



2021 TACs and Quotas Still Not Finalised

Brexit chaos continues with the fishing industry still awaiting the final conclusions of the EU-UK bi-lateral talks. The first quarter of 2021 saw a provisional TAC and Quota which was roughly based on a quarter of the total TAC and Quota agreed for 2020 being ratified, with some allowance being made for those fisheries which are subject to more concentrated activity, such as the pelagic fisheries whose focus is the early months of the year. It was expected that by the time that arrangement had run its course there would be more clarity regarding the remainder of 2021.

However, the arrangements now in place, as agreed at the March Fisheries Council, only provide allocations until the end of July, 2021. In addition, the published TACs and Quotas figures are not as straightforward as usual. Some stocks have been agreed at the EU/Norway bi-lateral and EU/Norway/UK tri-lateral talks and the TACs and Quotas are at 100 per cent for 2021; while others are only agreed at seven-twelfths of the ICES scientific advice for 2021; western horse mackerel is at 80 per cent, and undulate ray 7d,e is missing from the proposals. There is also a problem with the way the Hague Preferences are calculated, as they are

calculated on a full year rather than a seven months basis. This is an unprecedented and very difficult scenario for all Irish sectors which are already under enormous pressure due to the real drop in TAC and Quota and the serious market disruption due to COVID.

The accompanying tables, both provisional and full, do not show (as normal) comparisons with the previous year or the Brexit effect, only the figures as agreed at the Fisheries Council on March 22-23. Hopefully in our July newsletter we will be able to show these comparisons.

PROVISIONAL IRISH FISH QUOTAS 2021

PROVISIONAL/FULL PELAGIC QUOTAS

SPECIES	ICES AREA	Provisional/ Full Quota 2021
Mackerel	6, 7, 8, 5b, 2a, 12, 14	60,847
Horse mackerel	2-4-6-7-8-5b, 12, 14	14,181
Horse mackerel	4b, 4c, 7d	196
Blue whiting	1-8, 12, 14	35,373
Herring	1, 2	3,370
Herring	5b, 6b, 6aN	278
Herring	6aS, 7b, 7c	721
Herring	7a	471
Herring	7g, 7h, 7j, 7k	437
Northern albacore	Atlantic Ocean	3,141
Greater silver smelt	3a, 4	3
Greater silver smelt	5, 6, 7	153
Boarfish	6, 7, 8	7,715
Totals		126,886

(Continued on page two)

Ted Breslin Retires A Milestone for the Killybegs Fishing Industry

Ted Breslin, Executive Assistant and Deputy CEO at Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation retired on February 26, after 38 years working for Ireland's most prominent fishermen's representative body.

Ted is known and respected by all sectors of the seafood industry; his career has spanned very important years for the entire fishing industry but particularly the pelagic sector based in Killybegs. Ted joined the KFO in 1983 and was responsible for implementing and operating the EU Withdrawal Scheme. His calm and level-headed approach led him on to represent KFO at many discussions - local, national and European - against a backdrop of growth and ever-increasing regulation for the fishing industry. In recent years Ted has been the face of KFO for many representations at government and fisheries management level.

Ted grew up in the Ardara area steeped in a love of all sporting activities but above all his love of football has never waned. He has passed on this love of sport to successive generations with his unstinting work coaching young footballers in his local area. His sporting interests are wide, including golf and archery, and he hopes his upcoming retirement will provide freedom to pursue all those interesting hobbies he has been putting on the long-finger these past years.

All staff and members of Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation wish Ted, his wife Jacinta, sons Simon and Nicholas and their daughter Evanne, many happy and fulfilling years to enjoy a very well-earned retirement. Go n-eirín an t-ádh leat, Ted.



Burden Sharing Must be Sought to Save Irish Fishing Industry

The KFO has pointed out in several fora that burden sharing could provide some relief for the disproportionate amount of fishing quotas which Ireland has been forced to surrender to enable the Trade Cooperation Agreement (TCA) to be completed.

Brexit has resulted in a UK fishing windfall of €184 million from the EU which consists of a staggering €41 million, mackerel at €26 million and prawns at €7 million make up almost 83 per cent of this figure, of Irish fish, gift-wrapped for the UK. Based on a simple burden sharing equation across the nine member states, Ireland should be shouldering a loss of €20 million; not €41 million as was foisted upon it.

