid section of ICES V11A north must be one of the cleanest places in the marine environment!

## Northern Ireland Seafood Trails

A new initiative promoting seafood and seafood eateries has recently been launched by SEAFISH through the Northern Ireland regional program and supported by the Department of Agriculture and funding through the EMFF regional grant.

Designed to promote seafood restaurants, cafes, fish and chip bars and seafood outlets a series of 9 pamphlets extols the credential of 14 coastal towns, their fishery links and local seafood establishments.

Done as much as a tour guide the pamphlets do promote fish with a variety of recipes as well as sites of local interest. Admitting that seasonality of availability of the various fish species is an issue the pamphlet encourages readers to try seasonally available choices highlighting the choices available at each of the chosen locations

# UK Fishing Industry Voices Highlight Impacts of Brexit in New Report

Trade, access, quotas, markets, and management of fisheries resources all highlighted for political attention by the fishing industry post-Brexit.

**The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Fisheries has released a report showcasing voices from across the UK fishing industry speaking on the impact of Brexit on their livelihoods – and the actions these people believe government should take to support the UK’s fishing industry.**

It was frequently predicted that the UK fishing industry would benefit from Brexit, both in the run-up to the 2016 referendum and the UK’s official departure from the EU. However, industry members have said that the reality has proved to be very different. Their words form the basis of the new report, *“Brexit: Voices of the UK Fishing Industry”*.

**Alistair Carmichael MP, Vice Chair of the APPG**, suggested that the APPG compile the report following a Parliamentary debate on the same topic in mid-2021. “Having raised the myriad challenges faced by fishermen and the wider seafood industry numerous times with the government in the past two years, the work of the APPG has been vital in gathering evidence across the sector,” he said. “This timely report provides a direct insight into the unique circumstances our fishing industry has faced as a result of new trading conditions, and will be a crucial resource for those in Parliament and

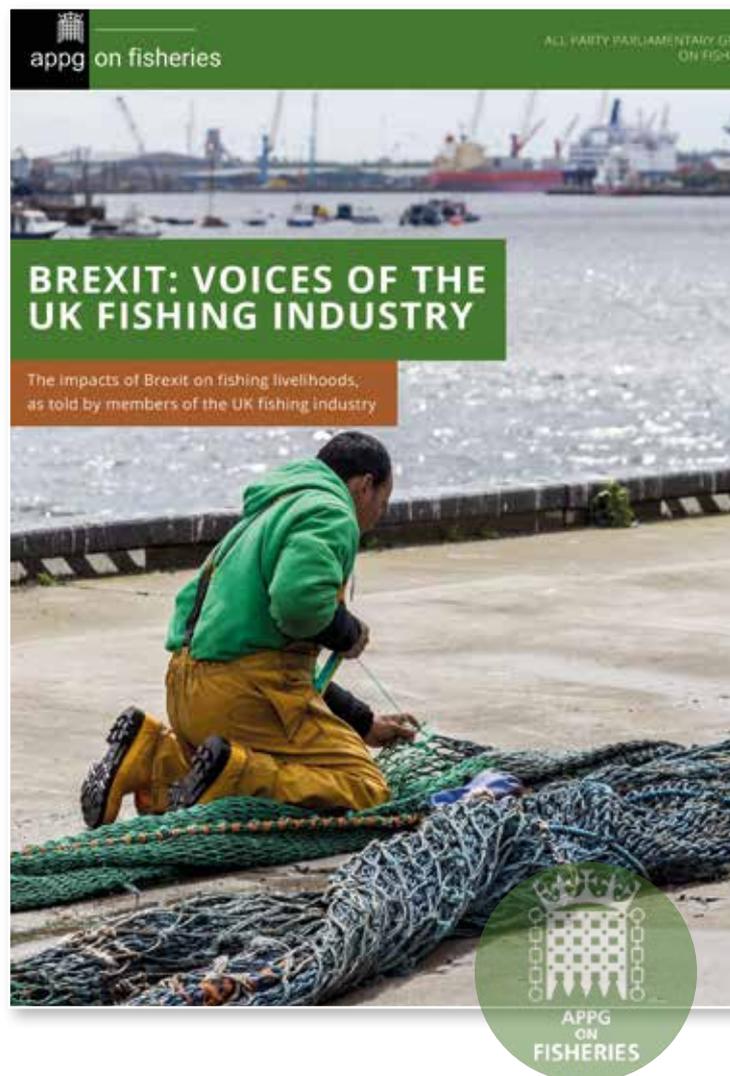
government aiming to support the sector.”

In winter 2021, the APPG on Fisheries released a survey to collate experiences of Brexit felt by members of the fishing industry. Responses revealed significant and shared concerns around financial losses and the long-term viability of individual businesses, fishing fleets, and other parts of the industry including processors and transporters.

For example, exporters have routinely struggled to get their shipments through the border, resulting in loss of income or, in extreme cases, entire markets, while small-scale fishers have felt unable to compete with larger EU vessels which have retained some access to UK waters until at least 2026.

“This report shines a light on what is needed from policy to help support the UK’s fishermen, who have suffered many negative impacts to their livelihoods as a result of Brexit,” said **Tina Barnes, Head of Impact at The Seafarers’ Charity**, which co-funded the report. “Paying heed to the recommendations from industry members themselves would help ensure they get the assistance they need.”

While respondents overwhelmingly felt Brexit had not worked in their favour, many were hopeful that the situation could be improved.



*Their recommendations included:*

- Ensuring quotas are distributed and managed more fairly.
- Further restricting non-UK fishing fleet access to UK waters, sooner than 2026.
- Ensuring effective and inclusive management of domestic stocks.
- Working with the EU to free up trade, and remove regulatory and financial barriers
- Implementing more restrictions on access to UK waters for non-UK fishing fleets
- Investing in infrastructure and new markets, at home and abroad.

**Dr Eleanor Adamson, Fisheries Programme Manager with The Fishmongers’ Company’s Fisheries Charitable Trust**, which co-funded the report, said: “We are pleased to see the publication of this report, which will stand as a permanent record of the turbulent times that UK fishermen have faced in recent years, as well as providing

pathways for supporting the sector where it needs support most.”

Carmichael concluded: “Based on the correspondence I received personally and the accounts contained in this report, it is clear that more and better engagement is needed, and pragmatic, serious efforts to support the fishing industry are required from ministers in order to ensure that coastal communities can continue to thrive into the future.”

The report is publicly available and will also be sent to the APPG’s Parliamentary Members, relevant Ministers, and other coastal Mps.

The full report can be found on the APPG website.

For any questions, get in touch with the APPG Secretariat at [secretariat@fisheriesappg.org](mailto:secretariat@fisheriesappg.org).



Responses revealed significant and shared concerns around financial losses and the long-term viability of individual businesses.





# Majority of Fishermen are ready to use Biodegradable Fishing Gear

SURVEY CARRIED OUT BETWEEN 2020/21

**M**ore than 200 French and English fishermen took part in the survey conducted as part of the INdIGO project between December 2020 and August 2021. The analysis of the results provides important information on the use of plastics in the fishing industry on both sides of the Channel and the potential for fishermen to adopt new biodegradable nets.

The majority of the participants in the survey are owners and skippers who use passive gear (traps, nets and lines). Gillnetters were the majority (35%) but trawlers, pot fishermen and dredgers also participated in the study.

## Using biodegradable fishing gear: under what conditions?

The results of the survey show that the majority of the participants (73%) would consider using a biodegradable fishing net in the foreseeable future. For the fishermen who participated in the survey, the performance criteria are essential: the biodegradable net must be as efficient as traditional nets, i.e. as efficient, resistant and solid. At the technical level, 76.4% of the fishermen consider that the resistance of the nets is very or extremely influential. Furthermore, for 65.7% of the participants, a reduction in the lifespan of fishing gear is acceptable.

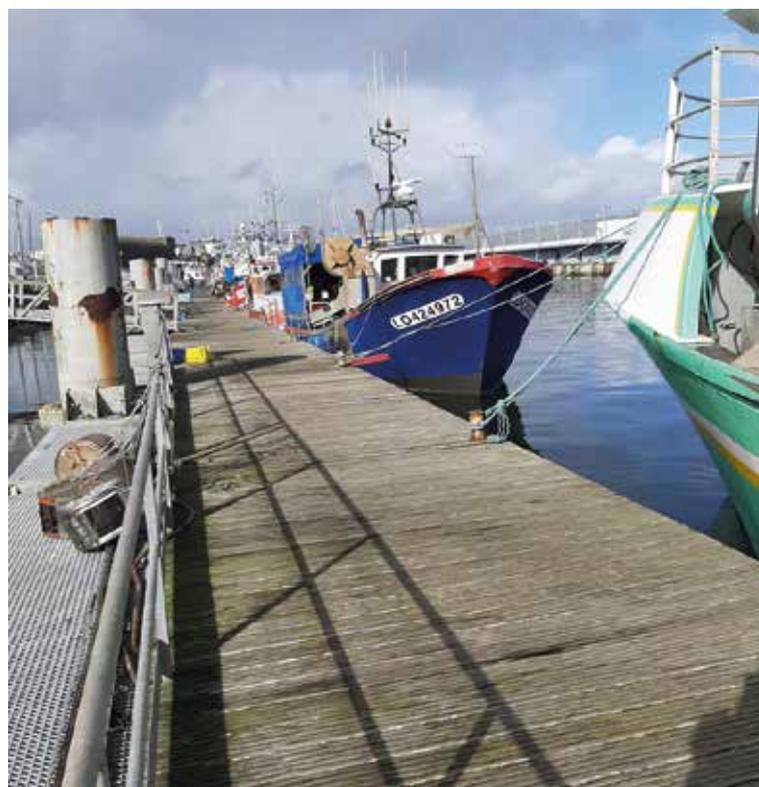
The results of the survey also

show that the valorisation of the fishing product and the fishing activity with customers and the general public could encourage the fishermen to adopt the new biodegradable net (e.g. by proposing a sustainability label). For more than half of the fishermen interviewed, it is important that family and customers are supportive of their choice of fishing gear. It also seems that environmental arguments are useful to encourage the fishermen to change to biodegradable fishing gear.

