

## Ireland rope grown mussel

# Surveillance Report

Conformity Assessment Body (CAB)	Global Trust Certification
Assessment team	Lead Assessor, Conor Donnelly Assessor, Sam Dignan
Fishery client	An Bord Iascaigh Mhara
Assessment Type	Second surveillance
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## 2 Glossary

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AFMD	Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division, DAFM
ALAB	Aquaculture Licences Appeals Board
AtoN	Aids to Navigation
BIM	An Bord Iascaigh Mhara
BIP	Border Inspection Post
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body – Certifier
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CIL	Commissioners of Irish Lights
CLAMS	Coordinated Local Aquaculture Management Systems
CoC	Chain of Custody
CR	Certification Requirements
DAFM	Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine
EC	European Commission
EHC	Export Health Certificate
eNGOs	Environmental Non-Government Organisations
ETP	Endangered, Threatened and Protected species
EU	European Union
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCR	Fishery Certification Requirements
IFA	Irish Farmers Association
IPAFFS	Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System
LLA	Local Lighthouse Authority
MED	Marine Engineering Division, DAFM
MI	Marine Institute
MSC	Marine Stewardship Council
MSO	Marine Survey Office
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
P1	MSC Principle 1
P2	MSC Principle 2
P3	MSC Principle 3
PCR	Public Certification Report
PISG	Performance Indicator Scoring Guideposts / Scoring Guideposts
PI	Performance Indicator
RBF	Risk Based Framework
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SFPA	Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority
SG	Scoring Guidepost
SI	Scoring Issue
SPA	Special Protection Area
SUMS	Special Unified Marking Schemes
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
UoA	Unit of Assessment
UoC	Unit of Certification
VME	Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems

### 3 Executive summary

#### 3.1 Summary of audit process

This report contains the findings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> surveillance audit of the 1<sup>st</sup> certification cycle of Ireland rope grown mussel. The audit was conducted by an audit team commissioned by Global Trust Certification Ltd. (the CAB, hereafter Global Trust) consisting of Conor Donnelly and Sam Dignan. A summary of the assessment team's CVs was previously provided in Appendix 1 to the Surveillance Announcement.

The surveillance audit process began in June 2021 and was conducted according to relevant requirements as outlined in MSC Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) v.2.2. The MSC Scheme Documents and Templates outlined in the table below were used during this surveillance audit.

**Table 1.** Fisheries program documents versions.

Document	Version number
MSC Fisheries Certification Process	Version 2.2
MSC Fisheries Standard	Version 2.0
MSC General Certification Requirements	Version 2.4.1
MSC Reporting Template	Version 2.1

The audit included a remote desktop review by the audit team of documentation relating to changes in management and science in the fishery and a remote 'site visit' which involved engagement with the client and relevant stakeholders through remote interviews. This surveillance audit was originally intended to involve an on-site site visit but as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic it was conducted as an off-site audit. Meetings were held remotely with stakeholders on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

Global Trust would like to thank all management and scientific agencies, industry bodies and stakeholders for their collaboration and for providing the information and data necessary to carry out this assessment.

#### 3.2 Summary of history of assessments

The 2<sup>nd</sup> surveillance audit focused on any changes to the fishery and its management since the first surveillance (completed October 2020) and full assessment (completed July 2019) and evaluated whether there is continued compliance with the MSC Principles and Criteria.

There were no conditions set during the initial assessment. One was identified during the first surveillance following the receipt of new monitoring information on the impact of rope grown mussel production on protected maërl (a habitat ETP species) in Roaringwater Bay SAC. This resulted in the re-scoring of PI 2.3.1 from 100 to 75 and the identification of the condition. Note that the revised scoring of PI 2.3.1 leads to a revised overall score for Principle 2 of 86.1 (from 88.9), so the fishery still passes Principle 2. Two recommendations were identified during the initial assessment, these remain open with progress being made. No new recommendations were identified during the first surveillance.

### 3.3 Summary of audit findings

Table 2 below present a summary of the audit’s findings as they relate to the various conditions, Performance Indicator (PI) and Principle (P) score changes.

**Table 2.** Summary of surveillance findings.

Condition number	Condition	Performance Indicator (PI)	Status	PI original score*	PI revised score
1	The client group must provide evidence that: 1. Known direct effects of the UoA are highly likely to not hinder recovery of ETP species, and; 2. Indirect effects have been considered and are thought to be highly likely to not create unacceptable impacts.	2.3.1	Open. Ahead of target	75	Not revised

\* Where ‘original’ refers to the Performance Indicator score entering this surveillance audit.

### 3.4 Updated certification status

Following this audit, Global Trust has determined that the fishery continues to meet applicable MSC requirements such that continued certification is appropriate; therefore, the certification status of the fishery as certified remains unchanged.

Updated certification status = **CERTIFIED**

## 4 Report details

### 4.1 Surveillance information

**Table 3.** Surveillance announcement.

1	Fishery name
	Ireland rope grown mussel
2	Unit(s) of Assessment (UoA)
	There is one Unit of Assessment (UoA).
	<b>Units of Assessment (UoA) 1 (of 1)</b>
Target species	Mussel stock complex: blue mussel ( <i>Mytilus edulis</i> ), Mediterranean mussel ( <i>M. galloprovincialis</i> ), foolish/Baltic mussel ( <i>M. trossulus</i> ) and hybrids.
Geographic area	<p>All fishing activity takes place within FAO Major Fishing Area 27 Northeast Atlantic (ICES Areas 6.a, 7.a, 7.b, 7.g, and 7.j) and may be split between licensed seed collection and on-growing locations.</p> <p><b>Seed location</b> – Coastal waters within the Republic of Ireland’s Territorial Seas (i.e. within the 12 nautical mile limit).</p> <p><b>Harvest locations</b> – Permitted harvest areas in identified bays within the Republic of Ireland’s coastal waters potentially including (note this represents a list of all the bays/estuaries where rope mussel culture is currently practiced or where an application for rope mussel culture has been made):</p> <p>Poulnaclough Bay; Adrigole Harbour; Ardgroom Harbour; Ballycotton Bay; Ballymacoda Bay; Bantry Bay; Cleanderry Harbour; Clonakilty Bay; Coulagh Bay; Dunbeacon Bay; Dunbeacon Harbour; Dunmanus Bay; Gouleenacoush Harbour; Kenmare Bay; Kenmare River; Kilmakiloge Harbour; Kinsale Harbour; Oysterhaven; River Ilen; Roaringwater Bay; Arranmore Island; Donegal Bay; Illancrone Island; Lough Swilly; McSwynes Bay; Mulroy Bay; Ardbear Bay; Ballinakill Harbour; Bertraghboy Bay; Casheen Bay; Cleggan Bay; Friar Island; Galway Bay; Killary Harbour; Kinvara Bay; Mannin Bay; Castlemaine Harbour; Coongar Harbour; Dingle Bay; Shannon Estuary; Smerwick Harbour; Bellacragher Bay; Clew Bay; Waterford Harbour; Ballinekker; North Bay; Rosslare; South Bay Wexford; Wexford Harbour.</p>
Stock	Mussel wild stock complex around the island of Ireland.
Fishing gear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seed mussel collection by suspended ropes and nets.</li> <li>▪ On-growing of mussel using suspended ropes (including floating long-line cultivation).</li> </ul>
Management system	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), in particular its Aquaculture and Foreshore Management Division and Marine Engineering Division; and DAFM’s associated agency the Marine Institute. Also, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA), Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) and the Marine Survey Office (MSO).
Client group and other eligible fishers	<p>Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM).</p> <p>All members of the rope-grown mussel industry, operating in the licensed harvest locations, are eligible to access the certificate. However, only those entities that have agreed BIM’s terms of membership of the client group, including to contribute financially to the MSC assessment process and to comply fully with the MSC Standard and Fisheries Certification Requirements, will be considered to be part of the client group for the purpose of Certification. The most up to date client group (updated when any changes occur) is available on the MSC webpage for this fishery.</p> <p>There are other eligible fishers. In this case these are any producers, operating in the licensed harvest locations, who are not on the most up to date client group list. The Client has previously prepared and published a statement of their understanding and willingness for reasonable certificate sharing arrangements.</p>

