



AN t-ÚDARÁS UM
CHOSAINT
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES
PROTECTION
AUTHORITY

Press Release

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Fishing Master Pleads Guilty to Landing Below Minimum Legal Size Brown Crab and Undersize Lobsters

A master of an Irish sea-fishing boat, 'Atlantic Chief', appeared before Midleton District Court on the 4th of December 2025, and confirmed guilty pleas to fisheries offences including storing four undersize brown crab and twenty-eight undersize lobsters. The Court ordered a charitable donation of €1,000 is made to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) in lieu of a conviction.

The Court heard evidence that during the course of an inspection at a retail stall adjacent to a Limerick city market, Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) discovered the undersized brown crab and lobsters which were seized and returned alive to the sea.

An SFPA spokesperson commented:

“Compliance with EU and national rules on shellfish minimum conservation reference sizes is key to ensuring the sustainability of these stocks for the seafood industry, fishing communities and ecosystems. Masters and vessel operators adopt necessary operational measures to ensure compliance with the minimum conservation reference rules and comply with their obligations in respect of such catches. The SFPA notes the seriousness attached by the Court to the case. 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