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Government of Ireland

# Project Marine Newsletter

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Prepared by the Marine Planning, Policy and Legislation (MPPL) Section  
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## Introduction

The Marine Planning Policy and Legislation (MPPL) unit welcomes you to our fifth Project Marine Newsletter. We would once again like to thank those of you who provided us with feedback and suggestions for future topics, and we will do our utmost to include these in future issues. As always we are appreciative of all feedback, and can be reached at [msp@housing.gov.ie](mailto:msp@housing.gov.ie).

It has been a busy few months since our last publication with the launch of MARA (see *page 2*), the launch of the South Coast DMAP Proposal (*page 4*) and the commencement of public engagement events on the South Coast DMAP (*page 29*).

The Seafood/ORE Working Group has published a Summary Guide document on engagement between both sectors (see *page 8*) while our Regional News articles continue from *page 11*.

For the first time ever, we are delighted to announce our **FREE COMPETITION** “Oh Captain, My Captain” with MPPL Merchandise on offer to our winning entries (see *page 15*). Meanwhile our colleagues in the Marine Institute give an in-depth account of all that has been happening since we heard from them in our last newsletter (*page 21*).

There was good news for Rosslare Europort when it won the coveted Ferry Port of the Year Award in September (see *page 23*). And in further positive news, Irish Lights and Bord Iascaigh Mhara are pleased to announce a unique training collaboration (*page 18*).

We also have our usual informative column “A View from Europe” with Maritime Attaché Eoin Leahy (*page 30*) making our fifth edition another bumper publication. Please enjoy and let us know what you think.

## Recent Legislative & Policy Developments

This section of the newsletter highlights significant legislative and marine policy developments recently announced.

*July 2023 was an exceptionally busy month for all Departments involved in Marine Planning, with several significant announcements being made by Government.*

### Minister Eamon Ryan designated as Competent Authority for Offshore Renewable Energy

On July 5th, the **Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien T.D.** designated his colleague the **Minister for the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan T.D.**, as the competent authority for the purposes of preparing and publishing a Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) or Designated Maritime Area Plans (DMAPs) in respect of offshore renewable energy for the Irish maritime area. In accordance with Section 20 (1) (c) of the MAP Act, Minister Ryan is the competent authority responsible for all offshore renewable energy plans (sectoral area) in the Irish maritime area.

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### Launch of Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) at Rosslare Europort

July 13th saw a packed attendance at Rosslare Europort for a number of Government marine announcements, the most significant of which was the launch of the **Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA)** by **Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage Darragh O'Brien T.D.** The newly established authority will be responsible for regulating development and activity in Ireland's maritime area, and will have a key role to play in the new streamlined consenting system for the maritime area. Located in the coastal county of Wexford, MARA's key responsibilities will include;

- Assessing Maritime Area Consent (MAC) applications for the maritime area, which are required by developers before development permission can be granted;
- Granting marine licencing for specified activities;
- Compliance and enforcement of MACs, licences and offshore development consents;
- Investigations and prosecutions;
- Administration of the existing Foreshore consent portfolio;
- Fostering & promoting co-operation between regulators of the maritime area.



Minister Darragh O'Brien TD speaking at the launch of MARA

MARA will be a key enabler in respect of Ireland's ambitions for the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) sector. It will also support delivery of other projects of strategic importance (including cabling and telecoms projects, ports development, drainage projects, sewerage schemes etc.), facilitating the State to harness significant benefits from realising a low-carbon economy, ensuring energy security, and presenting new opportunities for economic growth. If you would like more information about MARA and its functions, or on any aspect of the new planning system for Ireland's maritime area, please contact MARA at: [info@mara.gov.ie](mailto:info@mara.gov.ie)

#### **Minister O'Brien stated:**

"With the launch of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority here in Rosslare today, we now begin the second phase of our all-of-Government approach to the development of offshore renewable energy. Delivery of offshore renewable energy will be crucial as we strive towards our climate goals over the next few years and MARA will provide the regulation and clarity that this emerging industry needs and govern our extensive maritime resource and contribute to our nation's sustainable future."



Also speaking at the launch event, **Chief Executive Officer of MARA, Laura Brien**, commented:

“Ireland has one of the highest sea-to-land ratios in Europe and today marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in how Ireland will manage that resource. MARA’s remit is wide-ranging reflecting the diverse marine resource that we will steward for this generation and the ones to come. MARA is confident in our ability to support the governance of our maritime resources. In achieving this, we look forward to working with the wide range of stakeholders in the seafood, tourism, transportation as well as offshore renewable energy sectors to deliver on our role.”

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## **Ireland’s first DMAP Proposal launched**

The same event in Rosslare Europort also saw the launch of the first Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) Proposal for Offshore Renewable Energy by **Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan T.D.** DMAPS will determine the broad area where ORE projects can be developed, and will act as a management plan for a specific area of our marine waters.

The first ORE DMAP for the South Coast puts forward an initial ‘proposed’ geographical area within which future offshore renewable energy development may take place. This area will be refined through a process of public engagement and consultation, expert environmental impact assessments and other expert analysis of the maritime areas, to assess its suitability for offshore renewable energy development.

Following a period of public engagement, a ‘Draft DMAP’ (which is anticipated to encompass a significantly smaller footprint than the initially outlined in proposal) will be published. Following this, a further statutory public consultation will take place, before the Draft DMAP is presented to the Minister for Housing and both houses of the Oireachtas for approval.

