



Happy 40th Anniversary

ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURE



Significant Environmental Challenges facing the Irish Fishing Industry

2019 poses considerable environmental challenges for the fishing industry through a combination of policy and regulatory measures reaching a critical mass with serious implications on several fronts. The measures concern the development of a National Marine Planning Framework (NMPPF), a Climate Change Adaptation Plan and the combined Directives concerning the use and treatment of plastics throughout the lifetime of such materials. Each of these actions create serious problems for industry at individual level but their combined effects have serious financial and functional implications for everyone in the fishing industry and associated businesses.

National Marine Planning Framework a Step Closer with development of Marine Planning Policy Statement

The process of developing a National Marine Planning Framework (NMPPF) has made significant headway recently with the launch of a Marine Planning Policy Statement (MPPS). The MPPS, published on June 10, 2019, is intended to guide the development of the final NMPPF which is, itself, a requirement of the European Marine Spatial Planning Directive (Directive 2014/89/EU) and driven by a looming deadline of March 31, 2021, for member states to have their plan in place.

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government is leading a whole-of-government approach to the development of Ireland's first marine spatial plan which will mirror the Department's land-based National Planning Framework and will set out the long-term planning objectives and priorities for the management of Ireland's seas over a 20-year time frame.

The Marine Planning Policy Statement is intended to:

- Describe the existing components of Ireland's marine planning system;
- Outline a vision for the future development of our marine planning system;
- Set out the overarching policies and principles which those bodies involved in future marine planning will be expected to

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The first Board of Directors of the KFO, including from left: Sonny Daly, Paddy Kerins, Joey Murrin, Hughie Moore, Noel McGing, Kevin McHugh, Mick Doyle, Joe Sheeran.



KFO celebrates its 40th AGM

Sean O'Donoghue, CEO, and Michael Cavanagh, Chairman, cut the cake at KFO AGM on 14th June 2019

KFO Celebrates Its 40th AGM

This is another landmark year for the KFO celebrating 40 years of service to the Killybegs fishing industry. Formed in 1979 to advance the fishing industry in the North West, 40 years later the KFO is the largest representative organisation for the fishing industry in Ireland and a powerful voice both nationally and in the European Union.

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adhere to, such as, public engagement, transparency, governance, environmental assessment, climate action, social and economic benefit;

- Set our high-level priorities for the enhancement of the marine planning system in Ireland.

The planning system is envisaged to consist of three important elements:

- Forward planning – planning objectives over the medium- to long-term at national, regional and local level;
- Development management and;
- Enforcement.

To date, the closest Ireland has had to marine spatial planning were the goals of Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth set out in its Integrated Marine Plan in 2012 and based on an increased maritime economy, healthy ecosystems and a greater engagement with our maritime heritage. This base has now been given the tools with which to turn aspirational goals into firm policies and results.

The Marine Planning Policy Statement sets out the overarching principles and high-level priorities for the marine planning system. The strategic principles include obligations regarding EU and international law which includes, but is not limited to, EU Directives such as those dealing with Habitats and Birds, the Common Fisheries Policy, the SOLAS Safety at Sea Convention and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Very importantly it states, *"The marine planning system will support the maintenance and development of our seafood industry, particularly in recognition of our strong fishing heritage and its contribution to vibrant, accessible sustainable coastal and island communities."*

High-level priorities are focused on the regulatory and statutory tools which will be required to enable the ambitious strategic principles – forward planning, development management and enforcement – which require up-to-date and robust legislative framework to support timely and appropriate decision making. Such legislative requirements will be reflected in the necessary amendments to the current Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act.

The development of a Marine National Planning Framework is long-overdue and sincerely welcomed by all sectors and stakeholders, but it must also be viewed against the backdrop of the parallel development of the Climate Action Adaptation Plan (see right) which advocates huge support for Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE). The proposals being considered could create disproportionate problems for the existing fishing industry and hinder investment and growth in future.

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government welcomes feedback from all sectors up to August 5, 2019. Full instructions for giving your opinion and the entire Marine Planning Policy Statement (Consultation Draft) can found at https://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/public-consultation/files/marine_planning_policy_statement_consultation_draft_-_7_june_2019.docx.pdf.

The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) has overall responsibility for developing resilience to climate change in Ireland and has produced a document "Climate Action Plan 2019 – To Tackle Climate Breakdown." This lays out the actions required and how the government proposes to implement them to achieve our national and international commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and our reliance on carbon-based energy. The timescale to achieve our targets is two-fold; latest projections indicate Ireland's emissions will continue to rise during 2021 to 2025 as the demand for electricity increases but should begin to decline post-2025 with a net decrease of 30 per cent by 2030. From then onwards the Climate Action Plan should achieve its zero-decarbonisation target by 2050.

