

# Editorial



by Sean O'Donoghue

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, KFO



I am delighted to take this opportunity to welcome Dr Ed Farrell to Killybegs Fisherman's Organisation as our new Chief Scientific and Sustainability Officer (page one.) You will all be familiar with Ed as his relationship with the fishing industry and KFO goes back many years and we consider ourselves very lucky that he sees his future at the coalface of the business. There will be many challenges ahead but we are confident he will advise us well in overcoming them.

Unfortunately, all our news is not as upbeat. We are currently experiencing, albeit from afar, a savage war being waged in the Ukraine since the Russian invasion in late February. While we watch from the sideline we are not totally immune from the effects; the price and availability of fuel is having a disastrous effect on our economy and even more acutely on

the fishing industry which is heavily reliant on fuel for fishing, processing and transport (page three.) At this juncture we are calling on Minister Conalogue to implement those mitigation measures already prepared, the bi-monthly Tie-up Scheme and possible vessel de-commissioning, at the earliest opportunity. Our demands for post-BREXIT Burden Sharing are still relevant. I refer in particular to the issue of mackerel previously fished by Norway and Denmark but should now rightly be shared by Ireland and Denmark. A report on this situation was due out at the end of March but, to date, has not been published. There are 13,000 tonnes of mackerel at stake here and well worth fighting for.

Currently the European Commission is preparing a report on the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP.) KFO has contributed to this process but believes a report is not sufficient given the turbulence the industry has had to contend with in recent times and is calling for a full review and overhaul of the CFP. There are a number of areas which need actions which could only be dealt with under the review mechanism. In the meantime, the current system dealing with the EU-UK negotiations is completely inadequate and needs to be addressed before the 2023 TAC & Quota negotiations. Receiving such important information when a full year's quarter has passed is not acceptable.

We welcome the setting up the European Bottom Fisheries Alliance (page one.) This group has come together as a result of very cynical campaigning by a number of environmental NGOs which use ICES Advice regarding benthic fishing and status with a biased slant which paints a very damning picture of fishing activities which are completely unfounded. The EBFA was officially launched on March 24 and has already had meetings with DG MARE and DG ENVI. The Alliance plans to use scientific data to prove its credentials and, in the long-run, use this opportunity to demonstrate its constructive role in the human food security and supply chain while sourcing its products in an environmentally positive fashion.

With current reductions on quotas (page two & three) it is reassuring to hear research continues in new areas. The MEESO project is an example of this work and Ireland is well represented by BIM in this project. We have added a brief account of the recent MEESO workshop in Limerick during The Skipper Show. We have also included an overview of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change) which is an arm of the United Nations tracking Climate Change since 1988 and issued its most recent report on Monday (4/4/2022). This agency functions worldwide monitoring climate change and the problems it causes. While the general thrust of the report is concerned with damage to the natural world, there is a slightly more positive note regarding a fall in emissions in recent years.

We must also congratulate the Killybegs Harbour Development Group on its continuous work regarding the pier extension and Dry Dock facility. These improvements will be essential in keeping Killybegs to the forefront in bringing new business to the port in coming years.