**Minister Ryan** explained:

"Today marks the start of our new plan-led approach to the development of our off-shore wind industry, which was supported by both Houses of the Oireachtas. It also

aligns us with the strategic direction being taken by the world's leading off-shore wind countries like Denmark and Scotland. The rigorous legislative approach included within the South Coast DMAP Proposal will offer the best approach to protect local marine environments, fishing communities and boost local community development. It will offer comprehensive opportunities for public engagement, including the engagement of local communities.” [\*\(Go to Page 29 for further DMAP Updates\)\*](#)

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## Establishment of MARA paves way for National Industrial Strategy for Offshore Wind

In May, the **Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney TD**, received Government support to develop a National Industrial Strategy for Offshore Wind which will set out how Ireland can maximise the economic opportunity arising from the production of Offshore Wind Energy (OWE). The capacity attendance in Rosslare Europort heard Minister Coveney outline how the Strategy will be developed in consultation with the relevant government departments, agencies, and industry, with the objective of ensuring that Ireland fully captures the value of both the supply chain to deliver an OWE sector at scale, and the routes to market for this renewable energy. It is expected that the National Industrial Strategy for Offshore Wind will be published in Q1 2024 and complement the suite of upcoming government policies led by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications through the Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce.



Speaking at the event, **Minister Coveney** said:

"Together with my colleagues across Government, I am committed to creating the environment that will allow a burgeoning Offshore Wind industry to develop and thrive. The provision of abundant, competitively priced renewable energy can be a key strategic competitive advantage for Ireland's future reflecting the ambition as set out in my Department's White Paper on Enterprise. On the path to that goal are a series of important policy, legislative, regulatory and infrastructural steps. Today

marks one of those critical steps with the establishment of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) with its new Chief Executive Officer Laura Brien. I wish her and all her colleagues well in playing its central role for this new industry."

## **Minister Noonan announces Ireland's largest protected area for birds**

**Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan TD**, recently announced details of Ireland's largest ever protected area for birds. The new North-West Irish Sea Special Protection Area (SPA) is to be designated under the EU Birds Directive and will cover more than 230,000 hectares of important marine waters for a range of bird species throughout the year. It increases the percentage of Ireland's marine waters which are protected under the EU Birds and Habitats Directives to over 9%. The new SPA adjoins twelve existing SPAs already designated along the coast in this area and the publication of detailed information and maps for the site brings certainty and clarity to a long-mooted proposal for protections for marine birds in this area.

The new North-west Irish Sea SPA extends offshore along the coasts of counties Louth, Meath and Dublin. More detailed information about the site, including a map, a species list and a list of the Activities Requiring Consent (ARCs) for the site is available on [www.npws.ie/protectedsites](http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites)

The new site will be a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive, of special conservation interest for the following species:

Common Scoter; Red-throated Diver; Great Northern Diver; Fulmar; Manx Shearwater; Shag; Cormorant; Little Gull; Kittiwake; Black-headed Gull; Common Gull; Lesser Black-backed Gull, Herring Gull, Great Black-backed Gull, Little Tern, Roseate Tern, Common Tern, Arctic Tern, Puffin, Razorbill and Guillemot.

**Minister Noonan** commented:

"I am delighted that we have been able to realise a long-held ambition to extend and significantly improve the protections in place for our marine birds. This site, at more than 230,000 hectares, is the largest SPA designation for birds in Ireland's history. We are working hard as a Government to ensure we have robust protections in place



for nature as we work to deliver on our offshore renewable energy objectives. Biodiversity action and climate action must go hand in hand.”

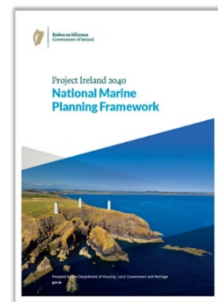
**Director General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Niall Ó Donnchú,** added:

“This is a milestone day for the protection of Ireland’s marine biodiversity. The estuaries and bays that open into the North West Irish Sea, along with connecting coastal stretches of intertidal and shallow subtidal habitats, and the more pelagic waters further out to sea provide safe feeding and roosting habitats for a range of bird species including the seabirds that breed at colonies along our islands and coastal headlands. Ireland rightly has ambition and purpose to make a significant contribution to the targets set in the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030. This new site is a determined step in that direction.”

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## NMPF Copies Still Available

Our National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) is still available. The NMPF is Ireland’s first national framework for managing marine activities and outlines the Government’s vision for how we want to use, protect and enjoy our seas in the years up to 2040.



Please click the following link to find all relevant details of the development history of the [NMPF](#). Should you wish to acquire a hard copy of the NMPF, please email [msp@housing.gov.ie](mailto:msp@housing.gov.ie) and we will be happy to post one out to you.

Requests for a copy of the NMPF **as Gaeilge** will also be facilitated.

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## Seafood-ORE Working Group Publishes Summary Guide on Seafood/ORE Engagement in Ireland



Seafood/ORE Working Group Chairman, Capt Robert McCabe address delegates at the launch of MARA in July.

Thursday July 13<sup>th</sup> saw the official launch of the **Summary Guide to Seafood-ORE Engagement in Ireland** by the **Chair of the Working Group, Captain Robert McCabe**, at an event held in Rosslare Europort to mark the launch of the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority. This event was attended by the **Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien, T.D.**, along with his colleagues the **Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications, Eamon Ryan, T.D.**, and the **Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Simon Coveney, T.D.**

Captain Robert was appointed by Minister O'Brien in May 2022 to chair the Seafood/ORE Working Group, which was established by the Government to facilitate discussion on matters arising from the interaction of the seafood and offshore renewable energy industries. The completed Summary Guide is the product of intensive negotiations held over the course of a year between the working group members, and is intended to provide Offshore Renewable Energy projects and seafood stakeholders with guidance on how to engage and co-exist in a constructive manner throughout the lifecycle of an ORE Project.

