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West of Ireland Sea Angling Guide

Clew Bay - North Clare



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland



IRELAND



Getting to the West Coast

Roads: The west coast can be accessed by way of the N5, M6 & M7 from Dublin.

Airports: Ireland's main international airports are at Dublin, Cork, Shannon and Belfast. Galway & Knock regional airports also service the west coast.

Ferry Ports: The west coast can be easily accessed from Dublin, Dun Laoghaire and Cork from the South and Belfast and Larne from the North.

O/S Maps: Anglers may find the Ordnance Survey Discovery Series Map No's 30, 31, 37, 44-46, 51, 52 & 57, beneficial when visiting the west coast. These are available from most newsagents and bookstores.

For up to date angling reports and information, please log onto our dedicated angling website: www.fishinginireland.info

Tourist Information: Failte Ireland provide information on accommodation, places to eat, attractions, how to get around and much more at www.discoverireland.ie

If you come across instances of poaching, pollution or invasive species, please dial the IFI Hotline immediately: **1890 34 74 24**

Other Useful Links

Air:

www.ryanair.com
www.aerlingus.com
www.irelandwestairport.com
www.aerarann.ie
www.dublinairport.com
www.shannonairport.com

Land:

www.irishrail.ie
www.buseireann.ie
www.gobus.ie
www.citylink.ie
Sea/Ferries:
www.stena ferries.org
www.irishferries.com
www.brittanyferries.ie

Weather:

www.met.ie
Ireland Maps:
maps.osi.ie/publicviewer

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Be biosecurity aware!

<http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/invasive-species/invasive-species.html>

For information and to report

LO-CALL: 1890 34 74 24

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Introduction

Sea angling in the West of Ireland covers a vast range of fishing situations and species, from lobbing baits into the surf for humble but obliging flounder to casting long distances for big ray, and from float fishing for mullet in quiet estuaries to drifting for big sharks out in the Atlantic. Wherever you go, you have the chance of enjoying excellent fishing for your chosen quarry.

This guide covers the region from Westport, in Clew Bay, south to the rocky headlands of north Clare, including Galway Bay, Connemara, Killary, Louisburgh, Clew Bay, and the offshore islands of Inisbofin, Inisturk and the Aran Islands. The guide is in no way comprehensive, and the list of marks and venues is just a sample of what is available. There are literally hundreds of shore marks in the region that have rarely, if ever, been fished, and the potential waiting to be explored is immense. Getting off the beaten path and trying a new mark may produce the fish of a lifetime.

Boat angling in the region offers a huge variety of species, with mixed species fishing on a charter boat regularly producing 15 or more species in a day.

Saltwater Fly Fishing (SWFF) and lure fishing are becoming very popular, with soft plastic lures the latest development in this field. Species that were previously only targeted with bait are now being taken on fly and lure, and a new field of angling is just opening up.



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Porbeagle

Angling Information

Contact Inland Fisheries Ireland WRBD Angling Section for angling support, up-to-date news, information and details of charter boats, tackle shops and angling guides available in the area.

T: +353 (0)91 563118 W: www.fishinginireland.info E: galway@fisheriesireland.ie

There are many websites and angling forums on the internet with information on sea angling in Ireland. Probably the best known is www.sea-angling-ireland.org which has comprehensive information on marks, tactics, and a forum where members post reports of catches.

Tackle Shops

There are a good number of tackle shops in the region that provide tackle and bait for sea anglers. Fresh bait is difficult to obtain from tackle shops in the region unless ordered in advance, as most local anglers dig their own bait. Ragworm are extremely scarce locally, and must be ordered through a tackle shop. For a list of tackle shops in the region, check www.fishinginireland.info/tackleshops/index.htm

Charter Boats

Charter boats operate from many harbours around the coastline, and typically cater for between 8 and 12 passengers. All charter boats must be licensed by the Department of the Marine, and there are very strict criteria for safety equipment, vessel safety, and skipper training and certification. Charter boats offer access to deep water and offshore marks, and skippers are generally very knowledgeable about the fishing in their area. A good charter skipper will be able to cater for novice and experienced anglers alike, with tackle and instruction provided as standard.

For an up to date list of approved and certified charter boats in the region, consult www.fishinginireland.info/charterboats/index.htm

Clubs and Competitions

The club scene in this region is not as busy as in other provinces, although most areas have an active club, and there is a good calendar of competitions run. The West Coast Shore League is run by a number of clubs in the area, and holds competitions throughout the year on venues from north Clare all the way up to Sligo and even Donegal. Joining a club is a great way of learning how to fish, as most clubs organise outings where established members show newcomers all the tricks of the trade. It is also a great way to meet other anglers and learn about the best places to fish, and find out where is fishing well.

For a list of clubs, with secretaries' contact details and information on competitions, etc., the Irish federation of Sea Anglers has all this information available on their website at www.ifsai.ie

Weather Forecasts

Weather forecasts are broadcast daily on RTÉ Radio, television and at www.rte.ie. Check programme guides in the daily newspapers for times. Forecasts are also available on Aertel. Telephone weather forecasts are available from Irish Meteorological Service - Met Éireann at www.met.ie. Wind speeds for the whole day should be carefully checked before venturing out in small boats as weather conditions can vary throughout the day.

Tides

Tide times are published in national papers every day, and can be found online on many websites, for example: www.sailing.ie or www.pocketsizetides.com.

There are also many apps available to download for iPhone and Android phones that have tide data.

Swell/Surf

It is often important to know what sea conditions are likely to be before heading fishing, particularly when fishing rock marks, where large swell can create dangerous waves, or beach fishing, when a nice bit of surf can produce good fishing.

A good website for swell and surf forecasts is www.magicseaweed.ie which is aimed mainly at surfers, but is a valuable tool for anglers to predict surf and swell conditions.

Access and Country Code

Angling marks are sometimes reached by passing through farmland and anglers are generally allowed this access by courtesy of local farmers. If in doubt please ask farmers/land owners for permission to enter on to their land to fish. Please respect their property, light no fires, leave no litter and close all gates. Cars should be parked in designated parking areas where available and should be parked so that they do not cause obstruction.

Errors or Inaccuracies

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this guide is accurate, no responsibility will be accepted by Inland Fisheries Ireland for any errors or inaccuracies contained therein.



Angling Methods

Shore Angling

Shore angling in the region offers a wide variety of venues. There are over 30 venues listed in this guide, but the region is relatively underfished, and there are vast stretches of coastline that rarely see a rod. The angler prepared to walk a bit to explore new ground will probably be rewarded with excellent fishing. The shore marks listed in this guide are some of the better-known marks, and to aid navigation their GPS co-ordinates are included here.

Ordnance Survey maps and online resources are very good for researching prospective marks, and the OSI website has excellent interactive maps, including aerial photography. These can all help to pinpoint new marks for fishing, and anglers are encouraged to get out and explore the coastline. The interactive maps can be found at www.osi.ie

Boat Angling

Boat angling in the region is mainly practised on charter boats, although the potential for small boat angling is huge. There are a good number of charter boats based at various harbours around the coastline, all of which are certified to carry passengers, and operated by fully qualified and experienced charter skippers. The western region offers excellent rough ground fishing, with many species available over reefs, rocky ground and wrecks. The most common species available over this ground are pollack, coalfish, cod, ling, conger eel, pouting, ballan and cuckoo wrasse.

Saltwater Fly Fishing

Saltwater fly fishing (SWFF) has become more popular in recent years, and offers anglers a very sporting method of catching fish on light tackle. Modern fly rods are so light and responsive that even a small fish can provide great sport, and mackerel are very popular quarry for fly anglers. SWFF also has the advantage of being able to travel light, and cover plenty of ground. The most common species targeted by fly anglers in the region are pollack, mackerel, mullet, bass and sea trout. **NB: please remember a State licence is required in order to fish for sea trout.**

A typical saltwater fly outfit consists of a rod rated to cast an 8-9 weight line, with a large arbour corrosion-resistant reel suitable for saltwater. Floating, intermediate and sinking fly lines are part of the armoury, and fast-sinking poly leaders are also useful in some situations. Saltwater fly anglers often use a line basket attached to their waist to catch the coils of line as they retrieve. This avoids the line being snagged around their feet on rocks as it is moved around by tide or swell.

For bass, large flies that imitate sandeel or sprat work well. Pollack favour large flies that are dressed with red or yellow materials. Mullet are targeted mainly in quiet estuaries with smaller flies that imitate maggots, or pieces of bread, and pre-baiting with bread works well. Some anglers also have success with very small (size 16) salmon flies, such as a Cascade, for mullet.

Fly casting takes a bit of practice to master, and a lesson with a casting instructor is recommended. There are many qualified casting instructors around the country, and a list can be found at www.fishinginireland.info/guides/index.htm



Lure Fishing

Lure fishing is basically the art of fishing with artificial lures. These include various spinners, plugs and lures of various materials, usually metal, plastic or wood, and in recent years soft plastic lures have become very popular. Spinning was always a popular pursuit for anglers after mackerel and pollack, as well as bass and sea trout, with metal lures such as the German sprat and Kilty catcher very popular. In recent years, lure development has accelerated, and there is a vast choice of metal and hard plastic lures available, with different actions, swimming depths, and styles of retrieve.



Soft Plastic Lures

Soft plastic lures are an even more recent development that have evolved from the successful jellyworms, popular for pollack, and now include a vast choice of soft lures in different sizes and shapes. Typically a soft plastic lure is threaded onto a hook, and can be rigged in a number of ways. Texas-style rigging is a popular method, where the hook point remains buried under the skin of the lure until a fish takes it. This method has the advantage of allowing a lure to be fished in heavy weed without snagging, as the hook point is hidden.

Soft plastic lure fishing is chiefly targeted at pollack, wrasse and bass, and while wrasse were previously targeted only with bait, soft plastics have proved very successful at targeting them, with the added benefit of less tackle losses, and no need for junk leads!

Lure fishing typically involves much lighter tackle, with rods as small as 6-7 feet being used for close inshore fishing with soft plastics. Light 2-3000 sized fixed-spool reels are teamed with these rods, and braid mainline is most effective, as bite detection is far superior to traditional nylon.

There are a growing number of articles and blogs on the internet about lure fishing, and a quick Google search will bring up plenty of information for anglers interested in trying it.

Specimen Hunting

Specimen hunting has become very popular in recent years. Specimen fish are fish over a certain size (weight), that are regarded as trophy fish for that species because of their size. The Irish Specimen Fish Committee (ISFC) is a voluntary organisation, whose main aim is to verify and publicise the capture the specimen fish caught on rod and line in Ireland, from both freshwater and sea. ISFC maintains a record of all specimen fish, and publishes an annual report with details of all specimen fish caught for all species that year. There is also an annual award ceremony.

Specimen fish must be weighed on a certified scales to be acceptable, and the claim must be verified by the ISFC. Anglers must submit a claim form with all the details of

the capture. Anglers whose claims have been accepted qualify for a specimen award, which is a special merit badge for specimen fish, and a silver medal for a record fish. There are also awards for anglers who have caught more than 10 specimens, and more than 10 species.

Some species are not accepted for specimen awards due to their rarity, as it is not considered acceptable to target these species.

Full details of the rules, eligible species and specimen weights, as well as information on how to make a claim, are available from www.irish-trophy-fish.com

Species Hunting

Many anglers like to catch a variety of species, and having the various techniques to target different species is part of the challenge of shore angling. In recent years, targeting mini-species has become popular, as anglers seek to challenge themselves further by expanding their range of skills and boosting their species count. This is invariably done on a catch-and-release basis. There are a large variety of mini-species available, including poor cod, corkwing wrasse, rockcook wrasse, goldsinny wrasse, long-spined sea scorpion, tompot blenny, rock goby and more. Most of these species are taken on very small baited hooks, although fishing for them with miniature soft plastic lures is also proving successful.



John Dory

A close-up photograph of a fishing rod and reel resting on a rocky shore covered in seaweed. The rod has a blue and black handle and a silver reel with green line. The reel has 'EXAGE 3000STC' written on it. The background is a large, mossy rock.

Tackle & Rigs

Rods

There are rods to cover all types of angling, species and conditions, and dedicated sea anglers often have a large number of rods to cover all these situations. However, one or two rods can cover most of the shore angling found in the region. For most shore angling, a beach caster of 12-13 feet that can cast 3-6 ounces is required. Either a fixed spool reel or multiplier can be teamed with the rod. A shockleader must always be used when casting weighted traces from the shore. This is a length of heavier line running from the trace up the rod and onto the reel for several turns. The shockleader serves to absorb the shock to the mainline from casting a heavy weight, and prevents "crackoffs" where the mainline parts under the shock of casting and the lead weight and trace can fly off in any direction. A general rule of thumb is to use 10lbs breaking strain for every ounce of lead used, so to cast a 5oz lead use a 50lbs shockleader. Using line that is too light for casting heavy weights is extremely dangerous and should never be done.

For some situations, heavier gear is required – a 12-14 ft rod rated to cast 5-8oz weights, and powerful enough to pull fish out of heavy weed and rough ground. A robust reel is required to be teamed with this gear – certain reels are very popular among anglers for this purpose.

In many situations, a light spinning rod between 8-10 feet is perfectly adequate. Spinning for mackerel, pollack and other species does not require heavy tackle, and a lighter rod will provide more sport when playing fish. Float fishing is also a popular method, and again a lighter rod is perfect for this.