The overarching elements of Ireland's approach will be through financial and planning measures. Carbon taxes will incentivise the development and uptake of alternative power sources. The current Carbon Tax of €20 per tonne of carbon dioxide produced by using fossil fuels such as diesel, will rise to €80 per tonne by 2030. This tax will be reviewed every five years and may be further increased. This is a substantial added cost to an industry already very exposed to the effects of rising fuel costs for both catching and distribution. Vital refrigeration costs may also rise with restrictions on types of gas allowed

A major plank in the Climate Change Plan is the intended move to offshore renewable energy (ORE). The Climate Action Plan 2019 lists very detailed Action Points (Nos 25, 26, 27) in this regard and links such developments to the National Marine Planning Framework:

- "Development and enactment of necessary secondary legislation following enactment of Marine Planning and Development Management
- Completion of the National Marine Planning Framework in a manner to give priority to key national policies such as the overall decarbonisation of the economy and Ireland's renewable energy ambitions
- Full engagement by all marine consenting agencies with the NMPF process to provide certainty to developers and the public, avoiding potential spatial conflicts and identifying synergies with other activities
- Use NMPF and associated processes to resolve conflicts between competing sectoral objectives (e.g. including renewable energy and others)
- All Departments feed into the central resource of marine spatial data and evidence being developed by the Marine Institute as part of the NMPF process."

It is important that the full engagement referred to above is followed through at all levels of the fishing industry to ensure displacement, which there will be, has as few negative consequences as possible.

While the DCCAE has responsibility for the overall Climate Change Action Plan, the individual government Departments have had to translate the over-arching objectives into sectoral-appropriate Climate Change Adaptation Plans. Twelve key sectors have been identified and of these, three come under the remit of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), namely Agriculture, Forest and Seafood. DAFM had already published a document "Adaptation Planning – Developing Resilience to Climate Change in the Agriculture and Forest Sector." On June 27, a revised version, including Seafood, was launched by Minister Michael Creed, TD, with the Overall Adaptation Goal to "Build resilience to the effects of climate change and weather related events in the agriculture, forestry and seafood sector, reduce any negative impacts where possible, take advantage of any opportunities and to contribute to achievement of DAFM Statement of Strategy Goals". This Adaptation Goal statement is built around a series of case studies, how the issues highlighted might be addressed and followed by a non-specific Adaptation Plan with 17 Actions setting timelines and identifying the responsible authority and stakeholders.

There is a facility for Public Consultation which is available on the DAFM website: (<https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/media/migration/ruralenvironment/climatechange/PublicConsultationQuestionnaire260619.docx>) and open until Friday, August 16, 2019. The public consultation questionnaire is supported by several information documents which are advisable reading before completing the questionnaire.

CIRCULARITY OF FISHING GEAR

- industry will be responsible for where it ends up -

The broader fishing industry will be responsible for fishing gear from its production to final recycling following a number of Directives and new impetus from the European Commission regarding marine litter. Directives such as the Marine Strategic Framework, Single Use Plastic (SUP), the Port Reception Facility Directive and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) all have a role.

Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) have operated a "Fishing for Litter" scheme in Ireland with 90 vessels and all six fishery harbours run by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine taking part in the initiative; to date they have landed more than 200 tonnes of such debris. However, the new proposals will go far beyond such efforts. Producers will be responsible for all fishing gear they produce; the Member State (MS) where producers operate will be obliged to monitor sales of fishing gear and fishing gear retrieved and report these figures to the Commission. Eventually, all gear production will be standardised to facilitate recycling. The port services will be required to provide reception facilities for all marine waste to enable segregation necessary for directing to appropriate re-use or recycling in the downstream waste management chain. EU registered vessels will be required to have equipment onboard to retrieve lost gear as quickly as possible.

The costs incurred in landing waste material, that generated by the vessel itself and recovered/damaged gear, will be borne by the vessel. However, costs charged by the port facility cannot be such that it encourages a targeted industry of waste collection. These recycling efforts will be phased in over the next five years but they will eventually add a significant additional cost to fishing operations, so every effort must be made to reduce waste as far as possible.

The North Western Waters Advisory Council is currently setting up a Focus Group to consider the issues and liaise with other groups with similar interests. BIM have already hosted a Workshop on "Improving the Circularity of Fishing Gear" which was addressed by Alena Petrikovicova, DG MARE. Catherine Barrett, BIM, will keep industry informed on developments on this issue and can be contacted at barrett@bim.ie.