In their respective speeches, Minister O'Brien and Minister Ryan both made reference to the importance of the work of the group, and commended the group on the publication of the guide document, with Minister Ryan specifically referencing the importance of the seafood sector's interests and livelihoods in the context of sustainable food production. Captain Robert thanked the Ministers for their support for the group, and described the Engagement Guide as just one of the solutions to the many challenges in implementing Marine Spatial Planning and putting the National Marine Planning Framework into practice.

Captain Robert concluded by thanking the members of the working group, which brings together key organisations representing Seafood, Offshore Renewable Energy, Government Departments and State Agencies. He pointed out that the seafood sector representation on the group encompasses all of that sector including fishing and aquaculture, offshore and inshore, large and small; and he considered this sector, alongside the ORE practitioners responsible for delivering a clean energy future, as the heart of the group. He described the group members as passionate about their (respective) industries, and commended them for being prepared to listen and engage with those who want to share the same maritime space, particularly noting the work they have done to date to understand each other's needs and perspectives. Group members who attended the launch event included Liz Goff (South East Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum), Kevin Conneely (West Regional Inshore Fisheries Forum), John Lynch (Irish South East Fish Producers Organisation) and Peter Coyle (Marine Renewables Industry Association).

Commenting to the Press shortly after the event, **Seafood/ORE Working Group Chairman, Captain Robert McCabe** stated;

"The completion of the summary guide document represents a significant achievement in the managed introduction of Offshore Renewable Energy into Ireland's maritime area, and I wish to commend the considerable efforts of the working group over the past year in finalising a comprehensive engagement guide within a challenging timeframe."

\* The Summary Guide on Seafood/ORE Engagement in Ireland can be viewed on [www.marineplan.ie](http://www.marineplan.ie) [here](#).

## Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme

A major €16 million fund to support hundreds of outdoor recreation projects across the country was launched recently by **Department of Rural and Community Development** and currently remains open for some applications.



The 2023 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) will see the development of our natural amenities such as our mountains, lakes, rivers, beaches, blue-ways, bogs, forest walks and uplands.

Grants up to €500,000 are available under the scheme, which places a particular focus on developing amenities for adventure tourism in rural Ireland.

Among the activities that will be invested in include **walking, hiking, cycling, swimming, kayaking, sailing, paragliding and kite-surfing**.

The scheme is administered at a local level by local authorities and local development companies. It will prioritise projects which have evidence of strong community engagement.

The remaining measures where applications are still open under the ORIS 2023 are:

Measure:	Purpose:	Deadline:
2	Medium scale projects with funding of up to <b>€200,000</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
3	Large scale projects seeking funding of up to <b>€500,000</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> October 2023

For more information go to: <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/181e2-outdoor-recreation-infrastructure-scheme/>

**Source:** Department of Rural and Community Development



## Regional News

Other Government Departments and organisations work in tandem with our local authorities in improving our Maritime/Coastal areas. The following two articles are just some examples of the excellent work they have carried out. We here in the Marine, Planning, Policy & Legislation Section are happy to further promote the work of all these organisations and wish all parties concerned every continued success.

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### SLIGO

#### Official Opening of Mullaghmore Beach Access for All



Representatives at the launch of the 'Mullaghmore Beach Access for All' in July

**Sligo County Council**, supported by the **Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth** officially opened the 'Mullaghmore Beach Access For All' initiative during the Summer.

The works comprises of car park resurfacing which facilitates the addition of 4 new disabled car parking spaces. Upgrading works to the 125m path leading from the newly surfaced carpark to the entrance of the beach was undertaken, providing accessibility for all users. Two new beach wheelchairs have also been purchased



and can be booked over the summer months only by contacting Sligo County Council on **071 911 1111** or email to [enviro@sligococo.ie](mailto:enviro@sligococo.ie)

To further enhance the Access For All facilities, Swim Ireland kindly donated 100m of beach matting to allow wheelchair users the enjoyment of the amenities.

**Leas Cathaoirleach of Sligo County Council, Cllr. Tom Fox** welcomed this initiative:

“It will improve the enjoyment of Mullaghmore for all users. In opening this facility, Sligo County Council are dedicated to improving access for all to the wonderful natural amenities Sligo has to offer.”

**Chair of Sligo County Council’s Disability Consultative Committee, Cllr. Declan Bree**, stated:

“This is an excellent initiative and is the first completed ‘Access For All’ project at one of Sligo’s many beaches. It also marks the start of a focus on improving accessibility at further beaches across Sligo.”

**Swim Ireland’s Head of Participation Ashley Hunter** highlighted

“Over the past few years Swim Ireland have worked in partnership with Sligo Sports Partnership and Sligo County Council to provide open water programmes at beaches across Sligo. The addition of beach matting at Mullaghmore will enable us to provide new open water programmes for those with reduced mobility. We also look forward to seeing people of reduced mobility access the beach via the matting to go open water dipping / swimming or just to enjoy the beautiful beach.”

