

Preliminary Seed Mussel Survey Report for Rosslare, the north Long Bank (West and East) and Blackwater – 23/04/14 to 2/05/14

Vessel: MV T'Burke (BIM), Skipper John Murphy, Survey Officer Nicolas Chopin

Equipment: 400 kHz side scan sonar, 1 meter dredge.

Area surveyed: in the channel between the Calmines buoy and the West Holdens buoy and west of the Holdens bed; between the Lucifer Bank and the Long Bank (North) and north of the West Long buoy; between the coast and the Blackwater bank.

Survey summary:

The four areas were checked for two reasons, firstly to assess the level of naturally occurring damage/ seabed changes following the winter's storms and secondly to see if there was any incidence of overwintered seed.

In the first area, (Rosslare) only a limited amount of seed was found last year. Despite the storms, a very small amount seemed to have survived, but there is evidence of heavy starfish predation. The sand cover on the seabed was observed to have been reduced in the southwest portion of the survey area (from the side scan sonar imagery), whilst the rest of the area appeared unchanged. No signs of new settlement were observed as yet.

The second area surveyed, between the Lucifer Bank and the Long bank (North side), was where good quantities of seed were found in the early last year. Unfortunately the bed was destroyed by the starfish during the summer and only small amount of under-sized seed remained by mid-August last year. The ground has been cleared by the winter storms and nothing from last year remains. The ground is quite rough with mainly stones and old oyster shells as the sand cover has been washed away. No signs of new settlement were observed at this time.

The third area surveyed is situated on the western side of the Long Bank, where seed was found in 2007 and 2011. Very few items of interest were apparent from the side scan sonar imagery and only stones and old oyster shells were found in the dredges. No signs of new settlement were observed at this time.

Finally, the fourth survey area is situated where most of the fishing took place last year. The substrate has been substantially changed by the winter storms, the sand cover is gone and only stones and old oyster shells remain. The seabed has become hard and rough and there was no signs of last year settlement. No signs of new settlement were observed at this time.

Recommendations:

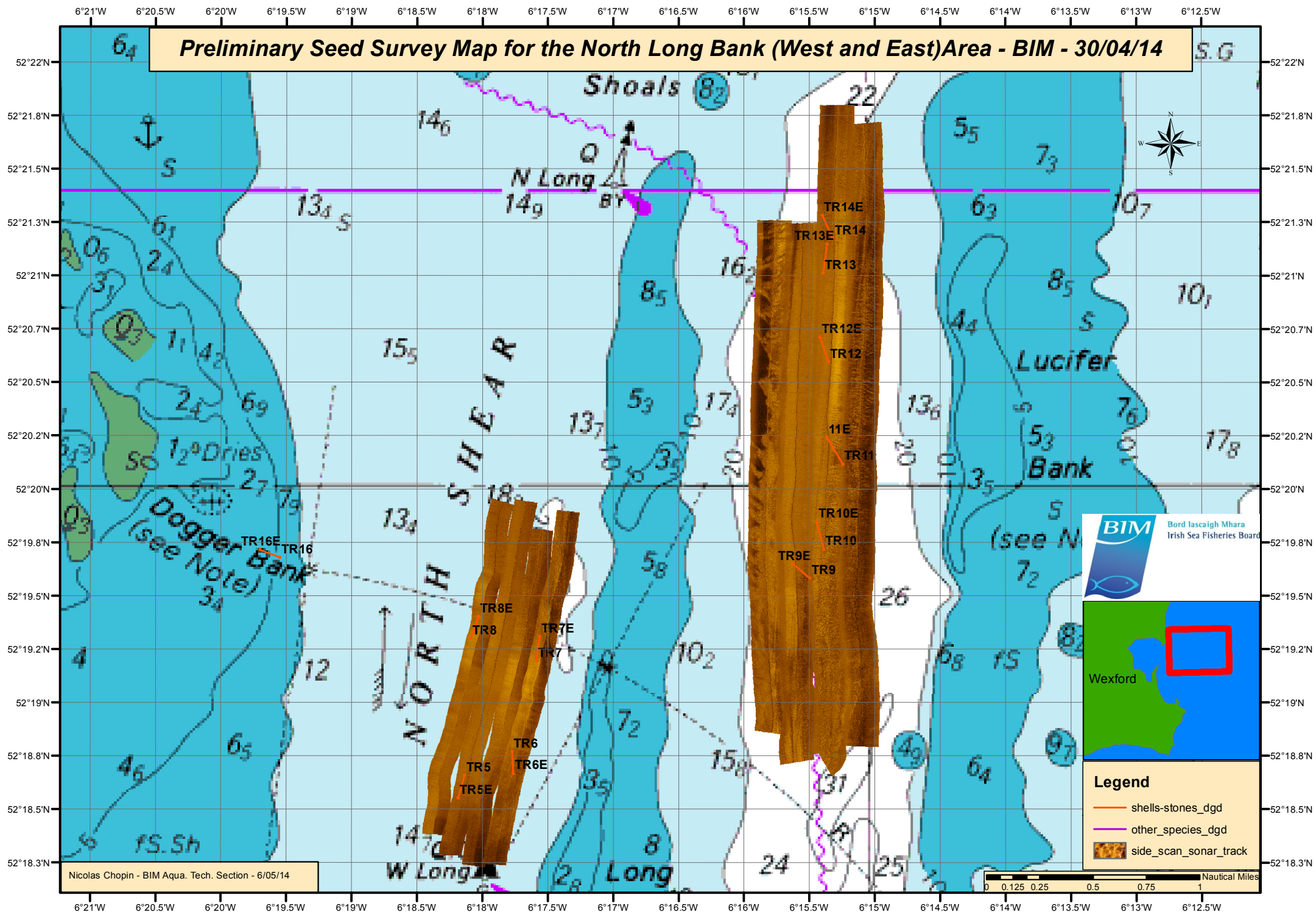
So far nothing has been found, the settlement from last year has gone and the new spat has probably not settled yet; the mussels from Wexford Harbour seem to have only spawned in the last 3 to 4 weeks. The survey season has really only started since early April due to bad weather conditions, prime areas around Cahore, Arklow and Wicklow still remain to be surveyed in 2014.