On June 28 ICES released single stock advice for 2020 for a number of stocks in the Bay of Biscay, Celtic Seas and the North Sea. This year, a number of advices are given under the EU Multiannual Plan (MAP) for Western waters and adjacent waters which specifies an advice range along with the MSY point value. The MAP specifies the conditions under which catches higher than the point estimate can be taken. Mixed fisheries advice (cod, haddock and whiting) and single stock advice for Rockall haddock, monkfish area 6 and nephrops will be released in the autumn. Advice documents are available from www.ices.dk

Herring

Advice was released for three herring stocks. NW herring advice is again for zero catch. Although an inter-benchmark took place in 2019 during which a number of updates were made, the assessment continues to exhibit retrospective bias and its ability to accurately represent the dynamics of the combined stocks is unclear. As a consequence of the inter-benchmark assessment is now considered as a category 3 assessment; the assessment output is considered to be indicative of trends only; and given there is no change in the perception of the stock with SSB at very low levels, advice is for zero catch in 2020. ICES no longer gives advice in its top line of advice about the development a stock recovery plan, instead it is mentioned in issues relevant to advice as ICES considers the uncertainty in the assessment and the stock mixing need to be resolved to enable a suitable evaluation of any plan.

The assessment for Celtic Sea herring shows that SSB is now considerably below B_{lim} . Since there is no scenario where the stock can rebuild to above B_{lim} by 2021, the advice for 2020 is for zero catch. For Irish Sea Herring, the advice is increased by 17 per cent to 8064t.

West of Scotland

For Cod in 6a, there is no indication of stock recovery and catch advice remains zero. Advice for Megrim in 4a6a is virtually unchanged (up one per cent). Advice for Saithe in 4 and 6 is reduced by 15 per cent (to 88,093t) mainly due to lower than average recent recruitment. Low recruitment for Haddock in 4 and 6a has resulted in an 11 per cent reduction in advice to 30,228t.

Irish Sea

There are reductions in advice for both cod (down 86 per cent) and haddock (16 per cent).

The whiting advice remains at zero and has been issued for 2020 and 2021 as the stock size remains extremely low. Recent improved recruitment has resulted in an increase in stock size and 2020 catch advice for Irish Sea sole is increased by 36 per cent. As plaice is considered a bycatch species under the MAP, the basis has changed with catches less than 5640t for 2020 considered precautionary.

Celtic Sea

Catch advice for cod, haddock and whiting in the Celtic Sea in a single species context poses challenges for management of this mixed fishery. While advice for cod remains zero and whiting is reduced by 59 per cent, recent high recruitment results in a large increase in the haddock advice, more than doubling to 16,671t. The advice from the results of a mixed fishery analysis will be released in the autumn and will outline catch options for these stocks under various management scenarios.

There is little change in advice for the plaice stocks with zero catch again advised for the h-k stock in 2020 and 2021 and a six per cent increase for plaice in 7fg to 2295t. 2020 advice for the 7bc stock (24 t) was issued in 2017. This is also the case for sole in 7bc. For the other sole stocks, recent strong recruitment has resulted in an increase in SSB for sole in 7fg and a doubling of the advice to 1,731t for 2020. Sole in 7h-k is assessed to be declining and advice is reduced by 32 per cent.

The combined advice for the two anglerfish in area 7 species slightly increased, up seven per cent. For sea bass, advice for 2019 has been re-issued but is little changed. 2020 advice is given under the MAP and has increased by eight per cent to 1,946t.

New Emphasis for Brown Crab Focus Group

The North Western Waters Advisory Council has had a Brown Crab Focus Group (FGCrab) since late 2016 to follow-on the work of the ACRUNET (www.acrunet.eu), in particular to explore the possibilities of comparable management of the fisheries in the producer countries United Kingdom, Ireland and France. Due to the very different approaches to management in the participating countries the FGCrab was no more successful than ACRUNET in this task but was aware that the management issues common to all were changing rapidly due to rising demand, rising prices and expanding markets, especially in Asia.

This FGCrab will review current management measures in light of the current market issues; the implications of increased effort due to both demand and the enforcement of the landing obligation; plus the possible role for Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) and certification schemes (MSC and other national schemes). The FGCrab will explore the options and implications of a closer relationship with the ICES Crab Working Group. In the future, post-Brexit, the UK may not be able to participate in EU bodies such as the NWWAC, and an international forum such as the ICES WGCrab may prove very useful in achieving current objectives.

An update on the recent activities of the FGCrab was delivered to the NWWAC recent meeting in Ghent, Belgium. The FGCrab plans to request the Markets Advisory Council to commission an in-depth market analysis from the EU markets intelligence tool EUMOFA to provide a reliable baseline for future planning. To date, meetings have been conducted by video link to enable the members who are dealing with crab issues to participate freely.