For boat angling, a short rod is usually used, anything between 6-8 feet being most common. Boat rods are rated for the size of fish expected, with the most popular rating probably the 12-20lbs category. This will cover most situations for boat angling, including reef fishing for pollack and other species, and fishing over clean ground for ray and other clean ground species. For heavier fishing, particularly for shark, a rod rated 30-50lbs is ideal, and for targeting really big fish, like Common Skate, that run to over 200lbs, a 50-80lbs class rod may be needed. Rods should be teamed with appropriate reels and breaking strain line to cope with the expected species.

All good tackle shops should be able to offer good advice on tackle.

Weights

There are many different kinds of lead weights, all designed for different purposes. For most sea fishing anglers will use weights between 1 and 6 ounces, heavier weights are used for distance casting, or for holding bottom in a strong current. Weights come in all shapes and sizes, and different shapes help the weight to move, or not, in a certain way, in a current. Grip weights have wires attached, which when engaged help to anchor the weight on the bottom and stop it being dragged in the current. The wires can be disengaged too. Many grip weights also have a bait clip attached, which helps to anchor the baited hook close to the weight during the cast, reducing drag and adding distance.

For most beach fishing close in, a 2 or 3oz lead is sufficient. Flounder and turbot will investigate a moving bait, so a rolling lead that will move around in the surf can be more productive. If the tide rip is strong a heavier lead will be needed, maybe up to 5 or 6oz, and you may need to choose a lead that doesn't move around as much, e.g. a storm lead, pyramid lead, or watch lead. Sometimes twitching the bait back in slowly will create a bit of interest, and a watch lead is good here as it kicks up small clouds of sand each time it is dragged, attracting interest from fish.

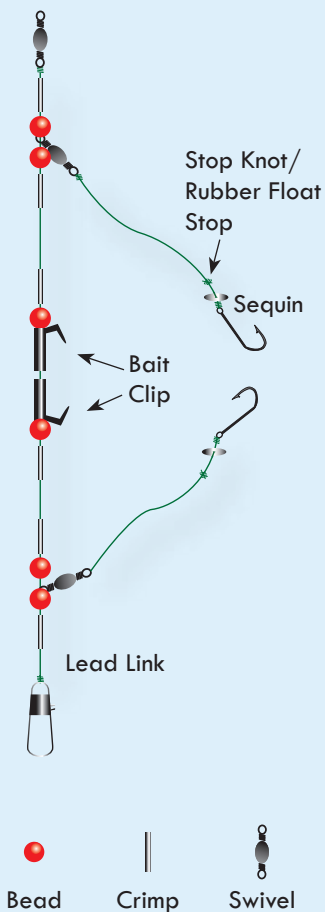
Fishing for ray, dogfish and bull huss usually requires a longer cast into deeper water, and as these fish mainly hunt by scent, the bait should not move around much, so that fish can follow the scent trail to the bait. A 4-6oz grip lead is best in this situation, with the wires engaged so that the bait doesn't move in the current.

For spinning and float fishing, lighter leads are the order of the day, anything from 1/4oz to 2oz being the norm. Bullet leads with a hollow drilled core slide onto the line and are more streamlined for casting.



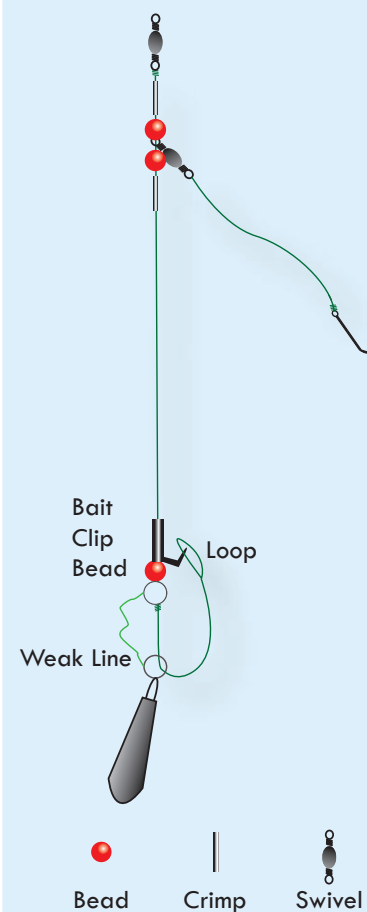
Traces - Shore Rigs

1 Up 1 Down Rig



This rig allows two baits to be fished at distance. The hooked baits are secured with bait clips which streamline the trace causing less friction while casting.

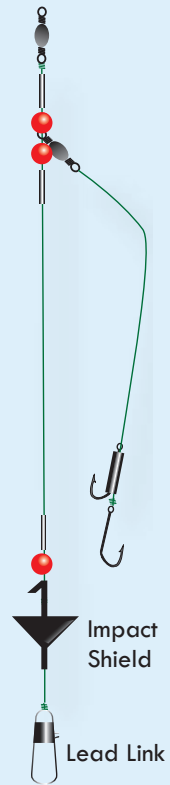
Rotten Bottom Rig



This rig is useful for fishing in rough ground for wrasse and conger. The weaker link (rotten bottom) breaks when the lead snags resulting in a lost lead but captured fish.

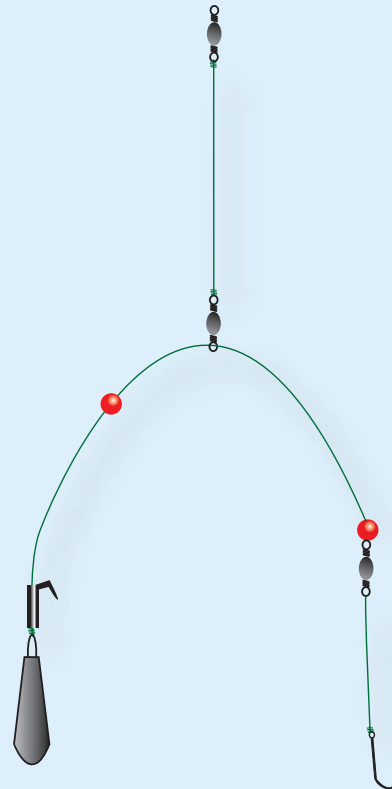
Traces - Shore Rigs

Pennel Rig



This rig allows a large bait to be fished for e.g. bass, ray or huss. Two hooks secure the bait which allows for better bait presentation and the advantage of a hook either end of the bait.

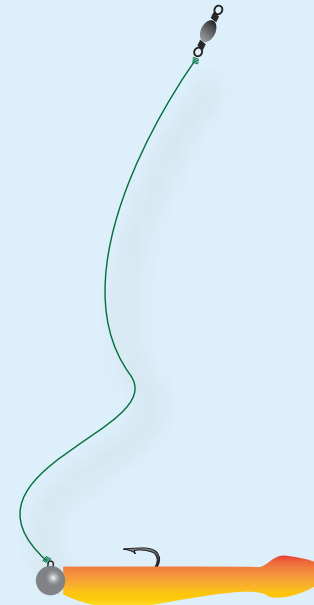
Pulley Rig



This rig is useful for fishing over rough ground. It allows the lead to be lifted clear of snags when retrieving. It's very useful in rocky gullies when fishing for wrasse & conger and when shore fishing over weed covered rocks for ray & huss.

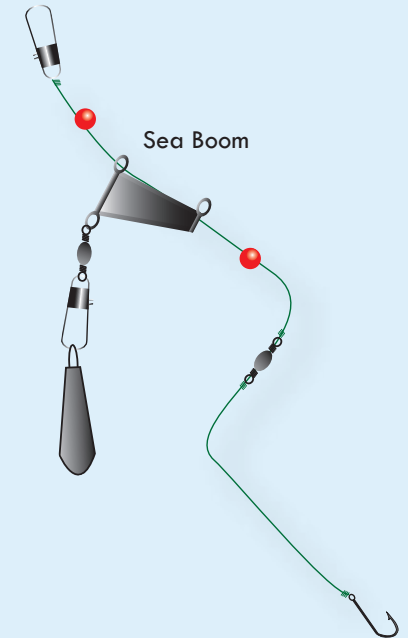
Traces - Boat Rigs

Shad on Lead Weight



This configuration is great fished with a spinning rod from a boat on the drift. Cast in the direction the boat is drifting and retrieve as the boat drifts over. It's effective on wrecks or over rough ground for pollack or coalfish.

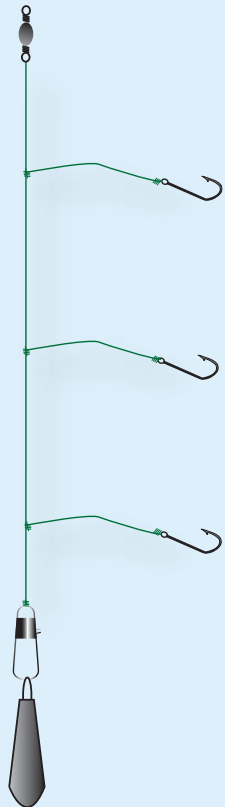
The Running Leger



A running leger can be used on the drift or down-tiding at anchor when you require your bait to fish tight to the bottom. This can be used in many variations of hook size and baits for all bottom feeding fish.

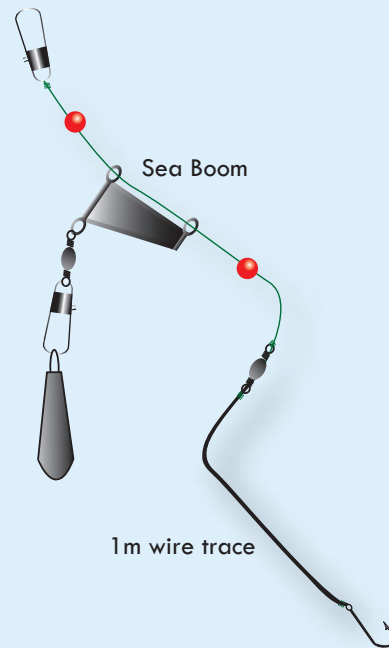
Traces - Boat Rigs

3 Hook Paternoster



A 3 hook paternoster rig can be used on the drift or down tiding to present a variety of baits at different heights off the bottom. It is also often used with a range of artificial baits or feathers for most whitefish or higher in the water for mackerel or scad.

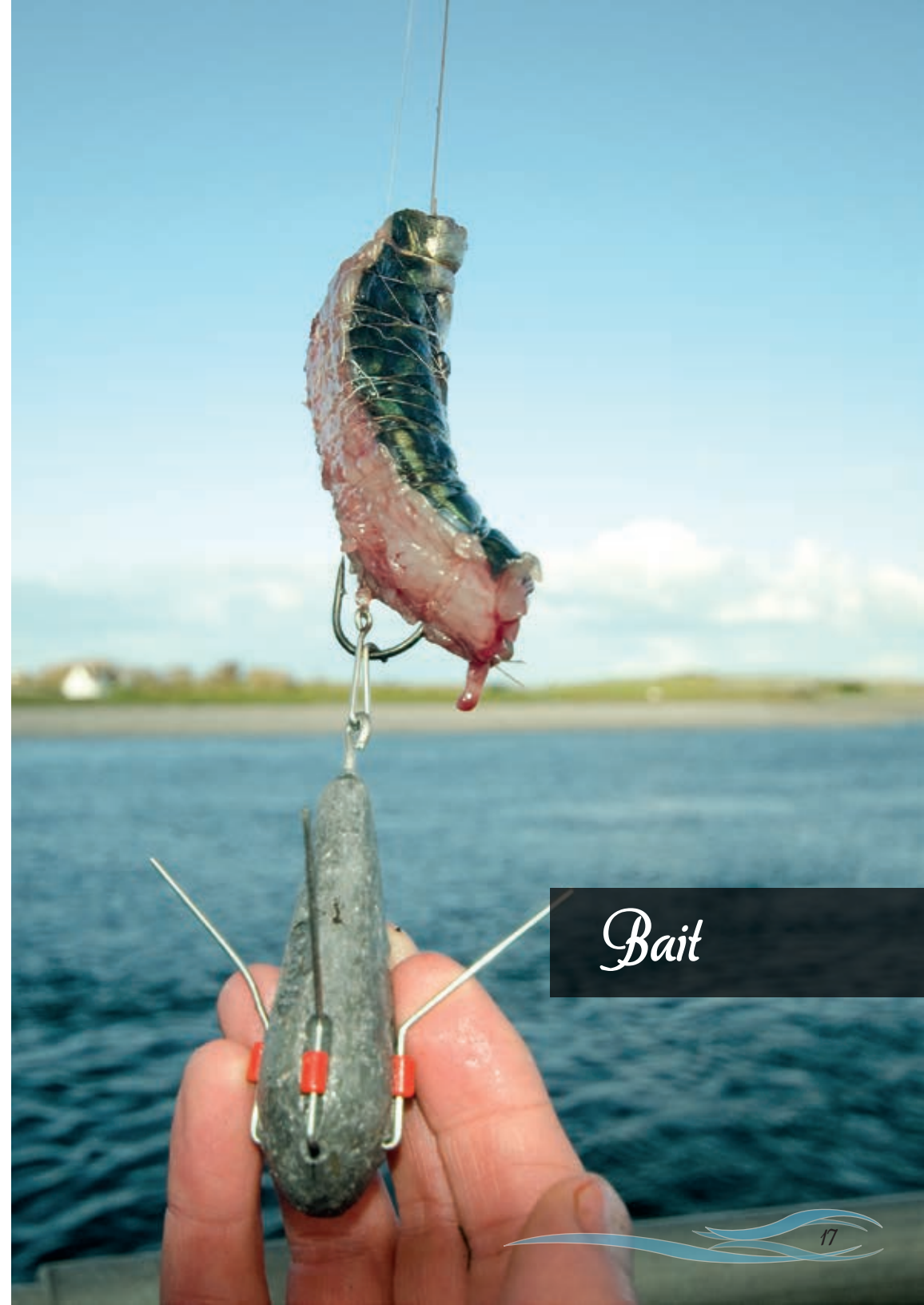
Conger and Tope Trace



 Bead

 Swivel

This is much like the running leger but with a wire trace as protection against abrasion from sharp teeth.



