

Coastal Resource Protection and Management

Seminar organized by the Marine Group of the Environmental Pillar
hosted by the European Parliament offices in Ireland
Nov 18th 2011; 9.30 - 4 pm; EP Offices Molesworth Street Dublin

PROCEEDINGS

Compiled by
Karin Dubsy and Dr Annetta Zintl
Photos by Roy Daniels



Marine Group membership: An Taisce, BirdWatch, Coastwatch, Feasta, Irish Seal Sanctuary, Irish Wildlife Trust and Irish Whale and Dolphin Group.



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Acknowledgements

The European Parliament offices Dublin for hosting this seminar and MEP Nessa Childers for making a special effort to arrive back in time to address the meeting.

All speakers and chairmen who provided their time and their outstanding presentations and input free of charge. WE are so sorry we could not even be invited to a decent lunch due to budget constraints.

Roy Daniels who helped in preparations and Roy Daniels, Annetta Zintl and Michael O Sullivan who helped so much with logistics on the day.

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9.30 am Registration

9.45 Welcome, Francis Jacobs, Director EP offices Dublin

10 am Session I: Sustainable Inshore Fisheries and Wild Harvesting

Chair:

Dr Michael Gunn, Veterinarian

- **Sustainable Inshore Fisheries and Jobs.** Reflections on Italy and Ireland – *Dr Ilaria Vielmini, Ziguele Association Italy*
- **Protecting, growing and harvesting:** Aiming for wise use of wild resources and aquaculture minimizing impact and maximizing job potential. Short interventions setting out status and harvest issues in and out of Natura sites for species incl. oysters (Karin Dubsy Coastwatch), mussels (Brendan Price IWDG) and razor shells (Dr. Ed Fahy, fisheries scientist).

11.00 Coffee

11.20 am Group works on ways forward by species and area, especially Natura 2000 sites.

Back up: legal related to Sea Fisheries by Declan Quigley, Senior Port Officer, SFPA 12.20 pm Rapporteur for each group presents key points

12.40 pm Clarifications, conclusions and recommendations.

1.00 Lunch break

1.45 Session II – Coastal and Marine Protection on the Island of Ireland

Chair:

Phil Kearney Aarhus Task Force on Public Participation in environmental decision-making

- Marine Protected Areas in N. Ireland - Dr Joe Breen, Head of Aquatic Science Team, Northern Ireland Environment Agency
- Climate change adaptation - planning for the soft coast – Dr Kevin Lynch, School of Geography and Archaeology, National University of Ireland, Galway
- Sea grass – citizen participation in monitoring and protection. Joint work with EPA, Coastwatchers and local communities Karin Dubsy, Coastwatch.

Short break

3.00 pm EU coastal policy and European Parliament priorities – Nessa Childers MEP

3.20 pm Panel Discussion: Implementing protection plans and legislation

3.50 pm Closing remarks, Francis Jacobs, Director EP offices Dublin

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Environment Pillar Marine Group membership: An Taisce, BirdWatch, Coastwatch, Feasta, Irish Seal Sanctuary, Irish Wildlife Trust. Irish Whale and Dolphin Group.

Coastal Resource Protection and Management NOV 18th 2011

Summary

On Nov 18th 2011, the Marine group of the Environment Pillar held a seminar in the European Parliament Offices Dublin on coastal resource management issues including inshore fisheries protection and management.



After the official welcome by **Francis Jacobs**, Director EP offices there were plenary addresses from Italy, Northern Ireland and the Republic presented instances of sustainable and problematic inshore fisheries, raised marine nature protection and coastal zone planning and management issues.

The Workgroup session focussed on sustainable wild shellfish harvesting in the coastal zone. Results were fed back for discussion, ably moderated by **Dr Michael Gunn**, chairman of the morning session.



Dr Ilaria Vielmini (Ziguele Association Italy) gave a snapshot of select artisan inshore fisheries in Italy and Ireland. She argued that by combining traditional methods with modern research and technology, high value foods may be produced sustainably while boosting local economies and jobs. Moreover, local knowledge and records of environmental changes are invaluable contributors to monitoring.