**Table 3.** Surveillance announcement.

3	Date certified	Date of expiry
	04/07/2019	03/01/2025
4	Surveillance level and type	
	Surveillance level 3, off-site surveillance audit.	
	The surveillance programme for this fishery has changed from that previously indicated in the PCR or a previous surveillance report. An updated surveillance programme is provided in <a href="#">7.3. Revised surveillance programme</a> .	
5	Surveillance number	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Surveillance	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Surveillance	X
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Surveillance	
	4 <sup>th</sup> Surveillance	
	Other (expedited etc)	
6	Proposed team leader	
	<p><b>Conor Donnelly – Lead Assessor with responsibility for Principle 3 and traceability</b></p> <p>Conor Donnelly, a member of Global Trust’s internal staff led the assessment team. Conor meets the Fishery Team Leader Qualification and Competency Criteria outlined in FCP Annex PC; he has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A degree in a relevant subject</li> <li>▪ 3+ years’ fisheries experience</li> <li>▪ Reviewed any updates to the MSC Fisheries Program Documents at least annually</li> <li>▪ Passed MSC’s fishery team leader training course within the last 5 years</li> <li>▪ Passed new versions of the compulsory online training modules where relevant</li> <li>▪ Has undertaken 2 MSC fishery assessment or surveillance site visits as a team member in the last 5 years</li> <li>▪ Experience in applying different types of interviewing and facilitation techniques</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of a common language spoken by clients and stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Two years’ fishery work experience in the country or in a relevant fishery in the last 15 years</li> </ul> <p>Conor was responsible for coordinating the Assessment Team, participating in the assessment and for the completion of the assessment in accordance with Certification procedures.</p> <p>In addition to leading the assessment team, Conor was the team’s expert on Principle 3; to that end, he has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3 years or more experience as a practicing fishery manager and/or fishery/policy analyst.</li> </ul> <p>He was also responsible for traceability assessment and accordingly has passed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The MSC’s Traceability training module within the last 5 years</li> <li>▪ New versions of the training when new traceability requirements are published prior to undertaking assessments against the new requirements</li> <li>▪ Reviewed any updates to the traceability requirements at least annually.</li> </ul> <p>Conor does not have any conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment. A summary of Conor’s CV was previously provided in Appendix 1 to the Surveillance Announcement. Conor was off-site during the audit.</p>	
7	Proposed team members <i>[remove if not applicable]</i>	
	<p><b>Sam Dignan – Assessor with responsibility for Principle 2 and Risk Based Framework (RBF)</b></p> <p>Sam meets the Fishery Team Member Qualification and Competency Criteria outlined in FCP Annex PC; he has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A degree in a relevant subject</li> <li>▪ 3 years’ fisheries experience</li> <li>▪ Reviewed any updates to the MSC Fisheries Program Documents at least annually</li> <li>▪ Passed MSC’s fishery team member training within the last 5 years</li> <li>▪ Passed new versions of the compulsory online training modules where relevant</li> </ul>	

**Table 3. Surveillance announcement.**

	<p>With respect to his additional duties under Principle 2, Sam has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 3 years' or more experience in research into, policy analysis for, or management of, fisheries impacts on aquatic ecosystems including the following topics: i) bycatch and ii) habitats.</li> </ul> <p>Sam has also passed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The MSC's RBF training course in the last 5 years</li> <li>▪ New versions of the training when new RBF requirements are published prior to undertaking assessments against the new requirements</li> <li>▪ Reviewed any updates to the RBF requirements at least annually</li> </ul> <p>And he has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knowledge of a common language spoken by clients and stakeholders</li> <li>▪ Two years' fishery work experience in the country or in a relevant fishery in the last 15 years</li> </ul> <p>Sam does not have any conflicts of interest in relation to the fishery under assessment. A summary of Sam's was previously provided in Appendix 1. Sam was be off-site during the audit.</p>
8	<b>Audit/review time and location</b>
	<p>The 'site visit' portion of this audit took place remotely on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021. As this is a remote site visit, Conor and Sam participated from their home offices.</p>
9	<b>Assessment and review activities</b>
	<p>The following was assessed/reviewed during this audit (Note this may not be an exhaustive list):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Changes to the fishery and its management.</li> <li>2. Progress against conditions of certification.</li> <li>3. Any developments or changes within the fishery that impact traceability and the ability to segregate MSC from non-MSC products.</li> <li>4. Any other significant changes in the fishery.</li> </ol>
10	<b>Stakeholder opportunities</b>
	<p>As part of this surveillance audit, the following stakeholder opportunities were available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stakeholders could submit written input using the 'MSC Template for Stakeholder Input into Fishery Assessments' which is available here: <a href="https://www.msc.org/what-you-can-do/engage-with-a-fishery-assessment">https://www.msc.org/what-you-can-do/engage-with-a-fishery-assessment</a>.</li> <li>▪ Stakeholders could also consult directly with the audit team during the period specified in the <a href="#">8. Audit/review time and location</a> above.</li> </ul> <p>Further information on Stakeholder input opportunities was provided in the Surveillance Announcement which is available on the MSC webpage for this fishery.</p>

## 4.2 Background

This section outlines relevant changes to the fishery since the last surveillance report. Where no changes have occurred in relevant areas, this is additionally noted.

### 4.2.1 Update on fishery's position in relation to MSC scope criteria

The fishery's position in relation to MSC scope criteria has not changed. Global Trust confirms that the fishery remains within scope for MSC fisheries.

#### 4.2.1.1 Update on fishery's position in relation to additional scope criteria for enhanced fisheries

The fishery under assessment represents an enhanced Catch and Grow (CAG) fishery whereby individuals are caught in the wild and on-grown to the desired size. The MSC specifies additional scope requirements for enhanced fisheries. The specific circumstances of the fisheries under assessment as they relate to these additional requirements has not changed.

### 4.2.2 Changes to Management systems and relevant regulations

Changes arising from Brexit and changes to traceability regulations are reviewed in section 4.2.7 below. There have been no other significant changes to management systems or regulations.

### 4.2.3 Changes to personnel involved in science, management or industry

The assessment team was advised during this audit of various personnel changes in entities managing the fishery under assessment (e.g. retirements etc.). None of the changes notified to the team were of such consequence to impact the fishery's conformity to MSC requirements so they are not included here.

### 4.2.4 Update on scientific base of information, including stock assessments

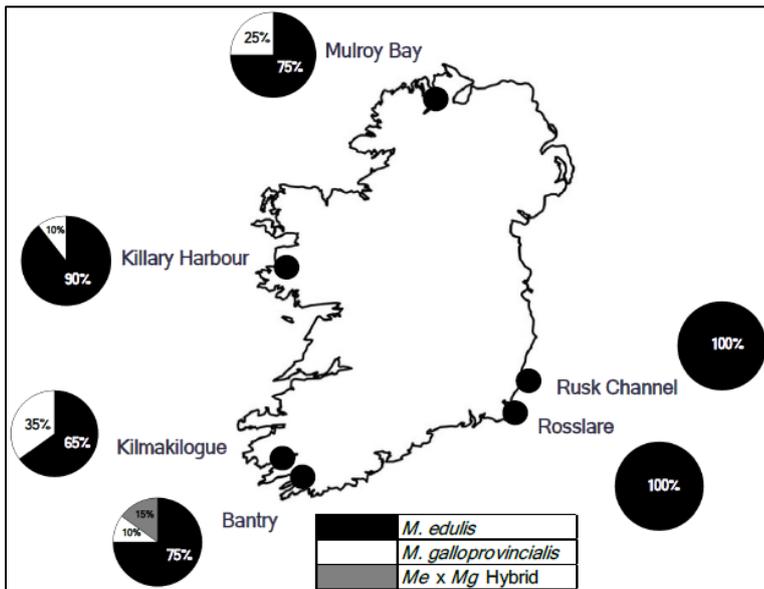
While various surveys of seed mussel beds and intertidal mussels do take place, there is no overarching assessment of the mussel stock complex around the island of Ireland; therefore, no updated stock status or advice is available. As the fishery does not involve translocation and there is no evidence that it negatively impacts the parent stock, Principle 1 is not scored.

There have been numerous additions to the scientific base of information related to Irish mussels in the last year, primarily in the area of genetics.

The Blufish project which was an InterReg Ireland-Wales project that included larval monitoring in the Irish Sea and larval dispersal modelling and an extensive (mostly presence/absence) survey of intertidal mussel populations in Irish Sea has now ceased.