**Deirdre Lavin, SSRP Sports Co-ordinator** was in attendance and noted

“Sligo Sport and Recreation Partnership is delighted to support Sligo County Council and Swim Ireland with the introduction of a beach access mat at Mullaghmore. It is a fantastic initiative which will allow people of all abilities to enjoy beach access and will particularly benefit people with a physical disability, wheelchair users and persons requiring a more stable surface”.

**Source:** Sligo County Council

## CORK

### Cork Embarks on Visionary Journey Towards Green Energy Excellence for Harbour and Coastline

Cork County Council has announced a plan that will examine how the county's coast and harbour can offer unlimited potential in terms of green energy prospects. The County Council has said that with increasing demands in this area and opportunities for related industry, businesses and employment, recognition of the co-ordination of state, semi-state and investors is needed to ensure this potential is fully maximised.



Mayor of County Cork,  
Cllr. Frank Flynn



Chief Executive of Cork  
County Council,  
Tim Lucey



Comhairle Contae Chorcaí  
Cork County Council

With a proven track record in leadership and its long-standing focus on the Cork Harbour Economy, Cork County Council wishes to establish a governance structure which will ensure the potential for green energy production is guaranteed and will provide long term benefits locally and nationally.

The Council will start this process by bringing stakeholders together and developing a comprehensive **Cork Harbour and Coastline Green Industrial and Economic Strategy**. Procurement for services to prepare this high-level scoping document have begun and will focus on green industrial development opportunities, with a primary emphasis on large-scale offshore wind energy production around the Cork coastline from large scale offshore wind energy production.

**Mayor of County Cork, Cllr. Frank O'Flynn** welcomed the strategy:

"Cork County's coast and harbour offer vast green energy possibilities. We are committed to unlocking this potential for the benefit of our region, our industry, and our communities, ensuring a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future for all."

**Chief Executive of Cork County Council, Tim Lucey** said:

“In the realm of offshore energy and economic development, Cork's coast and harbour are unrivalled in Ireland. This recognition is growing and the demand for harnessing this potential is evident. The creation of this strategy is an exciting prospect with the full strategy set for completion in 2024. Cork County Council's commitment to sustainable, green energy initiatives stands as a testament to our dedication to driving positive change for the environment and the economy.”

Source: Cork County Council

## Some photos from the MPPL Stall at the recent National Ploughing Championships 2023 in Laois



We had a hugely positive reaction to our stall at the Ploughing Championships late last month in Ratheniska, Co. Laois. As you can see, Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD paid us a visit (*photo, top left*) as did Minister of State Kieran O'Donnell TD along with members of the public as we displayed our prototype interactive “**Maritime Planning in Irish Coastal Waters**” game. Our thanks to everyone who took part and who stopped to say hello.



## FREE COMPETITION: Oh Captain, my Captain!

How well do you know your sea captains?

See if you can match the photos to the names listed below.



**Bligh – Davos Seaworth – McCallister – Birdseye – Barbossa – Quint – Ahab - Pugwash – Jack Aubrey**

### Bonus Questions:

Name the actors who played Captains B, C, D, E, G and I?

Name the creator of fictional Captains B, C and I?

Who is the only real life Captain listed?

What is the name of the fish restaurant owned by Captain F?

Which Cork town was used in the filming of C?

Name the sailor who led the mutiny on board the ship in D?

Name the boats under the command of Captains D and C?

Name the directors of films C and E?

The villainous Cut-throat Jake was the enemy of which Captain?

Name the film and character that won Captain D his Oscar in 1992?

Name the film that won Captain G his Oscar in 1997?

Which of these Captains was also known as Captain Igloo?

**First 10 correct entries win marineplan.ie merchandise including specially branded pens, pencils and notepads – Email your answers to [mshp@housing.gov.ie](mailto:mshp@housing.gov.ie) with Newsletter Competition in the subject box. *Correct Answers in next edition***

## Donegal and Sligo documentary selected for film festival



Official Movie Poster for the documentary

A short film featuring the views of local coastal communities from Donegal and Sligo who depend on the sea to make a living is set has recently received its online premiere.

‘Fair Seas: The Atlantic Northwest’ was also selected as part of the Northern Ireland Inheritance Film Festival which occurred in mid-September.

Fair Seas created the 14-minute documentary which explores the coastline from North Donegal to Sligo through the eyes of its coastal communities. It features the

stories, hopes and fears of local seafood producers, an angler, dive instructor and walking guide. The film delves into how Marine Protected Areas might offer a new way to conserve the incredible marine life that has supported these communities for generations.

The Northwest is an important marine site and is home to rare and endangered species of sharks, skates and rays, over 25 species of whales and dolphins and 38 species of seabirds. The film tackles the impact of climate change, pollution, a loss of biodiversity and reduced fish stocks.

Fair Seas is campaigning for strong and ambitious Marine Protected Areas (MPA) legislation to be published as soon as possible to protect this vital resource and the coastal communities of Donegal and Sligo that rely on it. The group wants to see mandatory targets committing to effectively protecting 30% of the seas around Ireland by 2030 with 10% strictly protected.

**Aoife O’Mahony, Campaign Manager with Fair Seas** said

“The Northwest coastline is breath-taking and our latest film explores some of the wildlife and biodiversity hidden beneath the waves. It is really important for us to hear the views of the people who make a living from the sea and to hear their concerns



about the health of the ocean. There is also plenty of reason for hope and we all can act to make a difference. Donegal is famous for the large number of basking sharks that can be seen in its waters. This gentle giant was hunted nearly to extinction, now it is a protected species in Irish waters and making a comeback thanks to widespread public support.”