## Important Dates April - June 2022

DATE	MEETINGS	VENUE
April 4	CFP Review Group 2 Meeting	Galway/Virtual
April 7	Fisheries Council	Luxembourg
April 13-14	OUR Ocean Conference	Palau
April 17-21	Effects of Climate Change on the World's Oceans	Bergen, Norway
April 20	Pelagic Advisory Council (WG I,II and ExCom)	Netherlands/Virtual
April 22	Quota Management Advisory Committee	Virtual
April 22	CFP Review Group 3 Meeting	Virtual
April 25- May 8	UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15)	Kunming, China
April 28	IFSRP meeting	Galway
April 29	Inter AC coordination meetings	Virtual
May 04	OREDP II Advisory Group meeting	Virtual
May 05	Inter-ACs Brexit meeting with DG Mare	Virtual
May 09	CFP Review Group 4 meeting	Galway
May 09	HAWG Meetings	Virtual
May 10	NWWAC & PELAC: Fisheries Impacts from Seismic /Offshore Wind Energy Development	Virtual
May 10	Coastal States Mackerel	London
May 17	Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) ExCom	Madrid
May 18	Long Distance Advisory Council (LDAC) General Assembly	Madrid
May 19	EMFAF Monitoring Committee	Clonakilty
May 20	KFO AGM	Killybegs
May 23	Markets Advisory Council (MAC) WG II, WG III	Madrid
May 24	Markets Advisory Council (MAC) WG I, ExCom	Madrid
May 06-June 11	ICES Advice Drafting Group Celtic Sea Stocks	Copenhagen/Virtual
June 10	CFP Stakeholders Event	TBC
June 13	Fisheries Council	Luxembourg
June 22-23	MIAC & MIACO meetings	Copenhagen/Virtual
June 27- July 1	UN Ocean Conference	Lisbon, Portugal
June 30	ICES Advice Issued Certain Stocks	Copenhagen/Virtual

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# news

Killybegs Fishermen's

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## European Bottom Fisheries Alliance launches at European Parliament

Irish Producer Organisations Defend Their Industry

European Bottom Fisheries are being targeted by environmental lobby groups using a pseudo-science approach to discredit this long-term and sustainable fishing pattern which has provided fish to European populations for generations. The campaign, led by some prominent NGOs, is tacitly supported by DG ENVI which undermines the support the fishing industry might have previously expected from DG MARE, given that Commissioner Sinkevičius heads up the combined environmental, marine and, specifically, fisheries departments.

Fishing organisations from 14 EU countries – Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden - representing more than 20,000 fishermen and 7,000 vessels, have come together to defend their industry by launching the EBFA. At a press conference in the European Parliament on March 24 last, hosted by the Vice-Chair of the Fisheries Committee, MEP Peter van Dalen, the objectives of the new EBFA were spelt out by Iván López van der Veen, Chair of the EBFA who commented "Trawling to catch fish certainly has an environmental impact, nobody denies that. Everything we eat costs the planet something. But thanks to effective, science-based management, the EU and the sector strive to sustainably harvest fish with the minimum impact. Besides, bottom fishing activities are nowadays pretty much fenced to historical fishing grounds." He concluded, "We can do better and we will do better, but we need policies based on factual, scientific and peer-reviewed evidence and comprehensive impact assessments. Using pseudo-

*science or unsubstantiated claims, such as those relating to the fisheries footprint or carbon emissions of the sector, to phase out perfectly legal fishing gears will not help oceans' health nor fishers."*

The newly formed Alliance points out the overall importance of its widespread fishing methods in the EU member states which provide in excess of one million tonnes of healthy and sustainable seafood annually. This represents 25 per cent of the total EU landings and generates almost 40 per cent of the total revenue for the sector, contributing to the wealth, employment and industrial fabric of many coastal and peripheral communities. The EBFA also points out that these fisheries are well regulated, controlled, researched and widely certified. Some environmental organisations and the European Commission itself are questioning the sustainability of the bottom trawling gears but the mainstream scientific opinion identifies ocean warming, acidification and rising sea level as the major threats to the marine environment which will not be addressed by further restriction of bottom trawling.

## Dr Ed Farrell Joins KFO as Chief Scientific and Sustainability Officer



The KFO is pleased to announce the recent appointment of Dr Edward Farrell as the KFO's new Chief Scientific and Sustainability Officer. Ed has a long history of working closely with the KFO on a range of different projects, which started in 2010 with the boarfish project. In more recent years he has focused on developing the genetic stock identification methods for herring, which resulted in the recent splitting of the Malin Shelf Herring Acoustic Survey (MSHAS) data by population rather than inappropriate geographic-based delineation. His new role will see him become more involved in the ongoing KFO work and also helping the KFO to keep pace with the rapidly developing ecosystem and sustainability side of fisheries science, advice and management. The fishing industry is facing an increasing number of issues these days and it is important to have the resources to stay well-informed of scientific advances. There is also significant potential for the industry to contribute to fisheries science and assist with data collection. The KFO led the way with this when it initiated the boarfish project back in 2010, and is now reinforcing its commitment to improving the interaction between science and industry through this appointment. Ed adds, "I'm delighted to start this new role with the KFO. It's an exciting opportunity to work closer with the members and to identify areas where industry information can be used to improve the science behind the assessment and management.