Bait

Lugworm

Common black lugworm, or blow lug as it is known, can be dug on many sandy beaches and estuaries around the region. Lugworm is an excellent bait for shore fishing, particularly for flatfish such as flounder and turbot. It is also very good for targeting coalfish and whiting. It is often tipped off with a small strip of mackerel or squid to make a cocktail bait, and tipping off helps to keep the lugworm up the hook and makes for better bait presentation.



Mackerel



Mackerel is one of the most common baits used by sea anglers. As an oily fish, it gives off a great scent trail, and can draw fish into an area using their sense of smell. It is an excellent bait for both shore and boat fishing, and takes a wide range of species. It can be fished on its own, or as part of a cocktail bait, and is often used to tip off worm baits.

Ragworm

Ragworm is hard to find on the west coast, and is usually easier to obtain by ordering in a tackle shop. Ragworm is mainly a bait for boat anglers on the west coast, it is rarely used by shore anglers. It can be presented whole, or cut in sections. Even cut into inch long sections it will continue to move on the hook for some time, and it is this movement that often triggers a bite. It is very good for fishing over rough ground and reefs, where it is a great bait for ballan and cuckoo wrasse, cod, pollack, coalfish and several other species.

Sandeel

Sandeel shoal in huge numbers during the summer months, and many species feed on them at this time. They are an oily fish and produce good scent. They are mainly used by shore anglers targeting ray, dogfish, bull huss and flatfish. They can be presented whole, or cut in half, and bound to the hook with bait elastic.

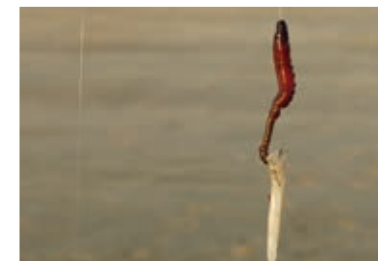


Crab

Crab is not a common bait used in the region, although it has its uses. It is much more common on the south coast, where estuary fishing for bass using peeler crab is popular. Hardback crabs can be used when fishing from rocks, and are a great bait for targeting wrasse.

Squid

Squid can be obtained in most tackle shops, and many seafood shops too. A box of calamari squid is quite cheap, and provides a good supply of bait. Squid is most commonly used in strips to tip off other baits. It provides a visual attractant as the white strip flutters in the current (see photo). Squid can also be used to wrap fish or cocktail baits, such as mackerel and lug, to form a sausage bound with bait elastic to keep it on the hook. The tougher squid helps to protect the bait inside from crabs, and keeps it fishing for longer.



Harbour Ragworm

Harbour rag is better known to anglers as "maddies". They are small, red coloured ragworm found in soft muddy estuaries. Maddies are popular with shore anglers, particularly competition anglers, as they can often be the difference between catching fish and blanking in tough conditions. Maddies are usually fished very close in, in the surf, for flatfish. They are not a suitable bait for power casting, as they are quite soft and fly off the hook. They are hooked through the head on a fine wire hook, usually several at a time, and can be used to tip off other baits. They provide very good movement, and can attract flatfish even in the calmest conditions.



Razor Clam

Razor clams, or razorfish, are long bivalve shellfish found on sandy beaches around the low spring water mark. They can be collected on a low spring tide by pouring salt down their burrow and waiting for the clam to pop up in the sand. This is only possible on the very low spring tides that expose more sand.

Razorfish is a good bait for shore fishing, especially for bass and flatfish. It can be fished on its own, or as part of a cocktail bait with other baits. It is soft, and needs to be bound to the hook with bait elastic for casting.



Species

Over 30 species can be landed from shore and boat in the region, from the humble but obliging flounder to Blue and Porbeagle Sharks, and the magnificent Common Skate.

1 Flounder (*Platichthys flesus*)

A right sided flatfish (eyes on the right hand side), but may be reversed. Dark brown to a light greenish-grey colour on top, often mottled, with orange spots (not as obvious as in plaice), white underneath. Has a series of enlarged, rough scales on the head, along the lateral line, and at the base of the dorsal and anal fins on the eyed side, which are very noticeable when you run a finger along it. Grows to 5lbs (>55cm), although most are less than 2lbs (~40cm). Often found in fresh water well above tidal limits. Flounder can be caught all year round, although most migrate offshore to spawn from December to March, and fishing picks up again from April. The best fishing tends to be in autumn, when fish are feeding hard prior to the spawning migration. The Irish record is 4.91lbs, and specimen weight is 1.36kg (3lbs).



2 Dab (*Limanda limanda*)

Another flatfish, often confused with flounder, although usually less mottled in colour and with no orange spots. Grows to 2.5lbs, but averages much smaller than this normally. Found over sandy/gravelly ground, but in the west of Ireland tends to be found in slightly deeper water, whereas on the east coast it is more common on shallow beaches. Worm baits are usually best, and beads and attractors on a trace work well.



3 Turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*)

Turbot are a flatfish prized for their flavour, and can grow quite large. They have a distinctive diamond shape, almost as wide as they are long, and a mottled brown appearance. Like the flounder, it is a right sided flatfish, with the bottom side almost transparent white. There are numerous bony tubercles or bumps on the upper side. Turbot can grow to over 40lbs, but inshore anglers rarely catch them over 5lbs. The Irish record is 34lbs, and specimen weight is 8.165kgs (18lbs).



4 Plaice (*Pleuronectes platessa*)

The plaice is another flatfish, very similar in appearance to the flounder, but with typically much brighter red/orange spots. It lacks the bony tubercles, and is very smooth to the touch, often the only way to tell the difference. Plaice can grow to 10lbs or more. The Irish record is 8.23lbs, and the specimen weight is 1.814kgs (4lbs).



5 Lesser Spotted Dogfish (*Scyliorhinus caniculus*)

The lesser spotted dogfish, commonly referred to as the dogfish, is a member of the shark family, and is one of the most commonly caught species in Ireland. It has an elongate body, with very coarse skin that feels like sandpaper to the touch. Generally brown in colour, with mottled and spotted appearance. The Irish record weight is 4.25lbs, and the specimen weight is 1.474kgs (3.25lbs).



6 Greater Spotted Dogfish or Bull Huss (*Scyliorhinus stellaris*)

The bull huss, as it is better known, is a larger version of the dogfish. It has a thicker more muscular appearance, and is usually darker in appearance, with more pronounced dark spots. The nasal flaps extend to the mouth, unlike dogfish, and the teeth are much more evident (take care when unhooking). The bull huss can grow to 25lbs or more. The Irish record is 23lbs 13oz, and the specimen weight is 7.257kgs (16lbs).



7 Thornback Ray (*Raja clavata*)

The thornback ray is the most common ray in the region, found close inshore on sandy areas to deep offshore banks, and one of the most targeted species for sea anglers. It has a diamond-shaped appearance, tapering to a long tail, and a mottled brown colour on top, pale underneath. There are numerous sharp spines across its upper surface and along the tail, hence the name, and they should be handled with care. Generally caught in summer from May to October, although can be taken in deeper water outside this period. The thornback ray can grow to over 40lbs. The Irish record is 37lbs, and the specimen weight is 9.072kgs (20lbs).



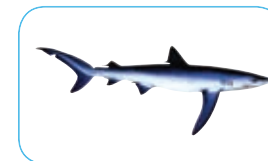
8 Tope (*Galeorhinus galeus*)

The tope is another member of the shark family, with the typical sleek profile. It is a mainly slate-grey colour on top, pale underneath. The tope is migratory and tagged fish have been caught thousands of kilometres from where they were originally caught. They are often found cruising deep channels close inshore, and can be caught from shore or boat. The tope can grow to over 80lbs, with the Irish record standing at 66.5lbs. The specimen weight is 18.144kgs (40lbs).



9 Blue shark (*Prionace glauca*)

The blue shark is found in summertime off Irish coasts, generally in deeper water (over 100 feet). Another migratory species, they are very sensitive to scent in the water, and putting down a good trail of "rubby-dubby" is essential to success when targeting blues. They are very hard-fighting and test tackle to the limit, so adequate rods, reels and end tackle are important. Blue sharks can grow to over 250lbs, and the Irish record is 206lbs. The specimen weight is 45.359kgs (100lbs).



10 Pollack (*Pollachius pollachius*)

The pollack is ubiquitous to rocky shorelines, reefs and wrecks, and is known for its fighting qualities. A deep brown on top, with golden bronze flanks, it is a member of the cod family, distinguished from its near relative the coalfish by the protruding lower jaw, and the lateral line which bends around the pectoral fin. Generally a summer species, especially from the shore. The pollack can grow to over 20lbs. The Irish record is 19lbs 3oz, and the specimen weight is 5.443kgs (12lbs).



11 Cod (*Gadus morhua*)

The cod is one of the more sought after species for its eating qualities. It has a pale brown appearance with darker mottling and spots, and is rarely mistaken for other fish. The cod can be caught from a wide variety of locations, from rocky reefs and deepwater wrecks to areas of shingle and sand, and also in harbours and some estuaries. Cod can be taken throughout the year, although wintertime is best for shore anglers. Cod can grow to over 50lbs, although most specimens are much smaller than this. The Irish record is 42lbs, and the specimen weight is 9.072kgs (20lbs).



12 Coalfish (*Pollachius virens*)

The coalfish is a member of the pollack family, although unlike the pollack, its upper and lower jaws are the same length. Common over rocky ground, reefs and wrecks, it grows to 15kgs. Small coalfish are very common inshore in wintertime, particularly after dark, sometimes in 'plague' proportions. Generally targeted by boat anglers with feathers or artificial lures over rough ground.



13 Ling (*Molva molva*)

The ling is a member of the cod family, although it has a long eel-like appearance. It has a noticeable barbel under the chin, and is known for its very sharp teeth. It is found on offshore reefs and wrecks and is rarely, if ever caught by shore anglers. The ling is known both as a hard-fighting and good eating fish, and is sought after by boat anglers. Grows to over 60lbs. The Irish record is 55lbs, and the specimen weight is 11.35kgs (25lbs).



14 Mackerel (*Scomber scombrus*)

Mackerel are very common along the coast in summer and into autumn, forming vast shoals at times, and can be very easily caught when they are feeding hard on sprat or sandeels. Easily identified by the dark wavy stripes on the green upper body and silver undersides. Mackerel are an important bait fish when fishing for other species. They can grow to about 4lbs, although 1-2lbs is the normal maximum size. The Irish record is 4.125lbs, and the specimen weight is 1.134kgs (2.5lbs).



15 Wrasse (*Labrus spp*)

The wrasse family comprises a number of species. The most common around our coasts are the ballan wrasse (*Labrus bergylta*), which grows to about 10lbs, and the cuckoo wrasse (*Labrus mixtus*), which grows to about 2lbs. They favour rough ground, and are often caught around reefs by boat anglers. Wrasse are deep bodied fish and powerful fighters, and are known to take baits very aggressively. The ballan wrasse can be green to dark brown in colour, usually mottled, and lighter underneath. The male cuckoo wrasse is very distinct with deep orange and blue markings. The female cuckoo is much plainer, a light brown colour with a large dark spot near the tail. The Irish record ballan wrasse is 4.3kgs (9.46lbs), and a specimen is 2.154kgs (4.75lbs). The record cuckoo is 2lbs 7oz, and a specimen is 0.567kgs (1.25lbs).



16 Bass (*dicentrarchus labrax*)

The bass is one of the most sought after sport fishes for Irish anglers. It is usually found inshore, in estuaries, on surf beaches, and on rocky shorelines as the tide fills. Bass are much more numerous on southern coasts, but more and more are now being caught on the west coast, particularly on some of the Atlantic storm beaches. They are very silver-bodied, with a spiky dorsal fins and sharp edged gill plates. They are protected by law, with a 2 fish limit in any 24 hour period, a 40cm minimum size limit, and a closed season from May 15 to June 15 inclusive. Bass grow to over 20lbs, but it may take over 30 years to attain this size, so conservation is very important. The Irish record is 17lbs 13oz, and specimen weight is 4.536kgs (10lbs).



17 Conger Eel (*Conger conger*)

The conger eel is a large marine eel, with a long muscular body and continuous dorsal, caudal and anal fins. The mouth is large, with sharp teeth, and the upper jaw protrudes slightly. Found both inshore in rocky areas and around piers, and offshore on reefs and wrecks. Can grow to over 100lbs, but the Irish record is 72lbs. The specimen weight is 18.144kgs (40lbs).