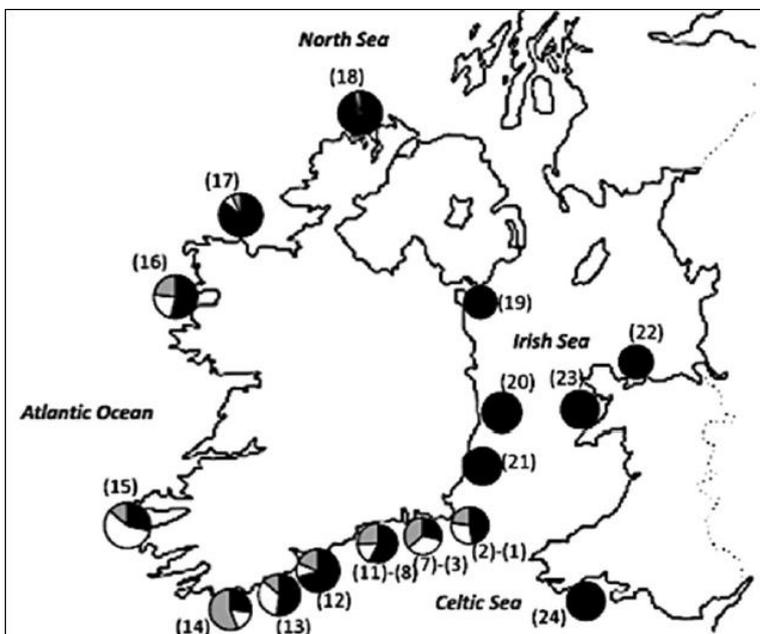
Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) conducted mussel seed genotyping in 2020 using mussel samples from rope mussel operators which were screened to establish allele frequency by area using the same genetic markers and methods as previous studies. The study's results largely matched with previous studies in that mussels from the Irish Sea showed exclusively *M. edulis* genotypes whereas both *M. edulis* and *M. galloprovincialis* and/or hybrids were detected in other locations outside the Irish Sea (Figure 1).

GMIT researchers also advised of efforts to apply novel high-resolution genetic markers to further assess levels of hybridisation in studied populations and of genetic screening of plankton samples to detect larvae from particular bivalve species. These studies aim to set a baseline for which species are present and when they are spawning and is more efficient and cost effective than the process used to date. The main focus of these efforts is on establishing baselines with a view to investigating the potential impacts of climate change.



**Figure 1.** Proportion of *Mytilus edulis* (black), *M. galloprovincialis* (white) and hybrids (grey) in the sampled areas (Source: GMIT 2020).

Another study, Lynch *et al.*, 2020, sampled predominantly wild mussels at 24 Irish intertidal sites and 3 Welsh sites to investigate the abundance and distribution of *Mytilus spp.*, and compared their results with historical observations and found *inter alia* that *M. edulis* was consistently the most abundant species, followed by hybrids and *M. galloprovincialis*. At certain sites, hybrids were detected while *M. galloprovincialis* was absent (Figure 2). Again, this study’s findings were consistent with previous findings that the mussel population in the Irish Sea is dominated by *M. edulis*.



**Figure 2.** Map of Ireland and Wales showing the wild *M. edulis* (black), *M. galloprovincialis* (white) and hybrid (grey) abundance and distribution at study sites (site number in parentheses) (Source: Lynch *et al.*, 2020<sup>1</sup>).

<sup>1</sup> Lynch, S. A., Coghlan, A., Morgan, E. and Culloty, S. C., 2020. Northward establishment of the Mediterranean mussel *Mytilus galloprovincialis* limited by changing climate. *Biological Invasions*, 22(9), pp.2725-2736: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342133062\\_Northward\\_establishment\\_of\\_the\\_mediterranean\\_mussel\\_Mytilus\\_galloprovincialis\\_limited\\_by\\_changing\\_climate](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342133062_Northward_establishment_of_the_mediterranean_mussel_Mytilus_galloprovincialis_limited_by_changing_climate)

#### 4.2.5 Habitats and Ecosystem impacts update

No changes of such consequence as to impact the fishery's conformity to MSC requirements were identified. Nevertheless, a number of issues of note are presented for information purposes.

A public consultation on an expert advisory group report entitled "Expanding Ireland's Marine Protected Area Network" is currently ongoing and due for closure on Friday 30 July 2021<sup>2</sup>. The consultation seeks the views of the Irish public on the process by which Ireland's network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) will be expanded. The Irish Government aims to designate 30% of Ireland's maritime area as MPAs by 2030. Current MPA coverage is 2.13%.

'Rope Mussel degradable stocking and ropes'<sup>3</sup> was a 2020 EMFF/BIM funded project which supported a trial of plant-based biopolymer meshes as potential replacements for biodegradable cotton meshes currently used in the rope mussel industry. The biopolymer mesh was found to work well with existing mussel farming machinery, and the biodegradation of the yarn was monitored with observations being sent back to manufacturers to alter the yarn composition. To date, with testing still ongoing, this feedback loop has resulted in five different yarn compositions. The report also found that the biopolymer mesh might be used to create biodegradable grow ropes which could benefit the bottom mussel industry were it to use rope grown seed.

#### 4.2.6 Enforcement update

The public certification report and last surveillance report describe the work DAFM Marine Engineering Division (MED) have been undertaking to develop post-license monitoring of the rope grown mussel industry. This includes a bay-wide survey repeated at 5 yearly intervals with a mid-point survey and risk-based surveillance inspections occurring within this period. Following the survey, MED produce a Shellfish Farm Inspection Report which is sent to the operator (aimed to be within 4-6 weeks post-survey). If the report requires action, there is a discussion with the operator about what is required (e.g. movement of lines within 12 months). MED then return to re-survey and check the action has been completed.

In the last year, Bantry and Roaringwater Bay have been surveyed and Killary and Castlemaine are being surveyed this year. The pandemic has had a significant impact on progress causing delays in undertaking surveys and compiling reports (no access to specialist software due to home-working). Also, there has been an issue with recruiting technicians (due to lack of applicants) and MED are looking at alternatives. As a result, the programme is about 1 year behind.

In Roaringwater Bay, where a condition has been identified relating to the potential impact of rope mussel cultivation on protected maerl habitat, the Shellfish Farm Inspection Reports have been issued to the operators and the next step is a meeting with the operators on 18 August 2021. This meeting is to discuss resolving issues identified in the reports i.e. where mussel lines have been laid out outside licensed areas which may affect maerl or pose an impediment to navigation. Rectification may include lifting and moving mussel lines, removing them entirely or, where appropriate, modifying lease areas to accommodate existing line configurations. See section 5.3.2 for further information on the condition and progress against it.

During the site visit, MED noted they are developing an aquaculture viewer, an on-line resource of information related to aquaculture sites which will be publicly available. Phase 1 is due to be ready by the end of year and will be followed by Phase 2 which will include *inter alia* licenses, monitoring reports etc. A certain amount of information is already available on the Marine Atlas.

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<sup>2</sup> Public Consultation on advisory group report "Expanding Ireland's Marine Protected Area Network": <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/45271-public-consultation-on-expert-advisory-group-report-entitled-expanding-irelands-marine-protected-area-network/>

<sup>3</sup> BIM Seafood Technical Services Knowledge Gateway Scheme, Work Programme Projects Final Report 2020: <https://bim.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/EMFF-Knowledge-Gateway-Scheme-KGS-Final-Report-2020.docx>

As noted in the initial assessment, a monitoring, control and enforcement system exists outside of the aquaculture licensing system and is implemented in the fishery through the management of navigation in the bays where rope grown mussel production occurs. The boundaries of licensed areas must be marked by Aids to Navigation (AtoN) for navigational safety purposes. AtoN can be established for individual licensed areas, or where a number of licensed areas occur in proximity to each other, through a Special Unified Marking Scheme (SUMS). The Local Lighthouse Authority (LLA) is responsible for this marking and it must receive statutory sanction from the Commissioners for Irish Lights (CIL). BIM acts as a LLA in several locations for the management of SUMS. The SUMS unify multiple sites under one marking scheme with the dual advantage of improving navigation in aquaculture areas and providing efficiencies for the shellfish producer. SUMS of relevance to rope mussel production are located in the main rope grown mussel production areas of Mulroy Bay, Clew Bay, Killary Harbour, Bantry Bay and Roaringwater Bay, with another planned for Kilmackilloge.