A brief overview of inshore fisheries law and enforcement was provided by **Declan Quigley**, Senior Port Officer, SFPA. Declan also acted as valuable roaming legal resource in the workgroup session which followed.

Workshop facilitators introduced their shellfish and back ground information, with **Dr Edward Fahy** providing an introductory paper for the razor clam fisheries .



Brendan Price and Karin Dubsy introduced the mussel and flat oyster workshops respectively. The outcomes are a key part of the seminar and are presented below.



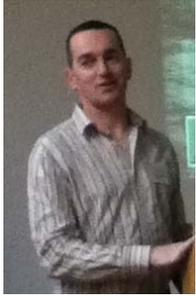
The afternoon session chaired by **Phil Kearney Aarhus Task Force on Public Participation in environmental decision-making**.

The first afternoon address was by **Dr Joe Breen**, Head of Aquatic Science Team, Northern Ireland Environment Agency. He described the surveying, designation and management of Marine Protected Areas (N 2000 an



OSPAR) in Northern Ireland *with very comprehensive mapping and information.*

A comparison of site protection approaches adopted in Northern Ireland, the UK and Scotland was made. An all-Ireland approach to marine protection and spatial planning was picked up again in discussion.



Dr Kevin Lynch, School of Geography and Archaeology, National University of Ireland, Galway, reviewed the environmental impact of erosion and flood protection methods particularly in regards to soft coastlines. A number of 'soft protection measure' alternatives and the conservation and enhancement of natural buffers such as saltmarshes and sand dune systems were proposed (presentation attached). **Karin Dubsy** of Coastwatch presented a new citizen seagrass survey designed by Coastwatch, based on the official monitoring carried out by the EPA. The first results for Lough Swilly, Co Donegal, Tramore and Dundalk Bay were presented. (presentation attached).



The final speaker was **MEP Nessa Childers** who provided the European context of EU Maritime policy and relevant national programme for government actions including planning and foreshore legislation reviews. (presentation attached) .

After final discussion moderated by the afternoon chair *the meeting was officially closed by Francis Jacob , Director of the EP Offices Dublin .*



Marine Group membership: An Taisce, BirdWatch, Coastwatch, Feasta, Irish Seal Sanctuary, Irish Wildlife Trust and Irish Whale and Dolphin Group.



WORKSHOP SESSION

After the first plenary session, three parallel workshops were held, each focussing on a different native commercially important bivalve mollusc. Participants discussed 'their' mollusc, guided by a group facilitator. The group rapporteurs took notes and presented the outcomes to the plenary. In preparation with group facilitators, the following points were covered as possible headings for each workshop.

- Review of Species Status
- Recommendations for wise (sustainable), transparent and fair use of the select shellfish
- Fisheries or Aquaculture in protected sites
- Commission draft proposals for Common Fisheries Policy
- Jobs
- Law Enforcement
- Public Information
- Research

The notes below are the DRAFT workshop outcomes which were resent to participants for final comment. Minor edits were made to improve layout and clarity.

WORKSHOP OUTCOMES:-

1. RAZOR CLAM WORKSHOP

Facilitator: – Dr. Eduard Fahy (Marine group coop expert)

Rapporteur: Camilla Keane (An Taisce)

2. MUSSEL WORKSHOP

Facilitator: Brendan Price (Irish Whale and Dolphin Group)

Rapporteur: Johnny Woodlock (Irish Seal Sanctuary)

3. NATIVE OYSTER WORKSHOP

Facilitator: Karin Dubsky (Coastwatch)

Rapporteur: Dr Annetta Zintl (Coastwatch)



