



AN t-ÚDARÁS UM
CHOSAINT
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES
PROTECTION
AUTHORITY

Press Release

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

6th November 2025

SFPA Emphasises Seafood Safety, Trade Verification Role and Sea-Fisheries Control Activities in 2024 Annual Report

- **2,276 Fishing Vessel Inspections, 108 Casefiles opened.**
- **2,593 Food Safety Official Controls carried out: 56 Food Safety Incidents/Complaints investigated.**
- **Processing of 5,959 consignments of seafood, totalling 63,768 tonnes of produce from 61 Irish Export Businesses and 956 Catch Certificates issued for the export of 29,908 tonnes of Irish seafood produce.**
- **1,617 Shellfish Samples taken.**

The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), Ireland's competent authority tasked with protecting the sustainability of sea-fisheries in Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone and ensuring seafood safety for consumers as well as the verification of seafood trade launched its Annual Report for 2024, today 6th November 2025. In accordance with our mandate, the SFPA continued to provide regulatory oversight of our sea-fishing fleet and our seafood processing sector, underpinning the sustainability and safety of our internationally renowned seafood offering.

The operational demands on the SFPA continue to increase in line with regulatory changes and the trade requirements of the UK and other trading partners. From a fisheries control perspective, 2024 was a significant year with the continued implementation of the European Commission approved Sea-Fisheries Control Plan. The functioning of the Control Plan progressed satisfactorily over the course of the year. The SFPA has monitored the implications of the new European Union (EU) Fisheries Control Regulation and continue to advise industry of what the requirements entail as the new measures continue to take effect.

Protecting seafood safety is crucial, not only to the reputation of Ireland's seafood offering both at home and abroad, but ultimately for the health and well-being of consumers of Irish seafood products. In 2024, the SFPA promoted and oversaw compliance with relevant food safety legislation in 2,290 food businesses.

Overall, a total of 2,593 food safety controls were carried out. Of these official controls, 476 were categorised as inspections of approved establishments, 1,965 consisted of official control checks, such as checks prior to certifying a consignment of food being exported to a third country, temperature checks and labelling checks. During 2024, the SFPA dealt with a total of 56 food incidents, a decrease of 16% compared to 2023. Of this number of food incidents, 19 (34% of total) were associated with the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed (RASFF) - Ireland was the notifying country in five of these RASFFs. A food incident is any event where, based on the information available, there are concerns regarding the safety or quality of food requiring follow-up by the Competent Authorities in the interest of public health.

Seafood safety law enforcement measures in 2024 ranged from informal advisory measures to the service of Compliance Notices, as well as to the commencement of criminal prosecutions for serious non-compliances. In 2024, four separate criminal prosecutions were commenced against food business operators for breaches of the regulations on food safety including on food hygiene, traceability and food premises requirements. Twelve Compliance Notices were issued in 2024.

As Ireland's competent authority for seafood trade compliance, the SFPA undertakes a range of activities critical to enabling Ireland's seafood economy. The SFPA's Trade Compliance Unit, supported by our Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers (SFPOs) across the country, work to support seafood producers to enable export internationally and the functioning of seafood production supply chains. In 2024, the SFPA enabled the export of consignments of seafood totalling 29,908 tonnes to countries outside the EU including the UK through the provision of Export Health Certification. The withdrawal of the UK from the EU has led to increased demands on the SFPA. 2024 was the first year that export health certificates were required for consignments from Ireland destined for Great Britain. In 2024, exports to Great Britain totalled 4,849 tonnes exported in 1,369 consignments.

Protecting sea-fisheries sustainability and safeguarding against illegal fishing activity is one of the critical activities of the SFPA operating throughout the coast and at sea through our partnership with the Irish Naval Service and the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA). To this end, SFPOs undertook 2,276 inspections of fishing vessels. A total of 108 case files were opened, comprising of 84 sea-fisheries law enforcement cases and 24 food safety law enforcement cases. Twenty-four points cases for serious infringements of fisheries regulations were submitted to the Points Determination Panel in 2024. Increased inspection and enforcement provide an effective tool to protect against illegal fishing activity.

Commenting on the publication of the SFPA's 2024 Annual Report, Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson of the SFPA stated: "I am pleased to publish our Annual Report for 2024 which details the extensive work programme the SFPA undertook across the year in fulfilment of our commitment to our statutory remit. In a challenging climate for Ireland's sea-fisheries and seafood sector in 2024, the SFPA continued to provide regulatory oversight of our sea-fishing fleet and our seafood processing sector, underpinning the sustainability and safety of our internationally renowned seafood offering. The SFPA demonstrated its capacity as the effective, fair regulator and promoter of compliance with sea-fisheries and seafood safety law throughout the year. In line with our statement of strategy, the SFPA worked to enhance the SFPA's position as an effective regulator, an employer of choice, an active participant in Ireland's climate action journey and an important stakeholder in our global food producing ecosystem."

Ends

Note to Editor

The SFPA's Annual Report 2024 can be accessed on SFPA's website and by clicking the following link: [Annual Report 2024](#)

Photo Caption

Pictured at the launch of SFPA's Annual Report 2024 at SFPA's Head Office in Clonakilty are, from left to right: Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson, SFPA and Michael Finn, Authority Member, SFPA.

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