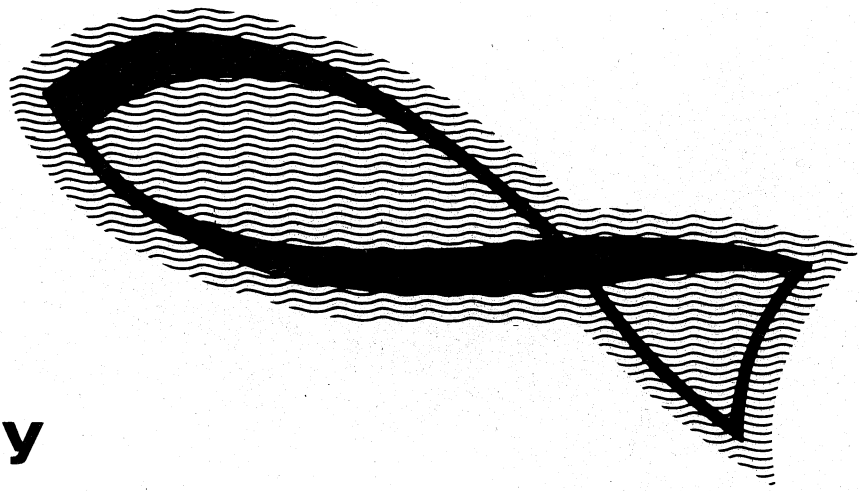




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**The herring fisheries on the
South and South-West coasts
1976-77**



**by
J. Molloy**

**Department of Fisheries
Trade and Information Section
Dublin 2**

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A B S T R A C T

The quantities and values of herring landed during the 1976/77 herring season off the south coast and during the July to November period off the south west coast are reviewed. In both areas there was a further serious decline in the catches - mainly due to a continuing very poor rate of recruitment of young herring to the adult stock. In the Celtic Sea the total international catch during 1976/77 was only 7,000 tonnes compared with 48,000 tonnes in 1969, while the total Irish catch of approximately 3,000 tonnes was the lowest since the mid-fifties. The immediate aim of any management policy for the Celtic Sea herring stock must be to rebuild it to a level of at least 40,000 tonnes. It is, at present, estimated to be below 10,000 tonnes. This can only be done by having a complete ban on all herring fishing in the Celtic Sea until 1980 at least.

1. SOUTH COAST (CELTIC SEA)

Introduction: The 1976/77 winter herring fishery began during September 1976 and continued until the middle of January 1977. The total landings during the season amounted to 2,981 tonnes which was over 3,600 tonnes (55%) lower than in 1975/76 and was in fact the lowest landing since the 1955/56 season. The value of the landed catch decreased to £807,000 from £1,100,000 in the 1975/76 season. Because of the poor catches in the early part of the season a number of boats did not participate in the fishery with the result that the total number of boats involved decreased from 78 to 40. The early start to the season and the continual good weather meant that until the middle of January there were a possible 89 fishing days and landings were made on 65 of these days. Some small boats using drift nets also took part in the fishery during the season, but like the trawlers, their catches were very disappointing. The following table shows the monthly landings per port for 1976/77 and corresponding figures for 1975/76 and 1974/75.

Table 1: Monthly Landings (Tonnes) in 1976/77 by port and for 1975/76 and 1974/75 (all ports)

Month	Dunmore East	Cobh	Total 1976/77	Total 1975/76	Total 1974/75
August	-	-	-	11	-
September	442	-	442	584	-
October	424	268	692	1,494	601
November	67	554	601	1,795	4,880
December	507	101	608	1,417	3,079
January	482	3	485	1,282	3,001
February	-	-	-	-	257
Totals 1975/76	1,922	926	2,828	6,583	11,818

Landings made by small boats using drift nets off that part of the Wexford coast that is in the Celtic Sea and also off Helvick amounted to approximately 150 tonnes.

