

MCIB

Marine Casualty Investigation Board
Bord Imscrúdú Taisní Muirí



**REPORT OF EMPTY VESSEL
FOUND OFF
TAWIN ISLAND,
GALWAY BAY
ON
7th SEPTEMBER 2016**

**REPORT NO. MCIB/265
(No.7 OF 2017)**

The Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB) examines and investigates all types of marine casualties to, or on board, Irish registered vessels worldwide and other vessels in Irish territorial waters and inland waterways.

The MCIB objective in investigating a marine casualty is to determine its circumstances and its causes with a view to making recommendations for the avoidance of similar marine casualties in the future, thereby improving the safety of life at sea.

The MCIB is a non-prosecutorial body. We do not enforce laws or carry out prosecutions. It is not the purpose of an investigation carried out by the MCIB to apportion blame or fault.

The legislative framework for the operation of the MCIB, the reporting and investigating of marine casualties and the powers of MCIB investigators is set out in The Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, 2000.

In carrying out its functions the MCIB complies with the provisions of the International Maritime Organisation's Casualty Investigation Code and EU Directive 2009/18/EC governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector.



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The Marine Casualty Investigation Board was established on the 25th March, 2003 under the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, 2000.

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	PAGE
1. SUMMARY	4
2. FACTUAL INFORMATION	5
3. NARRATIVE	7
4. ANALYSIS	9
5. CONCLUSIONS	10
6. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS	11
7. APPENDICES	12
8. NATURAL JUSTICE - CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED	25

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 On the morning of the 7th September 2016 the '*Loch Corrib II*', a registered inshore fishing vessel, departed from its home pier, at Ballinacourty, near Maree, Co. Galway. There was one occupant on-board. Shortly before 12.45 hrs, the vessel was noted stationary off Tawin Island by another vessel. It was observed that the vessel had been in the same position for a considerable period and the Skipper of the other craft went to investigate. He found the vessel unmanned with the engine running and held in position by a string of lobster pots. The alarm was raised and a full scale search commenced. At approximately 17.40 hrs, the body of the Skipper of the '*Loch Corrib II*' was found in the water approximately one nautical mile west of the Black Rock buoy, off Barna (see Appendix 7.1 Location of vessel and casualty recovery).

Note: For the purposes of this report all times are shown in UTC. Local time at the time of the incident was UTC + 1 hour.

2. FACTUAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 The ‘*Loch Corrib II*’ is a Buccaneer 19 inshore fishing vessel built in the United Kingdom, in 1994. The vessel was engaged in a commercial activity, in the lobster fishing sector. The vessel was constructed of Fibre Reinforced Plastic materials, commonly referred to as FRP. The vessel was fully decked, with a raised fore deck and a wheelhouse offset to the port side (see Appendix 7.2 Photograph Nos. 1, 2 & 3). The engine hatch was flush fitting to the working deck. The vessel was powered by an inboard diesel engine driving a 3 blade fixed pitch bronze propeller. A pot hauler was located on the starboard forward part of the working deck, at bulwark level. The vessel was fitted with dual controls, one set for normal operation inside the wheelhouse and the second set, for working with pots, located on the starboard outside of the wheelhouse.

Principal Particulars:

Name: ‘*Loch Corrib II*’.

Fishing Number: G 438.

Port Of Registry: Galway.

Flag: Ireland.

Construction: FRP.

Year of Build: 1994.

Type of fishing: Polyvalent - General.

Length Overall: 5.85 metres (m).

Beam: 2.52 m.

Depth: 1.05 m.

Gross Tonnes: 1.14.

Engine: Kabuta Beta Marine, 14.7 kW.

Electrical Systems: 12 volt DC, with belt driven alternator from engine.

Document of Compliance: Issued 1st June 2013.

- 2.2 The vessel set out from a small pier at Ballinacourty, near Maree in Co. Galway at approximately 05.00 hrs on the morning of the 7th September 2016 (see Appendix 7.2 Photograph No. 4). There was only one person on-board the

vessel. The intention was to attend strings of lobster pots set off the southern part of Tawin Island and return to Ballinacourty in time for the next tide.