The majority of fishermen have expressed the will to try the new biodegradable fishing gear (94%) and some of them are already interested in the tests that will take place in the next few months in the framework of INdIGO. Finally, an additional cost of 1 to 10% for the purchase of the biodegradable net is envisaged by half of the fishermen questioned. However, the majority declared that financial aid is essential to start using a biodegradable net.

## Abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear: more information to improve pollution prevention and management

The INdIGO survey also found out more about lost, abandoned or discarded fishing gear. 42% of the fishermen agreed that bad weather conditions cause gear loss, while according to some fishermen, the lack of awareness and training on the issue of used fishing gear can also cause gear



42% of the fishermen agreed that bad weather conditions cause gear loss,

loss. Other factors causing gear loss that were highlighted by fishermen in the survey were inadequate collection facilities in ports and harbours (e.g. insufficient number of bins) (32%) and deliberate discards (31%).

The vast majority (almost 90%) of English and French respondents indicated that they encounter abandoned fishing gear at sea. When derelict fishing gear is encountered, almost all the fishermen in the sample (90%) reported bringing it ashore for disposal. For more than half of the fishermen (56%), this disposal is done via the waste bins for general waste, while 40% use the containers reserved for fishing gear.

Finally, with regard to knowledge of the regulations concerning the management of end-of-life fishing gear, 78% of those questioned stated that they were not aware of the regulations concerning used fishing gear. However, it appears that the younger generations are more aware of the existence of regulations on the management of waste fishing gear than previous generations.

## Presentation of the partners involved

The survey was conducted by three partners of the INdIGO project: Lab-STICC, CEFAS and SMEL.

■ The **Lab-STICC** laboratory of the University of Southern Brittany and the FHOX team

in particular focus on the study of socio-technical systems and the understanding of the environment in which innovations are hosted (analysis of activities, acceptability, appropriation, etc.).

■ **SMEL**, Synergie Mer Et Littoral, is a technical centre located in Normandy which provides technical support to maritime professionals and accompanies the development of production (foresight, research and development). The number of projects responding to environmental issues is increasing and the problem of marine waste is now one of the concerns of these sectors.

■ **CEFAS** is a British technical centre that works with the fishing and aquaculture industries. The marine litter team has years of experience in dealing with marine litter and in particular plastic pollution, ranging from the observation of larger debris to the monitoring of microplastics.



The INdIGO Project is a multi-stakeholder initiative concerned with the reduction of plastic fishing gear pollution in the Channel Sea; it also endeavours to redesign the current gear used by applying key sustainable principles that will in effect not only support best practice in the fishing industry but will also help protect the marine environment and all its wildlife.



Cowrie Bay shooting off Kilkeel.

# First successful trial of a wireless sensor on scallop gear to measure the pitch and roll in real-time

SIMRAD SENSOR AND SOFTWARE MONITORING USED. *By Stephen Jones, i-Fish Marine Electronics*

ONE OF THE MOST COMMON questions asked to **i-Fish Marine Electronics**, based in Kilkeel Northern Ireland from scalloper skippers was how they could monitor, in real-time, the angle of pitch of their scallop dredges. Having this information at hand would allow the skipper to adjust the amount of wire quickly during fishing operations, to set the dredges at the most effective towing angle. To the casual observer, it would be assumed that when fishing for scallops, the wheels on the end of the dredge bar rolled along the seabed when towed, and this in turn dictated the angle of the dredge teeth in relation to the seabed.

However, scallop dredge skippers will tell you that the normal practice is to shoot more or less wire warp as the best method to change the towing angle of the dredges. Having the correct towing angle can significantly improve the scallop yield per tow and therefore is a crucial piece of information to know.

As the **Simrad Dealer** for Northern Ireland, **i-Fish owner Stephen Jones**, contacted **Andrew Masson**, UK Commercial Fishery Sales Manager of the Simrad UK distributor, **Echomaster Marine Ltd.** for advice. Echomaster Marine have over three decades of experience with wireless trawl monitoring systems however, using such a system of a scallop vessel would be a first for them too.

Due to the heavy nature of scallop fishing gear, and the continuous shooting, hauling, tipping operations a solution would require an extremely robust sensor. Another concern was the system would require exceptional signal handling in order to overcome the localised low frequency noise generated by the scallop dredge teeth striking the often-stony ground. Echomaster Marine suggested a trial be organised utilising the tried and tested **Simrad PX Multisensor**, coupled with the **Simrad TV80** gear monitoring software. The signal from the

sensor would be picked up by a portable hydrophone for the trial, although this would be a hull mounted hydrophone in a permanent installation.

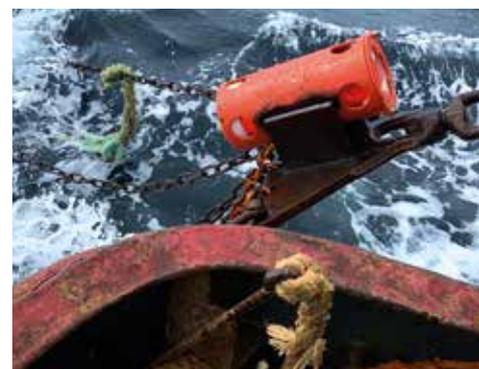
Stephen Jones talked to **Mark McKee**, skipper of the *Cowrie Bay*, who kindly agreed to trial the system while the vessel was working, day fishing off Kilkeel, at the end of the season. The ground off Kilkeel is very rough and the trial was based on the presumption that if it works on very rough ground, where there will be maximum noise and

vibration, then it should work anywhere. i-Fish engaged local fabricators **Samuel & Raymond Patterson** and discussed how the sensor housing was mounted.

The mounting solution had several requirements. For example, the sensor must not interfere with the balance of the towing bar. Also, there was the possibility of damaging the sensor on the seabed if it ended up being towed up upside-down. Ultimately it was agreed that mounting the sensor on the towing triangle would avoid these issues and



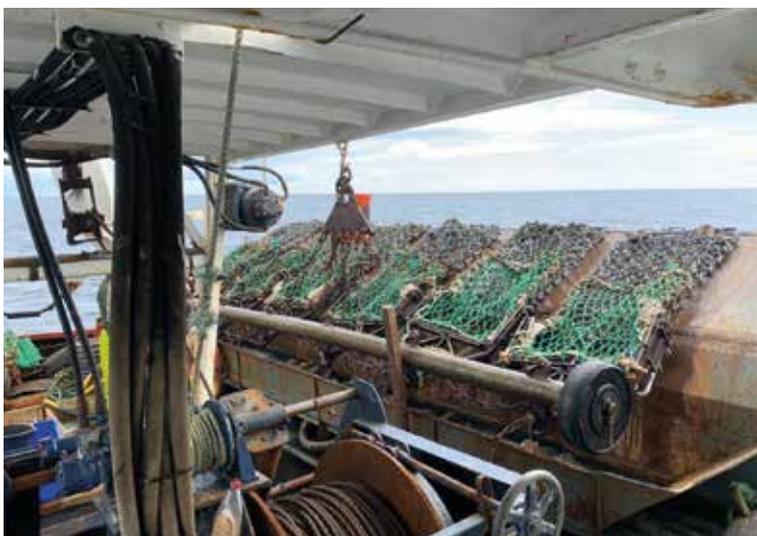
Portable hydrophone and the Simrad sensor housing welded onto triangle.



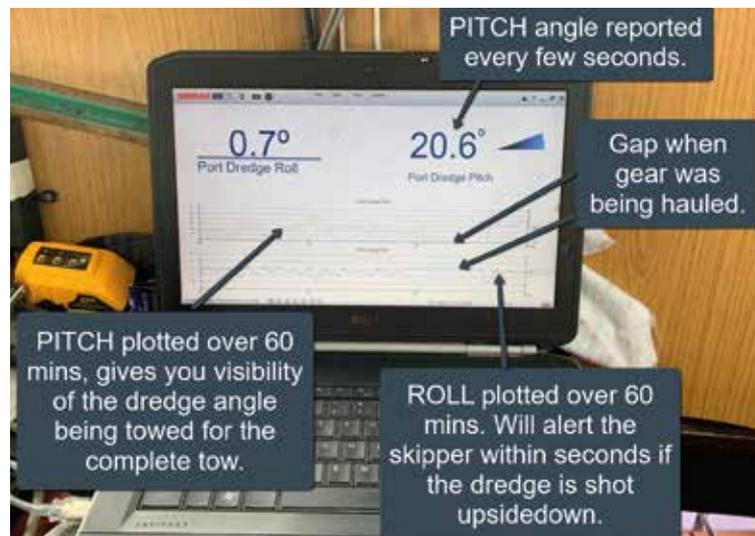


Johnny and Chris McKee shooting wire.

The conclusion is that the use of a Simrad Multisensor system onboard scallopers is very helpful in setting the gear quickly at the preferred angle of attack for each tow



Tipping the dredges.