There is a precedent for achieving this and it harks back to the mid-1970s when ironically, the UK benefited from a process of reducing the percentage quota share of other member states in order to protect its fishing sector. It also benefited from the Hague Preferences which gave both the UK and Ireland additional tonnage of certain species. Burden sharing, or 'equalisation' as it was known, saw Britain compensated for forfeiting certain stocks and grounds to the tune of 90,000 tonnes of fish, valued at €80 million, which came from the other Member States.

The KFO now suggests that the EU revisits this policy traditionally referred to as jurisdictional and third country losses/gains and Hague Preferences and applies the same rationale and fairness in order to render Ireland's key fisheries viable after the crippling and unsustainable cuts divvied out by Brexit.

In the waters off Donegal alone for instance, 82 per cent of stocks in tonnage terms - both pelagic (mackerel, herring and blue whiting) and demersal species (monkfish, megrim, haddock, cod and saithe) - have been forfeited to Britain.

The most galling fact about the loss of mackerel is that the fish are spawned in Irish waters. While Ireland cannot, nor does not, claim ownership of them, Ireland is now being discriminated against catching the fish off the coast of Scotland when they are in their prime and at their most valuable, as a result of the 26 per cent reduction in its quota.

In essence, Ireland is providing the fish for Britain to net, and for others to profit from. Ireland now has a miserly 16 per cent share, whereas the UK - mainly Scotland - has 70 per cent.

There are a number of technical options for invoking burden sharing such as Hague Preferences, jurisdictional losses, and the process of 'equalisation.' There will also be opportunities in coming years to re-negotiate the current share ratios and explore all options whereby Ireland's position can be improved. The KFO has made a detailed presentation to the Task Force (see page four) on a range of burden sharing options that should be pursued.

PROVISIONAL/FULL DEMERSAL QUOTAS

AREA VI WHITEFISH STOCKS

SPECIES	ICES AREA	Provisional /Full Quota 2021
Cod	6a, 5b	243
Cod	6b, 5b	3
Megrim	5b, 6, 12, 14	352
Anglerfish	6, 5b, 12, 14	328
Haddock	5b, 6a	650
Haddock	6b	247
Whiting	6, 5b, 12, 14	209
Plaice	6, 5b, 12, 14	248
Pollack	6, 5b, 12, 14	9
Saithe	6, 5b, 12, 14	369
Common sole	6, 5b, 12, 14	27
Norway lobster	6, 5b	54
Totals		2,739

AREA VII WHITEFISH STOCKS

SPECIES	ICES AREA	Provisional /Full Quota 2021
Cod	7a	84
Cod	7b, 7c, 7e-k, 8, 9, 10	285
Megrim	7	1,680
Anglerfish	7	1,678
Haddock	7b-k, 8, 9, 10	1,814
Haddock	7a	771
Whiting	7a	196
Whiting	7b-k	2,915
Plaice	7a	1,263
Plaice	7b, 7c	15
Plaice	7f, 7g	248
Plaice	7h, 7j, 7k	15
Pollack	7	137
Saithe	7, 8, 9, 10 NorS62° N	1,492
Common sole	7a	105
Common sole	7b, 7c	28
Common sole	7f, 7g	25
Common sole	7h, 7j, 7k	73
Norway lobster	7	3,557
Norway lobster	FU16	696
Totals		16,381

AREA VI, VII AND OTHER WHITEFISH STOCKS

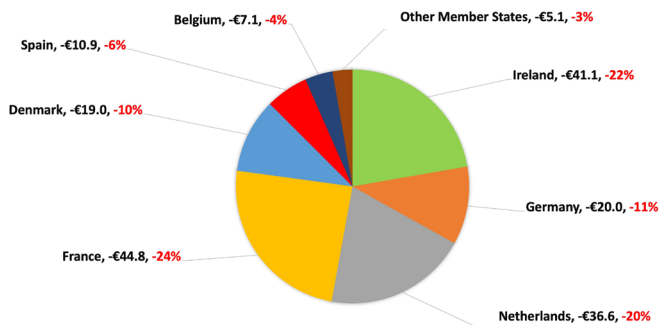
SPECIES	ICES AREA	Provisional /Full Quota 2021
Cod	Nor 1, 2	290
Hake	6, 7, 5b, 12, 14	1,742
Redfish	5, 12, 14 (shallow)	0
Redfish	5, 12, 14 (deep)	0
Ling	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14	2,231
Blue Ling	2, 4	1
Blue Ling	5b, 6, 7	19
Tusk	5, 6, 7	139
Greenland halibut	2a, 4, 5b, 6	4
Skates and rays	6a, 6b, 7a-c, 7e-k	683
Undulate Ray	7d, 7e	16
Picked dogfish	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14	28
Totals		5,153

Brexit

– What it Really Means for Ireland's Seafood Industry

Ireland will experience many negative effects following Brexit; some are already evident with major disruption to supply chains and increased costs for the business of trading, but no sector will experience greater adversity than the seafood industry. This hardship will be felt at every level from the catching sector to processing, transport and marketing.