- 2.3 This was a very serious marine casualty, with loss of life involved. The incident was not witnessed so the exact time cannot be determined. The indications are that the Skipper, who was also the owner of the vessel fell overboard sometime before 11.45 hrs. The vessel was found in position 53° 12.22' N 009° 01.25'W. The Irish Coast Guard was notified of the incident at 14.30 hrs on the 7th September 2016. The weather at the time was south easterly winds of Beaufort Force 4, air temperature of 8.34°C (see Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report). The casualty was working on deck, in the starboard forward section, where the pot hauler and external helm and engine throttle controls were located. When found, two pots were lying on deck and a third pot was tight against the outside of the bulwark.
- 2.4 The Irish Coast Guard, through MRSC Valentia (Coast Radio Station) organised the search and recovery exercise, utilising the Air Sea Rescue Helicopter Service, the RNLI All-Weather Lifeboat based in Kilronan and the Galway Inshore Lifeboat, based at Galway Docks. Local fishermen also joined in the search. The response time was approximately two minutes for the first tasking. The casualty was recovered at 17.40 hrs by the Galway Inshore Lifeboat and taken to Galway Docks for medical assessment. The rescue services were stood down at 18.00 hrs.

3. NARRATIVE

- 3.1 The '*Loch Corrib II*' was a commercially built inshore fishing vessel constructed of FRP materials. The vessel operated under the Code of Practice for the Design, Construction, Equipment and Operation of Small Fishing Vessels of Less than 15m Length overall. The last Document of Compliance (DoC), (without which the Fishing Licence could not be obtained) was issued on the 1st June 2013. The expiry date was 31st May 2017. The DoC is issued when the vessel has been surveyed and found to comply with the requirements (see Appendix 7.4 Documents of Compliance). The Owner had also carried out the required intermediate declaration confirming ongoing compliance with the Code.
- 3.2 The vessel was based at a public pier near the townland of Ballinacourty, Co. Galway. The harbour dries out on low tides, so movement of the vessel is restricted by tidal conditions. The vessel was set up for a one man operation with the primary controls located inside the wheelhouse and secondary controls on the starboard side of the wheelhouse for the vessel whilst recovering pots (see Appendix 7.2 Photograph No. 5). Safety equipment on-board included two Lifebuoys, there was also a smaller life-ring on-board (see Appendix 7.2 Photograph No. 6), flares, VHF transceiver and a Personal Floatation Device (PFD), fitted with water reacting light and a Personal Location Beacon (PLB) fixed to the PFD.
- 3.3 At approximately 10.20 hrs, another vessel working off Eddy Island, noted the vessel stopped in the water. At 12.45 hrs the Skipper of this vessel noted that the '*Loch Corrib II*' was still in the same position. He was approximately 1.5 nautical miles from the vessel. The tide was low. He decided to check out what was happening. As he drew near he could not see the Skipper of the '*Loch Corrib II*' on deck. They came alongside and found the vessel had nobody on-board and that the engine was still running. There was a string of pots partially hauled, with two pots on deck and one over the gunwhale or bulwark, held in position by the pot hauler. The alarm was raised.
- 3.4 The string was later recovered and it was found that there were three pots entangled together at the mid-point of the string. There are normally 20 pots per string. It was thought that the Skipper had been trying to recover the string and untangle the pots. The vessel was brought back to its regular berthing pier under its own power and reports indicate that the engine and drive worked properly.
- 3.5 The RNLI's Inshore Lifeboat from Galway was the first of the emergency services on scene. A search of the immediate area had no result. The search area was expanded and eventually, the body of the Skipper was found at position 53° 13.81' N 009° 08.19'W. On recovery of the casualty it was thought he had a weak pulse. The Lifeboat crew immediately commenced CPR and used oxygen

on the casualty, whilst heading for Galway Docks. The casualty was found face up and with his PFD inflated. The PFD was worn under his oilskin smock, and when they cut away the smock it was found that the PFD was tight against his neck.

- 3.6 The Met Éireann weather forecast and report for the day have been examined. Winds were south easterly in direction between 11 and 15 knots, increasing to between 15 and 18 knots in the forenoon. Wave heights were between 0.2 and 0.3 m. There was a westerly swell for the area of approximately 0.8 m.
- 3.7 The area for the incident lies in the south eastern part of Galway Bay, which is known as South Bay (approach to Kinvara and Clarinbridge). Tawin Island forms the northern shore of South Bay. The casualty was found approximately 4.5 nautical miles from his boat, having drifted to the north west and almost due south of the village of Barna.
- 3.8 The tidal conditions for the day were:
- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Low Tide: 02.00 hrs 1.31 m | High Tide: 08.24 hrs 4.29 m |
| Low Tide: 14.18 hrs 1.51 m | High Tide: 20.36 hrs 4.17 m |
- 3.9 The predicted tides indicate the tidal range was midway between spring and neap tides. The chart indicates that the maximum tidal current flows north westerly at 0.75 knots at spring tides.