“Inheritance” is an environmental festival which takes place three times a year. It aims to educate, inspire and raise awareness of contemporary environmental issues, and to showcase the work of independent filmmakers from all over the globe. The festival is live-streamed on the Inheritance website and screened on regional TV channels including Latest TV in Brighton, Northern Visions in Belfast, Sheffield Live! in Sheffield and KMTV in Kent.

The Fair Seas film was shown on Belfast’s NVTV on Sunday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> last and the channel is available on Freeview 7 and Virgin Media 159, in Belfast, and [nvtv.co.uk/livestream](http://nvtv.co.uk/livestream).

‘Fair Seas: The Atlantic Northwest’ was part funded by the Networking and Marine Research Communications Awards, funded by the Marine Institute under the Marine Research Programme with the support of the Irish Government.

It was produced by Swimming Head Productions, an award-winning team specialising in quick-fire documentaries with a focus on heritage, science and the natural world.

Fair Seas has also produced a new postcard for Ireland’s Northwest Coast which features a basking shark swimming over a bed of seagrass. This postcard will be shared with ocean conservation organisations in this local area to highlight the beauty of this area of Ireland’s Coast.



Diver Aoibheann Guillespie Mules in Portnablagh, Donegal

For more information about Fair Seas visit <https://fairseas.ie>

## Irish Lights Spearheads Maritime Safety and Efficiency Advancements through Collaborative Training and Technology Initiatives



In collaboration with BIM, Irish Lights has introduced an online training course tailored for Local Lighthouse Authorities. Pictured at the launch were CEO of BIM, Caroline Bocquel and CEO of Irish Lights, Yvonne Shields O'Connor

In a strategic move to bolster maritime safety and navigation, the Commissioners of Irish Lights has unveiled two significant initiatives aimed at enhancing the operations of Local Lighthouse Authorities. These initiatives, launched over the summer months, represent a significant step forward in ensuring safe and efficient maritime practices in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

### Training Partnership with BIM

In collaboration with Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Ireland's seafood development agency, Irish Lights has introduced an online training course tailored for Local Lighthouse Authorities. The course, delivered through BIM's state-of-the-art Learning Management System, consists of six modules designed to provide a dynamic and immersive learning experience for participants.

The course aims to enhance the safe and efficient operation of local aids to navigation services under the remit of these authorities including ports, harbours, local authorities, and other bodies who manage aids to navigation at a local level. Local Lighthouse Authorities who oversee more than 3,500 local aids to navigation,

including lighthouses, buoys, beacons, poles, and signs will benefit from this course. It covers essential topics such as the legal foundations of marine aids to navigation provision, understanding the functions of different types of aids, maintenance schedules and the importance of policies and procedures for outage reporting and international standards compliance.

**CEO of Irish Lights, Yvonne Shields O'Connor** emphasised the course's importance, stating:

"The training course will serve as an invaluable resource, enabling Local Lighthouse Authorities to expand their understanding of maritime matters concerning the provision of local aids to navigation. By incorporating insights from both the Local Lighthouse Authorities themselves and maritime experts, the course content ensures relevance, practicality, and industry best practices. It represents our commitment to upholding the highest standards of safety and efficiency in maritime and navigation services. Through this course, we aim to empower and equip authorities with the necessary knowledge to effectively manage local aids to navigation, thereby ensuring the well-being of mariners and the protection of our coastal environments."

**CEO of BIM, Caroline Bocquel** added:

"BIM is proud to collaborate with Irish Lights in delivering this new short and targeted online training programme. Its format ensures it is an accessible and effective way for harbour masters, local authority engineers and other local lighthouse authorities to further develop their specialist skills and knowledge. By leveraging our easy to use learning management system, we are creating an engaging learning experience where new skills and knowledge are being acquired and continuous professional development is being supported."

## **Cutting-Edge Local Aids to Navigation Portal**

Simultaneously, Irish Lights has launched its Local Aids to Navigation Management Portal, coinciding with IALA World Aids to Navigation Day 2023. This online platform will enhance the management and reporting of aids to navigation services, benefiting maritime operations in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Local aids to navigation, which include lighthouses, buoys, beacons, and more play a critical role in ensuring maritime safety by assisting vessels in identifying safe navigable waters, highlighting marine hazards and maintaining efficient navigation channels for ports and harbours. They also mark offshore renewable energy sites, aquaculture zones and recreational areas.

Local Lighthouse Authorities, responsible for managing these aids to navigation, will rely on the new portal for effective oversight. The portal facilitates online applications by third parties to Irish Lights for statutory consents to allow the establishment of new aids to navigation, changes to existing aids and the dis-establishment of aids to navigation.

**Ronan Boyle, Director of eNavigation & Maritime Services, Irish Lights**

highlighted the portal's significance, saying:

"This portal provides an easy-to-use and reliable management and reporting tool based on GIS technology, empowering those using it to carry out their responsibilities more efficiently and effectively."

These two initiatives reflect Irish Lights' dedication to collaboration and the advancement of aids to navigation practices worldwide, with Irish Lights at the forefront leveraging cutting-edge technology to achieve these goals.



## All the latest news from the Marine Institute



Click on each of the links below for more details

### [INFOMAR releases five new high-resolution maps showcasing the Cork coastline in unprecedented detail](#) (Link)

See the iconic Cork coastline, from Bantry Bay to Roches Point, in remarkable detail thanks to a new series of maps that have been developed by INFOMAR. From The Beara Peninsula to Mizen Head, from Cape Clear to Roaringwater Bay & Cork Harbour, these new high-resolution maps highlight the unique & intricate landscapes that lie beneath the waves.