Fig.1 NOMINAL IMPACT OF BREXIT BY MEMBER STATE (€MILLIONS)



REAL IMPACT OF BREXIT BY MEMBER STATE (€MILLIONS)

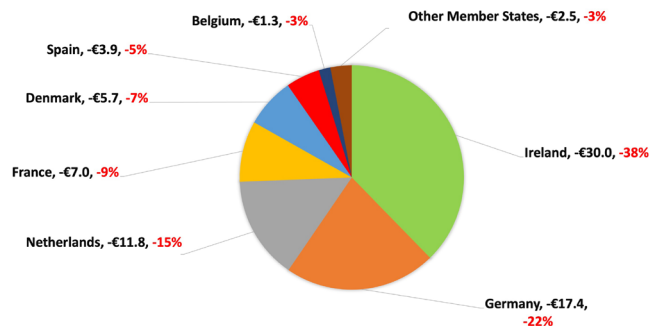
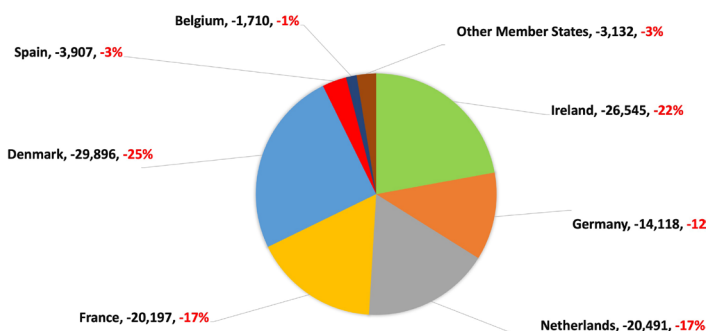
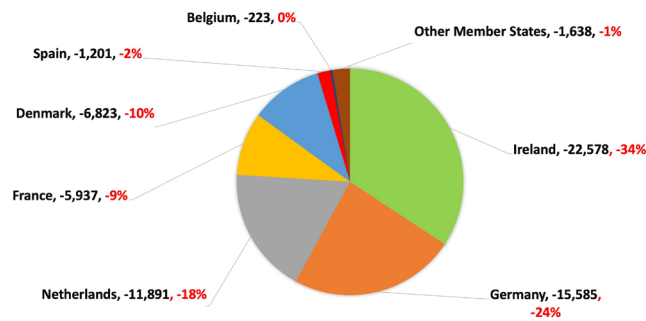


Fig.2 NOMINAL IMPACT OF BREXIT BY MEMBER STATE (TONNES)



REAL IMPACT OF BREXIT BY MEMBER STATE (TONNES)



The scale of the quota cuts and their value to the Irish seafood industry is completely disproportionate as these charts illustrate. The nominal data, both quantities (tonnes) and value (Euros) is a measure of potential quota while the real data is a measure of the actual quota utilisation by each country. When these data are compared the real impact for Ireland is a considerably greater and a more serious end result. In the case of Ireland, the percentage quota loss in tonnes increases from -22 to -34 per cent which means the percentage value loss goes from -22 to -38 per cent. In both scenarios Ireland fares substantially worse than the other Member States.

The Brexit outcome for the fishing industry and dependant facilities such as processing and transport is likely to be very serious for all Irish coastal communities but particularly Donegal. Losses to the local economy in

Donegal have been estimated to be €675 million over the next ten years. First sale losses, i.e. direct losses incurred by fishing, could be €270 million, with 1,150 jobs lost out of a total of 6,321 over the same period. A population of less than 160,000 would find it difficult to recover from such a downturn.

Remedial measures such as burden sharing (see article page two) must be sought and implemented immediately to try to offset the worst effects. In addition, there must be focused use of available Brexit funding, supporting affected fleets and Donegal maritime activities, such as seafood production and innovative seafood products; supporting Killybegs as a centre of excellence in marine ingredients, and fast-tracking the harbour development.

Trade and Cooperation Agreement Finally Agreed on Christmas Eve

The Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) between the United Kingdom and the European Union was bad news for the Irish fishing industry which is certainly not looking on the TCA as a satisfactory outcome. Despite a very clear mandate being given to the Commission by the Council, which was not changed, it was ignored by the Commission in the end.

