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CHOSAINT
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES
PROTECTION
AUTHORITY

Press Release

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

27th May 2025

Fishing master pleads guilty to fishing net mesh size offence

On the 21st of May 2025, Eamonn Moss, the Master of fishing vessel “Rony” was convicted and fined €9,000 at Cork Circuit Court for an offence of using fishing net mesh measuring below the legal mesh size in place to support the recovery of Hake stocks in an area of Irish waters.

The offence was detected during an at-sea inspection by officers of the Irish Naval Service* in February 2017. The Master was found to be using beam trawl nets with a mesh size of approximately 81-83mm in an area known as “the Hake Box”, in contravention of the 100 mm minimum mesh size requirement for that area.

The Court made a further order of forfeiture of €6,000 from the value of catch and gear onboard.

An SFPA spokesperson commented:

“The SFPA notes the seriousness attached by the Court to the non-compliance with the fishing gear requirements in this area, as reflected in the penalty imposed. Protecting hake stocks is vital to support their recovery and ensure the long-term sustainability of the fishery. The fishing gear requirements applicable to the area of Irish waters, and of the Celtic Sea, known as the Hake Box, play a key role in achieving this goal. Compliance with mesh size and gear requirements is, accordingly, key to ensuring the sustainability of fish stocks and future fishing activities for the fishing community. Masters of fishing vessels must ensure consistent compliance with mesh size requirements for gear used during fishing activities, particularly having regard to the potential damage of failing to do so. The SFPA commends the inspection by Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers involved in this investigation.”

ENDS

Note to Editor

* The SFPA has a Service Level Agreement with the Department of Defence for the provision of fishery protection services by the Naval Service and Air Corps.

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