18 Porbeagle Shark (*Lamna nasus*)

The porbeagle shark is a large shark, with a thicker more muscular appearance than the blue. It is slate grey on the dorsal side, paler underneath. It is generally found in deeper water, but can be quite close to land where deep water comes close to shore. Also found patrolling wrecks and reefs feeding on baitfish. The porbeagle is extremely powerful, and heavy gear is required if targeting them. Can grow to over 500lbs, the Irish record is 365lbs. The specimen weight is 68.038kgs (150lbs).



19 Garfish (*Belone belone*)

A type of needlefish, the garfish is mainly a summer species in Ireland, where it is found near the surface both inshore and offshore. It is often caught while fishing for blue shark, as it follows the scent trail laid down by ruby-dubby, and is usually caught by float fishing, with a small strip of mackerel the best bait.



20 Gurnard

There are 3 species of gurnard found in Irish waters. Grey Gurnard (*Eutrigla gurnardus*) which grows to about 3.5lbs, and is less colourful than the others; it is also slimmer in body shape and the pectoral fins do not reach as far as the vent. The red Gurnard (*Aspitrigla cuculus*), grows to about 4lbs, and is generally more vividly coloured with a red/orange body and fins, and the pectoral fins reach as far as the vent. The Tub Gurnard (*Trigla lucerna*) is the largest, found to about 12lbs, and is the most brightly coloured, with a red/orange body and bright blue pectoral fins with orange around the edges. The tub also has a more rounded dorsal fin, and the pectoral fin reaches past the vent. All 3 species are found in water of 15-50m depth, usually offshore and generally caught by boat anglers, but small tub and grey gurnards are sometimes caught by shore anglers from deep water shore marks.



21 Haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*)

A common catch by boat anglers off the west coast, the haddock is another member of the pollack family, generally found over clean ground in deeper water. It has a brown-greenish back and grey-silver on the sides, with a distinctive brown spot, about the size of a thumbprint, along the flank. Bottom fishing with worm, mackerel or shellfish baits is usually successful.



22 Common Skate (*Raja batis*)

The Common Skate is a large, slow-growing member of the skate family, with a long pointed snout and broad wings. It is found on sandy and stony bottoms, and is usually caught on fish baits. The skate is an exceptionally strong fish, requiring heavy tackle, including strong hooks and line, and often taking a long time to land. It is most common in Clew Bay, although it is endangered and protected by law. Skate are not eligible for specimen fish claims, and fish should be returned immediately.

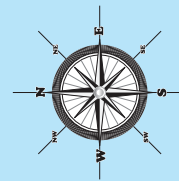
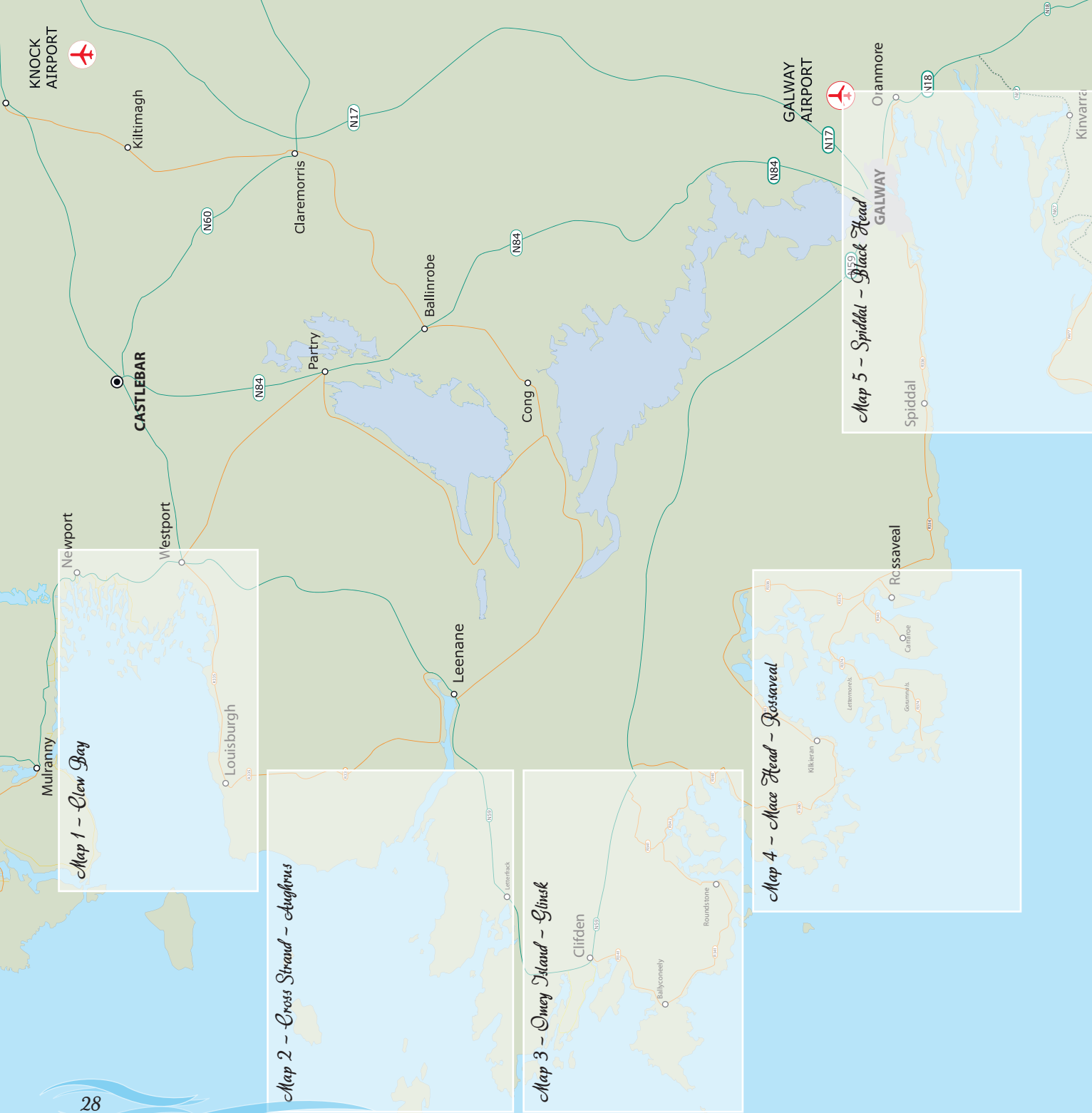


19 Lesser Weeverfish (*Echiichthys vipera*)

This small fish is not a target species of anglers, but it is one that all beach anglers should familiarise themselves with. It is found on many clean sandy beaches in the region, and is an indicator of very clean water. However, it is the weeverfish's venomous sting that it is better known for. There are several sharp spines on the dorsal fin and around the gill plates, which can inject venom into unsuspecting hands or feet. Be very careful when handling and unhooking these fish, and it is also advised not to wade barefoot when fishing on low spring tides, as the fish bury themselves in the sand in shallow water, and will not be noticed until stepped on. The sting can vary from very sore to excruciating, and the only remedy is to steep the affected body part in very hot water, as hot as the person can stand. Hot water (over 40C) denatures the venom proteins. Some people may suffer an allergic reaction to the sting and go into anaphylactic shock. Medical attention should be sought immediately in this case, as this may prove fatal.

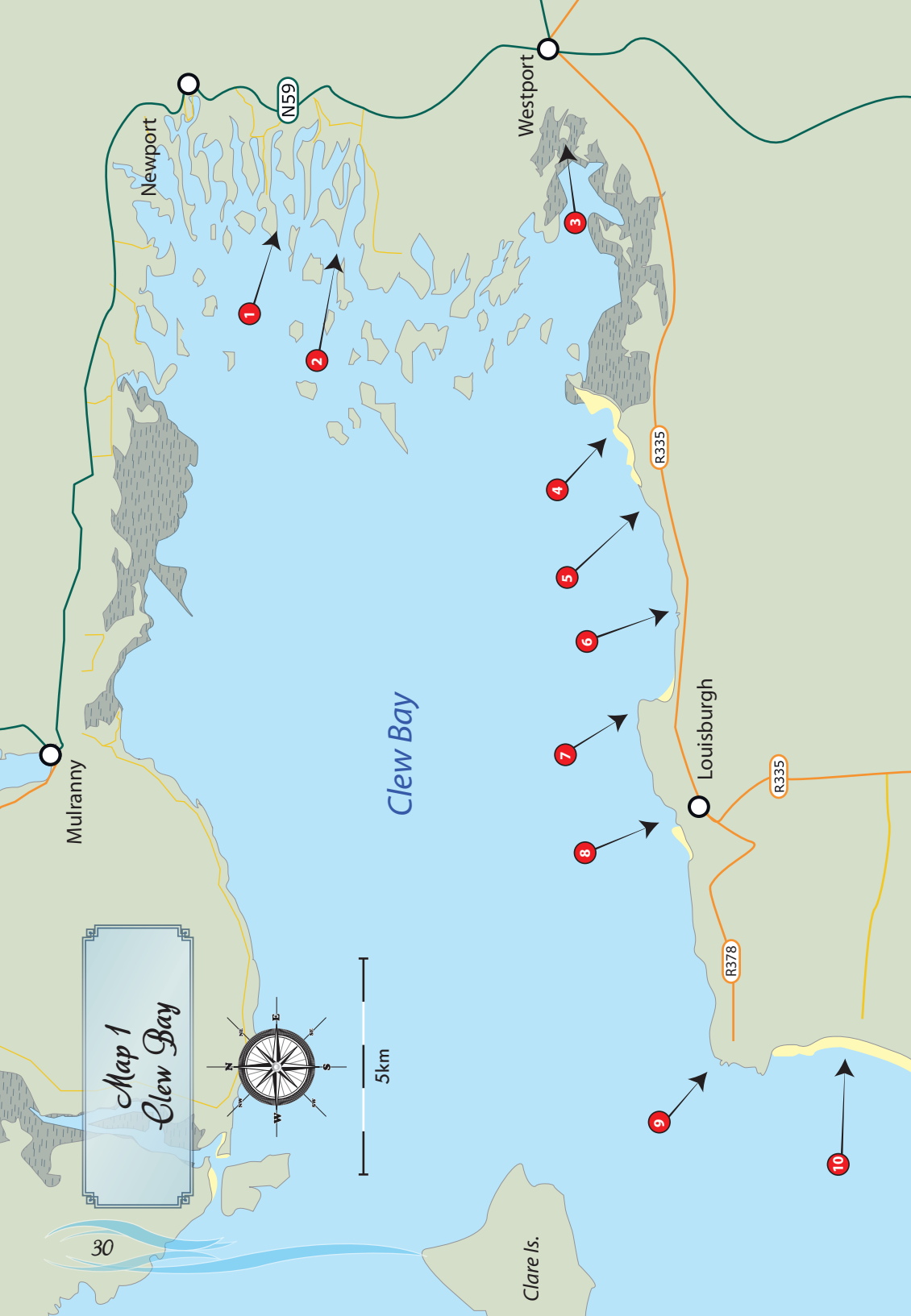


Angling Marks



Maps of Angling Marks





1 Rossanrubble (53.86541, -9.5915)

Rossanrubble is one of Clew Bay's noted marks for thornback ray and bull huss. Huss to double figures are regularly taken at many marks in the bay, from boat and shore, and Rossanrubble is one of the more reliable spots.

Fishing is into a deep channel, a short (60m) cast from the shore. Fish baits including mackerel and sandeel work best, although crabs can be active and can strip the hook in minutes, so check your bait regularly. Good thornback ray are also taken here, and anglers should keep an eye on the rod tip constantly for bites, to avoid losing rod and all!