Simrad TV80 on laptop labelled up

provide the vital information back to the wheelhouse. At this location there was a suitable area to weld the Simrad PX sensor housing while also considerably reducing the risk to the sensor itself during normal fishing operations. Crucially it would not interfere with the emptying of the scallop dredges.

Leaving Kilkeel Harbour at 8am, the Cowrie Bay made the short journey to the fishing grounds. Tows lasted for approximately 50 minutes, and it took around 10 minutes to haul and shoot. This timeline allowed for 11 tows throughout the allowed fishing day. The Simrad PX sensor on the towing triangle quickly reported the pitch angle being towed which was displayed on the Simrad TV80 software in the wheelhouse. The towing angle pitch quickly changed from 15

degrees to 22 degrees depending on the length of wire used.

**The pitch and roll angles** were plotted over the whole tow to let the skipper see how much it varied when turning. It was noted that the reported angles from the PX sensor were consistent throughout the tows.

Continuous reporting of the roll angle of the dredge allowed the Skipper to know within seconds if the dredge bar had ended up on the seabed upside down when it was being shot away. This prevents one side of the vessel's scallop dredges being completely unproductive for a tow and incurring damage by being towed upside down over rough or stony ground. Having this information early means the gear does not require to be repaired saving on cost & time. Under normal conditions

the roll measurement would be within a few degrees of zero, but if upside down it would read on the TV80 software around 180 degrees.

Mr McKee concluded that it wouldn't take long when fishing the same patch of ground to make note of the angles against different wire shot, and what catch was obtained for each tow to then determine what is the best angle in that area. Unlike the trawlers spread, the scallopers angle is very easily adjusted, and a few fathoms of wire in or out could make quite a difference. Once the skipper is happy with the desired angle to work in a certain area it would be this pitch range to be used no matter the state of tide and wind.

The conclusion is that the use of a Simrad Multisensor system onboard scallopers is very helpful

in setting the gear quickly at the preferred angle of attack for each tow and knowing that the gear is on the ground the right way up, and therefore can enable the skipper to increase the catch and lower running costs. The standard system setup suits most scallop fishing vessel sizes.

Generally, grant aid is available for these type of systems in the UK and Ireland. ●



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# CAMPAIGN AGAINST GILL NETTING RECEIVES NEW IMPETUS

**F**ISHERMEN and local politicians in Shetland have stepped up their efforts to have gill netting banned from Scottish waters.

In what can be described as an unlikely alliance **Shetland Fishermen's Association (SFA)** and the local branch of the Scottish Greens have written in "forceful terms" to cabinet secretary Mairi Gougeon urging her to act.

Meanwhile, Shetland Islands Council has re-iterated its continued support after first agreeing two years ago to make representation to the Scottish Government on issues such as discarded fishing equipment and gill netting.

Spanish and French gill netters, working to the west of Shetland use huge monofilament plastic nets that cover vast areas of sea and are designed to catch everything swimming in their vicinity, often resulting in the entanglement of sea mammals and birds.

The nets are generally discarded in the water after use, posing a continued threat both to wildlife and to shipping traffic. The nets are regularly dragged up by local fishing vessels.

Both, the SFA and the Greens, have been campaigning for many years to stop the practice. The Greens are a junior partner in the Scottish Government and intend to use their parliamentary powers to push the issue higher up the agenda.

**SFA executive officer Sheila Keith** said the cooperation between fishermen and Greens is symbolic of a deep frustration in the community at the lack of action by the Scottish Government to protect local waters, wildlife and the cornerstone of the island economy.

"Criticism over the high bycatch rates and mortality of species such as seals, crabs and seabirds, all evidenced in the catalogue of photographs captured by our members, leads us to question why Marine Scotland is failing to act," she said.

"It is time to regulate these destructive fishing practices, failures around the disposal of waste and discarding of fishing gear, before the damage becomes irreversible."

Newly elected Green councillor **Alex Armitage** added: "We cannot allow intensive gillnetting to continue in Scottish waters; not only is it decimating our marine environment, but gillnet crews are trashing our seas with their used nets and domestic rubbish.

"Greens support responsible, sustainable fishing and I'm happy to be working with the Shetland Fishermen's Association and all fishers who want to sustain our marine economy and ecology for the future."

Armitage also raised the matter in a formal question to the council leadership at a meeting of the full council on 8 June.

Addressing council convener **Andrea Manson**, the Green councillor said: "The Shetland Fishermen's Association, along with the Shetland Greens, are calling on the Scottish Government to end intensive gillnetting in Scottish waters.

"Will you join us in calling for a ban on gillnetting by boats over 15m – and stand up for the economy and ecology of our coastal communities?"

Manson explained that the matter has been on the agenda of KIMO – the international body designed to prevent pollution and protect the seas – for some time.

Calling for continued focus on the topic, Manson said it is "something we definitely will have a look at".

It comes nearly two years after a motion, backed by North Isles member Duncan Anderson, was approved by councillors calling on the SIC to make representation to the Scottish Government on the matter of discarded fishing gear.

Anderson said this week on social media that the council had received a "pathetic response – if any response at all" on the matter.

"Hopefully the Greens have a louder voice at Holyrood than the council did," he said.

"The appalling ecological



Green Councillor Alex Armitage and SFA executive officer Sheila Keith.

damage must end. If foreign vessels cannot or will not fish here responsibly, they should be banned from our waters."

**M**eanwhile, in a response to the letter sent by the SFA and the Greens a spokesperson for **Marine Scotland** said the government agency would encourage anyone with knowledge of suspicious activities by vessels operating in Scottish waters to reporting this to the relevant authorities.

"We take protection of the marine environment seriously and are clear that any form of dumping and other illegal activities is completely unacceptable," the spokesperson said.

"The regulations covering the disposal of litter and fishing gear at sea are enforced by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).

"Marine Scotland Directorate officers proactively report incidents through our intelligence system to the MCA and we

periodically remind vessels of their obligations under the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships Regulations (MARPOL).

"The safety of our fishers is of paramount importance and any allegations of behaviour that risks the lives of fishers and the safety of vessels are very serious.

"Any such incidents are a matter for the MCA. Marine Scotland, including our Marine Protection Vessels and Coastal Officers, work closely with the MCA when it becomes aware of any safety related incident.

"Landings into all Scottish ports, including foreign vessels consigning catches back to the continent, are inspected and monitored on a risk based basis. We would encourage anyone with intelligence relating to suspicious activities by vessels to report this to us on our website.



## SEAFOOD EXPORTS COME TO A HALT FOLLOWING DRY DOCK DELAYS

**SEAFOOD worth hundreds of thousands of pounds waiting to be shipped from Shetland to the Scottish mainland was again caught up in delays with the NorthLink freight service in late May.**

As a result of the disruption Shetland's two fish markets were closed on Thursday 26 May preventing more than 2,000 boxes of whitefish from

being shipped to the UK and European markets.

Industry group **Seafood Shetland** said exports have "ground to a halt" due to delays in bringing the NorthLink freight boat *Helliar* back from dry dock.

Scottish Sea Farms' head of operations Ewan Mackintosh said his company has more than £250,000 worth of salmon

# Fishing association calls for full research into offshore wind plans

**THE FISHING industry has again raised concern about areas of proposed offshore wind development – claiming they could “wreak havoc with key spawning and nursery grounds” for important stocks.**

Shetland Fishermen’s Association (SFA), which represents the interests of over 120 vessels, has provided maps showing the overlap between proposed areas of development and these sensitive ecosystems for young fish.

It is calling for the Scottish Government and wind developers to undertake full research on the topic.

For Scotland’s most popular fish, haddock, only two out of 18 areas earmarked for turbine installation under the government’s ScotWind and INTOG (Innovation and Target Oil and Gas) leasing rounds are outwith that species’ spawning or nursery grounds.

In the ScotWind auction there is an area east of Shetland up for grabs for offshore wind, while there is interest in developments around the isles to service oil and gas installations.



More areas of proposed offshore wind development.

Created using the Scottish Government’s own data, the SFA said the maps also show that several wind farm areas will impact the spawning and nursery grounds of Scotland’s most valuable pelagic fish stocks such as mackerel, herring and blue whiting.

SFA executive officer Daniel Lawson said: “We appeal to the Scottish Government and to offshore developers to undertake a full programme of research to more fully understand the impacts of anchoring offshore wind farms in the middle of fish spawning grounds.

“Ministers must adopt the precautionary principle and apply it.

“While the industry does not contest the concept of more offshore renewables, this rush towards development means that mistakes will be made – with Scotland’s productive and pristine fishing grounds potentially paying the price.

“Our government says it wants to support coastal communities, build a world class fishing nation and protect the health of Scotland’s fish stocks. Our community relies on a sustainable

fishing industry and encouraging offshore wind farms without a full understanding of their impact is a real threat to the sustainability of those stocks.”

The association also said that evidence is mounting of the negative impact on shellfish species from offshore turbines and associated cabling.

“We must avoid a situation where fishing crews providing low carbon, nutritious and healthy food are threatened with the loss of their legitimate businesses and ultimately replaced by higher carbon food producers,” Lawson added.

“Fishermen are now questioning whether ministers or Marine Scotland even took spawning grounds into account in their rush to auction off vast areas of sea to multinational energy firms.”

caught up in the delays.

Seafood Shetland said the situation has been compounded by how the relief vessel, *MS Arrow*, was released from the Northern Isles route early on Monday morning and has now returned to the Isle of Man.