## 2022 TACs & Quota Finally Published

Once again BREXIT has left the Irish fishing industry waiting until a quarter of the year has passed before there is any clarity on the final TAC & Quota for 2022. This information would previously have been made available immediately after the December Fisheries Council and needs to revert as close as possible to that timeline in 2023 and future years.

The Tables (Right) illustrate the level of complexity which BREXIT has brought to the negotiations. To clarify some of the additional elements which now impact the outcome of TAC & Quota negotiations we need to consider the TAC change – see Pelagic Quotas (2022 Final) right – which for mackerel was -6.7 per cent. This would have produced a quota of 67,285 tonnes (higher than the 2021 quota of 60,847 tonnes) but the effect of BREXIT both for 2021 and 2022 results in a loss of 12,291 tonnes which is an overall drop of 9.6 per cent and a resultant 2022 quota of 54,994 tonnes. For certain whitefish stocks e.g. haddock 6b and whiting 7a, there is a loss as a result of the application of the Hague Preferences.

The disproportionate reduction on the allocation of Haddock (Area 6a) is also very disappointing. The Scientific Advice allowed for an increased TAC in 2022 of 154 per cent but EU/Norway/UK negotiations agreed a much lower level which resulted, once the calculations were completed, only in an increase of 5.2 per cent. The overall result was negative when comparing 2022 with 2021 Quotas.

## Fuel Crisis Poses Yet Another Threat to the Fishing Industry

Having coped with BREXIT, the COVID pandemic and its associated supply chain problems, the fishing industry must now fight off an even greater threat posed by soaring fuel prices and uncertainty regarding supply. Fuel at a sustainable price is a very basic need for a fishing operation – the margins are always tight and supplies of fuel tend to fall into the “just in time” category as it is not feasible for suppliers to hold large stocks.

This new crisis is a direct result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and highlights the vulnerability of countries which are dependent on uninterrupted supplies, at appropriate prices, over which they have no direct control. Aside from the immediate and serious impact on the fishing industry, there is also a very real threat to the food supply chain which may have a very critical impact on less robust socio-economic sectors within European communities.

There have been a number of meetings, mostly virtual, where industry has been able to inform directly the Commissioner Sinkevičius and DG Mare on the serious outlook for all sectors in the fishing industry. Using the crisis mechanism available through the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) Commissioner Sinkevičius has responded with a package of measures by confirming that the conditions required to trigger the emergency measures under EMFAF have been met and informed the Member States that these emergency measures can be put in place immediately and back dated to February 24, 2022. The Commission has also confirmed that these measures can be introduced in the absence of an agreed Operational Programme (OP). The measures covered under the emergency measures are:

- Compensation to fishery operators (vessels and processors) for lost income and additional costs as a result of this market disruption; increased costs linked directly to disruption caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict can be included.
- Financial compensation to producer organisations for “storage aid” to place products on the market at a more advantageous time.
- The EMFAF mechanism can be applied retroactively from February 24, 2022 and will run until the end of 2022.
- *De minimis* payments have been increased with an additional €35,000 available to those who have not already drawn down this funding in recent years.

