

**Seed Mussel Survey Report for Cahore Point Area (Morriscastle) from 19/04/2011
to 21/04/2011**

Vessel: MV T'Burke (BIM), skipper John Murphy, survey officer Nicolas Chopin

Equipment: 400 kHz Side Scan Sonar, 1 meter dredge, 0.1 m² Day Grab

Area Surveyed:

Along the shore south of Cahore Point, close to Morriscastle (see map).

Survey Summary:

An extensive side scan sonar survey was carried out South of Cahore Point, from the Rusk Bank to the shore. Seed was fished in the location last year and the aim of the survey was to check if anything had over wintered. Some settlement patterns were observed on the data collected and the bed was confirmed with dredge samples. The estimated area is located between the following coordinates:

Latitude	Longitude
52° 28.926' N	6° 15.007' W
52° 30.132' N	6° 13.878' W
52° 30.115' N	6° 13.811' W
52° 29.508' N	6° 14.011' W
52° 28.880' N	6° 14.864' W

The area represents a strip of 1500 meters long, covering 75 hectares approximately. The average density couldn't be precisely estimated but a grab sample in the centre of the area showed around 11 kg/m² gross weight (samples from the dredge showed waste percentage from 6 to 25%). The mussels are mainly half grown (see following measurements), TC are related to tows showed on the map:

Sample	Pieces/kg	Average size	% waste
TC1	409 P/Kg	32.28 mm	25%
TC2	483 P/Kg	30.56 mm	6%
TC3	1113 P/Kg	21.70 mm	77%

The mussels look quite fragile (very thin shell) and a lot of new spat (1 to 5 mm not included in the previous measurements) is mixed with the half grown, however everything seems well settled on the seabed. Sample from the north of the area (TC3) showed a number of big starfish and a degree of mortality, same in the south (TC13 on the map). Starfish seem to fringe the bed on the western side; most of them are above 25 cm in diameter and ready to spawn.

Bottom type: Muddy sand with broken shells and small stones.

Discussion;

The finding of small fragile new spat amongst the older mussels makes the question of whether or not this bed should be fished in May a difficult one. On the one hand it would probably be best to leave these stocks for some further weeks to allow the small spat to grow and toughen up. On the other hand there is the danger that the starfish will multiply in numbers and range and may devour a lot of the stock.

Industry's opinion on this matter is sought as a matter of urgency. Please contact either the forum member representing your area or make direct contact with the forum secretariat and put forward your opinion on two matters;

(A) your view as to whether or not this bed should be fished at all next week.

(B) If you think it should not be fished then please also express your views on whether it should be kept officially closed or whether the situation can be managed by consensus and agreement at the level of the vessels skippers and owners.

BIM Aquaculture Technical Section on behalf of the BGMCF

Seed Mussel Survey Map for Cahore Point Area - 21/04/2011