“For producers, the result will be cancelled orders and a real threat that customers will lose confidence in the Shetland sector and look elsewhere in the future for their seafood,” the group’s Ruth Henderson said.

“They highlight – yet again – the continuing intransigence

of Transport Scotland to address the issues faced on the Northern Isles routes to ensure that the economy of Shetland – and, indeed, the economy of Scotland – is not undermined through the organisation’s failure to understand the impact of its inaction.”

Shetland Fishermen’s Association executive officer Sheila Keith said: “Transport Scotland has been warned about the fragility of our freight service for years, and the embarrassing lack of contingency options regularly causes problems for seafood

producers.

“Shetland’s reputation for quality fish has been built on freshness and continuity of supply.

It comes after a report, presented to transport minister Jenny Gilruth, found that six in 10 northbound and four in 10 southbound sailings are running close to at least 90 per cent capacity, with one in ten over the allotted capacity.

Freight manager at NorthLink Ferries Kris Bevan confirmed that cargo ship returned to service on 27 May following routine maintenance.

## Migrant fishermen report does not reflect Shetland situation, association says

**A NEW report which claims that some migrant fishing workers on Scottish boats have suffered physical and racial abuse – as well as poor pay and conditions – does not reflect the situation in Shetland, according to the local fishermen’s association.**

Researchers from the **University of Nottingham** said they spoke to more than 120 migrant workers who had contact with ports across the UK and further afield – including Lerwick and Scalloway.

More than a third of workers claimed they were subjected to physical violence on a regular basis, while around 20 per cent said they did not have a signed copy of their contract.

The research does not go into further detail regarding which boats the workers have been with, or any specific locations.

Another feature of the report was that some fishermen claimed they worked up to 20 hours in a shift for less than £4 an hour.

The report concluded that there was “compelling evidence that exploitative labour practices and forced labour are endemic across the UK fishing industry”.

But Shetland Fishermen’s Association’s executive officer **Sheila Keith** said the “findings in this report are not something we recognise as issues in the Shetland fleet”.

“If the findings of this report are true, they raise significant concerns for the treatment of fishermen elsewhere,” she said.

Keith said there is a significant difference when it comes to local fishing boats - the Shetland fleet is owned by residents rather than larger companies.

“A small percentage of fishermen in our fleet are non-Shetland residents, less than half a percent, of which there is a small number of Filipino, Ghanaian and Latvian fishermen,” she explained.

“All sourced through reputable agencies, with contracts of employment. All vessels comply with the ILO188 regulations and UK employment law.”

Keith added that most of these fishermen have been working on their current boats for many years and are “very settled”.

“Surely that is a testament to good working experiences of foreign crews in our fleet,” she said. ●



The reason for the decrease is a lower estimate of the cod stock compared with previous years.



# COD QUOTA CUT ONCE MORE

**ICELANDIC FISHERMEN will have to settle for a 6% reduction of their cod quota in the upcoming fishing year starting in September. The quota will be reduced by 13,000 tons, from 222 thousand tons to 209,000 tons.**

## 23% reduction in a three year period

■ This will be the third year in a row that the cod quota is cut. Three years ago the total allowable catch of cod amounted to 272,000 tons so the reduction since then is 23%. The reason for the decrease is a lower estimate of the cod stock compared with previous years. The biomass, however, is expected to increase slightly in the next two or three years when the 2019 and 2020 cohorts come in as they are estimated to be above average in terms of size. In spite of the quota cuts in recent years the scientists claim that the cod stock is strong.

## The most important species

■ Cod being by far the most important species in Iceland, rendering over 40% of the total export value of seafood, this latest announcement made by the Marine and Fresh Water Research Institute of Iceland (MFRI) was certainly a disappointment. When it comes to deciding the total allowable catch (TAC) of cod and many other important species, the scientists do in fact have the last word even though the decision is

formally the minister's.

## A management plan

■ According to a management plan which the Icelandic government has committed itself to and which has been approved by ICES (The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) the TAC of cod must not exceed 20% of the size of the stock (cod age 4 and older). A similar plan (with various percentages) has been adopted for many other species such as haddock, saithe, redfish and herring, but not for all. The Minister of Fisheries in recent years has, almost without exception, followed the advice of the scientists to the letter when it comes to issuing yearly fishing quotas.

## Ups and downs

■ While the cod stock is temporarily deteriorating the haddock stock is on the rise and allows for a quota of 62,000 tons which is an increase of 23% compared with the current fishing year. The biomass is expected to increase in the next two years as the 2019 and 2020 cohorts are above average.

The golden redfish in the East Greenland/Iceland/Faroe Islands area, on the other hand, is in its poorest condition since 2009 and the spawning stock continues to decrease. According to the current management plan the quota will be cut by 20% and will amount to roughly 26,000 tons for the next fishing year. The advised quota is likely to decrease further in the coming years, according to the scientists.

## Icelandic herring recuperating

■ The stock of the Icelandic summer spawning herring has increased following a period of constant decline since 2008.

The decline was related to poor recruitment and the persistent infection by protozoan parasite. The advice for the next fishing year, when the management plan is applied, is 66,000 tons. That is 8% less than the current fishing year's TAC but still favorable compared with 35,000 tons two years ago.

## Shared stocks excluded

■ The fishing quotas issued now do not include stocks that Iceland shares with other nations, such as mackerel, blue whiting and herring. The list also excludes the Icelandic capelin which has made a remarkable recovery following years of poor recruitment. ●

## Fishing opportunities in Iceland (thousand tons)

SPECIES	TAC current year	Recommended next year
Cod	222	209
Haddock	41	62
Saithe	78	71
Golden redfish	32	26
Dem. Beaked redfish	8	6
Greenland halibut	27	27
Plaice	8	7
Lemon sole	1	1
Witch	1	1
Atlantic wolfish	9	8
Ling	5	6
Tusk	2	4
Icelandic herring	72	66
Great silver smelt	9	12
Sea cucumber	2	3

Fishing year: September-August  
Excluded: Capelin and shared stocks; blue whiting; mackerel and herring.

# Commercial Oils enjoy a busy expo

**C**OMMERCIAL OILS, Part of Certas Energy Lubricants returned to Scottish Skipper Expo after a two-year break and the company described it as 'a fantastic few days'.

Diane Campbell of Commercial Oils said: "It was great to be back catching up with everyone face-to-face at this very busy event, as well as sponsoring the Seafood Buffet, a lively well-attended event as usual. The impactful *Valvoline Blood Sweat and Oil* stand theme, grease stand and simulator as well as a charity raffle ensured the stand was busy each day and created a real buzz.

"We made some new acquaintances and look forward to working with the skippers that have placed orders with us for lubricants and we have plenty of leads still to follow up. Mark from EMD Partners Ltd provided non-stop support to both the younger attendees and adults alike at the ever-popular Racing Simulator. Mark's contribution ensured another successful racing event took place and congratulations to Caleb McGregor, the overall winner, who



Commercial Oils and their impactful Valvoline, Blood, Sweat and Oil stand.

won this year's trophy and Valvoline goodie bag.

"Huge thanks to everyone that contributed to the RNLI through both our raffle and the simulator, we raised £159.50 and Certas are kindly doubling this to £320, much needed funding for the lifeboats that are so essential.

"Well done to Sharon Boyle and the team at Mara Media for all their hard work and made it such a success along with

the new venue P&J Live, we really enjoyed the new space and layout. Finally, to the Certas team for all their hard work Arthur MacDonald, Lorraine Stewart, Scott Wilson, Jenni McGrath, Andrew Cossar and Lauren Campbell.

"We are looking forward to next year already!"



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- Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting
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- 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



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# New build 'Dillon Owen II'

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Congratulations to Paddy, Family and Crew with their new vessel "Dillon Owen II." We are proud to have supplied, installed and commissioned the communication, navigational and fish finding equipment for this vessel.



## Paddy O'Sullivan's new 26 mtr Trawler/Seiner designed and delivered by Danish Shipyard Vestværflet ApS in Hvide Sande.

WORDS & PHOTOS: NIALL DUFFY

**A** FLOTILLA OF LOCAL BOATS gathered last month to give a traditional welcome to the new *Dillon Owen II* as she arrived to her home port of Castletownbere, West Cork after the long steam home from Denmark. Owner Paddy "Owenie" O'Sullivan guided his new vessel up Berehaven Sound accompanied by his families other boats Owenie Padraig, Velvet Chord II, Tea Rose and Sainte Marie De La Mer.

*Dillon Owen II* is a 26 mtr Trawler/Seiner designed and delivered by Danish Shipyard Vestværflet ApS in Hvide Sande. The hull was built in Szczecin, Poland and towed for outfitting in Hvide Sande.

The vessel replaces the original *Dillon Owen* built by the same yard whilst giving Paddy the extra option of Seining alongside the Demersal and Pelagic trawling role utilised before.



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**OWNER PADDY AND ELNORA O'SULLIVAN.**



**PADDY WITH HIS CREW.**

**Engine Room**

■ *Dillon Owen II's* main engine is a Caterpillar 3508C supplied by Zeppelin, Esbjerg coupled with a Hundested CPG-120 Marine gearbox with 3 pcs. PTO, reduction, 11,93:1 driving a Hundested variable pitch diam. 2800 mm Propeller in high efficient nozzle. The Propeller turns at 134 rpm. The Auxiliary Power and Hydraulic systems are proved by 2 Caterpillar C. 9.3, 312 KVA, 50 Hz engines and a Harbour 40 KVA genset and a Hydraulic driven 135 KVA generator.

