



Press Release

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

12th September 2024

Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority Launches Report on Protecting Seafood Trade

- A total of **3,802** consignments of seafood totalling **49,782** tonnes and **23** species were certified by the SFPA for export from **44** Food Businesses to **41** countries outside the EU in 2023.
- Three countries account for **59.6%** of Irish seafood exported to third countries outside the EU in 2023: **Nigeria 35.3%, China 13.9%, and Ivory Coast 10.4%**
- In 2023, the vast majority (**90.7%**) of seafood exported consisted of pelagic species including **Blue Whiting, Mackerel and Horse Mackerel**.

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) launched the Protecting Seafood Trade Report 2023, today, 12th September 2024*. The report highlights the important work the SFPA carries out to protect and enable the import and export of seafood. Irish seafood exports in 2023 were valued at €550 million**. As Ireland's competent authority for seafood trade compliance, the SFPA undertakes a range of activities critical to enabling Ireland's seafood economy.

2023 was a challenging year for Ireland's seafood sector. This was reflected in the decrease in third country exports from Ireland to 49,782 tonnes and 23 species from 44 Food Businesses to 41 countries outside the EU in 2023 from 78,171 tonnes in 2022.

Protecting seafood trade by ensuring highly functioning levels of regulatory assurance is a critical element of the SFPA's mission as the competent authority responsible for ensuring the international integrity of Ireland's seafood offering. The information provided in the Protecting Seafood Trade 2023 report offers data in terms of the key trends facing the sector at this present time and highlights an important element of SFPA's activity as a regulator.

Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson of the SFPA said:

“I am pleased to launch the SFPA’s report on Seafood Trade 2023. Ireland as a food exporting nation places significant emphasis on our position as a supplier of safe, traceable, sustainably produced high-quality food and the SFPA plays an important role in ensuring the integrity of our valuable seafood offering.

Fish is highly traded in international markets. Illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing is a significant threat to the future of fishing. IUU fishing jeopardises the development of sustainable fisheries on which many coastal communities globally rely for their livelihoods, including in Ireland. As regulators, we are committed to utilising all the controls available to us to help detect and deter IUU fishing and IUU derived fishery products within our jurisdiction.

Regulation, including health certification, also underpins confidence in the safety of Irish seafood products, providing vital reassurance to retailers, hospitality businesses and consumers at home and abroad. Retaining Ireland’s growing reputation for producing superior seafood is essential and the integrity of the supply chain is vital in this regard.

In 2023, the SFPA continued to develop its work in seafood trade regulation through the provision of technical market access support, performing official controls of seafood safety and sea-fisheries conservation. Implementation and enforcement by the SFPA of EU official control regulation and fisheries conservation legislation continue to provide the regulatory baselines upon which Ireland’s robust seafood certification system is built. Inspection and health certification of export consignments provides public health and customer assurance regarding seafood safety and quality standards.”

Ends

Notes for Editors

Photo Caption

Pictured on the 12th September in Castletownbere, to launch the SFPA’s report on Protecting Seafood Trade 2023, from left to right: Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson, SFPA; John Nolan, CEO, Castletownbere Fishermen’s Co-Op and Bernard O’Donovan, National Director Trade Compliance, SFPA.

* The Protecting Seafood Trade Report 2023 can be accessed here: -
<https://www.sfpa.ie/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=sXebR-lqCqE%3d&portalid=0&resourceView=1>

**Figure taken from Bord Bia's "Export Performance and Prospects Report 2023 – 2024" –

<https://www.bordbia.ie/industry/insights/performance-and-prospects/performance-prospects-2024/>

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