### [Marine Institute and BIM collaborate with pelagic sector to capture Northeast Atlantic mackerel data](#) (Link)

Irish pelagic fishers and processors are joining an international scientific initiative to provide vital information which helps inform the management of Northeast Atlantic mackerel, one of Ireland's most valuable species.

### [RV Tom Crean Celebrates First Year](#) (Link)

The RV Tom Crean, Ireland's cutting-edge research vessel, proudly celebrates its one-year anniversary since its arrival in Galway on July 18, 2022. We take this opportunity to reflect on the past 12 months and recognise its immense contribution to Ireland's marine science, made possible by the dedicated efforts of its highly skilled crew and scientists.

### [Marine Institute announces Interim CEO](#) (Link)

The Marine Institute is pleased to announce the appointment of Michael Gillooly as Interim CEO. He takes on the position following the retirement of Dr Paul Connolly at the end of the June. Mr Gillooly has worked with the Marine Institute for over 30 years. He has 30 years' senior management experience in marine technical research, operational projects and infrastructure projects and has been the Director of Ocean Climate and Information Services of the Marine Institute since 2003. Mr Gillooly was appointed Interim CEO of the Marine Institute at the June meeting of the Board.



### **Container volumes at Irish ports fell sharply in first half of 2023, but encouraging signs as inflation eases (Link)**

In the first six months of 2023, the volumes handled by the Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) and Lift-on/Lift-off cargo modes at Irish ports declined significantly. When compared to the first half of 2022, RoRo volumes fell by 3%, equivalent to 20,000 fewer RoRo units. LoLo traffic fell by 9%, or 55,000 TEU's, over the same period.

### **Marine Institute welcomes TREC (Traversing European Coastlines) Expedition to Galway (Link)**

The Marine Institute hosted a first of its kind European science expedition when it made a stop in Galway. The European Molecular Biological Laboratory (EMBL) is carrying out a pan-European census of European coastal ecosystems and their response to the environment. Working along with the Tara Schooner, the expedition will explore the interactions between the two major ecosystems (Land and Sea) on our planet in order to better understand how these ecosystems interact, and how the organisms within them respond to changes both natural and those from human disturbance.

### **The Summer Bursary Programme Through the Years – The Bursary as a Pathway into a Marine Institute Career (Link)**

The Marine Institute was first established in 1991, after the amalgamation of multiple fisheries and marine research bases. Before then, however, the organisation's predecessors had already been facilitating Summer Bursary internships. With the Marine Institute continuing to offer bursary positions each year, the many decades of the programme's existence results in an incredible number of students who have been given the opportunity to take up a temporary role in the organisation.

### **Galway Statement 10 Year Celebration (Link)**

In July the Marine Institute, along with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission co-hosted a high-level celebration marking 10 years of the Galway Statement - a decade of marine research cooperation across the Atlantic Ocean. The milestone event, entitled "10 Years of the Galway Statement. Celebrating a decade of marine research cooperation along and across the Atlantic Ocean - Our Shared Resource"

## Rosslare Europort named European Ferry Port of the Year



Director Commercial Business Units with Iarnród Éireann – Port Authority for Rosslare Europort, Glen Carr collecting the award

Rosslare Europort won 'European Ferry Port of the year' at the recent 2023 European Ferry Shipping Summit in Malmo, Sweden – making it the first time that such an award has been won by an Irish port.

A delighted Glenn Carr, Director Commercial Business Units with Iarnród Éireann – Port Authority for the port was on hand to collect the award saying:

“This award is wonderful recognition for our team at Rosslare Europort who have transformed the port’s fortunes in recent years. That team of course comprises our team of over 100 Rosslare Europort colleagues, but also our shipping customers, our service providers, the Irish logistics and haulage industries and the crucial State agencies at the port. Our success has been built on a partnership approach, one that we will continue to apply as our ambitious expansion plans are delivered.”

At present the port is going through a transformational phase in its development with a more than six-fold increase in direct European sailings since Brexit and record freight and passenger volumes being recorded.

Not only that but Rosslare Europort was the only port in Ireland to record growth in the first six months of 2023, on top of the record growth recorded over the previous two year period. Direct European services have increased from six to 38 over the past three years and there are now direct links between Rosslare and Bilbao, Cherbourg, Dunkirk, Le Havre and Zeebrugge.

This award also reflects the further ambitious plans underway at Rosslare Europort, with several investment projects including:

- Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Hub development, including an ORE purpose-built quay and berth, ORE quayside storage and pre-construction (up to 50 acres in area), navigable channel dredged down to a minimum of 9 metres depth, and management Control Centre & management offices and facilities
- Rosslare Europort Masterplan, including port digitalisation: These works will reflect its status as Ireland's Gateway to Europe and will include new freight and passenger facilities, storage, export and import facilities, berth extension. Matching the port's physical transformation, a digitalisation of systems and operations is also planned which will deliver a better, more effective and more efficient Port, to become Ireland's most advanced digitalised port
- Office of Public Works Project T7, to develop a permanent Border Control Post within the port, to provide the facilities and systems for all aspects of Border Control
- New TII N25 Rosslare Europort Access Road will ensure a better experience for port users and enhance quality of life for those living and working in the area by taking trucks out of the village and improving access and connectivity to the port.