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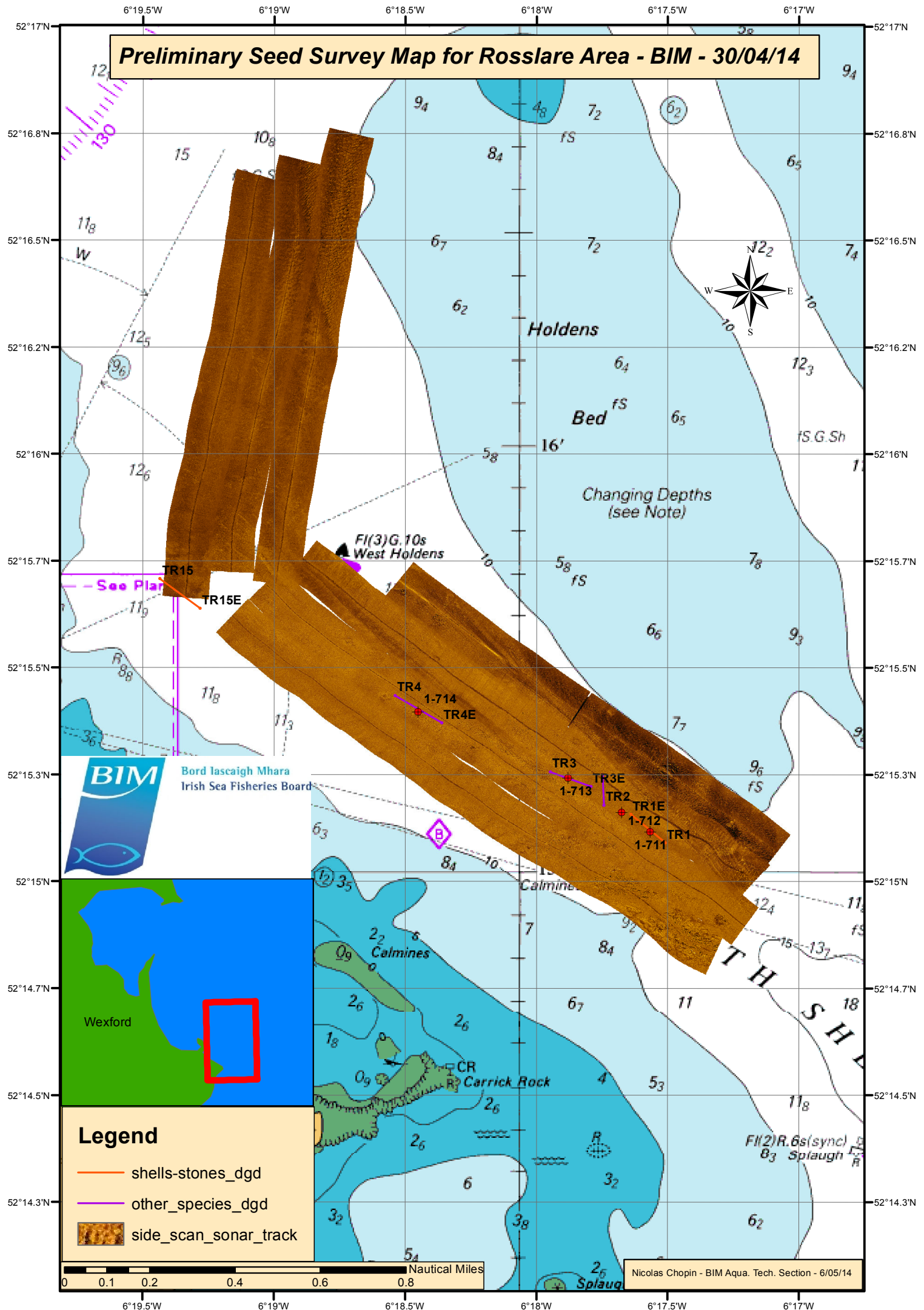
Notes for the map:

TR stands for Tow Rosslare
TB stand for Tow Blackwater
In the legend Dgd stands for Dredge

Preliminary Seed Survey Map for the North Long Bank (West and East) Area - BIM - 30/04/14



Preliminary Seed Survey Map for Rosslare Area - BIM - 30/04/14



Preliminary Seed Survey Map for the Blackwater Area - 2/05/14

