

MARA consultation for MUL230026, made by Wicklow County Council, relating to dredging within Wicklow Port

Proposed activity:

Maintenance dredging of the navigation channel, turning basin and berths within Wicklow Port.

Note: Related to EPA Dumping at Sea Permit S0037-01 Wicklow County Council - Wicklow Port

BIM Comments:

06.02.2026

BIM Acknowledge that revised Assessment of Impact on the Maritime Usage Report (AIMU) (Rev 02 - 15 December 2025) analysis and potential impacts on Fisheries and Aquaculture have been documented. The report concludes:

- »A.slight.negative?but.temporary.impact.is.therefore.assigned.to.activities.associated.with.commercial.fisheries; ..
- »No.significant.effects.on.aquaculture.operations.are.expected.given.the.substantial.distance.to.the.aquaculture.sites?small.footprint.area.coverage.from.the.dredging.and.disposal.activities.and.the.short.duration.of.activities;

The AIMU report also notes that the proposed revised disposal site will not overlap with historical seed mussel beds. »Bord.lascaigh.Mhara.(BIM).provided.a.full.set.of.shapefiles.for.seed.mussel.bed.surveys.from.7636.to.8688; These.locations.were.closely.reviewed.via.GIS.in.relation.to.the.dredge.and.disposal.sites.(Image.79); None.are.located.in.proximity.of.the.sites;



Image 13: Mussel Seed Beds in Study Area (BIM)

However, some concerns have been raised by local inshore fishers who activity pot for lobster and crab around the location of the proposed dumping site.

- Due to the relatively shallower depths and weak tidal influences (only a weak north south tide) or currents may not disperse the dredge spoil from the proposed site on a continual basis. It is therefore likely that during strong easterly gales that the spoil will be washed away, including ashore.
- The dredge spoil will likely damage the gravelly substrate/habitat for lobster etc. in its location.
- The fact that the dredge spoil is being taken from a working port has concerns due its potential toxicity, or that which would be perceived where a seafood product is being fished.
- The boats that predominantly fish lobster and crab etc. in that area do not have the ability move their effort to fish far offshore due to their boat size. They fish mainly a 10 mile north south stretch adjacent/close to the coastline. This includes the area of the proposed dumpsite. The overall impact to them of ground lost will be greater than that of the actual dumpsite, especially when considering the points above.
- Pre-consultation stages should include local fishermen on the ground and not just cover state agencies and representative groups as local concerns don't always get voiced or opportunities to raise their concerns.

The main concern from a fisheries context would be disturbance to fishing, and accidental entanglement with static fishing gear and/or by fishing vessels with the deployed equipment by the dredging/dumping vessels at the proposed dumping location.

Therefore, timely notification to notify fishers on the ground, through direct contact using the Irish Fleet Register [Sea-Fishing Boat Licence Applications, Forms and Conditions](#) should be taken. Additional, usual channels of communication, such as Marine Notices, the Producer Organisations such as the IS&EFPO, IIMRO, NIFA, local RIFF, all the relevant harbour port offices and local authority offices, and local media including Marine Times where possible covering the impacted area.