In total, these developments will see a total of €350 million invested in the port and its environs. A huge congratulations to all concerned.



## Queen's University Belfast Hosts Joint Transboundary Conference with the Korea Maritime Institute



Delegates attending the QUB conference in September

The conference "*Reflections on Transboundary Cooperation for Sustainable Ocean and Coastal Areas*" was held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September last in Queen's University Belfast (QUB) and was organised by Dr Heather Ritchie (Lecturer in Planning, School Natural and Built Environment), Professor Richard Collins (Dean of Internationalisation and Professor in the School of Law) and Dr Jungho Nam, (Senior Research Fellow, Korea Maritime Institute).

The aim of this conference was to share experiences and consider the challenges of co-operation and co-management of transboundary marine spaces. A number of pertinent topics were discussed including transboundary marine spatial planning, marine protected areas and other cross-border management tools, and the licensing of marine activities. It not only brought the two regions (of the Island of Ireland) together in a comparative perspective, but sought to canvass opinion from academia, government, and non-governmental bodies, regional institutions and designated cross-border institutions (the Loughs Agency).

The Conference opened with a roundtable discussion reflecting on 25 years of Transboundary Marine Experiences on the Island of Ireland, and was followed by four other panel sessions with speakers from the UK and Ireland, as well as the Korea Maritime Institute.

The delegation also travelled to Derry/Londonderry for another session and were warmly welcomed and hosted by the Loughs Agency. Heather, Richard and Jungho are thankful to all the speakers and chairs that made the event so enjoyable with a

real sense of knowledge exchange: *Loughs Agency, DAERA NI, AFBI NI, Marine Institute, Ulster University, University of Liverpool, Marine Renewables Industry Association, GoBe Consultants, Howell Marine Consulting, MaREI in University College Cork, National Trust, Fair Seas, and Trinity College Dublin.*

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## Red Sky at Night . . .



A beautiful photo of Curracloe Beach, Co. Wexford as dusk draws in  
Photo: Mairead Ryan, Wexford

## Have You Any Marine-Related Photos?

We at MPPL are always interested in marine-related photography, so please feel free to submit your marine photos to us and we will feature the best ones in future editions and we will make sure your name appears with them.

Send them onto [msp@housing.gov.ie](mailto:msp@housing.gov.ie) and put “Photos for Newsletter” in the subject box.

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## Marine Spatial Planning Autumn/Winter Online CPD Series



The **Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage** are delighted to have worked with the **Irish Planning Institute** to bring a new online CPD (Continuing Professional Development) Framework for MSP.

This program will bring together professionals from both the academic and policy areas as well as the relevant bodies for maritime authorisations and decision making.

The program runs every Friday lunchtime for eight weeks from 13th October to 1<sup>st</sup> December next. Sessions will be approximately 75 mins and will be recorded and uploaded to [www.ipi.ie](http://www.ipi.ie) for those who cannot attend.

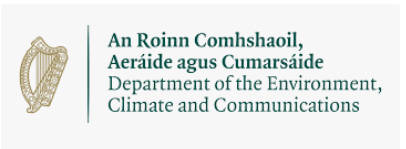
**At the end of the programme participants should be able to:**

- Identify relevant legislative and policy frameworks for the sustainable planning, use and management of the marine resource.
- Understand the diversity of state, market and civil stakeholders with an interest in marine resources
- Apply relevant legal and policy documents to a specific marine-related issue.
- Articulate the benefits of a trans-disciplinary approach to the planning and management of the marine resource.

Date:	Topics:	Speakers:
Friday 13th October  13:00 – 14:15	Introduction to MSP  Land/Sea interaction: Over the Sea	Dr. Heather Ritchie, QUB  Paul Lawlor, TU Dublin
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> October  13:00 – 14:15	Introduction to Marine Legislation  Land Sea Interaction: Under the Sea	Dr. Anne Marie O'Hagan, UCC  Ali Robinson, Uisce Éireann

<b>Friday</b> <b>27<sup>th</sup> October</b>  <b>13:00-14:15</b>	<b>Introduction to role of the Dept. of the Environment, Climate and Communications</b>  <b>Introduction to MARA</b>	<b>Conor Mc Cabe, International and Offshore Energy, DECC</b>  <b>Rory O’Leary, MARA Establishment Unit, DHLGH</b>
<b>Friday</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> November</b>  <b>13:00-14:15</b>	<b>Mapping Data</b>  <b>Marine Implementation</b>	<b>Juliet Fitzpatrick, DHLGH</b>  <b>Karina Fitzgerald, Planning Advisor, DHLGH</b>
<b>Friday</b> <b>10<sup>th</sup> November</b>  <b>13:00 – 14:15</b>	<b>Making Marine Spatial Planning Matter to Stakeholder</b>  <b>Transboundary MSP: Why, How, Case Examples &amp; Outcomes</b>	<b>Dr. Wesley Flannery, QUB</b>  <b>Dr. Kofi Ansong, University of Liverpool</b>
<b>Friday</b> <b>17<sup>th</sup> November</b>  <b>13:00 – 14:15</b>	<b>Introduction to role of An Bord Pleanála</b>  <b>Marine Ecology for Planners</b>	<b>Ciara Kellett, An Bord Pleanála</b>  <b>Dr Maeve Flynn, An Bord Pleanála</b>
<b>Friday</b> <b>24<sup>th</sup> November</b>  <b>13:00 – 14:15</b>	<b>Delivering Blue Growth: Role of the Planning Consultant in Offshore Wind Development</b>	<b>Sybil Berne, MacCabe Durney Barnes</b>  <b>Colm Ryan MKO</b>
<b>Friday</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> December</b>  <b>13:00 – 14:15</b>	<b>Lessons Learnt: Lessons from the Celtic Interconnector</b>  <b>Lessons Learnt: Marine Development in the Shannon Estuary</b>	<b>Des Cox, Eirgrid</b>  <b>Brian McCarthy, Clare County Council</b>

## South Coast DMAP Public Engagement sessions held by DECC



**The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC)**

held a number of public information sessions recently seeking the views of south and southeast coast communities to help determine where future offshore wind energy developments may take place.