**Deck Machinery**

■ The Hydraulic installation was designed and built by Thyborøn Skibs & Motor, Thyborøn.

- 2 x main Seine winches under the main deck
- 2 x Trawl winches aft of the wheelhouse
- 2 x Split net drums with Poclairn motors
- 1 pcs. trawl gantry for moving 2 blocks with hydraulic ram
- 1 x Codend winch
- 1 x 45 KW Power pack
- 1 x Landing crane TMP 1300 L with 1500 kg winch
- 1 x Autotrawl system

**Fish Handling**

■ A complete fish handling system was designed and built by Danish firm Boatech, Hanstholm. The catch can be bagged at the stern or starboard side hoppers and then transported by conveyor to the gutting and washing

station where they are graded and delivered to the fishroom by individual chutes. Cooling of the catch begins in the hoppers for maximum quality.

LMK Lemvig fitted out the refrigerated fish room and fresh ice is supplied by 2 x 3000 kg Buus icemakers.

A 90 Kw cooling system was installed for the vessels two RSW tanks.

**Trawl Gear**

■ The seining gear on board *Dillon Owen II* consists of combination seine rope from VCU Urk and two Danish seine trawls from Nordsøtrawl, Thyborøn.

Swan Net Gundry supplied the vessel with Dyneema trawl warp

and whitefish trawls.

SNG & KT Nets Pelagic nets will be used for the upcoming Tuna season.

**General**

■ A full Electronics package was delivered and installed by Barry Electronics, Killybegs, Ireland. (See Panel For Details)

*Dillon Owen II* is fitted with Hundested ST 4 160 HP Bow & Stern thrusters and AS:Scan, Hvide Sande supplied a Scan-Steering MT – 1600 steering system

All outside steel was sandblasted, metallised and painted in Hempel Paint by Vestværflet.

The Deck coverings on working deck and external decks were treated in Degafloor Resin by PBP Services, Peterhead. (See Panel, p.30))

Speaking to The Skipper as the *Dillon Owen II* docked at Dinish Island Pier for the first time, Paddy O'Sullivan said:

"I would like to like to thank my wife Elnora, family, friends and crewmates for all the support they have given me during this build."

"Also my sincere gratitude to everyone involved in building and fitting out the *Dillon Owen II*. Your hard work and professional approach is much appreciated"

"A special thank you to Noel O'Regan – Promara, who provided valuable assistance and advice during the whole project."

**The Skipper Team would like to offer our congratulations to Paddy and Family and wish them safe fishing and good times with the *Dillon Owen II*.** →

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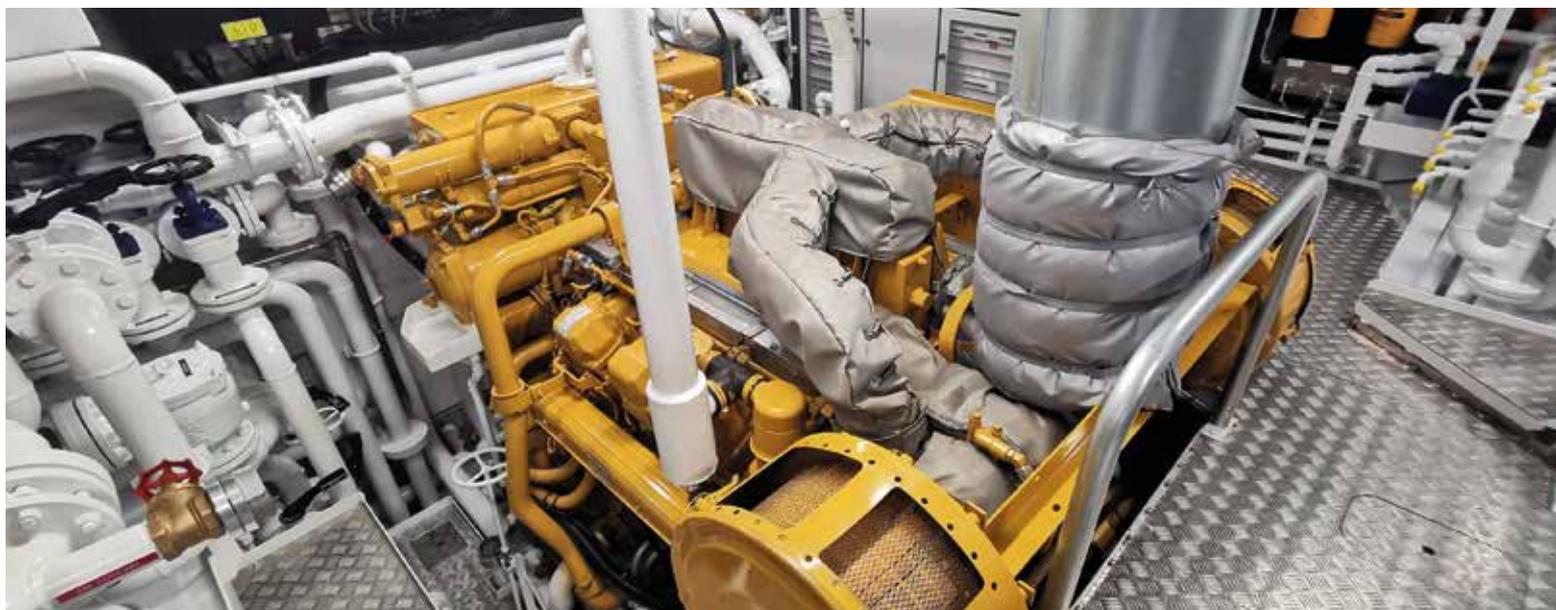
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## ELECTRONICS PACKAGE

**Barry Electronics Ltd supplied and installed a complete electronics package to *Dillon Owen II*.**

- Furuno FAR1518 X Band Radar
- Furuno FAR1513 X Band Radar
- Furuno FSV35 Low Frequency Sonar
- Furuno FSV85 Medium Frequency Sonar
- Furuno FCV1900 Dual Frequency Sounder
- JRC JFV180 BB Netsounder
- WASSP F3i Multibeam Echosounder
- Simrad ES80 Echosounder with C-All Transducer
- 2 x Sodena Easy Win Plotters
- 1 x Max Sea TZ Professional Plotter
- Simrad AP70 Mk2 Autopilot with AP70 Aft Control



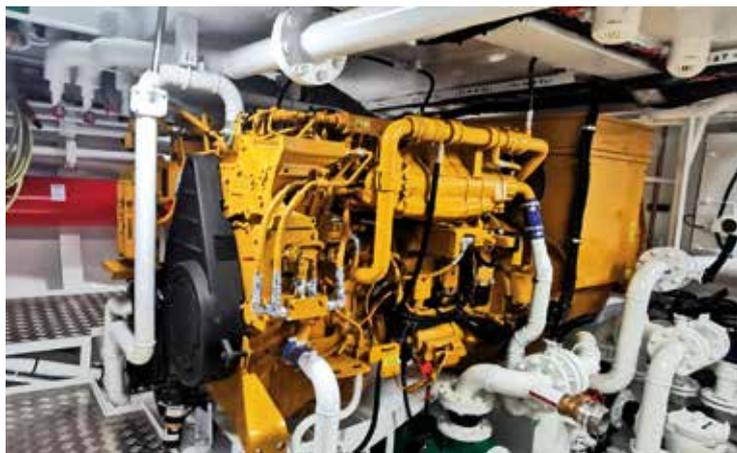
- Simrad A2004 Autopilot back up pilot
- Navitron Watch Alarm
- Furuno GP170 GPS Navigator
- Furuno GP33 GPS Navigator
- Furuno SC70 Sat Compass
- Furuno FM8900 VHF DSC Radio
- Furuno FS1575 MF/HF DSC Radio
- 2 x Sailor 6210 VHF
- Furuno NX300 Navtex
- Jotron 60S EPIRB
- Jotron Tron AIS SART
- Icom GM1600E GMDSS Handhelds
- Victron Battery Charger and Monitor
- Sailor Fleet One satellite phone
- BEL VSAT Internet and WiFi
- Intellian i6P Sat TV and distribution system
- 17 x IP Camera CCTV system
- Phonotech Intercom
- Furuno LH5000 loudhailer
- Propellor Monitoring Camera



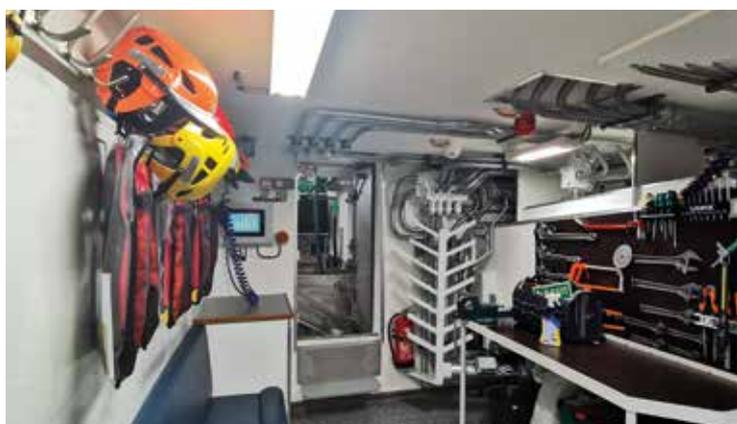
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**FISH HOPPER IN THE HOLD.**

## PBP Services Provide Certified Degafloor Deck Resin System For New *Dillon Owen II*

PADDY O’SULLIVAN is delighted with the quality and standard of work provided by **PBP Services** over the recent Danish Holiday Weekend while the Shipyard was closed for the holiday.