CIL is the General Lighthouse Authority for the whole of Ireland and AtoN cannot be established, altered or removed without their prior consent. CIL require quarterly returns on AtoN performance from LLAs and undertake periodic inspections of AtoN (by the AtoN officer). As part of this monitoring and inspection activity by the LLA / CIL, compliance with aquaculture license conditions on the spatial extent of production activity in relation to the licensed area is necessarily checked i.e. to ensure lines and anchors are within site. Where deviations from license conditions are detected, support is provided to the producers to bring themselves back into compliance. The primary driver for this is to address risks to navigation but it also ensures aquaculture license conditions relating to the spatial extent of licensed activity are being complied with. For this surveillance BIM have provided updated information, collated from area officers, of their AoN monitoring, control and surveillance activity since the initial assessment:

**Table 4.** Aids to Navigation surveillance activity (source: BIM)

Production area	Report	Source	Action Proposed for 2020/2021	Action 2020/2021
South West	Barrell recycling	BIM		Recycled approx. 500 barrels
Killary	Oct 2018 - 3 longlines out of area	SUMS Inspection – BIM and CIL	1 removed, remainder to be removed by end of April 2019	A second line has been removed
Killary	Mooring inspection for all SUMS buoys	BIM	Update Mooring system for all SUMS buoys- carried out in 2019 and maintenance work completed 2019	SUMS buoys cleared of fouling each year. SUMS inspections confirm lights working. This is carried out a few times a year
Killary	Barrell recycling	BIM	May and November 2019 – over 300 mussel barrels were shredded by BIM and sent for recycling.	No recycling in 2020. Mussel barrels are currently being collected and prepared for despatch to recycling – shredding machine. Work to be completed by end of Sept / Oct 2021

As noted in the initial assessment, the Ireland Operational Programme for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014-2020 requires that producers must be compliant with their license conditions and “in good standing with the Department” in order to access grants available to the industry. As can be seen in the updated information below, there is no evidence of those producers applying to the grant scheme being non-compliant:

**Table 5.** Sustainable aquaculture scheme (source: BIM)

Year	No. of Projects Registered	No. of Projects Approved	No. of Projects Referred /Deferred	No. of Projects Not Drawn Down due to Non-Compliance
2020	49	46	3	0
Year	No. of Rope Mussel projects Registered	No. of Rope Mussel projects Approved	No. of Rope Mussel Projects Referred /Deferred	No. of Rope Mussel Projects Not Drawn Down due to Non-Compliance
2020	8	8	0	0

#### 4.2.7 Client Group and Traceability Update

Aside from one producer added to the Client Group (see latest Client Group Member list available on MSC website<sup>4</sup>) there have been no significant changes in the Client Group since the first surveillance.

Also considered in this section are any developments or changes within the fishery with the potential to impact traceability or the ability to segregate mussel from the Units of Certification (UoCs) from mussel from outside the UoC (non-certified mussel).

There has been some new European Legislation which affects traceability. Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/691<sup>5</sup>, “Rules for establishments keeping aquaculture animals and transporters of aquatic animals” supplements and consolidates in one place the existing rules established within Regulation (EU) 2016/429 “on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (‘Animal Health Law’)”. Amongst other things, the Delegated Regulation requires registration and approval (subject to some exemptions) of aquaculture establishments and sets out requirements for record-keeping and traceability.

With regard to Brexit, the UK left the EU on Friday 31 January 2020 on the terms set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, including the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. The Withdrawal Agreement provided for a transition period up to 31 December 2020.

On 24 December, the EU and UK negotiating teams reached agreement in principle on a Trade and Cooperation Agreement, which came into effect from the end of the transition period. Since 1 January 2021, the UK has been outside the EU Single Market and Customs Union. Customs formalities and other regulatory requirements now apply to food imported into the EU from the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) and to food exported from the EU, including Ireland, to the UK (excluding Northern Ireland)<sup>6,7</sup>. These measures include, for example, food of animal origin coming into Ireland from the UK being subject to veterinary controls at one of Ireland’s Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) and food of animal origin exported to the UK must be pre-notified to the new UK IT system - Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS) and accompanied by an Export Health Certificate (EHC).

At present, these procedures have not been implemented due to an extension of a grace period for movement of chilled meats and other products between the UK and Northern Ireland until October 2021 requested by the UK and formally granted by the EU. The UK has further extended this grace period in recent days<sup>8</sup> so that, *inter alia*, the requirement for pre-notification of agri-food imports will be introduced on 1 January 2022 as opposed to 1 October 2021 and the new requirements for EHCs, which were due to be introduced on 1 October 2021, will now be introduced on 1 July 2022.

<sup>4</sup> <https://fisheries.msc.org/en/fisheries/ireland-rope-grown-mussel/@@certificates>

<sup>5</sup> Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/691: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32020R0691>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.fsai.ie/brexit/imports/animal.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/520f6-how-to-export-to-the-uk/#exporting-fish-and-fish-products>

<sup>8</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-09-14/debates/21091478000006/ControlsOnIncomingGoodsFromEU>

No new procedures apply to food moving between Ireland and Northern Ireland because of the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland<sup>9</sup>.

#### 4.2.8 Impact of Covid

The covid pandemic and lockdown have had a significant impact upon the fishery, with EU and UK markets shut and the home market reduced to small amounts to retail and wholesale while the hospitality sector remained closed resulting in low levels of sales of fresh mussel. In BIM's latest annual aquaculture report (BIM, 2020a) it was noted that the over-riding concerns are: loss of product positioning, product price, loss of stock condition, backing up of stock, destruction of stock and damage to supporting structures and the inability to replace these, even if a market with a workable price remained to take the finished product.

The report also notes the impact on the health of producers and others working in the sector arising from stress effects on seeing the rapid destruction of slowly built up businesses, the difficulties of maintaining social distancing on the larger units and social isolation on the smaller ones.

The situation affects all segments of the sector but to varying extents. It was noted that some shellfish producers, due to specific market demand, had sold the greater part of their market-ready stock before the lock down and the bottom mussel segment in particular are usually in this position by the second fiscal quarter.

Following market re-opening, it is expected the damage inflicted may result in businesses requiring a year before returning to normal day to day running or longer to recover product positioning – especially if current stocks are lost beyond saleability.

Government assistance available to producers includes the private sector 12-week Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS) whereby 70% of wages are covered by government and the balance by the employer (85% for salaries under €24,400 annually). BIM and Bord Bia have also been looking at alternative routes to market and the Irish Farmers Association (IFA) Aquaculture lobbied for grant of working capital and financial compensation to aquaculture farmers and processors for the temporary suspension and the reduction of production and sales, or for the additional storage costs, occurred between 1 February and 31 December 2020, as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak. In October 2020, Minister Charlie McConalogue announced a Covid-19 financial support scheme for rope mussel and oyster farmers<sup>10</sup>. The COVID-19 Aquaculture Support Scheme was established under Union Priority 2 (Sustainable Development of Aquaculture) of Ireland's Operational Programme under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014 – 2020, co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Commission<sup>11</sup>. Applications were invited in November 2020 with payments made within 2020.

#### 4.2.9 MSC Covid Derogations 1 and 6

Brief summaries of the MSC's (Covid) Derogations 1 and 6 are included here. Derogations 2 – 4 were related either to Chain of Custody or remote auditing and are not so relevant as to warrant inclusion here.

##### **Derogation 1: Covid-19 pandemic (superseded)**<sup>12</sup>

This derogation applied an automatic six-month certificate extension to all fishery certificates as well as any associated timelines (e.g. condition milestones and deadlines). The automatic 6-month certificate extension was applied to this fishery in June 2020 extending the certificate expiry from 03 July 2024 to 03 January 2025.

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<sup>9</sup> [https://www.fsai.ie/food\\_businesses/brexit.html](https://www.fsai.ie/food_businesses/brexit.html)

<sup>10</sup> Announcement regarding financial support for rope grown mussel and oyster: <https://www.ifa.ie/farm-sectors/announcement-by-minister-mcconalogue-of-a-covid-19-aquaculture-support-scheme-welcome/>

<sup>11</sup> COVID-19 Aquaculture Support Scheme: <https://bim.ie/about/european-maritime-and-fisheries-fund/>

<sup>12</sup> MSC Derogation 1: <https://mscportal.force.com/interpret/s/article/Covid-19-pandemic-derogation-March-2020>

**Derogation 6: Covid-19 Fishery Conditions Extension**<sup>13</sup>

This derogation became effective on 28 March 2021 and applies to any fishery certified before 28 March 2021 (which this fishery was) with the objective of extending existing deadlines on eligible conditions by 12 months, and providing a reprieve to fishery certificate holders that have the potential to face exceptional difficulties in making progress on conditions as a result of the impacts of Covid-19 on fisheries management systems. 'Eligible' conditions in this case are conditions raised against a specified list of Performance Indicators (PIs) as outlined in the derogation and CABs can only apply the derogation to conditions set against those PIs. For certified fisheries such as this, CAB are required to apply the derogation at the publication of the next surveillance audit report after 28 March 2021. As the only condition relevant to this fishery does not relate to an 'eligible' PI, the derogation has not been applied as part of this assessment.

