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CHOSAINT
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES
PROTECTION
AUTHORITY

Press Release

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Joint Aerial Surveillance Operation Undertaken by the SFPA and EFCA within the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone

A joint aerial surveillance operation was undertaken by the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA) from the 28th July to the 14th August as part of the Western Waters Joint Deployment Plan (WW JDP). The EFCA chartered aircraft was based at Kerry International Airport and the SFPA had personnel present at the co-ordination centre in EFCA's premises in Vigo, Spain, for the three-week period.

The priority was to gather information on fishing activities within the Irish Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) with a particular focus on activity in and around vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME), where fishing with bottom contact gears between 400 and 800m is prohibited.

The national co-ordinators analysed live-stream footage from the flight and were in a position to task the aircraft to high-risk targets. A total of 11 flights were successfully completed with 40 surveillance inspections conducted.

The use of EFCA chartered surveillance aircraft bolsters Ireland's control capabilities within the Irish EEZ which at 450,00 km² is over six times that of the land mass of the Republic of Ireland.

Ends

Note to Editor

About VME

https://oceans-and-fisheries.ec.europa.eu/publications/map-vme-closures-and-overall-footprint-areas-400-800-m-depth_en

Further Information

About EFCA

The European Fisheries Control Agency is a European Union agency. The agency's mission is to promote the highest common standards for control, inspection and surveillance under the Common Fisheries Policy. The EFCA will function at the highest level of excellence and transparency with a view to developing the necessary confidence and cooperation of all parties involved and, in so doing, to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of its operations.

Joint deployment plans (JDPs) are the vehicle through which the EFCA organises the deployment of human and material resources of control and inspection pooled by Member States and EFCA. The deployment of pooled national means is coordinated by the EFCA in cooperation with Member State and frequently with the presence of national coordinators at EFCA premises.

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