## FINAL IRISH FISH QUOTAS MARCH 2022

### PELAGIC QUOTAS (2022 FINAL)

SPECIES	ICES AREA	TAC Change %	Quota 2021	Pre Brexit Quota 2022	Hague Change	Full Brexit Change 2021 & 2022	% Quota Change 2021-2022	Quota 2022
Mackerel	6, 7, 8, 5b, 2a, 12, 14	-6.7%	60,847	67,285	0	-12,291	-9.6%	54,994
Horse mackerel	2-4-6-7-8-5b, 12, 14	-12.6%	17,561	15,760	NA	0	-10.3%	15,760
Horse mackerel	4b, 4c, 7d	-36.0%	330	263	NA	-60	-38.5%	203
Blue whiting	1-8, 12, 14	-19.0%	35,373	28,739	NA	-295	-19.6%	28,444
Herring	1, 2	-8.1%	3,370	3,457	NA	-359	-8.1%	3,098
Herring	5b, 6b, 6aN	0.0%	478	526	0	-56	-1.7%	470
Herring	6a, 5, 7b, 7c	0.0%	1,236	1,236	0	0	0.0%	1,236
Herring	7a	15.2%	808	2,198	0	-1,480	-11.1%	718
Herring	7g, 7h, 7j, 7k	0.0%	750	750	NA	0	0.0%	750
Northern albacore	Atlantic Ocean	0.0%	3,115	3,271	NA	-27	4.1%	3,244
Greater silver smelt	3a, 4	0.0%	5	5	NA	0	0.0%	5
Greater silver smelt	5, 6, 7	211.8%	262	820	NA	0	213.0%	820
Boarfish	6, 7, 8	19.0%	13,234	15,748	NA	0	19.0%	15,748
			<b>137,369</b>	<b>140,058</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-14,568</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>125,490</b>

### AREA VI WHITEFISH STOCKS (2022 FINAL)

SPECIES	ICES AREA	TAC Change %	Quota 2021	Pre Brexit Quota 2022	Hague Change	Full Brexit Change 2021 & 2022	% Quota Change 2021-2022	Quota 2022
Cod	6a, 5b	0.0%	243	158	0	-67	-62.6%	91
Cod	6b, 5b	0.0%	16	16	6	-8	-12.5%	14
Megrim	5b, 6, 12, 14	6.8%	600	723	NA	-96	4.5%	627
Anglerfish	6, 5b, 12, 14	-20.0%	562	510	NA	-71	-21.9%	439
Haddock	5b, 6a	5.0%	648	819	-137	0	5.2%	682
Haddock	6b	-30.4%	570	457	0	-73	-32.6%	384
Whiting	6, 5b, 12, 14	92.1%	299	524	129	-92	87.6%	561
Plaice	6, 5b, 12, 14	0.0%	248	260	-12	0	0.0%	248
Pollack	6, 5b, 12, 14	-15.2%	26	22	NA	0	-15.4%	22
Saithe	6, 5b, 12, 14	-24.5%	369	319	50	-16	-4.3%	353
Common sole	6, 5b, 12, 14	0.0%	46	46	0	0	0.0%	46
Norway lobster	6, 5b	-20.6%	202	160	NA	0	-20.8%	160
			<b>3,829</b>	<b>4,014</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>-423</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>3,627</b>

### AREA VII WHITEFISH STOCKS (2022 FINAL)

SPECIES	ICES AREA	TAC Change %	Quota 2021	Pre Brexit Quota 2022	Hague Change	Full Brexit Change 2021 & 2022	% Quota Change 2021-2022	Quota 2022
Cod	7a	0.0%	104	136	-29	-3	0.0%	104
Cod	7b, 7c, 7e-k, 8, 9, 10	-20.0%	422	370	-26	-6	-19.9%	338
Megrim	7	3.0%	2,844	3,004	NA	-176	-0.6%	2,828
Anglerfish	7	8.0%	2,775	3,121	NA	-144	7.3%	2,977
Haddock	7b-k, 8, 9, 10	0.0%	2,959	3,167	0	-247	-1.3%	2,920
Haddock	7a	-9.9%	1,322	1,315	NA	-144	-11.4%	1,171
Whiting	7a	0.0%	280	414	-102	-38	-2.1%	274
Whiting	7b-k	4.3%	3,916	3,978	0	-6	1.4%	3,972
Plaice	7a	-3.5%	1,069	1,347	-316	0	-3.6%	1,031
Plaice	7b, 7c	0.0%	15	15	0	0	0.0%	15
Plaice	7f, 7g	-9.2%	240	238	0	-1	-1.3%	237
Plaice	7h, 7j, 7k	70.1%	28	49	NA	-2	67.9%	47
Pollack	7	-15.0%	680	611	NA	-39	-15.9%	572
Saithe	7, 8, 9 10NorS 62° N	-20.0%	1,493	1,402	0	2	-6.0%	1,404
Small-eyed Ray	7f, 7g	0.0%	12	16	NA	-4	0.0%	12
Common sole	7a	2.5%	104	105	0	0	1.0%	105
Common sole	7b, 7c	0.0%	28	28	0	0	0.0%	28
Common sole	7f, 7g	-5.4%	42	41	0	-2	-7.1%	39
Common sole	7h, 7j, 7k	-23.9%	126	95	NA	0	-24.6%	95
Norway lobster	7	-5.5%	6,102	6,284	NA	-602	-6.9%	5,682
Norway lobster	FU 16		1,194		NA		-14.9%	1,016
			<b>24,561</b>	<b>25,736</b>	<b>-473</b>	<b>-1,412</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>23,851</b>

