



AN t-ÚDARÁS UM
CHOSAINT
IASCAIGH MHARA

SEA-FISHERIES
PROTECTION
AUTHORITY

Press Release

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Fishing Master Pleads Guilty to Obstruction and Illegal Sea-Fishing Activity

The master of the Irish sea-fishing boat, "Mairead", pleaded guilty at Skibbereen District Court on the 25th of November, 2025 to charges of obstructing Sea-Fisheries Protection Officers (SFPOs) of the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and fishing without a sea-fishing licence, which occurred, and was detected, during an inshore patrol in September, 2024 off the coast of County Cork.

The Court heard evidence that during the at-sea inspection, the master discarded catches of Crab back into the sea before the catch was inspected by the officers. The Court also heard that the sea-fishing license expired in June 2024 and that the license was issued shortly after to the boat owner, and there was no fishing logbook onboard.

The Court imposed a fine of €450 in respect of the obstruction charge, and a fine of €250 in respect of the offence for fishing without a sea-fishing licence. The Court took the charge of failing to have a logbook into account.

In making its decision, the Court remarked that the obstruction was "very serious" and that operators "must cooperate with officers when they come onboard." The Court also remarked that the authorities must have knowledge of the fishing vessels operating around the coast.

Paschal Hayes, Executive Chairperson of the SFPA commented:

"The obstruction of officers conducting an inspection to ensure compliance with sea-fisheries regulations is a serious matter and the SFPA notes the seriousness with which the Court treated the case. Officers exercise their statutory powers to ensure compliance with regulations in place to protect the sustainability of fish and shellfish, and the fishing for such stocks by fishing communities. Sea-fishing licensing is key to ensuring the sustainable balance of fishing capacity and fishing opportunities. While there is a high level of compliance by commercial vessels with the requirement to hold a sea-fishing licence, it is important that there is consistent compliance across the industry. The SFPA commends the SFPOs for their inspection work."

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