The average price per tonne increased from £167.16 (i.e. £28.75 per cran) in 1975/76 to £270.86 (£48.59 per cran) in 1976/77. (Table 2). Because of the scarcity of herring, prices continued to rise throughout the season, and the prices paid after Christmas ranged from £60-£70 per cran. The total landings, the total value and the average price per tonne since 1968/69 are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Total landings (tonnes), total value (£) and the average price per tonne, 1968/69 - 1976/77

Season	Tonnes	Value (£)	Average Price (£)
1968/69	12,174	353,905	29.07
1969/70	16,673	544,670	32.66
1970/71	19,060	770,703	40.43
1971/72	13,724	718,128	52.32
1972/73	18,800	1,060,351	56.40
1973/74	10,697	1,423,683	133.09
1974/75	11,818	1,301,913	110.16
1975/76	6,582	1,100,218	167.15
1976/77	2,981	807,426	270.85

Table 3: Average monthly price per tonne, 1976/77

Month	Dunmore East		Cobh	
	Tonnes	£	Tonnes	£
September	442	170.46	-	-
October	424	197.48	268	-
November	67	240.19	534	196.96
December	507	351.56	101	288.70
January	482	389.44	3	176.87
Season	1922	282.77	906	244.25

International catch: For the third successive season the total catch taken from the Celtic Sea was regulated by the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (N.E.A.F.C.). The total allowable catch (T.A.C.) for 1976/77, originally fixed at 16,500 tonnes, was later reduced to 10,850 tonnes. This was divided as follows:-

Ireland 6,500 tonnes, France 1,300 tonnes, Netherlands 2,000 tonnes, U.K. 350 tonnes and others 1,700 tonnes. Again, as in the previous two seasons, Ireland's catch of 2,900 tonnes fell far short of its allotted quota. In Table 4 the catches per season for each country participating in this fishery since 1965/66 are shown. These are the figures supplied to the ICES* Working Group on the assessment of herring stocks, and are considered the best estimates of catches taken from the Celtic Sea stock.

Table 4: Celtic Sea herring catches tonnes (1 April - 31 March)
(1976/77 figures are provisional)

Season	Bul- garia	France	Ger- many (DR)	Ger- many (FR)	Ireland	Nether- lands	Pol- and	U.K.	U.S.S.R.	Total
1965/66	-	1,742	-	353	3,482	13,071	-	1,054	-	19,702
1966/67	-	5,506	-	1,143	8,861	11,459	112	197	-	27,278
1967/68	-	3,825	-	910	10,736	10,204	425	398	-	26,498
1968/69	-	2,637	-	1,662	11,996	12,191	130	598	-	29,214
1969/70	-	7,038	-	5,906	16,712	13,111	261	400	-	43,428
1970/71	-	3,627	-	1,481	19,106	4,667	778	220	-	29,879
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Table 4 (Contd.)

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Season	Bul- garia	France	Ger- many (DR)	Ger- many (FR)	Ireland	Nether- lands	Pol- and	U.K.	U.S.S.R.	Total
1971/72	-	3,383	-	974	13,757	10,600	880	65	-	29,659
1972/73	-	7,327	-	393	18,846	6,852	751	-	618	34,787
1973/74	123	4,143	7	294	11,317	5,834	1,139	-	334	23,191
1974/75	-	2,150	-	435	11,683	2,462	954	-	-	17,684
1975/76	-	2,451	-	399	6,524	2,441	579	24	1,054	13,472
1976/77	-	1,578	147	36	2,970	1,264	157	-	826	7,078

* International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

Table 5 shows how the total allowable catch has been allocated per country since quotas were first implemented by N.E.A.F.C. in 1974/75 for the Celtic Sea. The actual catch recorded by each country each season is also shown.

Table 5: Quotas and recorded catches in the Celtic Sea (tonnes)

Season	1974/75		1975/76		1976/77			
	Quota	Catch	Quota	Catch	Quota	Catch +		
Ireland	18,000	11,683	14,000	6,524	6,500	2,981		
Netherlands	7,000	2,462	5,000	2,441	2,000	1,264		
France	5,000	2,150	3,600	2,451	300	1,578		
Germany (FR)		435)		399)				
Poland	2,000	954 }	1,600	579 }	700	1,266		
U.S.S.R.							0 }	1,054 }
U.K.							0	800
Total	32,000	17,684	25,000	13,472	10,850	7,089		

(+) Provisional figures for 1976/77.

Disposal of the catch: No difficulty was experienced in 1976/77 in disposing of the catch. The major part of it was exported fresh to France while smaller quantities were cured, mainly for the Netherlands, and the U.K. Small quantities were also exported fresh to the U.K.

Locations of fishery: The catches in the early part of the season were taken from Baginbun Bay. During the remainder of the season small shoals were located over a wide area extending from the Daunt Rock to Hook Head. The main feature of the location of the fishery was the absence of any worthwhile shoals on the traditional spawning beds off the Daunt Rock, in Ballycotton and Youghal Bays and in Baginbun Bay.

