



AN t-ÚDARÁS UM
CHOSAINT
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES
PROTECTION
AUTHORITY

Press Release

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

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Fishing Master Convicted for Illegal Discarding of Sea-Fish

A Spanish fishing master of the French registered fishing vessel 'Punteareas Uno' was represented at Cork Circuit Criminal Court on the 25th November 2025, where his guilty plea was confirmed to charges for failing to retain catches of sea-fish subject to quotas onboard the vessel which is in contravention of the Landing Obligation rules. The Court convicted the fishing master of the offence and imposed a fine of €10,000 for the charge and ordered forfeiture of €35,000 from the value of the catch and gear onboard.

The charges arose from an inspection by officers attached to the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) patrol vessel 'Ocean Guardian' in the waters of the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone on the 15th of October 2025, which led to the detention of the vessel at Castletownbere port. The detention was coordinated by officers onboard the 'Ocean Guardian', Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and An Garda Síochána. The Court heard that during the course of an inspection onboard the vessel, officers witnessed crew members discarding fish species back into the sea via a discards belt. In giving its decision, the Court remarked that operators and masters must comply with the sea-fishing regulations.

Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson of the SFPA commented:

"I note the important decision of the Court, and the seriousness attached to the contravention of the Landing Obligation rules. The Landing Obligation rules are key to supporting the sustainability of stocks of quota species and future sea-fishing activity. Failure to comply with the Landing Obligation rules, by engaging in illegal discarding, undermines the sustainability of sea-fisheries. I commend the officers involved in this investigation and the cooperation between the EFCA Union Inspectors, Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers and An Garda Síochána."

Ends

Note to Editor

Landing Obligation

The Landing Obligation is the requirement to bring onboard, retain onboard, land and record species of sea-fish which are subject to catch limits (quotas). Such catches are counted against quota except where an exemption under law allows for a legal discard of certain catches.

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