4. ANALYSIS

- 4.1 The vessel was configured for single handed operations. There was no one else on-board to initiate a search and rescue operation.
- 4.2 The casualty had been engaged in retrieving the string of pots just prior to him entering the water. The fact that the pots became entangled meant that the vessel remained at its location as there was sufficient weight in the string for it to act as an anchor for the vessel.
- 4.3 The casualty's PFD had been issued to him by Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM) and was one of those presented to fishermen who had successfully undertaken an enhanced safety course. The PFD was a Mullion type with a Kannad Solo Safe Personal Location Beacon (PLB) secured in a pouch. The PLB was a manually activated type and was registered with COMREG. The service date on the PFD was April 2016. It had fully inflated. The battery date on the PLB was checked and found in date. The beacon worked on test.
- 4.4 The PFD was worn under the oilskin jacket or smock worn by the casualty. Although the PFD activated, it was overdue a service (normally replacement of the gas cylinder and inspection of the folds of the bladder for damage). Being worn under the outer layer of protective clothing meant the casualty could not access the switch to activate the PLB.
- 4.5 Although not incident related, it was noted that the two lifebuoys were carried on top of the wheelhouse structure. Both were secured by bungee cords which would make their release difficult. The uppermost lifebuoy was faded and had lost its high visibility qualities. The outline of lettering on the sides indicated the lifebuoy came from another vessel. The third life-ring did not comply with the statutory requirements.
- 4.6 The autopsy report indicates that the casualty died as a result of drowning. The report also indicates that there was evidence of a condition which can be associated with sudden collapse. This may have been a contributory factor.
- 4.7 The Code of Practice for the Design, Construction, Equipment and Operation of Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15m Length overall requires owners to carry out an intermediate declaration after two years from the initial survey. In this case the owner did carry out the required intermediate declaration as seen in the DoC in Appendix 7.4 of this report. At this intermediate verification the owner was required to ensure that all safety equipment was stowed correctly and the vessel maintained in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Design, Construction, Equipment and Operation of Small fishing Vessels of Less than 15m Length overall.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The casualty had been engaged in retrieving a string of pots at the time.
- 5.2 The autopsy report indicates that the casualty may have suffered some form of collapse which likely caused him to fall overboard.
- 5.3 The automatic inflatable lifejacket operated properly. However, if the PFD had been worn external to the oilskin jacket, then if conscious when entering the water, the casualty could have been able to activate his PLB. Activation of the PLB would have ensured a swifter alerting of the emergency services and perhaps might have saved the life of the casualty.
- 5.4 The PFD, although it worked, had not been serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- 5.5 The vessel was required to carry two lifebuoys. There was a third life-ring carried, but this did not comply with the statutory requirements. The vessel's DoC had been re-validated by the vessel owner as set out in Section 4.7 above.

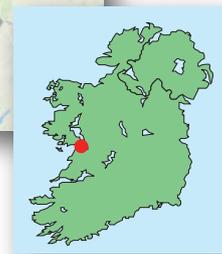
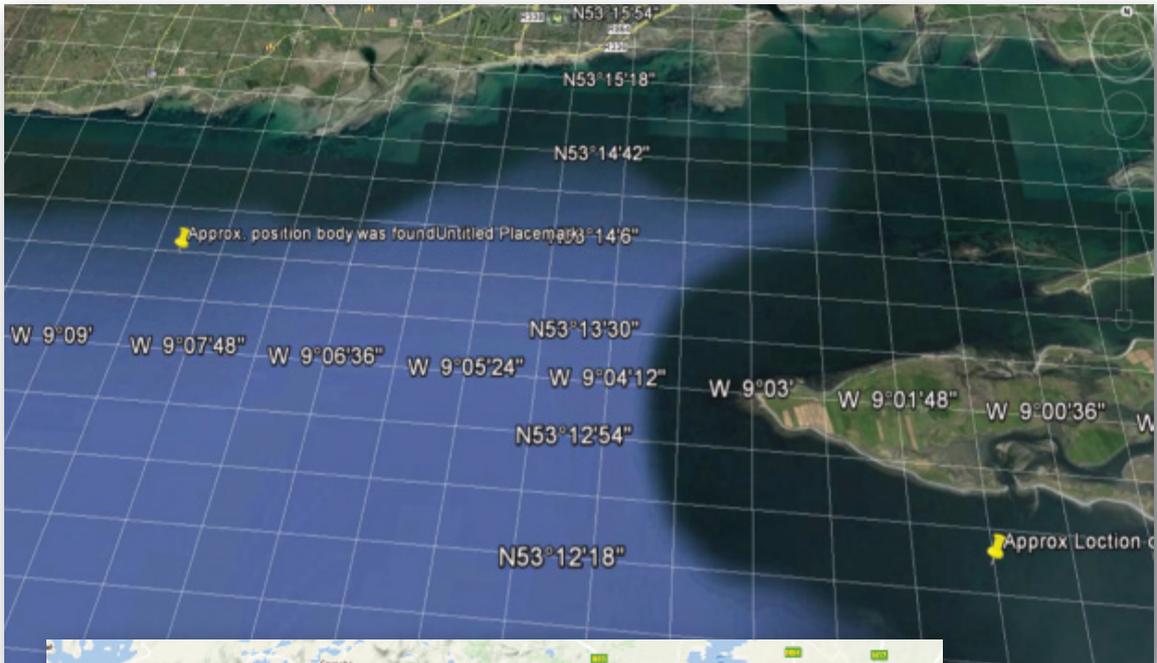
6. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport should issue a Marine Notice highlighting this casualty and the Marine Notice should emphasise the need to wear a PFD external to all clothing and especially to provide access to the PLB. The Marine Notice should be directed to all fishers and also to training providers.

