



Press Release

**Issued by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority's Press Office
21st November 2024**

Fines and Forfeiture totalling €562,500 Imposed by Cork Circuit Court in Six Separate Fisheries Cases

Fines and forfeiture amounts totalling €562,500 were imposed this week by Cork Circuit Court in relation to six fisheries control prosecutions brought by the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA). The following fines and forfeiture amounts were imposed: €37,500 for illegal fishing gear use and gear data recording offences; €22,000 for unauthorised fishing in territorial waters; €50,000 for under-recording of catch in the vessel fishing logbook; €290,000 for illegal set-up of grading equipment; €48,000 for under-recording of catches in the vessel fishing logbook and €105,000 was imposed for fishing gear offences. A fine of €10,000 was imposed for failure to facilitate safe boarding of officers onto a fishing vessel.

Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson of the SFPA stated:

“Breaches of sea-fisheries law undermine the sustainability of valuable fish stocks and the livelihoods dependent on them. The Court’s rulings in these cases serve as a deterrent to others, and promotes compliance with the regulations, across the fishing vessels operating off our coast. Under the Sea Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006, the SFPA has a statutory mandate to secure the efficient and effective enforcement of sea-fisheries law. This enforcement is carried out in an impartial manner, ensuring fairness and transparency in all actions taken.

Guilty pleas were entered in all six cases. The Court’s significant decisions this week reflect the robust inspection activities and appropriate enforcement steps undertaken by officers. I commend the dedicated work of our officers, support services, the Naval Service, and the European Fisheries Control Agency for their commitment to protecting the sustainability of sea-fisheries.”

Ends

Note to Editor

The forfeiture in these cases refers to the portion of the monetary value of catch and gear onboard the vessel forfeited to State consequent to a conviction for an offence under the Sea-Fisheries and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006.

Details of the cases are below:

- **MFV Astrid - €50,000 of fines and forfeiture imposed for under-recording of catches in the vessel logbook**
- **MFV Blue Horizon €48,000 imposed under-recording of catches in the vessel fishing logbook**
- **MFV Wiron 6 - €290,000 imposed for illegal set-up of grading equipment**
- **MFV Pesorsa Dos - €115,000 imposed for failure to facilitate an officer's safe vessel boarding and non-compliant gear-use offences**
- **MFV Ortegal Tres - €37,500 of fines and forfeiture imposed for non-compliant gear-use offences and gear data recording offences**
- **MFV Punta Candieira - €22,000 of fines and forfeiture imposed for unauthorised fishing in territorial waters**

In the case of Director of Public Prosecution (DPP) v Roland Krasinski, the master pleaded guilty to two counts of under-recording in the fishing logbook transmitted to the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) of catches onboard the French-registered vessel "Astrid" on the 16th of August, 2024, prior to the vessel's landing into Castletownbere port, in particular 1,300 kgs approximately of Norway lobster (also known as Dublin Bay Prawn) and Monkfish by 660kgs. The under-recording was detected during a physical inspection by Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers (SFPO's) of the SFPA of the vessel upon its landing into Castletownbere port. A total of €50,000 for forfeiture and a fine was imposed.

In the case of DPP v David Minihane, SFPOs detected during the course of an inspection on the 23rd of October 2022, at Castletownbere port, an under-recording in the fishing logbook of catches onboard the Irish-registered vessel "Blue Horizon" of Norway lobster (also known as Dublin Bay prawn) by 5,958 kgs. The fishing master pleaded guilty to the offence. A total of €48,000 for forfeiture and a fine was imposed.

The case of DPP v Melis related to the detention of the UK-registered factory vessel, "Wiron 6", in Irish waters for an offence of non-compliant set up of the fish grading equipment onboard the vessel which did not allow for automatic freezing of catches.

The equipment onboard also did not prevent the possibility of discard of catches to sea. The Court heard evidence that the prohibition on the installation of such equipment in this manner was a conservation measure to prevent the destructive practice of discarding of catches with lower commercial value, which can lead to misreporting of fish stock levels. Such discarding of dead catches also undermines the health of future fish stocks. The Court heard there was just under 450 tonnes, approximately, of catch onboard however that it was not the prosecution case that discarding had occurred. A total of €290,000 for a fine and forfeiture was imposed.

In the case of DPP v Rubido, the master of the German-registered vessel, “Pesorsa Dos”, pleaded guilty to charges, arising from January 2023, of failing to provide safe access to board the vessel arising from an incident where the boarding ladder broke as an Irish Naval Service officer attempted to board the vessel, and failure to remove fishing nets after 72 hours, in addition to a failure to accurately record the time for which the fishing gear was set in the water. Evidence was given of how the boarding ladder broke as the Naval Service officer climbed it, and how the officer was pulled onboard by the master. The Court heard evidence that the 72-hour limit is a conservation measure in order to prevent fishing activity having an overly adverse impact on certain fisheries. A total of €115,000 for a fine and forfeiture was imposed. In the case of DPP v Martinez, in relation to the German-registered fishing vessel, “Ortegal Tres”, the master pleaded guilty to charges of failing to remove fishing nets from the water (in breach of the requirement to remove such gear after 72 hours) and failing to accurately record data relating to the gear in the fishing logbook. That case arose from a joint inspection between the Irish Naval Service, the SFPA and the European Fisheries Control Agency in January 2023. A total of €37,500 was imposed for fines and forfeiture.

Details on the “Punta Candieira” can be accessed here:

https://www.sfpa.ie/Portals/0/Press%20Release_Spanish%20Fishing%20Master%20Convicted%20and%20Fined%20for%20Unauthorised%20Fishing%20Operations%20within%20Irish%20Territorial%20Waters.pdf

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