Immediately on the order being placed for *Dillon Owen II*, materials were despatched and extra manpower were mobilised to join the PBP team already in Thybøron, Denmark, painting on the slipway for another customer.

The 4-layer **Degafloor Resin System** was applied by long serving experienced employees, working long and hard hours over the weekend to ensure no disruptions to the Shipyard workers and sub-contractors working days.

A quartz anti-slip resin was applied to the complete Trawl Deck and under Net Drums and Net Drum tracks a smoother quartz finish was applied to prevent netting wear and to provide a durable protective barrier to underlying steel deck from wear down of the steel plates.

Food and Drinks Industry certified anti-slip Degafloor Resin was also applied to the steering room and various other rooms as well as the fish processing deck which can be hygienically cleaned and easily maintained over the longer period with no annual painting required providing cost saving during future refits and tie ups going forward.

Oil Skin and Changing areas had the **Degafloor Decor Fleck System** applied to the floors ensuring good underfoot comfort as well as ease of cleaning and a highly decorative appearance achieved.

Paddy O’Sullivan has worked with PBP Services for many years and



**DEGAFLOOR RESIN SYSTEM.**

commented that he had no hesitation in placing his order and is delighted with the work ethic and quality of works provided by the experienced PBP Team whom he knows from previous fish hold rebuilds and blasting and painting carried out by PBP over 15 years ago.

He also stated that the Degafloor Resin is the best deck and floor product he could choose for the *Dillon Owen II*, adding that it is next best to having another layer of steel on top of deck plates which will protect against corrosion and steel wear down. Also the anti-slip crew safety aspect, as well as the visual appearance underfoot, comfort and strength of the product, is second to none.

“It’s great to see the teamwork and organisation of PBP during installation, where there is no room for error and all the team must be on the ball to work quickly before curing starts. The Degafloor Resin cures and dries hard within one hour.”

“I’d like to thank PBP for the outstanding services provided just before new build completion as well as a big thank you to Degafloor for their top quality products.”

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 Congratulations to Paddy, Elnora, family & crew with their new vessel ‘Dillon Owen II’

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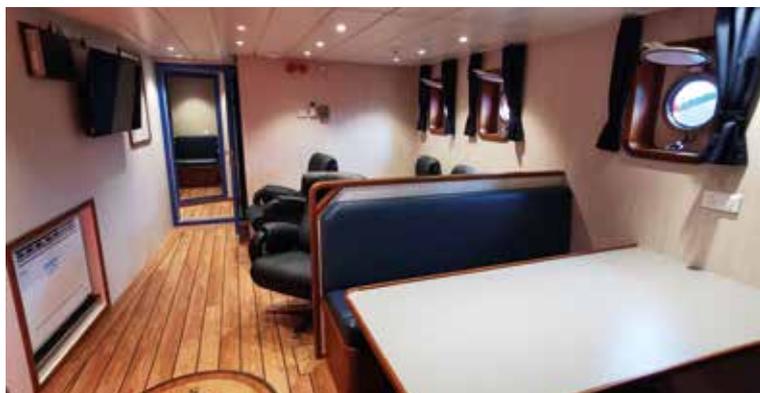
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Best wishes to Paddy, Elnora, Family and Crew from Joe and Trisha

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# MSD Animal Health Launches New Fisheries Platform to Support Sustainable Fisheries

The DNA TRACEBACK® Fisheries platform is currently being implemented in a project to discriminate herring populations in the Irish and Celtic Seas and Bristol Channel,



Oilean an Oir at sunrise while fishing in the Celtic Sea for herring. PHOTO: DECLAN HORAN



As the saying goes, 'counting fish is like counting trees, except they are invisible, they keep moving and they eat each other.' Despite this every year scientists must perform essential stock assessments on different species of fish in order to attempt to estimate what the sustainable levels of catch for the future year will be. These stock assessments bring together catch, survey and biological data under the assumption that the data included is representative of the stock being assessed. This means that the data should cover the entire distribution of the stock and also that fish do not leave or join the stock i.e. the stock is a closed population. It is therefore essential to know what biological populations of each species of fish exist and to make sure that this is accounted for in the identification and delineation of stocks for the purposes of assessment and ultimately management. Simply put, in order to count fish, you first have to know what you are counting.

It sounds simple but the central fundamental weakness that remains in many existing stock assessments is the lack of knowledge of underlying population structure and the inaccurate definition and delineation of stocks for data collection and assessment. Most stocks are defined according to geographical and political features or regions or statistical areas (e.g. ICES Divisions) rather than on a biological basis. Over time, it has become increasingly clear that the temporal and spatial distributions of most fisheries resources are not aligned to these artificial divisions. Whilst delineation by predefined area may be convenient, accurately assessing the status, biomass and sustainable exploitation rates of a stock without knowing its biological (population) composition is impossible.

Despite considerable effort and development of numerous potential stock identification methods over the years, this basic requirement has largely eluded fisheries scientists. That is until recently, when advances in genetic sequencing technology have enabled unprecedented access to the genetic information of these valuable natural resources. It is now possible to study the entire genetic code of species such as herring and horse mackerel and identify minute differences with which to distinguish populations.

Genetic markers for these differences can then be used to establish baseline population information and ultimately to assign individual fish in mixed survey and commercial catches to the population or assessment unit to which they belong, before conducting a stock assessment.

This genetic stock identification approach has been applied over the past few years on the herring to the northwest of Ireland and west of Scotland in Division 6.a and has highlighted the inaccuracies in the geographic based splitting of the Northwest (6.a.S, 7.b-c) herring and the West of Scotland (6.a.N) autumn spawning herring. Essentially the data for these stocks have been incorrectly analysed since they were proposed as separate stocks in the 1970s, which has contributed to their unsustainable exploitation. The assessments for these stocks have now been changed on the basis of the genetic evidence, to reflect the true distribution of the underlying populations and these will continue to be monitored to ensure that the assessment data is collated at the correct level.

Now these advances have progressed even further with the ground-breaking development of a higher-powered genetic approach. In collaboration with **Uppsala University** (Sweden), **MSD Animal Health** has developed the **DNA TRACEBACK® Fisheries platform**. This is a multi-species genetic tool that contains all the known informative genetic markers for all herring populations across the entire distribution of the species. If applied in the same manner as the work in Division 6.a it would enable any herring caught anywhere to be assigned back to its population of origin with a very high level of confidence. This is a game changer in terms of stock assessment and could potentially redraw the maps of herring stocks in the northeast Atlantic. The beauty is that the tool also contains markers for horse mackerel, sprat and cod to name but a few and it is hoped to add additional species once data become available.

"Thousands of particularly informative genetic markers have been selected for each species based on recent whole genome sequencing efforts and are now represented on the DNA TRACEBACK Fisheries platform," says Dr. Leif Andersson, professor of functional genomics at Uppsala University. "These extraordinary

advances in DNA sequence analysis offer great potential in fisheries management when they are made widely accessible and affordable."

This offers a real-world solution to address the global need for sustainable food production and marine conservation and provides scientists with the genetic tools they need to accurately define the fish stocks which they are assessing, thus providing the foundation on which sustainable management can be built.

**The Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation** (KFO) and the **Pelagic Advisory Council**, who have been strong supporters for the development and implementation of novel genetic methods for improving the data that underpins various stock assessments, including those for Herring and Horse Mackerel, noted that "the release of the first DNA TRACEBACK® Fisheries platform from MSD Animal Health represents a significant advance. Wide-scale application of the tool across the various species will enable national fisheries institutes and ICES to assess valuable fisheries resources more accurately, which will lead to more sustainable management. In the near future we hope that Mackerel and Blue Whiting markers will be added to the array and it is important that we continue to support the further development by adding more adding more pelagic and demersal species."

The DNA TRACEBACK® Fisheries platform is currently being implemented in a project to discriminate herring populations in the Irish and Celtic Seas and Bristol Channel and there are projects under way and supported by fishery organisations to extend this to other species (e.g. horse mackerel).

"Substantive progress in seafood sustainability can be achieved through this type of scientific innovation and collaboration. We are delighted to extend our activity into global marine fisheries," said Dafydd Morris, general manager Norge, MSD Animal Health. "Further innovation is expected and many more commercially important species, including major tuna species, could soon be incorporated into the DNA TRACEBACK Fisheries platform. The more fish species that are included, the more beneficial this technology becomes for its users – so we are excited by the opportunity to connect with researchers working in this space."

DNA TraceBack® Fisheries represents the first widely accessible and standardised tool to facilitate genomic fisheries stock identification and research.

Harnessing the latest data resources from whole-genome sequencing studies, the multi-species array offers fixed content validated polymorphic markers (SNP) for your species of choice.

Delivered through our network of MSD Animal Health laboratories, analysis of your samples is convenient and cost-effective.



More than analysis of the genomic array, MSD Animal Health has the resource of baseline and reference samples to provide the most accurate stock identification solution, from sample to assignment.

Flexible sample submission options enable studies of archival and sub-optimal specimens.

For each species DNA markers have been selected from whole-genome sequence data, to provide broad genome coverage.

SNP are especially informative for population and stock identification. SNP may also be used for familial reconstruction, parental assignment and differentiation studies.