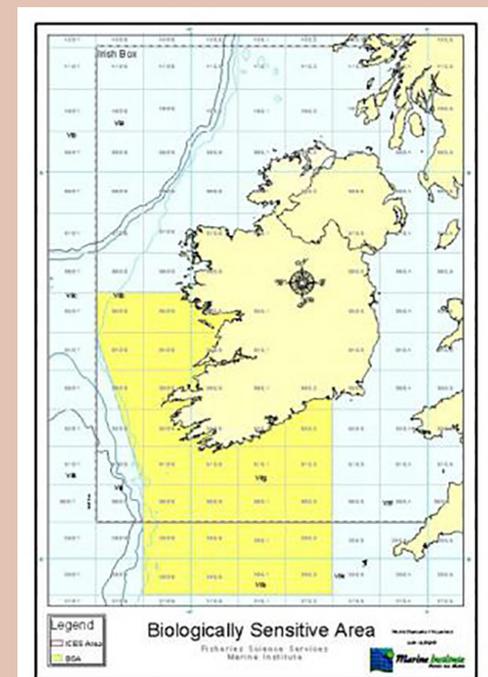
Managing Crab Effort in the Biologically Sensitive Area (BSA)

Brown crab, which has continued to develop as the most important inshore fishery in Ireland, could face some serious obstacles for the remainder of 2019. The species occurs in all waters around Ireland but the fisheries are concentrated on the south, south-west and north-west coasts; in the south-west the fishing is within the Biologically Sensitive Area (BSA) which has an effort restriction (63,198 KwDays per annum which is usually supplemented by swaps to allow for approximately 110,000 KwDays) which applies to all vessels over 10-metres. The available KwDays, including swaps, was sufficient to maintain those vessels which fished the area regularly; but with increasing demand, exceptionally high prices and fewer fishing options elsewhere, the number of boats in the BSA increased substantially and is now estimated to be around 30 vessels.

Due to the unexpected increase in boats the KwDays were used early in the season in 2018 resulting in the closure of the fishery from the end of October 2018. With the support of the fishermen it did not re-open until March this year. Several meetings were held in the Cork area to devise a plan to use the available KwDays carefully and ensure as many fishermen as possible could continue to fish brown crab as long as possible in 2019.

To manage the uptake of KwDays successfully and avoid unnecessary early closure of fisheries requires a real-time overview of the usage of effort. In many cases there may

be a substantial time lag particularly where paper-based log sheets are the system being used as happens in the BSA. The Verifish company, which has developed an electronic system of data recording, used primarily for the purposes of certification, has made a system available to the fishermen in the BSA to record their trips daily which would provide the necessary data to manage their available KwDays month-by-month. There is a small fee to avail of this system but negligible compared to the loss of fishing opportunity if this fishery should close again in late autumn 2019.



The Biologically Sensitive Area (BSA).

Editorial



by Sean O'Donoghue

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KFO



KFO held its AGM on June 14 last and the packed agenda was a measure of the serious issues the fishing industry is facing this year. Many of the problems we need to address are interconnected which, if anything, makes them even more difficult to solve but there are some which stand out as more serious and present greater threats to the future of our industry.

Firstly, the loss of MSC certification for the mackerel fishery was a direct result of erroneous advice given by ICES in 2018. I have raised the question of ICES quality assurance previously and my worst fears were realised when, due to a flawed assessment system, ICES advice for this year recommended a 68 per cent reduction. The final TAC agreed by the EU in December was not quite as bad but MSC decided to run with flawed ICES advice and to withdraw its mackerel certification. The result of the inter-benchmarking of mackerel and the revised ICES advice issued on May 15 has vindicated the industry position on the good state of the mackerel stock. The industry was confident that this major change in ICES advice for the MSC would be restored but not so, and we had to undergo a surveillance audit as recently as July 5. I am pleased to report this appears to have been a very successful process and we are confident of a restoration of the MSC accreditation shortly.

The penalty points issue has again reared its head with Minister Creed announcing last week that he intends to sign a new Statutory Instrument (SI) to replace the SI rejected by the Oireachtas last year. The precise details of the new SI are still not

known but it appears that the key issues of the right to appeal to the High Court, the removal of penalty points from the licence in the event of successful High Court challenge and a totally independent appeals process remain unchanged in the new SI. If this is the case it is totally unacceptable and will be vigorously opposed by the Industry. It is also expected that the opposition parties will similarly oppose this new SI.