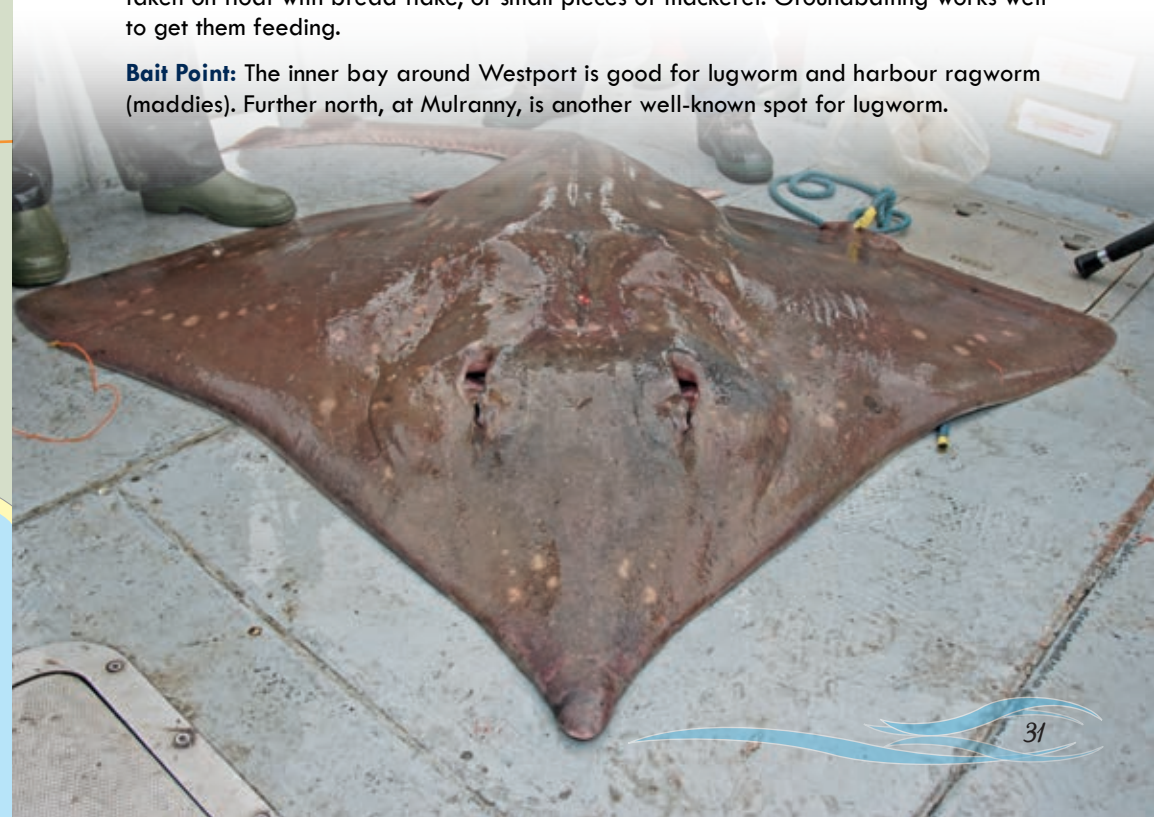
2 Inisnakillew (53.85187, -9.6088)

Inisnakillew is a small island in Clew Bay joined to the mainland by a causeway. Park at the end of the causeway and follow the shoreline around to the right, after a 20 minute walk the shoreline provides good access to a deep water channel, which holds dogfish, thornback ray and bull huss to double figures. Fish baits are best. There is weed for about 10m out from the shore, so fish with slightly heavier tackle here so you can bully fish in through the weed. If fishing at night beware of foxes stealing your bait!

3 Westport Pier (53.80282, -9.55753)

The pier in Westport is very tidal, and only accessible to boats for part of the tide. Large expanses of sand and mudflats are exposed nearby at low tide, allowing easy digging for lugworm and maddies. Mullet are very common around the pier and can be taken on float with bread flake, or small pieces of mackerel. Groundbaiting works well to get them feeding.

Bait Point: The inner bay around Westport is good for lugworm and harbour ragworm (maddies). Further north, at Mulranny, is another well-known spot for lugworm.



4 Bertra (53.78846, -9.66080)

Bertra is a long peninsula on the south shore of Clew Bay, a few miles west of Westport. The car park is signposted from the main road. The peninsula is a long narrow strip of sand dunes extending northwards into the bay, with a sandy beach on the western side. Fishing from the beach produces flounder, turbot, dogfish and the odd bass. Coalfish and whiting are also landed in autumn and winter. A good walk along the dunes to the end of the peninsula allows access to the main channel and deep water. The channel can be impossible to fish during the flood, but is fishable over low and high water, and can produce ray, dogfish, bull huss and tope. Low water is best for this mark.

Spinning from the end of the point in summer with feathers or small lures will take mackerel in good numbers, particularly on the flood tide. Bass can also be taken spinning from the point, and from the northern side of the reef which protrudes from the strand.

Fishing over high water in the sheltered water on the eastern side of the spit can produce thornback ray, tope and even monkfish have been reported here.

Bait Point: Lugworm can be dug from the sand flats to the eastern side of the spit.

Bertra



5 Lecanvey Pier (53.78340, -9.69007)

Lecanvey Pier is located about 2km west of Bertra, off the main R335 road. The pier offers access to sandy ground in a small bay, with flounder and dabs the most common species, as well as dogfish and occasional ray. There is a small patch of rough ground off the end of the pier, offering small pollack and coalfish. Night time fishing in winter should produce coalfish, whiting and rockling. Mackerel can be taken here over high water in summer.

6 Kilsallagh (53.77388, -9.7323)

From the rocks below the old schoolhouse at Kilsallagh there is a stretch of coast which offers several fishing stations. **Care should be taken in wet conditions as the rocks here can be very slippery. This mark should not be fished in high north or north-westerly winds.**

Spinning over high water will produce mackerel, pollack and coalfish, while float/lure fishing will produce wrasse close in. There are some stretches of clean sandy ground, where bottom fishing will produce dabs, dogfish, ray, plaice and gurnard.

7 Old Head Louisburgh (53.778315, -9.770064)

The pier at Old Head is signposted from the main R335 Westport-Louisburgh road. Fishing from the pier will produce flounder, dogfish, dab and occasional ray. There is a nice walk through an oak wood to the left of the pier which leads to the headland. In summer, mackerel come in close here and are easily caught. Bottom fishing over rough ground will produce wrasse and conger, as well as pollack. Casting 100m or so will reach sand, with a good mix of species, including plaice, dabs, gurnard, dogfish, bull huss and ray. Fishing over high water is considered the best period.

This mark should not be fished in high winds, especially northerly or northwesterly winds, as the rocks are swept by large waves in these conditions.

Bait Point: Lugworm and sandeel can be dug from the beach south of the pier.

8 Carrowmore Strand (53.76939, -9.8253)

The beach at Carrowmore, north of Louisburgh, is a good mark for flounder, with bass a possibility also in good surf conditions. At the western end of the beach a small road leads to the pier. Fishing off the seaward side of the pier is difficult due to two rocky outcrops, but spinning over high water will produce pollack, coalfish and mackerel. There is sandy ground between the rock outcrops that can produce codling, whiting and coalfish to worm baits late in the year.

Fishing from the end of the pier onto a sandy bottom produces dogfish and dabs at night.

Bait Point: Sandeel can be dug on the beach just west of the Bunowen river mouth.

Electric Ray



9 Roonagh Quay (53.76279, -9.9049)

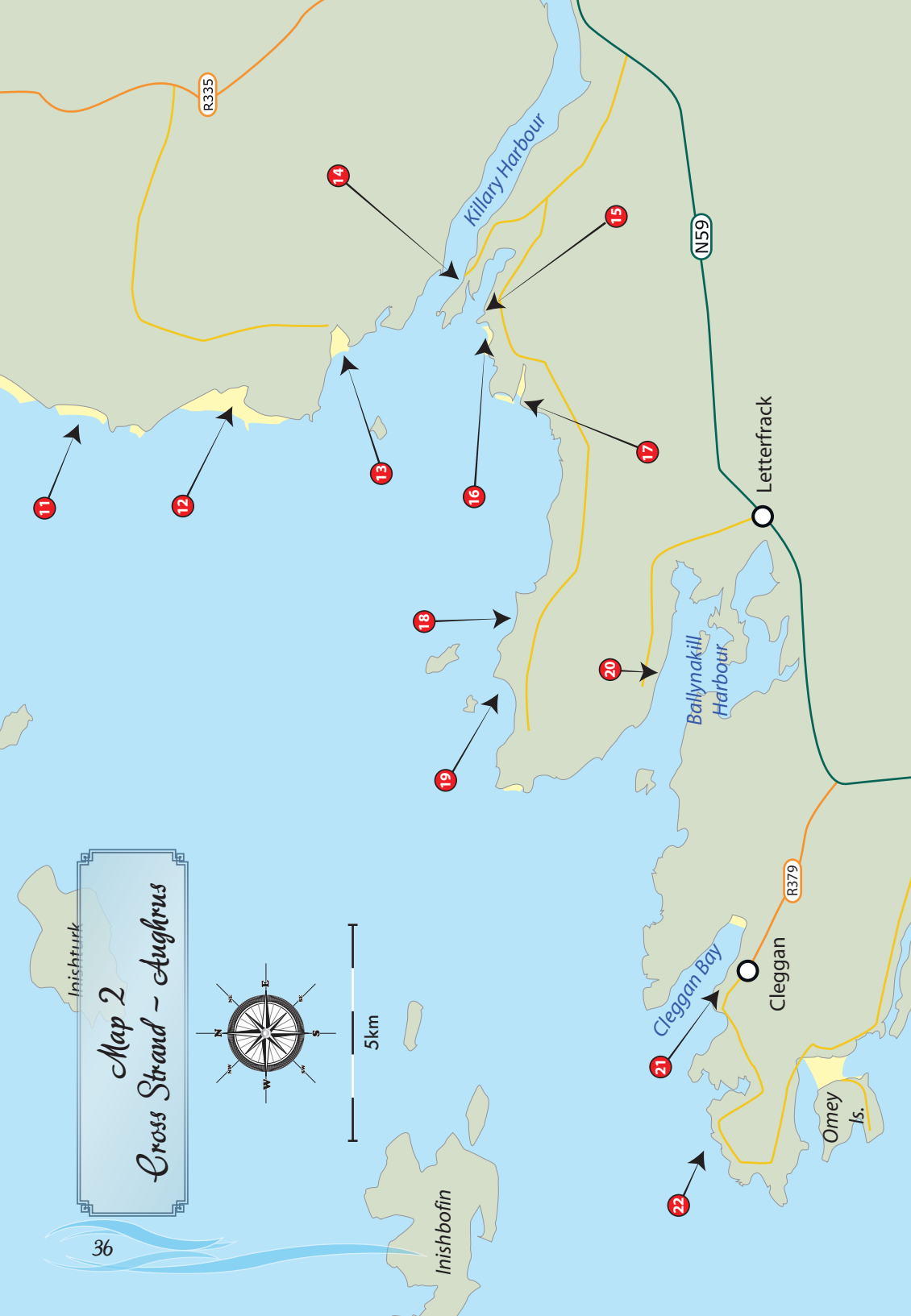
Roonagh Quay is located a few miles west of Louisburgh. A ferry service operates from here to Clare Island. The mark here is the rocks to the southwest of the pier. This mark should only be fished in calm weather, as the rocks are dangerous in even moderate seas. Wrasse, coalfish, pollack and mackerel can be caught here, with float fishing, spinning and lures the best methods.

10 Carrownisky (53.73544, -9.8933)

Carrownisky is a large west-facing surf beach just south of Louisburgh. It is very popular with surfers and may be best left until dark in summertime, when bathers and surfers have departed. Flounder and turbot are the most common species here, with bass possible, especially with a bit of surf, and sea trout as well. Dogfish and ray may be caught at distance in calmer conditions, especially after dark. Weaverfish are common here so take care.

Carrownisky





11 Cross Strand (53.70590, -9.9102)

Cross Strand is another surf beach, south of Carrownisky, and the same species and tactics apply here.

12 Whitestrand (53.66921, -9.9023)

Whitestrand is a large west-facing beach south of the village of Killeen. There is ample parking in the public car park. The sand is very soft in places. You must cross a shallow stream to access the beach, and in very wet weather this may require waders, however it is very safe to cross. Beware of occasional quicksand on the sandbanks further along the stream however.

The main species caught off the beach are flounder, turbot, dogfish, thornback ray, with occasional bass and painted ray. In autumn/winter you can expect whiting and coalfish also. Weaverfish are common here, so take care when handling small fish. Flounder are also very common in the stream itself, and can be taken here on a flooding tide.

13 Silverstrand (53.64983, -9.8813)

Silverstrand is another storm beach on this stretch of coastline, with a car park at the end of the road. There is a small stream to cross to access the beach, but this is passable at most stages of the tide. It can be a long walk out to the waterline at low tide, and much of the beach only floods on bigger tides, although when it does it comes in very fast, so take care if fishing a flood tide.

Flounder and turbot are the dominant species, with bass a possibility, and ray and dogfish after dark in calm weather.



Whitestrand

Killary



14 Killary Harbour (53.62039, -9.85772)

Killary is the only fjord in Ireland, a long deep inlet formed by glacial erosion during the last Ice Age. The steep hillsides continue underwater, so deep water is found very close to shore. Killary is known as a tackle graveyard, with jagged rock ledges snagging traces on the retrieve, and deep sucking mud on the bottom that lead weights seem to disappear into without trace.

Having said that, it can be a very productive area for several species, including dogfish, ray, bull huss, pollack, wrasse, cod, and even deep water species like ling may be taken from the shore. There are unconfirmed reports of common skate being hooked by shore anglers, although none were landed. It would be some feat to land one on a beachcaster given the depth of water and tackle limitations.

Bottom fishing here requires heavier tackle, and lead lifts are advisable. Single hook pulley rigs will help avoid rock ledges on the retrieve, and a fast retrieve is vital to get fish up in the water before reaching these ledges. Rotten bottom lead links are also a good idea.

Killary is also a good spot for mackerel, with the salmon cages providing a plentiful supply of food to attract them inshore.

15 Little Killary (53.616791, -9.874687)

Little Killary is a productive mark for thornback ray, dogfish, dabs and occasional gurnard. Big conger are also caught here in close. It is a rock mark, with easy access from the car park at Glassilaun. Climbing the fence will cause problems for local farmers, so walk along the track and enter the field through the gate, heading straight ahead and fish from the rocks into the bay to the right. The fishing is onto clean sand, and distance casting is not necessary, once you have found the fish keep casting to that range.

16 Glassilaun (53.614735, -9.87511)

Glassilaun is a beautiful sandy beach in a sheltered crescent-shaped bay, which means it rarely has heavy surf. Fishing from the beach you can target flounder, turbot, brill and dabs, as well as ray and dogfish at distance. Whiting and coalfish are very common in winter, and pollack and conger eel can be taken close to the rocks on the right hand side. Fishing from the rocky headland out into the bay allows easier access to deeper water, with a greater chance of taking thornback ray.