1. RAZOR CLAM WORKSHOP – Dr Edward Fahy, Camilla Keane

Review of status

- Since 2007 - Landings fairly stable. Fishermen have gone into other fishery sectors.
- Currently fishing to order for a frozen and fresh markets - mainly abroad.
- This is now a full year fishery. Seasonal harvesting went when the fleet got smaller.
- Currently approx. 25 razor clam boats are fishing in the north west Irish Sea, but the total potential effort is unknown, because the holders of polyvalent fishing licenses are entitled to use these methods..
- Harvesting methods known to be used in Europe are;
 - Hydraulic dredging – which is the norm in Ireland
 - Electric fishing – currently experimentally used in Ireland
 - Diving – currently prohibited in Ireland
 - Hand picking at v low tide - rare here

Recommendations agreed:

- All methods of harvesting should be reviewed for by-catch and by-kill (under different sea conditions). Investigations should include survival of discards .
- Investigate & quantify the impacts on benthic biodiversity from different methods
- Regulate fishing effort: the number of boats, where and when they fish
- Increase public awareness of legal measures (Minimum Size 10cm)
- Seasonality – do not fish during and immediately following the spawning season
- Manual harvesting methods should be promoted to minimise by-caught species and other damage but that needs to be well planned and appropriately regulated .
- Harvesting by divers under supervision should be considered.

Natura 2000 sites

- Any harvesting must comply with Regulations that apply to Natura 2000 sites (including Appropriate Assessment)
- If permitted, then harvesting must be monitored, controlled and reported upon.

CFP reform

- No recommendations were highlighted/considered

Enforcement Recommendations

- Enforcement of regulations within 6 n miles needs to be significantly tightened up
- More direct observations of harvesting are needed.
- It should be mandatory for all boats to carry Electronic Reporting Systems
- There should be managed access to the fishery.
- Fishing effort should be commensurate with resource available.
- Fishing should be in response to specific demand (orders).

2. MUSSEL WORKSHOP – BRENDAN PRICE, Johnny Woodlock

Review of Status (S.W.)

- Mussels are wild native found right around the country.
- The scale of the mussel fishery in Ireland by volume is now: one third rope to two thirds bottom culture.
- 39.000 tonnes/annum seed collected and dredged. (Authorised 29,600 tonnes for “seed” dredging) Total harvest is ~76 000 tonnes per annum, involving 24 boats.

Recommendations for wise (sustainable), transparent and fair use of select shellfish

- It was agreed that there was a need for full regional consultation with **all** stakeholders. The ratification of the Aarhus convention could help in this regard.
- Everybody recognised the need for an all-Ireland marine spatial planning authority. Mussels are an all-Ireland fishery and should come under such a spatial plan.

Aquaculture in protected sites, guidance on aquaculture in Natura 200 sites

- Much of mussel aquaculture takes place in N 2000 sites in Ireland.
- There was a lot of confusion about the precautionary principle and how to apply it. (this was one of the issues with long discussion time but no outcome)
- It was accepted that appropriate assessments were now mandatory for mussel seed harvest and aquaculture in N 2000 sites. The agreed recommendation was that:

Decisions based on appropriate assessments should be turned around quickly to avoid injustices.

Points re EU Commission draft proposals for Common Fisheries Policy

Not covered

Enforcement

- Resources and funding for data acquisition and enforcement should be sought.

Research and Public Information

- Adequate resources for gathering of data and reporting around which good management decisions can be made.

3. OYSTER WORKSHOP – Karin Dubsky, Dr. Annetta Zintl

Review of Status of the Native Oyster:

Wild populations of the flat oyster have shrunk from a wide distribution until about 80 years ago when many large beds like those in the Irish sea collapsed due to overfishing. Viable beds are now only found in 8 RoI bays and it is feared that these may decline further as all except for Tralee Bay have now tested positive for Bonemia infection. The Irish situation is bad but still better than many other European countries where the flat oyster became extinct.

The native oyster *Ostrea edulis* is a Red list species under the OSPAR Convention and special species action plans have been drawn up in the UK and NI. In NI government effort to restock Strangford Lough is proving successful. Efforts are increasing in other EU counties.