The TCA sets out the ground rules for the future relationship of the EU and the UK. Details can be found under Heading Five: Fisheries (Chapters 1-4 and Annex 1-4.) The most relevant information i.e. the details regarding management of the shared stocks is in Annex 1,2 & 3 and non-quota species in Annex 4.

Following more than four and half years of lobbying, representations and presenting a united front, the European Fisheries Alliance (EUFA) of the nine countries most likely to be affected by Brexit, was ignored to ensure a last-minute trade deal was ratified on December 24, 2020. The ensuing chaos for Ireland has not been resolved after three months and the existing arrangement is only intended to last five years after which it will be reviewed leading to additional uncertainty

and no doubt the UK seeking additional transfer of quotas. More than three months into 2021, there is still no finalised agreement on whitefish quotas but there are some provisional and full quotas following agreement at the Fisheries Council on March 22-23, 2021 (see tables pages one and two.)

Before Brexit, about 30 per cent of fish caught by the Irish fleet was from UK waters. This was cut by an average of 13 per cent in the TCA but Ireland's two main fisheries, mackerel and prawns, were cut by 26 per cent and 14 per cent respectively. Access to UK waters is partially achieved but this will decrease over coming years and Ireland bears a highly disproportionate burden of EU losses. In comparison, the Belgian fleet caught over 50 per cent of its fish in UK waters and is facing an average reduction of only six per cent. The Danish fleet, which caught under 50 per cent in UK waters, is facing an average reduction of eight per cent and the French fleet which caught about 36 per cent in UK waters is facing an average reduction of just six per cent (see Brexit article, above.)

In addition, there will be restrictions on non-quota species where Irish vessels will only be permitted to catch no more than their average catches during 2012-2016 providing they have fished in those waters with the same or equivalent replacement vessel during four of those years. These are fisheries, such as crustaceans (brown crab), gastropods (whelk), molluscs (scallops) and cephalopods (squid and octopus) which have developed substantially, both by new entrants and higher landings, since the reference period and could now be displaced. All these non-quota species are high value and their loss would be disproportionately serious.

The fishing industry has already petitioned the Government to demand that the eight other EU coastal countries which were affected by Brexit re-align their position and transfer sufficient quota to Ireland to level the playing field. Appeals to the EU to facilitate this request seem to have fallen on deaf ears with DG MARE Director Charlina Vitcheva supporting the current redistribution of quotas as Ireland's territory lay closest to the UK.

Editorial



by Sean O'Donoghue

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KFO



The Brexit Trade Agreement reached on Christmas Eve has failed Irish fishermen and is a bad fisheries deal. Put simply, Ireland has taken a disproportionate hit compared to the other eight Member States that fish in UK waters with €41 million of the total €182 million transferred to the UK coming from Ireland. Having borne the brunt of a Brexit deal for Irish fisheries, our sector is now determined to win back quota from other EU Member States which took much less of the heat from the deal hammered out on Christmas Eve.

We were dismayed at the duplicitous nature of the protracted Brexit negotiations and how repeated guarantees given to Irish fishermen and very clearly set out in a formal EU mandate, which was not changed, were effectively shredded. Four and a half years of 'cast-iron' agreements were for all intents and purposes, completely ignored in the end by the negotiators. We duly found ourselves within just days of the transition period drawing to a close being the last facet of a highly complex deal to be ironed out even though we were assured otherwise on several occasions in the lead up to the deal that this would not happen. While many businesses were hugely relieved to see a trade deal struck, and we completely understand and appreciate their position, we in fisheries were the sacrificial lamb of Brexit. A total of €182 million of EU fish has been handed over to Britain while they have also been allowed retain another €80 million, which was originally intended as compensation for potential losses of fishing opportunities in third countries waters when the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) were extended to 200 miles in 1976.

This is rendered much more unpalatable by the fact that Ireland is absorbing the brunt of the losses. This British windfall essentially consists of a staggering €41 million of Irish fish. This is a completely disproportionate hit when compared to the eight other EU coastal states. €26 million of this relates to our vital, highly valued mackerel catch, while Dublin Bay prawns - our second most valuable fishery - is set to haemorrhage €7 million. We have taken a very heavy loss in our whitefish stocks (cod, haddock, whiting monkfish and megrim), particularly in the waters off Donegal and in the Irish Sea as well as a massive cut of 96 per cent of Irish Sea herring.

Neither have our non-quota species such as crab, scallop, and squid avoided a hit in terms of access to UK waters with our catches now constrained to average catches in the period 2012-2016. Furthermore, the review that will take place after five and half years and ten years has a very weak linkage to wider trade and economic areas which was a fundamental element of the EU mandate.