Glassilaun



Lettergesh



17 Lettergesh (53.602202, -9.908853)

Lettergesh is a classic Atlantic storm beach, with clean sand sloping gently away from a shingle/dune complex. It is known best for flatfish, with flounder, turbot and brill all caught here, but particularly for flounder. A good surf helps the flattie fishing, and fish can be caught at most stages of the tide, with the best fishing often during the ebb tide. Lugworm tipped with mackerel is a good bait, although the flatfish also take sandeel. In calmer weather thornback rays and dogfish are taken, especially after dark, on fish baits.

Bait Point: Lugworm can be dug in the sandy river estuary at the northern end of the beach.

18 Renvyle Sandy Beach (53.606852, -9.989238)

Driving west from Tully Cross, after Tully village there is a turn off to the right for a caravan park. 400m further on take the lane to the right which leads to a small car park beside the beach. Renvyle is a small north-facing beach, which means it doesn't get heavy surf too often. It produces flounder and some turbot, but is better known for dogfish and ray fishing in autumn. There are some rocks along the beach which attract other species, such as pollack, coalfish, whiting and conger eel.

19 Renvyle Stony Beach (53.609198, -10.009199)

Driving west past Renvyle House Hotel, stop when you reach the low wall along the seashore and find a spot to park without obstructing traffic or entrances. The beach is accessed by walking back along the shore from here about 500m, past the rock outcrops to the curved bay. At high tide only a rock and shingle shore is visible, but as the tide drops the sand is exposed. A short cast finds relatively deep water for a beach, so distance casting is not essential here to find fish. Over the last 2 hours of the ebb and first 2 hours of the flood, flounder are taken close in, but may be taken further out when the sand is totally covered. During daylight, thornback ray are a common catch, with sandeel baits best, fished at medium range. Once darkness sets in, dogfish are very common here and may be taken in large numbers. In autumn, coalfish and whiting are very common, and pollack and wrasse may be taken, especially casting close to the reefs out to the left. There are a number of snags here also, so be prepared to lose the odd rig.



Renvyle Sandy Beach



Renvyle Stony Beach

20 Ballinakill (53.57312, -9.99280)

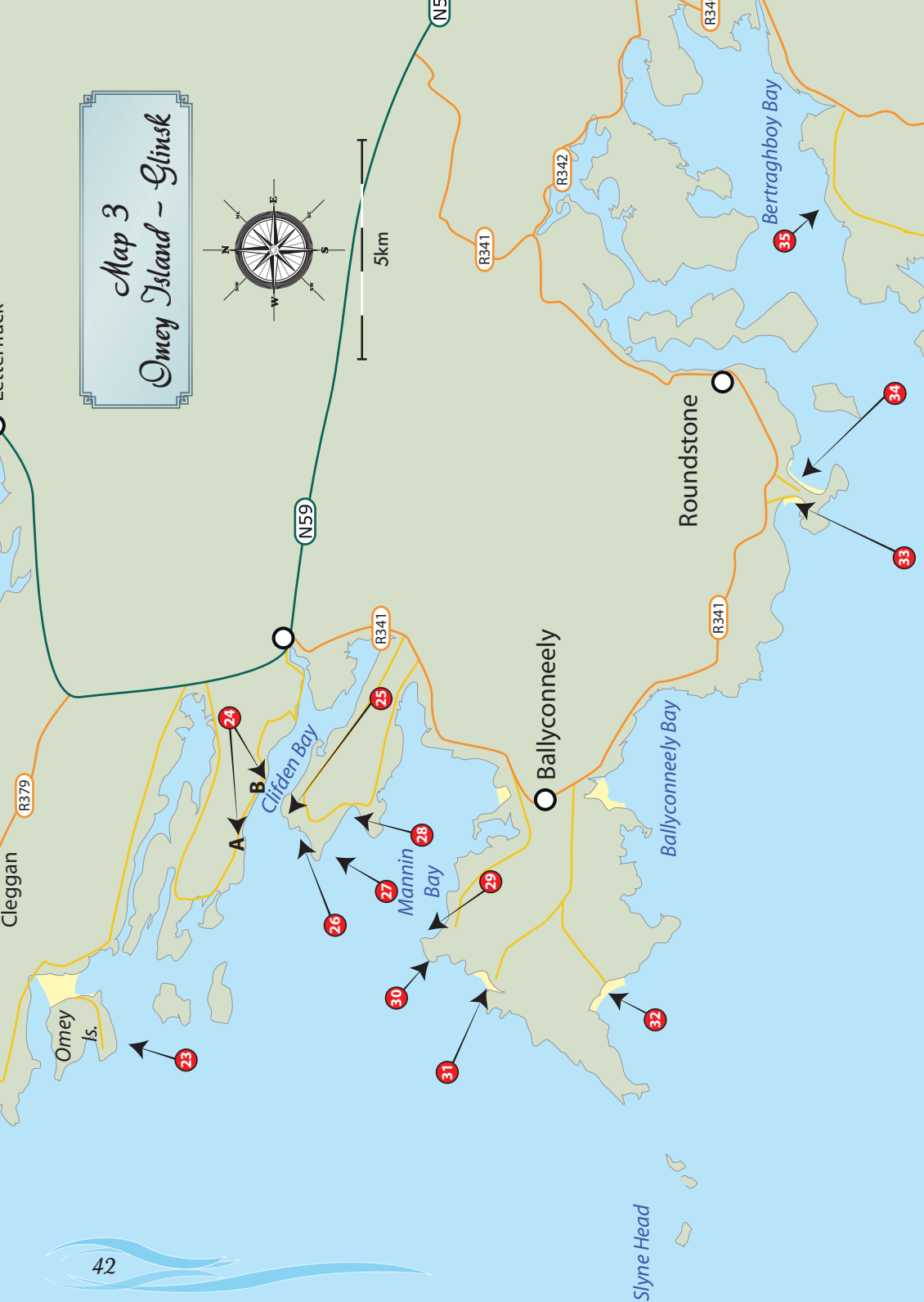
Ballinakill Harbour is little fished, but there are several marks along the northern shore where dogfish, flounder and ray can be caught. Parking can be difficult along the narrow road.

21 Cleggan (53.55734, -10.1097)

The pier at Cleggan offers fishing from the pier onto fairly clean ground, with dogfish, dabs and ray possible. Mullet and small pollack are taken over high water close to the pier, while fishing at night with fish baits can produce very good conger, with specimen fish to over 18kgs recorded there.

22 Aughrus (53.5583, -10.1807)

West of Cleggan, there are several locations along the road near Aughrus Point and to the west of Aughrusbeg Lake where a short walk from the road brings the angler to good rock marks, where float/lure fishing will produce wrasse, pollack and mackerel.



23 Omey Island (53.5270, -10.1554)

Omey Island is a small island cut off from the mainland by a tidal sand flat. At low tide it is possible to drive over to the island across the sand – there are markers along the route. The best fishing is on the south western side, with pollack, wrasse and conger all available here.

Bait Point: The sand flat between the island and the mainland is a very good area for collecting bait, with lugworm, sandeel, and occasional clam and white ragworm to be found. The southern side is best for bait digging.

24 Clifden

Clifden Bay is a great location for thornback ray fishing, although access can be difficult. There are 2 well-known marks on either side of the bay – the White Lady and the Lower Sky Road. Both offer fishing from rocks onto sandy ground for dogfish and thornback ray. Parking along the Lower Sky Road can be difficult, and access to the shore is tricky due to high cliffs, but there are a couple of marks here –

A: Slopers Cliff (Grid Ref 53.49619, -10.08949) and

B: Belleek (Grid Ref 53.49089, -10.06670)

where access is reasonably good, and fishing for ray can be excellent. Wrasse, pollack and conger can also be taken close to the rocks, while casting a short distance will land a bait on clean sand, with dogfish, ray and bull huss possible.

Bait Point: There is a small beach 1.5km west of Clifden on the northern shore of the bay where lugworm and sandeel can be dug.



25 White Lady (53.48853, -10.07938)

The White Lady is a rock mark which gives easy access to deep water over a sandy bottom. The name refers to the white stone marker at the mouth of the bay. The mark is close to this marker light, and is accessed by walking about 750m north from the pier, where some parking is available. It is best known as a ray mark, with thornback ray to over 10lbs caught here in good numbers. A cast of 60-80m is plenty to put the bait in the right place, with sandeel and other fish baits most popular. On spring tides the current can be very strong here, and even on smaller tides grip leads are required to hold bottom, except over slack water. Other species caught here include dogfish and bull huss, the latter taken closer in where the sand meets the rocky ground. Float fishing close in can produce pollack and wrasse, and ledgering a mackerel fillet will take conger eel. Two hours either side of low water is best here.

26 Errislannan Harbour (53.48432, -10.08861)

The small harbour just north of Errislannan Point offers wrasse on float or lure fishing, and also conger, but these are difficult to land as the rough ground offers plenty of places for a hooked eel to anchor itself.

White Lady



27 Errislannan Point (53.47752, -10.0923)

South-east of Errislannan Point, wrasse can be taken close in to the rocks, while distance casting will put a bait onto sandy ground, with dogfish, thornback ray and dabs possible. This is best fished on a flooding tide.

28 Keerhaun (53.47298, -10.08004)

The sheltered bay at Keerhaun produces plaice, flounder, dabs, turbot, dogfish and occasional ray. Distance casting with worm or fish baits is most successful.

29 Mannin Bay & Knock Point

The best fishing in Mannin Bay is at several marks around Knock Point, at the south-western corner of the bay. All the marks require a bit of a walk from the nearest parking, but it is well worth it. The beach just east of **Knock Point (Grid ref. 53.45397, -10.1252)** produces ray, dogfish, dabs, flounder and plaice. Distance casting is best to reach the better fishing here.

To the west of Knock Point, there are 2 marks at:

(30) False Bay (Grid ref. 53.44794, -10.1355) and

(31) Dooloughan (Grid ref. 53.44155, -10.1441)

where bottom fishing produces good flatfish, including flounder, plaice, dabs and small turbot. Lugworm and mackerel are the most productive baits here.

32 Ballyconneely (53.41672, -10.1422)

There are a number of small sandy beaches on the southern side of the Ballyconneely peninsula, and near the headland itself. All provide good fishing for flounder, with turbot a possibility, and where there are rocks nearby, pollack, wrasse, coalfish, whiting, conger eel and even bass are possible.

33 Dogs Bay (53.37818, -9.9641)

Dogs Bay is a beautiful, long sandy beach 3km west of Roundstone. It faces west, although it is slightly sheltered by a headland, so it rarely gets a very big surf. Close in is good for flounder and turbot, with coalfish and whiting in winter, especially after dark, while distance casting will produce dogfish and thornback ray.



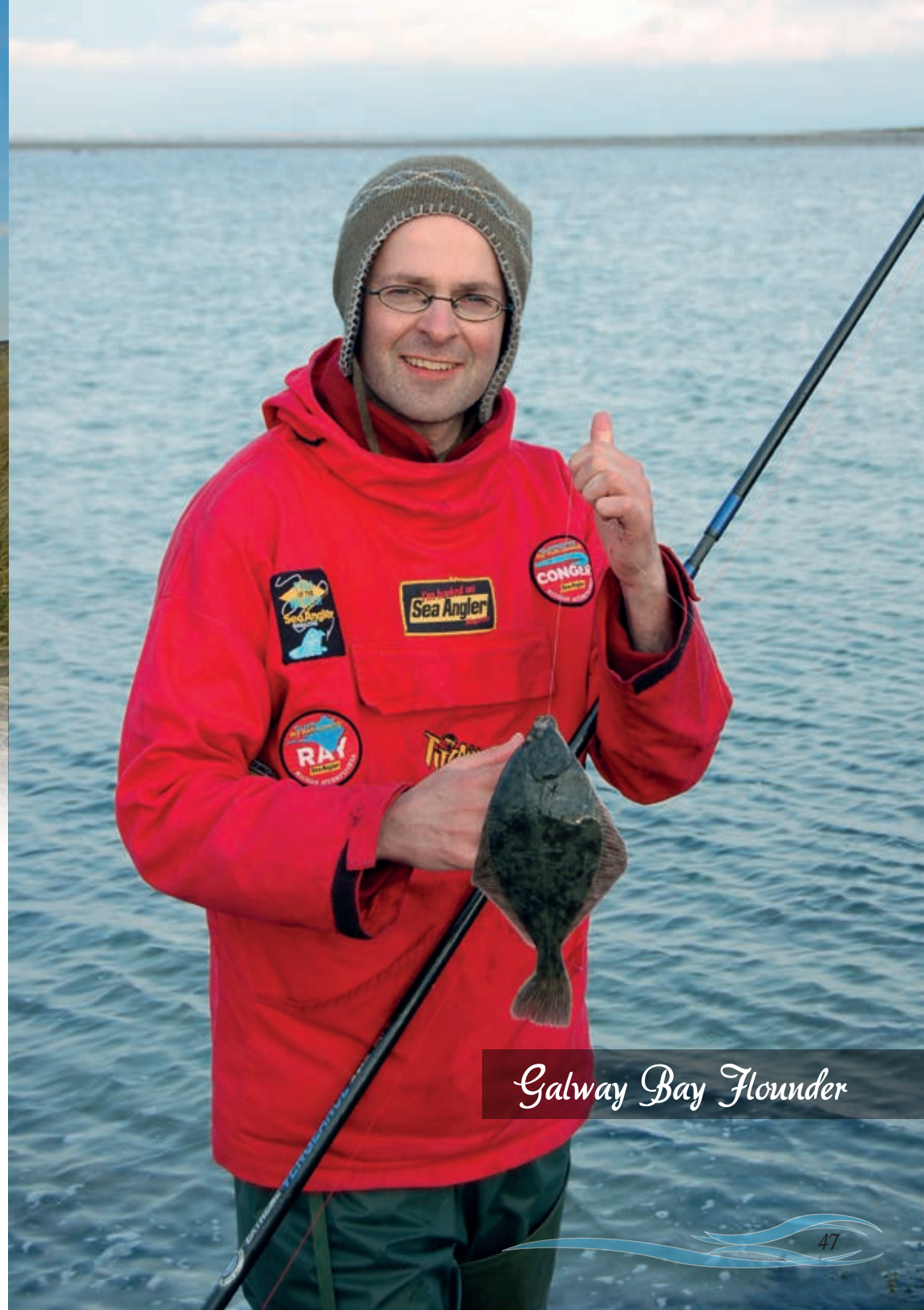
34 Gurteen (53.38013, -9.9561)

Gurteen is another long sandy beach that is back to back with Dogs Bay beach – they face opposite directions on the same narrow spit of land. Gurteen faces east and is more sheltered from prevailing wind direction and Atlantic swells, and is rarely unfishable due to weed. Distance casting to the eel grass visible at about 80-100m will produce thornback ray, with dogfish usually plentiful here too, especially after dark. Bull huss are occasionally caught among the dogs and ray. Fishing close in can produce good flounder, particularly when there is a small surf. Fishing is best 3 hours either side of low tide, when it is easier to reach the eel grass with a cast.

