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CHOSAINT  
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES  
PROTECTION  
AUTHORITY

## **Press Release**

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

**26th June 2025**

### **Fishing Master Convicted for Illegal Discarding of Sea-Fish Catches**

Ludovic Guennec, the Master of the French registered fishing vessel, "ASTRID", was represented before Cork Circuit Criminal Court on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2025. His guilty plea to an offence of non-compliance with the Landing Obligation rules, specifically for failing to retain catches of quota-managed sea-fish onboard the "ASTRID", was entered. The Court convicted Mr. Guennec of the offence and imposed a fine of €12,500 for the charge. In addition, the Court ordered forfeiture of €30,000 from the value of the catch and gear onboard.

The charges arose from an inspection by officers, including an Irish officer, attached to the European Fisheries Control Agency's (EFCA's) patrol vessel "Ocean Guardian", operating in the waters of the Irish exclusive economic zone on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2025. The vessel was detained in an operation coordinated by officers onboard the "Ocean Guardian," Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and An Garda Síochána.

Evidence was given that during the inspection onboard the vessel, officers witnessed crew members discarding fish species back into the sea via a pipe attachment on the end of the sorting line. All fish species except Anglerfish and prawns, were observed being discarded by the crew overboard. The discarded species included those subject to catch quotas.

The Court heard that the Masters of fishing vessels are legally obliged to retain and record all quota species landed. These records are vital for calculating sustainable quota allocations, conserving fish stocks, and informing area closures where necessary, to prevent overfishing and avoid stock collapse. In giving its decision, the Court remarked that it was a necessity to know the quantities of fish being caught.

An SFPA spokesperson commented: "The SFPA notes the seriousness with which the Court treated this breach of the Landing Obligation rules. Compliance with these rules, including the mandatory retention and recording of catches, is fundamental to support the sustainability of fishing into the future for fishing communities. This case underscores the importance of the need for full compliance with the Landing Obligation rules by all vessel operators and by fishing Masters. A Fisheries Information Notice

outlining the rules of the Landing Obligation is available on the SFPA website. We strongly encourage all operators to review and adhere to this guidance.

Accurate data from fishing vessels, as required under national and EU legislation, is essential to assess the health of fish stocks and to inform science-based management decisions. We commend the officers involved in this investigation and the effective cooperation between the EFCA Union Inspectors, Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers of the SFPA and An Garda Síochána that led to this outcome.”

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 the subject of catch limits (quotas). Such catches are counted against quota except where an exemption under law allows for a legal discard of certain catches.

The FIN on the Landing Obligation can be accessed on the SFPA’s website and by clicking the following link:

[Landing Obligation Fisheries Information Notice](#)

### **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](http://www.sfpa.ie)