7. APPENDICES

	PAGE
7.1 Location of vessel and casualty recovery.	13
7.2 Photographs.	14
7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.	17
7.4 Documents of Compliance.	23

Appendix 7.1 Location of vessel and casualty recovery.



APPENDIX 7.2

Appendix 7.2 Photographs.



Photograph No. 1: View of vessel from front.



Photograph No. 2: View of vessel from aft.

Appendix 7.2 Photographs.



Photograph No. 3: Primary controls in wheelhouse.



Photograph No. 4: Pier at Ballinacourty.

Appendix 7.2 Photographs.

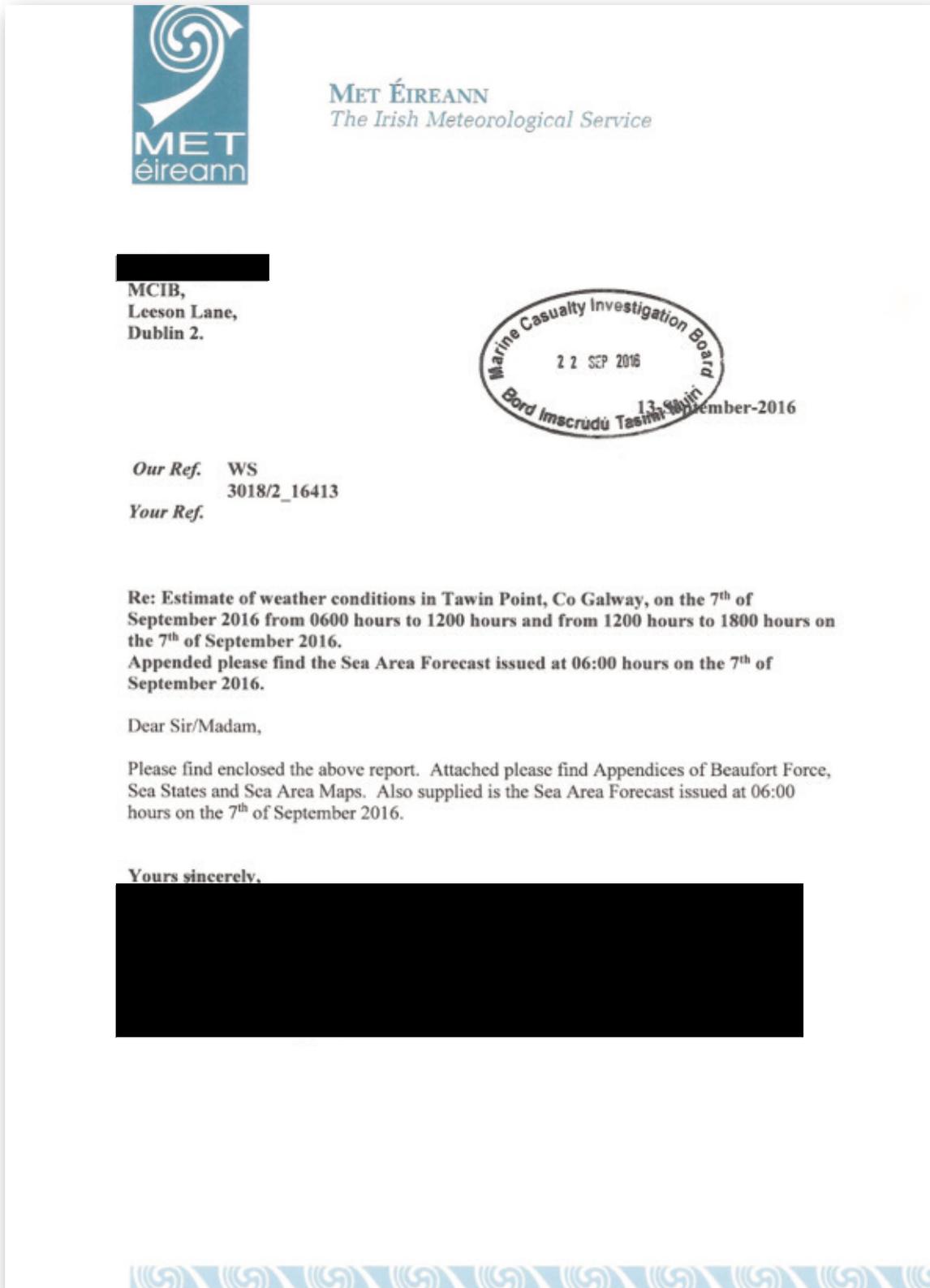


Photograph No. 5: Secondary controls beside pot hauling system.



