



AN t-ÚDARÁS UM  
CHOSAINT  
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES  
PROTECTION  
AUTHORITY

## **Press Release**

**Issued by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority's Press Office**

**26<sup>th</sup> June 2024**

### **Fishing Master Convicted and Fined for Brown Crab Claw Landing Offence**

The master of the fishing vessel "Chaser", Alan Hinchy, from Kilmore Quay, Co Wexford, was convicted and fined €300 at Wexford District Court on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2024, for an offence relating to the landing of Brown crab claws in excess of one percent of the total Brown Crab catch from the fishing vessel on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2022 at Kilmore Quay, Co Wexford.

The Court heard evidence of how Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers of the SFPA inspected the catch from the vessel and detected a box of detached Brown Crab claws, along with another box of Brown Crab bodies. Evidence was given that one box of detached claws would correspond to an estimated amount of eight boxes of Brown Crab bodies. Under EU law, the landing of Brown Crab claws detached at sea and caught with pots and creels is prohibited, however, an exceptional allowance of up to one percent of the landing of Brown Crab may consist of Brown Crab claws to take account of circumstances including natural breakage.

An SFPO explained that the rules regarding declawing of Brown Crab are important for reasons including the protection of the population of Brown Crab stocks and the difficulty to ascertain the size of the Brown Crab which is caught and declawed without being landed. Whilst there was no allegation of below minimum conservation reference size of Brown Crab caught or landed, the Court was told declawing of Brown Crab at sea undermines the ability to assess if below minimum legal size Brown Crab has been declawed onboard. The Court heard evidence that the removal of claws of crab at sea undermines the conservation efforts for the Brown Crab fishery as it hinders spawning and contributes to the decline of stocks.

An SFPA spokesperson commented:

"This case underscores the importance of compliance with the rules regarding the catch and landing of Brown Crab, and crustaceans more widely, in order to ensure the

sustainability of the species and this important fishery for fishing communities. The SFPA commends the officers involved in this enforcement action for their thorough inspection.”

Ends

### **About the SFPA**

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) is the independent statutory body responsible for the regulation of the sea-fisheries and the sea-food production sectors. It promotes compliance with the EU Common Fisheries Policy, sea-fisheries law and food safety law relating to fish and fish products, verifies compliance and, where necessary, enforces it. Its mandate covers all fishing vessels operating within Ireland’s 200-mile limit, over 2,000 Irish registered fishing vessels wherever they operate, and all seafood produced in Ireland’s seafood processing companies. The SFPA operates through a network of regional port offices situated at Ireland’s main fishery harbours. For further information visit: [www.sfpa.ie](http://www.sfpa.ie)