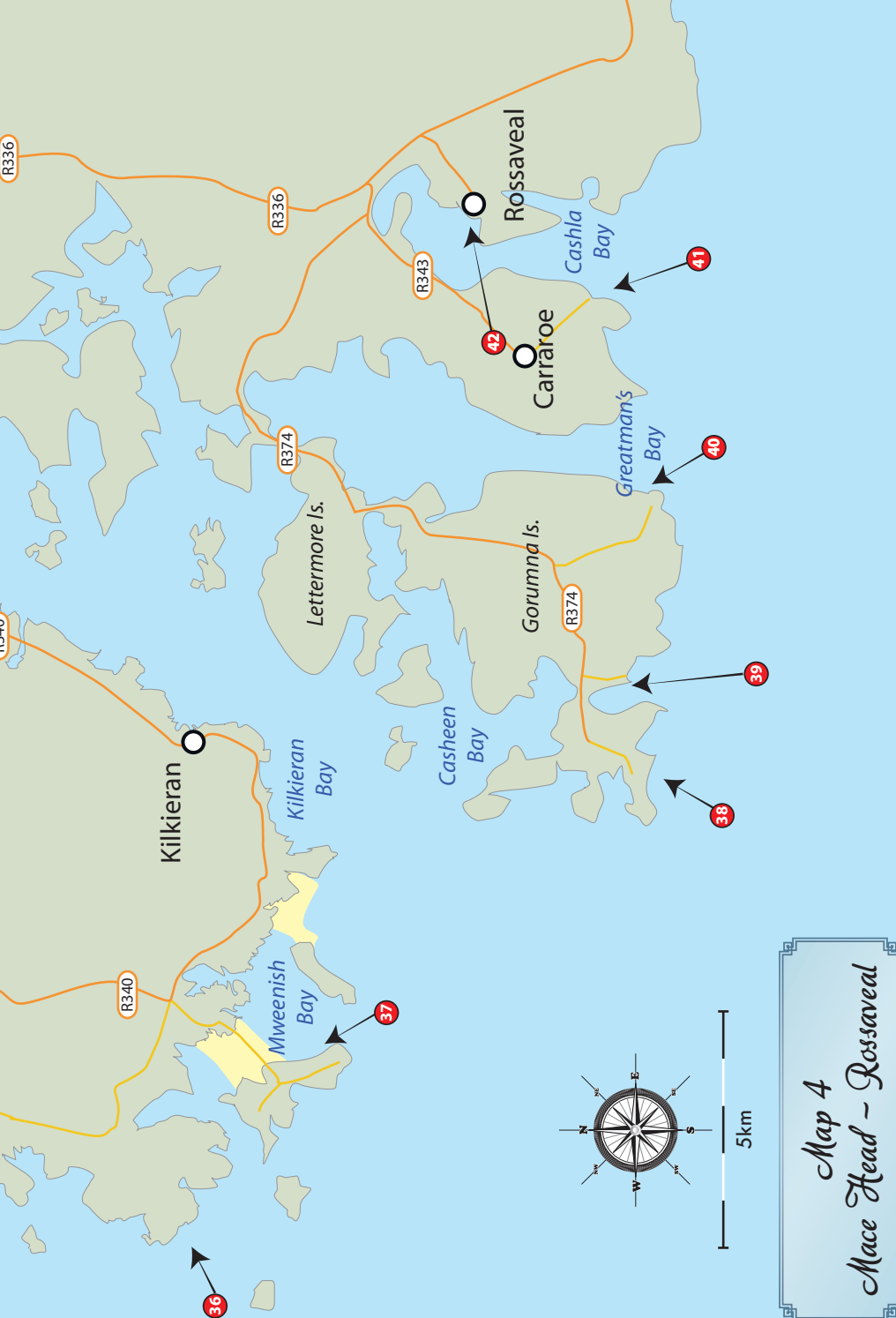
35 Glinsk (53.37340, -9.8557)

About 2 km west of Glinsk there is good fishing from rocks onto clean ground, where dogfish and ray are the main quarry. Dabs and plaice are also possible here, as well as wrasse close in.

Bait Point: The beach south of Moyrus Pier can be dug for lugworm and sandeel.



Galway Bay Flounder



36 Mace Head (53.3246, -9.9041)

The rocks on the south-eastern side of Mace Head provide good fishing for wrasse and pollack. The ground is rocky and weedy close in, providing perfect habitat for these species. Further out is clean sand, although a long cast is needed. Thornback ray are possible here, although it can be difficult to land fish due to the weedy ground close in to shore.

Bait Point: The sandy ground south of the road between Carna and Mweenish island provides good digging for lugworm and occasional white rag. Peeler crab can be found among the weed and rocky outcrops in the middle of the beach.

37 Mweenish (53.2915, -9.8353)

The south-eastern corner of Mweenish island offers fishing onto mainly clean sandy ground to the north-east of the point. Dogfish, wrasse and pollack are taken here, as well as dabs, plaice, flounder and bull huss.

38 Gorumna Island

There are several marks along the southern shores of Gorumna Island and Lettermullan. The shoreline between Golam Head and Dog Island, along the south of Lettermullan, offers mixed ground fishing for dogfish, bull huss, wrasse, pollack and mackerel. There is the possibility of coalfish and codling in winter here also. Rotten bottom lead links are recommended here due to the rough ground.

There is sandy ground close to the abbey on **Kiggaul Bay (39)**, on the southern side of Gorumna, where flounder, plaice and dabs are taken.

Bait Point: Lugworm can be dug in the mudflats in the inner bay at Kiggaul.

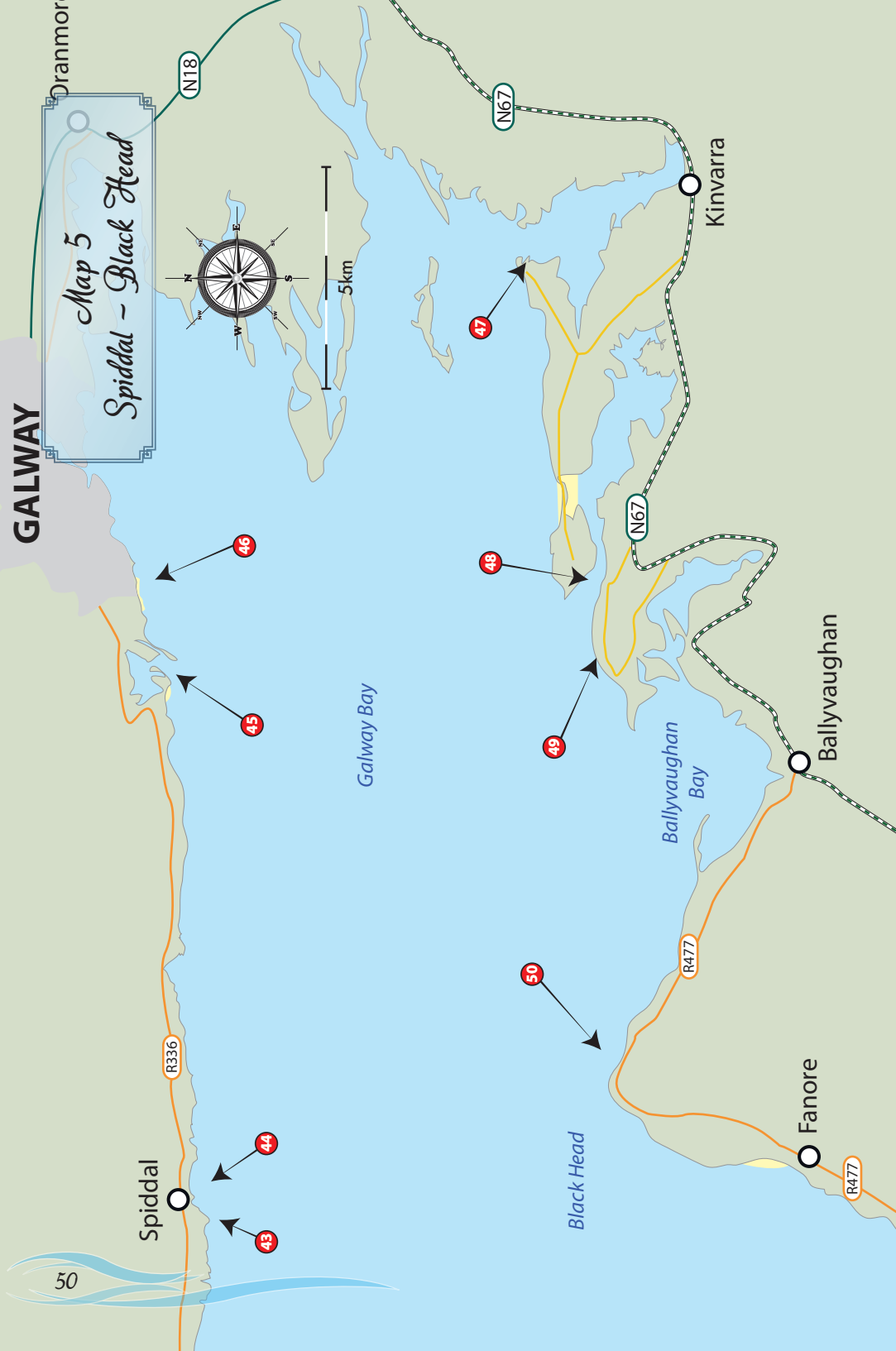
Fishing from the rocks at **Trawbaun (40 Grid ref. 53.23355, -9.6478)** on the south-eastern corner of Gorumna Island, offers bottom fishing over sand for flounder and plaice, best over high water. Spinning will also produce pollack along the rocks.

41 Carraroe (53.23779, -9.5834)

The rocks adjacent to the small lighthouse at Carraroe is a mark offering easy access to the channel into Rossaveal harbour. A short cast will put a bait onto clean ground, with dogfish and thornback rays most common. Mackerel are taken here throughout the summer. In winter whiting, coalfish, rockling and the odd codling are taken. Wrasse and pollack can be caught close to the rocks, as well as conger eels.

42 Rossaveal (53.26629, -9.5600)

The harbour at Rossaveal Port is known for conger fishing. Conger to over 18kgs have been caught here, with the best fishing at night. Mullet and flounder are also available in the harbour.



43 Spiddal Pier (53.24070, -9.31224)

Spiddal Pier is located at the western end of the village, and produces a number of species. Fishing off the back of the pier, from the rocks, produces mackerel, pollack and wrasse, with dogfish, conger and occasional bull huss. This is mostly rough ground. From the end of the pier you have access to deeper water, with a short cast putting a bait onto a sandy bottom. Flounder, dabs, whiting, pollack and coalfish are the most common catch here. Float fishing in summer is good for mullet, and mini-species hunters can increase their species count very easily here, with a number of smaller species available close in to the end of the pier, including goldsinny and rockcook wrasse, blennies, sea scorpion, and several more.

44 Spiddal Beach (53.24412, -9.29734)

Spiddal Beach, at the eastern end of the village, is a semi-sheltered beach, with clean patches of sand interspersed with rocks and weed. It is often covered with weed after a good blow, making it unfishable, but when weed is not a problem it offers very good flounder fishing. Fishing close in, in the surf with worm baits will produce flounder, some to over 1kg. Codling are sometimes taken here in late autumn and winter.

Bait Point: The beach at Furbo, where the Knock River enters the sea, is a good spot for lugworm, and produces sandeel on spring tides also.