Recommendations for wise (sustainable), transparent and fair use

Discussion centred around traditional users and -specific provisions drawn up by traditional oyster fishermen for their area – such as a voluntary larger minimum size defined by the fishermen in L Foyle, and closed areas for spatters in some bays. Concerns were expressed about lack of policy and effort to bring the species back to good status in the RoI. Recent queries about granting of fishing licenses were noted – this applied to both, new licenses issued to people from outside the area as well as the renewal of existing licenses to traditional local men.

Harvest and aquaculture in Natura 200 sites

Management and harvesting should follow a Natura management plan devised by/with local stakeholders. This is now overdue. In N 2000 sites with commercial native oyster fishery.

It was clarified that the flat oyster is not listed in the Habitat Directive, however the Directive provides protection indirectly as presence of the flat oyster in an SAC, selected for its mudflat/sandflat habitat, it is considered a 'typical species'.

Virtually all oyster aquaculture in Ireland is based on Gigas oysters. Regarding Gigas oyster aquaculture in N 2000 sites, views within the group diverged with some participants supporting a moratorium on this aquaculture in marine SACs, while others felt that there were effective control measures available (e.g. the use of triploids) and that the issue should be decided on a case-by-case basis. Moreover it was claimed that in some areas (e.g. Clarin Bridge) native oyster populations improved following the introduction of Gigas oysters - although this was questioned by other participants. No agreed position was reached on this point.

Points re EU Commission draft proposals for Common Fisheries Policy

The reform may bring opportunities for sustainable inshore management and recognition of small scale distinct fisheries.

Jobs

Present employment in native oyster fisheries is very limited. This is partially due to dwindling stocks, but also the fact that most native oyster areas are now in Grade B water quality, which requires oyster purification prior to consumption. As there are v few local purification plants, the shellfish are exported for purification elsewhere. Oyster festivals are helping some, but not all areas. Job potential would be raised substantially by promoting native oysters to tourism providing marketing back up and purification facilities until water quality is improved.

Enforcement

Oyster harvesting comes under the Fisheries Act sections handled by Inland Fisheries Ireland. However, many environmental protection legislation such as the Wildlife Act, and the Habitats Directive [proper title??] are enforced by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Public Information

There is public confusion about the flat oyster *Ostrea edulis* and the Gigas oyster *Crassostrea gigas*. There was agreement that it would be beneficial to provide more public information on Irish native biota including our oysters (flat and Saddle) and for tourism and culinary reasons.

Research

Just touched on for time reasons: Research into threats to oysters and how this can be better controlled including disease and disease vectors. There was support for a genetic analysis of native oyster populations to determine how they are related to each other and other European populations.

Finally participants were asked to comment on a prepared list of recommendations drafted by Coastwatchers in conjunction with traditional oyster fishermen in L Foyle and L Swilly.

The actions which were agreed in the workgroup and not rejected when presented in the plenary are now reprinted in Green, those in red and italics were not agreed and reasons are noted.

Recommendations prepared by Coastwatch with traditional oyster fishermen in L Foyle and L Swilly.

1. An all-Ireland approach to the protection, management and marketing of native oysters.
2. The Irish government to declare the European Oyster a priority species for protection and joining with NI on an all-Ireland species action plan. The plan to be prepared with cooperation of native oyster fishermen, completed and adopted as a matter of urgency.

3. *Ireland to follow the NI example and declare the Gigas oyster an IAS (invasive alien species) under EU Council Regs (EC) No 708/2007, (EC) No 535/2008 and (EC) No 506/2008.*

NOT PASSED AS NOT ENOUGH TIME TO EXPLORE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ACTION AND REGS.

4. *Both NI and RoI governments to prohibit the movement of shellfish into areas with native oysters as precautionary measure to avoid disease and IAS spread. Prohibition to be strictly enforced.*

ARGUMENT MADE THAT CONTROLS ARE ADEQUATE.

