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CHOSAINT
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES
PROTECTION
AUTHORITY

Press Release

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Fishing Master Fined for Offences Relating to Catch Document Misrecording and Late Submission of Landing Declaration

The Master of a sea-fishing vessel, Anthony Conlon, from Drogheda, Co Louth, was fined, on the 17th of September 2024, at Drogheda District Court, for charges relating to under-recording of catches of Haddock in the fishing logbook and landing declaration, onboard the fishing vessel "Argonaut IV." Mr Conlon was also fined for the late submission of the Landing Declaration in respect of the fishing trip.

The offences were detected on the 23rd of September 2022, during an inspection by Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) of the catch landed from the vessel at Dunmore East, Co Waterford, where 213 boxes of Haddock were detected however 131 boxes were recorded in the fishing logbook. The Court heard that Haddock is a more sensitive species, and the boxed Haddock catch was under-recorded by approximately 5,145kgs in the landing declaration. The landing declaration was submitted in October 2022, beyond the statutory 48-hour period from the completion of landing. Evidence was presented to the Court that Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers also detected an over-recording of boxes of Whiting onboard the vessel, with 86 boxes recorded in the logbook however, 11 boxes were found on inspection of the landing.

Evidence was given that the accuracy of data in fishing logbooks and landing declarations is important to determine the extent of quota uptake and for setting future fishing quotas to ensure stocks are preserved. The Court heard that Haddock and Whiting in the relevant fishing areas are subject to tighter regulatory controls for their recovery and to prevent those stocks being overfished.

The Court remarked that the offences were "serious matters" at the heart of the ecological system. The Court imposed fines totalling €2,500 for charges relating to under-recording of haddock and the late submission of the Landing Declaration.

An SFPA spokesperson stated:

"The SFPA notes the decision and seriousness attached to these offences by the Court. Accurate catch data in EU waters is the basis for sustainable quota

management and catch limits to avoid depletion of stocks and ensuring a healthy future fish stock for fishing communities. The decision of the Court highlights the importance of the submission of catch documents within the statutory time limits. The submission of catch documents within the periods required by law is a key tool to ensure stocks are actively monitored in real-time to ensure quota uptake is assessed and managed to avoid overfishing. The SFPA commends the Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers involved for their investigation.”

Ends

Further Information

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