## FINAL IRISH FISH QUOTAS MARCH 2022

### AREA VI, VII & OTHER WHITEFISH STOCKS (2022 FINAL)

SPECIES	ICES AREA	TAC Change %	Quota 2021	Pre Brexit Quota 2022	Hague Change	Full Brexit Change 2021 & 2022	% Quota Change 2021-2022	Quota 2022
Cod	Nor 1,2	-100.0%	290	290	NA	0	0.0%	290
Hake	6,7,5b,12,14	-20.0%	2,989	2,442	0	-59	-20.3%	2,383
Redfish	5,12,14 (shallow)	#DIV/0!	0	0	NA	0	-	0
Ling	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12,14	-18.0%	1,301	1,108	NA	-49	-18.6%	1,059
Blue Ling	2,4	0.0%	2	2	NA	0	0.0%	2
Blue Ling	5b, 6,7	-5.8%	32	31	NA	-1	-6.3%	30
Tusk	5, 6,7	0.0%	238	242	NA	-4	0.0%	238
Greenland halibut	2a 4, 5b, 6	0.0%	29	29	NA	0	0.0%	29
Skates and rays	6a, 6b, 7a-c, 7e-k	-2.0%	1,210	1,237	NA	-60	-2.7%	1,177
Undulate Ray	7d, 7e	0.0%	25	28	NA	-3	0.0%	25
Picked dogfish	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12,14	0.0%	48	52	NA	-5	-2.1%	47
			<b>6,164</b>	<b>5,461</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-181</b>	<b>-14%</b>	<b>5,280</b>

### DEEPWATER STOCKS (2022 FINAL)

SPECIES	ICES AREA	TAC Change %	Quota 2021	Pre Brexit Quota 2022	Hague Change	Full Brexit Change 2021 & 2022	% Quota Change 2021-2022	Quota 2022
Black scabbardfish	5, 6, 7,12	-68.0%	55	18	NA	0	-67.3%	18
Roundnose grenadier	5b, 6,7	-72.4%	150	42	NA	0	-72.0%	42
Roundnose grenadier	8, 9, 10, 12,14	-63.0%	2	1	NA	0	-50.0%	1
Alfonsinos	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12,14	-71.9%	7	2	NA	0	-71.4%	2
Red seabream	6, 7, 8	-74.3%	3	1	NA	0	-66.7%	1
			<b>217</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-71%</b>	<b>64</b>

## United Nations Report Warns of Danger to Marine Ecosystems But There Are Also Improvements

The United Nations (UN) has long been a champion of Climate Action. As recently as January this year, Secretary General, António Guterres, called once more for faster action and more radical thinking in tackling rising global temperatures. A long-standing element of the UN approach has been the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) which has been drawing on the skills and knowledge of a wide range of experts since its inception in 1988. Over those years the IPCC, which works and reports via three Working Groups, has built up an enormous bank of environmental information for the entire planet which has contributed to monitoring and mitigating Climate Change. This week (April 4, 2022) saw the release of the IPCC Working Group 3 contribution to the IPCC's Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) which assesses literature on the scientific, technological, environmental, economic and social aspects of mitigation of climate change.