5. Both governments to legally protect native oyster beds and areas in which live native oysters are still found, by audit of the areas and inclusion in final SAC marine site list (Natura 2000 sites) and/or OSPAR marine protected areas (MPAs) by the end of 2011. This should be done with stakeholder consultation - especially wild oyster fishermen – to decide on site boundaries and site management plans. The largest known area not yet protected is in the border areas.
6. Both governments and Loughs Agency to set out grant aid priorities for oyster protection and bed

restoration. Measures may include native oyster stock enhancement, removal and opportunity for commercial exploitation of Gigas oysters, research into native oyster stocks and potential for reintroducing the native oyster into key old bed areas. Hatcheries which substitute import/export and promotion of the wild native oyster as high quality food product and a symbol for sustainable fisheries to be explored.

- 7. All Gigas oyster farmers to be required to within 1 month: (i) undertake a site audit and report on number of active culture bags and oysters, by type, origin and year class (ii) remove any old Gigas oysters which may have spilled onto the ground in order to remove the largest spat risks (iii) report Gigas oyster found settling on rocks or ground adjacent to their farms.*

THE TIME (1 month) WAS NOT AGREED. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT FOR SOME FARMS THIS IS ALREADY A LICENSE CONDITION. .SOME THOUGHT ONE SHOULD WAIT UNTIL THE CURRENT IMPASS ON LICENSE RENEWALS WAS SORTED AND THEN MAKE THE PROVISIONS PART OF THE RENEWAL PROCESS.

- 8. Stem the spread of Gigas oysters by tight controls on the use of Gigas oysters for aquaculture and applying Gigas eradication plans to try and clear the invested sites of the invasive Gigas oyster within 5 years. Gigas control can provide some substitute income for local fishermen.*

QUERY AS TO TIME SCALE AND WHAT IS MEANT BY TIGHT CONTROL.

- 9. Regional and national Government to revise the draft Water Framework Directive plans so that all shellfish waters are brought to good or high quality status by 2015 with no derogations.*

- 10. Governments and all agencies dealing with the coastal zone to support information, awareness raising and eco labelling initiatives for the native oyster and their habitats as icon for coastal environmental quality. If credible and handled transparently it will yield solid employment and economic return, as experience in other regions of the EU has shown.*

List of participants

Joe Breen, Northern Ireland Environment Agency (speaker)
Angela Byrne, Rush Community Council
Nessa Childers MEP (speaker)
Clare Cryan, UCD
John Daly, SFAG ISS
Trish Daly, BIM
Linda Daniels, Coastwatch
Roy Daniels, Coastwatch
Leo Doyle, Boyne Fishermen's Association
Karin Dubsy, Coastwatch (coorganiser, speaker)
Edward Fahy (workshop facilitator)
Wesley Flannery, NUI Galway
Laura Foley, TCD
Michael Gunn, Coastwatch Chair Morning
Michael Hackett citizen
David Healy, Friends of the Irish Environment
Veronica Heywood, BMAC
Brian Hosford, Rush Community Council
Theresa Hughes, TCD
Francis Jacobs, European Parliament (host)
Rebecca Jeffares, Booterstown Nature Reserve
Brian Jones, Brookfield Environmental Group
Caitlin Joyce, TCD
Camilla Keane, An Taisce (rapporteur)
Phil Kearney, mediator, Chair afternoon
Andy Kelly, Castletown Residence Group
Breda Kelly, Castletown Residence Group
Ian Lawler, BIM
Kevin Lynch, NUI Galway (speaker)
Bronwen Mare, Assistant MEP Nessa Childers
Alexia Massa-Gallucci, UCD
Sarah Mulhall, UCC
David Murphy, AquaTT
Michael O'Driscoll
Elizabeth O'Reilly
Daniel O'Sullivan, Fishery Manager
Michael O'Sullivan, Irish Wildlife Trust, UCD
Brendan Price, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (workshop facilitator)
Declan Quigley, SFPA
Mary Seaver, Biologist
Roslyn Shaw local community
Morris Sullivan, Economist
Ilaria Vielmini, Ziguele Association Italy (speaker)
John Wilde Crosbie Barrister
Prof Jim Wilson, TCD
Johnny Woodlock, Irish Seal sanctuary (rapporteur)
Dr Annetta Zintl, Coastwatch (rapporteur)

PRESENTATIONS IN ORDER OF DELIVERY