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<sup>13</sup> MSC Derogation 6: <https://mscportal.force.com/interpret/s/article/Derogation-6-Covid-19-Fishery-Conditions-Extension>

### 4.3 Version details

The versions of the MSC fisheries program documents used for this assessment are outlined in the table below.

**Table 6.** MSC Scheme Documents and Report Templates used during this assessment.

Document	Version Number
MSC Fisheries Certification Process (FCP) (and Guidance)	2.2
MSC Fisheries Standard (and Guidance)	2.0
MSC General Certification Requirements (GCR)	2.4.1
MSC Reporting Template	2.1

## 5 Results

### 5.1 Surveillance results overview

#### 5.1.1 Summary of conditions

The table below summarises the sole condition applicable to this fishery; for further details see [5.3 Conditions](#).

**Table 7.** Summary of conditions.

Condition number	Condition	Performance Indicator (PI)	Status	PI original score	PI revised score
1	The client group must provide evidence that: 3. Known direct effects of the UoA are highly likely to not hinder recovery of ETP species, and; 4. Indirect effects have been considered and are thought to be highly likely to not create unacceptable impacts.	2.3.1	Open, Ahead of target	75	Not revised

#### 5.1.2 Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and catch data

The fishery is not managed with quotas or Total Allowable Catches (TACs). However, the Assessment Team are required to include a completed TAC and catch data table using the table below and where relevant a separate table for each species or gear, if possible.

In this instance, the table below presents the rope mussel production from the Client Group which is intended to include the entire rope grown mussel industry in the Republic of Ireland. As such UoC “green weight catch” is analogous to rope mussel production in the Republic of Ireland which in 2019 was 10,214 tonnes, an increase of 11.1% in volume from 2018 when it was 9,192 tonnes (BIM, 2020; BIM, 2019).

**Table 8.** Total Allowable Catch (TAC) and catch data (sources: BIM, 2020 and BIM, 2019).

	Year	n/a	Amount	n/a
TAC	Year	n/a	Amount	n/a
UoA share of TAC	Year	n/a	Amount	n/a
UoA share of total TAC	Year	n/a	Amount	n/a
Total green weight catch by UoC	Year (most recent)	2019	Amount	10,214 t
Total green weight catch by UoC	Year (second most recent)	2018	Amount	9,192 t

#### 5.1.3 Recommendations

Unlike Conditions, Recommendations are non-binding and do not require specific actions on the part of the fishery. Nevertheless, MSC certificate holders are encouraged to act upon Recommendations in the spirit of MSC certification.

During this assessment, the assessment team has not seen fit to add any additional specific recommendations to the client or notes for future assessments.

Progress against previously raised Recommendations is presented in [5.5. Progress against Recommendations](#).

## 5.2 Re-scoring Performance Indicators

Where the information base has changed, CABs are required to re-score relevant Performance Indicators and include in surveillance reports full scoring tables for any re-scored Performance Indicators.

No Performance Indicators were re-scored during this assessment as the information base had not changed sufficiently to warrant doing so.

## 5.3 Conditions

### 5.3.1 Closed Conditions

No conditions were closed during this surveillance audit.

### 5.3.2 Progress against conditions

Included in this section is a table detailing progress against milestones for the sole pre-existing condition reviewed during this surveillance audit which remains open following this audit. Insofar as is possible, reporting uses the same narrative or metric form as the original condition.

Table 9. Condition 1.	
Performance Indicator	2.3.1
Score	75
Justification	<p>This condition is relevant to scoring issues b and c and scoring element 5 Plants.</p> <p>Between the initial assessment of this fishery and the first surveillance audit, new information became available related to the direct (Slb) and indirect (Sic) impacts of rope mussel aquaculture on one of the ETP species identified as being relevant to this fishery (maërl) (Sally <i>et al.</i>, 2020). This new information results from monitoring of Habitats Directive Annex 1 marine habitats and species in Ireland by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS).</p> <p>Relevant to Slb (direct effects), Sally <i>et al.</i>, 2020 found negative direct impacts on the maërl community in Roaringwater Bay resulting from rope mussel activity occurring outside of licenced areas, where those licenced areas were delineated to avoid direct impacts on known maërl habitats.</p> <p>Relevant to Sic (indirect effects), Sally <i>et al.</i>, 2020 found negative indirect impacts on the maërl community in Roaringwater Bay resulting from rope mussel activity occurring outside of licenced areas. These indirect impacts included pseudofaeces deposition and extensive algal cover of and/or the presence of the opportunistic ascidian <i>Ascidiella aspersa</i> on abundance on maërl beds in the immediate vicinity of mussel lines.</p> <p>In each case, the report does not describe the precise extent of maërl directly or indirectly impacted in the context of the extent of maërl within Roaringwater Bay or nationally. At a national level maërl, as an EU Habitats Directive-listed species, has been assessed recently as in 'unfavourable-bad' status with a declining trend (NPWS, 2019a), a downgrading from its last assessment published in the 2013 Article 17 report but Roaringwater Bay is only area where impacts of rope mussel on maërl are noted.</p>
Condition	<p>The client group must provide evidence that;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. known direct effects of the UoA are highly likely to not hinder recovery of ETP species, and;</li> <li>2. indirect effects have been considered and are thought to be highly likely to not create unacceptable impacts.</li> </ol>
Condition start	Surveillance 1, 2020
Condition deadline	The deadline for this condition is the expiry date of the current certificate (03 January 2025).
Milestones	According to MSC FCP v2.1 §7.18.1.3, CABs shall draft conditions to result in improved performance to at least the 80 level within a period set by the CAB but no longer than the term of the certification unless there are exceptional circumstances such that and the CAB determines that achieving a performance level of 80 may take longer than the period of certification (MSC FCP v2.1; §7.18.1.5). In this case the assessment team determined that the exceptional circumstances provision did not apply such that the client is required to close this condition within the term of the certification.

