South East News

by Derbhile Dromey

MEETINGS FOR FISHERMEN

Two meetings aimed at boosting the fishing industry were held in Waterford in mid-October. On October 7th, fishermen in Cheekpoint met to explore their options with regard to building the pier in Cheekpoint. Meanwhile, fishermen from all over the Suir Estuary had a chance to have their say about the state of the fishing industry at an open meeting in the Tower Hotel in Waterford on October 14th.

CONCERNS ABOUT EEL SURVEY

Eel fishermen in the Suir Estuary are concerned that they haven't received results from a survey carried out on the eel population in the area this year. They had no knowledge of the survey and are also deeply concerned that it covered a small number of boats, with no local knowledge used. Waterford Labour TD Ciara Conway was recently able to obtain the data from the larger survey on the area carried out three years ago, when the fishery was closed.

COD QUOTA USED UP

Punts fishing from Dunmore East are looking for quotas to be redistributed so that there will be a higher cod quota later in the year. Levels of cod are healthy, so quotas are often used up before the end of the year. The fishermen met with former Fisheries Minister Tony Killeen earlier this year to increase the quota, but October's quota was only 3-4 boxes.

WHITEFISH CONDITIONS

The herring season will open for smaller boats on November 20th. Quotas are very small, 3-4 tonnes per week and some fishermen are debating the viability of fishing for herring this year. Two boats from Dunmore East are taking part in the main Celtic Sea herring fishery. They're getting their quota, but that season is also likely to be short. A few boats went up the East coast as far as Dundalk for sprat, but were unsuccessful, possibly because it was a little early in the season.

SHELLFISH CONDITIONS

Most boats in the Suir Estuary are potting, but the quality of crab meat is very poor. The South-East didn't benefit from the heat wave at the end of September, so it has been difficult to get out. Some small scallop boats have only got out 2-3 times in the last month.

South West News

By Niall Duffy

WARNING TO FISHERMEN OF DANGEROUS JELLYFISH

Fishermen and beach users on the Southwest coast have been warned to keep an eye out for a lethal type of jellyfish that has been found washed ashore on beaches in Cork and Kerry, sparking a public warning from fisheries experts to avoid it "like the plague". The Portuguese Man of War was washed ashore on Wine Strand in Smerwick Harbour, west of Dingle, Co Kerry and on Ballydonegan Strand, Allihies in West Cork.

The beautifully coloured jellyfish may be attractive to look at but the poison in its tentacles is enough to kill its prey and can also kill humans. Fisheries protection officer Kevin Flannery, based in Dingle, said they were normally found in tropical southerly seas but the prevailing southerly winds could sometimes carry them to northern Europe.

"They're a beautiful colour, all the colours of the rainbow, but the beauty comes with a price," Mr Flannery told the Skipper

"I would advise members of the public, please, please do not touch them," he stressed. "They will sting, they will burn and they are lethal."

According to the fisheries expert, the Portuguese Man of War's tentacles can stretch out up to 30 metres to touch its prey. It then releases venom that kills.



Portuguese Man O War (Physalia_physalis)

"They're fascinating creatures to watch. They can inflate themselves in the water so they move faster with the wind," he added.

"The southerly winds from Africa we've been experiencing lately brought these ashore. It has happened before and you do get the odd one that makes its way on to Irish beaches."

Mr Flannery explained that the Portuguese Man of War is a living colony of minute organisms and can reproduce within itself. Its name is borrowed from the man-of-war, a 16th-Century English armed sailing ship, which was based on an earlier Portuguese vessel.

There may be others out in the ocean but so far only two have come ashore. However, local fishermen say they have spotted the tropical jellyfish in the water and that they're not an unusual sight at this time of year.

Anybody who comes across one washed ashore should contact their local SFPA office and refrain from touching it.

HAVE YOU NEWS WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT?

To keep our readers informed of news in their local area the Skipper needs input from Fishermen, Producers and Organisation that represent local interests. Have you news or a story that you think should be included in the South West notes? Do you have photos or maybe you just want to announce an upcoming event? You can submit ideas or any other thing you may want our readers to know about by emailing dubincork@gmail.com or contacting Niall Duffy on 086-8937916. Postal submissions can be sent to Niall Duffy, Main St, Castletownbere, Co Cork. All input will be greatly appreciated.