I should emphasise that in redressing these huge cuts, we are not looking for financial compensation but an equitable burden sharing by the other Member States of our quota losses. We merely need fish (quota) returned in order for our industry to remain viable. We have

requested and expect that our Government will immediately work with us to resolve this very inequitable and unjust burden put on Ireland's fisheries sector. Based on a simple burden sharing equation with the nine Member States involved, Ireland should be incurring a loss of €20 million - not €41 million.

We have formally requested our Government to go back to Brussels and demand that the eight other EU coastal countries step up to the plate and take a proportionate hit on the Brexit deal. We believe that the pain must be shared *pro rata*, as was set out by the European Fisheries Alliance (EUFAs) when it set out in its mission statement that no single sector should bear a disproportionate burden once Brexit was done. The burden sharing strategy has been used to good effect historically and we must explore every strand available such as Hague Preferences, jurisdictional losses and additional negotiations with all relevant parties. In this regard, we welcome the setting up of the Irish Seafood Task Force which will support and encourage the entire seafood industry to combine its efforts in this regard. I have already addressed the Task Force and given it details of the damage being inflicted on the Irish seafood industry at every level. However, there are mitigating actions, such as the burden sharing approach, which I have also outlined to the Seafood Task Force and hope it will pursue. I am imploring the Irish government as well as Irish MEPs to urgently redouble their efforts on burden sharing with the other Member States, and take the Commission to task in order to ease the crippling angst and sustained uncertainty being visited upon fishermen here. The TACs and Quotas now available to us have been included in this newsletter (pages one and two.) They are as comprehensive as possible given the obstacles and delays we have encountered in their delivery. Also, they are not as detailed as we normally produce for our members but seeing we are in a totally new environment it is not realistic to measure the data against the previous year.

I must take this opportunity to thank my colleague, Ted Breslin, on his recent retirement, for his outstanding contribution to the development of the organisation and his support for me personally and the KFO. Ted has been a stalwart of both KFO and Irish fishing for nearly 40 years (see page one.) We wish him and his family all the very best in the years to come.

Finally, we were so very sorry to hear of the recent death of our friend and colleague Patrick McClenaghan. Patrick was a founder and member of the whitefish sector in KFO since March 1986. We send our most sincere condolences to his sons, daughters and extended family on this sad occasion. Go ndéana Dia trócaire ar a anam uasal.

KFO is not setting a date for the AGM at this time pending clarification of COVID restrictions in May 2021.

The Seafood Sector Task Force

A Seafood Sector Taskforce has been established by Minister McConalogue under the chair of Aidan Cotter to examine the impacts of Brexit on the fishing fleet and coastal communities and report back to the Minister with recommendations on how best to mitigate those impacts.

The terms of reference for the Task Force were discussed in some detail at its first meeting. There was a unanimous view from all the seafood sector representatives that the key priorities were to address burden sharing (see article page two), the financial package under the Brexit Adjustment Reserve Fund and the review of the CFP. The Task Force will also examine the implications arising from the EU/UK TCA for the Irish fishing industry and coastal communities particularly dependent upon it. It will, in particular, outline initiatives that could be taken to provide supports for development and restructuring so as to ensure a profitable and sustainable fishing fleet and to identify opportunities for jobs and economic activity in coastal communities dependent on fishing. The Task Force will consider how all available funding streams could be used to address, to the greatest extent possible, the initiatives identified and the State agencies to support those initiatives.

Work Programme

The Task Force is charged with producing an interim report within two months of establishment, and a full report within four months. In producing the reports, it will take account of the possibilities created by all available funding streams.

Chairperson & Steering Group

The Task Force consists of Chairperson, Aidan Cotter; Steering Group, Margaret Daly and Michéal O'Cinneide; and a Committee of Members drawn from the Producer Organisations, Processors and Exporters Group, the Inshore Fisheries Forum, IFA Aquaculture, the larger Fish Cooperatives around the coast, Irish Local Development Network, Údarás na Gaeltachta and Local Authority Manager's Association. The Committee will also include representation from DAFM; BIM; Bord Bia; Tourism Ireland and Enterprise Ireland. The Secretariat will be provided by BIM.

Public Consultation

The Task Force is now seeking written submissions or observations within the scope of the Taskforce's Terms of Reference. Please email submissions to taskforce@bim.ie before April 22, 2021. See the link below for further details. Seafood Sector Taskforce Public Consultation

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