**Table 9.** Condition 1.

	<p>The condition milestones are subject to a 6-month extension in accordance with MSC Covid-19 Derogation 1.</p> <p>As PI 2.3.1 is not an ‘eligible’ condition under MSC Derogation 6, the deadlines and associated milestones for this condition have not been impacted by the additional 12-month extension allowed for ‘eligible’ conditions under that Derogation.</p> <p><b>Year 1 (progress to be examined at Surveillance 2):</b> The Client group shall provide evidence of a plan to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Known direct effects of the UoA are highly likely to not hinder recovery of ETP species, and;</li> <li>2. Indirect effects have been considered and are thought to be highly likely to not create unacceptable impacts.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Expected score: 75</b></p> <p><b>Year 2 (progress to be examined at Surveillance 3):</b> The Client group shall provide evidence of the implementation of the plan to ensure that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Known direct effects of the UoA are highly likely to not hinder recovery of ETP species, and;</li> <li>2. Indirect effects have been considered and are thought to be highly likely to not create unacceptable impacts.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Expected score: 75</b></p> <p><b>Year 3 (progress to be examined at Surveillance 4):</b> The Client group shall provide evidence that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Known direct effects of the UoA are highly likely to not hinder recovery of ETP species, and;</li> <li>2. Indirect effects have been considered and are thought to be highly likely to not create unacceptable impacts.</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Expected score: 80 (Condition closed)</b></p>		
<p>Progress on Condition (Year 1)</p>	<p>The progress made by the fishery client to address this condition is detailed here along with any observations from the assessment team. Progress summaries from previous surveillance audits are also included.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="360 1227 1495 2103"> <tr> <td data-bbox="360 1227 571 2103"> <p>Year 1</p> </td> <td data-bbox="571 1227 1495 2103"> <p>Condition raised at surveillance 1, 2020.</p> <p>During a call on 20 July 2021, personnel from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine’s (DAFM) Marine Engineering Division (MED) presented the results of a survey of rope mussel sites in Roaringwater Bay conducted in 2020. The results consisted of a GIS database depicting the locations of all mussel lines within the Bay, over which polygons depicting licenced areas and known maërl habitats were overlaid.</p> <p>MED and BIM outlined that the next step is management agencies to liaise with the owners of mussel lines laid outside of licenced areas (including those overlapping with maërl habitats), or lines laid in a haphazard fashion which could pose an impediment to navigation in order to rectify each situation.</p> <p>Rectification may include lifting and moving mussel lines, removing them entirely or, where appropriate, modifying lease areas to accommodate existing line configurations. The results of any rectification activities will be assessed at the next surveillance audit.</p> <p>MED has also approached other State agencies such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Marine Institute to enquire whether any updated information on the distribution of maërl in Roaringwater Bay is available.</p> <p>As of this surveillance audit, the client group has shown evidence of a plan to ensure that known direct effects of mussel lines in Roaringwater Bay are highly likely to not hinder recovery of maërl, and that indirect effects have been considered and are thought to be highly likely to not create unacceptable impacts. In addition, the initial</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Year 1</p>	<p>Condition raised at surveillance 1, 2020.</p> <p>During a call on 20 July 2021, personnel from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine’s (DAFM) Marine Engineering Division (MED) presented the results of a survey of rope mussel sites in Roaringwater Bay conducted in 2020. The results consisted of a GIS database depicting the locations of all mussel lines within the Bay, over which polygons depicting licenced areas and known maërl habitats were overlaid.</p> <p>MED and BIM outlined that the next step is management agencies to liaise with the owners of mussel lines laid outside of licenced areas (including those overlapping with maërl habitats), or lines laid in a haphazard fashion which could pose an impediment to navigation in order to rectify each situation.</p> <p>Rectification may include lifting and moving mussel lines, removing them entirely or, where appropriate, modifying lease areas to accommodate existing line configurations. The results of any rectification activities will be assessed at the next surveillance audit.</p> <p>MED has also approached other State agencies such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Marine Institute to enquire whether any updated information on the distribution of maërl in Roaringwater Bay is available.</p> <p>As of this surveillance audit, the client group has shown evidence of a plan to ensure that known direct effects of mussel lines in Roaringwater Bay are highly likely to not hinder recovery of maërl, and that indirect effects have been considered and are thought to be highly likely to not create unacceptable impacts. In addition, the initial</p>
<p>Year 1</p>	<p>Condition raised at surveillance 1, 2020.</p> <p>During a call on 20 July 2021, personnel from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine’s (DAFM) Marine Engineering Division (MED) presented the results of a survey of rope mussel sites in Roaringwater Bay conducted in 2020. The results consisted of a GIS database depicting the locations of all mussel lines within the Bay, over which polygons depicting licenced areas and known maërl habitats were overlaid.</p> <p>MED and BIM outlined that the next step is management agencies to liaise with the owners of mussel lines laid outside of licenced areas (including those overlapping with maërl habitats), or lines laid in a haphazard fashion which could pose an impediment to navigation in order to rectify each situation.</p> <p>Rectification may include lifting and moving mussel lines, removing them entirely or, where appropriate, modifying lease areas to accommodate existing line configurations. The results of any rectification activities will be assessed at the next surveillance audit.</p> <p>MED has also approached other State agencies such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and the Marine Institute to enquire whether any updated information on the distribution of maërl in Roaringwater Bay is available.</p> <p>As of this surveillance audit, the client group has shown evidence of a plan to ensure that known direct effects of mussel lines in Roaringwater Bay are highly likely to not hinder recovery of maërl, and that indirect effects have been considered and are thought to be highly likely to not create unacceptable impacts. In addition, the initial</p>		

**Table 9.** Condition 1.

		<p>stages of that plan (i.e. establishing the current locations of all mussel lines) have already been implemented. As implementation of the plan is not required until Year 2, the fact that implementation is already well progressed is sufficient to determine progress on this condition to be 'ahead of target'.</p> <p>While progress is 'ahead of target', the performance indicator continues to score &lt;80 such that the condition remains open.</p>
	Year 2	
	Year 3	
	Year 4	
Progress status	<p>As the relevant PI continues to score &lt;80, this condition remains open. As of this surveillance audit, progress is adjudged to be 'on target'.</p> <p>Overall condition status = Open, on target</p>	
Remedial action	<p>Remedial action, including revised milestones is not required.</p>	
Additional information	<p>No additional information is provided.</p>	

### 5.3.3 New conditions

No new conditions were raised during this assessment.

### 5.4 Client Action Plan

Where conditions or milestones have been amended (or added) during a surveillance audit, the fishery client is required to submit correspondingly updated Client Action Plans for those conditions. In the case of this surveillance, no new conditions were raised, and the sole open condition was not modified such that no new or revised client action plans were required.

### 5.5 Progress against Recommendations

The MSC process allows CABs, if desired, to review progress on non-binding Recommendations raised during previous assessments. The assessment team has done so here and, in doing so, has generally followed the process for reporting progress against conditions including using a modified version of the associated table.

There are two recommendations currently in place in this fishery. Progress against these recommendations are presented in Table 10 and Table 11 below. The tables used are a modified version of the table that assessment teams are required to use at surveillance audits when evaluating a fishery's progress against conditions.

**Table 10.** Recommendation 1 (of 2).

Performance Indicator(s)	3.2.3	
Recommendation	<p>The Assessment Team recommends a comprehensive monitoring, control and surveillance (MCS) mechanism is implemented in the fishery which can demonstrate a consistent ability to enforce relevant management measures, strategies and/or rules.</p>	
Progress on Recommendation	Year 1	<p>MED has been progressing the development of a more structured approach to monitoring the rope grown industry in a similar vein to that which applies to the finfish industry. Consultations have been undertaken with AFMD, BIM, SPPA and IFA. The programme will involve site survey and a checklist, based on that developed for finfish, has been developed for use as part of the monitoring. Information gathered is fed into a standard report and the intention is that this report will be made available on-line. The expectation is that the first reports will be ready to be published on-line by the end of 2020. The monitoring programme involves an initial bay-wide pre-inspection which is repeated at 5 yearly intervals with a mid-point survey and risk-based surveillance inspections occurring within this period. At time of the remote 'site visit', surveys on rope grown mussel had been undertaken in Inner Bantry Bay and were about to be undertaken for Roaringwater Bay (and will include checks on position of lines relative to licensed areas and maërl habitat and buffer zones). There have been delays in the planned programme of works caused by COVID.</p>

**Table 10.** Recommendation 1 (of 2).

		Progress is being made in developing a programme of post-license monitoring for the rope grown mussel industry, including consultations by MED with AFMD, SFPA, BIM, IFA and the development of the checklist and reporting tools required to implement it. Initial bay-wide inspections have been piloted on a number of bays including Inner Bantry and Roaringwater Bay.
	Year 2	<p>Bantry and Roaringwater Bay have been surveyed and Killary and Castlemaine are being surveyed this year.</p> <p>The pandemic has had a significant impact on progress causing delays in undertaking surveys and compiling reports (no access to specialist software due to home-working). Also, there has been an issue with recruiting technicians (due to lack of applicants) and MED are looking at alternatives. As a result, the programme is about 1 year behind.</p>
Progress status		Remains in place

**Table 11.** Recommendation 2 (of 2).

Performance Indicator(s)		3.1.2, 3.2.2
Recommendation		The Assessment Team recommends the publication of the implementation plan for the Independent Aquaculture Licensing Review. The publication of this implementation plan could provide evidence to support achievement of SG100 for a number of the Scoring Issues under Principle 3.
Progress on Recommendation	Year 1	<p>Implementation of the findings of the Aquaculture Licensing Review Group have been included as an action in the Programme for Government of the new government. An interim implementation plan has been produced but not yet signed off by the Minister.</p> <p>A commitment to implement the recommendations of the Aquaculture Licensing Review Group has been made publicly in the Programme for Government. An interim implementation plan has been developed and is awaiting sign off.</p>
	Year 2	Information provided by stakeholders during the remote site visit was that the Implementation Plan is not published as yet but is currently going through revisions and is expected to be signed off in the near future. It was noted that Minister McConalogue has committed to implementing the recommendations of the Review.
Progress status		Remains in place

## 6 References

BIM 2020a. BIM National Seafood Survey Aquaculture Report 2020.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344188564\\_BIM\\_National\\_Seafood\\_Survey\\_Aquaculture\\_Report\\_2020](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344188564_BIM_National_Seafood_Survey_Aquaculture_Report_2020)

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Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, 2021. Public Consultation on advisory group report

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[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342133062\\_Northward\\_establishment\\_of\\_the\\_mediterranean\\_mussel\\_Mytilus\\_galloprovincialis\\_limited\\_by\\_changing\\_climate](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342133062_Northward_establishment_of_the_mediterranean_mussel_Mytilus_galloprovincialis_limited_by_changing_climate)

### 6.1 Relevant MSC Interpretations

The MSC requires that the use in an assessment report of an interpretation from the interpretation log must be properly referenced in a separate Appendix of the report with the date, title and web link of the interpretation being provided.