Photograph No. 6: Lifebuoys on wheelhouse

Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.



Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

13-September-2016

Our Ref. WS
3018/2_16413
Your Ref.

Re: Estimate of weather conditions in Tawin Point, Co Galway, on the 7th of September 2016 from 0600 hours to 1200 hours and from 1200 hours to 1800 hours on the 7th of September 2016.

General Meteorological Situation at 3:00 am: A freshening southerly airflow became established over Ireland on the day in question. A cold front 200 miles west of the country moves steadily eastwards.

From 06:00 hours to 12:00 hours

Wind: Southeast mean speeds 11 to 13 knots (Force 4), increased 15 to 18 knots (Force 5) during the forenoon. However some gusts up to force 6 occurred near midday.

Weather: Some infrequent outbreaks of very light rain, but mainly dry. Cloudy.

Temperatures: A steady 17 to 18 degrees Celsius.

Visibility: Good

Sea States Wavelets. Increased from 0.2 meters Significant Wave Height to 0.3 meters. Period 2 seconds. However this sea was superimposed upon a west Swell of 0.8 meters/period 6 seconds.

From 12:00 hours to 18:00 hours

Wind: Southeast mean speeds of 17 to 22 knots (Force 5 to 6). Some gusts of force 7 occurred also.

Weather: Infrequent light showers – mainly later in period. Overcast. Most of period dry.

Temperatures: 17 to 19 degrees Celsius.

Visibility: Good (Greater than 10 km).

Sea States Slight. 0.4 to 0.5 meters Significant Wave Height. Period 2 to 3 seconds. However this sea was superimposed upon a west Swell of 0.8

Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

meters/period 6 seconds.

Appended Beaufort wind Scale.

Beaufort Scale of Wind					
Force	Description	Speed*		Specification -sea	Wave height** (metres)
		knots	km/hr		
0	Calm	<1	<1	Sea like mirror	
1	Light air	1-3	1-5	Ripples	0.1 (0.1)
2	Light breeze	4-6	6-11	Small wavelets	0.2 (0.3)
3	Gentle breeze	7-10	12-19	Large wavelets, crests begin to break	0.6 (1)
4	Moderate breeze	11-16	20-28	Small waves becoming longer, frequent white horses	1 (1.5)
5	Fresh breeze	17-21	29-38	Moderate waves, many white horses, chance of spray	2 (2.5)
6	Strong breeze	22-27	39-49	Large waves, white foam crests, probably some spray	3 (4)
7	Near gale	28-33	50-61	Sea heaps up, streaks of white foam	4 (5.5)
8	Gale	34-40	62-74	Moderately high waves of greater length	5.5 (7.5)
9	Strong gale	41-47	75-88	High waves, dense streaks of foam, spray may reduce visibility	7 (10)
10	Storm	48-55	89-102	Very high waves, long overhanging crests, visibility affected	9 (12.5)
11	Violent storm	56-63	103-117	Exceptionally high waves, long white foam patches cover sea	11.5 (16)
12	Hurricane	64+	117 & over	Air filled with foam and spray, sea completely white	14 (-)

*Speed is mean speed at a standard height of 10 metres.
**Wave height is only intended as a guide to what may be expected in the open sea.
Bracketed figures indicate the probable maximum wave height.

Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.



MET ÉIREANN
The Irish Meteorological Service

Sea States.

Wave Heights / State of Sea
The wave height is the vertical distance between the crest and the preceding or following trough. The table below gives a description of the wave system associated with a range of significant wave heights. The Significant wave height is defined as the average height of the highest one-third of the waves. (It is very close to the value of wave height given when making visual observations of wave height.)