Brexit remains the single greatest threat to the future of the Irish fishing industry. After three years the UK has not reached an agreed position within its own parliament never mind its relationship with the rest of Europe. Unfortunately, the prospect of a No-Deal scenario becomes more likely as time goes by and the current leadership struggle compounds this possibility. We must explore every option possible to prevent a No-Deal outcome at the end of October or a future date. The continued joint approach of all the parties, the European Fisheries Alliance (EUFA), Member States, Commission and TF50 remains our best option for negotiating a feasible deal to achieve our bottom-line needs of access to fishing grounds, percentage share of the quota and the linkage of these two key issues to wider trade and economic areas negotiations.

Fuelled by the Brexit farce, we have seen a resurgence of claims to the Rockall fishing grounds from the Scottish Government. Under the CFP, EU vessels have equal access to such waters unless specifically denied in Annex I of the CFP. There is no reference in the CFP to a

12-mile zone around Rockall. Furthermore, under the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS), an island such as Rockall which cannot sustain human habitation, cannot claim an exclusive economic zone or continental shelf.

Other than Brexit the next most serious threat is climate change. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) released a report in May with stark headlines "Nature's Dangerous Decline 'Unprecedented' Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating.'" The report attributes human activities as the cause of the degradation of the environment. One very obvious manifestation of environmental damage is climate change which may be within the power of the developed world to slow down and eventually halt. This report calls for a number of actions such as reducing fishing opportunities, increasing Marine Protected Areas and eliminating harmful subsidies. The threats to fishing created by climate change are: an increase in sea temperature which would lead to less oxygen in the oceans; acidification of sea water which would have enormous negative effects on bony fish, such as pelagics, most whitefish and crustaceans; and significant migrations of our shoaling fish to cooler waters.

Our own government has developed a Climate Change Adaptation Plan, with a specific seafood section (see page two). There is a very significant emphasis on converting electricity production from traditional fossil fuel sources to offshore renewables, windfarms, wave and current generators and possible new technologies. The Marine Spatial Planning Framework will facilitate the fast-tracking of such developments at sea which could create considerable restrictions on fishing grounds. Another tool which the Climate Change Plan will use is taxation; currently the Carbon Tax is €20 per tonne of CO₂; this will rise to €80 by 2030 and possibly be further increased. There is a reference to taxes being "aligned" which could well be interpreted as removal of fuel subsidies. Taken together the Climate Adaptation Plan, the Marine Spatial Planning Framework, and the Circularity of Fishing Gear (see page two) requirements, there will be a significant additional administrative burden for the fishing industry with possible restrictions regarding access to fishing grounds and considerable uncertainty regarding cost and availability of fuels. Once again we were pleased to invite our local politicians to our AGM and delighted at their response. Brexit remains the main item on our agenda and we urged our representatives to use all resources in their power to protect our industry particularly regarding access to our traditional fishing grounds, maintaining our quota share and linking these to wider trade and economic areas in the negotiations.

After the AGM the Board met to elect a Chairman and co-opt Directors onto the Board. The new Board of Directors, which did not change from 2018, is as follows: Michael Cavanagh, Chairman; Pete McBride, Vice-Chairman; Cathal Boyle, Jens Bach, Eamonn McGuinness, Ciaran Doherty, Pauric Conneely, Tony Byrne and Eamonn McHugh.

Important Dates July - September 2019

DATE	MEETINGS	VENUE
Jul 2 - 3	NWWAC, General Assembly, ExCom, WGs	Brussels (Ghent)
Jul 04	Industry/Science Meeting	Dublin
Jul 04	Sea Fisheries Liaison Group	Dublin
Jul 05	MSC Audit	London
Jul 10	Nothern Pelagic Working Group EAPO	Lisbon
Jul 10 - 11	Pelagic AC, WG 1& 2, ExCom	Lisbon
Jul 16	Marine Spacial Planning Advisory Group	Dublin
Jul 15 - 16	Fisheries Council	Brussels
Jul 24	Monthy Whitefish Quota Management Meeting	Dublin/Clonakilty
Jul 26	North West Herring industry meeting	Killybegs
Jul 27	Blessing of the Fleet	Killybegs
Aug 28 - Sept 3	ICES WGWIDE (Pelagic Stocks)	Tenerife
Sept 2 - 3	Markets Advisory Council (MAC)	Brussels
Sept 4 - 6	NWWAC, General Assembly, ExCom, WGs	Dublin
Sept 17 - 20	ICES ADGWIDE (Pelagic Stocks)	Copenhagen
Sept 16 - 17	Fisheries Council	Brussels
Oct 01	ICES Advice on widely distributed stocks (Pelagic)	Copenhagen

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