Relevant Interpretation 1	
<b>Title:</b>	What are the MSC requirements on harmonisation? (multiple questions) (FCR v2.0 - Annex PB)
<b>Date:</b>	30/08/2018
<b>Weblink:</b>	<a href="https://mscportal.force.com/interpret/s/article/What-are-the-MSC-requirements-on-harmonisation-multiple-questions-1527586957701">https://mscportal.force.com/interpret/s/article/What-are-the-MSC-requirements-on-harmonisation-multiple-questions-1527586957701</a>
<b>Question:</b>	<b>8.Harmonisation of assessment trees.</b> The requirements and guidance on tree use are contradictory. When should trees be harmonised?
<b>Answer:</b>	<p>MSC notes the lack of clarity in FCR Section PB2 and the related guidance GPB2. CABs are advised that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PB2.1 applies to all fisheries using default trees, including the vast majority of fisheries in the MSC programme. Fisheries are expected to transition to new trees (e.g. move from v1.3 to v2.0) as normal following the FCR implementation timelines. Any differences between such default trees may lead to non-harmonised outcomes and scoring (as stated in the guidance GPB3). Harmonisation should, however, still be applied where trees are materially unchanged. CABs should make reference to MSC’s analysis of which changes are material and which not, as provided on the release of FCR v2.0.</li> <li>• Sections PB2.2 – 2.4 applies to those fisheries that are not using the standardised default trees (such as the special trees used for enhanced bivalves and salmon prior to the release of the default versions for these species groups). Where a special tree is used in a previous overlapping fishery, it may also be appropriate for such tree to be adopted in the new fishery. However, developments such as the release of FCR v2.0 should also be considered at these times to ensure that such fisheries do not get ‘stuck’ with very old trees. When a new default tree is released for the species group, these should also be adopted instead of any old pre-default version. Special</li> </ul>

consideration will be needed by CABs in these rare cases, and variation requests should be submitted as per PB2.3.

## 7 Appendices

### 7.1 Evaluation processes and techniques

#### 7.1.1 Site visits

This surveillance audit was originally intended to involve an on-site site visit but as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic it was announced as an off-site audit using the MSC Covid-19 pandemic derogation<sup>14</sup>. Meetings were held remotely with stakeholders in the week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The remote 'site-visit' was undertaken as a joint audit with the Ireland and Northern Ireland bottom grown mussel fisheries for the sake of efficiency as the certificates share many of the same stakeholders.

The objectives of the consultation meetings were:

- Progress against the conditions
- to collect information of any change in the fishery management system or regulations.
- to collect information on any changes to personnel in science, management or industry and evaluate their impact on the management of the fishery.
- to collect information on any changes to the scientific base of information.
- to evaluate any progress against the recommendations identified during the initial assessment.
- to evaluate any change in the client group or Chain of Custody

The consultation meetings were designed to be inclusive of all organizations and representatives of the fishery. A description of the meetings held and stakeholders involved are recorded in the next section.

#### 7.1.2 Stakeholder participation

The announcement for this second surveillance was made on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The announcement included details of the dates and times of the off-site audit, what will be assessed/reviewed during the audit and details of the auditors. Stakeholders were also contacted directly by email.

The table below details the meetings held remotely with stakeholders during the surveillance audit. As previously noted, the remote audit was a joint audit of the three mussel certificates on the island of Ireland so the meeting notes below reflect that scope (i.e. they are not purely related to rope grown mussel).

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<sup>14</sup><https://www.msc.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/for-business/program-documents/chain-of-custody-supporting-documents/msc-derogation-3-covid-19-fishery-and-chain-of-custody-remote-auditing.pdf>

**Table 12.** Stakeholder meetings carried out during the off-site audit undertaken in July 2021.

Name of Organisation	Present at Meetings	Position	Location	Venue	Date/Time	Purpose
Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)	Vicky Lyons	BIM, Aquaculture Shellfish Quality & Food Safety Specialist	Off-site	Off-site	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2021; 11:00-13:00 UTC	<p><b>Client opening meeting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes to fishery and its management</li> <li>• Performance in relation to conditions and recommendations</li> <li>• Any developments / changes in fishery that affect traceability.</li> <li>• Any other significant changes.</li> <li>• Updated catch statistics.</li> </ul> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed timing of audit following feedback from one of the producers that this is a busy time of year.</li> <li>• Discussed progress in addressing condition on PI 1.1.4. This covered monitoring undertaken so far involving relaying experiments looking at allele frequencies. Work being undertaken this year involves relaying rope grown seed in Castlemaine Harbour to investigate speciation and survival over time. Hypothesis that <i>M. gallo</i>. is unable to survive in Irish Sea as limited by temperature.</li> <li>• Discussed seed survey and new survey vessel with significantly increased survey coverage.</li> <li>• Implications of Brexit. 12<sup>th</sup> July, mechanism for reciprocal access re-established for named vessels including BGM vessels registered in Ireland and Northern Ireland.</li> <li>• Aquaculture Initiative EEIG being formally wound up. Both bottom grown mussel certificates will be run by BIM for the time-being. Longer-term still be decided.</li> <li>• Discussed progress on condition on PI 2.3.1. Site survey of Roaringwater Bay undertaken with mapping produced, identifying areas where lines outside licensed areas and overlap with maerl habitat. Multi-agency approach involving MED working with BIM regional officer and NPWS.</li> <li>• Update on Recommendations:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wexford AA. Licensing still delayed, complex site.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Joanne Gaffney	BIM, Aquaculture Technical Manager				
	Gary McCoy	BIM, Shellfish Productivity Optimisation Officer				

**Table 12.** Stakeholder meetings carried out during the off-site audit undertaken in July 2021.

	Conor Donnelly	GTC lead assessor				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ [Also discussed pre- and post-fishery survey of seed beds. Use of side scan sonar. To be undertaken for first time this year.</li> <li>○ Also, Offshore windfarm cable routes crossing shellfish beds. Working group being established involving windfarm and fisheries sectors including aquaculture. Currently outside Marine Planning framework, Dept. of Housing working on this at present]</li> <li>○ Post-license monitoring. To discuss with MED.</li> <li>○ Implementation of the findings of the Aquaculture Licensing Review. To discuss with AFMD.</li> <li>● Changes to fishery. Mentioned Brexit access issue but now resolved as discussed earlier. No other significant changes.</li> <li>● Traceability and CoC. New EU Regulations, UK prepared similar regulations. Implementation delayed.</li> <li>● Changes in Client Group.</li> <li>● Impact of Covid</li> </ul>
	Sam Dignan	GTC assessor				
Stakeholder meeting	Michael Havlin	Tully Shellfish Ltd.	Off-site	Off-site	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2020; 14:00 - 16:00 UTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduction including brief presentation.</li> <li>● Condition on PI 1.1.4. Discussed genotyping report. GMIT looked at genotype of mussel specimens from locations around country. Similar results to what has been observed before. Irish Sea composed entirely of <i>M. edulis</i>, whereas other locations both <i>M. edulis</i>, <i>M. gallo</i>. and hybrids present. This work continuing this year. Looking at novel approaches – applying/adapting markers (from France / Scotland) to Irish population and comparing with traditional methods.</li> <li>● Other work – screening plankton to detect species. Report available on BIM website. Main aim is to establish baseline against which to assess future change (e.g. climate change impacts, changes in spawning events etc.).</li> <li>● Also, Bluefish project (now finished) involved larval dispersal studies, included East coast intertidal populations. Some research done on genetics of stocks too but not received as yet.</li> </ul>
	Michael Mulloy	Blackshell Farm Ltd. & Chair, IFA Aquaculture Committee				
	Bryan Hyland	Emerald Mussels Ltd.				
	Adele Boyd	AFBI NI Senior Scientific Officer, Marine EIA				
	Helena Horan	AP, Aquaculture & Foreshore Management Division, DAFM				
	Geraldine Farrell	HEO, Aquaculture & Foreshore Management Division, DAFM				
	Therese O’Keeffe	HEO, Aquaculture & Foreshore				