Sea State (Descriptive)	Significant Wave height in meters
Calm	0 – 0.1
Smooth(Wavelets)	0.1 – 0.5
Slight	0.5 – 1.25
Moderate	1.25 – 2.5
Rough	2.5 – 4
Very rough	4 – 6
High	6 – 9
Very high	9 – 14
Phenomenal	Over 14

Individual waves in the wave train will have heights in excess of the significant height. The highest wave of all will have a height about twice the significant height

Visibility Descriptions of visibility mean the following:

Visibility (Descriptive)	Visibility in nautical miles (kilometres)
Good	More than 5 nm (> 9 km)
Moderate	2 – 5 nm (4 – 9 km)
Poor	0.5 – 2 nm (1 – 4 km)
Fog	Less than 0.5 nm (< 1km)

Note:

If there are no measurements or observations available for an exact location, these estimated conditions are based on all available meteorological measurements and observations which have been correlated on the routine charts prepared by Met Éireann.

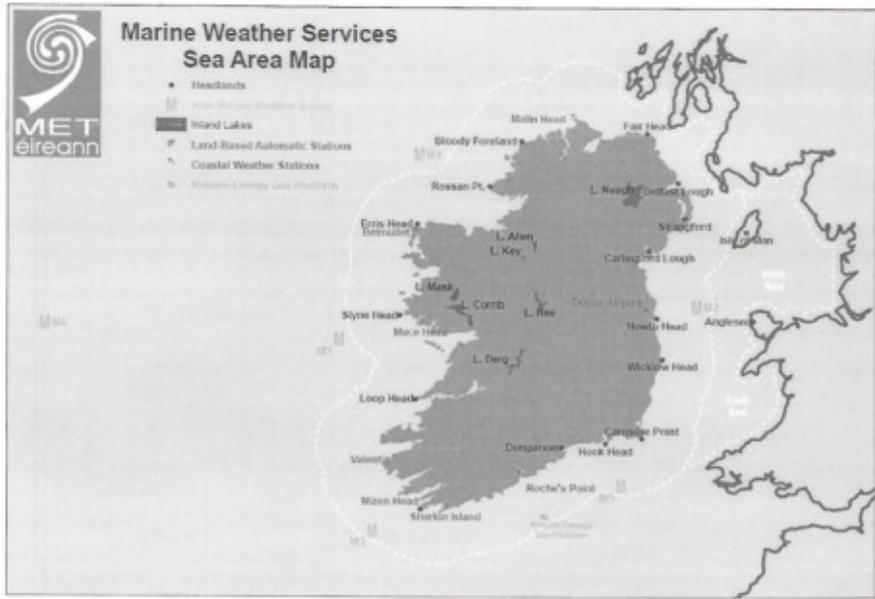


Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.



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The Irish Meteorological Service

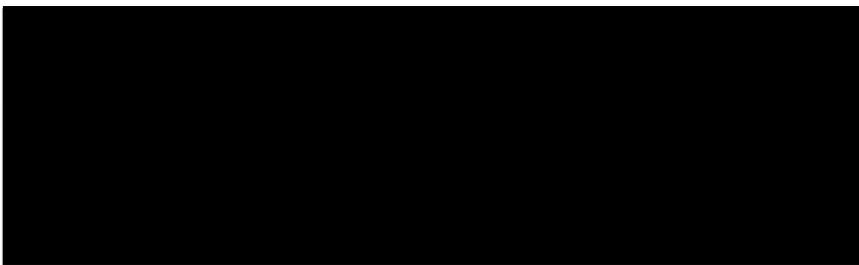
Sea area Map



**Marine Weather Services
Sea Area Map**

- Headlands
- ☒ Inland Lakes
- ☒ Land-Based Automatic Stations
- ☒ Coastal Weather Stations
- ☒ Wicklow & Longuë Sea Protection

The map displays the coastline of Ireland with various weather stations marked. Key locations include: Main Head, Fair Head, Bloody Foreland, Rosan Pt., L. Neeshy, L. Allen, L. Key, L. Mask, L. Corrib, L. Ree, L. Derg, Loop Head, Slieve Head, Carrigrohane, Hook Head, Wicklow Head, Anglesea, Roche's Point, Mizen Head, and Sharkin Island. It also shows several lakes and sea areas like Spaldford, Carlingford Lough, and Wicklow & Longuë Sea Protection.



Appendix 7.3 Met Éireann Weather Report.



Weather Forecast From Met Éireann

24-hour Sea Area Forecast

Updated at 0000 / 0600 / 1200 / 1800

Sea Area Forecast until 0600 Thursday, 8 September 2016
Issued at 0600 Wednesday, 7 September 2016

1. Gale warning: Nil
Small craft warning: Nil

2. Meteorological situation at 0300: A warm front, running from Erris Head to Malin Head to southern Scotland, will soon clear northwards leaving Ireland in a humid, southerly airflow; the following cold front will extend eastwards from the Atlantic later today as the parent depression deepens and moves northwards off the west coast.