Common Name	Species	Family	SNP Density
Atlantic Salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>	Salmonidae	4K
Brown Trout	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	Salmonidae	4K
Cod	<i>Gadus morhua</i>	Gadidae	4K
Herring*	<i>Clupea harengus</i>	Clupeidae	7K
Horse Mackerel†	<i>Trachurus trachurus</i>	Carangidae	4K
Pacific Whiteleg Shrimp	<i>Litopenaeus vannamei</i>	Penaeidae	1K
Perch	<i>Perca fluviatilis</i>	Percidae	4K
Sprat	<i>Sprattus sprattus</i>	Clupeidae	6K

Details of chromosome coverage and related measures are available

\*doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2022.04.07.487341>

†doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2022.04.25.489172>

“The Killybegs Fishermans Organisation and the Pelagic Advisory Council have been strong supporters for the development and implementation of novel genetic methods for improving the data that underpins various stock assessments, including those for Herring and Horse Mackerel. The release of the first DNA TraceBack® Fisheries array from MSD Animal Health represents a significant advance in this area. We believe that the wide-scale application of the tool across the various species will enable national fisheries institutes and ICES to assess valuable fisheries resources more accurately, which will lead to more sustainable management.”

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



PHOTO OF THE MONTH

**WINNER:**  
Máire Éinniú

*Girl Autumn passing Golman Head Tower Lettermullen*



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

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

### THE MONTHLY PRIZE

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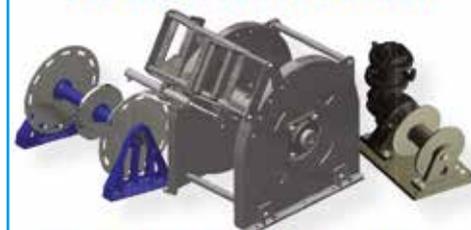
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Fort Aengus.



Girl Nicola.



Anne O'Grady, Denis O'Driscoll, Patricia Slevin and Pat Keogh at the European Seafood Exhibition in Brussels.



From L-R: The Ewing family with Shaun Rodgers, Atlantic Marine, and Hugh Bonner of The Skipper.



Above: Tom Doyle of the MFV Paula in 1997.

# The Skipper Archives

June 1989

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### French trawlers wreck gillnetter's gear

The skipper and crew of the Dingle gillnetter, Carol Ann, taking off the remains of their nets which were damaged by two French trawlers, Lohale and Magalaine, about 120 miles off the Blacksand last month. Owned by Andrew O'Connor and fished by John Francis Brennan, the boat was working on logs at the time.

Apart from the 18 nets, about 30 more were damaged by the trawlers, which even stayed in the nets moving away after the Dingle boat appeared and protested. The two Commission-based fisheries then steamed off leaving the protest.

The owner has made a report to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin about the expensive accident, which apart from the financial loss, would cost two weeks of fishing time to repair the remaining gear.

Many areas in the south are now virtually out of bounds for longlines for the same reason.

### E.C. may make new ice law

NEW E.C. regulations on fish handling which are being drafted in Brussels, could force Irish boats to ice all fish on board, in order to meet standard European hygiene regulations.

The regulations aim to bring different countries' standards into line. They will be put to the European Commission for approval later this year, and then have to be passed by the Council of Ministers.

The Department of the Marine said there would be full consultations with the fishing industry here, before the ministers finally agree on any new regulations.

The main problem for Ireland is the lack of ice supplies in all but the main ports.

---

### F.E.O.G.A. BLOCKS GRANTS FOR NEW IRISH BOATS

THERE WAS BITTER disappointment in many ports last month when it was learnt that no F.E.O.G.A. grants had been sanctioned for new vessels for which applications had been processed by B.I.M.

The reason given in Brussels was that Ireland had failed to reduce its tonnage as set out in an E.C. directive governing the size of national fleets in 1982.

Particularly upset were fishermen whose applications are based on taking non-quota species, or species which are not under pressure.

Frank Doyle, I.F.F.I. Secretary General, said that he would meet a team of the Ministry and the Department of the Marine to discuss the matter.

He said, "I.F.F.I. is disappointed that the E.C. is not taking account of the fact that the Irish fleet is being reduced by the E.C. and that the E.C. is not taking account of the fact that the Irish fleet is being reduced by the E.C. and that the E.C. is not taking account of the fact that the Irish fleet is being reduced by the E.C."

### VELVETS BRING CASH TO RUSH

Rush, Co. Dublin, has been enjoying a minor boom from velvet fish landings. In January and February the total catch was worth over £10,000.

The velvet fish, which comes from the sea, is a very good food source, and some boats taking up to 12 tonnes per day at £20 per ton.

---

### FAMOUS MORAVIA ENDS ITS DAYS

One of the best known fishing vessels ever to work in Ireland was sunk last month when the Moravia went down with her crew of five men north east of Malin Head on a trip from Greenacres. The crew of five were rescued by another fishing boat.

The 60-foot Moravia became famous for its large size and catches in the past few years when thought to be the largest fishery vessel in Ireland.

The crew of five were rescued by another fishing boat.

### Salmon patrol uses 'copter

A HELICOPTER patrol was used by the North-Western Fisheries Board to detect unattended nets in Sligo District Court last month.

Mr. Vincent Roche, in an effort to detect unattended nets, contacted the Fisheries Board officers at Ballyvaughan who went to the scene by boat. Each man was fined £50.

---

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**FRENCH WRECK**  
The Skipper and crew of the Dingle gillnetter Carol Ann taking off remains of their nets which were damaged by two French trawlers, who steamed off ignoring protests.

**NO GRANTS**  
Bitter disappointment in many ports when it was learnt that no F.E.O.G.A. grants have been sanctioned for new vessels because Ireland had failed to reduce its tonnage.

**ICE LANDING**  
New E.C. regulations on fish handling, drafted in Brussels, could force Irish boats to ice all fish on board, in order to meet stand European regulations and bring standards into line.

**SALMON CHOPPER**  
Helicopter on patrol was used by the North-Western Fisheries Board to detect unattended nets against four Mayo men accused of obstructing fisheries officer.

**MORAVIA LOST**  
One of the best known vessels ever to work in Ireland was lost when the 60-foot Moravia went down ten miles north east of Malin Head. The crew of five were rescued.

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The Skipper/July 2022

37



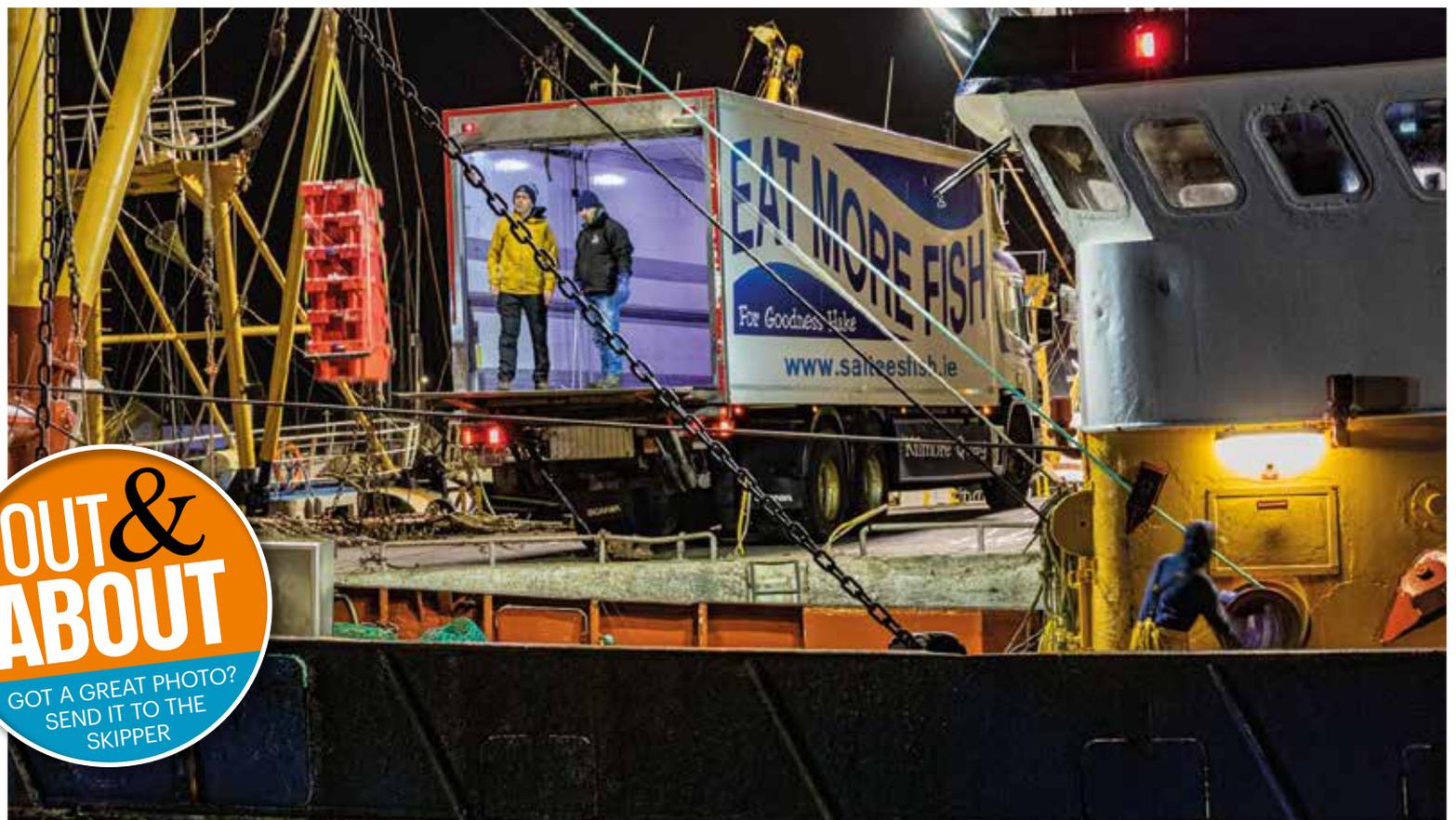
Jamie O'Sullivan on Castletownbere pier. PHOTO: BRID BOYLE