Climate change due to human activities has exposed ocean and coastal ecosystems to conditions that are unprecedented and which has greatly impacted life in the ocean and along its coasts. Fundamental changes in the physical and chemical characteristics of the ocean, acting individually and together, are changing the timing of seasonal activities, distribution, and abundance of oceanic and coastal organisms, from microbes to mammals and from individuals to whole ecosystems, in every region.

Evidence of these changes, consisting of detailed observations and a variety of studies both in the seas and laboratories, is well documented. Geographic-range shifts of marine species generally follow the pace and direction of climate warming, which the Irish fishing industry itself has seen in recent years with a significant change in mackerel migration. Warming, acidification and deoxygenation are altering ecological communities by increasing the spread of physiologically sub-optimal conditions

for many marine fish and invertebrates. These and other responses have subsequently driven habitat loss, population declines, increased risks of species reduction or even extinction and the rearrangement of marine food-webs.

IPCC WG1 AR6 reported earlier that marine heatwaves are more frequent, more intense and longer since the 1980s, and since at least 2006, very likely attributable to human-driven climate change. Open-ocean, coastal and shelf-sea ecosystems, including coral reefs, rocky shores, kelp forests, seagrasses and other unique ecosystems have recently undergone mass mortalities from marine heatwaves. Marine heatwaves drive abrupt shifts in species composition that may persist for years with associated biodiversity loss and collapse of regional fisheries.

Covering two-thirds of the planet, the ocean hosts vast biodiversity and modulates the global climate system by regulating cycles of heat, water, and elements including carbon. Marine systems are central to many cultures, and they also provide food, minerals, energy and employment to people. Since previous assessments, new laboratory studies, field observations and process studies, a wider range of model simulations, and local knowledge provide increasing evidence on the impacts of climate change on ocean and coastal systems, how human communities are experiencing these impacts, and the potential solutions for ecological and human adaptation. There was some good news from the IPCC WG3 "Total net anthropogenic GHG emissions have continued to rise during the period 2010–2019, as have cumulative net CO2 emissions since 1850. Average annual GHG emissions during 2010–2019 were higher than in any previous decade, but the rate of growth between 2010 and 2019 was lower than that between 2000 and 2009." It is hoped that the growing awareness and implementation of more mitigation measures will increase such positive trends.

## Building our knowledge of the mesopelagic zone

On March 25, BIM hosted a seminar entitled 'Building our knowledge of the mesopelagic zone,' which served as an update on the large EU funded MEESO project. The project is focused on investigating whether mesopelagic species, such as pearlides (*Maurolucus muelleri*) can be exploited in an ecologically and economically sustainable way. The seminar was organised to run in parallel with The Skipper Expo and was well attended by the KFO members.

Presentations were made by the project partners to give a broad overview of the progress so far. Of particular interest were efforts to develop the methods to estimate the abundance of mesopelagic species. Difficulties are encountered when surveying mesopelagic species due to the variation in the acoustic signal of the different species and the need for high frequency acoustics. Work is underway to refine the methods so more accurate measures of biomass can be made, though to date it is still uncertain as to what the potential biomass is. There was also a strong focus on the selection patterns of different mesh sizes and trawl opening sizes. This is an important consideration for mesopelagics given their small size and the potential effects on the catch composition. Given the relatively small size of mesh needed for mesopelagics this can also have impacts on the fuel economy for towing these trawls.

A number of presentations also focused on the processing methods and potential for mesopelagics. Of particular note was a presentation by Teagasc, which highlighted that mesopelagics were rich in proteins and omega-three oils, and presented opportunities to develop novel feed, food and functional food ingredients and products. Some of the species were to be noted as sources of novel Anti-Hypertensive and Anti-Diabetic Peptides, which has the potential for higher value products to be derived from these resources.

Whilst a considerable amount of work has been done so far there is still much to be learned about mesopelagics. The MEESO project is due to run until 2024 and the project progress may be followed on their website [www.meeso.org](http://www.meeso.org). There is also another concurrent project, SUMMER-Sustainable Management of Mesopelagic Resources, whose progress may be followed at <https://summerh2020.eu>.