The Department extended the deadline for its public information period to October 6th, 2023.

This initial engagement period followed the publication of the **South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) Proposal** last July by Minister Eamon Ryan, which puts forward an initial ‘proposed’ geographical area of the south and southeast coast within which future offshore renewable energy developments can be advanced. This proposed geographical area is approximately 8,600 square kilometres in size.

The Department held eight face-to-face public information drop-in events, along with two workshops throughout coastal communities in counties Wexford, Waterford and Cork, as well as an online webinar to introduce the South Coast DMAP Proposal.

The Department also hosted a second Public Information Webinar on the South Coast DMAP Proposal on Thursday, 28 September, from 6pm – 7pm.

Following the 8-week public information period, a ‘Draft DMAP’ will be published later in 2023, which will identify specific areas for future offshore renewable energy development. This Draft DMAP and accompanying environmental assessments will then undergo a further six-week statutory public consultation period before the Draft DMAP is presented to the Minister for Housing and both houses of the Oireachtas for approval.

**Further information on the South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) Proposal is available on [www.gov.ie/SouthCoastDMAP](http://www.gov.ie/SouthCoastDMAP)**

## A View from Europe



**Eoin Leahy**  
Maritime Affairs Attaché



An Roinn Gnóthaí  
Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of  
Foreign Affairs and Trade

As usual, summer in Brussels is punctuated with a change in Council Presidency and the urgency to conclude files before this change and the summer break. As Sweden handed the baton to Spain, there was a big push to complete the **EU Maritime Security Strategy** file which had been under discussion for over a year at that point. The away days meeting held in Karlskrona helped to allow informal discussions on some of the sticking points in a more relaxed setting which greatly moved the file along. This brought us to the file being almost but not

quite complete by the Presidency handover with two meetings under the Spanish Presidency required to finish the task at Working Party level. This file will now make its way through Coreper and Council where its publication will deliver a more relevant strategy given both climate and environmental concerns and the current geopolitical situation. See here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/coreper.html>

At the same time, work was underway to organise a high-level political event in Dublin to mark 10 years of the **Galway Statement on Atlantic Co-operation** on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. This high-level, by invitation only event was co-organised between DFA, the EU Commission and Marine Institute which aimed to renew our shared commitment to the Atlantic.

Commissioner McGuinness led the morning session, Minister Burke hosted a VIP lunch and the Tánaiste delivered a keynote address in the afternoon session.

80 guests attended. All of these were political or diplomatic representatives or senior officials. Ireland, France, Portugal, USA, Canada, Argentina, South Africa, Morocco, Germany and Norway as well as OECD and EU Commission were represented. Secretaries of State for Portugal and Norway, the Deputy Director General of DG MARE, Deputy Secretary for the OECD, Executive Director of the European Fisheries Control Agency, CEOs from the Marine Institute, BIM and Commissioners of Irish lights, and the CEO of Ifremer attended.

Ambassadors from Brazil, Argentina, Morocco and France, a US Capital based Ambassador for Atlantic Cooperation, a former Minister from Portugal and many senior officials from Ministries and agencies from all corners of the Atlantic were also present.

Interventions from high-level delegates, beginning with Commissioner McGuinness, roundly applauded Ireland's continued central role in this initiative from conception through its expansion, highlighting our stewardship in managing the coordination and delivery of results. This alliance is now regarded as a global model for science diplomacy where Ireland was further singled out for praise for our seabed mapping programme in which field we are viewed as world leaders.

Over the summer period I spent a considerable period of time working on a committee under a US chair developing a new Atlantic co-operation initiative. This Partnership aims to engage coastal Atlantic countries in collective problem-solving and uphold a set of shared principles for Atlantic Co-operation This followed Ireland joining the Partnership for the Atlantic Sea Basin in 2022 and work during the intervening year to develop this Declaration and an associated plan of action by a group of like-minded Atlantic Countries.

Ireland joined this partnership at a Ministerial meeting in the margins of High Level Week at the UN General Assembly in New York. Minister Ryan represented Ireland where I attended as part of our delegation having been involved in co-ordinating Irelands input. 32 other countries from 4 continents around the Atlantic also joined which is unique in terms of its scope in the Atlantic - the next steps will be interesting as this new partnership begins its work.

Finally, work is ongoing on next month's Atlantic strategy ministerial to be held in Porto. This event aims to reaffirm political support for the Atlantic Strategy with an increased focus on how this strategy can help deliver offshore renewable targets for the four countries involved through cooperation, EU funding and sharing of best practice. I worked on a joint Ministerial Declaration with France, Spain and Portugal as well as the Commission which is to be adopted at this meeting. We expect strong participation from Ireland at this meeting and look forward to reporting back on the outcomes in the next edition!



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The Department of  
Housing, Local Government and Heritage



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
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