**Table 12.** Stakeholder meetings carried out during the off-site audit undertaken in July 2021.

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maerl and rope grown mussel production in Roaringwater Bay. AFMD requested survey from MED, awaiting results.</li> <li>• Independent Aquaculture Licensing Review Implementation Plan. Expect to be signed off in near future – going through revisions at the moment. Noted that Minister McConalogue has committed to implementing the recommendations – significant progress made.</li> </ul>
DAFM Marine Engineering Division	Raphael Crowley	MED	Off-site	Off-site	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2021; 12:00 - 13:00 UTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction.</li> <li>• Roaringwater Bay – survey 2020. Mapping presented showing maerl, licensed sites (with 30m buffer). Few lines in maerl area. Also, some lines in channel. Working with local operators and BIM to resolve. Meeting arranged for 18<sup>th</sup> August to take forward. Noted that maerl habitat information from 2009, would like to have more up to date information – speaking to NPWS about this and also Francis O’Beirn in the Marine Institute (leads on AAs).</li> <li>• Update on progress with Shellfish Monitoring Programme. Bantry survey last year, report not yet publicly available but AFMD following up results with operators. Roaringwater Bay surveyed this year (RIB with handheld GPS to map lines – trialled elsewhere and found to work well). Next step is to send operators report and meet with them (see above). Actions to be taken may include moving lines, re-licensing etc.</li> <li>• Shellfish Farm Inspection Report template shared with assessment team. Report issued to operator by AFMD. Aim is to do this 4-6 weeks after survey. If it requires action, operator then talks to MED about what is required (e.g. movement of lines within 12 months). MED return and survey.</li> <li>• Covid impact: delays in surveys and issues arising from working with home and not having access to software. Due to lack of applicants, recruitment of technicians on hold - looking at alternatives. As a result of delays about 1 year behind where they would like to be. Bantry and Roaringwater Bay have been surveyed, Killary and Castlemaine this year. Pressure to</li> </ul>
	Vicky Lyons	BIM, Aquaculture Shellfish Quality & Food Safety Specialist				
	Gary McCoy	BIM, Shellfish Productivity Optimisation Officer				
	Conor Donnelly	GTC lead assessor				
	Sam Dignan	GTC assessor				

**Table 12.** Stakeholder meetings carried out during the off-site audit undertaken in July 2021.

						<p>progress being maintained by regular meetings between AFMD, NPWS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roaringwater Bay last surveyed 2013 before re-licensing. Intention is to get surveys to 5-year cycle with a mid-term review.</li> <li>• Lincenng back log cleared, licenses being issued. Licenses held up where there are issues – has led to better compliance.</li> <li>• MED developing an aquaculture viewer (on-line resource of publicly available information for instance you can click on licensed sites for further information). Phase 1 by end of year. Phase 2 will include license, monitoring reports etc. Certain amount of information already available on the Marine Atlas.</li> <li>• No other changes.</li> </ul>
Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM)	Vicky Lyons	BIM, Aquaculture Shellfish Quality & Food Safety Specialist	Off-site	Off-site	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2021; 15:30 - 16:30 UTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Closing meeting.</b></li> <li>• Covered progress against audit objectives, initial audit findings, next steps (timetable for report delivery etc.), questions from client.</li> <li>• Discussed IAS risk assessment in bottom grown mussel seed fishery. <i>Sargassum muticum</i> identified as a risk, risk assessment performed and brought to IAS Working group who considered and approved opening of fishery.</li> </ul>
	Joanne Gaffney	BIM, Aquaculture Technical Manager				
	Gary McCoy	BIM, Shellfish Productivity Optimisation Officer				
	Conor Donnelly	GTC lead assessor				
	Sam Dignan	GTC assessor				

## **7.2 Stakeholder input**

No written submissions were made by stakeholders during the second surveillance audit. A summary of verbal stakeholder input received during the site visit has been provided in the previous section. The verbal input received was in response to questions raised by the assessment team and took the form of information supplied rather than questions and comments raised about the assessment as such no specific response from the CAB is required other than to note that the information has been incorporated into the audit report where applicable.

### 7.3 Revised surveillance programme

As noted previously, the surveillance programme for this fishery has changed from that previously indicated in the Public Certification Report.

As the surveillance programme for this fishery has changed from that previously indicated in the PCR or a previous surveillance report, the following is presented below:

1. A rationale for any reduction from the default surveillance level following FCP v2.2 7.28.4–7.28.7.
2. A rationale for any deviations from carrying out the surveillance audit before or after the anniversary date of certification.
3. A completed revised fishery surveillance programme.

**Table 13.** Surveillance level justification.

Year	Surveillance activity	Number of auditors	Rationale
2	Off-site audit	2 remote auditors	There is one condition.  In the first-year surveillance, surveillance year 2 was changed to an on-site audit. However, due to the health risks presented by the on-going pandemic situation and in line with the latest MSC Covid-19 derogation (Derogation 3, issued 19 February, 2021), surveillance 2 was changed back to an off-site audit.

**Table 14.** Timing of surveillance audit.

Year	Anniversary date of certificate	Proposed date of surveillance audit	Rationale
2	4 January each year (Anniversary of certification + 6 months per MSC Derogation 1)	July 2021	For the sake of efficiencies, the intention is to align the surveillances of the rope grown and bottom grown mussel certificates around a common date in June/July. As the rope grown mussel certificate has been extended by 6 months this means the audit will take place 6 months before the new certificate anniversary.

**Table 15.** Fishery surveillance program.

Surveillance level	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Level 3*	Off-site surveillance audit	Off-site surveillance audit	Off-site surveillance audit	On-site surveillance audit & re-certification site visit

\* The surveillance programme has been aligned with that of the bottom grown mussel fishery which has proposed off-site audits in Year 2 and Year 3 and an on-site audit in Year 4. This is in response to the on-going pandemic situation and because it is possible to remotely verify information and progress against the one condition identified (the assessment team has reviewed the verification of information criteria presented in the initial assessment, see Table 29 of the [Public Certification Report](#), and consider that it still holds true).

#### 7.4 Harmonised fishery assessments

Where fisheries have areas of overlap CABs are required to ensure consistency of outcomes so as not to undermine the integrity of MSC fishery assessments. Under PB1.3.5 of the MSC FCP v2.2, where a UoA under surveillance overlaps with a certified UoA, the CAB shall coordinate assessments to make sure that key assessment products and outcomes remain harmonised.

There has been no change in overlapping fisheries since the initial assessment and first surveillance which identified two overlapping fisheries, Ireland bottom grown mussel and Northern Ireland bottom grown mussel. As identified in the first surveillance (SAI Global, 2020), this fishery requires harmonisation with the Ireland bottom grown mussel fishery following the scope extension to that fishery (announced 14 January 2020 and completed 1 April 2021). As shown in the table below, although the fisheries are assessed under different versions of the Standard, MSC have issued an interpretation that harmonisation between trees of different versions should still be applied where trees are materially unchanged - see Relevant Interpretation 1 in section 6.1.

The scope extension was undertaken by Global Trust Certification using the same assessment team who are undertaking the Ireland rope grown mussel surveillances and who undertook the initial assessment. Consequently, where PIs overlap the scoring and rationales were copied from the Ireland rope grown mussel assessment to the scope extension. The findings of the first rope grown mussel surveillance, in particular the new information on the impact of rope mussel activity in Roaringwater Bay on the maërl habitat ETP species which resulted in the re-scoring of PI 2.3.1 to 75 and the identification of a condition were incorporated into the scope extension assessment.

In this second surveillance, there have been no changes to rationales and scoring for either overlapping certificate, so no harmonisation is required.

**Table 16.** Overlapping fisheries.

Fishery name	Certification status and date	Standard	Performance Indicators to harmonise
<i>Ireland rope grown mussel</i>	<i>Certified, 4 July 2019</i>	<i>2.0</i>	
Ireland bottom grown mussel	Scope Extension in assessment	1.3	P2 and P3

## 7.5 Template information and copyright

This document was drafted using the ‘MSC Surveillance Reporting Template v2.1’. Note amendments have been made to formatting in order to comply with Global Trust Certification’s corporate identity; however, content and structure follow that of the original template.

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2.01	28 March 2019	Minor document change for usability
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A controlled document list of MSC program documents is available on the [MSC website \(www.msc.org\)](http://www.msc.org).

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