3. Forecast for Irish coastal waters from Mizen Head to Erris Head to Fair Head

Wind: Southeast to south force 3 or 4, locally force 5, increasing south force 5 to 7 this evening; further increasing gale force 8, occasionally strong gale force 9 early tonight, then veering south to southwest force 6 to gale force 8 overnight, strongest in the north

Weather: Rain or drizzle with fog patches clearing to showers tonight

Visibility: Mostly moderate or poor, becoming moderate to good later

Forecast for Irish coastal waters from Fair Head to Wicklow Head to Mizen Head and the Irish Sea

Wind: Southeast to south force 3 or 4, locally force 5 in the south; later becoming south to southwest force 4 to 6

Weather: Mainly fair on eastern coasts, but elsewhere drizzle and fog; rain extending from the west later but clearing by morning

Visibility: Good on eastern coasts, elsewhere moderate to poor

Warning of Heavy Swell: Nil

4. Outlook for a further 24 hours until 0600 Friday 09 September 2016: Fresh to strong, south to southwest winds, later decreasing moderate, occasionally fresh; scattered showers, some prolonged

Forecasts provided by Met Éireann. Customer Services (Tel) 01-8064244. (Email) customer.liason@met.ie. Met Éireann Copyright.

Appendix 7.4 Document of Compliance.

(Copy)



**Design, Construction and Equipment of
Small Fishing Vessels of less than 15 m Length over**

**Code of Practice
Declaration of Compliance**

To be completed by an Authorised Person

Declarations on page v to be signed by the Authorised Person

Name of Vessel	Fishing Letters & Number	Official Number
LOCH CORRIB II	G438	
Overall Length (less than 15 metres)	Breadth	Depth
5.85	2.52	1.05
Engine Make & Model		
Kabuta – Beta Marine		
Name & Address of Owner		
Description of vessel		
Decked GRP with wheelhouse		
Description of operational area		
A1 Ballinacourty pier and within 4NM from safe haven		

Appendix 7.4 Document of Compliance.

NOTES:

1. # indicates Statutory requirements
2. * indicates mandatory requirement for Code compliance
3. † indicates statutory requirement for vessels $\geq 12m L_{oa}$ and mandatory requirement for Code compliance for vessels $< 12m L_{oa}$
4. Only Statutory and mandatory Code requirements are to be addressed when completing Declaration.
5. If 'No' is answered to any question, please supply, in a separate statement, the reasons the particular item is not complied with.
6. If a particular item is not applicable, please state the reason why.

Declaration by Authorised Person

Name of Vessel	Fishing Letters & Number	Official Number	Port of Register
LOCH CORRIB II	G438		Galway

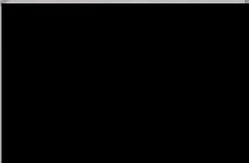
I hereby declare that on 1/6/ 2013 at Clarinbridge I completed the Declaration of the Fishing Vessel Loch Corrib II

1. the particulars given on this form are true and correct;
2. in my judgement the vessel complies with the Code of Practice and is fit for fishing method and for the sea areas in which it is intended to operate.

Dated at Clarinbridge
 this 1 day of June 2013

Signed _____

This Declaration is valid until 31 day of May 2017

Company Stamp. 

Declaration by Owner

We, _____
 owner(s) of the above-described vessel declare that the particulars given on this form are true and correct and that the vessel is fit for its intended fishing method and for the sea areas in which it is intended to operate.

Signature(s): _____

 Position held: _____

NATURAL JUSTICE - CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Section 36 of the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, 2000 requires that:

- “36 (1) Before publishing a report, the Board shall send a draft of the report or sections of the draft report to any person who, in its opinion, is likely to be adversely affected by the publishing of the report or sections or, if that person be deceased, then such person as appears to the Board best to represent that person’s interest.
- (2) A person to whom the Board sends a draft in accordance with subsection (1) may, within a period of 28 days commencing on the date on which the draft is sent to the person, or such further period not exceeding 28 days, as the Board in its absolute discretion thinks fit, submit to the Board in writing his or her observations on the draft.
- (3) A person to whom a draft has been sent in accordance with subsection (1) may apply to the Board for an extension, in accordance with subsection (2), of the period in which to submit his or her observations on the draft.
- (4) Observations submitted to the Board in accordance with subsection (2) shall be included in an appendix to the published report, unless the person submitting the observations requests in writing that the observations be not published.
- (5) Where observations are submitted to the Board in accordance with subsection (2), the Board may, at its discretion -
- (a) alter the draft before publication or decide not to do so, or
 - (b) include in the published report such comments on the observations as it thinks fit.”