45 Silverstrand (53.25122, -9.1258)

This is a small sandy beach between Galway City and Barna. Access is very good, with a car park and promenade the length of the beach. The main target species is flounder, with some dogfish, whiting, coalfish and rockling, and bass have been reported from here. The flounder go to a good size here, with fish to over 40cm recorded. Best time to fish is late in the year, from August to November, and it fishes in a good surf. Fish can be caught at all stages of the tide, with night time fishing best. As it is a small beach, the stock of fish is small, so catch and release is recommended.

There is a sandy bay on the far side of the grassy hill, which can fish well for the same species, as well as mullet coming in and out of the estuary.

Bait Point: Lugworm and maddies can be dug in the estuary behind the beach. Caution should be taken as the mud closer to the beach side is very deep and very soft. This is the best digging area for maddies. Further out the sand is firmer and has plenty of small lugworm.



46 Salthill/Blackrock (53.25682, -9.0910)

Salthill is a number of small sand and shingle beaches interspersed with rocky outcrops. The small beaches can fish well for flounder. Off the rocks you will take mackerel, dogfish, coalfish, whiting, occasional bull huss and conger eel. Fish baits are best, with worm baits good for the flounder. The ground can be rough, so tackle losses may be high.

To the west of the diving tower at Blackrock is a well-known mark for bull huss, although numbers caught have declined in recent years. Dogfish are still taken here, and tope have been reported in the past.

Fishing is not permitted from the diving tower under a local byelaw, and anglers should be aware of swimmers in the water at any point in the area.

47 Parkmore (53.17168, -8.9691)

The pier in Parkmore offers access to the main channel into Kinvarra Bay, although boat mooring can restrict casting, particularly during summer. This is a known tope mark, as tope run the channel into the bay. A full mackerel fillet bait will increase chances of success. Dogfish and bull huss are also available here.

48 Newquay (53.15609, -9.0788)

Newquay is at the entrance to a large estuary bay, with a deep channel through which the tide flows at a very rapid pace, particularly on spring tides. There are 2 marks here – the point beside the beach, and the pier behind the seafood restaurant.

Both offer easy casting into the narrow channel, although the channel at the pier is a lot narrower, and this means the current is a lot stronger, so heavier grip leads are a must. Fish mackerel baits hard on the bottom for dogfish and bull huss, with bass taken on spinning gear. Tope run the channel during the summer months and can be taken on large mackerel baits.

The small beach on the western side of the point can produce flounder, dab and the odd bass.

Bait Point: The sandy bay at Muckinish (**Grid ref.** 53.13985, -9.10478) is good for lugworm.

49 Flaggy Shore (53.15915, -9.0938)

The Flaggy Shore is found further along the road past the beach at Newquay, and offers fishing from rock platforms into gradually deeper water. Dogfish, bull huss and pollack are the most common species here, with tope a definite possibility. The ground is mostly rocky and snaggy, and rotten bottom lead links are advised. Fish baits such as mackerel and sandeel work best.

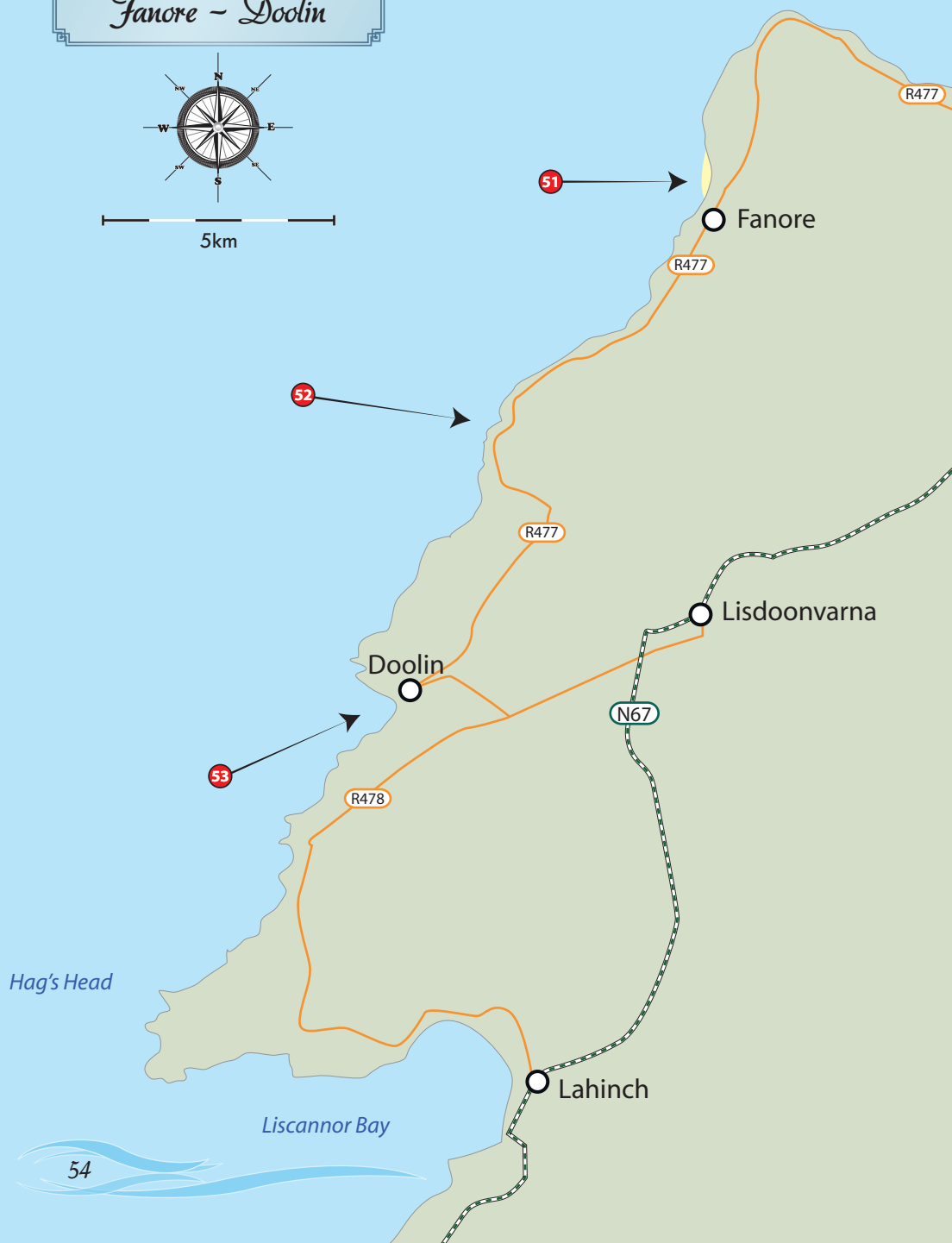
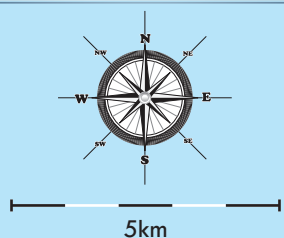
50 Blackhead (53.15284, -9.2596)

Black head in north Clare is a rock mark that offers fishing for a variety of species. Parking along the road near the lighthouse you can walk and clamber down to the lower rock platforms quite easily. This is a competition venue, and peg numbers are painted on the rocks. The mark should be avoided in rough weather, as the waves can be unpredictable and dangerous. Black Head is one of the most reliable marks for mackerel in summer, and can get busy for a couple of hours either side of high tide, especially on weekends and sunny days.

Fishing close in the ground is rough, rocky and very weedy, but can produce good pollack, wrasse and conger eel. Be prepared to lose tackle here, using junk leads and rotten bottoms will reduce tackle losses somewhat. Fishing further out you will be on fairly clean ground, with large areas of sand and the odd snaggy patch. Dogfish, thornback and spotted ray, bull huss, and even tope are possibilities here, with dabs also plentiful. Dabs will be drawn to worm baits, while the other species prefer fish baits.



Map 6 Fanore ~ Doolin



51 Fanore (53.11881, -9.2895)

The beach at Fanore is possibly the best-known mark for bass in the region. During summer months it can be difficult to fish in daylight due to surfers and swimmers, but the best fishing is usually on a rising tide into darkness anyway. Bass and flounder are the main quarry here. The rocks and small beaches north and south of the main beach offer bass, pollack and wrasse to lure and bait gear.

There is a good tackle shop beside the post office in Fanore village that provides tackle and frozen bait.

52 Ballyreen (53.07064, -9.3576)

Ballyreen is a noted competition venue about 5 miles south of Fanore. There are over 70 marked pegs, with peg numbers painted on the rocks, and as you drive along the coast road you will see peg numbers painted on the roadside rocks, indicating where to park for pegs 1-25, 25-50, etc.

Access to the marks can be tricky, and care must be taken descending the rocks. The rock is limestone, heavily pitted from erosion, and can be difficult to walk on, while easy to turn an ankle. Fishing from lower rocks should not be attempted in rough weather, as the swell can easily sweep a person into the sea.

Fishing from the rocks you have access to a range of species. Close inshore is very rough ground, offering pollack, wrasse and conger eel. Float fishing or spinning for the wrasse and pollack is productive, while eels are taken on ledgered fish baits. Be prepared to lose gear in the rough ground, and use a rotten-bottom rig.

Further out, past the rough ground, is clean sand, although there are a few snags. Casting 60-100 metres should put a bait onto clean ground, and dogfish, bull huss, thornback ray, blonde ray, spotted ray, tope and even monkfish have been landed here. Bite-offs are common here, and porbeagle shark have been landed here in the past, so the unthinkable is possible at this mark!

53 Doolin (53.01017, -9.39246)

Doolin beach is a sandy beach that produces, bass, flounder and dogfish. **There have been several drownings here due to dangerous tide rips – anglers are advised not to wade out in the surf on this beach.** In calm weather the rock marks to the north of the beach can produce pollack, wrasse and conger, but these should only be fished in good sea conditions as a big swell here makes fishing very dangerous.

List of Record Fish from Clew Bay - Hags Head

Species	lbs	ozs	kg	Place of Capture	Date	Name
Angler Fish	54	0	24.49	Galway Bay	9/13/1968	Joe Doherty
Bass	15		6.80	Ballyvaughan	9/30/1996	Michael O'Donoghue
Coalfish	16	14	7.65	Clare Island	7/11/1975	John Furness
Cod	34	8	15.65	Clifden	7/29/1978	Louis Nuyen
Conger Eel	54		24.49	Cleggan Pier	8/16/1976	John Brittain
Dab			0.77	Little Killary Bay	3/4/1990	Duncan Brown
Dogfish - Greater Spotted	18	2	8.22	Clare Island	6/13/1974	G. W. B. Burry
Dogfish - Lesser Spotted	4	1.5	1.86	Westport	16/08/1981	Padraic Conlon
Dogfish - Spur	15	1	6.83	Westport	8/26/1979	Patrick Slevin
Flounder	4	3	1.90	Galway Harbour	8/5/1963	J. L. McMonagle
Garfish (<i>B. bellone</i>)			1.29	Clifden	10/8/1990	Sean O'Farrell
Gurnard - Grey			0.74	Westport	9/12/1986	Ewald Schwoch
Gurnard - Red			1.25	Clifden	7/26/2005	Roy Low
Gurnard - Tub			3.55	Clew Bay	6/16/1997	Padraig Connolly
Haddock	8	8	3.86	Clare Island	6/30/1975	J. Furness
Herring		12.5	0.35	Black Head	6/17/1976	Jonathan M. Peel
John Dory			2.81	Ballyvaughan	8/27/1984	Kurt Rasmussen
Ling	36	4	16.44	Galway Bay	8/20/1983	Michael Griffin
Mackerel	2	5.5	1.06	Ballyreen	7/22/1964	P. Commane
Monkfish	69	0	31.30	Westport	7/1/1958	M. Fuchs
Mullet - Thick-lipped	7	5.25	3.32	R. Corrib	8/3/1995	Michael Flannery
Plaice	4	4	1.93	Clifden	6/21/1991	P. Zandstra
Pollack	16	3	7.34	Clifden	10/7/1975	Rose Kessler
Ray - Blonde	21	0	9.53	Westport	6/17/1966	Jim Orange
Ray - Homelyn	5	8	2.49	Clew Bay	6/23/1990	W. Borrmann
Ray - Thornback	23	8	10.66	Clifden	6/25/1979	Derek King
Ray's Bream	5	13	2.64	Clifden	9/18/1975	P. J. De Wit
Shark - Blue	125		56.70	Clare Island	7/30/1984	Reg Roynan
Shark - Porbeagle	190		86.18	Galway Bay	9/2/1980	William Payton
Skate - Common	208	0	94.35	Clare Island	8/29/1971	Leonard F. Hopkins
Skate - White*	165	0	74.84	Westport	8/7/1966	Jack Stack
Three Bearded Rockling	1	6	0.62	Black Head	8/12/1982	Walter Keane
Tope			28.40	New Quay	9/1/1993	Tommie Minogue
Trigger Fish	3	8	1.59	Black Head	9/7/2007	Eoin Trill
Tuna - Bluefin	708		321.14	Clifden	7/10/2002	Martin O'Malley
Whiting	4	6	1.98	Clare Island	6/18/1976	John Furness
Wrasse - Ballan			2.90	Fanore	6/21/1992	Terry Bewes
Wrasse - Cuckoo			0.72	Clew Bay	28/9/2002	Martin Carey

* Current Irish Record. Copyright of Irish Specimen Fish Committee.