Courageous LK470 leaving Lerwick after arriving back from Denmark from a paint up. PHOTO CALUM GRAY



John B heading for the fishing grounds. PHOTO: RORY WILDEA



Mary J landing its catch at Kilmore Quay. PHOTO: FINBARR HEALY

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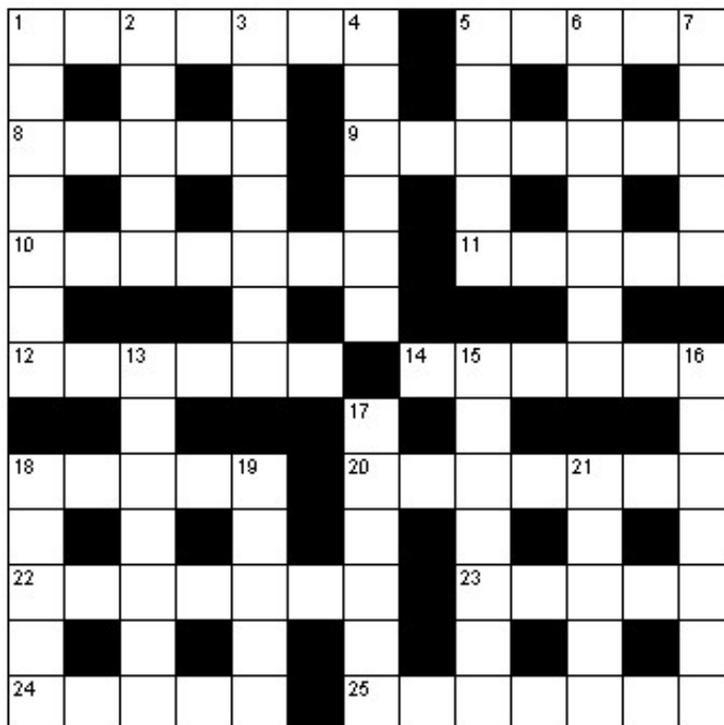
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- 22 Go over again (7)
- 23 Be (5)
- 24 Row of shrubs (5)
- 25 Beg, entreat (7)

**DOWN**

- 1 Put on display (7)
- 2 Stanza (5)
- 3 Madman (7)
- 4 Separated (6)
- 5 Rapid (5)
- 6 Do away with (7)
- 7 Trample (5)
- 13 Lit (7)
- 15 Bowmen (7)
- 16 Withdraw from a contest (7)
- 17 Excellent (6)
- 18 Area of swampy ground (5)
- 19 Astound (5)
- 21 Put into words (5)



**JUNE SOLUTION**



**JUNE WINNERS**

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**2ND** – Skipper Beanie  
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# Have your say at BIM's Regional Gear Workshops

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

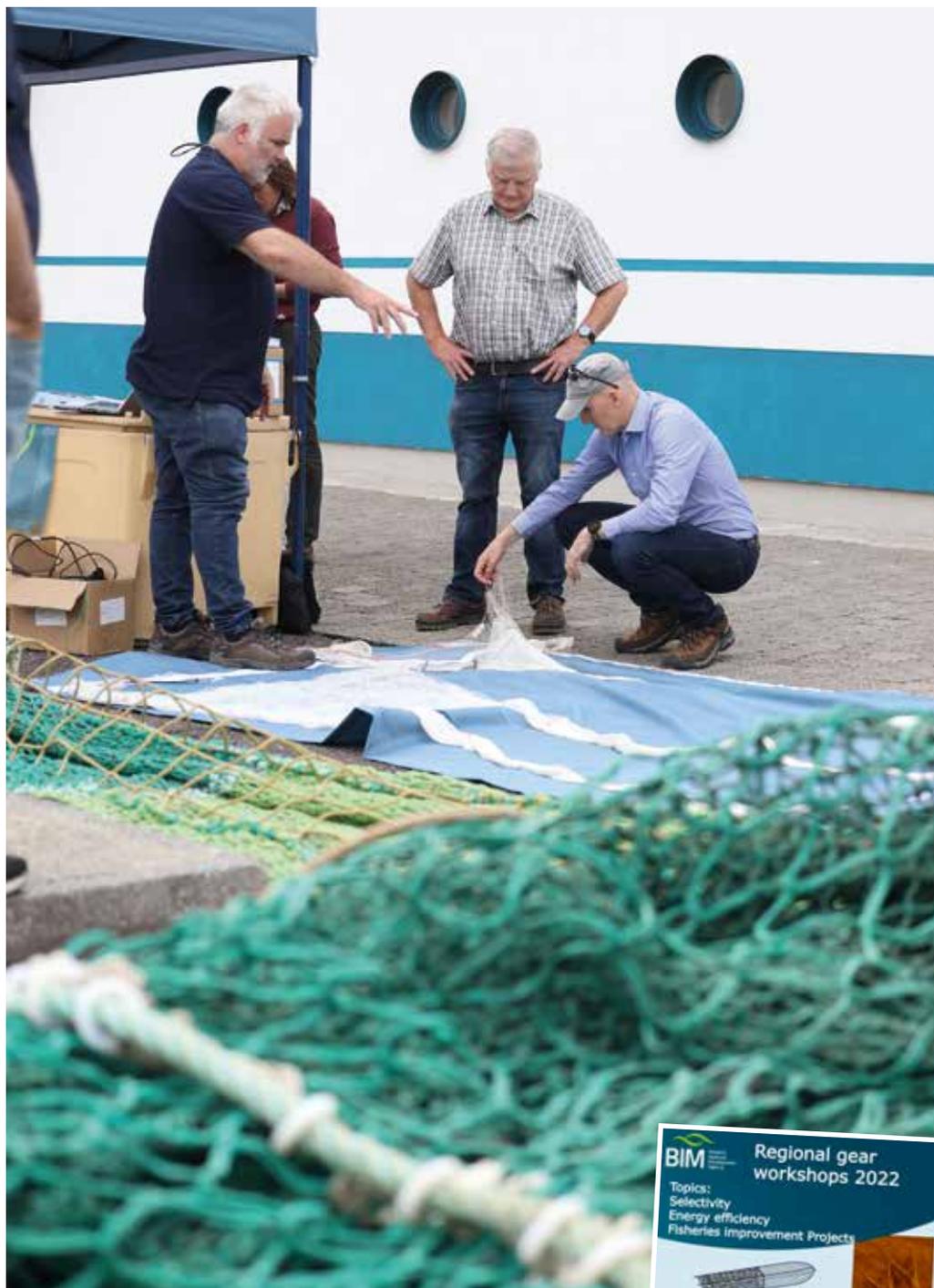
**BIM held a gear workshop on the pier in Castletownbere on June 16th.** This followed on from an event in Killybegs in May and is part of a series of Industry workshops being held around the coast during the summer months which aim to share knowledge on gear-based developments and challenges. **The Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs)** and the **Marine Institute (MI)** are also collaborating to discuss opportunities in this area.

Discussions in Castletownbere focused on a range of selective gears developed and implemented as technical measures in Irish waters. Thanks to extensive R&D by the Industry and BIM in response to the landing obligation, most Irish vessels are now actively using more selective gears such as T90 codends for whitefish and enlarged mesh escape panels for fish in the Nephrops fishery.

The FIPs provide an opportunity for Industry to capitalise on such improvements through demonstration of environmental credentials and enhanced market access. As well as providing essential data towards development of sustainable fisheries, the MI/Industry fish self-sampling programme provides an opportunity for vessel owners to record their use of more environmentally friendly gears – an important component of FIPs.

Given the ongoing energy crisis, there was also a lot of interest in the net model of our new four-panel trawl which has shown major potential for improving energy efficiency in the Nephrops fishery. Lifting parts of the gear off the seabed can also improve energy efficiency and help reduce seabed impacts of bottom trawls.

Reducing seabed impacts is likely to be a major new challenge for bottom-contact gears given plans for widescale introduction of marine protected areas, increased protection of marine biodiversity and carbon stores. Gear-based research in this area is at an early stage, however, and its essential that gear modifications are practical and commercially viable as well as good for the environment. The workshops provide a good opportunity for fishers to



**Matthew McHugh, Development Executive, BIM, John D O'Sullivan owner MFV Ronan Ross, and Ronan Cosgrove, Fisheries Conservation Manager, BIM.**  
PHOTO: CATHAL NOONAN

**Reducing seabed impacts is likely to be a major new challenge for bottom-contact gears given plans for widescale introduction of marine protected areas**



share ideas in this area which we can build into more R&D and collaborations in the years ahead.

The next workshops will take place in Dunmore East in mid-July and Clogherhead in mid-August. Please keep an eye out for messages from your Producers' Organisation and on social media for specific dates.

Thanks to the Industry participants and to Shane Begley and crew at the National Fisheries College of Ireland in

Castletownbere for use of the facilities.

This work is funded by the Irish Government and part-financed by the European Union through the EMFAF Operational Programme 2021 – 2027 under the BIM Sustainable Fisheries Scheme. ●