The Board reviews and considers all observations received whether published or not published in the final report. When the Board considers an observation requires amendments to the report that is stated beside the relevant observation. When the Board is satisfied that the report has adequately addressed the issue in the observation, then the observation is ‘Noted’ without comment or amendment. The Board may make further amendments or observations in light of the responses from the Natural Justice process.

‘Noted’ does not mean that the Board either agrees or disagrees with the observation.

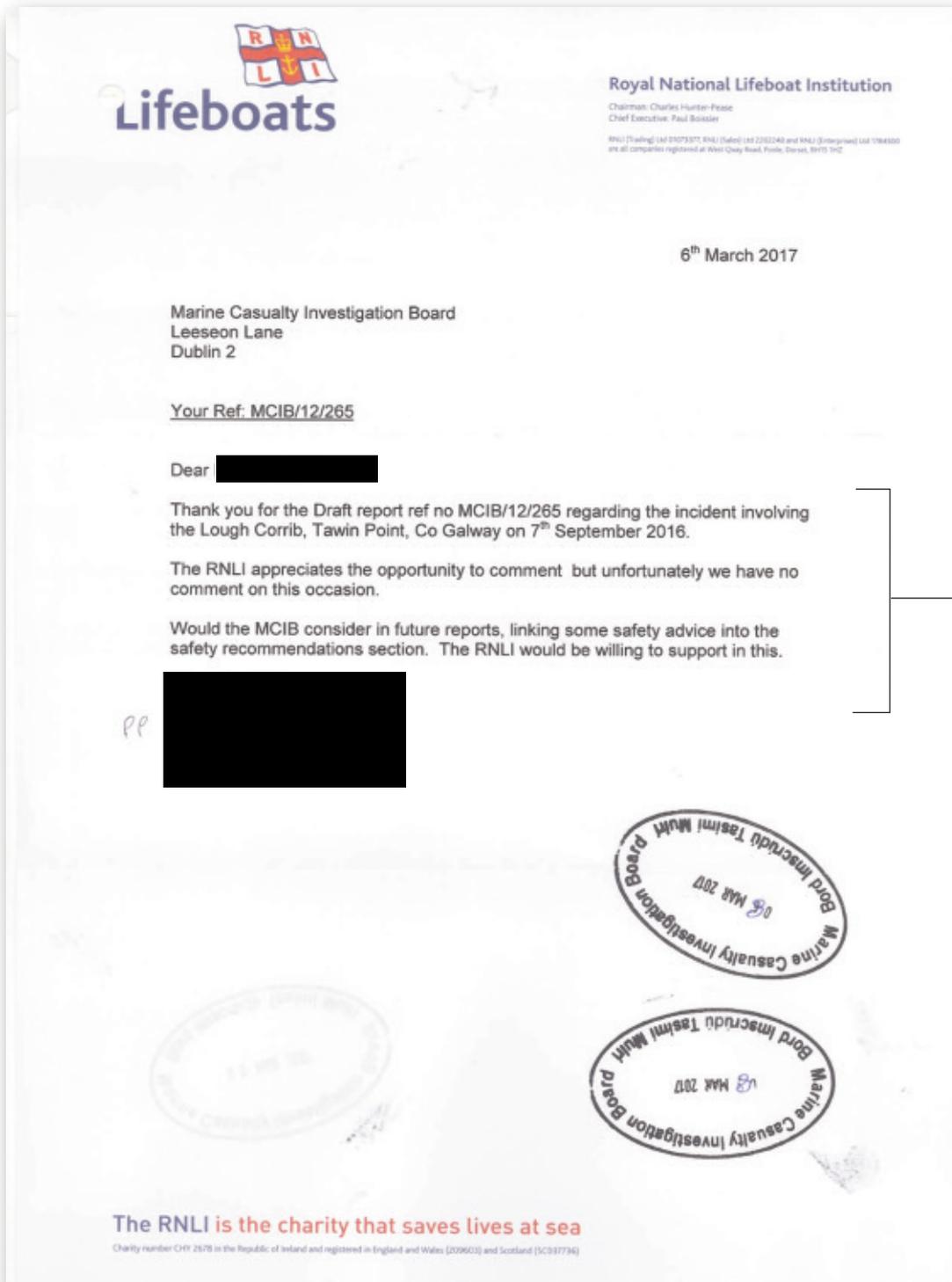
8. NATURAL JUSTICE - CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

PAGE

8.1 Correspondence from RNLI and MCIB response 27

Note: The names and contact details of the individual respondents have been obscured for privacy reasons.

Correspondence 8.1 Correspondence from RNLI and MCIB response



MCIB RESPONSE:
The MCIB notes the contents of this correspondence.



Leeson Lane, Dublin 2.
Telephone: 01-678 3485/86.
Fax: 01-678 3493.
email: info@mcib.ie
www.mcib.ie

